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WIDER Working Paper 2022/17

## **The legacies of armed conflict: insights from stayees and returning forced migrants**

Isabel Ruiz<sup>1</sup> and Carlos Vargas-Silva<sup>2</sup>

February 2022

**Abstract:** How does conflict, displacement, and return shape trust, reconciliation, and community engagement? And what is the relative impact of exposure to violence on these indicators? In this paper we explore these questions by focusing on the legacies of armed conflict and the differences between those who stayed in their communities of origin during the conflict (stayees) and those who were displaced internally and internationally and who returned home over time (returnees). The results, which rely on analysis of data we collected in Burundi, suggest that internal returnees have significantly lower levels of trust, reconciliation, and community engagement than stayees, whereas the differences between international returnees and stayees are mostly statistically insignificant. Greater exposure to violence has a more positive effect on trust for returnees compared to stayees. On the other hand greater exposure to violence has a more negative effect on reconciliation and community engagement for returnees compared to stayees.

**Key words:** trust, conflict, displacement

**JEL classification:** D74, F22, Q15, R23

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# 1 Introduction

There is a large literature exploring the impacts of armed conflict and violence on aspects such as trust, reconciliation, and community engagement (Alesina and La Ferrara 2002; Bauer et al. 2014, 2016; Hayes and McAllister 2001; Hazlett 2020; Lupu and Peisakhin 2017; Schwerter and Zimmermann 2020). However, one aspect that has been ignored in the literature is the attitudinal differences between individuals from the same community of origin who were located in different geographical areas or countries during the conflict. Understanding these attitudinal differences is important because the end of conflict often involves the return of large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons to their communities of origin.

The re-encounter of individuals who were separated for many years, and often decades, may lead to the re-establishment of old societal divisions or to the creation of new ones. Therefore, different views and attitudes between these individuals on trust, reconciliation, and community engagement can have long-term implications for peace-building, nation-building, and economic performance (Cox 2009; Guiso et al. 2004; Knack and Keefer 1997; Miguel 2004). For instance, Arrow (1972) suggests that ‘virtually every commercial transaction has within itself an element of trust’. He adds that ‘much of the economic backwardness in the world can be explained by the lack of mutual confidence’ (Arrow 1972: 357).

Yet, even with its great importance, there is scarce research documenting differences in indicators of trust, reconciliation, and community engagement between those who stayed in their communities of residence during the conflict (stayees) and those who were displaced internally and internationally and returned home over time (returnees). The purpose of this paper is to explore these differences.

There is a large literature suggesting that personal experiences have a major impact on individuals’ inclination to trust others (Alesina and La Ferrara 2002; Schwerter and Zimmermann 2020). Returnees and stayees often have very different experiences related to the protection of community resources, strategies to cope with conflict, incidents while on the move, and interaction with other populations, among many others. There can also be important differences in experiences between those returnees who were displaced internationally and those displaced within their own countries (e.g., adapting to life abroad, different levels of access to international development assistance, interaction with host communities, etc.).

In addition to these differences in experiences, stayees, internal returnees, and international returnees may have been exposed to different levels of violence during the conflict, one of the key factors determining the long-term legacies of conflict (Hazlett 2020; Lupu and Peisakhin 2017). Moreover, given the differences described above, it is possible that violence exposure has different long-term implications for each of the three groups in terms of trust, reconciliation, and community engagement (Lupu and Peisakhin 2017). We also explore this possibility in the analysis.

To explore differences in attitudes between stayees and internal and international returnees, we rely on data that we collected in Burundi, a country that experienced a major conflict between 1993 and 2005. The conflict resulted in an estimated 5 per cent of the population being killed, 10 per cent being displaced abroad, and a much higher share of the population being internally displaced (Ruiz and Vargas-Silva 2015, 2016).

Our results suggest that internal returnees have significantly lower levels of trust, reconciliation, and community engagement than stayees. For instance, controlling for community effects and

socio-demographic factors related to households and individuals, we find that internal returnees are 11 percentage points less likely to trust community leaders than stayees, 10 percentage points less likely to agree that justice has been done for those who committed crimes during the war, and 5 percentage points less likely to have a member who is part of a fishing association. The differences between international returnees and stayees are mostly statistically insignificant. Greater exposure to violence has a more positive effect on trust for returnees compared to stayees. On the other hand greater exposure to violence has a more negative effect on reconciliation and community engagement for returnees compared to stayees. In both cases the effects are mainly driven by internal returnees.

## **2 The legacies of conflict and exposure to violence across groups**

We measure the legacies of conflict using indicators of trust, views on reconciliation and peace, and community engagement. The discussion below explores each of these literatures in turn and relates the findings to the displacement and return context.

### **2.1 Trust**

There is a large literature exploring the determinants of trust. Studies suggest that personal experiences have a major impact on individuals' inclination to trust others (Schwetter and Zimmermann 2020). These experiences include living traumatic events, which is associated with lower levels of trust (Alesina and La Ferrara 2002). As explained above, there can be substantial differences in the experiences of stayees, internal returnees, and international returnees. The experiences of these groups differ across each specific conflict, and even among individuals experiencing the same conflict.

Stayees have to protect limited community resources from looting and destruction during the war, and may form different notions of trust as a result (Ruiz and Vargas-Silva 2022). Returnees, on the other hand, have the experience of escaping conflict, adapting to life in another location, sometimes even growing up in that location, and returning home, with many being forced to return (Black and Koser 1999).

There are also likely to be important differences in experiences between those returnees who were displaced internationally and those displaced within their own countries. Those displaced internationally interact with the residents of the host country and may develop different attitudes and notions of trust (Nickerson et al. 2019). Those displaced internally also interact with different communities, but within their own countries, and often have worse material conditions and less access to international assistance than international refugees (IDMC 2021b; Verwimp and Muñoz-Mora 2018).

### **2.2 Views on reconciliation and peace**

One aspect of the experiences of stayees and returnees that can be accounted for is direct exposure to violence, and there is a literature which explores how variation in experiences of violence affect support for peace and reconciliation. One set of studies suggests that experiencing violence leads to calls for further violence. For example, Hayes and McAllister (2001) show that in Northern Ireland exposure to violence increased support for paramilitary groups and reduced support for the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons. This 'violence begets violence' idea is based on the notion that those more exposed to conflict have greater levels of distrust, security concerns, and resentment.

Another set of studies posits that greater exposure to violence leads to greater support for peace. The main idea is that those with greater experience of violence are more aware of its actual costs and more likely to favour options to avoid it. For instance, Hazlett (2020) shows that Darfuriian refugees who experienced violence were more likely to agree that peace was possible and less likely to demand revenge over conflict events.

While there is little evidence on the consequences of differences in exposure to violence between returnees and stayees, there is a series of studies that have focused on differences among returnees. For instance, Lupu and Peisakhin, (2017) explore the implications of variation in victimization among Crimean Tatar returnees who had been deported to Uzbekistan. They find that returnees with higher levels of victimization have stronger self-identification with their ethnic group, stronger self-perception of being a victim, and a heightened perception of threat. Importantly, they also show that these effects can trickle down all the way to the third generation. Therefore the effects that we explore with the first generation in this paper can have long-term consequences for both the communities and the countries of origin.

### **2.3 Community engagement**

There is also debate on whether exposure to violence leads to better outcomes in terms of community engagement. The evidence from multiple countries suggests that exposure to violence often leads to more prosocial behaviour, including community engagement (Bauer et al. 2016). Yet the increase in prosocial behaviour tends to be towards one's own identity group. For example, Bauer et al. (2014) conducted several experiments to explore in-group and out-group cooperation in Sierra Leone. They found that those more exposed to violence behaved more altruistically towards in-group members compared to those who were less exposed. However, this effect was not present for out-group members.

There is some evidence that stayees and returnees may see each other as out-group members (Ruiz and Vargas-Silva 2022). This could potentially be expanded to internal and international returnees seeing each other as out-group members. It is not clear how these differences will affect community engagement practices for each of the groups.

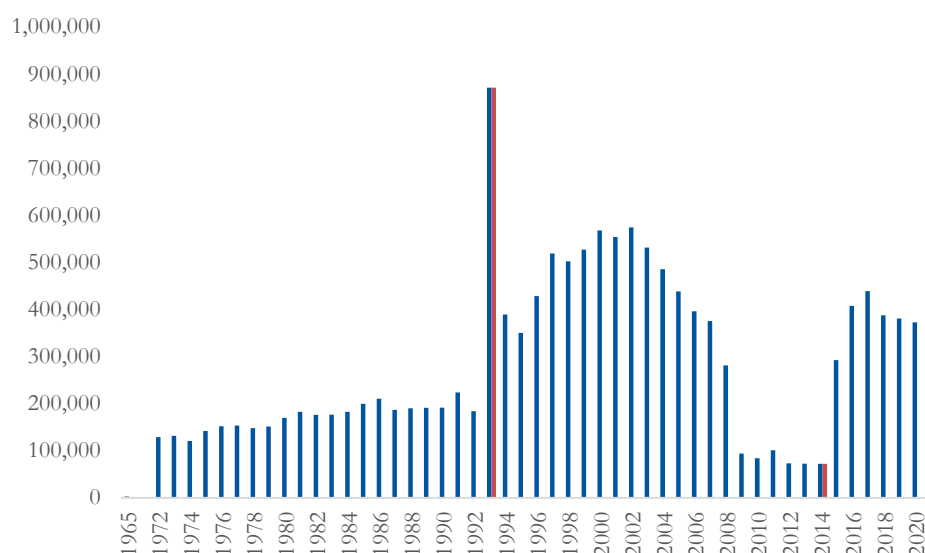
## **3 Conflict, displacement, and return in Burundi**

To explore the conceptual ideas presented above, we looked for case studies with three characteristics. First, we needed the country to have experienced internal as well as international displacement and return in order to compare these two groups with stayees. Second, for the effects to be perceivable, we needed the volume of repatriation to have been substantial relative to the size of the country's population. Therefore, we looked for countries that had experienced large outflows of refugees and inflows of returnees later on, as well as large internal population movements. Third, we needed a substantial portion of those displaced to have spent a substantial amount of time away from their home communities to allow enough time for the possible development of differences in trust, reconciliation, and community engagement. In the analysis we focus on Burundi, a country that has these three characteristics. While we explore a single case study, there are multiple countries (e.g., Afghanistan, Somalia, South Sudan) which have these three characteristics and for which the results are highly relevant.

Burundi is a landlocked country in the Great Lakes Region of Africa. The country has experienced several waves of conflict, with the longest conflict taking place during 1993–2005. Figure 1 presents the number of Burundian refugees in other countries since 1965. In this paper we are

interested in the displacement and return that occurred between 1993 and 2014 (the two orange bars). As is clear from Figure 1, international displacement levels increased substantially as a result of the 1993 conflict and it took about ten years for return to take place. We do not have similar annual estimates for internal displacement but our data suggests that it was higher than international displacement. Please note that our data was collected in early 2015, right before a new start of political tensions in the country, which means that it does not cover the latest displacement wave shown in the figure. However, in Section 7 we relate our findings to more recent events in the country.

Figure 1: Number of Burundians refugees worldwide



Source: authors' analysis of data from UNHCR Refugee statistics (UNHCR 2021a).

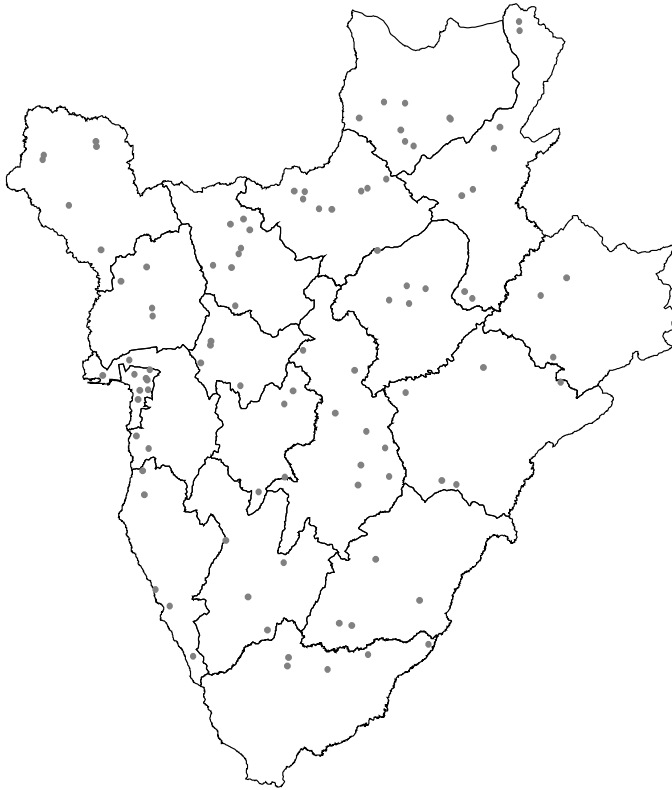
Refugees from the 1993–2005 conflict were mainly located in neighbouring Tanzania, a country that was perceived as a regional safe haven for refugees (Ruiz and Vargas-Silva 2021). During the mid- to late-2000s, Tanzania became more restrictive, closed refugee camps, and required Burundians to return home. By 2009 the large majority of Burundian refugees from the 1993–2005 conflict had returned home. In Burundi returnees could claim agricultural land, a very scarce resource in the country, in their communities of origin, which was a strong incentive for them to return to these communities.

## 4 Data and methods

### 4.1 The survey

We collected the data for this project during January to March 2015 as part of a nationwide survey. The survey had two components. The first was a household survey in which 15 households were interviewed in 100 communities (i.e. *sous-collines*) across the country's 17 provinces. The person providing the information on trust, reconciliation, and community involvement was the household head. The second component was a community survey in which a local leader was interviewed in each community. The number of communities selected in each province was based on information from the 2008 Census. Figure 2 indicates the location of the communities surveyed.

Figure 2: Location of communities surveyed



Note: geolocation of the 100 communities sampled in the survey.

Source: compiled from survey data collected by the authors.

In the analysis, we focus on rural areas. We exclude Bujumbura, the largest city in the country and the centre of commercial activity, from the analysis. Until recently Bujumbura was also the political capital of the country. Excluding Bujumbura from the analysis is common in studies on Burundi given the different dynamics in the city (Fransen et al. 2017; Verwimp and Van Bavel 2014).

The survey was a follow-up to a survey conducted with the same households in 2011. However, most of the variables relating to trust, reconciliation, and community involvement were only collected in 2015, hence the analysis in this paper focuses on that round.

## 4.2 Estimation

Our analysis intends to explore differences in the legacy of conflict between stayees, internal returnees, and international returnees and, as a second step, how conflict experiences affect such differences. Stayees are households without any members who left the country during the conflict. Returnees are households with members who were displaced for three months or longer, either internally or internationally. In total, 60 per cent of the households in our sample are stayees, 26 per cent are internal returnees, and 17 per cent are international returnees. In addition 17 per cent of the international returnees are also internal returnees; that is, these households were displaced for three months or more within Burundi and also in another country.



The main analysis consists of a series of regressions along the following lines:

$$Y_{ij} = \delta_j + \beta_1 I_i + \beta_2 R_i + \beta_3 L_i + \beta_4 K_i + \rho H_i + \varepsilon_{ij} \quad (1)$$

$$Y_{ij} = \delta_j + \beta_1 I_i + \beta_2 R_i + \beta_3 L_i + \beta_4 K_i + \beta_5 (I_i * L_i) + \beta_6 (I_i * K_i) + \beta_7 (R_i * L_i) + \beta_8 (R_i * K_i) + \rho H_i + \varepsilon_{ij} \quad (2)$$

Where  $Y_{ij}$  represents one of the indicators of trust, reconciliation, or community membership, which will be explained below for a household  $i$  living in community  $j$ .  $\delta_j$  is the community dummy,  $I_i$  indicates that the household has internal returnees as members,  $R_i$  indicates that the household has international returnees as members,  $L_i$  indicates that the household experienced land disputes during the conflict,  $K_i$  indicates that a household member was killed or disabled during the conflict, and  $H_i$  is a series of household and individual controls.  $\varepsilon_{ij}$  is the error term.

In the analysis we focus on discussing  $\beta_1$  and  $\beta_2$  from Equation (1), which provides information on the difference in the indicators between internal and international returnees, using stayee households as the base category. In Equation (2) we also discuss  $\beta_5$  to  $\beta_8$ , which provide information on the differential impact of direct experience of violence on internal and international returnees, also relative to the stayee households. In addition to the more commonly used fatalities/injuries among household members, we rely on disputes related to land as an indicator of direct experience of violence, as this was a recurring topic during Burundi's conflict given the scarcity of fertile land in the country (Tchatchoua-Djomo et al. 2020).

It is important to note that individuals displaced, either internal or internationally, are self-selected. We do not have an exogenous variable that determines whether a person is a stayee, internal returnee, or international returnee. While there was a strong incentive to return to their communities of origin, given the possibility of claiming land there, the return process is complex and includes many factors (Arias et al. 2014; Camarena and Hägerdal 2020; Hoogeveen et al. 2019; Sliwa and Wiig 2016). Therefore we are not estimating the effect of displacement and return for a randomly selected person or household but the actual differences that we observe across these groups. We believe that documenting these differences is of utmost importance for peace-building, nation-building, and the prospect of economic growth in countries that experience large population movements during conflict/post-conflict periods. There is also a scarcity of datasets that can document these differences in those countries affected by recurrent conflict, such as Burundi.

To ameliorate concerns about self-selection issues, we also present estimations in Section 6 that include pre-war controls. Including these controls does not change the main results of the paper.

### 4.3 Descriptive statistics

The Appendix includes the definition of all the variables included in the analysis. We divide the dependent variables into three groups: (i) trust indicators, (ii) violence and reconciliation indicators, and (iii) membership in the community. These variables are included in the estimations as dummy variables (see Appendix for details on the construction of all variables). Table 1 includes the means of these variables for each of the groups.

The trust indicator is based on the following question: 'please indicate the extent to which you trust the following people, groups, and institutions'. Trust levels tend to be high overall, but there

are differences across the groups. For instance, 93 per cent of stayees trust those of other religions, but only 76 per cent of them trust ex-combatants.

The variables related to violence and reconciliation are based on agreeing/disagreeing with three statements: (i) 'I feel reconciled with the atrocities that I experienced during the war in Burundi'; (ii) 'I feel justice has been done to those who committed crimes during the war'; and (iii) 'I feel the reoccurrence of conflict in Burundi is a real danger'. We re-arranged the order and created dummy variables in which values of one indicate higher levels of reconciliation across all of the variables. There are some differences in the means across these three variables. For instance, the shares of those who agreed that justice had been done to those who committed crimes during the war are 39 per cent for stayees and 33 per cent for internal returnees.

Finally, we measure community engagement as a variable indicating that at least one household member is an active member of the group/organization. An active member attends meetings regularly and is aware of decisions made within the organization. There is a gap in community engagement across different groups. For instance, 36 per cent of the stayee households have a member that is involved in a political group, while this share is 31 per cent for internal returnees.

Table 1: Means of dependent variables

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

Notes: see Table A1 in the Appendix for details of the construction of all variables.

Source: analysis of survey data collected by the authors.

Table 2 reports the means of the control variables included in the estimation. Overall, the groups are similar in terms of demographic characteristics. Household heads are aged in their late 40s, about a third have completed primary education, close to 80 per cent are married and tend to be males.

Table 2: Means of control variables

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

Notes: see Table A1 in the Appendix for details of the construction of all variables.

Source: analysis of survey data collected by the authors.

There are important differences in the experiences during the conflict. Stayees are more likely to have experienced land disputes (39 per cent), which makes sense given that they spent longer in their communities of origin. Meanwhile, internal returnees are more likely to have a household member who was killed or disabled during the conflict (30 per cent).

## 5 Results

Table 3 presents the estimations in which the trust indicators are the dependent variables. Focusing on Panel A, which reports the coefficients for internal and international returnees in the regressions without interactions, we see that most coefficients are negative and are more negative for internal returnees. Internal returnees are 11 percentage points less likely to trust community leaders than stayees, 6 percentage points less likely to trust those of other religions, 5 percentage points less likely to trust those of other ethnic groups, and 5 percentage points less likely to trust international returnees.

In Panel B we present the regression coefficients when we include the interaction terms. Looking first at the coefficients for internal and international returnees, we see that the dynamics are similar to Panel A, with the exception of the coefficient on trusting others in the community, which turns statistically significant. In this case, internal returnees are 7 percentage points less likely to trust others in the community.

Looking at the interaction coefficients we see that several of these coefficients are statistically significant. Moreover, all the coefficients which are statistically significant are positive. For instance, for internal returnees, having household members who were killed or disabled during the conflict makes them more likely to trust others in the community and ex-combatants, compared to stayees.

Table 3: Differences between stayees, internally displaced people (IDPs), and returnees in trust levels

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

Notes: controls included in the estimations are age, education, marital status, gender, household size, household child-to-adult ratio, and community dummies.

Source: analysis of survey data collected by the authors.

Table 4 presents the results in which variables related to violence and reconciliation are the dependent variables. It is also the case in these results that the differences between internal returnees and stayees are more negative than those between international returnees and stayees. Internal returnees are 6.4 percentage points less likely to feel reconciled with war atrocities and close to 10 percentage points less likely to agree that justice has been done for those who committed crimes during the war. The latter result increases to 13 percentage points when we include the interactions. However, the results for the interaction coefficients are different. In this case, those coefficients that are statistically significant are negative. For instance, internal returnees with a household member who was killed or disabled during the war less are less likely to be reconciled with war atrocities and to think that a new conflict is unlikely than comparable stayees.

Table 4: Differences between stayees, IDPs, and returnees in violence and reconciliation

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

Notes: Controls included in the estimations are age, education, marital status, gender, household size, household child-to-adult ratio, and community dummies.

Source: analysis of survey data collected by the authors.

Table 5 presents the results for participating in different community organizations. Contrary to the case in Tables 3 and 4, some coefficients are now more negative for international returnees compared to internal returnees. For instance, international returnees are 4 percentage points less likely to have a member who is part of a trade association compared to stayees. Still, for the most part, the bigger gaps are for internal returnees. These are 5 percentage points less likely to have a member who is part of a fishing association and 6 percentage points less likely to have a member who is part of a funeral association.

As was the case in Table 4, those interaction coefficients that are statistically significant are all negative. This suggests that, in relation to community engagement, experiences of violence have a more detrimental effect for internal and international returnees compared to stayees.

Table 5: Differences between stayees, IDPs, and returnees in organization membership

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

Notes: controls included in the estimations are age, education, marital status, gender, household size, household child-to-adult ratio, and community dummies.

Source: analysis of survey data collected by the authors.

## 6 Robustness

In this section, we conduct several exercises to show the overall robustness of the results. One concern with the estimations is that the results reflect broader pre-war differences between stayees, international returnees, and international returnees. As we mentioned above, we do not have a random assignment of individuals to the stayee and returnee categories.

One way of reducing these concerns is to control for pre-war conditions and check if the results are affected. We include two types of variables in this regard. First, for older households, i.e. those that were established before the onset of the conflict in 1993, we collected pre-conflict land ownership data. The pre-war size of land plots should provide a good idea of the household's economic background.

Second, we looked at education levels, which also provide information about wealth status. Primary education in Burundi is compulsory for children between the ages of 7 and 12 years. However, the war destroyed a substantial portion of the country's schools, many of the teaching staff were killed, and recruitment of new teachers was interrupted during the conflict (Fransen et al. 2018). We focus on the years of education among those who were 14 years of age and older at the start of the conflict in 1993. The war should not have affected the educational outcomes (i.e. primary school education) of this group. Including these two variables in the estimation decreases the sample substantially. Therefore we focus on whether the coefficients and differences are comparable to those presented in Tables 3 to 5.

Table 6 reports the means for these pre-war controls. As suggested by the table international returnees are more likely to report both lower pre-war land and have fewer years of pre-war education.

Table 6: Means of pre-war controls

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

Notes: see Table A1 in the Appendix for details of the construction of all variables.

Source: analysis of survey data collected by the authors.

As shown in Table 7 the results are consistent when we include these pre-war controls. There is somewhat less statistical significance in some of the coefficients, as expected given the smaller sample, but the overall trends are similar. It is still the case that for the most part the coefficients for internal returnees are more negative than for international returnees. One noteworthy difference in the results is that the coefficients for international returnees in the estimation with unlikely recurrence of conflict as the dependent variable is now statistically significant. In this case international returnees are 9 percentage points more likely to state that a new conflict is unlikely compared to stayees.

Table 7: Differences between stayees, IDPs, and returnees with pre-war controls included

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

Notes: controls included in the estimations are age, education, marital status, gender, household size, household child-to-adult ratio, community dummies, pre-war land ownership, and pre-war education.

Source: analysis of survey data collected by the authors.



## **7 Relation with Burundi's new displacement wave**

As we explained in Section 3, there has been a new displacement wave from Burundi after the end of the data collection. This displacement wave is the result of political tensions following the 2015 election. Pierre Nkurunziza, then President of Burundi, ran for a third term of office and there was controversy over whether he was actually entitled to run again. It is estimated that over 250,000 Burundians have since fled to neighbouring countries (UNHCR 2021b).

This new, large displacement wave may be accompanied by a new, large wave of refugees returning to the country. UNHCR (2021b) projected that the number of returnees would reach 141,000 in 2021, up from 41,000 in 2020. There are no datasets such as the one used in this study to explore the implications of this post-2015 return for trust, reconciliation, and community engagement, and it is not possible to determine the degree to which our findings are applicable to this new context.

However, it is possible to point to some potential differences between current dynamics and the pre-2015 period that would make it interesting to revisit the case study. UNHCR has been undertaking regular returnee protection monitoring since 2019. An estimated 9 per cent of refugees returning to rural communities were not found at their respective return areas in 2019 and may have moved onward. This pattern is also similar to our dataset, in which onward movement is not very common. However, in 2020 there was a substantial increase in the percentage of returnees not found (33 per cent). While the UNHCR data is based on reports from local monitors, and the potential implications of not finding a household need to be treated with caution in this regard, this evidence suggests that more recent returnees may be more mobile than the ones in our sample. This in turn can affect the variables of interest in our research, particularly the aspect of community engagement.

Another difference between the pre- and post-2015 refugee outflow is that, while Tanzania remains the main host of Burundian refugees (133,029 as of 30 June 2021), countries such as Rwanda (47,911), the DRC (43,158), and Uganda (51,066) are playing a greater role as host countries. This means that there is greater scope for a variety of ideas related to trust and community engagement to develop among Burundian refugees in different countries.

Finally, the current data suggests that internal displacement levels are at much lower levels than during the period we studied. For instance IDMC (2021a) data suggests that as of 31 December 2020, there were only 22,000 IDPs as a result of conflict and violence in Burundi. This is important as our results suggest that the main differences regarding trust, reconciliation, and community engagement were found for internal returnees.

## **8 Conclusion**

The end of conflict often involves the return of large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons to their communities of origin. The re-encounter of individuals that were separated for many years and often decades, could lead to the re-establishment of old societal divisions or to the creation of new ones. Different views and attitudes between these groups on trust, reconciliation and community engagement can have long-term implications for peace-keeping, nation-building, and economic development. We explored these differences in this paper using data we collected in Burundi, a country that experienced large levels of internal and international displacement, followed by return later on.

Our results suggest that internal returnees have significantly lower levels of trust, reconciliation, and community engagement than stayees. For instance, controlling for community effects and socio-demographic factors related to households and individuals, we found that internal returnees are 11 percentage points less likely to trust community leaders than stayees, 10 percentage points less likely to agree that justice has been done for those who committed crimes during the war, and 5 percentage points less likely to have a member who is part of a fishing association. The differences between international returnees and stayees are mostly statistically insignificant. Our dataset does not allow for a full analysis of the reasons behind these differences for internal returnees. However, the literature does suggest that those displaced internally often have worse material conditions and access to international assistance than international refugees and stayees (IDMC 2021b; Verwimp and Muñoz-Mora 2018).

We also explored differences across groups on the impact of violence on trust, reconciliation, and community engagement. The results suggest that greater exposure to violence has a more positive effect on trust for returnees compared to stayees. On the other hand greater exposure to violence has a more negative effect on reconciliation and community engagement for returnees compared to stayees. In both cases the effects are mainly driven by internal returnees.

What does this mean for policy interventions in societies experiencing high levels of internal and international return? Trust, reconciliation, and community engagement are all multidimensional areas for which it is difficult to isolate single factors and shape policy around them. However, using the research presented in this paper, it is possible to understand the type of individuals who need particular attention at the policy design stage. One policy priority would be to tailor the initial support provided to returnees, and the communities they return to, based on their views on trust and reconciliation. The results also suggest that policy efforts will require exploration of the situation of internal returnees and why they report lower levels of trust than other groups.

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## Appendix

Table A1: Definitions

Variable	Definition
Age head	In years.
Child-to-adult ratio	Number of children in the household divided by number of adults in the household. Adult = 14 years of age or older. Children = less than 14 years of age.
Credit/savings association	Dummy equal to one if at least one household member is an active member of a credit/savings association. Here an active member regularly attends meetings and is aware of decisions that are made within the organization.
Deaths/disablement in conflict	Number of deaths/disablement of household members during the conflict period. The text of the question was as follows: 'During the last period of conflict in Burundi (1993 to 2005), how many times did this household experience the following incidents?'
Female head	Dummy equal to one if the head is a female.
Household size	Number of members of the household.
Internal returnee	Dummy equal to one if at least one member of the household spent at least three months in displacement within Burundi.
Justice has been done	This is a dummy variable indicating that the individual agrees with a statement that justice has been done in response to war crimes (i.e. responses of 4 and 5). The text of the statement was as follows: 'I feel justice has been done to those who committed crimes during the war'. Responses use a 5-point scale, where 1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree.
Land disputes	Number of land disputes experienced by the household during the conflict period. The text of the question was as follows: 'During the last period of conflict in Burundi (1993 to 2005), how many times did this household experience the following incidents?'
Married head	Dummy equal to one if the head is married.
Political party/group	Dummy equal to one if at least one household member is an active member of a political party/group. Here an active member regularly attends meetings and is aware of decisions that are made within the organization.
Pre-war land	Size of household plots in hectares.
Pre-war education	Average years of education of those household members who were 14 years of age or older at the start of the war in 1993.
Primary education head	Dummy equal to one if the person completed primary schooling.
Reconciled with war	This is a dummy variable indicating that the individual agrees with a statement that they feel reconciled with the events of the war (i.e. responses of 4 and 5). The text of the statement was as follows: 'I feel reconciled with the atrocities that I experienced during the war in Burundi'. Responses use a 5-point scale, where 1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree.

Religious group/organization	Dummy equal to one if at least one household member is an active member of a religious group/organization. Here an active member regularly attends meetings and is aware of decisions that are made within the organization.
Restriction on movement	Number of times the household experienced restrictions on movement during the conflict period. The text of the question was as follows: 'During the last period of conflict in Burundi (1993 to 2005), how many times did this household experience the following incidents?'.
Trust in community leaders	This is a dummy variable indicating that the individual trusts community leaders (i.e. responses of 4 and 5). The text of the statement was as follows: 'Please indicate the extent to which you trust the following people, groups, and institutions'. Responses use a 5-point scale, where 1 means no trust at all and 5 means completely trust.
Trust in ex-combatants	This is a dummy variable indicating that the individual trusts ex-combatants (i.e. responses of 4 and 5). The text of the statement was as follows: 'Please indicate the extent to which you trust the following people, groups, and institutions'. Responses use a 5-point scale, where 1 means no trust at all and 5 means completely trust.
Trust in other ethnic groups	This is a dummy variable indicating that the individual trusts other ethnic groups (i.e. responses of 4 and 5). The text of the statement was as follows: 'Please indicate the extent to which you trust the following people, groups, and institutions'. Responses use a 5-point scale, where 1 means no trust at all and 5 means completely trust.
Trust in others in the community ( <i>sous-colline</i> )	This is a dummy variable indicating that the individual trusts others in the community/ <i>sous-colline</i> (i.e. responses of 4 and 5). The text of the statement was as follows: 'Please indicate the extent to which you trust the following people, groups, and institutions'. Responses use a 5-point scale, where 1 means no trust at all and 5 means completely trust.
Trust in returnees	This is a dummy variable indicating that the individual trusts returnees (i.e. responses of 4 and 5). The text of the statement was as follows: 'Please indicate the extent to which you trust the following people, groups, and institutions'. Responses use a 5-point scale, where 1 means no trust at all and 5 means completely trust.
Unlikely reoccurrence of conflict	This is a dummy variable indicating that the individual disagrees with the statement: 'I feel the reoccurrence of conflict in Burundi is a real danger'.

Source: list created by the authors.