

The Fragile Road Towards Peace and Democracy

Insights on the Effectiveness of International Support to Post-Conflict Burundi

Karina Mroß

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Bonn 2015

Discussion Paper / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik
ISSN 1860-0441

Die deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is available at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

ISBN 978-3-88985-666-1

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Foreword

This Discussion Paper has been written as part of the DIE research project “Transformation and development in fragile states”, which was supported by funding from the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. The project is based on a typology of fragile statehood developed at DIE, which guided the selection of eight case studies. It differentiates between countries on the basis of deficits in three dimensions of statehood: authority, legitimacy, capacity. The following cases were selected for analysis, namely countries which have substantial deficits in one of the dimensions: Senegal and Timor-Leste (capacity), Kyrgyzstan and Kenya (legitimacy), El Salvador and the Philippines (authority), as well as Burundi and Nepal, which face substantial deficits in all three dimensions of statehood. This paper presents the Burundi case study; all other case studies are accessible on the DIE homepage or will soon be available. A publication of the overall findings is under preparation.

Completing this research would not have been possible without the generous willingness of the interview partners and participants of the online survey to share their insights, the helpful comments on drafts of this study by Mark Furness and Imme Scholz and the thought-provoking discussions with and continuous support of the other project members, Charlotte Fiedler, Jörn Grävingholt and Julia Leininger.

Bonn, May 2015

Karina Mroß

Contents

Abbreviations

Executive summary	1
1 Introduction	3
2 Research design – theory and method	5
2.1 Effectiveness of external support for peace and democracy: three hypotheses	5
2.1.1 Dealing with trade-offs: supporting peace or democracy	6
2.1.2 Cooperative versus coercive forms of support	8
2.1.3 The role of donor coordination	10
2.2 Methodological approach	12
2.3 Case selection	15
3 Case analysis – peace and democracy in Burundi	16
3.1 Adoption of a new constitution (2005)	19
3.1.1 Domestic process and donor engagement	21
3.1.2 Explanatory factors	26
3.2 Dissolution of the CNDD-FDD armed forces (2004-2008)	27
3.2.1 Domestic process and donor engagement	28
3.2.2 Explanatory factors	38
3.3 Elections 2010	40
3.3.1 Domestic process and donor engagement	41
3.3.2 Explanatory factors	51
4 Appraising the hypotheses: explaining the effectiveness of external support	54
4.1 Prioritising stability hampers democratisation	54
4.2 Coercive versus cooperative forms of support	57
4.3 The positive impact of donor coordination	60
5 Conclusion and recommendations	61
Bibliography	63
Annex	71

Figures

Figure 1:	The research design	14
Figure 2:	Key political events in Burundi since 2000	18

Tables

Table 1:	Burundi's new constitution	25
Table 2:	DDR process of largest rebel group	37
Table 3:	Elections 2010	50

Annex

Table 1:	List of Interviewees	73
Table 2:	Survey on critical junctures	74

Abbreviations

ADC-Ikibiri	Alliance des Démocrates pour la Changement au Burundi/Democratic Alliance for Change
AfDB	African Development Bank
AMIB	African Union Mission in Burundi
APPM	Armed Political Parties and Movements
AU	African Union
AWEPA	Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa
BINUB	Bureau Intégré des Nations Unies au Burundi/United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Germany)
BNUB	Bureau des Nations Unies au Burundi/United Nations Office in Burundi
CENI	Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante/Independent National Election Commission
CNDD-FDD	National Council for the Defense of Democracy - Forces for the Defense of Democracy
COSOME	Coalition de la Société Civile pour le Monitoring Electoral
CSA	Comité de Suivi de l'Application de l'Accord d'Arusha
DDR	Demobilisation, disarmament, and reintegration
DIE	Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik/German Development Institute
EU	European Union
FAB	Forces armées burundaises/Armed Forces of Burundi
GDP	Gross domestic product
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit/German Technical Cooperation
HDI	Human Development Index
ICG	International Crisis Group
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IFI	International financial institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Networks
MDRP	Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program
NCDRR	National Commission for Demobilisation, Reinserion and Reintegration
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ONUB	United Nations Operation in Burundi
Palipehutu-FNL	National Forces of Liberation of the Hutu people
FNL	National Forces of Liberation
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPRONA	Unity for National Progress
USD	US dollars
WB	World Bank

Executive summary

How can international engagement support fragile states on their path towards peace and democracy? In light of perpetuating and recurring armed conflict all over the world, this question is of utmost importance to many policymakers. In order to better understand factors influencing the effectiveness of this support, this present paper analyses international support for peace and democratisation in the so far relatively successful case of Burundi.

Burundi suffered one decade of devastating civil war before major warfare ceased in 2003. The key peace agreement, though, had already been signed in 2000. The Arusha Agreement initiated a transitional period and provided the guiding framework for the ensuing peace and democratisation process. A seriously weakened Burundi state faced the double challenge of overcoming not only its violent past but also the legacy of socio-political exclusion and ethnic antagonism. The international community strongly engaged in supporting the process. Since 2000, Burundi has made remarkable achievements towards peace and democracy – such as *drafting and adopting a new constitution in 2005* and *dissolving its rebel armies* through integration and demobilisation. Recently, however, progress has stalled. The opposition's boycott overshadowed the *2010 elections*, further narrowing the already limited political space.

Each of these three processes was shaped by political power struggles and had a decisive impact on Burundi's future development – each thus constituting a 'critical juncture' in its political process. The analysis focuses on these critical junctures in order to establish what impact they had and to infer causality of donors' support. International engagement claiming to have made a crucial contribution to the overall process should be visible in these critical junctures, while significant contributions to such a critical juncture will by definition also have an impact on the larger peace and democratisation processes.

International support has been considerable throughout the entire process. At each of the critical junctures, external engagement at the political level was crucial in supporting peace and democracy, for example through mediation and facilitation of agreements or political pressure to accept these. Due to Burundi's high aid dependency and low economic development, financial and technical support played a key role. Nonetheless, at times, international efforts were not effective or remained below their potential.

Even before the last rebel group stopped fighting, Burundi successfully adopted a new constitution by referendum in 2005. The situation was stabilised sufficiently thanks to several peace agreements concluded previously, peaceful handovers of power by the transitional presidents and substantial diplomatic and military engagement by the international community. The constitution is strongly based on ethnic power-sharing arrangements already outlined in the Arusha Agreement. Both sides struggled to redefine these provisions in their favour. International diplomatic engagement was crucial in overcoming the ensuing political deadlock and convincing all sides to accept these terms.

Dissolving the armed forces of the largest rebel group (the National Council for the Defense of Democracy – Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD)) was a complex and highly political process. An important aspect was the integration of former combatants into

the national security institutions before the actual demobilisation and reintegration took place. The integration was primarily achieved by the domestic actors themselves, whereas international support played a significant role in aiding the relatively successful demobilisation. However, domestic and international actors failed to pay sufficient attention to reintegration, which may endanger the sustainability of the process.

The 2010 elections had a significant, but unfortunate impact on peace and democratisation in Burundi. Although the organisation of the elections went relatively smoothly and observers judged them to be free and fair, most former opposition parties boycotted the national elections after a devastating defeat in communal polls. Despite these developments, no major escalation of violence occurred. While technical and financial donor support was crucial to organising the elections, enormous diplomatic efforts failed to prevent the boycott.

In order to analyse which factors influenced the effectiveness of external support, the research was guided by academic literature, which suggests that 1) prioritising stability over democracy, 2) choosing cooperative over coercive forms of cooperation and 3) high levels of coordination increase the effectiveness of international support for peace and democracy. However, only the last presumption was confirmed: coordination of donor activities did indeed have a positive impact on its effectiveness. Yet, contrary to expectations from the literature, prioritising stabilisation has hampered democratisation and actually reduced the effectiveness of democracy support. Similarly, the Burundi case calls for qualifications regarding the second explanatory factor: depending on the circumstances, either cooperative or coercive measures rendered external support more effective.

Apart from contributing to academic debates, these insights can be translated into policy recommendations to aid efforts to support peace and democratisation processes in fragile states.

While calls for better coordination are hardly new, this research clearly showed that efforts to enhance coordination are worthwhile. A lack of coordination often distinctly limits the effectiveness of external support, while coordination increases the chances of positive impact and frequently helps to explain successful engagement.

Coercive measures can be equally legitimate and more effective in specific circumstances, having the potential to succeed in situations where cooperative engagement faces its limits. Often, a combination of coercive and cooperative measures promises best results.

Only in very few, specific situations is a prioritisation of stability over democracy warranted and useful. Mostly, such a prioritisation negatively impacts democratisation. While a positive impact on stability is often not apparent, in the long term such a prioritisation can even have destabilising effects.

1 Introduction

Internal violent conflict currently disrupts development and stability to an alarming scale around the world. In this context, the concept of state fragility and how to achieve (and support) sustainable peace has acquired new relevance and attention. In light of immense human tragedy combined with the threat of spreading instability, the international community is not only concerned with stopping open violence, but also with supporting these countries later on in their peace processes; or, possibly, with preventing an outbreak of large-scale violence altogether. Upon mention of fragile states, mostly worst-case scenarios such as South Sudan or Somalia spring to mind. However, there are also a number of positive cases, which – although yet far from fully consolidated – seem to have overcome their recent violent past and to have made substantial strides towards peace and democracy. Analysing such relatively positive cases can provide valuable insights into the conditions for successful external support to these processes.

Burundi constitutes an example of a country that (until recently) appeared to have successfully emerged out of ten years of civil war which had pitted the two main ethnic groups, Hutu and Tutsi, in armed struggle and claimed an estimated 300,000 lives. In the last decade, Burundi has achieved remarkable progress towards democracy and stability. The conclusion of the Arusha Agreement in 2000 (signed by 14 political parties and three factions of the rebel movement) constituted a major breakthrough, which was strongly aided by international mediation. Although the two main rebel groups did not sign the accord, it provided an important framework for the peace and democratisation process. At its core lie ethnic power-sharing arrangements that have helped to overcome the violent ethnic antagonism dominating the civil war. However, major warfare only ceased after the largest rebel group, CNDD-FDD (National Council for the Defense of Democracy – Forces for the Defense of Democracy), laid down its weapons in 2003 and joined the political process. In fact, this marked the end of the civil war in many ways, even though the last rebel group Palipehutu-FNL (National Forces of Liberation of the Hutu people) only stopped fighting in 2008. By now, all rebel groups have been demobilised or integrated into reformed security services.

Parallel to the peace process, Burundi rapidly engaged in a process of democratisation, also with significant achievements. The two transitional presidents peacefully ceded power when their respective terms ended, paving the way for the 2005 elections. A new constitution was adopted by referendum, enshrining the principle of power-sharing through ethnic quotas agreed upon in Arusha. The main rebel groups transformed into political parties and competed in democratic elections. The latest series of elections, conducted in 2010, have also been judged generally free and fair by national and international observers. However, when the main opposition parties suffered a devastating defeat in the communal elections that were conducted first, they complained of fraud and boycotted the later rounds of national and local elections. In this way, they handed the incumbent party a landslide victory. Since then, the government has increasingly drawn criticism for authoritarian tendencies and oppression vis-à-vis the extra-parliamentary opposition and civil society. Since 2014, alarming reports of armed youth wings of various political parties unsettle the country. In this light, the next round of general elections, planned for May to August 2015, had been anticipated with anxiety as well as hope. Controversy around a third mandate of the incumbent president provoked violent clashes and instability in the run-up to the polls, raising fear of a violent escalation.

External engagement has been considerable throughout the entire process. Diplomatic endeavours have been instrumental to ending the civil war and continued to play an important role later on. After the signature of the Arusha Agreement, donors resumed their development assistance, which had been stopped in reaction to the 1993 coup. Burundi is one of the most aid-dependent countries in the world, ranked number seven in 2011 (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2014). It receives over 50% of its budget through Official Development Assistance (ODA). The principal donors are the international financial institutions, the European Union (EU), Belgium and the United States (OECD, 2011). In addition, a key role has been played by the various UN (United Nations) missions deployed to secure and aid the peace process.

Aiming to gain deeper knowledge of the possibilities external support has in fragile contexts, this research analyses under which conditions external development assistance contributed to stabilisation and democratisation in Burundi. The present paper is part of a larger research project on factors influencing the effectiveness of international support in fragile states. It is based on a typology of fragile states developed by colleagues (Grävingholt, Ziaja, & Kreibaum, 2012), which guided the selection of a total of eight case studies. In 2000, Burundi represented the type of most-fragile states with substantial deficits in all three dimensions of statehood (legitimacy, authority, capacity). Nepal was another representative of this type after the decade-long civil war, analysed in a previous case study (Grävingholt et al., 2013); its findings will complement the conclusions. The research is guided by the academic literature on international support to peace and democracy, which provides potential explanations for the success or failure of international engagement to effectively impact on these processes. They presuppose that prioritising stability over democracy, choosing cooperative over coercive forms of cooperation, and high levels of coordination enhance the effectiveness of this support.

In order to assess the impact of donor engagement, the research focuses on selected ‘critical junctures’ in Burundi’s peace and democratisation process. These critical junctures are events or decisions that were decisive for the country’s future development. At a time when alternatives had been possible, they created path dependencies that are difficult to reverse.

The critical junctures analysed are:

1. Adoption of a new constitution in 2005
2. Dissolution of the CNDD-FDD armed forces (2004-2008)
3. Elections in 2010.

The paper continues as follows: Section 2 presents the theoretical and methodological background of this paper. It starts by introducing three explanatory factors for the effectiveness of external support that guided the research; that is, hypotheses on strategy, form, and organisation of support. Subsequently it clarifies the concept of critical junctures, explains the approach followed by this paper, and clarifies the case selection. Readers more interested in the empirical analysis are invited to continue directly with Section 3. This section introduces the country case of Burundi and analyses the three critical junctures listed above. To this purpose, first of all the internal dynamics are discussed, identifying strengths and weaknesses of each process and examining the role of key actors and institutions. In a second step, the analysis assesses the role of international

support and briefly discusses insights with regard to the explanatory factors in each juncture. Section 4 analyses the effectiveness of donor engagement in the peace and democratisation process in Burundi throughout all critical junctures, guided by the explanatory factors derived from academic literature. Finally, the paper draws a conclusion and formulates recommendations for international engagement in fragile states.

2 Research design – theory and method

This section presents the theoretical and methodological background of the paper.¹ The first sub-section briefly clarifies the understanding of the key concepts ‘peace’ and ‘democracy’, before deriving the hypotheses from the literature. The next sub-section briefly introduces historical institutionalism as an underlying framework and presents the concept of critical junctures, which is key to the research approach. A third sub-section positions the current paper within the framework of the larger research project, explaining case selection and focus.

2.1 Effectiveness of external support for peace and democracy: three hypotheses

Three hypotheses provide tentative expectations on how selected factors affect the impact of international support to stabilisation and democratisation. They have been derived from the extensive academic literature on external support to peace and democratisation processes as well as ongoing debates in policy circles. The hypotheses regard different dimensions of external support – strategy, organisation and forms of support – and provide potential explanations for the success or failure of international engagement to effectively impact on these processes.

It is important to clearly define the core concepts of peace and democracy as employed in this paper. Hence, this sub-section starts with a brief definition of each, before presenting the academic debates and derivation of each hypothesis.

The understanding of democracy is based on Robert Dahl’s minimal definition. According to him, democracy (or more precisely, polyarchy) is characterised by the key elements ‘participation’ and ‘contestation’, but also by civil rights and the rule of law (Dahl, 1971). ‘Democratisation’ refers to a change in regime quality on a scale from autocracy towards democracy. Democracy support, following Thomas Carothers, regards “*aid specifically designed to foster opening in a non-democratic country or to further a democratic transition in a country that has experienced a democratic opening*” (1999, p. 6).

The definition of peace basically follows Johan Galtung’s concept of negative peace, “*which is the absence of violence, absence of war*” (Galtung, 1964, p. 2). For the purpose of this paper, such a narrow, one-dimensional definition is more useful than broader concepts in order to isolate effects and differentiate between the two core concepts, peace

1 The research design, and thus content of Section 2, is the result of collaborative work with Charlotte Fiedler, Jörn Grävingholt and Julia Leininger.

and democracy.² This concept of peace is often referred to as ‘stability’ in political discourse, which is why both terms are applied interchangeably in this paper. Nonetheless, the analysis of donor support for stabilisation is not limited to the mere and direct containment of violence. A variety of different factors can contribute to stability. Therefore, donor engagement for stabilisation is understood as efforts to establish stability and/or consolidate it to prevent a renewed outbreak of violence.

The analysis aims to better understand the effectiveness of international engagement. International support is considered effective if it was able to make a crucial or substantial contribution to a critical juncture, which in turn (by definition) had a determining impact on the overall peace and democratisation process (see also sub-section 2.3).

2.1.1 Dealing with trade-offs: supporting peace or democracy

The first hypothesis deals with a common dilemma for donors in post-conflict societies: although they may wish to support democracy and peace at the same time, what is good for the latter may jeopardise the former, and vice versa. This dilemma figures prominently in academic debate on the relationship between democratisation and peace. The trade-offs identified pose particular challenges that external actors face in post-conflict contexts.

After the Cold War, democracy was perceived as a panacea to achieve peace and prosperity and was thus actively pursued and promoted worldwide. This trend of political liberalisation was accompanied with strategies of economic liberalisation. Within the next decade, however, the high hopes became increasingly frustrated by unsatisfactory results, and disillusion with democracy promotion increased. Rising criticism of liberal strategies was reinforced when the focus shifted towards security after 9/11, which led to the prioritisation of stability both in academic circles and among practitioners.

With their influential works, Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder (1995, 2002, 2005) called attention to the fact that democratisation might not only not be conducive to peace, but on the contrary even have destabilising effects. Their quantitative analysis shows that democratising states are more prone to resort to violence than regimes not undergoing regime change. As part of the debate on democratic peace, they primarily focused on inter-state war, but already highlighted destabilising effects on internal dynamics in their 2002 work. Among others, Håvard Hegre, Tanja Ellingsen, Scott Gates, & Nils Petter Gleditsch (2001) confirm their findings, demonstrating the relationship to be described by an inverted u-curve, with full democracies and full autocracies being most stable, while the transitional phase between both extremes was particularly vulnerable to civil conflict (see also Goldstone & Ulfelder, 2004). In a later study, Mansfield and Snyder specifically addressed the relationship between democratisation and civil war. They argue that the shifting power-relations inherent to democratisation processes can prompt violent conflict,

2 This understanding of peace corresponds with the World Bank definition of the absence of organised violence, as “*the use or threat of physical force by groups including state actions against other states or against civilians, civil wars, electoral violence between opposing sides, communal conflicts based on regional, ethnic, religious, or other group identities or competing economic interests, gang-based violence and organized crime, and international, nonstate, armed movements with ideological aims*” (World Bank, 2011, p. 39).

if adequate institutions are lacking. Therefore, introducing democracy too quickly in this context can have destabilising effects (Mansfield & Snyder, 2008).

Based on these findings, the question arises why external actors should bother at all to support democratisation, if such endeavours entail the danger of provoking instability. Various studies further tested the relationship and found that in the long term democratisation is the most reliable path towards stable domestic peace (Goldstone & Ulfelder, 2004; Hegre et al., 2001; Ward & Gleditsch, 1998). Jack Goldstone and Jay Ulfelder (in line with Hegre) conclude that “*liberal democracy is a powerful means of enhancing a country’s political stability*” and that “*the complex process of democracy building thus deserves further study and support*” (Goldstone & Ulfelder, 2004, p. 19).

Yet, how does one deal with the dilemma posed by these findings? Roland Paris recommends the strategy ‘institutionalisation before liberalisation’. In his qualitative analysis comparing post-conflict peacebuilding, he found that quick liberalisation efforts in the aftermath of civil war have produced destabilising effects, which hampered the consolidation of peace. Translating these empirical findings into practical policy recommendations, he argues that functioning state institutions are needed in order to settle political, social and economic conflicts in a non-violent manner. For this reason, external interventions in post-conflict situations should focus first and foremost on increasing the capacity and stability of the state. He highlights in particular competitive elections as periods prone to instability, and calls for them to be postponed until adequate institutional frameworks are in place – such as moderate political parties or electoral rules ensuring compliance with results and constraining extremism.

This emphasis on building strong and capable state institutions before introducing democracy gained particular support with the fight against global terrorism. Consequently, handling the challenge posed by fragile states through statebuilding became the focus of debate and politics and was advocated by numerous scholars (Chesterman, Ignatieff, & Thakur, 2004; Fearon & Laitin, 2004; Fukuyama, 2004; Ottaway, 2002; Ottaway & Mair, 2004; Paris, 2004).

The relationship and how to deal with it continues to be debated. Several authors criticise the quantitative studies relating democratisation to civil war (for example James Fearon and David Laitin or Hegre) on methodological accounts (most prominently the reliance on Polity IV due to the endogeneity resulting from their measurement of democracy, which contains political violence) and argue that the relationship does not hold once accounting for this (Narang & Nelson, 2009; Vreeland, 2008). A study by Hug Cederman et al., however, reconfirms the relationship as originally demonstrated, using a new measurement of regime change (Cederman, Hug, & Krebs, 2010). A prominent critic of the institutionalisation before liberalisation doctrine, Thomas Carothers, rejects the view that newly democratising states are particularly prone to internal violence. He claims that even if emerging democracies struggle with strengthening state institutions and the rule of law, they are better equipped to respond to these challenges than their autocratic counterparts. He calls for a gradualist approach to democratisation. Its core element – according to him “*the development of fair and open processes of political competition and choice*” – should be aimed at immediately, albeit in iterative and cumulative ways adapted to the specific context (Carothers, 2007, p. 25).

By now, awareness has increased for the existence of trade-offs or conflicting objectives between peacebuilding/statebuilding on the one hand and democracy support on the other hand, both in academic debate (see for example de Zeeuw & Kumar (Eds.), 2006; Leininger, Grimm, & Freyburg, 2012) as well as in policy circles. An OECD guidance brief, for example, calls for managing trade-offs and dilemmas more consciously. This may mean that, instead of pushing for elections, donors accept a political settlement where open electoral competition is curbed and power is shared (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee [OECD/DAC], 2010). Although the right timing and approach remain matters of debate, there seems to be consensus that donors should prioritise a stable institutional environment in order to reduce the risk of instability, which would endanger both democracy and peace (Burnell, Ed., 2007; Diamond, 2006). This strategy of prioritisation can be described as giving “*one goal precedence over another*” (Grimm & Leininger, 2012, p. 405). In sum, a predominant strand in academic and policy debates holds that providing a stable environment should be external actors’ prime concern:

Hypothesis 1: Effective support to democracy requires prioritising stability in fragile contexts.

2.1.2 Cooperative vs. coercive forms of support

Peace and democratisation processes usually require institutional change in response to changing political realities. These might be governance reforms or adjusting institutions to incorporate formerly warring parties into the existing political system. It is generally acknowledged that domestic ownership of such fundamental changes is crucial or even indispensable (see for example Burnell, 2007; Fortna & Howard, 2008; OECD/DAC, 2011; Schraeder, 2003). Accordingly, donor discourse emphasises that external support to peace and democracy should be more successful when matched by local ownership. At the same time, during such processes of change, power-relations inevitably shift. In consequence, former power-holders but also people aspiring to gain more power are not always in line with efforts to support peace and democracy. Depending on the degree of consensus between international convictions and recipients’ interests with regard to the next steps in the peace and/or democratisation process, external actors can choose to employ different forms of support. Focusing on the power-relations underlying the interaction, the differentiation of instruments is similar to the continuum Peter Burnell describes, ranging from coercive measures to those using ‘soft power’ (Burnell, 2008).

One way external actors can try to build strong, democratic institutions is through cooperative instruments. These are based on consent from both sides, usually manifested in an agreement in which aid recipients ask for assistance. Such measures aim at enabling and facilitating the process, usually in response to lacking capacities or to overcome other barriers to peace and democracy. Examples include financial and material support, enhancing technical capacities as well as empowerment but also electoral observation, mediation or providing third-party guarantees. Their advantage is that external engagement can build upon a certain level of local political will. And even in highly authoritarian settings where a political will for democratisation, for example, is lacking, social interaction and cooperation can be used to try to subtly change the attitudes of political actors through socialisation (Freyburg, 2010).

The aid effectiveness agenda strongly emphasises the importance of cooperative principles such as ownership, partnership and alignment for effective development cooperation. Combined with the recognised high relevance of domestic ownership for peace and democratisation processes, this strongly suggests that cooperative forms of support should be more conducive in this context. So far, no substantive evidence has been presented that specifically addresses the effectiveness of coercive versus cooperative forms of support in processes of democratisation and stabilisation (Burnell, 2008). Yet, some of the more cooperative measures for external actors to support peace and democracy have been shown to be effective.

Patrick Regan and Aysegul Aydin (2006), for example, compare different types of interventions into civil war and find that diplomatic interventions are significantly associated with shorter conflicts. Consent-based peacekeeping has proven effective to overcome the security dilemma – third-party guarantees even appear to be a necessary condition for successful peace agreements after civil wars (Fortna, 2003; Mattus & Savun, 2009; Walter, 1997; Walter, 2002). Moreover, both quantitative and qualitative analyses find a positive relationship between peacekeeping and the duration of peace after civil war (see for example Doyle & Sambanis, 2000, 2006; Fortna, 2003, 2004).

External actors also have coercive instruments at their disposal if (personal or group) interests thwart peace and democratisation. This mostly means trying to pressure or force unwilling governments (or other major political actors) to embrace reforms, but also to refrain from or undo steps that may endanger peace or democracy.³ In such cases, the political will for peace and democracy – at least at the elite level – is lacking. It is to be expected that such resistance makes external support more difficult, since it might imply imposing institutional change rather than supporting endogenously driven processes.⁴ Examples are sanctions and conditionalities, but also political pressure (Burnell, 2008). Evidence with regard to the effectiveness of such coercive instruments remains limited.

Sanctions are one coercive instrument in international politics which is often used, yet strongly debated. Academic literature has largely come to pessimistic conclusions regarding their effectiveness (Cortright & Lopez, 2002; Hovi, Huseby, & Sprinz, 2005; Hufbauer, Schott, & Elliott, 1985; Lacy & Niou, 2004; Page, 1998; Strandow, 2006; Drezner, 2003a, 2003b; Vines, 2012). Reasons to explain this lack of impact include the long preparation phase for installing effective sanctions, the lack of political will to fully enforce them, as well as unintended negative effects, such as humanitarian crises or greater internal cohesion as a result of external threats (Drezner, 2003a; Vines, 2012).

3 The most coercive way of external democracy support – external invasion or war – is an extreme case, which is not taken into account in this analysis, since the research project only looks at countries, which have specifically decided to engage in post-conflict democratisation.

4 In reality, coercive instruments and cooperative instruments cannot be neatly separated, but often overlap or are used jointly. For example, international mediation is not possible without the consent and participation of the two warring parties. However, threatening sanctions can be an important instrument to keep all parties at the negotiation table. This paper differentiates between the two depending on whether the instrument was initially based on consent, but fully acknowledges the possible interaction of the two forms of support.

Aid conditionalities are another controversial coercive instrument to support peace and democracy.⁵ These can, for instance, aim at supporting steps toward further democratisation, or intend to achieve compliance with peace agreements. However, beyond the very specific and successful case of EU accession (Grabbe, 2006; Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2005; Youngs, 2010), the effectiveness of conditionalities remains unclear. Donors in particular argue that decreasing aid dependence has rendered even positive conditionality ineffective. Instead, it produced hollow reforms only aimed at appeasing donors (Youngs, 2010). Interestingly, academic literature does not dismiss political conditionalities *per se* as ineffective, but rather emphasises the weak enforcement of conditionalities as one of the main reasons why they do not succeed (Boyce, 2002, 2003; Crawford, 1997; Emmanuel, 2010; Frerks & Klem, 2006; Goodhand & Sedra, 2007). Since mostly donors do not implement conditionalities consistently (failing to coordinate effectively, or due to other priorities on their agendas), it is difficult to trace the actual impact of political conditionality on peace and democracy.

Hard evidence appraising the effectiveness of the different forms of engagement for democracy and stability has been inconclusive so far (Burnell, 2007; Grävingholt & Leininger, 2014). However, overall, these different strands of literature suggest that cooperative forms of supporting peace and democracy should be preferred:

Hypothesis 2: Cooperative forms of support to democracy and stability are more conducive to the effectiveness of this support than coercive and conditioned forms of support.

2.1.3 The role of donor coordination

Donor coordination has been one of the main topics of debate among Western donors in recent years. This stems from the realisation that the excessive fragmentation of aid has regularly impaired aid effectiveness in individual countries (Easterly & Pfutze, 2008; Lawson, 2013). For this reason, donors agreed on overall principles to improve the consistency and coordination of aid, as set out in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and the Accra Agenda for Action (2008).

A first argument for coordination is a rather practical one – well-coordinated support should help to avoid duplications (Lawson, 2013). In many countries a plethora of bi- and multilateral donors, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and implementing agencies work on development issues. In 2002 in Vietnam alone, Arnab Acharya (2004) counted 25 bilateral donors, 19 multilateral donors and 350 INGOs implementing an overall total of 8,000 projects. In this context, donor coordination, implying a division of labour, can be essential to avoid duplication and hence make support for peace and democracy more *efficient*. This is even more so, since a multiplicity of uncoordinated donors working on similar issues can easily become problematic by overburdening the absorption capacity of a country.

5 Here, this paper follows the definition put forward by Frerks & Klem (2006, p. 5): “Conditionality is the promise or increase of aid in case of compliance by a recipient with conditions set by a donor, or its withdrawal or reduction in case of non-compliance”. This definition captures the ‘carrot and stick’ approach inherent to using both negative and positive conditionalities. Conceptually, negative conditionalities are essentially a type of sanction.

More importantly, donor coordination might help to raise the *effectiveness* of international support for peace and democracy. This argument is based on the assumption that coordination can enhance coherence. Donor coherence implies that all donor policies further the same overall goal or at the very least that their approaches do not conflict with or counterbalance each other. This point becomes particularly clear when looking at the effectiveness of conditionality: only when supported by all relevant donors can conditionality function properly because otherwise recipient governments can simply pit one donor against the other (Boyce, 2002; Crawford, 1997; Emmanuel, 2010; Faust, Leiderer, & Schmitt, 2012; Stokke, 1995).⁶

In practice, the extent of donor coordination varies widely. Elena Pietschmann (2014, pp. 8-9) differentiates between *coordination through communication*, *cross-sector division of labour* and the *pooling of resources*. What can be found in almost every country today is coordination through communication where donors regularly meet, with or without the local government, to exchange information and divide tasks amongst donors, both at the national and the sector level (Pietschmann, 2014). Cross-sector division of labour simply makes donors concentrate their work on specific sectors only, dividing tasks in such a way that all sectors are covered but duplications avoided. Pooling resources is usually associated with the highest degree of donor coordination. Jointly planned and managed multi-donor trust funds are one example which has become increasingly popular in fragile states. Apart from enhancing the effectiveness, they can provide a forum for continuous policy dialogue and joint decision-making processes, thus facilitating more coherent engagement (OECD/DAC, 2011, p. 82).

Whilst aid effectiveness and coordination have been major topics amongst donors, the impact of improved coordination on aid effectiveness has to date received little scholarly attention. Mostly, descriptive or theoretical work emphasises the transaction costs poor coordination creates for both sides (Bigsten & Tengstam, 2012; Easterly, 2007; Kanbur, 2006; Torsvik, 2005).⁷ First empirical analyses indicate negative effects of donor fragmentation. Thus for example Stephen Knack and Aminur Rahman (2008) show that donor fragmentation decreases the bureaucratic quality of the recipient country. However, it appears advisable to have a closer look at the phenomenon. Sebastian Ziaja (2013) finds that, whilst a higher number of donors providing general aid has a negative effect on democratisation, more donors providing democracy support positively influences democratisation. This is an interesting finding, given that one can expect coordination to be more difficult with more actors involved. However, since the study cannot say whether democracy support was well coordinated or not, it might merely highlight the fact that pluralism plays an important role for democracy promotion.

Many authors actually recommend better donor coordination as a means of raising the effectiveness of democracy support, although they do not provide empirical support for this argument (see Grimm & Leininger, 2012; de Zeeuw & Kumar (Eds.), 2006). The

6 An exception to this argument is the rare case in which one powerful donor has the necessary leverage to enforce conditionality by himself. In reality, however, this is rarely the case. What is more, frequently the most important donor in a country is actually the one standing in the way of efficient conditionalities, by refusing to join other donors who are trying to impose them (see Emmanuel, 2012).

7 One reason for this lack of research may stem from measurement issues or the fact that, despite donors' declared dedication to the matter, coordination has so far barely improved (Nunnenkamp, Öhler, & Thiele, 2011; Wood et al., 2011).

same argument recurs in the academic debate on successful peacebuilding, in which donor coordination is a common prescription among scholars and practitioners alike (see Paris, 2009). Surprisingly, a recent evaluation calls this line of reasoning into question by claiming that coordination slowed down the donors' capacity to react to changing circumstances and therefore restrained statebuilding activities (Bennett, Alexander, Saltmarshe, Phillipson, & Marsden, 2010).

Whilst the empirical literature has so far produced little evidence and contradictory findings with regard to the effects of donor coordination, avoiding duplications, policy incoherence and transaction costs are all good arguments why good coordination should make support to peace and democracy more effective. Although the impact of coordination on the effectiveness of support to peace and democracy remains understudied, in sum the literature discussed above and donor discourse expect a positive effect of coordination on the effectiveness of support to peace and democracy.

Hypothesis 3: Higher levels of coordination of support to democracy and stability are more conducive to the effectiveness of this support.

2.2 Methodological approach

Political change – such as any peace and democratisation process – is an inherently domestic process. It is decided upon and executed but also constrained by local actors and institutions. According to historical institutionalism, path dependency and self-reproducing institutional settings only allow for gradual change (Hall & Taylor, 1996). At the same time, institutions are considered “*legacies of concrete historical struggle*” (Mahoney & Thelen, 2009, p. 7). Thus, the interplay of institutions or structures and actors shapes such social phenomena. Historically evolved institutions might structure political action for democratisation and stabilisation, but do not determine the outcome of these processes, which are also significantly influenced by human agency (Hall & Taylor, 1996; Pierson, 2004; Sanders, 2008, p. 41; Scharpf, 2000; Steinmo, 2008, p. 151).

Institutional stability may be interrupted by a relatively brief period⁸ of contingency, during which the institutional setting is in flux (Capoccia & Kelemen, 2007; Mahoney, 2001). Such “*moments of relative structural indeterminism*” occur in particular during times of political upheaval (Mahoney, 2001, p. 7), such as a democratisation process or the end of war. According to James Mahoney, during these periods ‘critical junctures’ can significantly determine the future development of a country. He defines them as: “[C]hoice points that put countries (or other units) onto paths of development that track certain outcomes – as opposed to others – and that cannot be easily broken or reversed” (Mahoney, 2001, p. 7).

This definition highlights that a *critical juncture* (and thus its outcome) has a significant impact on the larger (political) process. In this way, critical junctures contribute to future path dependencies, generating institutional or structural patterns which cannot be easily

8 Relative, that is, with regard to the period of path dependency triggered by the critical junctures. While some scholars metaphorically (and misleadingly) refer to critical junctures as ‘moments’, the term is generally employed for periods which can actually take place over several years (Capoccia & Kelemen, 2007, p. 350).

altered afterwards (Mahoney, 2001, pp. 4-8; Wolff, 2013). Mahoney furthermore emphasises the importance of agency. During a ‘critical juncture’, institutional patterns do not confine actors’ choices to the same extent, but “*wilful actors shape outcomes in a more voluntaristic fashion than normal circumstances permit*” (Mahoney, 2001, p. 7).

The present paper uses critical junctures to conduct a *within-case comparison* of international support to peace and democratisation in Burundi.⁹ This approach helps to establish impact and infer causality of donor engagement and thus assess factors influencing the impact of international support. The underlying idea is that donors claiming to have impacted on the overall process must have contributed to such decisive events, which have a powerful impact on the political process. At the same time, the high relevance of a critical juncture allows one to draw causal inferences also in the other direction: if external engagement had a significant influence on one specific critical juncture, arguably it also impacted on the larger political process. The plausibility of this line of argument is not only based on a logical rationale but also on an empirical observation. The basic idea of critical junctures is to some extent also acknowledged and applied in the praxis of democracy support. Donors have recognised that targeted interventions geared towards ‘windows of opportunity’ emerging during a process of democratic transformation may have a deeper and more persistent impact (Schmitter & Brouwer, 1999).

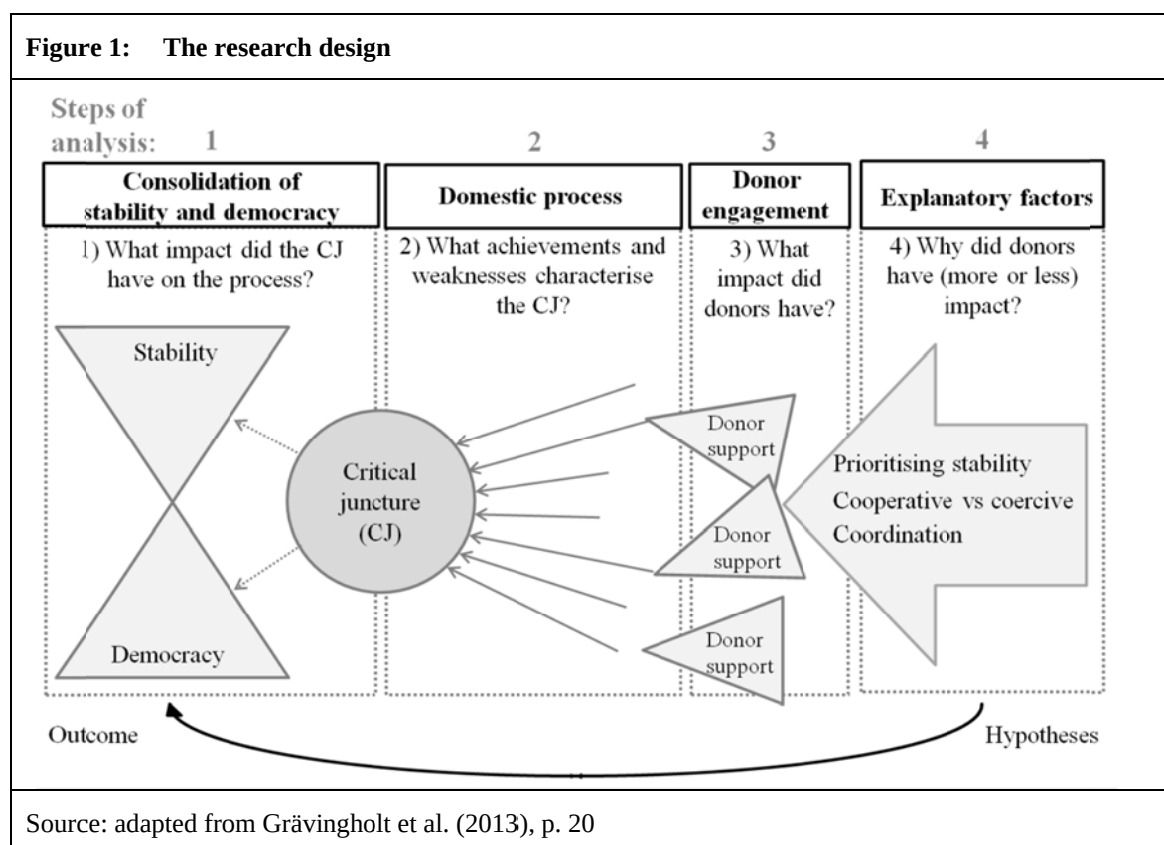
Critical junctures can be positive (e.g. free, fair and undisputed elections) or negative (e.g. failure of an important reform project), and accordingly impact positively or negatively on a general process (such as democratisation) but by definition *a different outcome had been plausible* at the time. This strong counterfactual logic inherent in the concept allows one to use critical junctures as an analytical tool serving to approximate impact and drawing causal inferences within a political process.

For analytical purposes, it is helpful to examine the critical junctures in depth and identify weaknesses and achievements which determined their development. These may be generated but also overcome by decisions and the action of key actors. This approach allows a detailed analysis of causal developments and influences within the process and mirrors the theoretical considerations by Giovanni Capoccia and Daniel Kelemen, emphasising the need to look in detail “*to identify the key decisions (and the key events influencing those decisions) steering the system in one or another direction, favouring one institutional equilibrium over others that could have been selected*” (2007, p. 369). Matching international activities with the main characteristic of the critical juncture makes it possible to construct a theoretical causal chain, from donor activities relating to or addressing the strength and weaknesses of the process, to the outcome of the critical juncture. The attribution of impact thus relies on constructing plausible theories of impact through: 1) plausible counterfactual reasoning and 2) alternative explanatory factors. Advancing the analysis to this level widens the vision to take influences (and international engagement) into account that are not intuitively or directly related to the political process. Thus, in cases where a constitutional court played a key role during an electoral process,

9 The paper constitutes part of a larger, comparative research project, featuring eight case studies – two representatives from each type of fragile states. This allows one to go beyond the within-case comparison of a single case to use paired comparison between the two cases within one type of fragility as well as cross-country comparison between the whole set of cases and all four fragility types to gain further insights with regard to the hypothesis and the relevance of the fragility type (paper forthcoming).

the analysis might yield that previous long-term rule-of-law projects were significant in strengthening the court and, consequently, had an important impact on the electoral process.

In each critical juncture, the analysis follows four steps, which are also visualised (from left to right) in Figure 1. The graphic, furthermore, depicts the logic of the hypotheses; that is how the explanatory factors from the hypothesis are expected to impact on the outcome this paper seeks to explain (consolidation of stability and democracy).



The first step of the analysis assesses the relevance and impact of the juncture on the overall peace and democratisation process. The second part analyses the evolution of the critical juncture, identifying the main processes, actors and decisions that led to the particular outcome. The aim is to highlight the strengths and weaknesses characterising the critical juncture: taken together, they explain why the juncture was able to positively or negatively impact the peace and democratisation process. The third component is an in-depth analysis of donor engagement for stability and democracy in the context of the critical juncture. The question now is whether donors contributed to the achievements and failures of the juncture, and if so, to which ones, and how. The fourth step in the analysis concerns the explanatory factors and how they help to explain the success or failure of the support that was provided.

Using *critical junctures* to measure external impact on political processes and close the attribution gap between donor activities and macro outcomes is a novelty and has not been undertaken before in any systematic way. It sets this research project aside from standard evaluations of donor engagement that often fall short of providing convincing evidence of

impact due to methodological shortcomings (Grävingholt et al., 2013; Grävingholt & Leininger, 2014; Grävingholt, Leininger, & von Haldenwang, 2012).

2.3 Case selection

Burundi has been selected for analysis as part of a comparative research project on international support to fragile states. The research project is based on the premise that specific contextual factors impact on the success of international support to stabilisation and democratisation. It therefore builds on a quantitative analysis that clusters countries according to the degree to which they satisfy the core dimensions of statehood: capacity, authority and legitimacy (Grävingholt et al., 2012). It suggests that empirically four groups of fragile states can be usefully distinguished: those with serious deficiencies in mainly one of three dimensions of statehood (i.e. authority, or control of violence; capacity to provide basic life chances; and legitimacy of the state); and those cases where deficiencies in all three dimensions co-occur. In total, the larger project (forthcoming) analyses a set of eight case studies covering those four types of state fragility¹⁰ applying the same approach, which helps to substantiate findings and assess the impact of the fragility context.

Further selection criteria for the case studies were:

1. A key event sometime in the past 10 years followed by a leap in the country's level of governance, i.e. stabilisation and/or democratisation.¹¹
2. A significant increase in external state-building/democracy support either shortly before or shortly after this key event.

Burundi represents the category of states with the highest degree of fragility, characterised by encompassing deficits in all three dimensions (at the starting point of the analysis in 2000, after the Arusha Agreement had been concluded).¹²

Determining the focus of the research, the selection of the critical junctures constituted an important step in the research process. In order to aid the selection of critical junctures in Burundi after 2000, a preliminary list of 13 critical junctures was first identified on the basis of extensive study of the literature. Subsequently, 20 selected experts (international and Burundian) were asked to verify and condense the selection in a small online survey.

10 Type A: substantial deficits in all three dimensions, Burundi and Nepal; Type B: low levels of state capacity, Senegal and Timor-Leste; Type C: low levels of legitimacy, Kyrgyzstan and Kenya; Type D: low levels of authority, El Salvador and the Philippines.

11 Selecting only cases experiencing a positive development in terms of progress towards peace and democracy since the key event might appear to introduce a selection bias. This is avoided by placing the level of analysis on a lower level, focusing on the critical junctures: these can be positive or negative. An overall fairly positive trend throughout the last decade, however, is necessary to have any chance of finding successful international engagement.

12 The second case selected from the type of most fragile states is Nepal, which was analysed in a previous paper (Grävingholt et al., 2013). The present paper does not aim at a fully fledged comparison, but will draw upon relevant aspects from the Nepali case in order to shed light on the particularities of international engagement in this specific type of fragility.

This served to gain a broad and diverse perspective on the events and their respective relevance to the peace and democratisation process.¹³

Based on this procedure, the following three critical junctures were selected¹⁴:

1. Adoption of a new constitution in 2005
2. Dissolution of CNDD-FDD armed forces through integration and demobilisation
3. Local and national elections in 2010.

Next to written sources, the findings are based on 45 semi-structured interviews conducted in Bujumbura with national and international stakeholders and analysts in May 2014.¹⁵ Interlocutors were Burundian representatives from government, administration and civil society (including think-tanks and media) as well as international representatives including bilateral donors, multilateral organisations and diplomatic actors. Since the domestic processes constitute the starting point of the empirical analysis, only those international actors and measures that played a significant role in the selected critical junctures are considered for further analysis.

3 Case analysis – peace and democracy in Burundi

The previous section explained that the research design and approach principally relies on the use of critical junctures. This section starts by briefly introducing Burundi's recent history and presenting some general information about donor engagement, which will help to put the subsequent in-depth discussion of the selected critical junctures into perspective.

Compared to other countries with a similar violent past, Burundi has appeared to have successfully stabilised after ten years of civil war. Since 2000, the political conflict has given way to a renewed attempt to institutionalise democracy. While tensions and political power struggles persist, the primary antagonism seems to have shifted away from ethnicity as the key determinant. However, democratisation and stabilisation also suffered serious setbacks. In recent years, repressive tendencies of the Burundian government (dominated by the former main rebel group) jeopardise democratic consolidation. Turmoil in the run-up to the 2015 elections (including a failed coup attempt) raises fears of a serious escalation and a return to violent conflict.

13 To be selected as a critical juncture for analysis, each event or process needed to 1) have had a significant impact on the peace and/or the democratisation process, 2) at a time when alternative developments had been possible and 3) should have received some external support, so that the research question can be addressed. Moreover, they needed to 4) have taken place after the Arusha Agreement in 2000, which constitutes the starting point of the analysis, and before 2012 so that it is possible to trace impact. In addition, the selection aimed at a relatively balanced sample distributed over the period of time and in relation to both peace and democracy.

14 See survey results in Annex 2.

15 As many interviewees agreed to be interviewed only on condition that they remained anonymous, the interviews are denoted solely by an ID number. Annex 1 provides generic information on each interviewee's background. Interview transcripts and information on the identity of interviewees are stored at DIE in accordance with the institute's policy on good academic practice.

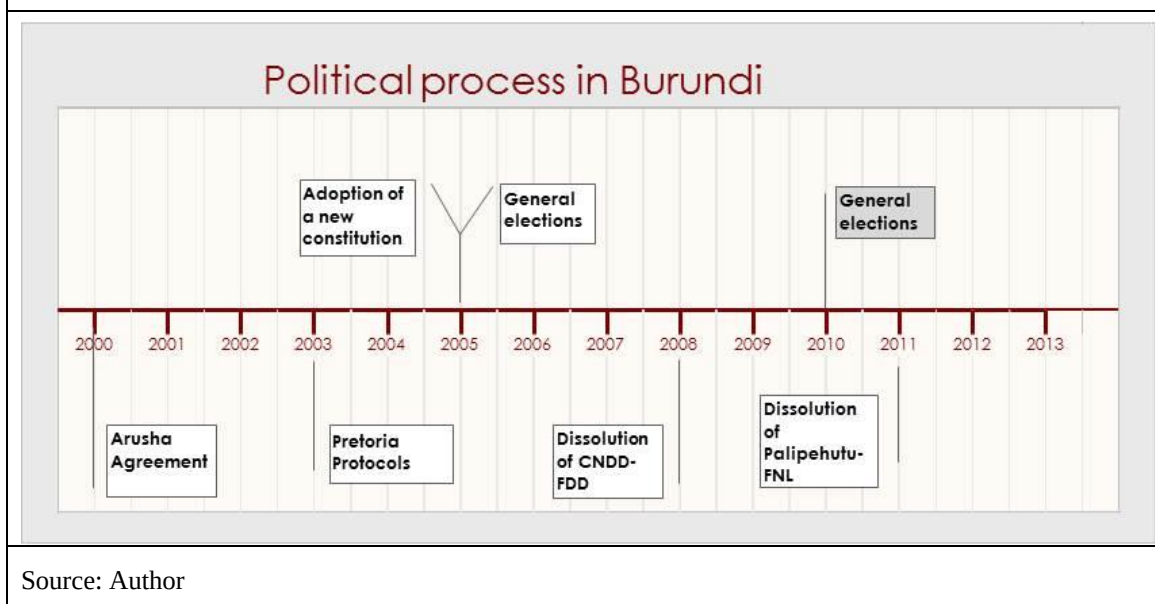
Political and economic inequalities and exclusion have been closely intertwined with ethnic¹⁶ affiliation already early in Burundi's history. While the majority of the population (85%) attribute themselves as 'Hutu', the 'Tutsi' minority had monopolised political power after decolonialisation. Therefore, it was a significant event when Melchior Ndadaye became the first Hutu president in the 1993 national elections. Shortly afterwards, however, he was killed by Tutsi extremists in an attempted military coup, which triggered the decade-long, devastating civil war that claimed an estimated 300,000 lives (from a total population of around 6.7 million in 2000 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2012), caused thousands to flee, and exacerbated ethnic cleavages between the two main ethnic groups.

A military stalemate paved the way for protracted negotiations with prominent international support, which achieved an acclaimed breakthrough with the Arusha Agreement in 2000. The accord centres on ethnic power-sharing, granting the Tutsi minority far-reaching guarantees. Key provisions determine that no ethnicity may be represented above 50% in the national army and ensure a minority representation of around 40% in the National Assembly¹⁷ (Arusha Agreement, 2000). However, it was not able to put an immediate end to hostilities. Instead, the peace process faltered due to the absence of two important rebel groups from the negotiations. CNDD-FDD, the largest rebel group, finally ceased hostilities agreeing on a ceasefire in 2003. In fact, this marked the end of the civil war, although the last rebel group Palipehutu-FNL only laid down its arms in 2008. Since 2003, Burundi seems to have stabilised with only minor incidents of violence. Critically to this success, the rebel groups have been demobilised or integrated into reformed security services and transformed into political parties.

Parallel to the peace process, Burundi rapidly engaged in the process of democratisation, with significant achievements. A new constitution was drafted and adopted by referendum in early 2005. It enshrined the principle of power-sharing through ethnic quotas which had been agreed upon in the Arusha Agreement. A few months later, a series of five elections was conducted relatively peacefully. They were judged generally free and fair and constituted a successful end of the transitional period. Several preconditions contributed to this achievement. Splitting the transitional period between two transitional presidents (Pierre Buyoya and Domitien Ndayizeye) guaranteed the balance of power between both ethnicities. Importantly, both peacefully ceded power when their term expired as agreed upon in Arusha. Another important fact was that CNDD-FDD had effectively transformed into a political party and participated in the elections. In fact, they won a clear majority to form the government. In 2010, the next series of elections took place, also judged generally free and fair by national and international observers. The main opposition parties, however, suffered a devastating defeat in the communal elections initiating the electoral period. They complained of serious fraud and boycotted the later rounds of parliamentary and presidential elections, handing the incumbent party a landslide victory. The following graphic summarises the main political events since the Arusha Agreement.

16 The distinction between Hutu and Tutsi as ethnic groups has often been called into question. However, since the political discourse and key legal documents – in particular the Arusha Agreement and the Constitution of 2005 – refer to ethnicity in this context, this terminology is also employed in this paper.

17 Moreover, the two Vice-presidents must belong to different ethnicities and political parties.

Figure 2: Key political events in Burundi since 2000

Since the 2010 elections, political developments increasingly jeopardise the positive achievements of democratisation and peace in Burundi. Opposition parties are weak and fragmented – with strong implication of the ruling party (Interview 4). Opposition, civil society and media face increasing restrictions, arrests and general crackdowns by the government. With regard to the peace process, ethnic tensions are resurfacing (Interviews 4, 5). Moreover, old alliances thought to have been overcome with the integration of the security forces re-emerge (Interview 6). Violent attacks of youth groups associated with political parties as well as extra-judicial killings cause agitation and concern, particularly in face of the next general elections due in May 2015 (Freedom House, 2015; UN Secretary-General, 2014). Mounting political tensions around the third mandate of the current president Pierre Nkurunziza already caused 100,000 to flee two weeks before the elections were to be held (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2015).

Starting out with serious deficits across all three dimensions of stateness, Burundi has made notable improvements. The state generally recovered its monopoly of violence by demobilising the numerous armed factions and integrating them into the security forces. Yet, deficiencies persist: the armament of party youth wings and extra-judicial killings endanger security. State capacity to provide basic life services has also improved slightly, but remains weak. State legitimacy is higher than in 2000, yet experienced a downward trend over the last years.

External engagement in Burundi was considerable before and after the Arusha Agreement in a variety of ways. As Stef Vandeginste states *“during most of its peace process, Burundi was under de facto international tutelage”* and most strategic political decisions were taken by an international consortium composed of the Regional Initiative led by South Africa, the UN representative in Burundi and some diplomatic representatives of key donor countries. This heightened influence in everyday politics only decreased after the 2005 elections (Vandeginste, 2012, p. 360). Observers state that none of the numerous ceasefire agreements was drafted or signed without significant external pressure or

support. In particular, regional powers (most importantly Tanzania and South Africa) have played a decisive role through mediation and provision of security.

With the signature of the Arusha Agreement, donors resumed ODA that had been suspended after the coup, but the flows only reached their pre-war levels in 2004. International engagement intensified again after the 2005 elections which placed the highly aid-dependent country apparently 'back on the road to normality'. Since 2002, a succession of one African Union (AU) and three UN missions (the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB), the Bureau Intégré des Nations Unies au Burundi/United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB) and the Bureau des Nations Unies au Burundi/United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB)) have been deployed to secure and aid the peace process. Initially, they received strong and broad mandates, which were increasingly curtailed in reaction to the progress made (and political pressure by the Burundian government to do so). The last mission left the country by the end of 2014; afterwards only a small country team remained. The principal donors in Burundi are the International Development Agency/World Bank (WB), the European Union, Belgium and the United States.

The following sub-section analyses the selected three critical junctures in detail: 1) adoption of a new constitution, 2) dissolution of CNDD-FDD armed forces and 3) 2010 elections. Each of these is discussed with regard to internal dynamics as well as international support.

3.1 Adoption of a new constitution (2005)

*The constitution would not have seen the light of the day without the involvement of the international community. [...] The constitution of 2005 was elaborated based on the Arusha Agreement, and the Arusha Agreement has been realised thanks to the participation and contribution of the international community*¹⁸
(Interview 9, domestic politician).

The end of the transitional period was marked by the adoption of a new constitution initiating a new period of democratisation. In October 2004, the parliament adopted the constitution, which was later approved in a referendum in early 2005. Its content not only draws on the previous 1992 constitution, but is moreover strongly based on the power-sharing arrangements defined in the Arusha Agreement and a number of subsequent peace agreements. The provisions restrict the Hutu majority of around 85% of the population to attaining a maximum of 60% of government positions, and Tutsi and three Twa representatives to a maximum of 40%. If necessary, the electoral Commission fulfils these quotas through co-optation. The power-sharing is not limited to the political realm, but extends to administration and, importantly, the security sector as well. Thus, in the national army, police or intelligence service, no ethnicity may constitute more than 50%¹⁹ (Constitution de Burundi, 2005).

18 Author's translation.

19 Moreover, the ministers responsible for the national police and army must belong to different ethnic groups.

The key components of the new constitution had thus already been set out in previous documents. Nonetheless, institutionalising these provisions in a universal, fundamental legal document constituted an important step to fostering peace and democracy (Interviews 9, 10, 31, 40). While the process of drafting a new constitution was not particularly inclusive, the popular referendum in which the constitution was adopted with an overwhelming majority helped to transform the elite agreement into a more popularly owned state-society contract (Interview 9). The successful adoption of a new constitution was particularly significant considering the still fragile situation. The largest rebel group was still in the process of demobilisation, while Palipehutu-FNL was still actively fighting. Moreover, the end of the transitional period – based on carefully arranged power-sharing – depended on the adoption of a new constitution, which would then enable elections to democratically determine a new government. In this context, if stances had hardened, it could have seriously disturbed the process, if not the peace. While it helped considerably that the key political groups had already agreed to the most critical points through various different peace agreements, determining the exact content of the constitution was not achieved without intense political power-struggles. Fortunately, the problems and delays that occurred in the process did not have a major and lasting impact on the political process. Even the political party emerging out of Palipehutu-FNL, which did not participate in the drafting process, has not been reported to call the legitimacy of the constitution into question.

Academics mostly agree that the power-sharing arrangements have significantly softened the ethnic polarisation, which was so pronounced during the civil war. The elections in 2010 were only minimally affected by ethnic discourse (Hofmeier, 2010; Vandeginste, 2011; Wolpe, 2011). As Vandeginste states: *“It is widely recognised that this de-ethnicisation of electoral competition is largely due to the consociational power-sharing arrangement laid down in the Arusha Agreement of 2000 and in the constitution of 2005”* (Vandeginste, 2011, pp. 329-330). Nevertheless, it is yet too early to assume that this faultline has been overcome; ethnic division still plays a role and is instrumentalised in politics – as for example in the land law favouring Hutu or the recent (narrowly failed) attempt to reform the constitution, which intended to abolish the ethnic quota system (Interviews 4, 5).

The constitution is widely perceived as a primarily domestic achievement, as the quote of a politician illustrates: *“The Accord d’Arusha was them, the constitution was us”* (Interview 39). Nevertheless, international support was crucial in facilitating the process. First, all interviewees emphasised the important indirect contribution deriving from the fact that the constitution was so strongly based on the Arusha Agreement, which was only made possible by international engagement. Secondly, international support did also play a more direct role for the successful adoption of the constitution. The most important direct influence probably occurred at the diplomatic level, since international mediators have pressured²⁰ the Tutsi parties to accept the provisions as they were set out in Arusha (and subsequent agreements). In contrast to more recent constitution-drafting processes (as

20 At various instances, the paper cites ‘international pressure’, which interviewees but also independent reports or academic literature claimed to have made an impact on the process. This is often not further specified, and thus constitutes *“something of a black box to onlookers”* (Burnell, 2008, p. 420). Due to the sensitive and private nature of such processes, combined with the time lag, it was in most cases not possible to gain further insights or details during the research, so that statements rely on secondary sources.

for example in Nepal, where almost all donors became active in this context), donors have not implemented larger projects in Burundi to accompany and support the drafting process in general and inclusive constitution-building in particular. It is often stated as common knowledge that international consultants were directly involved in drafting the 2005 constitution in Burundi. Hofmeier (2010) for example, states that international advisors, in particular from South Africa, had a strong influence. However, this was not confirmed by the research, which rather indicates that such international influence contributed indirectly through their impact on Arusha.²¹

3.1.1 Domestic process and donor engagement

The next sub-section examines in more detail different aspects characterising the process of adopting the new constitution and identifies international contributions. These are the stability of the context, procedural aspects such as the inclusiveness and delays, and political dynamics relating to the issue of power-sharing arrangements and the ambiguity around a third term by Nkurunziza.

Stable (if not peaceful) context

Considering the still fragile context, it was an important achievement that the situation was stabilised to such an extent that the process of drafting and adopting the constitution could be realised. Important political achievements contributed to this, as the interviewees pointed out. Firstly, the transitional institutions needed to be in place. In particular, the peaceful handover of power by the two transitional Presidents constituted a major strength, since it was not a matter of course. Apparently both transitional Presidents attempted to retain power or change the constitution to allow their own participation in the 2005 elections. Had these attempts to renege the agreement been successful, it could have seriously risked a return to civil war (Interviews 9, 30, 32). However, eventually both complied with the agreed procedure. Secondly, the ceasefire realised with CNDD-FDD was a key precondition as *“it would not have been possible to elaborate a constitution in an atmosphere of war throughout the country”*²² (Interview 9). In the same line, the Palipehutu-FNL – although still fighting – did not seriously disturb the process.

According to a minister during the transition, the international community was instrumental in facilitating these background conditions. *“Even with the Arusha Agreement, the constitution could not have been realised if the international community had not continued to invite the Burundi to sign the other peace agreements”* (Interview 9). In particular the UN and regional actors helped to realise the ceasefire and pressured the transitional government to hand over power, preventing civil war from restarting (Interviews 9, 32). Although the UN and the region (above all South Africa, but also Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Gabon) were not directly involved in writing the constitution, they provided security to the politicians involved in the drafting process (Interview 32).

21 One interviewee agreed for example that a Swiss constitutionalist was influential in drafting the constitution; he was even specifically named. When I was able to contact him, however, he rectified that he was only involved in the process leading up to the Arusha Agreement, but afterwards was not involved in any form.

22 Translated by author.

Apart from political quarrels – and partly caused by them – delays caused considerable risks in this fragile situation precariously stabilised by the careful transitional power-sharing arrangement. A first delay was clearly caused by the failure of the opposing parties to reach a consensus on key aspects. In addition, after the parliament approved the interim constitution, the constitutional court failed to validate the constitution within a certain timeframe, as foreseen in Arusha.²³ Since the constitution was needed to release the election timetable, people were afraid this could provoke violent unrest, and hundreds of Burundians started fleeing the country (Integrated Regional Information Networks [IRIN], 2004). President Nkurunziza withdrew the request for validation from the court, and instead presented the constitution directly for referendum, an alternative method of validation allowed for in the Arusha Agreement. Nevertheless, the referendum was still postponed several times. The constitutional vacuum, which loomed when the timetable foreseen in Arusha could not be met due to the delay of elections, could fortunately be prevented by the prolongation of the transitional period.

Inclusiveness

All political parties of the time discussed the draft constitution in an open seminar and numerous mediated meetings. In the still polarised context, this was very important for the legitimacy of the constitution. Attempts to achieve a unanimous vote in parliament, though, were not successful. Nonetheless, an overwhelming majority of the population approved the constitution in the referendum, which strengthened the political validity and legitimacy of the document, although the population asked to vote on it had limited knowledge of the contents (Interviews 9, 29, 39; International Crisis Group [ICG], 2004). Otherwise, the inclusiveness of the process remained limited to the elite level – civil society or academia had not been invited to participate (Interview 30). At the Arusha negotiations, civil society organisations had been present, yet it is not reported if they had been able to exercise significant influence. Nevertheless, a minimum of 30% women's representation in government found its way into the constitution, going beyond the provisions to strengthen the role of women in the Arusha.

The responsibility for the 2005 elections, including the referendum, lay with the UN, which provided substantive technical and financial assistance to organise the vote in cooperation with the Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante/Independent National Election Commission (CENI). In this way, international support rendered the popular approval of the constitution possible. International efforts to inform the population throughout the country about the constitution helped improve the awareness of the population (Interview 9), yet knowledge of the content remained low. Moreover, security guarantees were provided for politicians returning from exile, and in particular the EU helped political refugees to return to the political scene for this purpose (Interviews 9, 32).

Power-sharing

At the core, the most critical points of contention for the constitution had already been decided in Arusha. It thus constitutes a major strength of the constitution drafting process that, despite controversy, these power-sharing arrangements were accepted and enshrined

²³ Article 15 plus explanatory commentary, explicitly addressing the possibility that no draft is validated by the court.

in the constitution. The provisions of the agreement were so detailed, that it “*came close to being a complete constitution*” in itself (Brandt, Cottrell, Ghai, & Regan, 2011, p. 64). They were transferred to the new constitution with only minor adjustments²⁴ (Interviews 2, 3, 10, 30; see also Curtis, 2012). Interviewees agreed that through their indispensable support to Arusha, the international community was instrumental in facilitating the new constitution. As a former high-ranking politician pointed out, “*international constitutionalists helped to write the accord and only thanks to them the Accord d’Arusha was signed*” (Interview 39). During the Arusha negotiations, international, high profile constitutionalists had been called upon by the international mediators; in particular South African and Swiss constitutionalists had been influential in preparing the accord (Interviews 29, 30). One interviewee also mentioned that the Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA) organised a number of seminars for decision-makers to inform them in detail about the content of the Arusha Agreement (Interview 9).

However, it was by no means self-evident, nor a straightforward process to build upon Arusha. The two main political forces were no natural supporters of the provisions: CNDD-FDD, the main rebel movement, did not sign the Arusha Agreement, while the Unity for National Progress (UPRONA) and other Tutsi-representing parties had signed the accord only with reservations.

Most significantly, considerable controversy resurfaced around the issue of power-sharing. The group of Hutu-representing parties called for a return to free vote devoid of power-sharing restrictions, while the Tutsi-representing parties insisted on linking the ethnic power-sharing components with political party affiliation (Interviews 8, 9, 10, 11, 30). Between January and June 2004, negotiations between political leaders were unable to reach consensus. To avoid further delays, the Regional Initiative compelled the parties to end discussion on this issue (ICG, 2004). The negotiations were concluded when the Hutu-representing parties accepted the Arusha provisions by signing the Pretoria Protocols (Interviews 11, 30), yet UPRONA and the other Tutsi-representing parties refrained to do so. They caused a blockage by retreating from the process, demonstratively boycotting the parliamentary session in which the interim constitution was adopted in October. The Vice-president, Alphonse-Marie Kadege (one of the UPRONA leaders) was a strong opponent of the constitution; to such an extent, that President Nkurunziza dismissed him on 10 November 2004, and asked UPRONA to nominate a replacement. He was thus replaced by Frédéric Ngenzebuhoro, who was considered more flexible. According to the interviewees, these proceedings did not provoke problems (Interviews 8, 39, 40); quite the contrary, the change contributed to calming the political situation (ICG, 2004).

Negotiations on the issue of power-sharing were held in the commission for implementation of Arusha (Comité de Suivi des Accords d’Arusha) (Interviews 9, 10, 32). It was primarily a national committee to support and supervise the government in the implementation of Arusha, but South Africa and the UN played a strong role as well, the latter chairing the meetings in the person of the Special Representative (Interview 32). A member of the transitional government emphasised the importance of the international community in the drafting process. The UN continuously helped to bring the different parties together, but also the different ambassadors were always present accompanying the

24 Importantly, in this, the constitution did take the roots of the conflict into account, in particular with regard to the reformed security institutions.

discussions. “At a certain moment, if not for the international community, some parties would have assumed radical positions that could have brought the country to war”²⁵ (Interview 8).

Most importantly, however, the Regional Initiative and South Africa in person of President Zuma reportedly exercised significant pressure and forced the parties involved to adhere to the respective provisions of Arusha (Interview 32). On the one hand, this was done through a series of meetings leading to the signature of the Pretoria power-sharing agreements, which provided the basis for the constitution (Reyntjens, 2005). On the other hand, they put pressure on the Tutsi parties, which opposed both the Pretoria agreement as well as the draft constitution, to accept the concessions they had been granted through these documents (Interviews 9, 30; Reyntjens, 2005).

Third term

Highly relevant in the run-up to the 2015 elections, an ambiguity regarding the content of the constitution surfaced as a serious weakness: an unclear provision relating to a potential third mandate of the current President is causing political tensions. The constitution restricts the tenure of office of a president to two consecutive terms, elected by universal suffrage. However, the constitution stated that the first post-transitional President would be elected indirectly by both Chambers of Parliament. This created an ambiguity for the 2015 elections: while the spirit of the law clearly meant restricting the mandate after these two sitting terms, the letter of the law left a loophole for the incumbent President Ndayizeye. Since his first nomination occurred through indirect elections, he has not yet been elected “*twice by universal suffrage*”, as the constitution stipulates. Nonetheless, he first attempted to officially extend the term limit, which narrowly failed. Afterwards, considerable resistance against another term arose, both within CNDD-FDD and outside. On 25 April, his party declared him the official candidate. As observers had expected beforehand, when the constitutional court was asked to provide a verdict on this issue it ruled the renewed candidacy to be lawful. Despite the legal ambiguity, this is clearly against the ‘spirit of Arusha’, to which the constitution adheres and is causing serious destabilisation in the run-up to the elections.

Table 1 briefly summarises the previous analysis. International support in this juncture occurred primarily at the diplomatic level by facilitating negotiations and enforcing agreements. There was no significant technical support to the drafting process either content-wise or to ensure certain inclusiveness. However, the content of the new constitution was strongly influenced by the international community since it is heavily based on the Arusha Agreement. Most significantly, sustained pressure ensured that no changes to the ethnic quotas were introduced.

²⁵ Translated by author.

Table 1: Burundi's new constitution			
Main elements of the critical juncture	Internal explanatory factors	International contributions	Crucial international contribution
Situation stabilised to enable drafting process	• Peace agreements with CNDD-FDD concluded • Palipehutu-FNL did not disturb the process • Peaceful handovers during transition • Pragmatic handling of delays	+ Security guarantees for politicians + UN peacekeeping force	+ Political mediation of peace agreements
Relatively inclusive process	• All political parties involved • Approved in referendum • Population not very well informed about content	+ Political facilitation + Assistance to organise referendum + Security guarantees allowed participation	
Power-sharing provisions of Arusha included	• Deadlock was overcome and UPRONA rejoined process • Both sides agreed to stick to provisions of Arusha Agreement		+ Political pressure to accept power-sharing provisions + Facilitation of dialogue
Source: Author			

Overall, the constitution-drafting process in Burundi has been an enormous success. First of all, the situation was stabilised sufficiently to allow the process to take place. Secondly it was able to build upon the agreements found in Arusha, and lastly, the new constitution was accepted and adopted in a referendum with an overwhelming majority by the population. However, although in retrospect it was judged as relatively smooth, looking in more detail at the process reveals the difficulties related to drafting such a fundamental document in a post-war context. In this still fragile environment, such difficulties could have significantly hampered the adoption of a new constitution, or even endangered the peace itself. It appears that, despite the high stakes and heated controversy that accompanied the constitution-drafting process, political leadership on both sides realised that seriously calling into question the agreement already reached in Arusha could jeopardise the fragile peace (Interviews 8, 39). As Reyntjens observed “*although relations between parties were not exempt from conflict, they refrained from taking positions likely to result in violent deadlock, and they used a language conducive to keeping communication channels open*” (Reyntjens, 2005, p. 120). Remarkably, also the army, which had historically been ready to safeguard Tutsi interests as Filip Reyntjens points out, refrained from interfering. Next to war fatigue, this changed attitude can be attributed to the creation of the new integrated armed forces as well as the presence of the UN mission, which discouraged any attempts at a coup (Reyntjens, 2005).

In post-conflict situations, it is often debated whether key questions on the political design need to be resolved early on, or should be delayed until the situation has stabilised (the

sequencing debate). In Burundi, it was positive that the key questions had already been resolved at an early stage and been included in the key peace agreement. As Mehler et. al point out, ethnic-political exclusion had already been addressed by implementing the power-sharing in the transitional government. Thus, a core grievance had been addressed even before the main rebel groups signed any ceasefire agreements – and might thus actually have paved the way for these agreements (Mehler, Simons, & Zanker, 2012). In comparison, the main peace agreement in Nepal had not resolved essential questions, causing political standstill at a later stage as well as unrest in form of frequent *bandhs* (strikes) paralysing entire cities or even districts. Eight years after the peace agreement, the second Constitutional Assembly in Nepal has not yet been able to adopt a new constitution.

3.1.2 Explanatory factors

Since international support to the constitution-drafting process occurred mainly at the diplomatic level and was thus not very visible, this critical juncture does not generate many insights into the hypotheses. With regard to the form of cooperation, the international community facilitating the negotiation process combined diplomatic facilitation with direct pressure, which in this case seems to have worked very well. Another coercive instrument (vis-à-vis potential violent transgressors), namely security guarantees, is valued because it allowed relevant political actors to return to the country and participate in the process.

Not much information is available on coordination between international actors at the time. However, analyses usually speak of ‘the international community’ which might indicate that they had taken a common stance. In the same line, Vandeginste describes an “*international consortium*” of the Regional Initiative, the UN and key diplomatic representatives to have strongly impacted politics (Vandeginste, 2012, p. 360). If divergent views or stances had been present, they are nowhere reported. With regard to the political pressure exercised on UPRONA, this has surely helped to convince them that they had exhausted the goodwill of the international partners (granting them relatively strong minority guarantees), while a divided international community might have further complicated the process.

The focus of the international community was clearly on stability and ending the deep conflict (Brandt et al., 2011, p. 63) with a strong power-sharing arrangement grossly over-representing a minority in political and security institutions. A BINUB report states that “*The focus of the UN’s mission had been to enshrine the power-sharing arrangements in a popularly voted constitution*” (BINUB, 2012) and the international community employed pressure to ensure this (Reyntjens, 2005). At the same time, there were no efforts to facilitate a more inclusive process of drafting the constitution.

3.2 Dissolution of the CNDD-FDD armed forces (2004-2008)

The demobilisation “*is not a success, it’s a miracle, it is incredible*” (“*n’est pas un success, c’est un miracle, c’est incroyable*”) (Interview 7).

“*The demobilised in Burundi are a time bomb*” (“*Les démobilisés au Burundi c’est un bombe à retardement*”) (Interview 11).

In any post-conflict situation, the return of the monopoly of force to the state is a decisive step towards lasting peace. This usually involves the demobilisation and reintegration of armed groups. In Burundi, the process was particularly challenging on two accounts: first, there existed not just one, but a high number of armed groups, the last still continuing warfare after the first demobilisation process had already been completed. Since the CNDD-FDD was the largest and most important rebel group, this analysis solely focuses on the dissolution of their armed forces. Secondly, the national security institutions suffered from very low legitimacy due to their highly skewed ethnic composition, which has been closely linked to the ethnic-political inequalities instrumentalised during the civil war. Yet, Burundi appears to have mastered the challenge successfully. As Boshoff states: “*The DDR [Demobilisation, disarmament, and reintegration] process in Burundi, which had been one of the most intractable problems during the transition, became one of the positive drivers of the transition*” (Frey & Boshoff, 2005, p. 149).

The creation of joint security institutions and subsequent demobilisation were of utmost importance to the peace as well as the democratisation process. Far from being a technical process, it was highly political. First of all, the demobilisation of the largest rebel group shifted political contestation back to the democratic, political arena and cemented the end of the civil war (demobilisation posed as one condition for participating in the elections²⁶). Secondly, it constituted a significant and visible shift in the political power-relations of the country, ending the historical dominance of the Tutsi elite²⁷ in government and the security institutions. The transformation of the rebel group into a political party fundamentally transformed the political party landscape, where power-relations were promptly upended when CNDD-FDD gained a landslide victory in the 2005 elections. The Burundian army had traditionally served as a safeguard for the Tutsi minority to maintain their dominant position in the state and protect their interests vis-à-vis the Hutu majority. While the Tutsi regarded the army as vital protection against the alleged extinction threatened by the hands of the Hutu, the latter perceived the security forces as “*oppressive and alien institutions*” (Rumin, 2012, p. 79; Kamungi et al., 2005). Hence, sole demobilisation of combatants would not be sufficient, but rather a thorough restructuring of the security institutions was needed to correct the ethnic and regional imbalances and restore the legitimacy and neutrality of the forces in the eyes of the entire population.

As one interviewee stated: “*If the process – demobilisation, reintegration, reinsertion – had not been well executed, the war would have continued, and it would not have been possible to move on to elaborate the constitution*”²⁸ (Interview 3, see also Interview 9).

26 This raised the stakes of the demobilisation (Interview 28) and at the same time a successful integration and demobilisation process became an important precondition for successfully organising the elections.

27 This is illustrated by the fact that the MDRP programme was rejected by the parliament required to approve it (despite financing by internationals). Constituting the first real sign that power-relations would shift, there was political interest to stall the process (Interview 28).

28 Translated from French by the author.

Nevertheless, while these achievements are remarkable and significant in the short term, their long-term impact relies on the sustainability of the process. The activities of armed youth groups to some extent call into question the sustainability of the demobilisation and reintegration part of the process, as reportedly ex-combatants feature strongly among its members.

Careful power-sharing arrangements guided the process to address the political-ethnic imbalances. The Arusha Agreement already prescribed that no ethnicity may have a larger representation than 50% in the national security institutions. This was further specified in the Pretoria protocol signed in 2003, which stipulated that 50% of positions must go to the hitherto grossly underrepresented Hutu majority and that CNDD-FDD would receive 40% of army positions and 35% of the police. In order to implement these provisions, integration largely preceded demobilisation. In a first step, the security institutions were expanded to include those ex-combatants who had not voluntarily opted for retirement and demobilisation. In a second step, the institutions were downsized according to the predetermined ethnic quotas and previous affiliations, so that not only many ex-combatants, but also a large number of the former soldiers had to leave their posts. The thus demobilised received training and financial assistance in several tranches to facilitate their reintegration into civilian life. The last step supported reintegration of the former combatants into civilian life.

The international community provided important support to the dissolution of CNDD-FDD armed forces and their inclusion into joint security institutions. Although the process was primarily driven by a very strong ownership and commitment from the Burundian side, the international community provided significant technical and financial support and facilitated the process politically. The largest share of technical and financial assistance was channelled through the Multi-country Demobilization and Reintegration Program²⁹ (MDRP) with a total budget of USD 76 million. The fund was supervised by the World Bank but implemented by a national commission. Additional key actors were the peacekeeping missions present at that time (the African Union Mission in Burundi (AMIB) and ONUB) and bilateral donors, namely Belgium, France, the Netherlands and South Africa. The latter played a particularly important role by providing a significant share of the troops securing DDR assembly areas and supporting disarmament operations (Rumin, 2012, p. 83). Moreover, in the person of Nelson Mandela, it significantly facilitated the process politically. Next to the political facilitation, international support focused on providing advice, training personnel and supplying material for the reconstruction of barracks.

3.2.1 Domestic process and donor engagement

The following section analyses the process in more detail, identifying strengths and weaknesses with regard to key elements of the process, namely the preparatory phase including planning and cantoning the combatants, the creation of an integrated army and police force, demobilisation as well as reintegration. After discussing the internal dynamics, international contributions to each of these elements is assessed.

²⁹ Contributing donors were Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the European Commission.

Preparatory phase

The pre-disarmament phase had a political, technical and a security dimension. At the political level, key actors needed to come to an agreement on demobilisation and integration. Consequently, this had to be translated into a technical roadmap for implementation. Parallel to this, the combatants were assembled in cantonments to await demobilisation or integration.

At the political level, the Comité de Suivi de l'Application de l'Accord d'Arusha (CSA) played an important role in the process, as most decisions for the demobilisation and integration of the security forces were taken here (Interviews 30, 32). The CSA intervened and tried to mediate whenever there was a conflict between the political actors. It was composed of Burundians as well as internationals – the UN and especially South Africa. Due to a lack of trust between the parties, mediators were important to provide sound information to all sides (Interview 28). The international partners facilitated discussions on the conditions of demobilisation and disarmament with both the army and the Armed Political Parties and Movements (APPM), such as status of combatants or harmonisation of grades. They helped to overcome blockages as well as the deep-rooted suspicion between the former enemies. Yet the decisions (on a roadmap etc.) were taken by Burundians themselves (Interview 27).

Overall, the relatively inclusive and transparent nature of the process is regarded positively and strengthened the process. A Joint Operations Plan was prepared in 'a consultative and participatory manner' and according to Alusala constituted a type of Memorandum of Understanding between the major actors involved, namely the National Commission for Demobilisation, Reinsertion and Reintegration (NCDRR), representatives of the Joint Ceasefire Commission, the UN mission at the time, and MDRP (Interview 28; Alusala, 2005). It defines goals, requirements and responsibilities and details the steps of the process to be followed (Joint Ceasefire Commission et al., 2004). As one interviewee stated: *"The process was relatively transparent, which was not done by Burundians but by the internationals; that has reassured a bit"* (Interview 14). However, due to the highly political nature of the process, technical experts (and thus technical issues) were only included at a late stage, which then led to difficulties during the implementation (Interview 28).

The cantonment phase suffered from weak planning and implementation. At some point, the resulting frustrations and disturbances seriously endangered the process. Medical supplies, food and infrastructure were insufficient, especially in the early stages (Interviews 27, 35; Boshoff, Vrey, & Rautenbach, 2010). In addition, providing health care in the cantonments was a serious problem. Commanding officers apparently sold part of the medical supplies, while medical assistance did not reach the cantonment areas. The lack of food, hygiene and medication became so severe that several people died (Interviews 27, 35). Tensions rose and rebel leaders threatened to resume fighting if conditions did not improve (Interview 27). Several attacks on the cantonments added further strain. These tensions and others, provoked for example by the postponement of the elections, brought the process to the brink of escalation. Fortunately the situation could be calmed down, in particular with the help of the international community, as one interviewee emphasised (Interview 27). The peacekeeping force was able to revoke the armed attacks on the cantonment sites, calming the situation (Interview 27). With regard

to provisioning, the role of the internationals is less positive. According to the Joint Operations Plan, “*an implementing partner will provide food and non-food items*” in the cantonment areas, assisted by ONUB (Joint Ceasefire Commission et al., 2004). While sources are not clear on who was actually tasked with providing the supplies, the responsibility clearly lay with the international partners. According to McMullin, the World Bank that was leading the DDR support argued that financing operations related to disarmament was not covered by its mandate, and that it thus could not provide the provisions. When the situation became worse, the European Union stepped in to finance the provisions, which were provided by the German implementing agency (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit/German Technical Cooperation [GTZ]). According to Boshoff, this was crucial to removing a source of insecurity and “*without this contribution, the process would not have been successful*” (Boshoff & Vrey, 2006, p. 47; McMullin, 2013).

Creation of integrated security forces

Observers characterise the integration of the two formerly hostile forces into one integrated army as a miracle and as an extraordinary process (Interviews 14, 30). The topic had been the most difficult point of contention in Arusha and during subsequent peace negotiations. Hence, many doubted the process could succeed peacefully. A side-deal by the two groups realised the integration practically overnight and formed a joint brigade without a single bullet disturbing the process (Interviews 7, 17, 28). Not only was the immediate fusion a success: until today, no incident has occurred and the integrated combatants did not pull out later (as happened in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for example) (Interviews 5, 32, 37).

When the Integrated Chiefs of Staff finally reached an agreement on the criteria for demobilisation and integration³⁰ as well as harmonisation of grades³¹, a major hurdle to the process was overcome. Discussions on this had been very heated and complicated, and delayed the process. Yet, once agreed upon, the implementation worked relatively smoothly and in a transparent way (Interviews 14, 27, 37, 39). An ethnically alternated hierarchy was created within the army reaching down to the lowest level, establishing a system of checks and balances (Interviews 17, 35). This worked very well and, despite initial discontent, eventually everybody accepted the hierarchies, no matter their provenance³² (Interview 17). To this end, ex-FAB members (ex-Forces armées burundaises/Armed Forces of Burundi) had to make huge efforts in sensitising their followers to overcome the frustration of officers forced to become subordinate to people with an inferior education.³³ Yet, most interviewees agreed that by now the army has become truly integrated and coalesced, a fact that had been reinforced by military missions

30 The number of integrated people depended on the number of combatants, but the process was complicated by last minute recruitments to boost numbers on the one hand, and the fact that not all members of APPM could present a weapon on the other hand, because frequently several shared a weapon and non-military supporters needed to be considered as well (Interview 35).

31 In particular, ex-FAB were reluctant to become subordinated to less educated ex-APPM members (Interview 39).

32 One expert on the demobilisation process, however, warned that the integration has its limits and that a sense of belonging to old group memberships is still existing, causing parallel lines of command (Interview 27).

33 Officers in the FAB usually attended university, while many APPM members were illiterate (Interview 17).

to Somalia (Interviews 3, 14, 17, 35). However, one interviewee claims that recent political events have caused old alliances to surface again, also within the security institutions, which would be a worrying development (Interview 6). In general, however, the new joint army has acquired a relatively high legitimacy in the eyes of the population (Boshoff et al., 2010, p. 82).

This important step in the dissolution of the armed groups was achieved by the Burundians themselves. ONUB was involved in the intense discussion on the criteria for integration and demobilisation with the Integrated Chief of Staff, which was chaired by international officers, yet was not able to reach an agreement (Interviews 14, 28, 35). One interviewee reported that the UN had been asked to pilot the process, but had not managed to propose a plan in the two previous years (Interview 37). Eventually the commission faced a *fait accompli* with the side-deal reached by CNDD-FDD and FAB (Interview 37). Nevertheless, it is very likely that by facilitating discussions and meetings prior to this agreement, the international community helped to lay the foundations which eventually made it easier for the two parties to accomplish their deal. However, it is not possible to determine what difference the engagement of the internationals made at that stage. The high ownership and initiative of the two main actors suggest that they could have done so without the international support in this regard. However, internationals did ensure that smaller actors were also included and able to defend their interests. Apart from the facilitation, the international partners helped with the practical integration of the two forces. Next to advice, and material for reconstruction of buildings, support to equalise different levels of formation was positively highlighted³⁴ (Interviews 27, 35).

In contrast to the new army, which interviewees widely praised as a success, the integration and formation of the new police force was problematic. Yet, this task had also been particularly challenging. Prior to the integration of the rebel movements, four different forces existed under the leadership of three different ministries. Combined, they numbered only 3,000 officers, while at its peak, the new police force reached 20,000 members³⁵ (Nindorera, 2007). The structural difficulties – the merging of three distinct forces and the simultaneous integration of a multiple of their former combined number – coincided with technical and procedural weaknesses. Apparently, the people in charge were not well prepared, lacking competence and logistical support and as a consequence the process was poorly managed and proceeded rather chaotically³⁶ (Interviews 5, 17, 27). The newly formed national police do not have a very high standing with the population, lack skills, and corruption remains a serious issue.³⁷ Nevertheless, Burundians appreciate the mixed composition and increased coverage of police stations, as a survey conducted in 2008 revealed. Yet, also within the police, discontent is high due to low welfare and the lack of basic infrastructure, which is not aiding the process of integration. While their performance has improved after the initial difficulties, recent political tensions cause old

34 In particular, a weeklong training for ex-FAB and ex-APPM by the Belgians has been emphasised as having “*helped tremendously*” (Interview 35).

35 Currently, the police still number around 16,000 officers. The target is 15,000, as agreed in Arusha and strongly supported by the World Bank and IMF (Interviews 6, 14).

36 For instance, police officers did not receive salaries (Interview 17).

37 To put things into perspective, the task of creating a capable police force is much more difficult than that of an army. The police have to work directly with the population instead of being confined to barracks.

loyalties to resurface and there has lately been a surge in extra-judicial killings by the police³⁸ (Interviews 5, 6, 7).

According to Nindorera (2007) the lack of basic training has been one of the biggest challenges for the new police force. Due to the side-deal forming the joint brigade overnight, the Joint Operations Plan was bypassed and no third party verification, screening or vetting of the integrated ex-combatants took place. One interviewee ascribes this as *“part of the reasons why the police is having the difficulties it is having today”* (Interview 28). Continuing basic training – with substantial international support – has been able to raise the level of formation and professionalism so that a positive development is slowly becoming visible (Interview 14; Nindorera, 2011). Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, France and the respective UN missions provided support for the professionalisation of the police. This included in particular material and financial support, constructing infrastructure, providing means of communication and transport, as well as training – both on basic policing skills as well as human rights and correct police behaviour (Nindorera, 2011). A UN representative was tasked with coordinating support to the police, which was particularly challenging due to the complex structure of the police (Interview 28). Without a sound evaluation, however, it is difficult to say how the efforts of the international partners improved the situation or where they could, and should, have been more engaged or differently.

Demobilisation

Only after the integration of the two armies did the main demobilisation process start.³⁹ It needed to downsize the security forces to reach a maximum number of 25,000 for the army and 15,000 for the police force. Despite the politicisation of the NCDRR, its technical staff were key to organising the process successfully (Interviews 28, 43). Together with the general staff of the APPM and the FDN, they developed criteria for the selection process (Rumin, 2012). Those to be demobilised received training and a reinsertion package (approximately USD 600 for a foot soldier and up to USD 1,800 for a senior officer; equivalent to nine months' salary) and money to cover the transport costs to return home. In addition, they were entitled to reintegration packages providing training intended to support the ex-combatants in sustaining their livelihoods (Rumin, 2012, pp. 76-77).

Interviewees agreed that the international community has been instrumental in the dissolution of the armed groups. They acknowledge that without this support the process would not have been possible (Interviews 3, 9, 14, 17). Financing was entirely incurred internationally (in particular by the World Bank), which was always stated as a key ingredient. However, the large sums involved made the programme susceptible to corruption. The World Bank accepted this without taking action against considerable embezzlement, which weakened the process (Interview 35). The technical implementation was led nationally⁴⁰, but was mostly done in close cooperation and technical support

38 In light of these developments, it becomes more worrying that apparently ethnic proportions were not entirely adhered to with regard to the integrated police force, which includes slightly more Hutus (Interviews 6, 8).

39 Before, only volunteers, child soldiers and disabled people had been demobilised (Rumin, 2012).

40 This differentiation between financing and implementation caused some difficulties for both sides (procedural restrictions on the one hand, limited possibilities to influence decisions on the other hand) but was managed well by the World Bank.

(mainly by the World Bank and the MDRP secretariat) was judged beneficial. Strong support was given to develop the Joint Operations Plan⁴¹ which was approved in 2004, detailing tasks and responsibilities and ensuring that all relevant aspects were covered (Interview 28). The many dialogue meetings held to discuss demobilisation and the disarmament process were coordinated and supported by the international community (Interview 27). The peacekeeping force ONUB was tasked with overseeing and securing the demobilisation process (Interview 28). Seminars were organised to prepare former combatants to return to civilian life (Interview 17).

In general, this process can be highlighted as another success. Combatants from both the APPMs as well as the FAB were demobilised relatively smoothly (Interviews 21, 28, 43). The need to disarm formally before participating in the 2005 elections strongly accelerated the process and prevented a hardening of positions (Interviews 27, 32). By January 2005, a total number of just below 20,000 ex-combatants had been demobilised, almost 7,000 of whom had belonged to the CNDD-FDD (Boshoff & Vrey, 2006). Due to the surprising speed, the process was largely completed by June 2005, helping to stabilise the situation (Frey & Boshoff, 2005).

The downsizing process of the police force, however, went less smoothly. When the integrated national police force reached an interim number of 20,000, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) pushed for the demobilisation to proceed quickly to reach the maximum number of 15,000 in 2008.⁴² This rush apparently negatively affected the sustainability of the process and many thus demobilised were later recognised to have joined the Palipehutu-FNL (Interview 6). The international financial institutions (IFIs) had pushed for a quick reduction, threatening to stop budget support if the police were not downsized. Later they conceded that allowing more time for the cutback might have been more suitable (Interviews 6, 27).

Reintegration

Reintegration is a challenge of a completely different nature, because it is a less technical and more complex process than demobilisation or integration. To succeed with reintegration in a poor country like Burundi, *“it needs a sound economic plan, which however, does not exist [here]”* (Interview 35) and the low economic development hampered the process considerably (Interview 37). This was also a finding of the MDRP evaluation, stating that reintegration was also affected by a *“stagnant economy and an agricultural sector that could not absorb both [ex-combatants] and returning refugees”* (Scanteam, 2010, p. 30).

Yet, apart from the difficult context, the process suffered from a number of weaknesses. On the strategic side, the focus was primarily a military one, neglecting the importance of reintegration. Moreover, community leaders and officials were not included in the process. Possibly as a consequence, integration in the communities is not perceived as having been very successful (Interview 27). According to an interviewee involved in the reintegration

41 Jointly by the transitional government of Burundi, APPMs, donors, AU, ONUB, MDRP and the World Bank.

42 The numbers were stated in Arusha, yet primarily determined by the WB and the IMF in order to reduce the military budget in comparison to social expenditure (Interviews 14, 17).

programme, neither were the communities prepared to receive the combatants, nor were the combatants prepared to put the aid – both money and training – to good use (Interview 43). Reconciliation and trauma were not addressed sufficiently (Interview 27). Moreover, victims received no reparations, which made the process appear to reward ex-combatants to the detriment of the victims. This caused tensions and proved disfavoured for reintegration (Rumin, 2012, pp. 76-77).

The commission for DDR was not well prepared to plan and execute the programme because members were primarily selected for political reasons instead of technical skills (Interviews 28, 43). The process started very fast, possibly because CNDD-FDD wanted to satisfy their former combatants and gain votes, but did not leave enough time for preparation (Interview 3). Immediate reinsertion payments (delivered in three instalments according to prior rank) are considered to have been efficient and successful. Combined with the training that was provided, it kept the former combatants occupied and contributed to stabilising the situation in the first years (Interview 3). A structure and financing for education was put in place to address the low level of education that posed a major challenge to the process (Interviews 8, 37). After the initial reinsertion, however, long delays in providing further assistance to reintegrate seriously hampered the process (this applies to cash payments as well as technical training delayed due to lack of funding⁴³) (Interviews 8, 28, 35, 43). Splitting the payments former combatants received into several tranches was meant to reduce the losses through family and community obligations, yet each tranche was considered too little for establishing an existence (Interviews 26, 38).

Apart from the problems related to planning and implementation, the weakness of this process was reinforced by failed expectation management. Apparently, rebel groups lacked precise information due to a gap between high-level political negotiations and the technical level (and the multiple actors involved) (Interview 28). As a consequence, today numerous combatants are frustrated and might easily be mobilised again (Interviews 3, 7, 8, 43). Nevertheless, many of the demobilised have successfully reintegrated into the communities and managed to sustain their life, in particular those who settled in villages (Interview 37).

National and international observers still consider former combatants a major destabilising factor, which calls into question the success of the process (Interviews 8, 9, 11, BINUB-source). Throughout 2014, reports mentioned the distribution of arms to party youths, which created unrest throughout the country. Most analysts agree that former fighters constitute a large percentage of these newly armed groups (Interviews 4, 9, 35). Moreover, the fact that the ruling party still adheres to and celebrates the category of ex-combatants⁴⁴ questions their successful reintegration into civilian life (Interviews 5, 26, 43), while at the same time also contributing to the perpetuation of this identity.

Implementation of the reintegration programs was mainly left to the national commission and selected national and international NGOs executing local projects to assist reintegration for one year. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) took charge of

43 According to one interviewee, the training even stopped without being completed later on.

44 Recently, the ruling party held an official ceremony for its ex-combatants who paraded through the capital on this occasion. The opposition perceived this behaviour as that of a “parallel army” (Interviews 9, 43).

the child soldiers, and apparently its programme was relatively successful (Interview 43). Apart from this, the international donor community has not been directly involved. Reasons for this might be lack of expertise, but also the more complicated and cumbersome, long-term nature of reintegration, which donors are often more reluctant to get involved in as opposed to the rather technical demobilisation with its limited timeframe, and quick, visible results (Interviews 35, 43).

Interviewees criticised that the ex-combatants were insufficiently accompanied by the World Bank. They mainly just received money – and not enough to be able to build an existence⁴⁵ – but were not prepared for reintegration into civilian life and support stopped too soon (Interviews 11, 26, 35, 37). To qualify, the vast majority of 98% of the ex-combatants opted for income generation activities instead of choosing any of the other options, which would have entailed a closer accompaniment and assistance.⁴⁶

Yet, apparently, the reintegration support was not very well implemented and MDRP procedures prevented money being paid on time. This not only caused frustration, it hampered the economic reintegration as people contracted debts in expectation of the next tranche; accumulating debt due to the delay. The situation even provoked former ex-combatants to take officials hostages in their offices, demanding the outstanding payments (Interview 35; McMullin, 2013). In general, a longer, more inclusive approach addressing both ex-combatants and other community members might have been more fruitful in not only allowing longer term accompaniment of ex-combatants without reinforcing this category but at the same time strengthening cohesion and reconciliation within a community (Interview 26). Overall, deficient international support has contributed to the weakness of this very important phase in the DDR process, failing to conclude the process sustainably.

Peaceful nature

A key achievement has been the peaceful nature of the entire process. In particular, people were astonished by the peaceful integration of the former belligerents into integrated armed forces, which happened practically overnight. As one interviewee stated: *“People could not imagine that it would be possible, but it was possible. It has been done without a single bullet. [...] That was an extraordinary success”*⁴⁷ (Interview 17). Also at a later stage, there were no major eruptions of violence even though the process was highly political and marked by heated discussions and numerous blockages. For this reason, it was beneficial that the process proceeded quickly, otherwise tensions might have erupted (Interviews 21, 27, 28). Importantly, the last rebel group, Palipehutu-FNL, still actively continued fighting, yet there were no serious security problems throughout the process. Some minor attacks were launched at the cantonments, but were successfully fended off and did not disrupt the process as a whole (Interview 35).

45 Reluctance by the World Bank and other contributing donors to pay larger sums (or all the money at once) to ex-combatants (Interviews 21, 37) is, however, easy to understand.

46 Other options were 1) assistance to return to former employment; 2) formal education; 3) vocational training; 4) entrepreneurial support. According to McMullin, however, their choice was not entirely free but guided by the interest of the CNDD-FDD government to have the programme executed quickly and in a way that would allow the support to be converted in the easiest way to cash and obtaining a share (McMullin, 2013).

47 Translated from French by author.

International peacekeeping support is appreciated to have contributed to the peaceful nature of the process. The African Mission in Burundi, which was later integrated into the UN Mission ONUB, played an important role in securing assembly areas and supporting disarmament operations as well as protecting political leaders (Interview 32; Nindorera, 2012; Rumin, 2012, p. 83). In particular, South Africa provided the majority of troops and politically decided to send in the military even before the UN mandate was given, which stabilised the process (Interview 29). What was also important was the fact that the Palipehutu-FNL was ensured to be eligible to join the demobilisation process later on, which was apparently one reason why they did not seriously disrupt the process (Interview 28).

Apart from direct, practical contributions, the presence and assistance of the international community served to provide moral support and reassured the parties involved (Interviews 14, 21, 28, 37). Importantly, international actors also facilitated the process on the political level, finding ways to calm the situation and restart dialogue, which solved a number of blockages that could easily have provoked serious complications (Interview 27). The Burundi Leadership Training programme (established by American Ambassador Wolpe, kick-started by financing from the World Bank) was highlighted as one initiative that was particularly beneficial in this regard (Interviews 32, 35).

Overall, at this critical juncture, the process was primarily driven by Burundian actors. While international support was very important, this was mostly in facilitating and accompanying the process, providing financing and assisting with implementation. This worked well with the highly political processes of army integration and demobilisation. However, the more tedious exercise of reintegrating ex-combatants into society was not sufficiently supported by the international community.

Table 2 summarises the previous analysis, providing an overview of strengths and weaknesses as well as international support to the process.

Table 2: DDR process of largest rebel group			
Main elements of critical juncture	Internal explanatory factors	International contributions	Crucial international contribution
Preparatory phase overall successful	• Political agreements reached • Roadmap prepared in inclusive manner • Difficulties with cantonments contained	+ Mediation and facilitation of dialogue + Military protection for cantonments - Supplies of cantonments problematic	+ Peacekeeping forces
Creation of integrated army	• In a side-deal, a joint brigade was formed overnight • Agreement on criteria and harmonisation of grades • Smooth and transparent implementation	+ Political facilitation	
Creation of integrated police force	• Ethnically mixed force created • Limited skills and professionalism • Involved in extra-judicial killings and corruption	+ Training - Push for quick downsizing	
Successful demobilisation	• Quickly implemented • Ex-combatants and soldiers successfully demobilised • Fraud and corruption	+ Coordination and facilitation of meetings + ONUB oversaw and secured process	+ Financial and technical support
Weak reintegration	• Not in focus • Social and psychological aspects not addressed sufficiently • Planning and implementation weak • Expectations not met • Combatant identity remains strong	- Short-term, technical approach + Financial packages and training	
Peaceful nature	• Belligerents come to agreement • Controversies and blockages overcome • Palipehutu-FNL eligible for later process		+ International presence + Peacekeeping forces + Political facilitation
Source: Author			

3.2.2 Explanatory factors

Both national as well as international interviewees agree that very strong ownership by and commitment from key national actors was the determining factor for the successful demobilisation and integration of the rebel movement. However, international engagement did play an important role in facilitating the process through security guarantees, diplomatic facilitation as well as financial and technical support. According to Boshoff, this form of interaction was particularly beneficial: *“A key factor contributing to the success of the transition was that the Burundian authorities and role players were allowed to make their own decisions, rather than being forced to accept externally-imposed judgements that they did not understand”* (Boshoff & Vrey, 2006, p. 47). The following sections discuss in more detail the reasons behind the effectiveness of international support based on the hypotheses guiding this research.

Coordination

Most interview partners perceived coordination to be wanting in the context of the DDR process – this is also confirmed by analysts (Mora, 2008). Apparently, it proved difficult in particular in the context of police support. The UN and three donors (Dutch, Belgians and French) were engaged in this context. Yet, their strategy and implementation was guided by different visions and models, which hampered a coordinated approach (Interviews 6, 14, 27). As a result, interviewees reported many problems of coordination, producing conflict and tension. All donors came with their own programmes, without first consulting the others engaged in that area. At a certain point, competition between the main actors provoked disarray, as the government did not know who to choose (Interviews 6, 27). The Burundian side for its part was not able to formulate a clear strategy either or to provide leadership to resolve such difficulties (Interviews 6, 27). Yet, there have now been efforts from the international side to enhance its coordination and several projects have been implemented jointly by two or three donors despite difficulties and differences (Interview 6).

In particular, interviewees mentioned conflicting interests between France and the other actors, the former assuming a very technical stance, while the other actors recognised the highly political nature of such a process. Consequently, *“completely different visions”* hampered police training provided in view of the 2010 elections, when the two donors involved (France and Belgium) transmitted very different messages on how to react to public manifestations (Interview 14). What seems to have worked relatively well, however, is cooperation and coordination between the political and technical level, with diplomatic engagement supporting and scrutinising the technical process, both in the context of police support as well as MDRP (Interviews 6, 28).

Cooperative versus coercive

International support for the dissolution of CNDD-FDD armed force comprised coercive as well as cooperative approaches, albeit no clear cut conditionalities were attached to any programme (Interview 36). A combination of strong national ownership with significant international assistance – and as a consequence, influence – characterised the process. As Rumin describes, formally *“Burundian authorities have full control of the mechanism and the implementation of activities, [...] yet are bound by very prescriptive WB procedures”*,

which limited their autonomy to design and implementing DDR (Rumin, 2012, p. 104). For example, the maximum size of the security institutions (army 25,000 and police 15,000) were *de facto* determined by the IMF.⁴⁸ This, in turn, curtailed the choice of the government to decide the number of combatants to be demobilised.

A peacekeeping force constitutes a very particular type of coercive engagement (at least it must be considered coercive if not all sides to the conflict jointly requested the force). In Burundi, an important contribution was made by 5,000 members of the military dispatched by South Africa under AMIB auspices and later integrated into the UN-mandated ONUB (Interview 14). Their presence and active military intervention when cantonments were attacked has been key to calming and stabilising the situation (Interviews 27, 28).

The international community jointly exercised political pressure at various instances to advance the process. For instance, “*international donors exercised enormous pressure*” to complete the demobilisation process before the 2005 elections. This is viewed very positively because it accelerated the process and prevented hardening of positions. Since there were problems in the cantonments at the same time, a slower, more stagnant process would have endangered the peace (Interview 27). In 2008, the IMF and WB pushed for a significant and quick reduction in the number of police officers (threatening to stop supporting the DDR process as well as budget support). However, this enforced rapidity apparently curtailed the sustainability of the process, as a high number of the thus demobilised returned to combat by joining the remaining rebel group (Interviews 6, 14). In the context of demobilisation, international pressure was hence effective in accelerating the process. However, as the second example shows, such measures require careful scrutiny of the goal and possible unintended side-effects.

Combining technical support closely with political dialogue has proved fruitful with regard to the police support. According to a donor representative responsible for implementation, this political support rendered the engagement more effective and sustainable. All but one donor engaged in this area practice this close interlinkage, and they have been able to stop the police from engaging in corruption or income generating activities (Interview 6). Nevertheless, this still relatively cooperative approach has not been sufficient to prevent or significantly reduce the high number of extra-judicial killings, allegedly carried out to a large extent by the police themselves (Interview 6).

Prioritising stability

In the context of DDR, the prioritisation of stability was one reason for a lax attitude towards corruption, with considerable adverse consequences on the larger political process (McMullin, 2013). According to observers, the fact that the World Bank was not able – or politically willing – to tackle considerable fraud and corruption in the MDRP programme reduced the success of the programme (Interviews 28, 35, 43). It had a negative impact on the perception of ex-combatants and slowed down the practical implementation. Nevertheless, it is not necessarily seen to have disturbed the overall process (Interviews 35, 43). In

48 Providing a large share of the budget, the IMF was strict on ensuring that expenses on security did not surpass certain margins that reflected a reasonable share of the total budget reflecting the size and needs of the country.

another instance, the presence of many combatants who had not yet been demobilised prevented the IMF from carrying through its initially decisive reaction to audacious corruption. When a substantial share of the national budget was not accounted for, the IMF decided to stop its budgetary support; however, it retracted its decision upon request from the donors when resulting price hikes provoked considerable tensions and threatened to destabilise the process as a whole (Interview 18).

3.3 Elections 2010

The fact that [the opposition parties] boycotted has derailed many things. That was a major catastrophe for this country, for the democratisation process. The Burundian society is still paying for this (Interview 21).

Post-war elections are usually periods of heightened tensions and constitute an important first indicator with regard to the consolidation of peace and democracy. In 2005, Burundi had already successfully conducted a series of local and national elections only two years after major warfare had ended. These elections caused a fundamental reshuffling of the political landscape and initiated a trend towards one-party dominance of the former rebel group CNDD-FDD facing a weak opposition. This raised the stakes for the 2010 elections, as well as hopes of reducing the domination by CNDD-FDD and of achieving a broader distribution of power (Falch, 2008). In particular, since by 2010 the last remaining rebel group, Palipehutu-FNL, had also stopped fighting and transformed itself into a political party (changing its name to FNL (National Forces of Liberation⁴⁹)). Thus, the 2010 elections constituted another significant milestone in the Burundi political process, having the potential to significantly strengthen peace and democracy.

Despite a relatively smooth (technical) organisation, the elections as a political event are overwhelmingly judged as a failure and in fact constituted a setback to democracy. Ambitiously, five polls were scheduled between May and September 2010. Starting with communal polls, presidential and parliamentary elections followed, while indirect Senate elections and elections at the smallest administrative unit (hill) came last. After unexpectedly suffering a serious defeat in the communal elections, the opposition parties accused the winning CNDD-FDD of fraud, called for a re-run of the elections and threatened to boycott the subsequent polls. National and international election observers, however, proclaimed that the elections had been in accordance with international standards. Although they acknowledged minor imperfections, these were judged as insufficient to call the credibility of the results into question. Only the most important Tutsi-representing party, UPRONA, and some minor parties could be convinced to participate in the legislative and senatorial elections. The remaining opposition parties organised themselves into the alliance ADC-Ikibiri (Alliance des Démocrates pour la Changement au Burundi/Democratic Alliance for Change) and carried the boycott through. In reaction, the government curtailed political freedoms and arrested opposition party members. Politically motivated killings occurred on both sides and mounting tensions drove some opposition politicians into exile and hiding. The thus practically uncontested elections reinforced the dominant position of the CNDD-FDD, which not only supplied the president but also gained a vast majority of 76% in the parliament.

49 Because the ethnic connotation of Palipehutu ‘for the Hutu people’ was prohibited by the constitution.

Nevertheless, although the 2010 elections did not realise their full positive potential, an outright return to civil war (which might also have been a possible development, albeit not highly likely) fortunately did not ensue either. Yet, political tensions have not been resolved; instead the course of the elections further hardened political stances.

The boycott by the main opposition parties had serious consequences for the democratisation process, as well as for stability in the country. Because of the boycott, the CNDD-FDD legally acquired quasi-absolute power, which it used (and abused) to further weaken, intimidate and oppress the opposition in the years to come (Interviews 3, 7, 10). The situation provoked civil society and the media to increasingly assume the role of the (missing) opposition scrutinising and criticising government activities. This provoked tensions with the government, which responded by restricting civil liberties. Furthermore, what is particularly concerning is the increase in politically motivated violence. A high number of extra-judicial killings occurred in the years after the elections, mostly attributed to the national police forces; these largely met with impunity. In addition, most parties (among them, and most pronounced and the ruling party with their youth wing Imbunerakure) maintain armed groups (Human Rights Watch [HRW], 2010; Simpson, 2011; United States Security Council [UNSC], 2010). This indicates that political contest has shifted away from the political arena and that raw force is once again perceived as a valid option. Despite these worrying developments, though, the situation has not escalated violently so far. Yet, in the run-up to the 2015 elections and controversies around the third mandate of Nkurunziza, violence and persecution of opposition members intensify and thousands of refugees are leaving the country.

In contrast to 2005, when the elections were organised under the auspices of the UN, the responsibility to organise the elections in 2010 lay with the people of Burundi themselves. Moreover, UN peacekeeping troops were no longer present to administer security. Yet, donors still contributed 85% of the electoral budget in 2010 (Vandeginste, 2011) and provided substantial technical support. International support was principally channelled through a basket fund organised by 15 donors⁵⁰ to support the electoral process. The main activities were technical and logistical assistance to the electoral commission (at the different administrative levels), civic and voter education, and support of administrative costs. In addition, some donors (including a few contributors to the basket fund⁵¹) provided bilateral assistance directly to the electoral commission (Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante/CENI) for specific topics such as securitisation or providing facilities. International observer missions, most importantly that of the EU, were deployed to supervise the electoral process. Moreover, financial and technical support had been provided to media and civil society organisations.

3.3.1 Domestic process and donor engagement

The following sub-section analyses the key elements of the 2010 elections, namely the political context, the organisation of the electoral process, the credibility of the results, the

50 Australia, Belgium, Canada, the UN Peacebuilding Commission, European Commission, Egypt, France, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, UNDP, United Kingdom, Sweden, Switzerland, Norway.

51 Belgium, the European Commission, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the UN Peacebuilding Commission.

boycott, as well as the peacefulness of the process. For each topic, the paper discusses internal dynamics and relevant aspects before turning towards donor engagement impacting the process.

Political context – (un)fair contestation

The 2010 elections were overshadowed by political developments since 2005. Backed by the comfortable majority which the CNDD-FDD gained in the earlier elections, they increasingly monopolised power in their hands and alienated the opposition at various instances (Falch, 2008; Reyntjens, 2005). One example is the composition of the Cabinet following the 2005 elections.⁵² Although in line with the ethnic power-sharing arrangements defined in the constitution, the number of cabinet posts received by the opposition parties did not correspond with the number of seats their share of votes actually required according to constitutional provisions⁵³ (Boshoff & Ellermann, 2010; Falch, 2008; Reyntjens, 2005).

In addition, the 2010 electoral environment has been preloaded by an uneven playing field for the competing political parties. Opposition parties did not have sufficient financial means to organise their campaigns and did not receive financial support from the state despite legal provisions. In contrast, the CNDD-FDD resorted to state finances, and the incumbent President Nkurunziza had been using his position for political campaign throughout the country since his inauguration in 2005 (Interviews 11, 37; EU, 2010). Even more critically, the government intimidated and oppressed the opposition, whose activities have repeatedly been restricted or disturbed⁵⁴ (Interviews 11, 14, 31; El Abdellaoui, 2010; Hofmeier, 2010; HRW, 2010; Vandeginste, 2011). The electoral commission did not react upon persecution of the opposition nor did it intervene when the parties were not able to campaign freely (Interview 38).

Similarly, Burundi's international partners did not react strongly to the authoritarian tendencies of the ruling party. With regard to the particular example presented above, they did not raise alarm when the composition of the cabinet was adjusted, and were probably mainly concerned – and thus satisfied – that the ethnic dimension of the quotas had been fulfilled. While this was indeed important, from a democratic perspective it should have been alarming that the opposition parties did not receive the full share of positions that the election results stipulated (irrespective of the ethnic quotas).

The UN organised Dialogue Forums from 2007-2009, which were successful in fostering dialogue between government, opposition and civil society according to an external evaluation. However, while similar forums organised by BINUB *after* the elections were

52 Another example of undemocratic tendencies became apparent in 2007 when frictions within the CNDD-FDD caused a deadlock in the parliament. Eventually the ruling party pressured the constitutional court to legitimise replacement of its dissident parliamentarians – in contradiction to an explicit constitutional provision – and regained the legislative majority (Boshoff & Ellermann, 2010; Falch, 2008).

53 “Ministers are appointed from parties having obtained at least 5% of the vote at the parliamentary elections; portfolios are attributed according to the percentage of seats they hold in the National Assembly” (Reyntjens, 2005, p. 129; Constitution de Burundi, 2005).

54 They were not allowed to meet or establish office before the official two-month campaign period; afterwards meetings had been prohibited, disturbed or cancelled at the last minute (Interviews 11, 14, 31).

widely praised by interviewees, they could not recall similar efforts in the pre-election period. Possibly, these Dialogue Forums were either not effective, or had simply not been sufficient to overcome the distrust and competition dominating the political scene in a sustainable manner.

Prior to the elections, politically motivated violence was instigated by almost all major parties⁵⁵, in particular the ruling CNDD-FDD. This was principally done through a militarisation of party youth wings (HRW, 2010; ICG, 2010). In reaction, several key international partners voiced concerns about the deteriorating situation. Outspoken criticism by BINUB in its report to the Security Council provoked the government to ask for the replacement of the head of BINUB, Youssef Mahmoud (BINUB, 2012; UNSC, 2010). Nevertheless, according to observers, this international pressure helped to improve the political climate and it was possible to contain the violence (if apparently not sustainably) (El Abdellaoui, 2010; ICG, 2010).

The electoral process

Paving the way for the elections, agreements on procedures and institutions to prepare the elections were reached in time and in an inclusive manner. This achievement is all the more relevant since it was politically challenging. Only after weeks of dispute was a compromise reached on the composition of the electoral commission (Interviews 14, 17; ICG, 2010; UNSC, 2010). Consequently, the commission was established late. Similarly, another difficult process resulted in an agreement with regard to changes to the electoral code, such as the sequence of elections, as well as ballot papers⁵⁶ (Interviews 17, 24). Serious controversies also had to be overcome when the incumbent president strove to influence the legal framework in his favour (Interviews 14, 17). Delays in the preparation eventually led to a postponement of the elections,⁵⁷ though without further impact on the process.

Burundi's international partners accompanied these processes to create an effective and consensual electoral framework. To this end, they facilitated discussions and supported the drafting of proposals, for example through Dialogue Forums organised by the UN. Eventually, concerted diplomatic pressure by the international community was instrumental to achieving the agreements on the electoral code as well as the establishment of the CENI (El Abdellaoui, 2009; ICG, 2010; Vandeginste, 2011, p. 326).

A remarkable achievement in the yet inexperienced democracy is the positive assessment by observers and analysts that the elections were well organised (Interviews 19, 22, 42, 7,

55 Compared with the 2014 situation, the militarisation was less pronounced (Interviews 31, 41). Nevertheless, discourse and actions were perceived as more violent than in 2005.

56 There had been criticism regarding the multiple ballot papers used in 2005 when people could take the remaining ballot papers home and thus demonstrate/prove their vote for a particular party. Therefore, a second envelope and urn was introduced for the discarded ballot papers in 2010 (Interviews 17, 24).

57 Due to disagreement on its composition as well as late funding, the electoral commission had been established late (Interview 13, 14, 31). Moreover, logistical problems during packing and distributing of the ballot papers contributed to the postponement (Abderhamane, Thompson, & Manirambona, 2011). Delays with voter registration led to mistakes regarding the number and distribution of ballots, so that CENI ordered new ballots to be printed at the last minute in South Africa, provoking the three days deferment (BINUB, 2012).

14, 41). This is especially the case as an ambitious five polls were held in the short period between the end of May and early September, described by one interviewee as an “*electoral marathon*” (Interview 24). A number of technical difficulties occurred nonetheless during the organisation of the elections. Voting booths were not well isolated and not everyone received a voting identity card in time; electricity cuts hampered the counting process; and insufficient vehicles made it necessary to carry urns on foot (Interviews 14, 31). The process was further impaired by the fact that a considerable number of party representatives left their posts in the voting offices before the counting started because they had not brought food (Interviews 14, 21, 24, 41). Although these issues did not cause major problems for the electoral process itself, they have been used by the opposition to challenge the outcome of the elections.

International financial and technical support to the 2010 elections was considerable; 85% of the electoral budget was incurred internationally. All interviewees agreed that, without this support, Burundi would not have been able to conduct the elections in a similar manner (see for example Interviews 22, 38, 41). The CENI, for instance, received infrastructure, material and logistical support, while the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme)-administered basket fund also provided technical assistance to enable the new institution to organise the process effectively.⁵⁸ Yet, an evaluation of the basket fund judged that even if CENI seemed to be well prepared, it still lacked sufficient technical assistance and financial means (Abderhamane et al., 2011).

Despite the substantial contributions international support was able to make, some problems limited its effectiveness. The basket fund was established late because the government would have preferred direct financial support. This delay left only a fairly short period to prepare the elections – although, once established, the technical support team started working very quickly and according to one interviewee did extraordinary work in preparing the electoral process in a very short period of time (Interviews 14, 25).

Credibility of results

In general, the elections were judged to be in accordance with international norms by national as well as international observers, in particular a large EU observer mission (COSOME et al., 2010; EU, 2010). Burundian civil society organisations had organised themselves into a consortium to monitor the elections, the Coalition de la Société Civile pour le Monitoring Electoral (COSOME), which provided an independent, national scrutiny. Against the background of the usually highly critical stance of civil society vis-à-vis the government, the positive assessments by COSOME significantly enhanced the credibility of the results. Various donors channelled their support to and through civil society organisations thus providing them with financial, technical and political support. As many NGOs depend significantly (or even as much as 100 per cent) on external funding, this support was critical in facilitating their positive role (Interview 21). More specifically, a variety of donors⁵⁹ directly supported COSOME financially and through

58 This included capacity building, but also assistance to produce voters’ registers or assistance in terms of achieving transparency (Abderhamane et al., 2011).

59 The EU, Belgium, the Netherlands, the United States, and the National Endowment for Democracy were mentioned by COSOME as supporting donors, yet it remains unclear whether the support was given in a coordinated manner.

capacity building to provide civic education and election monitoring (Interview 22). Despite these positive assessments by election observers, opposition parties accused the winning CNDD-FDD of electoral fraud. The complaints were only voiced after the publication of results, however, and no proof of large-scale fraud could be presented (Interviews 13, 24).

The results diverged strongly from prior estimation, which saw CNDD-FDD and FNL in close competition. With hindsight, however, the results do not seem unrealistic, as President Nkurunziza was indeed very popular. In addition, the incumbent party, the CNDD-FDD, had better access to money and to possibilities to attract supporters (Interview 13). Most interviewees acknowledged that international election observers had played an important role in lending credibility to the electoral process. During the dispute regarding the legitimacy of the election results, both sides tried to gain the support of the international community, knowing that this could be decisive in legitimising the results (Interviews 11, 17, 31, 38). Concertedly, the members of the international community remained firm in their conviction that the communal elections had been well organised and that a re-run was out of question. After a strategic meeting called by BINUB, they gave a joint statement in early June asking all political parties to continue participating, *de facto* endorsing the legitimacy of the polls (ICG, 2011; Vandeginste, 2011, p. 319).

Despite this consensus, some opposition and civil society members criticised the relatively quick international statement that the elections were generally free and fair (although it acknowledged imperfections) and felt that their concerns had not been taken seriously⁶⁰ (Interviews 9, 22). In particular, the assessments focused strongly on the elections themselves, while the restrictions in the run-up to the elections were neglected. This might also have been caused by the fact that international observers only arrived shortly before the election date and because some lacked prior experience in the African context, as certain interviewees criticised (Interviews 13, 38). Moreover, the boycotting parties accused the internationals of having only focused on a peaceful electoral process, without independently verifying the results (Hofmeier, 2010). Even more critically, according to Jamila El Abdellaoui, the EU observation mission had rephrased an initially more critical assessment upon request, which discredited their assessment in the eyes of the opposition (El Abdellaoui, 2010).

The boycott

Limits to fair contestation and the politically preloaded atmosphere probably set the stage for the boycott. The organisation of the election in itself did not provide serious grounds for contention, although deficiencies helped to nurture doubts. A key reason triggering the actual decision to boycott seems to have been failed expectation management. Apparently, every party was convinced it would win and everybody was very surprised about the results (Interviews 12, 37, 41). The international community might have unintendedly fed these expectations in two ways: Prior to elections, international and national observers agreed in their estimation that the ruling CNDD-FDD would not receive more than 40-50% (El Abdellaoui, 2010). In their efforts to persuade Palipehutu-FNL leader Agathon

60 Such as the statement of the first Vice-president Yves Sahinguvu, responsible for the coordination of the public domain and security (including organising elections) declaring that there had been fraud, but which was not even mentioned in the observation reports (Interview 9).

Rwasa to stop fighting and join the political process, they not only ‘pampered him a bit’, but furthermore argued – as was the general expectation – that if the armed group transformed into a political party, it would be a close contender to CNDD-FDD in the elections (El Abdellaoui, 2010, p. 9). When he actually joined, relief was strong and Rwasa received a very warm welcome and much attention and interest also in diplomatic circles, which probably confirmed his high expectations for the elections (Interview 21).⁶¹ One diplomatic representative described Rwasa’s entry to Bujumbura after laying down arms as follows: *“People came to meet him in masses. Also ambassadors, not only Burundians [...] I think it was almost a religious thing coming in. So he thought he would win”* (Interview 21).

Against this background, the results of the communal elections were difficult to accept by the opposition. Apart from the FNL, which was new to the political game, the other opposition parties had nurtured high hopes of re-entering the political arena in which they had been increasingly sidelined by CNDD-FDD, in particular since 2007 (Boshoff & Ellermann, 2010). In combination with perceptions of an uneven playing field, repression and incidents of violence, this convinced the opposition apparently that they had never stood a fair chance in any case (Vandeginste, 2011).

The electoral commission played a key, albeit not a very positive, role in the entire process. Several of its decisions were rather unfavourable and prevented the opposition’s doubts from being dispelled with regard to the accuracy of the results. The tight electoral schedule and constitutional provisions only allowed a limited timeframe in which to present allegations. Possibly fearing to cause an institutional vacuum, the CENI was not responsive to demands by the opposition for more time for investigations (Interviews 14, 31). An opposition representative claimed that the CENI rejected dialogue to address the errors highlighted by the opposition (Interview 9). When the opposition raised charges of fraud and intimidation in late June, the commission did not investigate the allegations (ADC-Ikibiri, 2010; HRW, 2010). In addition, a lack of transparency is widely perceived to have weakened the electoral process (Interviews 13, 14, 22, 29). This is principally due to the CENI’s refusal to publish the electoral protocols and to provide protocols to the party representatives as prescribed (EU, 2010), which prevented a verification that might have appeased the opposition, dispelled their doubts and rebutted the arguments.

With regard to CENI’s role, the substantial international assistance to the commission suggests that they had a possibility of influencing its attitude. In particular, the technical support focused among other things on enhancing transparency, an area which was strongly criticised. Yet, probably the influence was limited by the fact that the CENI’s basic funding was not provided by the basket fund but was 18% financed from the state

61 While a more cautious or conservative stance towards predicting results would have been desirable, it is important to acknowledge once again the fact that FNL joined the political game, after still launching serious attacks on Bujumbura in 2008. As stated beforehand, this was an important precondition for peaceful elections.

budget⁶² (Interview 41). Opposing a postponement of the presidential elections, the international community supported CENI's stance in this regard.⁶³

How did domestic and international actors react to the looming boycott? CENI did not play a constructive role in this context. From its own statement it becomes apparent that it did not see it as part of its task to ensure maximum participation. Interpreting its mandate fairly technically, a representative simply argued that it had to accept the parties' decision to boycott (Interview 24). Furthermore, tensions prevented a fruitful dialogue (Interview 38). Feeling that their concerns were discounted by CENI, the opposition came to perceive the electoral commission as partisan to the ruling party⁶⁴ (Interviews 9, 11, 22). Despite the consensual⁶⁵ agreement on its composition, CENI lost the trust of ADC-Ikibiri. In consequence, they demanded a replacement of the commission along with the annulations of the communal polls (EU, 2010). Combined with the deterioration of the electoral climate in the aftermath of the communal polls, this led to a complete loss of faith in the electoral process by the opposition (El Abdellaoui, 2010, p. 9).

In reaction to the looming boycott, diplomatic actors made tremendous efforts to convince the opposition to return to the process. *"There was a lot of political pressure on the opposition not to boycott the national elections. I mean a lot. Really a lot"* (Interview 21). All the international partners were involved at a very high level: the Regional Initiative, South Africa, the African Union, the United Nations, the European Union well as bilateral representations, in particular Belgium (Interviews 12, 17, 21, 31, 40). According to Vandeginste, the international community *"spared no effort"* to ensure at least a minimal level of political pluralism (Vandeginste, 2011, p. 324). Support was also channelled through NGOs such as the local branch of Initiative & Changement, which tried 'day and night' to convince the opposition to continue; or the Burundi Leadership Training Programme, which has been praised for its positive role (Interviews 32, 37). To a limited extent, they have been successful: thanks to all these efforts, the main Tutsi-representing party UPRONA and some other minor parties returned to the process and contested the legislative polls (Interviews 13, 40, 41).⁶⁶

Despite their strong engagement, however, the opposition perceived the role of the international actors fairly critically. To some extent, this might derive from their dashed hopes or even expectations that the international community would pressure the government to re-run the elections (Interview 39) or to negotiate a new power-sharing arrangement (Interview 12). However, in some regards, the attitudes of the internationals might also have involuntarily contributed to the hardened stance of the opposition.

62 A fact which is likely to have curtailed its independence – at one point, local media actually reported that CENI funding had been withheld by the government because it was discontent with new recruitment (El Abdellaoui, 2009).

63 Such a postponement would have provided time to take the concerns of the opposition seriously. Yet, reluctance to allow such a delay is understandable, given the history – donors probably wanted to prevent a scenario similar to the 1990s, when the 1993 elections gave rise *"to endless rounds of political negotiations, major instability and widespread violence"* (Vandeginste, 2011, p.324).

64 An issue undermining CENI's credibility cited several times was its statement that ballot papers had exclusively been printed in South Africa, which was later proven wrong when it became known that at least some ballots had been printed in Burundi (Interviews 13, 31).

65 Apart from CNDD.

66 This ensured not only participation of the most important opposition party, but moreover averted a constitutional crisis, as the quotas legally prescribed opposition participation in the government.

The opposition perceived the efforts by the international community to prevent the boycott primarily as pressure to continue. The international community issued public statements calling upon the opposition to accept the results and return to the process, thereby refusing to take their concerns seriously (ICG, 2011). One opposition representative characterised the interaction as a “*dialogue between the deaf*” (Interview 38). Of course, international and national observers equally assessed the elections in general very positively and the opposition was not able to actually provide proof that fraud had taken place. Yet, the limited means by the opposition parties combined with restricted access to protocols and limited time to present allegations did little to reassure the opposition (Interview 38). Moreover, the rephrased and uncritical assessment by the international monitoring missions was not helpful either. In this situation, possibly a more amicable approach might have been more fruitful.

This criticism regards more the nuancing of the assessments, without calling the overall positive assessment into question. Analysts and domestic observers agree with the observation missions that the elections were not perfect, but that there had not been major fraud (Interviews 11, 13, 31, 14). However, a more critical, nuanced statement might have provided the winning party with a less comfortable position, and enhanced its inclination to enter into negotiations with the opposition about the organisation of the remaining elections (Interview 22). Without calling the results as such in question, donors could have sent a signal by allowing more time for verification, or addressing concerns through measures for subsequent polls.

Was the boycott justified? This is not easy to say. The uneven playing field, in particular restrictions on campaign activities experienced by the opposition are valid points of complaint. However, the opposition did not centre its allegations on these issues. Instead, they complained of fraud, and only did so after the results had already been proclaimed. Since election observers acknowledged only limited fraud that is unlikely to have altered the results, their allegations were largely discarded. The timing of the allegations, which reminds one of similar reactions to unfavourable results in other emerging democracies⁶⁷ further reduces the credibility of the claims. However, the fact that all actors expected to fare well in the elections, also helps to explain why they might not have criticised the process prior to the publication of results. In doing so, they would have undermined (and thus delegitimised) their own expected victory. Although unclear if warranted, in retrospect, the boycott by the opposition is widely judged as a grave political error and lack of maturity of the respective parties (Interviews 4, 10, 19).

Peacefulness

Despite the electoral boycott, overall stability prevailed during the electoral period (Interviews 26, 31, 37; EU, 2010; Hofmeier, 2010). Although violence has been an issue, previous fears of large-scale escalation of violence, possibly even a return to major warfare, did not materialise.

67 In the 2013 elections in Nepal, the incumbent party similarly claimed irregularities when it became apparent that they had lost a considerable share of votes but later reconciled itself with its position as opposition (Gellner, 2014).

The militarisation of youth wings in the pre-electoral period was successfully contained before the elections took place. Yet, during the electoral period, incidents of election-related violence occurred, further contaminating the electoral climate (Interview 37; HRW, 2010). After the communal elections, the situation deteriorated and an alarming number of grenade explosions were reported. Attributing these to the opposition, CNDD-FDD resorted to intimidation and oppression and issued arrests. Between April and September, at least 20 people had been killed; both from CNDD-FDD and opposition parties. Several opposition leaders went into exile. Therefore, it is remarkable that even in this context the situation did not escalate: fortunately, violence subsided shortly after the presidential polls without seriously destabilising the country (Interviews 11, 13, 21, 22, 32, 41; Hofmeier, 2010; ICG, 2011).

The media played a positive role and contributed to the relatively smooth electoral process. The Burundian media has been praised for having played an important, positive role by reporting faithfully and regularly on incidents and results in a concerted manner, which enhanced transparency and prevented rumours from spreading (Interviews 24, 36, 38; EU, 2010). Donors supported the Burundian media in a joint effort to ensure that they made a positive contribution. The strength of their support was a common approach by all donors to a consortium of Burundian media in order to improve the quality and reach of the media coverage as well as its positive impact on the process (Interviews 36, 40; ICG, 2010).

The presence of the international community, closely following and supporting the electoral process, had a positive effect on stability. This is although – in contrast to 2005 – no international military force was present and less international money was provided for ensuring security for the elections (which was also reflected in more insecurity at voting offices) (Interview 41). After the communal elections, diplomatic representations were very active in providing advice and making an effort to prevent political violence (Interview 17; Vandeginste, 2011). When violence erupted nonetheless, the international community was very concerned and sent highest level facilitators (among them UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, although his intervention was not regarded positively by the opposition alliance) (Vandeginste, 2011). The international efforts generally helped to appease the situation and enable the election process to continue (Interviews 38, 41).

In summary, the electoral process was marked by important accomplishments, to which international assistance had contributed significantly. This included agreements on the electoral code as well as the composition of the CENI in preparation for the elections, reached through international facilitation and also political pressure. Furthermore, overall, considerable technical and financial assistance enabled the very effective organisation of the elections. Political engagement as well as international observer missions were instrumental to ensuring relative stability for the electoral period. Critical support to the media and civil society also had a positive impact in this regard. Nevertheless, these achievements could not bear fruit due to the boycott overshadowing the process. The decision to boycott was provoked by an unfavourable electoral environment, marked by the authoritarian behaviour of the ruling party, an uneven playing field, and politically motivated violence combined with technical deficiencies and elevated expectations. The way the situation was handled by CENI and the international community once the opposition parties threatened to boycott was not entirely favourable and not conducive to

find an amicable solution. These key elements of the process, as well as international support, are summarised once more in Table 3.

Table 3: Elections 2010			
Main elements of critical juncture	Internal explanatory factors	International contributions	Crucial international contribution
Fair contestation limited	• CNDD-FDD monopolised power • Campaign funding unequal • Repression and intimidation of opposition parties, no action by CENI		- International community did not react strongly
Electoral process	• Agreement on procedures and institutions reached (CENI, electoral code) • Delays and deficiencies did not disturb the process		+ Financial and technical support, basked fund → 85% of electoral budget + Political pressure on reaching agreements
Credibility of results	• COSOME assessed elections positively	+ Support to media and civil society	+ International community assessed that elections were in line with international standards
Opposition boycotts after communal elections	• Preloaded political climate • Doubts were not dispelled, stances hardened • Elevated expectations • CENI no constructive role • UPRONA continues	- Raised expectations to convince Palipehutu-FNL to join political arena - Proclaimed projections did not come true	+ Helped convince UPRONA to join - Diplomatic efforts to prevent boycott altogether failed
Peace prevailed	• No major escalation of violence • Concerted media coverage improved transparency • Election related violence occurred	+ Presence and political monitoring of process + Highest level facilitators	
Source: Author			

The critical discussion of donor engagement does not imply that donors were responsible for the boycott ultimately taking place. However, there might have been a chance for the international community to prevent this situation. Foresighted behaviour could have eased the situation in various ways. Firstly, a clear and early reaction to authoritarian tendencies, repression and intimidation could have improved the electoral climate and facilitated a more level playing field. Secondly, a discussion on the different scenarios of election outcomes could have helped to better prepare participants for unwelcome results. In

addition, a different attitude (less pressure, more comprehending, and more compromise oriented) during the mediation efforts might have been able to rebalance the interest calculations, yet this is rather speculative. In general, it needs to be emphasised that the international community also contributed positively to appeasing the situation and invested huge efforts at the highest political level to prevent the boycott.

3.3.2 Explanatory factors

Similar to the other critical junctures, international support significantly contributed to realising important achievements in the context of the 2010 elections. This occurred through substantial financial and technical assistance, without which the elections could not have been realised. In addition, the international community accompanied the process at the political level. At various instances, this helped to overcome obstacles for the electoral process – such as disagreement over the legal framework – and helped to contain violence instigated by party youth wings. However, with regard to the boycott, the diplomatic efforts failed to achieve their goal and to convince the opposition to continue. At this critical juncture, the three explanatory factors do once again help to explain the effectiveness of international support.

Prioritising stability

The interviews confirmed existing literature that throughout the 2010 electoral process the main preoccupation of the donor community had been to maintain stability. Democratic norms were aspired to, but donor representatives conceded that procedures were applied “*a little bit more leniently*” (Interviews 19, 23). Vandeginste claims that fears of instability, which were enhanced by regional unrest and experiences of violent elections in Kenya and Rwanda, lowered the standards for Burundi (Vandeginste, 2011, p. 324). Devon Curtis’ analysis confirms this conclusion, stating that international and regional peacebuilders have accepted “*good enough peace*” in Burundi and authoritarian practices in return for relative stability (Curtis, 2012, p. 88).

The political space had been increasingly curtailed since 2005; in particular in the immediate run-up to the 2010 elections, repression, intimidation and violence infested the political climate. In prioritising stability, the donor community failed to react in a stringent manner on alarming limitations to democratic procedures and freedoms and thus missed an opportunity to strengthen democratic checks and balances at an early stage.

Most importantly, the handling of the boycott followed the logic of prioritisation and affected the democratisation process in a negative way. One interviewee observed that in particular after the boycott loomed – signalling that the process could get out of hand – the primary concern of the international community was to maintain stability (Interview 41). In this line, the insistence of the international community to stick to the electoral schedule might have been caused by the same considerations for stability. Donors most probably wanted to prevent a scenario similar to the 1990s, when the 1993 elections gave rise “*to endless rounds of political negotiations, major instability and widespread violence*” (Vandeginste, 2011, p. 324). This prioritisation might have influenced the attitude of the international community perceived by the opposition as not taking its concerns into account. While there were huge efforts to ensure political pluralism and convince the

opposition to return to the process, an observer states that after UPRONA acceded – hence ensuring that the ethnic quotas could be observed – the international community appeared satisfied and it became less important that the other parties boycotted (Interview 41). Apparently, the international rationale was that a delay contained the risk of destabilising the country and therefore proceeding with the electoral process as planned would be safer. In these short-term considerations, however, the internationals did not take the detrimental long-term consequences into account, which could (and in fact did) ensue from the resulting limited pluralism. They overlooked that a party already showing authoritarian tendencies beforehand might use its fortified powers to solidify its position. The political developments after 2010 (authoritarian tendencies, dismantling and debilitating opposition parties and, in reaction, armament of party youth wings on all sides) not only impaired the nascent democracy, but are increasingly destabilising the political process. Mounting incidents of politically motivated violence in the run-up to the 2015 elections indicate that they can also impair the stability of the country.

Coercive versus cooperative

The international community supported the 2010 elections with a mixture of cooperative and coercive instruments. Very cooperative support was provided in the form of financing and technical assistance for CENI, the media and civil society organisations, without any formal conditionalities attached (Interviews 12, 14, 25, 36). High level facilitation successfully aided the process in some instances, such as reaching agreements on procedural issues. There was also constant political dialogue in which the international community voiced criticism with regard to the political climate. One could assume that Burundi's high aid dependency lent considerable weight to such statements⁶⁸, increasing the coercive character of political dialogue in this context. However, it is questionable if these statements truly had an impact without a real risk of more substantial consequences being taken by the internationals. The government's demand to have the head of BINUB replaced (which was complied with) shows how little the criticism impressed the government. Therefore, it is difficult to judge if this political dialogue constituted a coercive or more cooperative instrument.

Definitely more coercive, political pressure is frequently cited to have influenced decisions and impacted positively on the process at several instances, for instance, concluding agreements on electoral law or composition of the CENI. However, regarding the efforts to prevent the boycott, such pressure might actually have been counterproductive. Of course, to qualify as a strictly coercive measure, such pressure would need to be accompanied by tangible measures or threats thereof – such as sanctions or withholding of material support. Since the opposition was targeted, none of these leverages existed, which might be precisely why they were ineffective. In this situation, an altogether more cooperative stance might thus have helped, so that the opposition felt that their concerns were being taken seriously. This is not to mean accepting the demands by the opposition outright, but possibly acknowledging and investigating the issues raised by them. In these sensitive, political areas, perceptions do play an important role, which makes the question very relevant, how the negative perception of international efforts by the opposition could have been avoided.

68 Indicative for the political weight of the donor community is the fact that the legitimacy of the elections strongly depended on the international assessment (Interviews 11, 17, 31, 38).

Coordination

Coordination of donor activities and contributions to the electoral process were mixed. The fact that 15 donors organised a basket fund⁶⁹ to support the electoral process is already a positive step to improve coordination. This joint endeavour, though, was curtailed by some donors⁷⁰ providing additional bilateral assistance and others deciding to channel their support outside the basket fund: the African Union, China, Germany, and the United States (through the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and the National Democratic Institute).

In order to assist the electoral process, the international representatives established two core coordination mechanisms one year before the elections: one at the diplomatic and one at the technical level.⁷¹ In addition *ad hoc* meetings between the government, CENI and the UN were held as required (BINUB, 2012; Scanteam, 2010). Moreover, IFES was charged with coordinating aid given outside the basket fund (Interview 41) and participated in weekly meetings with CENI and UN, so that a link was established between the basket fund and other support, in particular NGOs (Interview 41).

In general, most interviewees perceived the coordination as satisfactory. Close cooperation between CENI, UNDP and IFES, for example, allowed IFES to cover short-term needs in several cases when disbursements by the basket fund were delayed for procedural reasons (Interview 41). Coordinating their support to local media, donors were able to insist on concerted coverage, which helped to avoid confusion and rumours through opposing statements.

At the political level, the international community spoke with one voice when the boycott ensued, both in their assessment of the elections, but also vis-à-vis the opposition. In the latter case, the united stance might have been rather unfavourable for resolving the issue. With regard to the tense political climate in the run-up to the elections, interviewees reported disagreement between donors over how to react⁷² (Interviews 12, 41). Thus, different positions and interests⁷³ (or a lack of strategic consensus) might have prevented a stronger reaction through a coordinated, united stance.

69 The basket fund's steering committee was co-chaired by UNDP and CENI, which ensured national ownership.

70 Belgium, the European Commission, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the UN Peacebuilding Commission.

71 1) A Consultative Strategic Committee taking strategic decisions at the diplomatic level, which was chaired by the Executive Representative of the UN Secretary-General; 2) a Technical Coordination Committee, which coordinated more directly the technical, financial and logistic support to the electoral process inside and outside the basket fund. It was chaired by the UNDP Country Director and oversaw the management of the basket fund.

72 For instance, EU and UNDP disagreed at a certain point with regard to the political climate, with the EU wanting to halt certain activities, while UNDP was charged with, and thus directly interested in, advancing the process (Interview 41).

73 Some of which were strongly influenced by geostrategic or historical considerations (Interview 12, 23).

4 Appraising the hypotheses: explaining the effectiveness of external support

Academic literature postulates that 1) prioritising stability over democracy, 2) choosing cooperative over coercive forms of cooperation, and 3) high levels of coordination positively affect the effectiveness of international support for peace and democracy. Yet, only the last of these hypotheses was confirmed: coordination of donor activities did indeed have a positive impact on their effectiveness. Contrary to expectations from the literature, prioritising stabilisation actually hampered democratisation and reduced the effectiveness of democracy support. Finally, the Burundi case calls for qualifications of the second hypothesis. Depending on the circumstances, either cooperative or coercive measures – or in particular a combination of both – rendered external support more effective.

Moreover, the analysis discloses the interrelatedness of the three explanatory factors presented in the hypotheses. The prioritisation of stability has influenced decisions on the form of cooperation. Despite being concerned with developments and perceiving a lack of political will from the government, donors have so far hesitated to cut aid, fearing negative consequences for the population, which could also impair stability. In addition, this prioritisation has provoked inconsequential behaviour in the IMF corruption scandal. This incident, but also the EU doubling its aid budget with a rather unfortunate timing, demonstrate how a lack of coordination (or of a common primary goal) undermines donor influence and renders coercive measures ineffective.

4.1 Prioritising stability hampers democratisation

You can only have a durable peace [...] if there is democracy. If you put everything on stability and less on democracy it's a very short term solution and you create a ticking time bomb (Interview 12).

The findings from Burundi have not confirmed the first hypothesis, which states that *Effective support to democracy requires prioritising stability in fragile contexts*. Similar to the other case study targeting this type of fragile state, conducted in Nepal, the research revealed that prioritising stability hampered the democratisation process. Both cases indicate the danger entailed in such a prioritisation first of all to weaken democratic institutions and procedures, but furthermore posing a possible threat to stability itself in the longer term.

In Burundi (as in Nepal) the end of the civil war initiated renewed democratisation. As a consequence, both the peace and the democratisation processes were pursued simultaneously and are closely intertwined. The nexus between peace and democracy is particularly relevant in this context of most fragile states, where stability often remains elusive and trade-offs need to be carefully managed.

The international community has clearly prioritised stability in its engagement in Burundi since the Arusha Agreement in 2000, an assessment which is shared by existing academic literature (Curtis, 2012, pp. 88-89; Vandeginste, 2011). This prioritisation did to some extent have a positive impact on the success of international support with regard to the dissolution of the CNDD-FDD and the 2005 elections. During the 2005 elections, priority

of international support has clearly been placed on stability rather than striving for the highest standard of democracy possible in this context (Curtis, 2012). This contributed to the successful and peaceful conduction of the elections only shortly after major warfare ceased to unsettle the country. Pressure to demobilise the largest rebel group before the 2005 elections is judged to have positively impacted the overall process. However, already with regard to government formation in the aftermath of the 2005 elections, it becomes clear that a sole focus on stability is not always justifiable if democratic principles are neglected in the course, even in such an immediate post-war situation. Solely focussing on the ethnic quotas, donors accepted without known protest that the government formation was not in line with important constitutional provisions. This had no apparent positive effect on stability – at least in hindsight, there are no indications that a different attitude would have provoked instability. Yet, it was a first step towards the concentration of power by the CNDD-FDD. Early and resolute reaction to undemocratic manoeuvres of the ruling party might have smoothed the political process and made the political derailment as it happened in 2010 less likely. Moreover, this could have helped to reduce the stakes, and thus political agitation and violence, surrounding the 2015 elections.

During the immediate pre-election period in 2010, donors once more put priority on furthering the peace in their efforts to prevent party militarisation and convince the last rebel group to give up arms and join the political scene. In their preoccupation with ensuring stability, they hesitated to react determinedly against intimidation and the restrictions put on the opposition. Moreover, they raised expectations with regard to expectable results, which later caused considerable frustration. Curtis shares the analysis that donors' willingness to accept authoritarian tendencies in return for stability had considerable negative consequences for the democratisation process: *"At key junctures, international peacebuilders largely turned a blind eye to governance abuses, human rights violations, and militarism, when confronted with the messy and contested politics of transition, as long as Burundi remained generally stable"* (Curtis, 2012, p. 75).

Recently, donor representatives seem to realise that a sole focus on stability – as pursued so far – appears to be insufficient. They now emphasise the need for pluralism and democratic norms. At the time of the research (May 2014), most international representatives stated that for the upcoming elections, they would place a stronger focus on the political environment and democratic norms. This has been articulated openly both in diplomatic speeches as well as in the arena of development cooperation (Interviews 14, 19, 22, 25). However, it seems that so far, donors have not translated these intents into practical consequences.

Another example of when prioritising stability had negative consequences for the larger political process in Burundi applies to corruption. The donor community accepted considerable corruption in the context of demobilisation, failing to respond with determination to obvious embezzlement. According to an implementer *"The MDRP programme – there was lots of corruption"*, and the World Bank was not capable or willing to prevent and/or tackle this (Interview 35). A former WB representative charged with implementation stated, *"My sense is that DDR was perceived by all as a way to buy time for peace to settle in. So it was more linked to the stabilising of the situation, and with the hope that stability would beget democracy"* (Interview 28).

In another case, the IMF actually stopped its budget support in 2007 when it discovered that USD 16 million – a substantial share of the annual budget – had not been accounted for. However, this caused considerable price hikes at a time many combatants had not yet been demobilised. When tensions mounted, donors became afraid that instability would spread and convinced the IMF to change its decision and release the money (Interview 18).

This acceptance of corruption in post-conflict situations appears comprehensible, since potential stabilising effects of corruption have become recognised among practitioners and academia alike (Zaum & Cheng, 2011). In Nepal, donors similarly accepted corruption in the intention of ‘buying peace’. However, this short-term solution can have severe consequences for the later political process (Zaum & Cheng, 2011). This is also the case in Burundi. As a diplomat states, extreme corruption among the elite has acquired a highly political dimension because it provides a double reason for the members of the ruling party to preserve power: 1) the aim to secure continuing access to resources; and 2) worry about being held accountable (Interview 4).

The general findings on this hypothesis, namely that prioritising stability beyond the immediate post-war period hampers democratisation in the longer term, closely coincide with conclusions drawn from the Nepali case. In Nepal, donors prioritised stability during the general elections held two years after the peace agreement, which had a positive effect at that time. Yet, continued prioritisation of stability prevented donors from taking a concerted stance in pushing for local elections when the opportunity presented itself, fearing that this could destabilise the central-level process. Increased participation and accountability at the local level, however, would have been an important tool for local involvement and clarification in the constitution drafting process and could thus have smoothened the process, which is ongoing for seven years already.

To conclude, in countries starting to emerge from this most fragile context, stability is still highly elusive, and therefore a prioritisation of stability can in some instances help to make international engagement more effective. However, even in such highly instable situations, a prioritisation of stability is not always justifiable or sensible. Both Burundi and Nepal show the risk entailed in delaying democratisation processes. Democratic standards and norms, such as fair contestation, were applied in a less stringent manner for the sake of stability, with reference to the sensitive political context. Yet, already early on, path dependencies were set, compromising the nascent democracy and narrowing the possibilities for further democratisation. What is more, in the long term, these developments even pose a danger to stability itself, as the violence and turmoil in the context of the 2015 elections in Burundi demonstrate. Therefore, even in most fragile situations it appears to be necessary to support democracy and stability in a gradual, but simultaneous way. In particular, to further democratisation, it seems fruitful to strengthen formal institutions such as democratic checks and balances.

4.2 Coercive versus cooperative forms of support

For us to use our financial support for the development of the country as a tool for more democracy, or to force the government in one way or another, is not easy, and it's not something that we are going to do unless the situation gets very bad (Interview 22).

Donors used different forms of engagement to support the peace and democratisation process in Burundi. Mostly, the support was provided in a cooperative manner, yet in some instances, more coercive measures have been employed. The second hypothesis examined in this research stipulated that *cooperative forms of support to democracy and stability are more conducive to the effectiveness of this support than coercive and conditioned forms of support*. Findings from Burundi do not support this hypothesis.⁷⁴ Instead, the analysis shows that, depending on the circumstances and alternative incentives in place, both cooperative and coercive measures can prove effective or ineffective. This section first discusses successful cases of the different forms of engagement, before outlining unsuccessful cases and then continues to discuss possible explanations.

Which forms of cooperation have been effective in supporting the peace and democratisation process in Burundi? In the context of all critical junctures, the cooperative instrument of mediation has facilitated agreements, helped to overcome blockages and furthered the processes (e.g. to agree on a draft constitution, adopt electoral legislation, or demobilisation). Technical assistance, funding and capacity development have been paramount to enabling important achievements. Nevertheless, there are also a number of coercive measures, which have successfully aided the Burundi peace and democratisation process. Most importantly, military engagement in varying scales has been instrumental, for example through the protection of political leaders returning from exile by bi- and multilateral (peacekeeping) forces. Moreover, analysts point out that frequently political pressure advanced the process. Often, it was probably in particular the combination of a cooperative approach at facilitating discussions and mediating between different positions together with diplomatic pressure at specific instances.

Apart from these examples demonstrating that indeed both cooperative and coercive measures can be successful, there are also examples when both forms of support have not been effective. Through dialogue, international actors repeatedly attempted to criticise and change the undemocratic behaviour of the government, in particular with regard to the 2010 elections. However, such concerns voiced for example in personal talks with government representatives apparently did not have a significant effect. Instead, the government furthered the disintegration of the opposition, restricted political liberties and successfully managed to curtail critical UN presence by requesting the replacement of the head of BINUB in reaction to critical reports and instigating a continuous downscaling of UN's political mission⁷⁵ (Interview 25; Curtis, 2012; Simpson, 2011). Instead of adjusting its behaviour, the government reacted to international criticism with reduced willingness to cooperate on political issues while tensions with the donor community also increased (Interview 4). In this context, cooperative behaviour did not prove fruitful. Instead, clear signals could have helped to translate aid into leverage aimed at improving the situation.

⁷⁴ This hypothesis was not a specific focus of the earlier case study on Nepal. Therefore, no findings from Nepal complement this sub-section.

⁷⁵ Over the past years, several Special Representatives have been replaced this way.

Nevertheless, coercive measures are not always the best choice: attempts to pressurise the opposition to refrain from boycotting the 2010 elections were also ineffective.

Both the more cooperative, as well as the fairly coercive forms of cooperation have been successful and unsuccessful in different situations. Thus, the question arises, under which conditions cooperative or coercive forms of support are more conducive to achieving the intended impact.

The variation in effectiveness apparently depends on the incentives external actors are able and willing to provide or impose in relation to the interests (and thus, incentives) already in place. In the cases where cooperative support was successful (e.g. mediation, unconditioned financial and technical support), the recipients themselves had a strong interest (and influence) in advancing the processes. Hence, in these cases, political will and ownership⁷⁶ were present. What were not effective were attempts to reduce or prevent authoritarian behaviour by the government in a cooperative way. In such cases, incentives provided by possibly displeased international partners (without credible negative consequences to be expected) were not strong enough to overcome the government's interest in strengthening and preserving its power. One would expect that Burundi's high aid dependence should give international criticism more weight. However, this leverage was reduced by past experience demonstrating that such criticism was unlikely to be followed by serious consequences.

More coercive measures are found in cases where actors could not be persuaded to take a certain course of action voluntarily. Here, tangible outside incentives such as military protection were able to stop the vicious circle and make room for other, more cooperative forms of rapprochement. However, in the case of the electoral boycott, external political pressure was not sufficient to incentivise the opposition to return to the process. This was probably because, apart from efforts to convince the opposition that they were acting against their own best interests (with persuasion clearly calling for a more cooperative approach), the international community did not have any leverage to alter their cost-benefit calculations. In this case, a more cooperative stance vis-à-vis the opposition would have been more promising; including compromise on some minor issues in order to find an acceptable solution for all, paired with political pressure on CENI and the CNDD-FDD to accept such a compromise on their part and refrain from repression or intimidation. One donor representative observed: *"We can run as many workshops on rule of law, witness protection and transitional justice, and democratisation in general [as we want, and] they can say the right thing, but they don't follow up"* (Interview 21). Essentially, the issue boils down to the question of political will (or ownership), without which a purely cooperative approach will not be effective.

Interestingly, the internationals differentiated in their attitude between the government and the opposition, yet their choices bore little fruit. They behaved more cooperatively vis-à-vis the government's authoritarian tendencies, although their development aid could have backed a harder stance. At the same time, they attempted to use political pressure on the opposition to return to the electoral process, without any direct leverage to impact their interest calculations.

⁷⁶ See (Grävingholt et al., 2013) for a discussion of the particular challenges in adhering to ownership in post-conflict situations.

However, deciding to employ more cooperative or more coercive measures is not always a decision of ‘either-or’. In certain circumstances, it is particularly the combination of different measures that heightens effectiveness. Thus, peacekeeping was a powerful tool to ensure stability, but at the same time the highly cooperative message that the last rebel group would also be eligible for the demobilisation programme once it decided to lay down its arms, provided an important disincentive to disrupt the process seriously (Interview 28). More generally, purely coercive measures without promoting mutual understanding and efforts to convince stakeholders are not likely to be effective; while on the other hand relying only on cooperative measures when facing a lack of political will is unlikely to suffice, in particular if political power is at stake.

So far, no official conditionalities have been attached to support given by the international partners in Burundi⁷⁷ (Interviews 4, 12, 23). Although donors finance over 50% of the national budget, they are highly reluctant to react upon critical political developments with financial consequences. Various diplomatic representatives described a responsibility trap, which creates a serious dilemma for engagement and provides an almost insurmountable obstacle to imposing effective conditionalities. They fear the responsibility – real and attributed by the government – if they cut financial contributions (Interviews 4, 14, 18). This responsibility trap is deepened by a very low level of economic development⁷⁸ and a high aid dependency. These concerns are, furthermore, influenced by the prioritisation of stability, as donors are afraid that repercussions on the population could impair stability (Interviews 14, 15). Such considerations and diverging stances within the donor community reduce their leverage to influence political developments through coercive as well as cooperative means due to a lack of coordination, and/or inconsequence.

However, there is a strong case that such incentives could have prevented negative developments, which currently challenge the peace and democratisation process. In demonstrating early on that authoritarian, repressive tendencies would not be accepted by the donor community (on whose financial contributions almost all national policies depend after all), donors could have prevented developments from taking the wrong direction. Instead, path dependencies were created, which eventually led to the current situation where a democratically legitimated, but increasingly authoritarian government has managed to further fragment and weaken the already frail opposition, while at the same time both ethnic antagonism as well as armed menace seem to be resurfacing. The assessment that imposing political conditions might have a positive impact and be necessary to improve the situation is also increasingly shared by Burundi’s international partners. Most donor or diplomatic representatives stated that they see the need to change their attitude and to take a more assertive stance vis-à-vis government transgressions on democratic liberties/norms. Conditionalities have been discussed in relation to future support, in particular in the context of the 2015 elections (Interviews 14, 19, 22, 25) but apparently have not been put into effect.

To avoid falling into the ‘responsibility trap’ without foregoing the opportunity to influence political developments, it is important to manage expectations adequately. Donors should

⁷⁷ However, at several instances the disbursement of money has been delayed for a short period of time (Interviews 23, 34).

⁷⁸ Socio-economic development remains extremely low in Burundi. It was the fifth poorest nation in terms of GDP (gross domestic product) per capita in 2012 and ranks among the ten lowest scores in the HDI (Human Development Index) (Central Intelligence Agency, 2014; UNDP, 2013).

not refrain from combining their support with governance-based performance indicators. These, however, should be detailed enough to allow for early, small-scale signals. This way, donors can demonstrate that their criteria need to be taken seriously. In addition, they can react before the situation becomes more acute and reduce the danger that they have to take tough decisions between overburdening their partners with radical aid cuts and accepting considerable repercussions for the population, or jeopardising their credibility with regard to political requirements through ‘business as usual’. This would help to manage expectations, and would most probably also be more effective than sudden, large-scale cuts. In Nepal, for instance, German support for local governance was phased out on the grounds of limited progress – such as holding local elections; yet, before this decision was taken, concern over the lack of local elections had not been raised as a matter of urgency in official intergovernmental meetings.

4.3 The positive impact of donor coordination

The third hypothesis targeted the organisation of support, expecting that *higher levels of coordination of support to democracy and stability are more conducive to the effectiveness of this support*. The findings from Burundi generally confirm this hypothesis. The Nepali case study provided an even more pronounced confirmation of this hypothesis, demonstrating that in particular a common primary goal shared by all donors engaged in the process is helpful to augment effectiveness.

At times, donors in Burundi had diverging priorities and interests with regard to specific projects or with regard to positioning themselves vis-à-vis specific political developments. This has reduced the effectiveness of donor engagement in several instances. First, it prevents a common, more critical stance of the donor community that would give a clear signal in the face of undemocratic manoeuvres. The World Bank rejects interference in politics on the basis of its apolitical mandate – although this has not circumvented strong reactions to unfortunate political decisions in other countries. Similarly, the EU has doubled its aid for the upcoming period, a decision met with incomprehension by other donors in the face of the current political situation. An EU representative himself regrets the timing as unfortunate. Due to a time-lag caused by internal procedures, the official signature was due in Summer 2014 (Interviews 21, 25). Moreover, strong measures are also prevented by diverging interests, which supersede a common cause. Next to geopolitical or strategic considerations, donors working in a particular sector are reluctant to jeopardise a fruitful cooperation ‘in their sector’ for the sake of political conditionalities (Interview 21). A donor representative described the situation as follows: “*Coordination with regard to political conditionality is very bad; if one donor does not pay, another will. The government just goes round and will eventually find someone*” (Interview 4).

In the context of technical cooperation, conflicting visions or approaches have reduced the effectiveness of external support for the newly established police force. Although only four donors have been engaged in this context (the UN, the Netherlands, Belgium, France) coordination and cooperation proved difficult due to diverging visions and ideas (Interviews 6, 14). The lack of government leadership reinforced this problem – also because the responsibility for the sector is distributed across several ministries. In particular, differences emerged between a more technical approach by France and a more political stance by Belgium. As a result, frictions negatively affected implementation and

hampered the effectiveness of the intervention (Interviews 6, 27). An evaluation confirms that taking joint action in development cooperation was not an easy task in Burundi (Specker & Briscoe, 2010, p. 22). There has not been a ‘whole-of-EU approach’ within Burundi. Information exchange and joint interventions on the ground have not been able to compensate for the fact that programming takes place at headquarters, where interaction and consultation among the member states is generally lower than ‘on the ground’ in the recipient country (Specker & Briscoe, 2010, p. 22).

Only three donors give direct budget support to Burundi (the EU, the WB and the African Development Bank (AfDB)). However, coordination between them is perceived as poor, without a common approach as regards criteria, triggers, or the objective of their support. Observers attribute this to the apolitical stance upheld by the multilateral financial institutions (Interviews 25, 34).

5 Conclusion and recommendations

How can international engagement support fragile states on their path towards peace and democracy more effectively? Although transition processes are primarily endogenous by nature, external actors engaged in Burundi have at times been able to provide crucial support, yet have failed to make a difference despite substantial efforts in other instances.

After one decade of civil war, a seriously weakened Burundi state faced the double challenge of overcoming not only its violent past but also the legacy of socio-political exclusion and ethnic antagonism. Since then, the international community has engaged strongly in supporting Burundi on its road towards peace and democracy. The country has made remarkable achievements in this regard – such as *adopting a new constitution in 2005* and *dissolving its rebel armies* through integration and demobilisation. Recently, however, progress has stalled. The *2010 elections* were overshadowed by the opposition’s boycott, further narrowing the already limited political space. In order to assess the impact of donor engagement, the research focused on these three political processes, since they constituted ‘critical junctures’ for peace and democratisation in Burundi, impacting decisively on its future development at a time when alternatives had been possible.

The project was guided by three explanatory factors (hypotheses) drawn from academic literature, which suppose that 1) *prioritising stability over democracy*, 2) *choosing cooperative over coercive forms of cooperation*, and 3) *high levels of coordination* enhance the effectiveness of international support for peace and democracy. The analysis not only contributes to the academic debate on these issues: the insights provide guidance for policymakers as well.

Coordination poses a particular challenge in most fragile situations, where usually a multitude of complex topics need to be addressed and many different actors are present (humanitarian, military, development). This effectuates high need for coordination, usually coinciding with weak coordination structures. The research shows that a lack of coordination often distinctly limits the effectiveness of external support, while coordination increases the chances of positive impact and frequently helps to explain successful engagement. In particular, when coercive measures or pressure are exercised, coordination between all major actors is key. Therefore, efforts to enhance coordination

and strategic coherence are worthwhile. To this aim, it is useful to strengthen coordination structures and improve their effectiveness. Yet, donors engaged in democracy support should also pay attention to ensuring that diversity and pluralism are not curtailed in the pursuit of effective coordination.

Supporting countries in their efforts to overcome state fragility often not only entails support of the peace process: frequently post-conflict countries chose democratisation to restructure their political system and thus hope to overcome their violent past. External actors supporting countries in these challenges need to be aware of trade-offs that exist between both processes. Prioritising stability over democracy can be justified in some situations of high instability but, even then, it is not necessarily the better strategy. Most often, no positive effect on stability is evident. Yet, such a prioritisation will usually have negative effects on democratisation and reduce the effectiveness of democracy support. In the long term, it can even have negative consequences for stability. Therefore, donors aiming to support such processes in a partner country should support peace and democracy gradually and in parallel, even in a highly instable context.

Peace and democratisation processes go hand in hand with deep shifts in power-relations. In this context, former power-holders fearing to lose power or new groups aspiring to gain influence might not always accord with popular wishes for peace and democracy, especially since institutions are usually still emerging and institutional constraints are often too weak to contain such ambitions. Coercive measures can be useful or even necessary to aid a peace and democratisation process in such situations, for example by ensuring a certain level of political pluralism or inclusiveness. Employing coercive measures requires a higher commitment and thus often implies a higher risk. Yet, it can generate a better result in some cases, since pressure has a potential to succeed in situations where cooperative engagement faces its limits. Often, a combination of coercive and cooperative measures promises the best results.

In cases of high aid dependency, the choice of conditional instruments poses particular challenges. In this context, donors are often afraid that stopping or reducing their aid might destabilise the country and cause major suffering among the population – they find themselves caught in the ‘responsibility trap’. In continuing ‘business as usual’ however, they not only risk undermining their credibility, but moreover might sacrifice important opportunities to have a positive impact on political processes (and thus, eventually reaping exactly the instability and suffering they attempted to avert). To avoid falling into the ‘responsibility trap’ without foregoing this opportunity requires bringing up critical (and often uncomfortable) issues at an early stage. Governance-based performance indicators can help to manage expectations and activate political dialogue. They should be detailed enough to allow for early, small-scale signals. This way, donors can demonstrate that their political requirements need to be taken seriously. In addition, they can react before the situation becomes more acute and reduce the danger that they face the dilemma of the ‘responsibility trap’ later on.

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Annex

Annex Table 1: List of Interviewees							
ID	Origin	Works as/for	Date	ID	Origin	Works as/for	Date
1	International	Bilateral agency	06.05.2014	24	Domestic	Electoral Commission	16.05.2014
2	Domestic	Politician	06.05.2014	25	International	Multilateral agency	16.05.2014
3	Domestic	Civil society/ NGO	06.05.2014	26	Domestic	Bilateral agency	16.05.2014
4	International	Government	07.05.2014	27	Domestic	Academia	17.05.2014
5	International	Multilateral agency	07.05.2014	28	International	Multilateral agency	18.05.2014
6	International	Bilateral agency	08.05.2014	29	Domestic	Politician	19.05.2014
7	Domestic	Journalist	08.05.2014	30	Domestic	Politician	19.05.2014
8	Domestic	Government	08.05.2014	31	Domestic	Civil society/ NGO	19.05.2014
9	Domestic	Politician	09.05.2014	32	Domestic	Politician	19.05.2014
10	Domestic	Politician	09.05.2014	33	Domestic	Bilateral agency	20.05.2014
11	Domestic	Civil society/ NGO	12.05.2014	34	International	Government	20.05.2014
12	International	Bilateral agency	12.05.2014	35	International	Bilateral agency	21.05.2014
13	Domestic	Journalist	12.05.2014	36	International	Multilateral agency	21.05.2014
14	Domestic	Journalist	13.05.2014	37	Domestic	Civil society/ NGO	22.05.2014
15	International	Government	13.05.2014	38	Domestic	Politician	22.05.2014
16	International	Bilateral agency	13.05.2014	39	Domestic	Politician	22.05.2014
17	Domestic	Politician	13.05.2014	40	International	Bilateral agency	22.05.2014
18	Domestic	Politician	13.05.2014	41	International	INGO	23.05.2014
19	Domestic	Civil society/ NGO	14.05.2014	42	Domestic	INGO	23.05.2014
20	International	Multilateral agency	14.05.2014	43	Domestic	Civil society/ NGO	23.05.2014
21	International	Government	15.05.2014	44	Domestic	Politician	23.05.2014
22	Domestic	Civil society/ NGO	15.05.2014	45	Domestic	INGO	23.05.2014
23	International	Government	15.05.2014				

Annex Table 2: Survey on critical junctures			
Survey Critical Junctures Burundi	Q1: Which events do you consider a critical juncture?	Q2: Was there considerable external involvement?	Q3: Which are the 5 most important critical junctures?
2003: President Buyoya peacefully cedes power to Ndayizeye	8	6	5
2003: Pretoria Protocol on Political, Defence and Security Power-Sharing	6	8	6
2003: Global Ceasefire Agreement with CNDD-FDD	7	9	5
2005: Adoption of a new constitution	7	3	7
2005: Elections (communal & parliamentary)	9	5	6
2006: Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement between government and Palipehutu – FNL	4	5	3
2008: Magaliesburg Declaration	2	3	1
2008: Dissolution of CNDD-FDD armed forces	5	4	5
2011: Dissolution of Palipehutu – FNL armed forces	3	3	2
2010: Elections (communal)	6	1	2
2010: Elections (presidential & parliamentary)	6	1	1
To date: Failure to establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission	3	2	2
To date: Failure to resolve land conflicts	3	0	2

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