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Thesis

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Global Order In Historical Perspective
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Abbreviations

AI	Amnesty International
APRA	Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi, 2000
CNDD-FDD	Congrès National pour la Défense de la Démocratie / Forces Nationales pour la Défense de la Démocratie
FH	Freedom House
HRW	Human Rights Watch
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front (*Front Patriotique du Rwanda*)
RSF	Reporters Sans Frontier (*Reporters Without Borders*)
UN	United Nations

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Constitutional Coups D'états and Political Violence in the Great Lakes

A Comparative Case Study of Rwanda and Burundi

1: Introduction

One of the most significant trends within the domestic politics of sub-Saharan Africa over the last half-decade has been the dramatic attempts by presidents to "modify, reinterpret or circumvent" their state's constitutions in order to remain in power (Yarwood 2016: 51). Central to this reversal of democratic norms is the use of "constitutional coup d'états" – the process of scrapping or changing two-term presidential limits through majoritarian parliaments, national referenda or supreme court rulings (Manirakiza 2017: 87). Rather than step down and hand over the reins of power, African leaders have increasingly used these institutional mechanisms to overcome the democratic hurdles posed by their state's modern constitutions (Fombad 2011). This has entrenched the practice of so called "third-termism" on the continent and made constitutional coups the "favoured tactic" for leaders bend on tightening their grip on power (Yarwood 2016: 51).

However, hampered by the African Union's (AU) changing democratic norms and greater demands placed upon them by younger generations, would-be dictators have faced opposition from restless populations and resolute supreme courts. In some cases, such as Senegal (2012) and Burkina Faso (2014), such flagrant attempts to remain in power resulted in widespread protests and violent demonstrations, sweeping these

presidents from office through civilian or military-backed coups d'états (Simmons & Tull 2015: 6). Meanwhile, comparable attempts to change the constitution by leaders in Congo-Brazzaville (2015) or Uganda (2017) were met with little or no resistance. This stark contrast between responses of widespread political instability on one hand, and quiet acquiescence on the other, opens up a complex set of questions about why some power grabs in vulnerable democracies result in violence, while others do not. It is this third-term paradox that the thesis will examine over the following chapters. To do so, it will focus in on two other African states which stand at opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of the instability and violence which resulted from constitutional coups: the two Great Lakes neighbours Burundi and Rwanda.

In April 2015, an attempt by Pierre Nkurunziza, the long-term president of Burundi, to seek a third term by adopting a controversial interpretation of the constitution was met with an eruption of protest in the capital Bujumbura. Dozens were killed as demonstrators clashed with security forces, sparking fears of another devastating ethnic conflict. As the government clamped down harshly on protests, widespread instability rocked the country, resulting in a failed coup by a faction of the military to unseat Nkurunziza (Hatcher 2015). In the backlash that followed, 1,200 people were killed in crackdowns on opposition and civil society, sending the country into a spiral of violence and causing more than 400,000 refugees to flood across the borders into neighbouring countries (Grauvogel 2016: 4). Amidst the chaos, Nkurunziza was able to force through the changes and successfully won re-election, securing another five years in office.

Contrastingly, just seven months later when constitutional amendments were approved in neighbouring Rwanda that allowed Paul Kagame to extend his time in office, no such violence was experienced. Despite the fact that it had been Kagame himself who had established the original two-term limit and then altered it when it applied directly to himself, no protests broke out on the streets of the capital Kigali among his detractors. No general sought to force regime change and no communities fled in fear of the outbreak of another civil war. In fact, aside from the criticism of Western governments, foreign aid donors, and one failed bid by a minor party to block the changes, no real form of opposition emerged to challenge the would-be "president-for-life" (Goehrung 2017: 79).

The underlying puzzle here then is why such comparable moves to extend presidential term limits through rewriting the law were met with such different

reactions? At first glance, the popularity of each president would appear an obvious answer. But since both Kagame and Nkurunziza took power in 2000 and 2005, each had claimed overwhelming electoral victory with over 90% of the vote (Turner 2013: 5). However, the similarities between these two states do not stop there. The two countries are highly comparable in terms of size, population density, ethnicity, culture, language and share a colonial legacy and tragic history of genocide (Lastinger 2017: 1). Both Nkurunziza and Kagame emerged from their country's bloody civil wars as rebel leaders during the 1990s and went on to oversee the creation of their state's modern constitutions. In addition, however, both have constructed regimes of developmental authoritarianism in which opposition parties have been supressed, media tightly controlled, and dissenting voices subjected to intimidation and repression (Jones 2014: 11).

In light of these political and historical similarities, why then do we see such different responses from the populations during the events of 2015? After all, a much-favoured expression about the two countries used in comparative literature on these "twin" states is that if one sneezes, the other catches a cold (Chemouni 2016: 48). Instability in one has historically spilled over to spark violence in the other (Goerhung 2017: 81). When riots and street protest broke out in Bujumbura in response to the constitutional crisis, the historical experience of the last three decades would lead us to assume that something similar would be seen in Kigali. The fact that the exact opposite happened further problematises this research puzzle. Unpacking this question further will therefore involve exploring what key differences within the two states' complex internal ecologies in the run up to 2015 were responsible for the two different trajectories. This motivates the research question:

Why are comparable attempts by African leaders to seek an unconstitutional third term in office met with such different reactions?

Relevance

This paper suggests that such a refinement of the literature on how these modern power grabs in vulnerable democracies play out in different contexts constitutes an important direction for future research. The rationale here is that answers to why the populations of Burundi and Rwanda reacted so differently may provide more substantive theories for

other African states' own situations. With several similar autocrats across the continent approaching the end of their two-term mandates in the coming years, greater understanding of this phenomenon could be important for helping to anticipate and mitigate against similar outbreaks of conflict in the future. Furthermore, with the coup in Burundi sparking the worst political, security, and humanitarian emergency in years, it is clear the ripple effects of protest against a third-term bid can have long-lasting effects on regional stability. With the Great Lakes region having experienced some of the most long-running and destructive wars on the continent over the past 30 years (Siegle 2015), any outbreak of violence also deserves appropriate scholarly attention.

In spite its growing relevance for both international relations and policy academia, however, the issue of why African leaders' comparable attempts to remain in power are met with polarised reactions has been remarkably undertheorised within academic literature. This is because firstly, while considerable scholarly effort has been channelled into analysing and theorising the *outcomes* of third termism in recent years (Posner & Young 2007; Simmonds & Tull 2015), limited progress has so far been made on understanding the root causes of *why* particular African leaders experience such different responses. Exploring this issue in depth in Rwanda and Burundi, two similar states with an intertwined history, presents many advantages. For while both country's leaders successfully altered their constitutions, the *reaction* of their population to such a move was remarkably different.

Furthermore, while a wealth of comparative literature exists on the post-genocide development of Burundi and Rwanda (Uvin 2010; Turner 2013; Vandeginste 2014), the majority predate the latest chapter in this upfolding story: the constitutional coups of 2015. Although these events mark watershed transitions in the modern histories of each state, current research has not yet set out to analyse the two events side-by-side. And finally, while a great deal of work was undertaken in the 1980-90s to document the issue of constitutional amendment in Africa (Lutz 1994), comparatively little research has focused on its re-emergence in the Great Lakes region in the past five years.

By addressing these gaps with in academic literature, the purpose of this thesis is twofold. Primarily, to provide an original and comprehensive analysis of the factors behind the different reactions to constitutional coups in Rwanda and Burundi. And then more fundamentally, to use these case studies to generate provisional theories about what determines different reactions to constitutional coups in Africa more widely. In

doing so, the thesis contributes a further layer of knowledge to the emerging theoretical framework on constitutional coups in fragile democracies, and also adds a fresh perspective to the wider debate within academic literature on the "third term trend" in Africa.

To do so, the paper is divided into five chapters. The first presents a literature review, while the second outlines specifications of the research design. The next provides comparative case studies for each of the thesis' four hypotheses, before the fourth discusses the results of the research. The final chapter ends with concluding remarks.

2: Literature Review

Overview

This section will set out and group together state-of-the-art works that the paper proposes to draw upon to contextualise its analysis and embed its argument. The first provides a brief historical background of presidential term limits in Africa. The second addresses the phenomenon of constitutional coup d'états on the continent. The third provides a theoretical framework for the paper's main hypotheses, setting out the four potential explanations for the research question.

I. Historical Context: Presidential Term Limits in Africa

In response to the four decades of authoritarian rule that flourished on the continent during the post-colonial era, the second half of the 1980s began with a move towards a "new era" of democratic consolidation and constitutionalism (Fombad 2011: 1007). As opposed to the cult-of-personality style of politics that had so far come to symbolise African leadership in the form of "presidents for life" (Posner & Young 2007:132), this new decade was to be one defined by strict two-term limits and functioning multi-party systems. Driven by pressure from foreign donors and, to a greater extent, large-scale popular movements, this wave of democratisation led to the creation of new and revising of old constitutions in most African countries. (Fombad 2011: 1009).

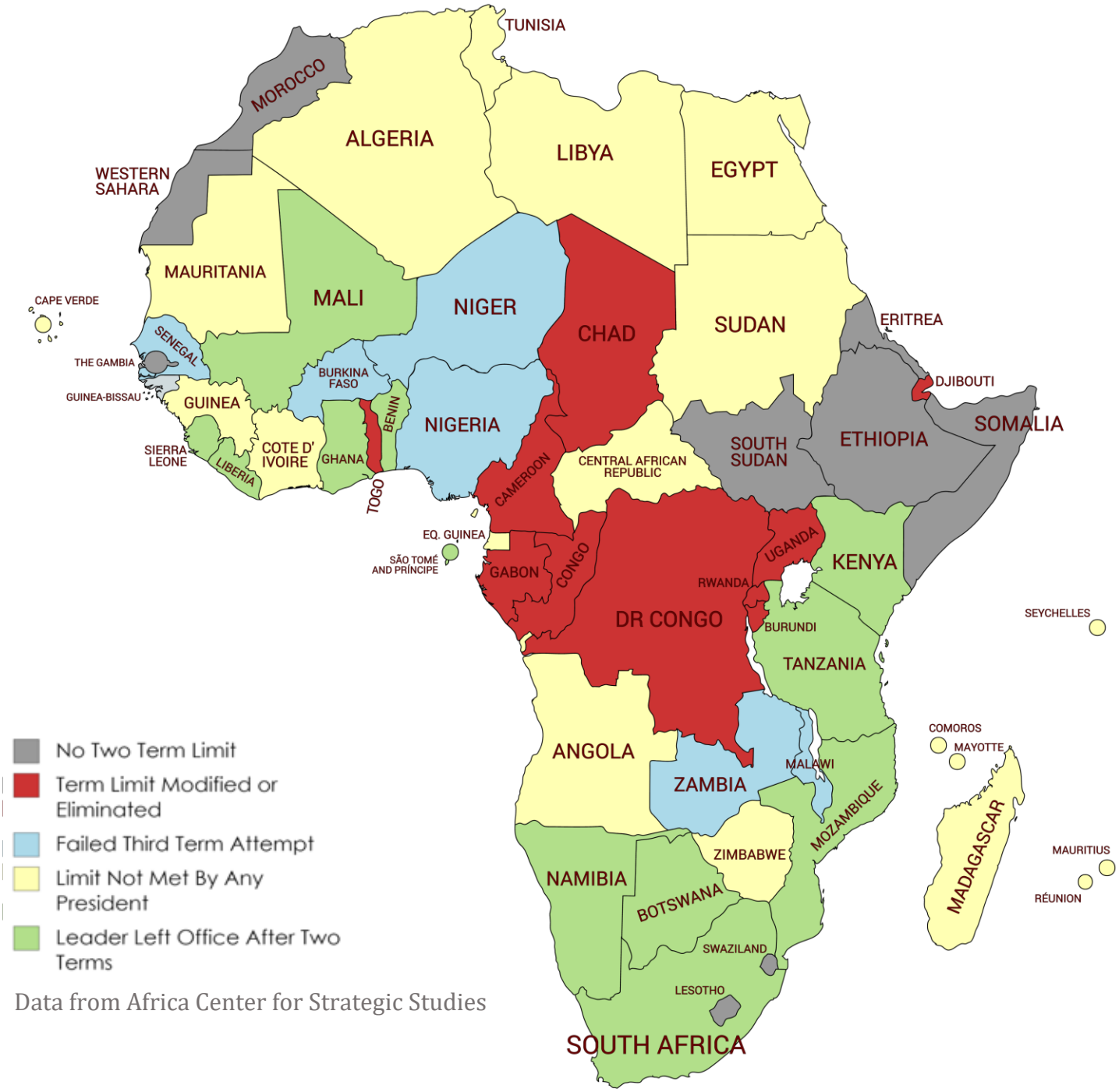
In the first few years of the 2000s however, this trend began to undergo a subtle reversal with the advent of "third termism" (Lumumba–Kasongo 2007: 125). This saw many leaders nearing the end of their elected mandates try to find new ways around relinquishing their time in office (Felter 2017). To circumvent the hurdles posed by their states' constitutions, these presidents engineered new quasi-legal methods to extend their mandate into three or more terms. Since the turn of the century, seventeen presidents have now attempted to remain in office in this way (Ibid).

II. Constitutional Coup D'états

If "third termism" is the trend of altering constitutional rules to remain in power, then a constitutional coup can be understood as the means by which these leaders achieve such an end. In this paper, they can be defined as "the practice of proposing amendments for approval by the legislature or judiciary, or in national referenda, that allow for additional terms in office" (Manirakiza 2017, 87). These "soft coups" give presidents an institutional-legal route to remain in power after their mandate has expired (Sawyer & Van Woudenberg 2015). This paradox is summed up well by Scheppele, who notes that such coups are constitutional because there is "never a moment when a government does something formally illegal to attain its desired goals." (2014: 51). It is a coup nonetheless, he argues, because "constitutionally devious leaders of a state can achieve a substantively anti-constitutional result, including, in the extreme case, transforming a state in plain sight from a constitutional democracy to an autocracy, all the while appearing to honour the constitution." (Ibid.). Since its rise in popularity, the phenomenon has manifested itself in different ways across the continent and spawned a small but growing sub-branch of African political science literature.

A first group of studies here examines regional trends. Constitutional coups became more common on the continent after 2000, when several third-wave postcolonial presidents began approaching the end of their two-term mandates. In the years that followed, the practice began to spread as more and more leaders bent on remaining in power began to see the tactics as a means of doing so legally. Soon attempts to scrap or extent term limits had become a commonplace feature of African politics, occurring every couple of years in different states across the continent (Felter 2017). Simons & Tull (2015) show that since 2000, fifteen incumbent African presidents have now attempted to stay in power in this way. In his wide-ranging study of constitutional amendments in Francophone West Africa, Kohoun (2014) shows that the particular history of this region and its former coloniser had marked effects on the adherence to democratic norms and term limits. In his case studies of Benin, Burkina Faso and Senegal, the author suggests that certain historical features of the formation of these constitutions left them vulnerable to tampering by incumbents (37).

Figure 1. Term Limits in Africa



So far however, no such study has sought to produce a comparable work in the East African region that is home to Burundi or Rwanda. This is remarkable because, as we can see from *Figure 1*, this is one of the regions worst affected by the phenomenon. Eight of the ten countries where term limits have been manipulated or eliminated are located in Central and East Africa, suggesting the spread of third termism has undergone some kind of domino effect.

Table 1. Success and Failures of Constitutional Coups

Two-Term Limit Successfully Modified/Eliminated	Unsuccessful Third-Term Bids
Togo (Endeyama 2002)	Zambia (Chiluba 2001)
Gabon (Bongo 2003)	Malawi (Muluzi 2003)
Uganda (Museveni 2005, 2018)	Nigeria (Obasanjo 2006)
Chad (Deby 2005)	Niger (Tandja 2009)
Cameroon (Biya 2008)	Senegal (Wade 2012)
Djibouti (Guelleh 2010)	Burkina Faso (Compaoré 2013)
Burundi (Nkurunziza 2015)	
Rwanda (Kagame 2015)	
Republic Of Congo (Nguesso 2016)	
DRC (Kabila 2016)	

Data from Africa Center for Strategic Studies

A second relevant group of literature here focuses on the outcomes of such third-term bids. Studies have shown shows that the success of such presidents in holding onto power is by no means guaranteed. As *Table 1* shows, research in 2017 by the Africa Centre for Strategic Studies found that around a third of constitutional coups since the beginning of the 21st century have failed. Several theories have been put forward here.

In her study of the power of protest on third termism, Yarwood suggests this is due to the growing demands for responsive and accountable government by opposition leaders, civil society activists, and ordinary citizens (2016: 52). Documenting the evolution of failed coups more recently in Senegal in 2011 and then Burkina Faso in 2013, she argues that younger citizens in particular were more opposed to long-term leaders (59). Comolli (2017) meanwhile suggests that the failure of President Jammeh's third term bid in the Gambia in 2016 can be explained by its small size and geography. The author argues that as a weak state surrounded by Senegal, a country which supported the opposition candidate, the government was more susceptible to international pressure. Important here too, she suggests, is the normative factor in the region. Here the author argues that as one of the most democratic sub-regions of the continent, the ECOWAS region around the Gambia provided a strong climate of adherence of democratic norms, reducing the legitimacy of the constitutional coup. While these two authors have highlighted

interesting common denominators, none of these theories (*state size, population age and regional institutions*) act as a clear explanatory factor for this thesis, since both Rwanda and Burundi are comparatively small states, with comparatively young populations, in a geographical region equally effected by the third-term phenomenon.

As we have seen then, extant theory falls short of providing an explanation for the varying domestic responses to constitutional coups in Burundi and Rwanda. Although ground has been broken on studying the wider trends and outcomes (LeBas 2016; Yarwood 2016; Comolli 2017), few scholars have looked properly at the underlying factors determining why states react so differently to the phenomenon. This thesis will try to fill this research gap by opening up and exploring this spectrum of reactions and responses to constitutional coups more deeply. Rather than looking simply at the black-and-white demarcation of success or failure, this research will instead use the cases of Burundi and Rwanda to give a more nuanced explanation of the *response* of the populations to third-term trend.

Such a refinement of the literature to explore the *root causes* of violence in the third term context represents an important next step in the development of the field. Because with the possibility of both Nkurunziza and Kagame remaining in power until 2034, and with several similar African presidents approaching the end of their two-term mandates, greater understanding of this phenomenon could be important for helping to anticipate comparable outbreaks of conflict in the future when leaders attempt to tamper with their state's constitution. As we have seen then, while the existing third term literature will act as an important foundation within which this thesis will embed itself contextually, the thesis will need to look elsewhere for answers to its research question. To do so, the next section expands its search for potential explanations into wider political science and international relations literature.

III. Potential Explanations

a) Lasting Legacies of Political Settlements

Analysis of political settlements is a branch of peace-building literature which seeks to understand the prevailing political orders which emerge at the end of war (Lastinger 2017: 23). Several overlapping definitions exist, and the concept has undergone significant theoretical development in recent years (Crocker & Hampson 1996; Hartzell & Hoddie 2007). Despite this lack of consensus, it can be broadly defined here as "how the balance of power between elite groups is settled through agreement around the rules of political engagement" (Ingram, 2014: 3). In recent years, scholars have used variants of this framework to analyse issues of African democracy and development (Behuria, Buur & Gray, 2017: 508; Abdulai & Hickey 2016: 45). Underpinning these studies are important theories which aim to explain the effects of such settlements on a state's development and political stability. These theories could help explain how the political settlements in Burundi and Rwanda cast a long shadow over their domestic stability in the run up to the events of 2015.

Agreed upon within this literature is that political settlements in fragile democracies are central to institutional performance, and therefore stability (Sen 2013: 25). A key argument here posits that states which emerge from war with "clear winners and losers" are more likely to foster long-term stability than those in which peace is reached through negotiated settlements (Jones 2012; Lastinger 2017). This view is also taken by Kelsall (2016), who sees these kinds of settlements as more susceptible to the threat of conflict in times of upheaval. It could be the case then that nature of the political settlement and peace deal in which each third-term leader came to power could be an important feature in answering this paper's research puzzle. Of particular relevance here will be the effect of the two county's post-war constitutions on the events of 2015.

b) Regime Cohesion and State Effectiveness

Another important group of theories here focus on the interlinked concepts of regime cohesion and state effectiveness. Within this literature, a clear link has been drawn between these two factors in developing countries (Lastinger 2017: 9). Research has shown for example that developmental states with strong one-party leadership are often more successful at fostering economic development than multi-party states (Waldner 1999). Comolli (2016: 52) argues similarly that more autocratic governments find it easier to kickstart their economies due to their ability to easily "mobilise" their workforce. The rationale here is that unified executive action is central to coordinating and implementing growth policies with developing states.

On the inverse logic, a lack of cohesion and its subsequent effect on weak state capability is theorised to contribute to several issues, including weak growth (Kaufmann & Kraay 2002), civil wars (de Rouen & Sobek 2004), and lack of democratic consolidation (Linz & Stepan 1996). Other theories posit that a state's effectiveness in providing for its citizens is also linked to greater cohesion among ruling elites (Lastinger 2017: 11). If we are to agree with Buhaug's (2006) hypotheses that regime change is more likely to take place in states where government cohesiveness is low, this could explain why we saw an attempted military coup in Burundi to its president's third-term bid, but not in Rwanda.

Scholars have also drawn a direct link between attempts to oust a president and issues of wealth and inequality (Londregan & Poole 1990; Collier & Hoeffler 2005; Houle 2016). For example, Barka & Ncube (2012, 10) contend that persistently low economic growth is a common factor in a population's reasons for demanding regime change in African countries. In addition, another body of work draws a link between a regime's ability to stimulate economic development and its survival in times of discontent (Doner et al: 2005; Chemouni 2016). The cohesion of the government in Burundi and Rwanda, and its link to the effectiveness of each state in growing the economy, may therefore provide an important explanation for this thesis' research question.

c) Freedom of Political Opposition and Culture of Criticism

A third group of theories here seek to understand the impact that political opposition and social movements have on protest in autocratic or hybrid regimes. Howard & Roessler (2006) have argued that the power of opposition and civil society to publicly express their dissatisfaction at the executive in such climates is an important factor in the likelihood of protest occurring. Bunce & Wolchik (2011) argue similarly that coalitions of social movements, NGOs and opposition parties play a major role in mobilising opposition during pivotal democratic ruptures. Further research on this topic within political science literature has found that higher levels of democratisation, and thus higher pluralities of political parties, are a natural conduit for increased protest in such regimes (Goldstone 2004: 334; Walton & Ragin 1990: 879; Magaloni & Wallace, 2008). In other words, the more open the political space, the more likely it is that dissenting voices will gain traction and spark protests (Francisco 1995: 265).

Taking these arguments and reframing them within the context of constitutional coups, LeBas argues that when control over opposition groups is weaker, "executives are able to act with impunity because there is no strong opposition to challenge entrenched incumbents" (2016: 171). These interlinked theories may indeed suggest why Rwanda experienced a very different reaction than Burundi to its leaders' third-term bid. An exploration of the culture of criticism and the ability of opposition to organise within both states could therefore prove useful to answering this thesis's research question. However, those theories laid out by scholars like LeBas are likely to form part of a far larger and more complex explanatory picture. This study therefore takes on the role of weaving together disparate and disconnected theories to form an initial theoretical framework for the Africa's third-term paradox.

d) Method of Constitutional Coup

One of the major areas given increased focus in the study of third termism in recent years has been the method different leaders use to change their state's constitution. Research shows that presidents have historically relied of a selection of different mechanisms. As *Table 2* shows, these can be divided into three categories.

Table 2. Methods Used By Presidents

MECHANISM	CASES
Change of constitution through parliament/senate	Namibia (1999) Togo (2002) Gabon (2003) Cameroon (2008) Djibouti (2010) (Rwanda (2015)
Popular referendum: change of constitution and/or introduction of new constitution	Burkina Faso (1997) Guinea (2001) Chad (2005) Uganda (2005) Sudan (2005) Niger (2009) Rwanda (2015) Congo-Brazzaville (2015)
Court ruling legalising third term bid	Senegal (2012) Burundi (2015)

As this data shows, the use of a referendum appears to be the most popular method used. This, Kohoun (2014: 11) has argued, could be because national referenda on constitutional changes provide the greatest transparency, induce greater input from the public, and thus enjoy greater legitimacy. This theory is backed up by scholars like Wing (2014: 455), who suggest that referenda are the most legitimate way to ensure popular support for constitutional amendments. As we can see from *Figure 4*, Kagame used two different mechanisms to legitimise his unconstitutional coup in Rwanda, including a popular referendum. Nkurunziza on the other hand relied upon a single mechanism, a ruling from Burundi's Supreme Court. While no comprehensive theories have yet been put forward within wider third term literature to explain how the reaction of populations is linked to the different methods of coup, this thesis suggests that this factor could have played a major role. The assumption here is that the fairer and more transparent the constitutional coup is, the greater legitimacy it will enjoy from its population, meaning less justification for detractors to move against the president.

As we have seen, while no dominant theories currently exist within third-term or constitutional coup research itself, several theories exist within wider literature that this thesis can draw upon to develop its argument. Many of the ideas discussed above form an important theoretical foundation for opening-up and expanding this paper's main research puzzle. Drawing on this literature, this thesis sets out four main hypotheses. These are that the differences between the different *reactions* to third termism in Rwanda and Burundi can be explained through four main causal mechanisms:

a) *the lasting legacy of different political settlements*
b) *regime cohesion and effectiveness*
c) *control of opposition and the culture of criticism*
d) *the method each leader used to instigate their constitutional coup*

3: Research Design

Having established its initial hypotheses, this section lays out additional details of the research design. After first presenting the design type and observable implications, it will discuss case study selection, before developing the different causal mechanisms chosen for analysis. It then turns to details of the method of data collection and sources selected.

I. Design Specifications

This research will be developed through a "structured and focused comparison" (George & Bennnett 2005: 67-72) using between-case design of two studies: Kagame's constitutional coup in Rwanda and Nkurunziza's in neighbouring Burundi. As such, the case studies are both "inductive and hypothesis-generating" (Levy 2008: 4–5). The inquiry also using process-tracing to "evaluate causal processes" and "investigate and explain the decision process by which various initial conditions are translated into outcomes." (George & Mckeown 1985: 35). Such a design facilitates an in-depth contextual analysis of this paper's two cases side by side, exploring the main causal mechanisms that determine the highly polarised outcomes of third-termism. As discussed above, these are: *political settlements, regime cohesion, culture of criticism, and the method of constitutional coup*. These four factors will be explored side-by-side in each state over the following sections of the main research chapters. It is hoped that micro-level hypotheses drawn from this research can then be expanded to provide more substantive hypotheses for the wider third-term trend in Africa.

To limit the scope of such an analysis, each section will assess the period leading up to 2015. In some instances, such as the study of constitutional coup method, this will involve a study period of a matter of months. In other sections, such as the examination of political settlement, this will require applying a long historical lens.

II. Observable Implications

Having set out the possible theories that can explain Burundi and Rwanda's third-term paradox, it is also important to determine the evidence we would expect to see if each is correct. Here we have several clear observable implications.

If this thesis' first theory is correct, then we would find strong evidence within literature that the political settlements in each country after their periods of mass violence have left a long-term impression on the makeup of their modern states. In other words, the effects of the way in which Nkurunziza and Kagame came to power in the 1990s would still be visible. This might be reflected in the amount of control their ruling party now enjoys over the executive and judiciary, or the effect their post-war constitution had on the events of 2015. In-depth qualitative research will be used here.

If our second theory proves reliable, we would expect to observe markedly different levels of co-operation and cohesion amongst party elites of the CNND-FDD and RFP. This would mean clear differences of competition, division and instability within the ruling party's own ranks and the military in the period leading up to 2015. This theory would also require a difference in the two state's economic trajectories, in term of GDP growth and development, transparency and corruption. Such differences will be clearly observable in quantitative data.

If the third hypothesis is valid, then we would expect to observe very different climates of political and social repression in each state in the years leading up to 2015. This would be reflected in each government's control over civil society, media and opposition parties. Central here is the ability of dissenting voices to openly criticise the regime and the two state's experiences of public protest. We would therefore expect to see evidence of greater democratic development in Burundi than Rwanda over the study period.

If the thesis' final theory is correct, then we would expect to see obvious differences in the way each president chose to achieve their constitutional coup. This would predominantly involve which mechanism they used to seek a third term, and the response it elicited from the population. In sum, we would expect to see a consensus within both literature and official data that Burundi and Rwanda exhibit clear differences in all four of these key causal variables.

III. Case Study Selection

This study chose Rwanda and Burundi as a case study pair for post-conflict countries through a rigorous case-matching exercise. Based on their similarities on a large number of variables, Rwanda and Burundi were identified as highly comparable examples. This is because their underlying historical, cultural and social similarities act as important control variables. As well as being East African neighbours of similar size, they share a similar ethnic composition (approximately 85-90% Hutu and 10-14% Tutsi) (Chemouni 2016: 15). Other similarities include their climate, topography, population density, predominantly agrarian economy, religion and language (Kinyarwanda and Kirundi) (Uvin 1999: 254). The two also share a colonial history (Lemarchand 2007: 2).

This means that their political and judicial systems also share several characteristics. For example, both are a presidential republic led by an executive branch, with a mixed legal system of civil law headed by a supreme court, and with their newest constitution formally established between 2003-2005. Likewise, both states are run by regimes that rose to power as "liberation movements" during the civil wars in the 1990s: the RFP in Rwanda, and the CNDD-FDD in Burundi (Chemouni 2016: 14). Economically speaking, they also rank among the world's poorest countries (Uvin 2010: 175). Most importantly of course, both states' current presidents instigated a constitutional coup in 2015 having both served their mandated two-term limit.

The utility of these similarities is reflected in the amount of studies which have previously chosen to examine the two comparatively. Work here has analysed the two in a wide range of research topics including post-genocide peace-building (Vandeginste 2014; Rieder 2015); state building (Turner 2013; Chemouni 2016) and the politics of ethnicity (Schraml 2010; Uvin 2010). For the purpose of this thesis, a comparative analysis of these two Great Lakes "twins" will allow for a narrow and focused study of the factors determining the reactions of populations to third-termism. While the two are obviously not perfectly identical, it is hard to imagine two other states in Africa more suited to a "most similar" case study design (Collier 1993: 105).

IV. Data Collection and Sources

To build its argument, the study will include both quantitative and qualitative data. This will be drawn from a variety of secondary sources. To ensure objectivity, these will be thoroughly checked and balanced by sources from Western and non-Western literature, particularly from within Africa itself. Data from reliable international sources, as well as from within the two countries themselves, have been utilised to ensure the paper avoids adopting a biased perspective. Having presented its research design, the next chapter moves on to its two case studies. To establish a temporal frame for the study period, *Table 3* and *4* will present a timeline of relevant events in both states.

Table 3. Timeline of events in Rwanda

5 August 1993	Arusha Peace Accords signed, bringing an end to Rwandan Civil War.
July 1994	Rwandan genocide which kills 800,000 Tutsis stopped after Kagame's Rwandan Patriotic Front marches into Kigali.
1994-2003	Rwanda governed by set of documents combining President Habyarimana's 1991 constitution, the Arusha Accords, and some additional protocols introduced by the transitional government.
April 2000	Kagame elected by government ministers and the national assembly and sworn in as president.
June 2000	As required by the accords, Kagame sets up a constitutional commission to draft new permanent constitution.
May 2003	New Rwandan constitution signed into law after national referendum backed by 93% of population.
June 2003	RPF selects Kagame as its presidential candidate to run for first full term following three-year transitional presidency.
26 August 2003	Kagame elected by public with 95.1% of the vote and sworn in for first official seven-year term.
11 August 2010	President Kagame elected by public with 93.08% of the vote and sworn in for second seven-year term.
2013-14	Kagame begins to hint that he might seek to rewrite the term-limit clause of the Rwandan constitution, to allow him to run for a third term in the 2017 elections.
26 May 2015	Petition signed by 3.7 million people - more than half of the electorate - presented to lawmakers asking for Kagame to be allowed to stay in office.
November 2015	Parliament responds by passing an amendment to the constitution, with both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate voting unanimously in favour.
18 December 2015	National referendum on amendment approved by the electorate, with 6.16 million voters saying yes, approximately 98% of the votes.
4 August 2017	In accordance with constitutional change, presidential election held in which Kagame re-elected for a third term with 98.79% of the vote.
18 August 2017	Kagame sworn in for another seven-year term. Kagame responds to criticism that it was not his own decision to seek a third term, but that the parliament and the people had demanded it.

Table 4. Timeline of Events in Burundi

28 August 2000	Signature of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement (APRA).
16 November 2003	Signature of the Global Ceasefire Agreement between the transitional government and the CNDD-FDD movement.
18 March 2005	Passing of new constitution of Burundi, approved by 92% of voters.
26 August 2005	President Nkurunziza indirectly elected by parliament (acting as an electoral college) and sworn in for first term.
26 August 2010	President Nkurunziza directly elected by public with 91% of the vote and sworn in for second term.
March 2014	Failed attempt in parliament by CNDD-FDD and allies to change presidential term limits. Bill loses out by just one vote.
November 2014	In open letter to the president, the majority of ex-FDD generals speak out against a third term bid.
20 March 2015	In an open letter, 17 high-ranking CNDD-FDD cadres speak out against a third term. The letter is followed by a purge of party dissidents.
25 April 2015	The CNDD-FDD officially nominates Nkurunziza as its presidential candidate.
26 April 2015	Start of the anti–third-term protests break out in Bujumbura and spreads to other cities and rural areas. Police clash with demonstrators.
27 April 2015	CNDD-FDD senators petition the Constitutional Court for an interpretation of articles 96 and 302 of the Constitution.
4 May 2015	Constitutional Court rules in favour of Nkurunziza's third term.
13 May 2015	Coup d'état attempt by General Niyombare to unseat Nkurunziza fails. Crackdown on opposition begins.
31 May 2015	Second East African Community Summit on rapidly worsening situation in Burundi. Increased instability. Refugee flows begin.
21 July 2015	Presidential election. Opposition parties boycott vote in protest.
20 August 2015	After delays, President Nkurunziza is elected by public with 69.41% of the vote and sworn in for third term. Protests and political violence continue.

4: Case Studies

I. Political Settlement - Transition from Rebels to Rulers

The first hypothesis put forward in this thesis is that the legacy of the post-war peace plans in Burundi and Rwanda, despite having been implemented decades before the 2015 constitutional coups, constitute an important factor in the response of each country's population to its presidents third term bid. This section analyses these two political settlements side by side, extrapolating on the two transitions from conflict to peace. Focus here will be given to explaining how the dynamics of Kagame and Nkurunziza's rise to power has affected the way in which each was tied to their respective post-war constitutions.

Rwanda

The war in Rwanda came to an end in July 1994 afer Kagame's RFP liberation group overpowered the capital Kigali and installed itself as the new government (Lastinger 2017: 9). Total defeat of the Rwandan Armed Forces and extremist Hutu fighters brought to a close the Rwandan genocide and ensuing civil war, which in just three months had claimed the lives of around a million people. Amidst this chaos, the RFP implemented the terms of the 1993 Arusha Accords, a UN-backed peace deal. This provided for the immediate establishment of a transitional Government of National Unity made up of the RPF and several other parties (Lastinger 2017: 15). Despite its external appearance of providing for political power-sharing however, this body quickly became a conduit for the establishment of one-party rule (Vandeginste 2014: 11). By the time the government succumbed to growing pressure from the international community for a presidential election, the RFP's domination of the state proved strong enough to propel it to victory. In a climate marred by significant irregularities, Kagame was elected president in July 2003 with a majority of 94.6% (Reyntjens 2011: 3).

The dynamics of this short transition from conflict to peace have been recognised by numerous scholars as having had significant effects on the type of state constructed

thereafter (Reyntjens 2004; Straus & Waldorf 2011; Escobar 2016). Firstly, the centralisation of power in the RFP is viewed as having given the party the "unchallenged moral legitimacy to impose its version of history" (Turner 2013: 8). This "victor's peace" is seen to have allowed for the initiation of an ambitious but tightly controlled process of social and political transformation (Silva-Leander 2008: 1607). Under Kagame's iron-fisted leadership, this period is marked by the gradually elimination of opposition parties and the subtle undermining of democratic framework laid out by the Arusha Accords. (Goehrung 2017: 79). Over time, this also led to the country's institutions becoming more authoritarian in nature (Guichaoua 2010; Kinzer 2008; Pottier 2002).

The legacy of this political settlement can also be traced right up to the ecology of the state before 2015. Some scholars suggest that the Rwandan regime's stability before the third-term bid is tied to the fact that no real opposition remained to challenge it after 2007 (Escobar 2016). This falls into line with the theory that post-war settlements with "clear winners and losers" are more likely to result in stability than those achieved through compromise and negotiation (Jones 2012; Lastinger 2017). Political hegemony allowed the government to use repressive measures against critics, further narrowing the room for opposition to organise (Escobar 2015: 3). This monopolisation of power is also reflected in the RFP's relationship with the judiciary. Opinion here concludes that despite paying lip-service to the notion of a separation of powers within Rwanda, Kagame's regime had effectively insured the compliance of this institution to its political agenda by 2015 (HRW 2008).

Eradication of these formal checks and balances permitted by Rwanda' unique political settlement come together to impact this study in three ways. Firstly, the "winner-takes-all" political settlement paved the way for a highly centralised state facing less democratic barricades able to block Kagame's third-term bid. Secondly, this accumulation of power allowed for the party's piecemeal appropriation of the judiciary, meaning the president was easily able to push the constitutional amendments through the courts. And thirdly, the party's control over history, memory and political discourse has allowed for the formation of a political culture of acquiescence, further stifling the opportunity for opposition or protest.

The most important effect of the political settlement here however involves the circumstances in which Rwanda's current constitution came into being. After his election in 2003, Kagame immediately set out to create a new founding document for the state.

This was voted through parliament and then achieved the backing of 93% of the population in May 2003. Lauded as a "home-grown" document shaped to Rwanda's specific needs and reflective of its entire population, this new constitution embodied the new period of Rwandan history and became strong symbol of national pride. However, it also marked a distinct break from the Arusha Accords, and the genocidal era of the nation's history that the peace deal had come to represent. If we fast forward to 2015, the popularity of the 2003 constitution remained strong (Escobar 2016). Importantly too, the "spirit" of the original UN framework no longer played a central part in Rwandan politics (Goehrung 2017). This meant that Kagame's third-term bid faced only one constitutional hurdle, rather than being tied strongly to the legacy of the Arusha Accords. This stands poles apart from the experience in its southern neighbour.

Burundi

In contrast to the events in Rwanda in 1994, the political settlement which emerged in Burundi was not brought about by a military victory, but through a peace agreement painstakingly negotiated by the international community. The Burundian version of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement (APRA) was agreed in August 2000 after years of negotiations (Nantulya 2015). It ended the 1993–2005 civil war in which 300,000 people had been killed (Lemarchand 2009: 162). The complex document saw 17 different political parties agree to a blueprint for peace and post-conflict reconstruction (Vandeginste 2014). To get all the warring parties to agree, the Arusha deal included major compromises from all sides. Central here was the establishment of what was described as the most delicate power-sharing arrangement on the continent (Vandeginste 2014: 11). Under the charter, the president had to appoint one vice president from each of the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups, who then had to receive the support of two-thirds of both chambers of Parliament (Freedom House 2014). Also at the centre of this peace plan were clear rulings on five-year-long presidential term limits.

The Hutu dominated CNNDD-FDD rebel group joined this Transitional Government in late 2003 after finally agreeing to a ceasefire. With an uneasy peace established, the party laid down its weapons and started its transformation into a legitimate political force. To do so it framed itself as a moderate, unifying force for the country (Nindorera 2012). Just two years later the 2005 elections gave the party a

comfortable majority. Riding this wave of popularity, Nkurunziza was elected president a few months later by the two houses of parliament (Reyntjens 2006).

The country's new constitution was established the same year and, in the spirit of Arusha, solidified the consociational model of power-sharing with democratic compromise at its core (Twagiramungu 2014: 1). Crucial here were new rules ensuring equal participation of Hutu and Tutsi in all spheres of governance and security, including all three branches of government, the army, and national institutions (Vandeginste 2014: 4). In addition, the deal ensured that no one party or coalition of parties could achieve a monopoly on power (Kuperman 2015). While this new constitution also signified a new era in Burundi's blood-stained history, it remained deeply intertwined with the values and agreements established in the APRA.

The significance of Burundi's political settlement is also key to understanding the political violence that broke out in response to Nkurunziza's constitutional coup in 2015. As several scholars and observers have noted, this issue was central to the breakdown of stability during the crisis (Vandeginste 2014; Van Acker 2015). This is because, unlike in Rwanda, the political framework in Burundi which would be affected by its president's third-term bid included dual constitutional layers; the APRA and the 2005 Burundian constitution. The problem for Nkurunziza was that, having brought stability after decades of war, the Accords still enjoyed widespread legitimacy among the population (Siegle 2017). For many Burundians the agreement was more than just a peace treaty - it also represented the establishment of a "new, post-war social contract" (Purdeková 2015). The symbolism of the Accords was therefore a defining feature of the state's new multi-ethnic national identity. An identity that resonated deeply with many, particularly young Burundians (Siegle 2017).

This posed a serious problem for the CNDD-FDD. Because seeking to amend the 2005 constitution, the president would also have to violate directly the values of the Arusha Accords. Tampering with one meant tampering with the other. In the run up to 2015 however, the APRA began to represent an inconvenient obstacle for both the CNDD-FDD and Nkurunziza which had to be addressed (Nantulya 2015). An added factor here was a faction of Hutu hardliners within the CNDD-FDD who had long wanted to break out of the power-sharing model of the APRA, arguing it was overly restrictive to the majority Hutu population (Siegle 2015). Accordingly, in a move that opponents and observers had

long expected, CNDD-FDD announced in April that it would seek to modify the country's post-war constitution, allowing its leader to extend his time in office.

These changes were important for two reasons. Firstly, they would undermine one of APRA's central pillars: the country's presidential term limits. And secondly, they would also abolish the dual vice president roles traditionally occupied by a Hutu and a Tutsi and replace it with a powerful prime minister (Rieder 2015: 25). This would allow the CNDD-FDD to install a Hutu vice president, simultaneously ripping up the power-sharing mechanism and increasingly the likelihood of hard-line Hutu interests becoming dominant within the executive (Siegle 2015). As such, it directly challenged the spirit of the Arusha Accords which had ensured stability for a decade. The significance of such a move was summed up well at the time by prominent rights activist Pierre Claver Mbonimpa, who described Nkurunziza's third term bid as a "coup d'état against the constitution and against the Arusha peace agreement" (Reuters 2015).

This double attack on the Arusha-era protocols proved a step too far for large segments of the population who viewed the amendments as the next step on the path towards the total accumulation of power by the CNDD-FDD (Purdeková 2015). In a country stained with intermittent cycles of ethnic violence, this was too risky an amendment for the electorate to permit. When in April 2015 protests finally broke out against Nkurunziza's third-term bid, demonstrations were framed as "saving" the principles laid out in the Arusha Agreement (Vincenot & Ndikumana 2015). Former presidents called upon the population to "rescue" the deal (Nantulya 2015) and opposition groups called on people to take to the streets to "defend" the post-war constitution (Gisesa 2015). A further representation of how strongly the Arusha peace deal had become enmeshed within Burundi's political fabric was the clear division that the plan to tamper with it created in Nkurunziza's own party. In April 2015, over 100 officials in the CNDD-FDD called on their own leader to "respect" both the Constitution and the APRA and step down (Siegle 2015). Nkurunziza's heavy-handed tampering can therefore be understood as the final straw for a segment of the population long frustrated by the regime's disregard for the country's post-war political settlement (Van Acker 2015: 1).

Sub-Conclusion

The transition of both the RFP and CNDD-FDD from rebel group to ruling parties led to very different political models and forms of power-sharing. This has in turn had very different effects on the nature of their state in the period leading up to both third-term bids. In Rwanda, the near-total control of the RFP achieved after their military victory allowed for the unchallenged imposition of its vision on the country. This "victor's peace" also allowed for the rewriting of the constitution and a clean break from the genocide-era Arusha Accords. When the time finally came to seek a third term, this meant that Kagame was able to do so without uprooting the entire foundation of his country's two-decade-long period of stability.

In Burundi meanwhile, a drawn-out settlement resulted in the establishment of a complex power-sharing deal underpinned by the APRA. In attempting to seek a third term, Nkurunziza risked unravelling the entire social contract that had held ethnic tensions in his country in equilibrium for many years. This resulted in the framing of protests against the president as "saving" both the constitution and the Arusha Accords, galvanising far more support from a broader range of the population. These key differences in these two political settlements, and in the lasting legacy they exert on the events of 2015, therefore go a good distance in explaining why Burundi experienced greater political violence than its neighbour. While this provides a good foundation for answering this paper's research question, an additional explanatory factor is still needed.

II. Regime Cohesion and State Effectiveness

A second hypothesis put forward by this research is that the polarisation in the response of the populations in Rwanda and Burundi to their respective leaders seeking of a third term can be explained by differences in the cohesion of the ruling elites, as well as their effectiveness in running the state. The overarching aim of this section therefore is to show how the two countries stood poles apart in terms of these two causal factors in the years leading up to 2015.

Rwanda

The RPF's monopoly on power was solidified through its sweeping military victory after the Rwandan genocide (Pottier 2002; Kinzer 2008). This left it with a cohesive and centralised party with little opposition (Guichaoua 2010). In addition, the inner circle was made up of technocrats and military generals with a shared experience within the former liberation movement (Chemouni 2015: 30). Many, including the future president himself, even grew up in Ugandan refugee camps together (Ibid.).

When in office, Kagame's firm hand further solidified the unity of his ruling party by purging dissenters and co-opting rival factions (Jowell 2014: 281). Party members who fell out of favour were assassinated both within the country and abroad (Reyntjens 2011: 9). This iron grip, internally and externally, is seen to have allowed Kagame's regime to morph into what scholars describe as "developmental authoritarianism" (Matfess 2015). In line with theories presented in the literature review, this cohesion has also allowed the RFP unprecedented control in developing the country's economy.

Since Kagame became president in 2003, Rwanda has undergone something of an economic miracle. Under his Vision 2020 modernisation strategy, his government has positioned itself as a major economic driving force in Africa and attracted significant foreign investment, transforming Kigali into a modern, high-tech economic centre (Uvin 2010: 170). The country now boasts an average annual GDP growth rate of between 7–8% (World Bank 2018). This has succeeded in reducing overall poverty levels for Rwandan citizens. When Kagame's government took over in 2000, this figure was at 58.9%. By 2011, it was down to 44.9%, lifting roughly one million people out of poverty

(Zakira 2009: 7). From 2000 to 2015, Rwanda also managed to cut its child mortality rate in half (Renford 2014: 11). This was the biggest reduction worldwide during that period, an accomplishment described as "one of the most significant achievements in human history." (UNICEF 2015).

Another important factor here is the nationwide anti-corruption initiative initiated by Kagame in his first years in office. The crackdown shut down the patrimonial structures that had come to define the state under previous regimes, transforming Rwanda from one of the continent's most corrupt countries to among its least in only 14 years (Escobar 2016: 10). Taken together, this economic success reflects the effectiveness of the government in being able to carry out its desired policies and provide economic growth. This trend is confirmed in quantitative data provided by the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) dataset. In 2015, the year of Kagame's coup, the World Bank ranked the effectiveness of Kagame's government at 54%, again among the highest in Africa (World Bank 2015).

This staggering rate of progress bolstered the support and popularity of Kagame, from both his population and the international community. His leadership is often presented as a "model" and "success story" for the developing countries (Reyntjens 2011: 3). Some praised him "a man with a plan", a "visionary", or a "new type of African leader" (Kinzer 2009). This widely-held legitimacy has given both Kagame and Rwanda a greater voice on the world stage and allowed it to punch above its weight on regional issues. This legitimacy, mixed with the reduction of public grievances and the fostering of a sense that the country was on the right track, can be understood as an important factor in the lack of protest against Kagame's third-term announcement. Most importantly, Kagame came to represent a figure of unity and stability for his electorate in the run up to the events of 2015.

Burundi

In contrast to the unity of the RFP government, a clear consensus within literature is that the negotiated peace settlement in Burundi forced the CNDD-FDD to govern a fragmented, saturated and confrontational political system, albeit one required to ensure peace (Lemarchand 2007; Vandeginste 2013). Nonetheless, this power-sharing model is

seen to have led to systematic competition within Burundi's government, as warring parties fought their conflicts within parliament, rather than on the battlefield (Rieder 2015: 296). As for the CNDD-FDD itself, it was formed in a non-hierarchical structure composed of a political wing (CNDD) and military (FDD) wing. These dual centres of authority are viewed to have resulted to a serious lack of cohesion within the party, as the former rebel faction clashed with the newer political faction over the aims and goals of the group (Twagiramungu 2014: 2). In 2015, the year of the constitutional coup, the World Bank assessed Burundi's government effectiveness at just 12%, the lowest in East Africa (WGI 2015). Observers see these failures as having drastically weakened the party's support base in recent years (Bjarnesen 2015). This lack of elite co-operation is also seen to have immobilised entire areas of the state, limiting the ability of the government to lift its population out of poverty (Jones 2013: 196).

Data shows that year-on-year Burundi is consistently listed among the world's three poorest countries (HRW 2017). Despite continued GDP growth of over 4% per year under a Nkurunziza government, the wealth of average Burundian citizens has not increased measurably (World Bank 2015). From 2006-2015, Burundi's poverty rate fell from just 67% to 65%, meaning two-thirds of the population still lived below the poverty line (IMF 2015). Against a backdrop of rising inflation, land scarcity and increasing costs of living, very few ordinary Burundians were able to measurably improve their lives. In addition, unlike in Rwanda, agricultural production under Nkurunziza could not keep pace with the country's spiralling increase in population (Chemouni 2016: 32). In 2013, this led to massive food poverty, with 56% of children suffering from chronic malnutrition (von Grebmer et al. 2013). A year later, just one year before Nkurunziza would make public his intention to run for a third time, the economy had slumped and, teetering near bankruptcy, the state had to be bailed out by foreign donors (Economist 2014).

This situation was made even worse by exorbitant levels of corruption within the CNDD-FDD-led government (Rieder 2015: 296). Since its electoral victory in 2005, and even more so since the opposition boycott in 2010, the party had built a systematic system of patronage around its own party structures (Lastinger 2017). At all levels, affiliation had become the main factor for acquiring access to state resources (Van Acker 2015). In 2015, Transparency International (2015) ranked Burundi 159 out of 175, making it by far the most corrupt country in East Africa.

The effects of this lack of cohesion and effectiveness in government on the events of 2015 are clearly observable. Firstly, it meant Nkurunziza presided over an extremely poor state which, 15 years after the civil war had ended, remained unable to greatly improve economic conditions for its people (Twagiramungu 2014: 164). This failure, paired with high levels of corruption, provided a breeding ground for discontent (Kambanda 2015). In March 2015, just one month before Nkurunziza's third term announcement, the capital was brought to a standstill by the actions of civil society coalition The Campaign Against the Rising Cost of Living (Daley & Popplewell 2016: 654). This movement demonstrates the sheer number of economic grievances around which opposition could already coalesce before the constitutional crisis. Key here too was the amount of youth unemployment, particularly in the capital. In 2015, this figure stood at an estimated at 80%, a significant figure in a country where more than half the country's population was under 17-years-old (Ibid. 652).

More dangerous for the regime than the frustration of the general public however was the impatience from within the government and military itself. As scholars have noted, the period leading up to 2015 was marked by mounting internal dissatisfaction within the CNDD-FDD (Arieff 2015; Van Acker 2015). After a decade of tolerance for Nkurunziza's rule, patience among many of his party members appeared to have run out (Vandestige 2015). In October 2014 for instance, top officials in both the civilian and the military wings of the party started making secret plans for a post-Nkurunziza Burundi. Four months later, a disgruntled former CNDD-FDD senator demonstrated this rift within the party for the first time when he publicly requested Nkurunziza not to run. One month later, in February 2015, a confidential report on the third term issue which advised Nkurunziza not to run was leaked by the National Intelligence Service (SNR), a body previously viewed as extremely loyal to the president (ICG 2015). Then in March, 130 senior CNDD-FDD officials published an open letter opposing the third term (Vandestige 2015).

These public detractions, themselves the culmination of months of fomenting frustration, brought to the fore the disagreement within the party and strengthened the resolve of the president's opponents in the run up to April (Van Acker 2015). In response, the Nkurunziza instigated a purge of senior officials and internal critics. While this succeeded in eliminating internal opposition, it also damaged cohesion further by splitting his party into two opposing camps (Siegle 2015). More than 140 officials,

including two vice-presidents, left the CNDD-FDD (Vandeginste 2015). This breakdown of cohesion is widely considered to have resulted in the 13 May coup d'état attempt against Nkurunziza from a bloc within the military (Ibid.). Though the coup was eventually crushed by a loyalist faction, it represents a major event in the Burundian crisis and acted as a major catalyst for the violence and instability that followed.

Sub-Conclusion

While the RPF in Rwanda acted as a cohesive regime with a singular vision for the country, the minority CNDD-FDD government headed by Nkurunziza in Burundi was stymied by web of rival factions fighting for power (Twagiramungu 2014: 164). This meant that Kagame's regime had better conditions for improving his country's position, while corruption and weak state effectiveness hampered progress in Burundi. In addition, a faltering economy, high youth unemployment, and a lack of optimism also fostered a climate of distrust and public criticism of the regime, putting Nkurunziza in a position of weakness even before his decision to stand for a third term was announced. Furthermore, Rwanda's success lent its president the image of a stable and visionary leader, while his Burundian counterpart symbolised the very divisionism and corruption that formed the root causes of both Burundi's economic and political crisis. Brutally enforced cohesion within the RFP also meant that no potential challengers arose to unseat Kagame in 2015, while fragmentation and disunity caused a near-fatal rupture within the CNDD-FDD over Nkurunziza's mirror move.

While these two "root cause" factors are therefore clearly important in understanding the different levels of political violence experienced, one could reasonably suggest that a more direct explanatory factor is required. After all, even if we agree with the causal logic that Rwanda's stronger economy led to less underlying anger which could be used against Kagame in 2015, there would surely still be pockets of opposition that would stand up in protest at his third-term bid. To explain this lack of opposition, the next section turns to its third causal mechanism: each state's culture of criticism.

III. Freedom of Political Opposition, Civil Society and Culture of Criticism

The third hypothesis put forward in this study is that the difference in reaction of the population in Burundi and Rwanda to their leader's third term bid can be explained by differences in their culture of criticism and the strength of opposition groups. This section seeks to show the key variances between the two states in these two important factors during the study period. Particular focus here is given to the freedom of political opposition, media and civil society in both states to organsie.

Rwanda

A clear consensus within the international scholarly community during the study period is that Rwanda was governed by a hybrid regime with little toleration for criticism or meaningful opposition (HRW 2015; Reyntjens 2011; Twagiramungu 2014). While Kagame presented Rwanda as a model of reconciliation, under the surface the political system was kept in check through a raft of authoritarian measures (Silva-Leander 2008; Uvin 2010). What remained was a one-party system with the RPF as "the sole legal political operative in the country" (ICG 2001: 23). This lack of opposition resulted in a form of what scholars call "consensual democracy" (Rafti 2008). The majority of Rwanda experts see this settlement as having allowed the RFP to present itself as a consensus-based government, while in reality holding sole power to make decisions (Reyntjens 2011; Jones 2012). The few opposition parties still permitted had little power to constrain the regime and served predominantly as "bridesmaids" in elections (Dieterich 2010; Longman 2011; Rieder 2015).

Whenever parties were able to emerge, the regime fell back on well-rehearsed methods of political sabotage. Among the measures used were vague laws against "divisionism" and "genocide ideology" that allowed the RFP to accuse opponents of stirring up ethnic violence (Amnesty International, 2010: 273). These repressive laws, along with other state apparatus, were used to eliminate any parties dedicated to reform. The first to suffer this fate was the RFP's biggest rival, the Mouvement Démocratique Républicain, which was disbanded in 2003 (Reyntjens 2011: 13). This was followed by PS-Imberakuri during the campaign for the 2010 presidential elections. Methods of

suppression involved intimidating party leaders, engineering division with opposition groups and even stopping challengers from registering for elections (Goehrung 2017). One of Kagame's most serious competitors, Victoire Ingabiré Umuhoza, head of the FDU-Inkingi party, was targeted by police and detained twice in the run up to the 2010 election before then being found guilty by the Supreme Court in 2013 for engaging in terrorist activities (Freedom House 2016). Then just one month before the 2010 election, the Green Party's deputy leader was also found beheaded beside a river (Pflanz 2010: 30). These brutal tactics meant that by 2015, no serious political party existed that had the power to stand up to Kagame.

This total subjection of the political sphere is also mirrored in the social and civil setting. Rwanda has long been criticised by press freedom watchdogs as highly repressive against independent media (HRW 2015; RSF 2015; CPJ 2015). While laws brought in by the government were first used legitimately to eradicate genocidal hate speech, since then they have been directed at muzzling all critical media (Escobar 2015). This lack of criticism has also been ensured through the self-censorship of many other publications, meaning the only voices being heard within Rwanda on the third term issue were those trumpeting Kagame's achievements and calling for his continued stay in power (Kambanda 2015). Meanwhile, a number of leading opposition papers have been shut down, and others threatened with legal action (Waldorf 2007). Numerous domestic journalists have also been subject to death threats and forced into exile (Goehrung 2017: 86). A handful have also been kidnapped or assassinated (Silvia-Leander 2008: 1608). In 2015, this meant Rwanda was ranked near the bottom of the Freedom House's press freedom index at 161 out of 180, among many of the world's most brutal and repressive regimes.

Civil society had also been slowly weakened as a meaningful political force in Rwanda in the run up to 2015. Human rights defenders and NGOs were threatened with arrests and intimidation (HRW 2015; Reyntjens 2011). In addition, several organisations focusing on democracy and human rights had been banned (Freedom House 2015). Those that remained have been tightly controlled by the RFP (Rieder 2015: 47). Furthermore, organisations and unions chose not to exercise their constitutionally-mandated right to peaceful assembly for fear of detention or harassment by the authorities (Freedom House 2017). In fact, during the RFP's 21-year rule in Rwanda every

demonstration in the country has been organised by the government itself, and often in support Kagame, rather than against him (Reyntjens 2016).

Within this system, society itself had become increasingly self-policing and scared to voice its opinion (Reyntjens 2011: 26; Turner 2013: 35; Twagiramungu 2014: 173). This led some scholars to depict political culture in Rwanda before 2015 as one defined by an aversion to being critical of power (Beswick 2010; Turner 2013). Others meanwhile characterise Rwandans as being more "politically submissive" than Burundians (Twagiramungu 2014: 171). A third group take a darker view however, describing Kagame as presiding over a "culture of fear" (Matfess 2015: 190). Within such an authoritarian landscape, no opposition existed to challenge the regime institutionally. No independent press existed to steer public opinion against a third term. And no grassroots groups had the space in which to galvanise popular protest. The only attempt to block the change came from the tiny Democratic Green Party, whose request was quickly rejected by the Supreme Court (Kripphal 2015). Remarkably, from the moment Kagame announced his plans to modify the constitution to the moment the changes was passed by referendum, not a single public demonstration or protest - even peaceful ones - was held to oppose the move (Reyntjens 2016).

Burundi

In contrast to the system of consensual democracy in Rwanda, the power-sharing mechanism in Burundi resulted in a diverse political landscape. Since 2005, over two dozen parties have consistently been active in parliament (Freedom House 2017). While Nkurunziza's CNDD-FDD has consistently won a majority in elections, it has also been forced to govern with the support of two other parties: UPRONA (Tutsi) and FRODEBU (Hutu). In the period before the 2010 election, Burundi is seen to have made significant steps forward in its consolidation of democracy (Escobar 2015: 131). During this time, the country progressed from "Not Free" to "Partially Free" in Freedom House's annual index (Kaufmann, Kraay & Mastruzzi, 2015). It also progressed on the Polity2 scale from a strong autocracy to a relatively strong democracy, moving from a score of -7 to 6 in just a decade (Marshall, Gurr, & Jaggers 2010).

This political opening was matched by the development of freedom of expression. During the period between 2003 and 2010, Burundi's civil society was "reignited" and underwent significant expansion in size, diversity, capacity and influence (USAID 2009). Working in collaboration with the UN, the government also oversaw nationwide training on human rights and elections with national and local authorities, civil society, media and in schools (UN 2010). In the new system, citizens enjoyed an expanding arena for participation in politics (Escobar 2016: 16). Civil society groups were able to engage government institutions in policymaking and become agents for reform (Ibid.). The WGI Voice and Accountability indicator for example shows Burundi making serious improvement. Between 2000 and 2010, citizens had significantly more opportunities to influence their government (WGI 2015). Furthermore, progress was also made on expanding the country's media sector. Led by the highly-acclaimed Studio Ijambo program, the country underwent a minor revolution in press freedom, creating independent, unbiased media options throughout the country (Escobar 2015b: 135).

Despite the continuation of low-intensity violence and the crackdown on civil society and opposition groups that followed the contested 2010 election (Vandeginste 2011), the widely held perception is that changing political culture after 2005 meant that ordinary Burundians fundamentally altered the way in which they related to the state and those in power: they were "more critical, more independent and more demanding" (Uvin 2010: 167). Such an opening of space for critical thought in Burundi also meant that citizens had greater belief in their ability to affect the democratic process (Turner 2013: 34). This is seen to have resulted in an increased willingness of Burundian citizens to publicly express dissatisfaction at the regime (Van Acker 2015).

This has had observable implications in the events of 2015. Firstly, public frustration at the regime was well developed in the months before Nkurunziza's third term announcement. In February, just two months previously, the streets of Bujumbura had been filled with protesters angry about the controversial arrest of Pierre Claver Mbonimpa, a well-known human rights activist and Bob Rugarika, the head of Radio Publique Africaine, the country's largest independent radio station (BBC 2015). When the news broke that the two men had been released from prison, thousands took the streets of Bujumbura, unopposed, in "spontaneous protest" against the government's policies (Daley & Popplewell 2016; 651). This clear demonstration of the ability of people to protest en masse without violent repression from the security forces would have been

fresh in the mind of demonstrators in the wake of Nkurunziza's third-term announcement. In addition, such a willingness to stand up for their fledgling democracy meant that in the run up to April 2015, Burundian voters were also now far more in favour of presidential limits. An *AfroBarometer* survey found that, of those interviewed, 62% opposed their president's attempts to extend his term limit (ISS 2015).

This transformation of the relationship between citizens and the state in the years leading up to 2015 was clearly observable in the reaction to Nkurunziza's third term announcement. Moved by a desire to safeguard the Arusha Agreement, and in response to the wider climate of democratic backsliding, several opposition groups and protest movements immediately sprang up to challenge the president and his supporters (Vandeginste 2016: 48). These inter-ethnic civil society alliances brought together a broad range of actors in Burundian society. Central here was the explicit support of the Catholic Church, which in the months before the announcement embarked on an unprecedented public campaign against the third mandate, calling upon worshipers to "reject their enslavement" by leaders bent on breaking democratic norms for their own ends (Vandeginste 2014). This influence helped spread the movement from the city out into rural areas, creating hotbeds of protest in cities such as Bururi and Ngozi (Van Acker 2015).

Buoyed by this support, the movement soon began to gather pace (Frère & Englebert 2015: 296). By January 2015, more than 200 NGOs were involved (Siegle 2015). Together they established an official campaign under the banner '*Halte au troisième mandat*!' (Stop the third term!). The informal coalition, fronted by FORSC (Forum pour le Renforcement de la Société Civile) and FOCODE (Forum pour la Conscience et le Développement), co-ordinated protests and issued various statements against Nkurunziza. In April, they also created a deafening noise against the third mandate by asking drivers in the capital to blare their horns in unison at a designated time (Daley & Popplewell 2016; 651). By the time Nkurunziza officially announced he would stand again, this "Collective Against a Third Mandate" had already brought together more than a thousand civil society organisations and the country's two largest trade unions (MG African 2015). These groups played a key role in pressuring Nkurunziza's regime, engaging in debate within Burundian media, and eventually organising demonstrations throughout the election campaign and months that followed.

Sub-Conclusion

Increased democratic development in Burundi in the years before 2015 allowed for a political climate more suited to forming a strong and co-ordinated response to Nkurunziza's third term aspirations. Greater freedom for civil society groups to organise, underpinned by a more developed culture of criticism, resulted in a broad coalition of dissenting voices ready to stand up and protest. This allowed for a cross-party network, joined by actors as diverse as civil society organisations, unions, media and even the church. Nkurunziza therefore faced a driven, pluralistic and well-organised force.

In contrast, years of domination and co-optation of opposition groups and civil society in Rwanda ensured a more submissive and tightly controlled political space. This had resulted in the lack of effective opposition and a culture of unconscious and uncritical acquiescence to strongman leadership. Having never experienced a democratic opening like that of their Great Lakes neighbours, Rwandan citizens also did not have a recent history of dissent to act as a springboard for action against the third term. In addition, Kagame's grip on the channels of information within the county meant that the regime's control over public opinion and dissent was far stronger. Brutal examples of what happened to those who did dare move against the RFP also dissuaded the few pockets of resistance that remained, creating a climate of fear and self-censorship.

In sum then, vast differences in political culture and the ability of opposition to mobilise against both president's coups present a strong explanation for this thesis' research question. This brings us to the final causal explanation that can account for the differences in reaction in Burundi and Rwanda: the modality of constitutional coup.

IV. Method of Constitutional Coup

The final hypothesis put forward by this thesis is that the difference in reaction in Burundi and Rwanda can be explained by the manner in which Kagame and Nkurunziza went about achieving their constitutional coup. This section will show how the differences in the method used by each president, and the level of repression and violence that went with it, had a serious effect on the response of their population.

Rwanda

President Kagame first announced his plans to run for president for the third time in November 2014. This monumental decision not only went against numerous previous statements that he would respect the constitutionally mandated two-term limit but also made him the latest on a long list of African leaders to try and flout the democratic norm (Matfess 2015: 186). In contrast to the outbreak of protest and violence that had met many other leader's third term aspirations, however, the reaction within Rwanda was overwhelmingly positive. In the wake of the announcement, crowds began gathering outside parliament to celebrate and voice their support for Kagame's term extension (Clark 2016). At the same time, state-owned media began publishing articles calling for the constitution to be amended. Against this drumbeat, parliament began laying the groundwork for a change in the law (Reyntjens 2016).

Over the next few months, the RFP used its extensive network system to spread a petition throughout the country calling for Kagame to be allowed to remain in office. By May 2015, this had gathered 3.7 million signatures, 60% of the voting population (Reyntjens 2016). Although critics claimed the Rwandan state machinery had forced or bribed millions to sign the petition (Himbara 2015), the document was presented to lawmakers in Kigali on November 2015. The RFP-dominated parliament responded by passing an amendment to the constitution in November 2015, with both chambers voting unanimously in favour (Grauvogel 2015). One MP abstained. These changes would keep the two-term limit in place, while also reducing the term length from seven to five years. Importantly however, a tailor-made exception would be created for Kagame, who would

personally be permitted to serve one extra "transitional" seven-year term (2017–2024), followed by another two five-year terms.

With the approval of parliament secured, the second hurdle for Kagame was a national referendum, which by law, had to give the final seal of approval to any major constitutional change. Amidst a tight-controlled security climate, the vote was organised and carried out within just 10 days. The proposition was overwhelming approved on 18 December 2015 with 16 million voters saying yes, approximately 98% of the votes (Shaka 2015). While the electoral commission ruled that the vote had been peaceful and orderly, numerous instances of ballot box stuffing and voter intimidation by security forces were reported (HRW 2015). Regardless of international criticism, the resounding "yes" vote gave Kagame a mandate which, if carried out in full, could see him rule the country until 2034 (Tull & Simons, 2016: 92).

Throughout the entire two-year process, Kagame continuously refused to claim he sought to remain in power (Reyntjens 2016). When asked about the issue, he responded by arguing that it had been the Rwandan people who had demanded he stay on (Reuters 2015). By doing so, it allowed for a defence of his third term in appeals to democracy and the will of the people. In addition, by having the campaign carried out primarily by his ruling RFP party and its allies in parliament, Kagame was seen not to have been personally involved. Instead the image presented was of a loyal political servant to the country, responding only to the desire of the electorate for him to continue governing (Reyntjens 2016). This appearance of indifference, paired with the two-tier method of democratic validation (parliament vote *and* referendum), imbued Kagame's third term quest with a strong sense of legitimacy. Such a meticulously planned and carefully orchestrated constitutional coup left little room for opponents and protesters to act. Robbed of appeals to undemocratic and unconstitutional malfeasance and silenced by the insurmountable weight of the referendum vote, critics were shorn of what legitimacy they had.

Burundi

While it relied on a few of the same tactics, several of important differences exist between the Rwandan experience and Nkurunziza's own constitutional coup. The first variance here was that unlike Kagame, the Burundian president never made any great secret of his

desire to remain in office after 2015. His second term had been littered with hints about an extension of the mandate. In addition, the CNDD-FDD often voiced the opinion that their leader should be allowed to stand for a third time (Van Acker 2015).

Importantly too, an initial attempt to push amendments to the constitution through parliament had failed the previous year. Unlike the ruling party in Kigali, the CNDD-FDD had been faced with a far more confrontational and active opposition (Purdeková 2015). Several parties had long ago taken a firm stance against any such changes, viewing them as endangering the fragile power sharing deal constructed in 2005 (Van Acker 2015). Despite this strong opposition, the CNDD-FDD had introduced legislation for a vote in March 2014 (Nantulya 2015). While the party held 81 out of 106 seats in parliament, the bill needed four-fifths of votes to pass. In a major setback to Nkurunziza's third term aspirations, the vote was lost by a single vote (AFP 2014). In contrast to the fluid passage of constitutional changes in Rwanda then, the attempt by President Nkurunziza to extend his mandate would have to face a far more bumpy road.

Shorn of his preferred option, the only way for Nkurunziza to now remain in power was to adopt a controversial reading of the 2005 constitution. Against the advice of many within the party, the CNDD-FDD announced in the run-up to the 2015 presidential election that Nkurunziza would again be its candidate for executive office, despite his having already completed two terms in office (Vandeginste 2014). Central to the party's argument here was the challenge of an ambiguously-worded clause within the 2005 constitution. Using this legal uncertainty, supporters suggested that the term limits enshrined in the 2000 Arusha-era APRA deal did not apply to Nkurunziza as he had not originally been elected in a full national vote (Kambanda 2015). The party insisted that since he had been elected during his first term in 2005 by the Senate and National Assembly, rather than through popular election, his first term did not count. On this reading, Nkurunziza would not be seeking a third term, as he had not yet officially served two (Daley & Popplewell 2016).

In an effort to quell opposition to the move and further legitimise Nkurunziza as a candidate, in May 2015 the CNDD-FDD took the issue to the Constitutional Court. Against a background of demonstrations and rising tensions, the Justices handed a massive victory to the ruling party (Siegle 2017). While acknowledging the significance of Arusha, they concluded that ambiguity in the wording of the 2005 constitution meant it could legally interpreted as allowing for Nkurunziza to serve a third term (Vandeginste 2015).

While the decision was a victory for Nkurunziza and his supporters, the court's independence was questioned throughout the legal proceedings. Half way through the deliberations Sylvere Nimpagaritse, the court's vice-president, fled the country after accusing the CNDD-FDD and the president's supporters of intimidating judges (Daley & Popplewell 2016; 649). This sparked confrontations between the police and protesters (Vandeginste 2016: 48). With protests growing larger by the day, security forces responded with more brutal measures, leading to an increase in the death toll (Amnesty International 2015).

To legitimise Nkurunziza's candidacy still further, the CNDD-FDD organised a large pro-government march in the capital in which 50,000 supporters from across Burundi gathered to voice their support for the president's continued rule (Daley & Popplewell 2016; 649). In addition, a cult of personality was also encouraged over the following months, with images of the president and flags of the CNDD-FDD being placed in public spaces and schools (ITEKA 2017). In an attempt to appease critics, the government also set up a National Commission for Inter-Burundian dialogue. However, rather than a framework for meaningful negotiations, this acted more as a means to exclude the opposition platform, the National Council for the Respect of the Arusha Accord (Purdeková 2015).

To supress criticism of the regime meanwhile, the government used what control it had over media to stifle dissent, encourage self-censorship and dictate discourse. Efforts were also made to extradite vocal opposition figures operating over the airwaves from neighbouring Uganda and Rwanda, and increased security forces were deployed to the streets of the capital (Purdeková 2015). In addition, the Party mobilised and armed its youth wing, the Imbonerakure. Although officially tasked with organising events and demonstrations, the group was actually used to terrorise voters and break-up opposition demonstrations (Freedom House 2015). These attacks greatly increased the sense of insecurity in the country in the run up to the election (Van Acker 2015).

Against such a backdrop, presidential elections were planned for May 26. However, due to the rapidly deteriorating security situation, and pressure of the AU and international community, the government was forced to postpone the vote three times (Vandeginste 2015). Finally, however, with the entire opposition boycotting the vote, the path to victory for Nkurunziza was clear. He went on to win with 69.41% of the vote in

an election deemed "not free, credible and inclusive" by the UN (Hatcher 2015). The victory completed his constitutional coup and secured a third five-year term in office.

Sub-Conclusion

As we have seen, Kagame's control over the political and judicial system in Rwanda allowed for the fluid passage of his third term bid through parliament. Dual mechanisms of his constitutional coup – a vote by lawmakers and a national referendum – also lent his campaign greater legitimacy. Furthermore, acutely aware of the optics of his unconstitutional mandate extension, Kagame's air of indifference presented the image of president as simply responding to the will of the people. These factors greatly reduced the likelihood of protest in Rwanda and dampened any angry reaction that might have otherwise occurred.

In Burundi meanwhile, an initial attempt by Nkurunziza to pass constitutional amendments through parliament was defeated by opposition lawmakers, significantly narrowing the options of the president. This meant he had to embark on a more complicated path: pressuring the Constitutional Court into adopting a controversial reading of the 2005-era constitution. Such a course allowed more time for opposition groups to organize against him. In addition, Nkurunziza's heavy-handed approach of pushing through the amendments by force created an image of him amongst his critics as a power-hungry president with little respect for the population or constitution. These interlinked factors created a far more vocal and vicious response from opposition groups.

In sum then, the way in which each Great Lakes president went about changing their constitution played an important role in the difference in reaction of their populations. While other factors can help explain the underlying societal anger, or the existence of actors ready to protest, this issue perhaps more than any other acts as a direct explanation for this thesis' research question.

5. Discussion

This chapter provides a final discussion of the research presented in this paper. It first reflects on conclusions drawn from each of its four case studies, tying them together to form a concrete hypothesis. It then addresses the limitations of these theories before determining the study's contribution to the academic community and discusses directions for future research.

In carrying out research on constitutional coups and term limits, thesis has produced a number of hypotheses on the factors behind the third-term paradox in Burundi and Rwanda. These can be expanded to generate broader theoretical proposals on the phenomenon of third-termism in sub-Saharan Africa.

Firstly, African presidents who come to power in a winner-takes-all political settlement are likely to be in the position to foster greater internal stability, and have a greater say on shaping their state's constitutions. Meanwhile, leaders at the head of a political system with only a single constitutional layer, rather than overlapping peace deals or power-sharing structures, will be less likely to face opposition.

Secondly, countries not mired in corruption and economic stagnation will face less resistance if their leader attempts to seek a third term. Visible economic development and increasing living standards increases the likelihood of the civilian population supporting a continuation of the same political leadership. Furthermore, a president seen as a stabilising force for the country will be more likely not to face serious opposition.

Thirdly, in states where authoritarian control is weaker and there is better opportunity for protest movements to organise, aspiring third-term presidents are likely to experience greater protest. On the inverse logic, in African countries with less democratic development, leaders will face weaker institutions and enjoy greater access to methods of control and co-option, thus making them less likely to face large-scale opposition.

Most importantly, African leaders who are able to use dual mechanisms of carrying out their coup - first passing the amendment in parliament and then ratifying it with a national referendum – will enjoy far greater legitimacy and thus give opposition groups less arguments against their constitutional changes. Presidents forced to resort to

more repressive tactics are likely to be met with far greater anger and a possible backlash, in the form of peaceful protests, but also political violence.

Before proceeding further, it is important to address two key limitations to these theories. Firstly, it should be noted that these hypotheses are specific to the experience in Burundi and Rwanda, and therefore should not necessarily be taken as substantive theories applicable to other African contexts. One key direction for future research will indeed be to test these ideas through other case studies of constitutional coups on the continent. However, just as there is a need for caution when reaching any concrete conclusions in this study, so too should scholars err on the side of caution when generalising about so complex an issue.

Nonetheless, the initial findings outlined above can hopefully contribute to the debate within academic literature, as well as inform policymakers in the fields of peace studies and conflict management. Beginning with academia, firstly, the conclusions fall into line with theories presented within the literature review on the issue of a "winner-takes-all" political settlement (Horovitz 2001; Jones 2012). This research therefore adds a further example to the literature on this issue within the context of African democracy and development (Behuria, Buur & Gray 2017; Abdulai & Hickey 2016). Conclusions drawn from qualitative data also appear to validate theories presented previously on the significance of regime cohesion and state effectiveness (Geddes 2003; Barka & Ncube 2012; Simons & Tull 2016). Likewise, an examination of the political ecology in Rwanda and Burundi appears to corroborate theories linking increased likelihood of protest with greater democratic development and a more open political space (Howard & Roessler 2006; Bunce & Wolchik 2011).

As well as validating existing theories within political science, this paper's findings have their own significance. Firstly and most fundamentally, they offer new knowledge on the factors behind the outbreak of violence during African leader's constitutional coups. While hypotheses dealing with outcomes and effects of the third term trend had been well-documented in recent years (Posner & Young 2007; LeBas 2016), ground has now been broken on understanding the root causes of why states react so differently. The generation of provisional theories made in this study will therefore not only improve the accuracy and scope of future research, but will also allow literature to refocus its analytical lens away from the black-and-white perspective of success or failure of these third term battles, to the wider dynamics of the different responses of the populations.

Future research should therefore use these initial hypotheses as a launch pad for wider scale examination of the third term phenomenon.

This thesis' refinement of the literature, and the conclusions drawn from it, are also relevant for policymakers. Understanding of key factors will allow policymakers to predict and mitigate against future outbreaks of violence on the continent. In particular, theories outlined in this paper about the link between overlapping peace deals, existing ethnic/political tensions and increased protest, may help security analysts identify conflict flashpoints in the future. In addition, theories on the likelihood of violence and the *method* of constitutional coup used by a president might too be utilised as an early warning sign in future third-term bids.

The outcome of these term limit battles also have political implications for the rest of Africa. The example of what happened in the Great Lakes, particularly in Burundi, will serve as a norm-shaping lesson for other aspiring autocrats in the years to come. The fact Nkurunziza's playbook for achieving a third term – pressuring the constitutional court to allow him to run again, silencing critics, and then organising boycotted elections – not only worked, but were permitted by the African community, is a particularly dangerous precedent. On a continent with eleven key presidential elections taking place over the next two years, this is a worrying trend. Indeed, if the previous domino effect of third-termism on the continent is anything to go by, then the "third term wave" will likely re-emerge in the next few years. In the current political climate, it is a question of when and where, rather than if.

6. Conclusion

This thesis set out to assess why comparable attempts by African leaders to seek an unconstitutional third term in office are met with such different reactions. The necessity for such a study was prompted by the growing significance in academia, policy circles and wider society of the trend of constitutional coups in sub-Saharan Africa. In particular, the lack of a theoretical framework for explaining the reasons behind different outcomes acted as a key motivation. In carrying out its research, a number of concrete conclusions have been drawn.

Firstly, clear differences in the post-war political settlements in Rwanda and Burundi led to very different connections of each president to the Arusha Accords. When the time came to amend the constitution, Kagame could do so without uprooting the entire foundation of his country's two-decade-long period of stability, whereas Nkurunziza's similar move sparked a furious response by segments of the population determined to "save" the power-sharing deal.

Stark differences in the cohesion of the government in Rwanda and Burundi also resulted in very different economic trajectories in the years leading up to 2015. The cohesion of the RFP allowed for an economic revival, showering Kagame with supporters and greatly reducing criticism of the government. In Burundi meanwhile, a web of rival factions fighting for power led to low cohesion, poor state effectiveness and a weak economy. Resulting unemployment and a lack of optimism fostered an undercurrent of frustration and public criticism of Nkurunziza's regime, leading to a divisionist response from his own party over the third mandate and an attempted coup d'état from within his own military.

Meanwhile, clear variances in the culture of criticism and freedom of opposition groups to organise in the years leading up to 2015 led to highly polarised responses when plans were announced. Years of domination and co-optation of opposition groups and civil society in Rwanda ensured a more submissive and tightly controlled political space. In Burundi meanwhile, increased democratic development allowed for a political climate more suited to forming a strong and co-ordinated response to Nkurunziza's third term aspirations, resulting in peaceful and violent protests against his campaign.

Lastly, differences in the methods used by each president to achieve their constitutional coup led to very different responses from the population. The fluid passage

of Kagame's amendments through the political and judicial system imbued his campaign with legitimacy. While in Burundi, Nkurunziza's failure to push the changes through parliament, and his subsequently ruthless tactics in forcing the amendments through the courts, led his critics to see him as a callous and brutal dictator, in turn leading to more groups attempting to remove him from office.

Put together, the variances in these four interlinked factors – *political settlement, cohesion and state effectiveness, freedom of opposition, and method of constitutional coup* - explain the vast differences in reaction of the population in Rwanda and Burundi to the similar attempts by their leaders to remain in power. These findings also provide much-needed answers for how some power grabs in vulnerable democracies result in violence, while others do not. As we saw in the previous section, these findings hold several important implications both for the two states in question, but also for African democracy and constitutionalism more widely. More immediately however, with both Kagame and Nkurunziza now likely to remain in office until 2034, both rebel leaders have, for now, won their third-term battles. Regressive as these developments are, they are in-line with the common political standards of most countries in the region. However, greater understanding of the complex dynamics of protest, democratisation and constitutional amendment in sub-Saharan Africa in the future could yet tilt the trend back in the other direction.

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