

# HiCN Households in Conflict Network

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This publication is an output of TAMNEAC,  
an Initial Training Network supported by the European  
Commission's Seventh Framework Programme.  
www.tamneac.eu

## Social Capital and Conflict<sup>1</sup>

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HiCN Working Paper 134

November 2012

Abstract: Conflict is either caused by, or brings about, drastic changes in the underlying social relationships between members of a community involved in the conflict. The conflict literature has taken note, and a growing number of studies attempt to determine the relationship between conflict and social capital. Unfortunately, there are many problems that have plagued the social capital literature, and conflict studies have failed to address these. This paper aims to provide a critical analysis of the literature on conflict and social capital, discuss the problems that can arise when studying social capital, how the conflict literature might address this, and highlight the gaps in the conflict and social capital literature.

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<sup>1</sup> The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Union Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) under grant agreement n°263905 (TAMNEAC).

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## 1. Introduction

There is no doubt that conflict and violence are destructive to those involved: young lives are lost, assets destroyed, families displaced and livelihoods shattered. However there is another aspect that researchers and practitioners in the conflict field often ignore, although probably most essential in understanding the dynamics of conflict and preventing any further turmoil. Conflict is either caused by, or brings about, drastic changes in the underlying social relationships between members of a community involved in the conflict. As aid flows to post-conflict areas, rather than being a priority in order to prevent further escalation of conflict, social capital is often ignored.

Social capital has become a recent and popular development in the economics literature, allowing us to understand certain economic phenomena that are not driven by classical economic theory. For example strong social ties allow us to achieve goals that involve the cooperation and inputs of more than one player, leading to more effective outputs such as public goods, institutions, and community-level investments (Habyarimana, 2009), all of which are essential for economic development. When it comes to income shocks, social capital can be seen as a vital household coping strategy, not only in terms of financial support but also in terms of solidarity and emotional support. Mutual insurance networks are common amongst households that are susceptible to income shocks (Fafchamps & Lund, 2003). Other studies have empirically shown the advantages of a more cooperative society: public institutions and public policies are more productive (R. D. Putnam, Leonardi, & Nanetti, 1994), growth rates increase (Fukuyama, 1996; Knack & Keefer, 1997), human productivity is (Dasgupta & Serageldin, 2002), high school drop outs decrease (Coleman, 1988), and financial investments and networks increase (Harker, Wilkes, & Mahar, 1990). There are other benefits to cooperation and strong community ties, some less measurable, like personal satisfaction gained when greeting your neighbour as you leave your building, benefits that Sobel (2002) describes as valuable “intrinsically”.

In the context of conflict and post-conflict settings, a strong social fabric is even more crucial. Varshney (2001) shows that in multi-ethnic societies, if civic engagement (across two different communities or ethnic groups) is not present or weak, conflict is likely to flare up. Black and Gent (2006) explain that without proper reintegration into the former community, return of former refugees or IDPs is not “sustainable”, and can lead to further conflict and displacement.

As the importance of social capital has been realised, some recent studies on the consequences of violence and conflict on social capital have emerged, unfortunately with contradictory results. (see Bellows and Miguel (2009) and De Luca and Verpoorten (2011) for an example of two contrasting studies). This contradiction is mainly due to the different measures of social capital,

the lack of differentiation between “bonding” and “bridging” social capital and the questionable exogeneity of the variable that measures conflict.

This paper aims to provide a critical analysis of the literature on conflict and social capital by discussing the problems that can arise when studying social capital and how the conflict literature might address this, as well as highlighting the gaps in the conflict and social capital literature. The next section provides an overview of social capital, section 3 discusses the literature on social capital and conflict, and finally section 4 concludes.

## **2. Social Capital**

Classical economists saw land, labour and physical capital as the only three assets that generate income and foster economic growth. During the 60s, the notion of human capital was also added to the mix (Becker, 1962; Portes, 1998), as education, training and experience were found to increase productivity. However, the “embeddedness” of social relations in economic relations was still not acknowledged.

This lack of acknowledgement brought to light a clear distinction between the way sociologists and classical economists view individual actors. Sociologists tend to lean away from the individualistic element, believing that individual behaviour is formed by society around him/her, through social norms, rules and obligations. On the other hand, classical economists view individuals as rational beings seeking to maximize their own utility without any regard for others, leading Granovetter (1985) to accuse economic studies of relying on the “under-socialized concept of man”.

However, in more recent decades there has been a surge in popularity of social capital, as economists have realised that we cannot rely on physical and human capital alone, nor overlook the “embeddedness” of man. For example, aid channelled to physical capital such as roads, irrigation systems, and public facilities could turn to crumbling ruins in the absence of social capital that is needed to maintain it (Ostrom, 2002). Or, the best education and training possible will still amount to nothing unless an individual has colleagues, clients, employees, and employers around him/her to discuss, disseminate, learn from, and assist their work (Woolcock, 1998). Societies that have emerged from conflict will find it difficult to reconstruct and redevelop without communication between warring parties.

Social capital has started to be introduced into economic analyses, and is now a third (after physical and human capital) and equally important capital that provides tools and training to enhance productivity. “The core idea of social capital theory is that social networks have value. Just as a screwdriver (physical capital) or a college education (human capital) can increase productivity (both individual and collective), so too social contacts affect the productivity of individuals and groups (R. Putnam, 2000).”

Unfortunately, as social capital has interested scientists from an array of disciplines, this has led to an emergence of many different interpretations of the topic. But researchers have still been able to show that social capital, however defined, has an impact on development outcomes (Colletta & Cullen, 2000), be they education, household welfare, or crime rates, keeping social capital high up on the development and economics agenda.

I will try to uncover the origins of social capital, how they are analysed in the contemporary literature, and the problems associated with social capital.

The term social capital has been coined independently at least six times by academics and practitioners over the twentieth century (R. Putnam, 2000), meaning that not only is the definition of social capital debated, but its origins too. The earliest citation of social capital was in 1916, when Lyda Hanifan wrote a report on rural schools in West Virginia, claiming that in order for a school to be successful social capital is necessary. According to Hanifan, social capital is “those tangible substances [that] count for most in the daily lives of people: namely good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a social unit (Hanifan, 1916).” Hanifan must have had good foresight, as this definition includes many of the different forms that have been labelled as social capital by researchers over the years. However, Portes (1998) asserts that the general meaning of social capital is even older, and can be traced back to Durkheim’s advocacy of group life and its benefits, and Marx’s mobilized and effective “class-for-itself” (although they never actually referred to social capital).

The 1980’s and 1990’s saw the arrival of the sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman into the social capital field, who along with Robert Putnam can be named as the fathers of contemporary social capital. I will now discuss their contributions.

The first systematic analysis of social capital was brought by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, who defined social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to a possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition (Bourdieu, 1986).” Lacking a proper systematic explanation, this definition paved the way for the vague concept that we use today.

Bourdieu’s definition decomposes social capital into two elements: social relationships and the resources that these relationships offer. His focus on the latter could be a way of trying to make the concept popular amongst economists, however this has led to one of the most important challenges that social capital theorists face today: separating social capital from the resources that it offers.

Next to tackle the subject was James Coleman, combining influences from two different fields, sociology and economics, to understand the relationship between educational achievement and social inequality. Coleman offered the following definition, “[social capital is] a variety of entities with two elements in common: They all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they

facilitate certain action of actors – whether persons or corporate actors – within the structure (Coleman, 1988).”

Unlike Bourdieu, Coleman does acknowledge the fact that social capital can be harmful. Also unlike Bourdieu, Coleman saw the creation of social capital as an unintentional process, i.e. social capital arises out of activities meant for other purposes, and not for the sake of social capital itself. And while Bourdieu tended to focus on the social capital created by elitist groups, Coleman did not constrain social capital to this. But Bourdieu and Coleman can both be faulted in that they failed to differentiate between the resources made available through social capital and social capital itself.

Offering a more systematic analysis than Bourdieu, Coleman explored several different forms of social capital: obligations and expectations, information potential, norms and effective sanctions, authority relations, appropriable social organization, and intentional organizations. Coleman also offers us different examples of social capital: the lack of formal insurance in a wholesale diamond market, student activist groups that have evolved from study groups, a mother feeling that it is safe for her children to play on the streets unwatched, and a market in Cairo where a system of obligations means that a fruit vendor will be able to sell leather (or point in the right direction).

Next to the subject of social capital was Robert Putnam. Putnam can be credited with making social capital popular not only in the academic arena, but in the policy arena too, with former US president George Bush senior making references to Putnam’s work in a speech. Putnam defines social capital as “the connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them (R. Putnam, 2000).”

One of the more important contributions of Putnam’s work is differentiating between bridging and bonding social capital. Whereas the former refers to social capital that brings together individuals from different and diverse social backgrounds, the latter refers to social capital that forms from the basis of these social backgrounds, such as a bible reading group. Bonding social capital brings people together and encourages certain norms and strengthens identity, whereas bridging social capital can blur social divisions, as well as allow for better linkage to external assets and diffusion of information. Having strong bridging social capital is an important peace-building mechanism, and is crucial in post-conflict or multi-ethnic societies (Varshney, 2001).

Robert Putnam’s work drew a lot of criticism, mainly in that his definition of social capital was limited to organizational affiliation. While it is an important aspect, it is not the only form of social capital, and various other forms also need to be explored. Although membership in organizations might have decreased in the US (R. Putnam, 2000), individuals can also resort to other forms of social capital, such as social media, networking, and cooperation.

While these main players created the stage for social capital, a number of theoretical analyses and definitions have since emerged. Loury (1977) claimed that prohibiting racial discrimination in the work place could not completely eliminate racial inequalities, rather the legacy of a lack of connection of minorities to the job market and information about opportunities would remain. In short, it was the lack of social capital and not employers that was causing a discrepancy in salaries. Baker (1990) defined social capital as “a resource that actors derive from specific social structures and then use to pursue their interests, it is created by changes in the relationships among actors.” Schiff (1992) defines it as “the set of elements of the social structure that affects relations among people and are inputs or arguments of the production and/or utility function.” Moving more towards the idea of social networks, Burt (2005) defines social capital as “friends, colleagues, and more general contacts through whom you receive opportunities to use your financial and human capital.” Burt also emphasizes the importance of “holes” in social networks, or the “strength of weak ties” (Granovetter, 1974). Grootaert and Van Bastelaer (2002) differentiate between cognitive and structural social capital, the former referring to generally accepted attitudes and norms of behaviour, shared values, reciprocity, and trust; and the latter to the visible forms of social structures such as networks, associations, and institutions, and the rules and procedures that they embody – similar to the definition offered by Uphoff (2002). Sobel (2002) defines social capital as circumstances where individuals can use their membership in certain groups and networks to secure benefits.

At this point it is clear that the analysis is plagued by a number of problems. First, as mentioned before, there is a convenience and tendency in equating outcomes of social capital with social capital itself, leading to tautological statements where “a successful group succeeded because it had social capital, but the evidence that the group has social capital is its success (Sobel, 2002)”. This has caused a disagreement as to whether social capital refers to the infrastructure that builds social capital, such as associational membership and social networks, or the norms that result from it, such as trust and reciprocity. However, despite the confusion over the nature of what we are measuring, the measures of social capital in previous studies still have large positive outcomes on development and economic outcomes, making it difficult to ignore social capital, or its proxies.

A second concern is that there is no consensus as to whether social capital is an individual or a community variable. This parallels with the “under-socializing of man” vs. “over-socializing of man” debate introduced by Granovetter (1985). Obviously, an individual cannot join a book club if a book club does not exist; but if a book club does exist, an individual can then make the choice of joining the book club. In this way, the individual social capital is the choice of joining a book club, whereas the community social capital is the existence of a book club. Trying to prove that social capital can be individual and not just structural, Glaeser and Sacerdote (2002) offer a theoretical model that predicts how much an individual invests in social capital. They find that investments in social capital increase and then fall with age, decrease with expected mobility, rise in occupations requiring social skills, are highest amongst homeowners, fall with physical

distance, and are invested in alongside human capital. This proves that individuals play a role in determining their social capital, albeit in accordance with the social capital available in the community. It is therefore important to include both a community and individual measure of social capital in analysis.

A third problem of social capital, that seems to have mainly irked economists, comes from the term itself. Is social capital really a capital?

In order for social capital to be a “capital” it should have characteristics in common with other forms of capital (physical and human capital) such as depreciation with use (Ostrom, 2002), deliberate sacrifice in the present for future benefit (investment) (Arrow, 2002), and fungibility. Firstly, social capital does not depreciate with use, in fact, as social bonds become older, the accessible resources become larger. For example, an old school friend might be more likely to go the extra mile to help out. However, if social connections are severed, does social capital then depreciate through disuse? Secondly, investment in social capital need not be a “sacrifice”. While social capital can be a rich resource that provides numerous economic benefits, the value of social capital is intrinsic (Sobel, 2002), in most cases it is accumulated for the joy it brings. Lastly, social capital is not easily transferable, as it is difficult to put an economic value on it. In addition, unlike physical capital, social capital requires the input of more than one player.

I would argue that many of these objections also apply to human capital. For example, skills and knowledge will only increase with use, as “practice makes perfect”; while if not practiced or used these skills will become rusty or forgotten. Also, individuals might invest in human capital for the intrinsic value that education and knowledge brings, rather than future profits. And lastly, some of the benefits of human capital will not be realized without the involvement of others; for example, there is no benefit in learning a new language while living in a community that does not speak this language.

The last problem relating to the analysis of social capital is that of its definition. As evident above, the definition of social capital has slowly mutated from its original meaning and “heuristic value” (Portes, 1998) to become a vague term that often encompasses so many concepts that its distinct nature is no longer distinct. Despite this ambiguity, “the consensus is growing in the literature that social capital stands for the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures (Portes, 1998).” As different scientists have explored social capital they have added on different concepts and forms to the mix, from collective action to norms of trust and reciprocity. Dasgupta and Serageldin (2002) and Grootaert and Van Bastelaer (2002) have advocated the multi-faceted nature of social capital, as the different dimensions of social capital can have different effects on outcome variables, and it is important that we explore each of these dimensions independently.

### 3. Conflict and Social Capital

The relationship between conflict and social capital can go both ways. On the one hand, we would expect that conflict increases tension and decreases trust. As reports of violence are spread, individuals will be wary of others, cooperation is likely to decrease, and community members become divided (Colletta & Cullen, 2000).

On the other hand, we could expect conflict and violence to force individuals to rely and depend on each other. Social ties and capital might be formed on the basis of solidarity in the face of an external threat. For this reason, while bridging social capital might decrease, bonding social capital will increase. I.e. members of the same neighbourhood, village, ethnic group or religion might show more inter-group social capital but less out-group social capital.

The literature on social capital is quite new and the debate is still ongoing, with studies reaching contradictory results. Some research has showed that the experience of violence and conflict increases forms of social capital, while others have suggested negative causal links between conflict and social capital. These contradictions are due to the different measures of social capital under study, as well as various challenges to the independence of the conflict variable.

For example, De Luca and Verpoorten (2011) find that during times of conflict in Uganda, associational membership and self-reported trust decreases, but there is evidence for recovery. This might not necessarily reflect a deteriorating social fabric, rather the fact that during times of conflict, transportation to meetings will be difficult, clubs and organizations might have to discontinue due to security issues, and individuals are too preoccupied with the situation around them. The authors also measure trust with one simple question, *generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you must be very careful when dealing with people?* This is not a robust enough variable to measure trust, the question should be asked with subtlety, and several questions revolving around trust should be included rather than just one in order to decrease any problems caused by measurement error and noise. Also, this question does not reflect the fact that while members of the Lord Resistance Army might trust each other, they might not trust members of the Allied Democratic Forces, for example. This could potentially ignore a fundamental problem in the social fabric of this post-conflict society. Similarly, Muller and Vothknecht (2011) find that participation in certain organizations decreases in areas that are affected by conflict.

Using two comparative case studies, Colletta and Cullen (2000) show that violence weakens social capital and the social fabric of a community, divides community members, undermines interpersonal trust and collective action, destroys norms and values, and if not addressed can lead to more communal strife. Pinchotti and Verwimp (2007) show a similar story with qualitative evidence. Using a household survey and experimental games in post-war Tajikistan, Cassar, Grosjean, & Whitt (2011) show that exposure to conflict decreases trust and perceptions

of fairness within communities, as well as willingness to engage in impersonal exchange, and reinforces kinship based norms.

Humphreys and Weinstein (2007) use a sample of ex-combatants to evaluate a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, and find that previous participation in abusive military factions during the civil war in Sierra Leone make it more difficult for ex-combatants to reintegrate. Unfortunately, the authors are unable to solve the problems of spill-overs of the DDR programme, selection bias into the programme and sampling bias of ex-combatants.

However, a greater number of studies is pointing to the direction of violence and conflict *improving* social capital, rather than destroying it. This research is motivated by the fact that a number of African countries have witnessed a rapid post war recovery (Voors et al., 2012) not predicted by Solow growth models, which envisage per capita income to slowly return back to its steady state. Social scientists have attributed this growth spurt to a societal reform and a change in social capital caused by conflict itself.

In fact psychologists have found that that when an individual faces thoughts of death, a chemical called neuropeptide oxytocin is produced, which could cause individuals to identify with their group and group values (Bauer, Cassar, Chytilová, & Henrich, 2012). Early scientists such as Charles Darwin thought that conflict caused certain societal reform, and Cramer (2006) claims that “violence destroys but is also often associated with social creativity.” Although conflict might cause societal reform, this contributes to bonding social capital, rather than bridging social capital. For example, Bauer, Cassar, Chytilová, & Henrich (2012) show that older children who have been more conflict afflicted are more likely to act in an egalitarian way towards members of their own group.

Similarly, Whitt and Wilson (2007) use experimental games to determine whether ethnic bias might affect attitudes on fairness in post-war Bosnia. They find that there is preferential in-group treatment, but the outward bias is not as large as expected, and a norm of fairness still exists. This paper does not provide a direct or causal link between conflict and fairness, as we do not know how out-group bias and inter-group preference was before the war, or how it could change depending on an individual’s experience of the war.

The remaining studies discussed below have failed to differentiate between bonding and bridging social capital, and the reader will need to take this into account.

One of the first papers that proved this positive relationship between social capital and conflict was brought by Bellows and Miguel (2009), who find that individuals who directly experienced violence or conflict during the Sierra Leone civil war were more likely to participate in community and political groups, attend community meetings, vote in local elections and contribute to local public goods. The authors use a representative sample which includes self-reported victimization reports, information on the socio-economic situation of the household, as

well as data about individual political engagement. However, despite several tests, the authors cannot completely rule out the fact that individuals who are more likely to be politically active, i.e. individuals who are opinionated or even aggressive, were more likely to be victims of conflict. This would bias the coefficient upwards, making it seem as if there is large effect of direct conflict experience on political and communal participation in later years.

Using experimental games, Voors, et al., (2012) find that individuals who have been exposed to conflict are more altruistic towards their neighbours, risk seeking, and impatient. However, it is very difficult to isolate altruism from other social norms such as egalitarianism and fairness from the social value orientation experiment which offers participants certain allocations of money between them and an anonymous partner. In order to address the endogeneity of exposure to violence and altruism, Voors, et al., (2012) instrument exposure to violence with the community's distance from the capital and its elevation. Unfortunately this measure is a community level variable, and is not able to explain heterogeneous experiences of conflict within a community. This is problematic because within a community, certain individuals (such as selfish individuals) might have been targeted by violence. In addition, using this level of analysis brings forward another endogeneity issue: households might choose to migrate to escape violence. As it can be argued that these households are less connected to their community, the results could incorrectly show that these individuals, who have experienced less conflict, are also less altruistic.

Blattman and Annan (2010) show that former abducted child soldiers, compared to non-abducted children in Uganda, are significantly more likely to vote in later years, be a community organizer, and hold a political leadership position. The case of Uganda is unique in that recruitment is exogenous, child soldiers were recruited in a haphazard and unpredictable manner. Because the counterfactual to ex-combatants is non abducted children, the authors cannot provide an impact of the war, rather the added impact of being recruited during the war. This does not decrease the importance of this study, as it has provided us with useful lessons concerning the reintegration of child soldiers into society after a conflict.

Also arguing that experiences of war in Nepal are unpredictable and thus exogenous, Gilligany, Pasquale et al. (2011) find that participants in experimental games who have had greater exposure to violence and conflict during Nepal's war are more likely to exhibit higher levels of social capital, as measured through trust and public good games. The authors also delve deeper into the mechanisms behind this change in social capital, and find this difference to be explained by institutional adaptation and not a change in individual preferences and behaviour, as communities who have suffered conflict adopt more pro-social norms.

On the other hand, various articles have looked at how exposure to violence and traumatic events can change an individual preferences and behaviour, often with long-lasting effects. Individuals who have experienced a trauma or tragic event, such as health problems, divorce, or

financial losses, are less likely to trust others (Alesina & La Ferrara, 2002); football players who originate from a country of civil war receive a larger number of yellow and red cards than football players from peaceful countries (Miguel, Saiegh, & Satyanath, 2011); people living in areas that experienced damage and destruction by hurricane Mitch are more altruistic and cooperative in the “Dictator game” (Castillo & Carter, 2011); and children who have been exposed to war report lower levels of happiness and a constant fear of losing their home and family (Dyregrov, Gjestad, & Raundalen, 2002). Violence and conflict are likely to have profound effects on both individual and community levels of social capital; individuals experience conflict differently and thus their levels of social capital are likely to change, in addition social capital within a community affected by violence and conflict is likely to change.

The lessons learnt are:

We cannot incorporate all forms of social capital under one heading, rather we need to separate and narrow down our measurements to achieve meaningful results.

The variable that measures conflict or violence must be exogenous. It is very likely that individuals that exhibit high levels of social capital also become targets of violence. This is because they might be community leaders, they are more trusting and therefore led to dangerous situations, or they are well known so perpetrators of violence would like to make an example of them. At a more macro level, communities with high levels of bonding social capital are less likely to result in conflict, but if bridging social capital with another community is low this could lead to violence and conflict. All these are valid reasons to believe that there might be a relationship between social capital and conflict that heads in the other direction, i.e. social capital causes conflict, and researchers will need to address this issue carefully.

We need to differentiate between bonding and bridging social capital. An increase in bonding social capital can be dangerous, and combined with a decrease of bridging social capital it is a recipe for further escalation (or re-escalation) of violence (Varshney, 2001).

We need to differentiate between community levels of social capital, such as the existence of organizations, NGOs, community groups, public goods, and effective collective action; and the individual levels of social capital, such as trust, associational membership, and individual participation in social networks. It is important for us to understand the heterogeneity of the effects of violence on social capital within a given community, as we might find that it is the poor and vulnerable who are most affected.

This brings us to where further research is needed. Despite the acknowledged reverse causality between social capital and conflict, we have only seen research that shows how conflict might affect social capital. But we know little about the other relationship, are societies with high “bonding” social capital more likely to have conflict? Or do communities with low social capital resolve their differences through violence and conflict? And what of the perpetrators of violence

during conflict, are they well connected figures that attend monthly community meetings? Are they least trustworthy of their neighbours? We have yet to quantitatively identify the role that social capital might play in causing violence. In addition to poverty, Humphreys and Weinstein (2007) have found that political alienation predicts participation in conflict, but does this also apply to social capital? Engvall (2011) finds that mistrust of the government accompanied by poverty leads to violence, but what of mistrust within a community?

Another area that is left under-researched is that of refugees and IDPs. The literature has not been able to broach one of the most fundamental consequences of forced displacement, and one that affects millions of refugees around the world and their choice of returning home: How does returning home affect social capital? Nevertheless, return policy is advocated under the assumption that returning home will re-establish lost social capital (UNHCR, 2010). Also, once displaced, does social capital amongst refugees or IDPs become stronger because of solidarity and the fact that they have been through such a traumatic experience together? Using case studies of communities of refugees resulting from the conflicts that accompanied the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Peter Loizos (2000) finds that these communities are able to create and develop social capital solely based on the common factor of being a refugee. However this relationship has not yet been studied in a quantitative and rigorous manner.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Since economists and social scientists have realized the importance of social capital, it is only natural that this concept has been introduced into the conflict literature. Conflict brings about a change to the social fabric of a community and individual behaviour, so it is important to address these changes as part of the peace-building process.

Unfortunately, the research on social capital is plagued by several different problems, and adding conflict and violence to the mix only exacerbates these problems. Future research will need to differentiate between the resources of social capital, its outputs and social capital itself; unpack the different forms and measurements of social capital; specify an exogenous variable that measures conflict and violence; distinguish between bonding and bridging social capital; and capture both individual and community levels of social capital.

With this in mind there is much scope for further research, particularly in areas on the drivers of conflict, as well as research concerning the reintegration of refugees and IDPs once they return home. As post-conflict aid and relief reaches countries and communities, the complex relationship between conflict experiences and social capital needs to be understood, as strengthening the social capital of a community (particularly bridging social capital) is necessary to avoid re-escalation of hostilities.

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