

The Legacies of Armed Conflict: Insights from Stayees and Returning Forced Migrants

Isabel Ruiz[†] Carlos Vargas-Silva[‡]

[†]Harris Manchester College
Blavatnik School of Government University of Oxford

[‡]Centre of Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS)
University of Oxford
& Peace Research Institute of Oslo (PRIO)

May 16, 2022

- Large literature exploring the impacts of armed conflict and violence on aspects such as trust, reconciliation, and community engagement.
- Yet, literature has ignored the attitudinal differences between individuals from the same community of origin that were located in different geographical areas or countries during the conflict.
- Major gap as the end of conflict often involves the return of large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons to their communities of origin.

- Differences in views and attitudes between these individuals can have long-term implications for peace-building, nation-building, and economic performance.
- Arrow (1972):
 - *“Virtually every commercial transaction has within itself an element of trust.” — “Much of the economic backwardness in the world can be explained by the lack of mutual confidence.”* social capital,
- Fukuyama (2001):
 - Social capital - an element that *depends heavily on trust and cooperation, ‘is the sine qua non of stable liberal democracy’.*

In this paper...

- Document **differences** in indicators of trust, reconciliation, and community engagement between **those who stayed** in their communities of residence during the conflict (stayees) and **those who were displaced** internally and internationally and returned home over time (returnees).

In this paper...

- Document **differences** in indicators of trust, reconciliation, and community engagement between **those who stayed** in their communities of residence during the conflict (stayees) and **those who were displaced** internally and internationally and returned home over time (returnees).
- Explore the differential impact of **violence exposure** for each of the groups.

In this paper...

- Document **differences** in indicators of trust, reconciliation, and community engagement between **those who stayed** in their communities of residence during the conflict (stayees) and **those who were displaced** internally and internationally and returned home over time (returnees).
- Explore the differential impact of **violence exposure** for each of the groups.
- We use data that we collected in Burundi, a conflict affected country that has experienced large levels of displacement and return.

The legacies of conflict and exposure to violence across groups

- 1 Trust
- 2 Reconciliation
- 3 Community engagement

1. Trust

- Personal experiences have a major impact on individuals' inclination to trust others (Schwerter & Zimmermann, 2020).
 - Includes living traumatic events, which is associated with lower levels trust (Alesina & La Ferrara, 2002).

1. Trust

- Personal experiences have a major impact on individuals' inclination to trust others (Schwerter & Zimmermann, 2020).
 - Includes living traumatic events, which is associated with lower levels trust (Alesina & La Ferrara, 2002).
- Statees have to protect limited community resources during the war, and might form different notions of trust as a result (Ruiz & Vargas-Silva, 2022).

1. Trust

- Personal experiences have a major impact on individuals' inclination to trust others (Schwerter & Zimmermann, 2020).
 - Includes living traumatic events, which is associated with lower levels trust (Alesina & La Ferrara, 2002).
- Stayees have to protect limited community resources during the war, and might form different notions of trust as a result (Ruiz & Vargas-Silva, 2022).
- Returnees had to escape conflict, adapt to life elsewhere, sometimes even growing up there, and return home, some forced to return (Black & Koser, 1999).
 - Those displaced internationally interact with the residents of the host country and could develop different attitudes and notions of trust (Nickerson et al., 2019).
 - Those displaced internally also interact with different communities but within their own countries and often have worse material conditions (IDMC, 2021b; Verwimp & Muñoz-Mora, 2018).

2. Reconciliation

- Some studies show that experiencing violence leads to calls for further violence (Hayes & McAllister, 2001).
 - Those more exposed to conflict have greater levels of distrust, security concerns, and resentment.

2. Reconciliation

- Some studies show that experiencing violence leads to calls for further violence (Hayes & McAllister, 2001).
 - Those more exposed to conflict have greater levels of distrust, security concerns, and resentment.
- Another set of studies posits that greater exposure to violence leads to greater support for peace (Hazlett, 2020).
 - Greater experience of violence are more aware of its actual costs and more likely to favour options to avoid it.

2. Reconciliation

- Some studies show that experiencing violence leads to calls for further violence (Hayes & McAllister, 2001).
 - Those more exposed to conflict have greater levels of distrust, security concerns, and resentment.
- Another set of studies posits that greater exposure to violence leads to greater support for peace (Hazlett, 2020).
 - Greater experience of violence are more aware of its actual costs and more likely to favour options to avoid it.
- Role of displacement and return?

3. Community engagement

- Exposure to violence often leads to more prosocial behaviour, including community engagement (Bauer et al., 2016).
 - Yet, the increase in prosocial behaviour tends to be towards one's own identity group.

3. Community engagement

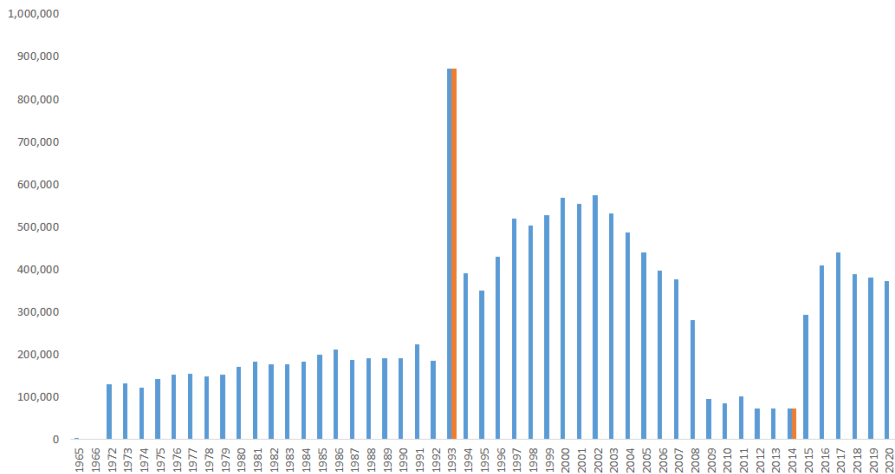
- Exposure to violence often leads to more prosocial behaviour, including community engagement (Bauer et al., 2016).
 - Yet, the increase in prosocial behaviour tends to be towards one's own identity group.
- Evidence that stayees and returnees may see each other as out-group members (Ruiz & Vargas-Silva, 2022).
 - This could potentially be expanded to internal and international returnees seeing each other as out-group members.

- Three important characteristics:
 - Experienced substantial internal as well as international displacement and return (can compare these two groups with stayees).
 - The volume of repatriation was substantial relative to the size of the country's population.
 - A large portion of those displaced spent a substantial amount of time away from their home communities. This time away may have been conducive to the development of differences in trust, reconciliation and community engagement.

Case Study: Burundi

- Three important characteristics:
 - Experienced substantial internal as well as international displacement and return (can compare these two groups with stayees).
 - The volume of repatriation was substantial relative to the size of the country's population.
 - A large portion of those displaced spent a substantial amount of time away from their home communities. This time away may have been conducive to the development of differences in trust, reconciliation and community engagement.
- There are other countries which also have these three characteristics and for which the results are relevant (e.g. Afghanistan, Somalia, South Sudan).

Number of Burundians refugees worldwide



- Collected during January to March 2015
- 15 household were interviewed in 100 communities (i.e. *sous-collines*) across the 17 provinces of the country.
 - The person providing the information on trust, reconciliation and community involvement was the household head.
- A local leader was interviewed in each community.
- The number of communities selected in each province was based on information from the 2008 Census.

Location of communities surveyed in Burundi



Questions on trust

Please indicate the extent to which you trust the following people, groups, and institutions.

- Community leaders
- Ex-combatants
- Other ethnic groups
- Others in the community
- Returnees

1 to 5, assume 4 and 5 indicate high levels of trust.

Questions on reconciliation

- *I feel justice has been done to those who committed crimes during the war.*
- *I feel reconciled with the atrocities that I experienced during the war in Burundi.*
- *I feel the reoccurrence of conflict in Burundi is a real danger.*

1 to 5, re-order so higher values indicate more reconciliation, assume 4 and 5 indicate high levels of reconciliation.

Questions on community engagement

- Community engagement is a variable indicating that at least one household member is an active member of the group/organization.
- An active member attends meetings regularly and is aware of decisions made within the organization.
 - Fishermen organisation
 - Trade association
 - Credit/savings association
 - Funeral association
 - Religious group
 - Political party/group

Summary Statistics

Variable	Stayees	Internal returnees	International returnees
	Trust		
Others in the community	0.8859	0.8893	0.8889
Community leaders	0.8078	0.7878	0.7881
Other religion	0.9339	0.9016	0.9211
Other ethnic group	0.9198	0.9184	0.9145
Ex-combatants	0.7633	0.7635	0.7584
Internal returnees	0.8982	0.8735	0.9145
International returnees	0.8804	0.8678	0.9145
	Violence and reconciliation		
Reconciled with war atrocities	0.7867	0.7236	0.7320
Justice has been done	0.3854	0.3277	0.3630
Unlikely reoccurrence of conflict	0.1328	0.1144	0.1689
	Organisation membership		
Fishermen organisation	0.0480	0.0204	0.0327
Trade association	0.0391	0.0286	0.0131
Credit/savings association	0.2117	0.1878	0.1961
Funeral association	0.0907	0.0490	0.1242
Religious group	0.2384	0.1878	0.2418
Political party/group	0.3559	0.3306	0.3137

$$Y_{ij} = \delta_j + \beta_1 I_i + \beta_2 R_i + \beta_3 L_i + \beta_4 K_i + \phi H_i + \epsilon_i,$$

$$Y_{ij} = \delta_j + \beta_1 I_i + \beta_2 R_i + \beta_3 L_i + \beta_4 K_i + \beta_5 (I_i * L_i) + \beta_6 (I_i * K_i) \\ + \beta_7 (R_i * L_i) + \beta_8 (R_i * K_i) + \phi H_i + \epsilon_i,$$

Means of control variables

Variable	Stayees	Internal returnees	International returnees
Demographic			
Age	47.5053	47.8939	48.1111
Primary education	0.2954	0.2735	0.2484
Married	0.8310	0.8122	0.8235
Female	0.1548	0.1878	0.1569
Household size	5.6228	5.8531	5.8693
Child to adult ratio	0.8692	0.8987	0.9149
Experiences during the conflict			
Land disputes	0.3879	0.3265	0.2876
Killed/disabled	0.1708	0.3020	0.2941

Results 1: Differences between Stayees, IDPs and Returnees in Trust Levels

Dependent variable	Others in the community (1)	Community leaders (2)	Other religion (3)	Other ethnic group (4)	Ex-combatants (5)	Internal returnees (6)	International returnees (7)
Panel A: Without interactions							
Internal returnees	-0.0441 (0.0280)	-0.1068*** (0.0355)	-0.0599** (0.0256)	-0.0523** (0.0247)	-0.0506 (0.0377)	-0.0401 (0.0285)	-0.0503* (0.0284)
International returnees	0.0280 (0.0327)	-0.0577 (0.0423)	-0.0217 (0.0253)	-0.0217 (0.0304)	0.0020 (0.0461)	-0.0113 (0.0315)	-0.0049 (0.0310)
Panel B: With interactions							
Internal returnees	-0.0687** (0.0297)	-0.1035*** (0.0384)	-0.0594** (0.0283)	-0.0543** (0.0273)	-0.0474 (0.0399)	-0.0317 (0.0320)	-0.0526* (0.0320)
International returnees	-0.0121 (0.0378)	-0.0698 (0.0486)	-0.0528* (0.0311)	-0.0238 (0.0355)	-0.0230 (0.0507)	-0.0082 (0.0362)	-0.0149 (0.0360)
Internal returnees x Land disputes	0.0632 (0.0594)	0.0048 (0.0827)	-0.0197 (0.0638)	0.0442 (0.0498)	-0.1234 (0.0959)	-0.0735 (0.0716)	0.0019 (0.0675)
Internal returnees x Killed/disabled	0.1358** (0.0654)	-0.0289 (0.1060)	0.0380 (0.0668)	-0.0795 (0.0724)	0.1820* (0.1014)	0.0497 (0.0649)	0.0038 (0.0698)
International returnees x Land disputes	-0.0111 (0.0725)	-0.0235 (0.0921)	0.0925 (0.0602)	0.0288 (0.0594)	0.2347** (0.1050)	0.0370 (0.0743)	0.0934 (0.0689)
International returnees x Killed/disabled	-0.0106 (0.0696)	0.0900 (0.0930)	0.0842* (0.0460)	-0.0426 (0.0635)	-0.0734 (0.1165)	-0.0373 (0.0553)	-0.0486 (0.0524)
Land disputes	0.0202 (0.0124)	-0.0256* (0.0151)	-0.0159* (0.0093)	-0.0069 (0.0062)	-0.0415* (0.0227)	-0.0114 (0.0115)	-0.0229* (0.0139)
Killed/disabled	-0.0174 (0.0190)	-0.0261 (0.0194)	-0.0211 (0.0193)	0.0071 (0.0063)	-0.0126 (0.0196)	0.0176 (0.0091)	0.0236*** (0.0088)
Observations	932	932	930	932	909	931	920

Results 2: Differences between Stayees, IDPs and Returnees in Violence and Reconciliation

Dependent variable	Reconciled with war atrocities (1)	Justice has been done (2)	Unlikely reoccurrence of conflict (3)
Panel A: Without interactions			
Internal returnees	-0.0639* (0.0387)	-0.0980** (0.0433)	-0.0256 (0.0285)
International returnees	-0.0236 (0.0465)	0.0104 (0.0529)	0.0593 (0.0385)
Panel B: With interactions			
Internal returnees	-0.0469 (0.0416)	-0.1261*** (0.0473)	-0.0165 (0.0288)
International returnees	0.0161 (0.0528)	0.0345 (0.0600)	0.0455 (0.0440)
Internal returnees x Land disputes	0.0468 (0.0829)	0.1130 (0.0956)	0.0185 (0.0739)
Internal returnees x Killed/disabled	-0.2725*** (0.1064)	0.0864 (0.1318)	-0.1768** (0.0870)
International returnees x Land disputes	-0.1975* (0.1083)	-0.1073 (0.1085)	0.1031 (0.1040)
International returnees x Killed/disabled	-0.0555 (0.1151)	-0.0230 (0.1117)	-0.0567 (0.0849)
Land disputes	0.0204 (0.0140)	-0.0288 (0.0229)	0.0003 (0.0160)
Killed/disabled	-0.0157 (0.0187)	-0.0413 (0.0253)	0.0241 (0.0171)
Observations	930	875	902

Results 3: Differences between Stayees, IDPs and Returnees in Organisation Membership

Dependent variable	Fishermen organisation (1)	Trade association (2)	Credit/savings association (3)	Funeral association (4)	Religious group (5)	Political party/group (6)
Panel A: Without interactions						
Internal returnees	-0.0480*** (0.0155)	-0.0152 (0.0135)	-0.0052 (0.0333)	-0.0611*** (0.0230)	-0.0538 (0.0367)	-0.0244 (0.0415)
International returnees	0.0020 (0.0188)	-0.0365* (0.0208)	0.0405 (0.0404)	0.0194 (0.0319)	-0.0002 (0.0455)	-0.0812 (0.0504)
Panel B: With interactions						
Internal returnees	-0.0506*** (0.0169)	-0.0099 (0.0161)	0.0113 (0.0361)	-0.0408 (0.0253)	-0.0486 (0.0394)	-0.0407 (0.0447)
International returnees	-0.0001 (0.0207)	-0.0309 (0.0244)	0.0826* (0.0451)	0.0380 (0.0385)	0.0125 (0.0499)	-0.0658 (0.0578)
Internal returnees x Land disputes	0.0146 (0.0330)	0.0050 (0.0279)	-0.1446* (0.0740)	-0.0931** (0.0406)	-0.0209 (0.0816)	0.0675 (0.1037)
Internal returnees x Killed/disabled	-0.0016 (0.0322)	-0.0717* (0.0408)	0.1045 (0.0980)	-0.0313 (0.0502)	-0.0573 (0.1068)	0.0509 (0.1222)
International returnees x Land disputes	-0.0004 (0.0443)	-0.0151 (0.0192)	-0.0741 (0.0748)	-0.0500 (0.0575)	0.1023 (0.1068)	-0.1023 (0.1055)
International returnees x Killed/disabled	0.0097 (0.0522)	-0.0269 (0.0300)	-0.1148 (0.0884)	-0.0366 (0.0571)	-0.1947** (0.0977)	0.0210 (0.1126)
Land disputes	0.0078 (0.0068)	-0.0034 (0.0052)	0.0133 (0.0157)	0.0071 (0.0124)	0.0088 (0.0166)	0.0116 (0.0184)
Killed/disabled	-0.0506 (0.0169)	0.0260 (0.0151)	0.0093 (0.0196)	-0.0155* (0.0088)	0.0346 (0.0228)	0.0196 (0.0234)
Observations	934	934	934	934	934	934

- Control for pre-war conditions.

Variable	Stayees	Internal returnees	International returnees
Pre-war land (hectares)	1.6893	1.6657	1.5261
Pre-war education (years)	2.0727	2.6773	2.0619

Robustness: Differences between Stayees, IDPs and Returnees with Pre-war Controls Included

Dependent variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Panel A: Differences in Trust Levels							
	Others in the community	Community leaders	Other religion	Other ethnic group	Ex-combatants	Internal returnees	International returnees
Internal returnees	-0.0312 (0.0349)	-0.0819* (0.0449)	-0.0665** (0.0292)	-0.0393 (0.0292)	-0.0326 (0.0447)	-0.0121 (0.0339)	-0.0183 (0.0342)
International returnees	0.0077 (0.0359)	-0.0439 (0.0518)	-0.0237 (0.0262)	-0.0167 (0.0328)	-0.0361 (0.0548)	0.0248 (0.0339)	0.0050 (0.0325)
Observations	682	683	683	683	664	683	677
Panel B: Differences in Violence and Reconciliation							
	Reconciled with war atrocities	Justice has been done	Unlikely reoccurrence of conflict				
Internal returnees	-0.0823* (0.0486)	-0.0828 (0.0521)	-0.0370 (0.0352)				
International returnees	-0.0422 (0.0557)	-0.0126 (0.0615)	0.0921** (0.0445)				
Observations	682	647	662				
Panel C: Differences in Organisation Membership							
	Fishermen organisation	Trade association	Credit/savings association	Funeral association	Religious group	Political party/group	
Internal returnees	-0.0731*** (0.0224)	-0.0215 (0.0183)	-0.0078 (0.0423)	-0.0822*** (0.0294)	-0.0551 (0.0447)	-0.0460 (0.0507)	
International returnees	0.0041 (0.0214)	-0.0193 (0.0251)	0.0714 (0.0487)	0.0266 (0.0406)	-0.0273 (0.0557)	-0.0658 (0.0572)	
Observations	684	684	684	684	684	684	

- Internal returnees have significantly lower levels of trust, reconciliation, and community engagement than stayees, whereas the differences between international returnees and stayees is mostly insignificant.
- Greater exposure to violence has a more positive effect on trust for returnees compared to stayees (but a negative effect on community engagement).

Relation with Burundi's new wave of displacement

- There was a new wave of displacement from Burundi after the end of data collection.
- This wave of displacement is the result of political tensions that resulted from the 2015 election.
- It is estimated that over 250,000 Burundians have fled to neighbouring countries (UNHCR, 2021).

Potential differences that would make it interesting to revisit the case study.

- UNHCR monitoring suggest 9% of refugees returning to rural communities were not found at their respective return areas in 2019 and could have moved onward, similar to our dataset, onward movement is not common.
 - However, in 2020 there was a substantial increase in the percentage of returnees not found (33%).

Potential differences that would make it interesting to revisit the case study.

- UNHCR monitoring suggest 9% of refugees returning to rural communities were not found at their respective return areas in 2019 and could have moved onward, similar to our dataset, onward movement is not common.
 - However, in 2020 there was a substantial increase in the percentage of returnees not found (33%).
- Another difference between the pre- and post-2015 refugee outflow is that while Tanzania remains the main host of Burundian refugees, countries such as Rwanda, the DRC and Uganda are playing a greater role as host countries.

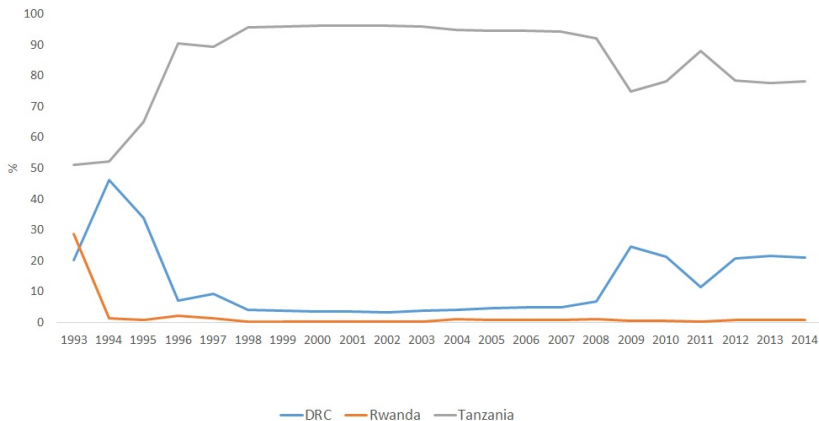
Potential differences that would make it interesting to revisit the case study.

- UNHCR monitoring suggest 9% of refugees returning to rural communities were not found at their respective return areas in 2019 and could have moved onward, similar to our dataset, onward movement is not common.
 - However, in 2020 there was a substantial increase in the percentage of returnees not found (33%).
- Another difference between the pre- and post-2015 refugee outflow is that while Tanzania remains the main host of Burundian refugees, countries such as Rwanda, the DRC and Uganda are playing a greater role as host countries.
- Finally, the current data suggests that internal displacement levels are at much lower levels than during the period we studied (IDMC, 2021).

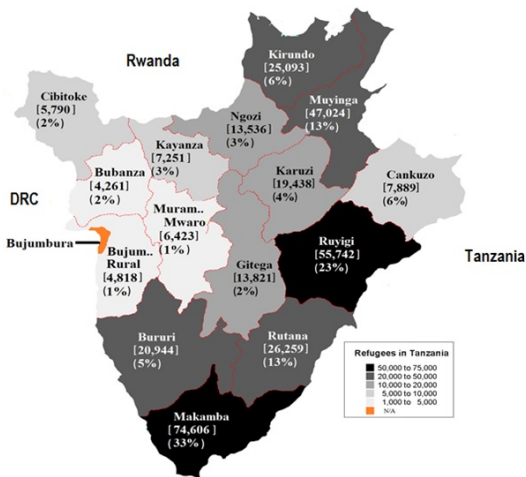
Thank you!

- carlos.vargas-silva@ox.ac.uk
- isabel.ruiz@bsg.ox.ac.uk

Main locations of Burundian refugees (% in each country)



Refugees in Tanzania in 2005 by province of origin in Burundi



- **Hypotheses 1:** Stayees will report higher indicators of trust, reconciliation and community engagement than returnees.
- **Hypotheses 2:** The gap in indicators of trust, reconciliation and community engagement between stayees and internal returnees, will be smaller than the gap in these indicators between stayees and international returnees.