

ENHANCING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION THROUGH E-DEMOCRACY IN  
BURUNDI

by

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**ENHANCING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION THROUGH E-DEMOCRACY IN**  
**BURUNDI**

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In accordance with Daystar University policies, this dissertation is accepted in fulfillment of requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in communication degree.

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**DECLARATION****ENHANCING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION THROUGH E-DEMOCRACY IN  
BURUNDI**

I declare that this dissertation is my original work and has not been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit.

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**DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my late Father Joseph NTAMAMIRO, my Mum UWIMANA Anne, my wife Claire Carine Kimana, and my daughter Chevanne Elyna NDAYIKUNDA,

To Canon Paul NTUKAMAZINA, Chancellor of Light University of Bujumbura, my Uncle Archbishop Bernard NTAHOTURI, my friend Prof. Mike Kuria for their dedication in accompanying me in this process during these 4 years,

To my extended family and my friends I dedicate this dissertation.

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## ABSTRACT

We live in the age of democracy and democracy is not only possible in the societies where there is freedom of information and discussion (Riaz, 2007). E-democracy plays a big role transcending barriers associated with traditional means of participation in democracy. However to be efficient, e-democracy requires appropriate means and strategic integration with other existing means of communication. Following recent studies (Kumar, 2017) e-democracy is often studied in isolation and opposition with other existing means of communication. Thus, this study addressed this problem by approaching e-democracy from logic of continuum and complementarity with other means of participation in a global political communication perspective. Using mixed method research design, and guided by ‘uses and gratification’ and participatory democracy theories, this study sought to find out how Burundi citizens participate in e-democracy and their level of satisfaction as well as investigate Burundi’s ICTs policy framework in fostering democratic and civic engagement. Findings showed that Burundians participated in decision making by means of e-democracy, however, their level of satisfaction was moderate, citing a lack of sufficient consideration for online participation vis-à-vis the traditional media. Other findings include: fear of repression by the government, integration of communication in other means of communication, access to ICTs and use of social media in political arena and lack of e-democracy appropriate means of participation as notable challenges. This study shifted from dichotomies of determinism (technological, cultural) to an emerging balanced position that e-democracy is assessed well contextually. In conclusion, e-democracy has a lot of potential to enhance citizen participation in decision making but its efficacy must be anchored in democracy principles, two way communication perspective, and its integration with existing means of communication.

**Keywords:** E-democracy, citizen participation, ICT platforms, communication, democracy.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

#### Introduction

The impact of e-democracy on citizen participation has been one of the major issues in the early 2000. While some believe that the advent of ICTs will revolutionize citizen participation and rub all barriers associated with the traditional means of communications and participation, others believe that e-democracy on citizen participation can be examined on a case-by-case basis according to socio-political contexts. However, "the debate over the contribution of new communication technology to democracy is far from settled" (Freenberg, 2009, p.5). Freenberg opines that "some perceive ICTs as effective at some occasions such as "online discussions and fund-raising for electoral campaigns", or to "restore the public sphere" while others accuse ICTs of "serving capitalism to promote ideas from dominant classes in the society and invading every aspect of our lives"(p.1). Even if there are some commonalities, "the application and effectiveness of e-democracy in enhancing citizen participation remains variable depending on the country or socio-political context" (Breindl & Francq, 2008).

Thus, it is in this perspective that this study was situated by analysing whether the way Burundi government practices e-democracy enhances citizen participation. To conduct this study, mixed method has been used as research approach on one hand. On the other hand, uses and gratification as well as democracy participatory theory have been used as theoretical framework to discuss the data. Considering that this study was interested by citizens who use ICTs, it has targeted students from public and private university by assumption that the youth are among the category of those who use ICTs more than others.

This chapter one introduced the study by addressing the e-democracy and citizen participation background, the problem to be addressed, the purpose of the study, the objectives, the research questions, the rational, the significance, the assumptions, the scope of the study, the limitations, and delimitations. This chapter one ended by defining the terms that were used in this study by giving general definitions and operationalized by addressing how they were understood in this study.

### Background to the Study

This study on e-democracy and citizen participation in Burundi was rooted in the global vision of the impact of ICTs in communication in relation to democracy (Clift, 2000; Tedesco, 2004; Odai, 2015). Communication and citizen participation are among the key cornerstones of a sustainable democracy. In accordance with Merland, Giasson, and Small (2008) argument, "communication provides the link between those in power and citizens, and among citizens".

In its historical development, the usefulness of the concept of e-democracy, and how it relates to citizen participation, has been regarded differently by scholars. On one extreme is the enthusiasm of early scholars (Becker & Slaton, 2000; Levy, 2002; Rehingold, 2008) who considered e-democracy as a "revolution"; a world where "ideals such as freedom and fraternity would reign" while on the other are the pessimists, such as Chadwick (2006), who argue that "with the notable exceptions of some community networks... the road to e-democracy is littered with burnt-out hulks of failed projects" (p.102). These two extremes have been characterized by two major schools of thought: technological determinism and cultural determinism. Technological determinism believes in the super power of the ICTs in influencing every aspect of life including citizen participation in politics. In this perspective, the major concern is the presence and availability of new technologies of information and

communication in a country. Other critical factors such as policy framework and capacity of the citizens to use them are not considered. On the other hand, cultural determinism believes that "political culture consists of cognitive representations, concrete social relations, and the information communication technologies that mediate these representations and relations" (Howard, 2006, p.71) there are other conditions other than technology that enhance citizen participation in politics. Policy framework, communication, trust in government, interest in political participation, citizen literacy and ICTs access are some of the factors that are highly considered in cultural determinism. Therefore, governments should focus on their provision so as to make e-democracy effective.

In view of this dichotomy of argument between technological determinism and cultural determinism, there are studies (Buss, Redburn, & Guo, 2006; Kim, 2006; Callahan, 2007; Ngwenya, 2016; Balog & Badurina, 2017) that have been situated somewhere in between the two extreme positions where the practice of e-democracy is interrogated and evaluated in order to suggest conditions under which it can effectively enhance citizen participation. In some circumstances, "ICTs and the internet in particular have become highly advantageous to citizen activists, non-governmental organizations, and new social movements that seek to challenge and occupy new public spaces in which formerly disenfranchised citizens would participate" (Milakovich, 2010, p.3). In 2011 the "Arab spring" showed the power of social media in political action and social movement. Using mainly social media, citizens changed political situations both in Tunisia and Egyptthus, changing presidents who had been in power for a very long time. This middle position argues that the impact of e-democracy with respect to citizen participation is fairly assessed by taking into account a specific socio-political context. In accordance with "rather

than speculating with ICTs' impact on the future development of the public sphere, it is more useful to approach the new technologies' contribution as an empirical question" (Ridell, 2004, p.86). It is in this context that this study has been conducted in order to assess whether the way Burundi government practices e-democracy facilitates and enhances citizen participation.

Following the wave of democracy in Africa in the 1990s, Burundi adopted democracy and held its first democratic elections in 1993. Although this election was followed by violence which led to a fragile political and security situation that continues up to now, the Burundi government claims that democracy remains the model of governance. As a matter of fact, Ndura and Numuraba (2013) inform that "the values and pillars of Burundi's 2025 vision provide a strong framework for a society grounded in democratic and social justice principles and practices" (p.717). In this regard, communication and ICTs play an important role because "much of politics, from the highly democratic to the rigidly authoritarian, is fundamentally communicative and informational in nature, and the internet is central to changes in the environment of communication and information that are historic proportions" (Bimber, Stohl, & Flanagan, 2010, p.71). For instance, in the context of Burundi where independence of traditional media is questioned by international organizations such as Reporters Without Borders (2017) and Human Rights Watch (2017), ICTs might constitute an alternative to facilitate citizen participation in democracy. In this sense, this study assessed whether the current use of ICTs in politics both on government and citizens enhanced citizen participation.

Besides the use of traditional means of communication, the penetration of ICTs constitutes an alternative means to engage citizens in democracy in view of increasing the number of Burundians who use the ICTs. The Burundi Telecommunication,

Regulation and Control Agency reports that from 2014 to 2016, the internet penetration rose from 4,9% to 8,5% of the national population of about 10,5 million. This growth is associated with the increasing number of mobile phone use (31% of the population in 2014 and 49.9% in 2016). As a result, "the internet and other digital technologies have become key platforms for East African citizens to enjoy their rights to expression and to associate with other citizens as well as to engage with leaders" (CIPESA, 2015, p.4). As a matter of fact, the ICT Africa reports that the government of Burundi is committed to encouraging the integration of ICTs in all spheres of society, with "e-government, e-Governance and Online Administration" being the major pillars of the National ICT policy focus (IST Africa Report, 2016). As a matter of fact, Burundi government initiated a national policy for ICT development. However, to contribute to democracy, there has to be a connection between e-democracy and other democratic communication as well as political communication processes and practices (Kumar, 2017). However, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD (2003) warns that it is necessary to draw a distinction between government use of ICTs to facilitate information, consultation and participation, and how these practices contribute to democracy.

Finally, this study followed the debate between optimistic and pessimistic views on the effectiveness of e-democracy. Thus, by examining the way e-democracy is practiced by the Burundi Government, it contributed to the debate because such a study seeks to "reconcile academic scepticism about e-democracy in many quarters with practitioner enthusiasm about the power of digital and social media to restore the health of contemporary democracy" (Kreiss, 2015, p.2).

### Statement of the Problem

While different scholars agree that "as ICTs have rapidly developed, the public sector has sought to apply these technologies to digital service delivery, and ICTs also afforded citizens a more direct means of participation in the public decision-making process" (Holzer & Schewester, 2005, p.1372). However, as far as democracy and citizen participation in decision making are concerned, the new technologies shall not be studied in isolation with existing traditional means of communication and means of participation by extension considering that ICT access and internet penetration is still low in some parts of the world such as Burundi where internet penetration stands at 8%. In addition, as a means of participation, it shall be seen as an alternative among others. Unfortunately, recent studies have established that an incredibly high number of e-democracy applications are left without an explicit connection to the traditional democratic communication and decision-making processes Kumar (2017). Some of the applications include the role of e-democracy stakeholders who may have different ideas and the framework which helps to define and promote a category of e-democracy in accordance with the current model of democracy in specific socio-political context.

Following Kumar (2017)'s findings, the problem addressed by this study lied in the fact that e-democracy is generally approached in isolation and opposition with other existing means of communication and participation with respect to democracy principles and practices. Hence, this study filled this gap by approaching e-democracy in logic of continuum and complementarity with other means of participation in a global communication strategy.

## Purpose of the Study

This study was interested in assessing whether the way Burundi government practices e-democracy facilitates and enhances citizen participation. To do so information have been collected from government officials, Ministries in charge of ICTs and Interior Ministry; civil society representative as democracy stakeholder; representatives of different political parties through focus group discussions; and a survey with students in order to assess the extent to which citizens are satisfied with the way government practices e-democracy with regard citizen participation.

## Objectives of the Study

Considering that various scholars (Coleman & Norris, 2005; Chadwick, 2008; Norris, Freeman & Quirke, 2013; Kreiss, 2015; Kumar, 2017) agree that "e-democracy is anything that governments do to facilitate greater participation in government using digital or electronic means" (Coleman & Norris, 2005, p.65) the objectives of this study were as follow:

1. To establish how Burundi citizens participate in e-democracy and their level of satisfaction.
2. To assess the place of communication strategy in e-democracy.
3. To assess if the ICTs policy framework in Burundi fosters democratic and civic engagement.
4. To investigate the extent to which e-democracy facilitates citizen participation in Burundi

## Research Questions

1. How do Burundi citizens participate in e-democracy and to which extent are there satisfied?

2. How is e-democracy integrated in Burundi government communication strategy?
3. Does the practice of e-democracy by Burundi government facilitate citizen participation?
4. Is the current e-democracy framework fosters democratic and civic engagement ?

### Rationale of the Study

With the advent of the ICTs, Burundi government uses ICTs to communicate with citizens, in addition to traditional means of communication such as radio, newspapers, and TV. However, I did not come across a study which had evaluated the effectiveness of ICTs with regard to democratic processes in the country. Yet "the analysis of democracy in Africa cannot be deduced from a universal essence (a Eurocentric one). Instead, one needs to study the pluralistic of representations in an inductive manner; this is the main condition for being able to exploit ICT to further democracy" (Dobra, 2012.p.78). In other words, to study the impact of ICTs on democracy, one cannot rely on general knowledge alone. Conversely, specific cases in specific socio-political contexts help to shade more light and knowledge about the relationship between ICTs and democracy. As a result, this study examined the way e-democracy was practiced by the Burundi government and whether it facilitated and enhanced citizen participation.

Recent studies reveal that the influence of citizen participation on policy mainly remains limited to providing ideas and suggestions and that their role and impact depends on the specifics of the design of the participatory process (Michels & De Graaf, 2017). According to Deka (2013), the transition towards e-democracy does not only require technology –in this case ICTs - but also a primarily change of mindset of

the governments and the citizens. While some still prefer or can just afford traditional means of participation, others prefer, and are very active in, online platforms. In theory, Omariba and Okebiro (2015) opine that "the rationale is to make public decisions more responsive to citizens' views or needs by opening information flows from citizen to government". These scholars explain that "e-democracy suggests greater and more active citizen participation enabled by the ICTs in today's representative democracy as well as through more participatory or direct forms of citizen involvement in addressing public challenges" (p.159). Thus, as said earlier, this study sought to assess these assertions in the context of Burundi.

In view of the potential which is in e-democracy, the revision of established institutional frameworks also must evaluate where, how, and which kind of digital tools are needed to integrate existing democratic processes (Hilbert, 2017). It is in this perspective that this study, in Burundi socio-political context, found its uniqueness and relevance. As said earlier, the extent of e-democracy's effectiveness is specific to each country; for this reason, it was crucial to conduct such study in the context of Burundi. For instance, Norris (2010), in his study on the "evolution of e-government in the United States", found that "idealistic claims of e-government fostering democratic deliberation and increased civic participation and engagement have not been achieved". It is arguable that the existence of ICTs does not make e-democracy effective if the latter is not integrated into other existing democratic processes and means of communication, especially in Burundi where very few people have access to ICTs.

Moreover, this study on e-democracy as a means of enhancing citizen participation was an important one as it contributes to scholarship because of the uniqueness of the context in which democracy and political communication are

embedded. According to Kumar (2017), "any implementation of e-democracy can be specific about the actual democracy model pursued in an initiative". Therefore, Kumar (2017) adds that e-democracy shall be well evaluated if it is considered in the context in which it is implemented. This does not mean that there are no commonalities among countries and good lesson to learn from others but each socio-political context has its specific experience in terms of success and challenges of e-democracy.

In addition, considering that Burundi faced post-election crises since the first election in 1993; 2005; 2010; and 2015, it was important to conduct this study in order to contribute to the improvement of our democracy. Moreover, in Burundi, since the crisis of 2015, some traditional media which are considered by some as "independent" and "opposition media" by others, have been destroyed and their licenses withdrawn. As a consequence, some citizens think that there is no longer independent media to express themselves or to represent the voice of the opposition (Reporters without Borders, 2018). Thus, e-democracy can constitute a significant alternative in enhancing citizen participation via online tools. As such, online participation, also called e-participation "provides mechanisms to enhance the (direct) involvement and participation of citizens in political decision-processes and can thereby be functional for many aspects of the quality of democracy and democratic goals such as institutional responsiveness, legitimacy of and trust in the political system, quality of political decisions, community empowerment and social inclusion" (Aichholzer & Strauß, 2016, p.53). Earlier studies in the 1980s had already shown that "the old communication limitations no longer stand in the way of expanding direct democracy". Spectacular advances in communications technology open, for the

first time, a mind-boggling array of possibilities for direct citizen participation in political decision-making" (Toffeler, 1980, as cited in Schmuhl, 1992, p.429).

In fact, e-democracy is essentially about peoples' empowerment, effective participation in the decision-making processes, enhancing and ensuring accountability and transparency of those in positions of governance, be they politicians or bureaucrats (Majekudunmi, 2013). In Burundi, as well as in some other African countries, it is important to conduct studies which might help to explore alternatives to mature our democracy and enhance effective citizen participation. As stated by Edozie (2009) in "countries such as Rwanda, Kenya, Burundi, Nigeria, South Africa, and Ethiopia, democratization may have exacerbated cultural identities conflicts such as ethnic, religious, and radical communities mobilize as political identities. In this context, scholarship is needed to contribute to the change with good political communication practices and philosophy which integrate e-democracy in a democratic way" (p.141). As a matter of fact, citizens are often involved when it is about voting while they are not seriously engaged to know what they vote for or express themselves on other matters that affect their lives. In this context, from the early age of democracy in Greek and Athens with the principles of sharing and equal participation; communication played an important role to make democracy effective. Thus, this study has suggested ways in which the means of communication and participation by extension might help to enhance citizen participation in public affairs through the concept of e-democracy coupled with traditional means of involving citizens in democracy.

Finally, the findings of this study and proposed solutions expected to inspire political communication among scholars, professionals and political actors. Considering that the users of ICTs, in many African countries including Burundi, is

increasing, e-democracy might be a critical alternative means to involve citizens in democracy and decision making in public affairs in general.

### Significance of the Study

Irrespective of how mature a democracy is, "today we live in the age of democracy and democracy is not only possible in the societies where there is freedom of information and discussion" (Riaz, 2007, p.164). This is made possible, partly, by ICTs and, by extension, e-democracy as they challenge the barriers to access and participate in traditional media. As a result, various scholars (Michels, 2010; Chung, 2011; Kumar, 2017; & Michels, 2017) assert that e-democracy is important in enhancing citizen participation. The potential to do so resides in the facilities it is able to offer to different democracy stakeholders, especially the citizens. For instance, "basic tools (email, online chatting, online discussion forums), Web 2.0 tools (blogs, Facebook, online social networking, Twitter), mechanisms (electronic voting, reputation systems), and tracking as well as analysis techniques (data mining, simulations, data visualization) which can contribute to enabling citizens to contact government, express themselves, participate in discussions, and propose public issues" (Costopoulou, Ntalianis, Ntaliani, Karetos, & Gkoutzioupa, 2017, p.4). In this sense, ICTs can help to facilitate and enhance citizen participation in democracy.

However, "the use of ICTs and their impact on citizen participation 'cannot be assumed and cannot be conceived outside larger socio-political processes, structures, asymmetrical and unequal power relations, and structural positions of specific individual qua member of specific socio-political groups'" (Neubauer, Vuga, & Ilc, 2012, p.237). For this reason, this study is beneficial to Burundi citizens, Burundi government and scholarship.. As a result,

In regard to citizens, this study is beneficial by letting them be aware of the potential that e-democracy has as far as means of communication is concerned in order to participate in democracy and participation in decision making. For instance, citizens who feel they are not catered for by the traditional media be they in the country or out can remain involved in public affairs and decision-making.

Equally important, this study may be very useful to the Burundi government considering that citizen participation constitutes one of the important goals of government organizations (Gir-Garcia, 2012). In fact, government credibility and legitimacy lie in the capacity to engage and involve its citizens in decision-making and attract the interest of the citizens in the democracy. Thus, in addition to other traditional means of facilitating citizen participation, the Burundi government should consider the advantages of e-democracy concept and put in place mechanism which can make it effective. As stated by Clift (2004), the advantages of e-democracy or e-government can be summarized as follows: "improved government decisions; increased citizen trust in government; increased government accountability and transparency; ability to accommodate the public will in the information-age; to effectively involve stakeholders, including NGOs, business, and interested citizens in new ways of meeting public challenges". As a matter of fact, the Burundi government has initiated a National Policy on the development of ICT in every sector including citizen participation in democracy by the use of new technologies of information and communication. Thus, this study may help to evaluate the implementation of this vision.

Lastly, this study may normatively contribute to academic research. Even in the American democracy which is acknowledged as one the most mature in the world, Wells (2015) informs that 'it should not be surprising that we continue to

conceptualize citizen participation as intimately tied to the organizational structures that facilitate it'. As matter of fact, the debate about effectiveness of e-democracy in enhancing citizen participation remains relevant. From time to time, Chadwick (2009) reports that scholarship has proceeded through several waves, from early enthusiasm to pessimistic reactions, and to the recent, more balanced and empirically driven approaches of the post-dotcom era. In fact, this study is situated in the time of a balanced era where the presence of ICTs is not the only condition to make e-democracy effective. In agreement with Karpf, Kreiss, Nielsen, and Powers (2015), such study with qualitative aspect contributes to the field of political communication research in association with ICTs and their impact on democracy". Likewise, Karpf, Kreiss, Nielsen, and Powers (2015) add that "a new era of qualitative research in political communication would contribute much in scholarly understandings of the processes of political communication by expanding the field of inquiry. At its best, it would help the field move past our current impasse and give rise to new theories and research tools adapted for studying political communication at a time of rapid changes in media, political, and social structures" (p. 15). Its quantitative aspect may also inform the level of satisfaction by Burundian citizens. Depending on the comprehension and level of satisfaction, this study suggested appropriate practices and policy framework to realize the potential which is in e-democracy to enhance citizen participation.

### Assumptions of the Study

The assumptions which underlie this study are as follows:

- 1) The Burundi Government has put in place ICTSs with an intention of improving citizen participation.

- 2) E-democracy has the potential to enhance citizen participation and the citizens are interested in an effective and efficient e-democracy
- 3) The e-democracy was effective if it was integrated in the political communication strategy with the intention of improving the existing democracy.
- 4) The targeted audience (Government Communication Officers, citizen representatives - Political Parties Leaders, and Civil Society Leaders) will be willing to participate in this study.
- 5) Respondents' responses would be sincere and tell the truth; in return anonymity and confidentiality will be ensured so as to encourage participation.
- 6) The target group - university students - are among the categories of those who use ICTs most.

#### Scope of the Study

This study focused on e-democracy as a potential means of enhancing citizen participation in Burundi (geographically) and political communication (area of research). In terms of target population, this study considered students from both private and public universities of Burundi. This category of citizens was deemed to represent the diversity of Burundi citizens in terms of political and ethnical affiliation; regions and gender. Equally, the study covered students since they constitute a category of people who, presumably, have access to ICTs and use it more than others. At least the majority of students had actually a mobile phone.

In addition, considering that the concepts of "e-democracy" and "citizen participation" are wide, this study addressed them in a specific perspective. In fact, "depending on the aspect of democracy being promoted, e-democracy employed

different techniques: (1) increasing the transparency of political processes; (2) enhancing the direct involvement and participation of citizens, and (3) improving the quality of opinion formation by opening new spaces of information and deliberation" (Trechsel et al., 2003, as cited in Adria & Mao, 2016, p.22). Thus, this study took the second angle which considered e-democracy as a means to enhance citizen participation in decision making on political matters as well as other affairs in terms of governance and citizen development. Furthermore, the kind of citizen participation considered was the online participation, also called e-participation. This kind of participation is defined as the use of online tools to participate in democratic processes as well as in other matters. Following Kim and Lee (2012, as cited in Lee (2017), e-participation was considered here as "citizen's voluntary participation and involvement in public administration affairs and public decision-making through the use of ICT applications" (p.285).

During data collection and administration of questionnaires, this study was interested in students who used ICTs in Burundi irrespective of their political affiliation. These included those who used mobile phones and internet to participate in decision making. Equally important was the use of focus group with the youth political leaders. On the government side, top officials from two ministries were targeted and interviewed along with their communication officers. In addition, this study was interested in establishing different means used by the government in e-democracy and the documents related to e-democracy policy framework.

### Limitations

Considering that this study chose to use the mixed method approach, the limitations were related to the qualitative and quantitative aspect which composed it. This was neither a purely quantitative nor a qualitative study as it is generally known.

Therefore, some scholars criticize the weakness of mixed method with regard to validity. According to Jupp (2006), "the validity of mixed methods research has been called into question in debates over the extent to which the underlying paradigms and the methods of quantitative and qualitative research can be seen as compatible" (p.180). To address this weakness, strategies such as triangulation were used. As a matter of fact, "validity is not an inherent property of a particular method, but pertains to the data, accounts or conclusions reached by using that method in a particular context for a particular purpose" (Maxwell, 1992, as cited in Hess-Biber, 2010, p.91).

Moreover, it was critical to be careful about social desirability in order to avoid being influenced by the government officials during interviews. This risk is associated with the fact that each government wishes to be perceived as the best. As explained by Rubin and Babbie (2010), this refers to "the tendency of people to say or do things that will make them, or their reference group look good" (p.80). In doing this, respondents tend to avoid saying things that make them, or the organisation that they represent, to be perceived negatively. To address social desirability, scholars suggest different methods such as not informing participants that they are under observation, not informing participants what is being observed, using physiological measures so that it is not be possible for participants to fake their responses, or using costly measures in terms of time, money and energy. Also structuring the interview or questionnaire in a way that the participants do not know the correct or wrong response can be used (Mitchell & Jolley, 2010). However, some of the latter suggestions can be judged unethical. For this reason, the study addressed the issue of social desirability by investing in sufficient time spent with participants. Moreover, the interview guide was structured in a way that respondents did not care about wrong or correct answers; only their opinions mattered.

## Delimitations

Following the scope part, this delimitation pointed out the aspects of e-democracy and citizen participation that were the concern of this study in opposition to those that were not covered.

First, this study was not interested in proving whether Burundi government uses ICTs in the democratic process and practices. Instead, its interest lay in assessing whether the way Burundi government uses ICTs facilitates and enhances citizen participation.

Secondly, this study was not concerned with providing quantitative statistics of Burundians who use ICTs only. Instead, it established the level of satisfaction of those who used ICTs in regard to the way Burundi government used ICTs for citizen participation. Moreover, it was possible to determine the extent to which the means used by the government matched with the ones used by the citizens in e-democracy.

Thirdly, this study was not focused on online voting as it is conceived by some scholars (Thomson, 2008; Achieng & Ruhode, 2013). Even if online voting is part of e-democracy, this later was not the major focus in this study. Instead it was concerned by the holistic perspective of e-democracy as a means by which citizens used to participate in politics as well as in other matters that affected their lives. In this study, e-democracy and citizen participation were conceived in the sense that a healthy democracy functions to facilitate citizens to participate in all matters that have impact on their lives. Therefore, citizens are facilitated to get involved in decision making.

Fourth, e-democracy was approached differently from e-governance. While some scholars conceive e-democracy as being similar to e-governance, this latter is concerned with government services facilitated or offered online. In contrast, this

study was concerned with e-democracy as a means to facilitate citizen participation in democratic processes and decision making in particular.

### Definition of Terms

Considering the diverse ways of understanding the issue under study, this section defined key terms as defined by various scholars. More importantly, it made clear the way the terms are used and understood in this study.

#### *Democracy*

Historically, the actual democracy originated from the Greek and Athens conception of democracy. The Greek form of democracy was based on the concept of 'strong principle of equality' which meant that all members were sufficiently well qualified, taken all around, to participate in making the collective decisions binding on the association that significantly affected their good or interest (Ober & Hedrick, 1996). This principle stresses that every citizen, no matter their differences, had the right to participate in public deliberation. Later, the Athens stressed the concept of citizen's participation as major feature in democracy. This meant that democratic leadership was built on a model of the volunteer expert adviser constantly seeking public attention and approval through direct communication with the citizenship, rather than on a model of the authoritative expert rulers who occasionally seek legitimization through elections (Ober, 2008).

In view of our current democracy, various scholars agree that it is inspired from the two principles (Finley, 1983; Bernal, 1987; Blumler & Coleman, 1995; Held, 2006). Although it can take different forms such as electoral, liberal, majoritarian, participatory, deliberative, and egalitarian (Coppedge & Gerring, 2011), this study considered democracy in the participatory form. This latter matched well with the study which considered democracy as the form of governance that involved citizens in

decision making on matters which affected their lives not just during electoral period. Thus, the leading definition of democracy is therefore from Saward (1940) who defines it as: "substantive policy, and political and administrative actions performed under substantive policy, must correspond to the express preferences of a majority of citizens" (p.14).

In this study, democracy was used to mean the system of governance that is anchored in the principle of facilitating citizen participation in decision making not only during election period but also on other matters that affect their lives.

### *E-Democracy*

The concept of e-democracy has been defined by various scholars such as Grönlund (2002); Chadwick (2008); Fischer (2012); Adria and Mao (2016). As a new concept, it came with different names approached from different perspectives. As mentioned by Grönlund (2002) "it comes as one of many names (teledemocracy, IT-democracy, etc.) by which is usually, and vaguely, meant information and communication technology (ITC) applied to enhance public participation in democratic processes". Accordingly, to some e-democracy is "the transfer of democratic practices into online forms with the aim of improving deliberation" (Fischer, 2012).

Depending on the driving motivation of a government, e-democracy in relation to citizen participation involves different aspects. According to Riley (2003, as cited in Kumar and Kumari (2015), "e-democracy involves electronic engagement (e-engagement); engaging public in the policy process via electronic networks; electronic consultation (e-consultation) which refers to interaction between public servants and the citizenry and interest groups; and electronic controllership (e-controllership) consisting of the capability to manage the cost, performance, and the

services of an organization electronically" (p.6). With respect to the purpose of this study, the leading definition of e-democracy is that it meant facilitating citizen participation by the use of ICTs. In opposition to "tools -centred approach" or "technological determinism", this study agreed with Kumar (2017) who argues that "e-democracy consists of all electronic means of communication that enable/empower citizens in their efforts to hold rulers/politicians accountable for their actions in the public realm" (p.20).

Referring to the definitions, this study used e-democracy as the use of ICT means to participate in democracy and public affairs in general. In this study, e-democracy is considered differently from e-governance that stresses online government services.

### *Citizenship*

Actually, the concept of citizenship is wide and vague considering the movements of people from a country to another, intermarriages among people from different countries, and equally important the diversify of legislations on matter of citizenship. According to Mindus (2009) "the political way of addressing "citizenship" is grounded in a dichotomy which opposes the citizen to the subject or, in the traditional terms of the French Revolution, the *citoyen* to the *sujet*" (p.31). Put simply Loria (2016) argues that there are three major criteria for defining citizenship. In her argument, anyone born on a country is a citizen of that country; a child whose parents are citizens of a country becomes automatically a citizen, and lastly citizenship is acquired by naturalization. So far the Burundi law attributes citizenship to a person whose parents are Burundian or acquired by naturalization (Burundi Constitution, Art.12). Hence the citizens targeted were Burundian citizenship by birth or acquired by naturalization. With regard to participation in democracy and decision

making, this study agreed with Mindus (2009) that "the citizen is therefore *active* member of the state, who contributes to the formation of collective will or self-government, by making decisions (in the classic form of direct democracy) or by voting for representation (in modern representative democracies) (p.36). As a matter of fact, the Burundi constitution (art,51) guarantees every citizen the right to participate in democracy and decision making in any public affair.

### *Citizen Participation and e-participation*

The concept of citizen participation has a long history and has been subject to many studies considering that it is one of the key conditions for a government to be called democratic. It has, hence, been conceptualized by various scholars such as Callahan (2007), Dalton (2008); Roberts (2008), Assi, Nabatchi, and Antoun (2013), and the Encyclopedia of Public Administration (2017). The Encyclopedia of Public Administration provides a broad definition of citizen participation as the "process in which ordinary people take part - whether on a voluntary or obligation basis and whether acting alone or as a part of a group - with the goal of influencing a decision involving choices that will affect the community".

Politicians, policymakers, NGOs, and corporations all promote participation as a means of achieving citizens' democratic empowerment (Zandbergen & Jaffe, 2014). With the advent of ICTs, the concept of citizen participation has evolved to the concept of "e-participation" to insinuate the use of ICTs to participate in democracy. The online participation in democracy presents a series of advantages for governments. For instance, "government officials have the opportunity to contact the citizens either actively, in the form of a dialogue and a debate, or passively, through anticipation of possible civil responses to given documents" (Kollar, Gasperova, & Poliak, 2016). In this sense, e-participation is defined as, 'the use of information and

communication technologies to broaden and deepen political participation by enabling citizens to connect with one another and with their elected representation' (Macintosh, 2008). Equally important, e-participation was also defined as 'use of ICTS to broaden and deepen political participation by enabling citizen to connect with one another and with their elected representatives' (Costopoulou, Ntalianis, Ntaliani, Karetos & Gkoutzioupa, 2017).

Thus, e-participation was conceived in this study as the online participation by the citizens in democratic processes by sharing and giving opinions on matters that impacted on their lives. In addition, e-participation went beyond e-voting as it was grounded in a long-term relationship where citizens were considered as major stakeholders in the democratic process. In view of the above different conception of the citizen's role in democracy, this study approached citizen participation not in an obligatory way but in a voluntary one. In this sense, this study accorded more with the definition of Assi, Nabatchi, and Antoun (2013) who defined citizen participation as the process by which public concerns, needs, and interests are incorporated into decision making, in an almost universally accepted foundation of democracy. In other words, this study considered e-participation as democratic processes that use ICTs to get involved in democracy and public affairs.

### *Government Communication*

The concept of government communication is very wide and complex to define as it implies many aspects of political communication. In theory, government communication can be considered as "all forms of political activities", it can also be looked at as a "specific focus on one limited activity" (Howlett, 2009). Likewise, government communication can be approached by analysing its actions which imply what 'it does' or analysing what 'it is' (Canel& Sanders, 2013).

Considering the complexity associated with this concept, Canel and Sanders (2011, as cited in Canel and Sanders, 2010) define it by referring to the "aims, role and practice of communication implemented by executive politicians and officials of public institutions in the service of a political rationale, and that are themselves constituted on the basis of the people's indirect or direct consent and are charged to enact their will". Said differently, Pasquier (2015) defined government communication as "all the activities of public sector institutions and organizations that are aimed at conveying and sharing information, primarily for the purpose of presenting and explaining government decisions and actions, promoting the legitimacy of these interventions, defending recognized values and helping to maintain social bonds". Canel and Sanders (2015) think that "government communication is the area of practice and study of communication directed to key publics in the pursuit of both political and civic purposes".

Considering the diverse ways of conceiving the concept of government communication, this study stressed on the practice of communication and especially the communication strategy related to e-democracy as a means of facilitating citizen participation. In this perspective, citizens were considered as active and the communication practice was grounded in the long-term beyond the voting calculation. This conception corresponds with Canel and Sanders (2013)'s view as they believe that on one hand, it is conceived for cultivating a 'long-term relationship' with the citizens in a mutual understanding perspective. The relationship goes beyond the voting calculation because it considers that the citizens are active, involved and interactive actors; on the other hand, government communication is concerned with tools and strategies to engage and facilitate citizen participation in democracy' (p. 10).

### *Participatory Democracy*

The concept of participatory democracy was associated with the idea of individual and voluntary participation of the citizens in decision making, and in any matter that affects their lives. With regard to this study, participatory democracy was conceived not in a competitive way (liberal democracy) but it “envision[s] citizens who engage into political decision-making in great numbers and who share a sense of collective responsibility” (Zittel, 2007). However, depending on the democratic system of each country, participation in democracy can be direct or indirect. Thus, Steiner and Kaiser (2017) define participatory democracy as “that system of community government in which [...] the members of a community participate, or may participate, directly or indirectly, in the making of decisions that affect them” (p.168).

Irrespective of the system, participatory democracy is considered, in this study, as the faculty of individuals to participate in decision making on voluntary basis.

### *Public Sphere*

The concept of public sphere is wide with different definitions along its history until now with the advent of ICTs. According to Koller and Wodak (2008), "the public sphere is a concept in Continental philosophy and critical theory that contrasts with private sphere and is that part of life in which one interacts with others and with society at large" (p.1). In their argument, they believe that "for man, the public sphere is a political one, which enables citizens to participate in democratic dialogue" (p.1.). Following Habermas' definition of public sphere, it "refers to a realm of social life in which 'public opinion' can be formed. Citizens meet as a part of the public sphere when they come together not as subjects of the state or as private economic actors

concerned with matters of individual interest, but rather as a free and open public body to discuss matters of general interest" (Roderick, 1986, p.42). Referring to this definition, public sphere is considered in this study as the capacity of ICT, especially social media, to allow citizens to share and discuss their opinion on matters that impacted on their lives.

### *ICTs Framework*

ICTs (Information Technology and Communication) have become omnipresent and used in every sector. For this reason, it is important to define their management and governance in a particular context for specific purposes. With respect to e-democracy which was conceived in the as the use of ICTs for political purposes, ICT framework refers to the "outlined strategy with respect to the purpose, structure and course of action laid down for achieving a set of goals or agenda of e-democracy" (Ayo, Oni, & Mbarika, 2016, p.3). In other words, ICT framework is called "architectural framework" to insinuate the idea that "there has to be a clear definition of goals, vision, and objectives of ICT" (Dubey, 2011, p.105). In general, ICT framework is designed in a document which captures the political orientation as well as the technological aspects. For the case of Burundi Government, the ICT framework was defined in their document called "National Policy on the Development of ICT". In brief, ICT framework, in this study, was defined as document that defined the objectives, vision, and the specific ICT means that are likely to facilitate citizen participation.

### Summary

In conclusion, this first chapter had dealt with giving direction to the study. From the introduction to the definitions of the key terms, this chapter served as mirror for the rest of work as it put clearly the purpose of the study, the methodology, the

reason why it was needed in the context of Burundi and scholarship. More importantly, this first chapter made clear the problem to be addressed. From the literature, e-democracy seemed not yet integrated in political communication strategy. Hence, this was the problem to be addressed with the intention of increasing the chances of e-democracy to enhance citizen participation. In addition, this chapter has helped to delimitate the study considering that issues of e-democracy can be looked at from various angles. The study was grounded in political communication perspective. Consequently, e-democracy was conceived as a potential means of enhancing citizen participation rather than as a democratic process perspective.

Although this first chapter created an orientation and understanding of the study, the subsequent chapter; literature review, helps in understanding the topic deeper. The theories considered as the lenses through which this study was understood are covered in this chapter. Conclusively, this second chapter helps to situate the study in the global scholarship and practice of e-democracy.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

This chapter reviewed the literature related to e-democracy and citizen participation in the context of government communication and political communication by extension. The issue of citizen participation has always been at the centre of democratic discussions. From the ancient Greek up to now in the advent of the ICTs, citizen participation is key for a healthy democracy. With respect to this, different scholars have conducted studies on e-democracy and citizen participation. Thus, the studies looked at in this chapter II have enlightened this one and helped to identify the gaps in this topic.

This chapter started with the theoretical framework which guided this study. In the theoretical framework, justification for choice of the theories is given. The theories were participatory democracy theory and uses and gratification theory.

#### Theoretical Framework

The use of a theory in research is very critical as it plays various roles. Both in qualitative and quantitative research, a theory can be used as a broad explanation for behaviour and attitude, and it may be complete with variables, constructs, and hypothesis (Creswell, 2014). In other stances, theories give researchers different “lenses” through which to look at complicated problems and social issues, focusing their attention on different aspects of the data and providing a framework within which to conduct their analysis (Reeves, 2008). Therefore, this study used two theories, Participatory Democracy theory, and Uses and Gratification theory. The two theories served to decipher better understanding of the role of e-democracy in enhancing citizen participation, guide the research questions, data collection, analysis and drawing of conclusions.

## Participatory Democracy Theory

Participatory democracy theory is one of the democracy theories which is protective, developmental, pluralist and participatory. Participatory theorists believe that citizens are active and have the capacity to participate in decision-making. They do not believe that participation should be limited to voting or relying on the representation only, but citizens should participate in what affects their lives. In fact, theorists of participatory democracy opine that "citizens of a participatory democracy increasingly become educated, effective and empowered because they are continually exerting a high level of control over the social, political, and economic institutions that directly affect their lives" (Hilmer, 2010, p.56). This perspective corresponds with the potential which e-democracy has as it allows citizens to participate directly by using the ICTs.

Furthermore, "in the participatory model of e-democracy, interaction is regarded as constitutive of democracy itself" (Chadwick, 2013, p.449). In fact, democracy is not limited to voting "once every four or five years" (Woolf, 2005). Woolf believes that "if this were the case, then people would not be able to influence the affairs of their nation, or protest against the actions of the government, during the long periods in between elections" (p.8). Historically, the idea of democracy was first expressed in ancient Greece, while the word "democracy" comes from the Greek Language. "Demos" which means people and "krates" which means rule; so "democracy" means "rule by the people" (Hardyman, 2017, p.4). Referring to the principles of sharing and equal participation, people are involved in decision making and management of public affairs. In this sense, participatory democracy finds its pertinence as it privileges interaction between citizens and government as well as interaction between citizens in a democratic way.

Although participatory democracy theory is currently (21st century) associated with Carole Pateman, it has a long history with other philosophers such Jürgen Habermas with his concept of "public sphere", and Robert A. Dahl in the 1960s and 1970s. With regard to the concept of public sphere, "Jürgen Habermas conceives the public sphere as an institutional space between the state and civil society, as a realm of social life in which public opinion can be formed" (Alejandro, 1993, p.181). He explains that "the public sphere developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when the emergence of literary clubs, along with periodic and political press, paved the way for a public and rational discussion of political issues"(p.181). According to Chadwick (2012), "in 1962, Habermas argues that the development of early modern capitalism during the eighteenth century heralded a new era of communication based on a culture of enlightened, critical, and reasoned public debate" (p.47). For instance, Habermas (1991) adds that "the bourgeois public sphere was conceived above all as sphere of private people coming together as a public; they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rule governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labour" (p. 27). In fact, this kind of public sphere was limited to the bourgeoisie; the owners of private and independent press, and political discussions were held at some specific physical places such as publics, salons and coffee houses. (Chadwick, 2012). In other words, the high class of the society was thinking and discussing on behalf of the rest of the population and their opinion was considered as general public opinion while every citizen was not allowed or facilitated to participate as it is expected in democracy.

However, with the advent of internet and new technologies of information and communication, the conception of public sphere has changed. According to Gerhards

and Schäfer (2009), people can access easily internet without restrictions and generally without paying highly as opposed to newspaper; as such, it allow inclusivity for those who have access and people can debate irrespective of their classes and geographical localization. They believe that "internet has improved the notion of public sphere with more openness for everyone and potential for inclusiveness". But their findings show that "the internet is still dominated by the elite and intellectuals, hence similar to the traditional public sphere". Fortunately, the situation is changing with the liberalization of internet and progressive reduction of its cost in our countries. Moreover, means of access are becoming more accessible to many. While it was required to have a laptop or a computer to access internet in the past, actually a good number of people have access to internet via their mobile phones.

In relation to democracy and citizen participation in politics and decision-making, "Habermas conceives a two-level model in which the informal networks of opinion formation of the public sphere and the formal deliberations of political institutions are portrayed as complementary democratic mechanisms" (Born, 2013). In other words, the idea of public sphere by Habermas in relation to democracy and e-democracy consists of the belief that individual citizens are active, can participate in decision-making and policies on matters that are susceptible to affect their lives. Although it is still possible to enjoy public sphere with traditional means of communication and media, it is becoming easy for those who have access to ICTs. As such, Dahlgren (2005, p.148) explains that "a functioning public sphere is understood as a constellation of communicative spaces in society that permit the circulation of information, ideas, debates - ideally in an unfettered manner-and also the formation of political will (i.e., public opinion)". This idea of giving importance to the citizen has

been also developed, in the same way, by Robert A. Dahl in the 'participatory democracy theory'.

From the ideas of Habermas and Robert A. Dahl, Pateman Carole continues the development of participatory democracy theory in the 21st century. In the argument of Carole Pateman (2003), the theory of participatory democracy is founded on the belief that there is an interconnection between individuals and their representative institutions. These two cannot be separated for a healthy democracy. In her argument, Pateman (2003, p.41) argues that "the existence of representative institutions at national level is not sufficient for democracy; for maximum participation by all the people at that level socialization, or "social training" for democracy must take place in other spheres in order that the necessary individual attitude and psychological qualities can be developed". In this perspective, citizen participation is considered a cornerstone in democracy and, as a result, means of communication, including ICTs play a critical role to achieve this goal.

The importance of participatory democracy theory in democracy is also demonstrated through the five criteria of the democratic process as stated by Robert Dahl (1989, as cited in Nyborg & Spangen, 2000). He opines that effective participation, in participatory democracy perspective, has to meet the following criteria: "throughout the process of making binding decisions, citizens ought to have an adequate opportunity, and equal opportunity, for expressing their preferences as to the final outcome; they must have adequate and equal opportunities for placing questions on the agenda and for expressing reasons for endorsing one outcome rather than another" (p.84). These criteria, especially those in relation with citizen participation and equal chances to participate meet the democratic principles as it was in the Athenian democracy which is the origin of the current democracy. In addition,

democratic principles cannot be effective if they are not accompanied by communication. As such, traditional means of communications have been influenced by the advent of ICTs which gave birth to the online democracy known as e-democracy.

In relation to e-democracy, there is coherence with the participatory democracy

theory considering that the idea of e-democracy refers to the effort to enhance citizen participation in political actions, enabling connection among citizens, and interaction between citizens and their representatives via the ICTs (Baarda & Luppicini, 2017). One of the major advantages of the ICTs is to facilitate citizen participation in decision-making and democracy in general. Norris and Coleman (2005) opine that "e-democracy should be defined broadly since computer and telecommunications, particularly tied to the internet and web, are connected to all aspects of politics and governance" (p.6). They exemplify that "from the paving roads to electing politicians, electronic media are reshaping access to what people know, who they communicate with, and what they need to know to get things done; in all these ways, technical change can enable more or less democratic patterns of communicative power" (p.6). However, the digital citizen participation should be strategically well coupled with other means of participation to avoid the so called "digital divide" among citizens who have the capacity and ability to participate in online democracy at the expenses of those who have no access to ICTs. If digital divide is not well handled, the core principle of democracy which is equal participation shall be affected.

According to Ragnedda (2017), the digital divide is an important social problem, because unequal access to and different uses of ICTs may cause additional forms of inequality. By general definition, "digital divide refers to the gap between

those people who have access to digital technologies and information on the internet, and those who do not" (Singh, 2002, p.4). Accordingly, the analysis of digital divide shall be done in consideration of two dimensions: the gap in terms of physical access to the new technologies of information and communication on one hand and the gap in terms of capacity and resources to be able to use the new technologies of information and technologies on the other hand (Albaran, 2017). The literature emphasizes three types of digital divide stratified into first, second, and third digital divide. The first level of digital divide refers to social, economic, and demographic aspects which determine the access to ICTs by those favoured or not to others; the second level of digital divide refers to issues of motivations to participate in politics and democracy, and skills needed to use effectively internet; the last and third level is associated with other aspects of life such as professional (search for job opportunities online), culture, etc. (Mi, 2010 & Van DIJK, 2012).

In view of the above explanation of digital divide concept, the first two digital divide aspects are related to this study while the third one is less connected to issues of democracy and equal access to means of citizen participation. The first two are significant to this study because of two reasons: on one hand, there are inequalities between the so-called developing countries and the developed countries in terms of ICTs' access and political participation. On the other hand, even within countries, the access to ICTs is not equal (second level of digital divide). This second digital divide refers to the fact that within the same county, there is unequal access or unequal use of ICTs in political actions. For effective participatory, government officials should be concerned about those who have access but do not participate as well as keeping availing traditional means of participation for those who do not yet have access to ICTs. For those who have access but do not participate, this study intended to attempt

a comprehension of the reasons behind the assessing e-democracy and citizen participation in Burundi. There are other factors or reasons that need to be taken care of so as to avoid such form of digital divide.

As it comes out in the empirical literature, social groups such as the youth are not so much motivated to political participation while they are the majority both in numbers and users of ICTs in African society, especially via mobile phones and internet access. Furthermore, the notion of digital divide correlates with the idea of thinking e-democracy in a holistic perspective of political communication strategy where those who cannot or do not want to participate via e-democracy shall keep involved through other means of communication be it traditional.

In relation to this study, scholars have used this theory in e-democracy and citizen participation studies. The studies include, Francoli (2007); Gupta (2017) and Simon, Bass, Boelman and Mulgan (2017). The specific studies are, the role of ICTs "on citizen participation and democracy" in Canada, "Towards participatory democracy: Can digitization help women in India?" and "Digital Democracy: The tools transforming political engagement". These examples show how this theory is suitable to this kind of study.

In sum, this study on e-democracy was well informed by participatory democracy theory as they share a common concern: citizen participation which is key in democracy. In addition, they share the belief that citizens are no longer passive but active and capable to shape politics and decision-making if they are facilitated on one hand. On the other, they share common interest which is to promote individual citizens to take part in the democratic process in an equal and freeway. As a matter of fact, Milakovich (2010) asserts that "the ideology of citizen participation has firm roots in democratic political values, especially relating to the concept of participatory

democracy" (p.2). Additionally, for avoiding "digital divide" while democracy is grounded on equal opportunities to participate and share ideas, e-democracy ought to be well coupled with other means of citizen participation.

Furthermore, even in e-democracy, citizens can use different media or tools to get engaged by sharing ideas, deliberating, debating, and participating in decision-making. For this reason, participatory democracy theory was used together with Uses and Gratification in this study. Hence, the Uses and Gratification theory is examined next. In fact, one cannot talk about the important role of ICTs in e-democracy without looking at the latter as media. Like in traditional media, ICT users have preferences in their choices of source of information or forum for interaction with politics and among citizens.

### Uses and Gratification Theory

The argument that people assimilate, select from and reject communications from the media, led to the development of 'uses and gratifications' model (Morley, 1992). In fact, "the uses and gratification theory proceeds from the needs of users and the probable gratifications that they derive from media use" (Fourie, 2001, p.297). A uses and gratification approach to the study of communication was first formally outlined by Katz O'Donohoe (1993). Katz argues that "communication research should reverse the traditional question of what the media do to people and ask instead what people do with media" (O'Donohoe, 1993, p.52). Uses and gratification research, in other words, "rejects the old legacy-of-fear approach, in which the mass media were seen as domineering agents that could easily manipulate the huddled masses thrown together in rapidly industrializing societies" (Orlik, 2009). Hence, Bennett, Slater and Wall (2006) add that "the basic premise of this approach runs as follows: we all have various needs and desires, for example, needs for entertainment,

information and social interaction". As a matter of fact, citizens use various ICTs (i.e. social media, forum, phone calls or SMS, WhatsApp...) for different reasons and needs to satisfy.

For instance, citizens might choose an online media depending on what they want to participate in or who they prefer to interact with. For instance, while some citizens participate actively in e-democracy through Facebook, others prefer twitter, or phones' through SMS. None of the tools is superior to the other; they just depend on the preference of the citizen, their ability to use a specific tool or their motivation in participating in e-democracy. As a result, government communication officers need to know the preferences of their citizens in order to facilitate their participation in e-democracy by matching the tools used.

The common tendency to attach to the label "uses and gratification approach" to work in this field appears to virtually disclaim any theoretical pretensions or methodological commitments (Katz, Blumer & Gurevitch, 1973-1974). In their argument, "the approach simply represents an attempt to explain something by which individuals use communication, among other resources in their environment, to satisfy their needs and to achieve their goals, and to do so by simply asking them" (p.510). Consequently, Uses and Gratifications theory has three components: 1) achievement, which refers to the improvement of respect, status, and reputation, 2) enjoyment, which indicates the internal satisfaction toward the community, and 3) social interaction, which refers to the mutual relationship of community members [30], [34] (Chuang, 2015).

Likewise, McQuail, Blumer, and Brown (1972, as cited in Severin and Tankard 2010), basing their research on England, suggest the following categories of needs: Diversion - escape from routine and problems, emotional release; personal

relationships - social utility of information in conversations, substitute of the media for companionship; personal identity or individual psychology - value reinforcement or reassurance, self-understanding, reality exploration, and so on; and surveillance - information about things that might affect one or will help one do or accomplish something (p. 295). For these reasons, Chuang (2015, p.473) opines that "the Uses and Gratification perspective takes an individual view". This perspective applies to citizen participation in e-democracy. Considering that e-democracy is grounded in democratic principles such as equal participation and sharing, individual citizens are driven by various motivations to participate in e-democracy and use various platforms to do so. Therefore, "participation can be individual as well as collective" (Gil-Garcia & Miranda, 2010).

Early in the history of communications research, an approach was developed to study the gratifications that attract and hold audiences to kinds of media and the types of content their social and psychological needs (Cantril, 1942, as cited in Ruggiero, 2000). In view of this, Katz (1979: 75), as cited in Liebes and Curran, (1998), says that researchers in Uses and Gratifications, a domain traditionally opposed to cultural studies, saw the new focus on audience interpretation as setting the scene for them "to build the bridge we have been hoping might rise between gratifications studies and cultural studies (p.31). In this regard, Livingstone (1998) says that the rationale here was to account for the selective responses of audiences in the face of media excess, with the concept being the active audience. As a result, "the very definition of the active audience as it is found in the communication literature implies a vigilant, self-directed, rationalistic consciousness aware of its needs and motivations, bending media materials in pursuit of these motivations and in the maintenance of cognitive independence" (Biocca, 1985, p.63). In this sense, platforms

such as twitter and Facebook give chance to users to exercise their vigilance or self-direction by following some politicians or political organizations and get in touch with them through comments or messages.

In terms of distinctive features, Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (Winter, 1973-1974) argue that five elements of this model in particular may be singled out for comment:

- 1) The audience is conceived as being active, i.e., an important part of mass media use is assumed to be goal directed (McQuail, Blumer, & Brown, 1972)
- 2) In the mass communication process much initiative in linking need gratification and media choice lies with the audience member
- 3) The media compete with other sources of need satisfaction
- 4) Methodologically speaking, many of the goals of mass media use can be derived from data supplied by individual audience members themselves - i.e., people are sufficiently self-aware to be able to report their interests and motives in particular cases, or at least to recognize them when confronted with them in an intelligible and familiar verbal formulation
- 5) Value judgments about the cultural significance of mass communication should be suspended while audience orientations are explored on their own terms (p. 511).

In relation to these five key characteristics of Uses and Gratification, it is indicated that media uses and gratification are related to the psychological and sociological factors of the audience (Samahanpan, 2014, citing Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch, 1974). In their argument, these psychological and sociological factors, consequently, engender needs and expectations with regard to mass media usage

(p.27). In this regard, they enumerated five social factors that direct the media uses and gratification of media users as follows:

- 1) Social situation produces tension and conflict, leading to pressure for its easing via mass consumption;
- 2) Social situation creates awareness of problems that demand attention, information about which may be sought in the media;
- 3) Social situation offers impoverished real-life opportunities to satisfy certain needs, which are then directed to mass media for complementarity, supplementary, or substitute servicing;
- 4) Social situation gives to certain values, the affirmation and reinforcement of which is facilitated by the consumption of the congruent media materials;
- 5) Social situation provides a field of expectations of familiarity which certain media materials, which must then be monitored in order to sustain membership in valued social groupings (p. 28).

In fact, uses and gratification approach was not so popular among mass media scholars for several decades, but with the rapid development of telecommunications technology, uses and gratification may enjoy its revival (Weiyan, 2015). Weiyan asserts that the deregulation of the communication industry and the convergence of mass media and digital technology have changed the consumption pattern of audience dramatically. As new technologies present people with more and more media choices, motivation and satisfaction become one of the most crucial factors of audience analysis (Ruggiero, 2000). For instance, Ruggiero says that new media like the Internet possess at least attributes of data not commonly associated with traditional media: interactivity, demassification, and a synchronicity (p. 15). It is in this context that ICTs are having success in democratic processes because of the facilities they

offer to citizens to participate in decision making with less restriction and cost. For this reason, it was important not just to assume but to assess the level of satisfaction of the citizens by evaluating the adequacy between their preferred means of participation and the government means of interacting with the citizens.

In relation to this study, the use of this theory goes beyond its traditional consideration just as a media theory. On one hand it stresses here the gratifications that individual/citizens get by using certain online platforms to contribute or attempt to influence policy on matters that affect their lives. As ICTs give access to ordinary citizens with diverse options (audio, text, video) and less restrictions compared to traditional media (radio, TV, newspaper), citizens feel their voices are heard and that they belong to a community in which they have now a way to voice themselves. On the other hand, there is necessity for government to care about e-democracy platforms used by the citizen in order to communicate effectively. This communication aspect is key because if people contribute but government does not take into consideration their online contributions, citizens can get discouraged and loose the capacity of e-democracy to enhance citizen participation. To prove the pertinence of Uses and Gratification theory in this study, other scholars have used it in the assessment of the impact of ICTs in democracy and political communication at large. They include; Jackson and Lilleker (2007); Homero, Jung, and Valenzuela, (2012); Yoo, Kim, and Homera, (2017). Accordingly, Yoo, Kim, and Homera (2017) believe that their study; "Cognitive Benefits for Senders: Antecedents and Effects of Political Expression on Social Media" 'shares the perspective of two-step theory and uses and gratification approach that media effects on social media is a product of motives and needs of active users (p.31). These studies not only confirmed the relevance of this theory in this study, but also, they guided the data analysis.

In sum, the Uses and Gratification theory, in association with participatory democracy were important in guiding this study. It helped to correlate the means used by the citizens in e-democracy and the ones used by the government. The outcome of this analysis informed the research question about the tools used by Burundian to participate in e-democracy and their level of satisfaction. In addition, the uses and gratification theory cohere with key features of e-democracy as they share the belief that citizen are active and they know which channel is appropriate for their participation in public affairs. Referring to the starting reflection of this theory, citizens know what they do with media. Furthermore, the two theories put together informed better the evaluation of the level of satisfaction of the citizens both qualitatively and quantitatively. Also, they informed, slightly, the level of maturity of our democracy because citizenship is key for a democracy to be sustainable. After all, the implementation of e-democracy meets the expectations and needs of the citizens so that they can participate effectively.

#### Theoretical and Empirical Literature Review

This literature review stressed two connected parts. The theoretical literature review and the empirical literature review. Each section of the theoretical literature review is concluded with an empirical one. In fact, the issue of e-democracy has been studied by various scholars with different angles because e-democracy and democracy in general are beyond voting as they touch on other critical aspects such as citizen participation (Manoharan & Holzer, 2012). As a result, this literature review, with respect to the topic and its objectives, has emphasized on the following elements: e-democracy and citizen participation, e-democracy and enhancement of citizen participation, e-democracy and government communication strategy, ICTs framework and citizen participation in e-democracy and lastly means of participation in e-

democracy, and level of citizens' satisfaction with regard to the way e-democracy is handled by the government.

### E-democracy to Facilitate and Enhance Citizen Participation

In this section, the literature reviewed focused on the relationship between citizen e-democracy and citizen participation with regard to the way the former facilitates and enhances the latter.

In theory, scholars (Chadwick, 2003; Clift, 2004; Norris, 2004; Ayo, Adebiyi, & Fatudimu, 2008; Aikins, 2008; Funikul&Chutimaskul, 2009; Kumar, 2017; and Oni & Okunoye, 2018) agree that e-democracy has the potential to facilitate and enhance citizen participation. Likewise, Kumar (2017) states that 'ICTs have the potential to engage people in all spheres of the political processes such as information generation, enhanced deliberation among citizens, and most of all enhance participation in decision making (p.53).

More importantly, Aikins (2008) adds that 'internet-based citizen participation provides some opportunities to minimize or avoid decision making delays, special interest influence and spatial-temporal barriers that plaque traditional citizen participation' (p.32). As such, ICTs have the potential to enhance and facilitate citizen participation considering that it is simultaneous and breaks the physical and hierarchical barriers. Historically, the concept of e-democracy was conceived as the one which empowers citizen to shape political agendas and alter the focus of government initiatives, enabling citizens to raise their views and suggest alternatives rather than being restricted to topics pre-set by governments (Freeman & Quirke, 2013). Thus, 'within e-democracy initiatives, it is common to distinguish between two areas: one addressing e-voting and the other addressing e-engagement or e-

participation (Cabiddu, 2010). Considering this distinction, this study followed the second perspective, e-engagement also called e-participation.

In its conceptual development, the concept of e-democracy is going through different stages. According to Vedel (2006), the first age of e-democracy began in the 1950s with the emergence of cybernetics sciences under Norbert Wiener.<sup>2</sup> At this particular time, the beginnings of computing technology and automated systems met efforts to re-evaluate processes of political negotiation and conflict resolution in the aftermath of the Second World War. Not only did cybernetics provide an analytical framework to better understand the social reality, it also brought in a promise of social orthopaedic. The second age of electronic democracy came with the advent and penetration of cable TV networks and private computers, during the 1970s and 1980s.

These new technological devices emerged as new political concerns and visions were framed in the aftermath of the social crises that many industrialized countries experienced in the late 1960s. This led to the rise of so-called new social movements as well as to new conceptions of politics, according to which society would be better transformed from the bottom up and the coordination of local actions rather than through the conquest of the state apparatus. The last and most recent stage has commonly been the one most associated with the term e-democracy, and it provided most dimensions now prevalent in the debate and understanding of the field. Not only did the emergence of the Internet in the 1990s bring about an entirely new communication medium that became inexpensive, instantaneous and user-friendly (in the context of industrialized countries), but it was also accompanied by a new ideology of information freedom and a declared political 'independence of cyberspace' and its 'citizen' from the physical, as elaborated by John Perry Barlow in 1996" (p.3-4).

In view of the above development process, various scholars have approached the issue of e-democracy from different perspectives. Parvez and Ahmed (2007) stated that earlier works applied a range of perspectives to make sense e-democracy projects. Some of these perspectives focused on understanding the effects of ICTs on democratic practices while others aimed to understand the influence of social factors in shaping e-democracy and moderating their impact on the democratic process (e.g. social shaping, social constructivism and informatization) (p.613).

However, despite the potential advantages in enhancing citizen participation, there are also serious challenges which need to be considered and resolved in e-democracy. In view of this, recent studies have shown that even if in its infancy, and with still a limited number of empirical research-focused contributions, the literature on e-participation proves to span from very theoretical questions to tool-centred ones, even though the latter do so in a more descriptive fashion; both dimensions of research consider the management of the e-participation policies as a central issue, as a factor shaping the very nature of the relation created between decision-makers and citizens (Andersen, Henriksen & Secher, 2007). As a matter of fact, these mechanisms have accompanied the implementation of e-democracy and the integration of e-democracy in a wide political communication strategy while taking into consideration other means of involving those who do not participate in e-democracy and adequate policies which guarantee free and equal participation.

For instance, in Queensland, Anderson and Bishop (2005) report that e-democracy was conceived as 'the convergence between the traditional democratic process and internet technology', the mobile phone included. It is in this perspective that this study was conducted, taking the example of Burundi. In practice, different literature conceived e-democracy interchangeably with e-government. For instance, in

Gunter's (2006) conception, e-government encompasses e-democracy. To him, e-government 'is also regarded as playing a crucial role in promoting greater citizen involvement in civic and democratic matters'. But, in this study, the distinction is clear: e-democracy and e-government are not used interchangeably. Following Chadwick's (2003) distinction, researchers who are interested in the analysis of public policy, administration and management stress e-government while those who are interested in political communication, democracy and social movements which have impact on people's life stress e-democracy. As a result, this study considered e-democracy as 'the use of ICTs (...) by democratic actors (governments, elected officials, the media, political organizations, citizens/voters) within political and governance processes of local communities, nations and on the international stage' (Clift, 2004, p. 39).

In the same manner, Chadwick (2008) adds that e-democracy can play two roles: consultation and deliberation. He explains that 'whereas consultative e-democracy principally stresses the vertical flow of state-citizen communication, the deliberative type conceives a more complex, horizontal, and multidirectional interactivity' (p.449). Simply put, e-democracy can help in consultation information from the state to the citizens and from the citizens to the state on one hand. In this form of e-democracy, there is no interactivity. E-democracy is conceived here as tool for information. On the other, e-democracy can be a means for debate not only between citizens and the representatives and government but also among citizens. The deliberation aspect consists in allowing different democracy stakeholders to engage on matters that concern the community.

For a government to develop or implement e-democracy there are different postures conceptualized into models. But different models can also be retrieved at

different moments depending on the driving motivation of the government. Just to name a few, scholars (Korac-Kakabadse & Korac-Kakabadse, 1999; Segell, 2001; Kakabadse, Kakabase, Kouzmin, 2003) opine that there are four dominant models in the literature: *electronic bureaucracy model, information management model, populist model, and civil society model*. They explain that the *electronic model* 'refers to the electronic service delivery of government agencies'. 'The goal of this method is to allow easier, quicker, and cheaper transactions with the government on behalf of business and citizens and to reduce, over time, the size of the public sector'. *The information management model* 'refers to more-effective communication bridges between individual citizens and candidates or decision makers'. *The populist model* enables 'citizens to register their views on current issues, is most often equated with direct democracy' while *the civil society model* 'refers to the transformation of political culture, and, hence, it can only be appreciated within the context of any broader transformations brought by information technology'.

Similarly, Clift (2003, as cited in Oni and Okunoye, 2007) has also suggested a conceptual model that governments use to benefit from e-democracy. His model constitutes five elements: government, e-citizen, media, political groups and media. In his argument, the government provides extensive access to information and interacts electronically with citizens. The political groups run online advocacy campaigns and online political parties' campaign, and the media and portal/search sites play a critical role in providing news and online navigation. The "private sector" is a commercially driven connectivity, software, and technology. In the model, citizens are those who experience e-democracy (p.3563).

Moreover, Vedel (2006) informs us of other models of e-democracy. On one hand, he reports that Jan van Dijk considers the 'purposes of democracy' (elites

selection, opinion formation, decision-making) and the 'means used to achieve these (representative or direct), 'reached six potential models of e-democracy (legalist, competitive, plebiscitary, pluralist, participative, libertarian). On the other, he reports that Jens Hoff, 'using traditional conception of citizenship (liberal, republican, communitarian, radical), suggests that four models of e-democracy could emerge from the use of the internet (consumerist, plebiscitary, pluralist, participative)' (p.5).

Models can vary depending on authors or the government's objectives but what is important is the ability of each of them to facilitate and enhance citizen participation in democracy. In relation to citizen participation, Kim (2006) opines that there are four major postures: '*e-democracy in organization*' which focuses on the e-democracy within the government for management purposes via ICTs; '*information provisional*' which focuses on the provision of information to the citizen via ICTs; '*interactive model*' which focuses on stimulating citizen participation in a two-way communication with the citizens; and the '*pluralistic model*' which focuses on two-way communication and interaction with the citizens and other social stakeholders. For all these reasons, each government ought to take advantage of e-democracy and design the model which corresponds to its needs at an appropriate time. However, this study followed the interactive model as it emphasizes on the engagement between citizens and leaders as well as among citizens themselves.

Considering the above theoretical literature, scholars have carried empirical studies to examine the impact of e-democracy in enhancing citizen participation. In this sense, the kind of citizen participation concerned is the online one, also called e-participation.

A study done by Yun (2010), using a survey to evaluate e-democracy in China found that ICTs have a positive impact on citizen e-participation. Considering that

China is one of the countries considered as one where democracy is not yet well settled, he found that ICTs, especially websites and blogs, facilitate and address complaints as well as engage in some sensitive topics such as 'social disparity, the unequal distribution of wealth, government corruption, and the rights of marginalized groups' (p.496). Similarly, Zheng (2016), in a study, using a survey also, found that ICTs have a positive impact on citizen participation on social issues such as corruption in China. To examine this, he used the UN Corruption Perception Index (CPI), in relation to the role of ICTs to facilitate citizen participation. According to these findings, "countries with a high level of e-participation are more likely to perform better in their anti-corruption efforts" (p.98). He emphasizes that 'the combination of information technologies and citizen participation make public supervision more powerful and e-participation becomes an important tool for anti-corruption efforts' (p.99).

Another study is by Olekesusi and Aiyegbajeje (2017) who examined the impact of ICTs in facilitating citizen participation in monitoring projects. In their study called e-Democracy for Smart City Lagos, they used a survey and found a positive correlation between e-democracy and citizen participation. Their findings indicate that one of the major successes of e-democracy in Lagos is in the area of e-participation through e-campaign, e-monitoring, and e-poll. For instance, e-monitoring contributed to the growth of infrastructure. They found that this was made possible by the involvement of the citizen via social media. Citizens were able to inform and update officials even when they were not physically present on the site. These examples indicate that e-democracy should not be limited to e-voting. The impact of e-democracy strengthens the nature of democracy which consists involving the citizen in decision making through sharing information, debate, deliberation, and

full involvement in decision making. More importantly, e-democracy is not restricted to political decisions only but all matters that affect people's life in the society. Taking the Kenyan example where government had proposed 16% VAT on petroleum products, citizens actively used social media to change government's position to 8%. In view of this example, e-democracy is expected to facilitate citizens to get involved in any matter that has an impact on their lives.

However, the effectiveness of e-democracy in young democracies or developing democracy evolves with time. For instance, in comparing the impact of e-democracy in China in 2013 and 2016, the situation has evolved significantly. In a study done by Linde and Karlson (2013), using fixed effects method to examine the relationship between e-participation and quality of government in non-democratic regimes, on the issue of combating corruption, his findings are different from the Zheng (2016)'s. They had discovered that e-participation does not weigh a lot on combating corruption in countries such as China. They also found that 'the only factor showing consistent effect on corruption and quality of government was the rule of law, or what has been referred to as legal accountability'. Similarly, Liden's (2015) qualitative study; 'Technology and democracy validity in measurements of e-democracy', found that e-participation on its own was not sufficient to measure e-democracy. As a matter of fact, his findings show that some countries score higher in democracy while they scored poorly in e-democracy. This is the function of the development of internet which affects strongly the implementation of e-democracy in combination with other political and social factors. By the same token, he also found that there are countries with big numbers of internet users without being necessarily democratic. Taking Rwanda as an example, it is ranked low in terms of freedom of

expression and other democratic rights by Human Rights Watch Report (2016) yet the number of internet users is huge.

Conversely, Rwanda is ranked highly in the fight against corruption in Africa by Transparency International Report (2016) because of its rule of law and accountability. This is to say, considering the increasing number of ICTs users in Africa, Burundi included, it was relevant to assess the correlation between e-democracy and citizen participation as the development of ICTs does not imply automatically effective e-democracy. These finding corresponds with the angle taken by this study that technology alone cannot determine the effectiveness of e-democracy. Many other factors have to be taken into consideration. Nevertheless, countries such as Ghana and Botswana which are seen as exemplary democracies in Africa, shy away because of their technological progress which is not yet at the level of Western or Asian countries. In other words, these findings show a gap associated with the fact that level of technology does not imply sustainable e-democracy.

As mentioned earlier, the evaluation of e-democracy was considered in a particular context and particular time. As a consequence, other factors as mentioned previously in the theoretical literature were involved to assess whether e-democracy facilitated and enhanced citizen participation. One of them was the integration of e-democracy in government communication strategy.

## 2. 2. E-democracy and Government Communication Strategy

In this section, the literature stresses on the strategic role of integrating e-democracy in government communication strategy in regard to facilitating and enhancing citizen participation. According to Grönlund (2003), there are two major and interconnected factors that must be considered so that e-democracy can effectively enhance citizen participation. First, the processes of democracy must be

designed with the intention to increase and improve citizen participation. Secondly, appropriate and adapted tools must be used to support citizen participation. Hence, Odai (2015) argues that the broader sense of e-democracy 'refers to how internet and other information technologies 'can be used to enhance democratic processes and provide increased opportunities for individuals and communities to interact with government' (p.240).

Compared to traditional means of citizen participation, the new technologies of information and communication give a chance to citizens, irrespective of their social class, to share their political opinions and communicate with people from the world without restriction or boundaries (Tedesco, 2004). Therefore, citizens may participate effectively in decision-making processes, by making use of e-participation (Zissis, Lekkas, & Arnellos, 2012). For instance, they facilitate to connect top-down and bottom-up easily, without a lot of investment, and less control (Garrett, Bimber, Zuniga, Heinderyckx, Kelly, & Smith, 2012). As a consequence, e-democracy in relation with government communication includes the following elements: "electronic access to government information and services; electronic access to and the ability to interact electronically with governmental officials; and online transactions with governments (e.g. to conduct business with and provide information and opinions, etc., to governments) (Norris, 2007, p. 166).

In fact, e-democracy can provide various advantages in government communication strategy. The advantages include "trust and accountability"; "legitimacy and understanding"; "citizen satisfaction and service"; "reach and equitable access"; "effective representation and decision-making"; "participation through input and consultation" and "engagement and deliberation"(Clift, 2004). Citizens are demanding to be more involved in decision-making than just only to be

involved when it is about voting as is the case now in most parts of the world. For this reason, to integrate e-democracy in government communication is strategic and necessity for a sustainable democracy. As a matter of fact, Van Belle and Cupido (2013) indicate that public participation should not just be viewed as events, such as elections, protests or demonstrations, but rather as on-goings, and evolving processes that require as much as a change in public perceptions and mind set, and a government commitment to explore new systems of participation (p.2).

Well defined in a clear framework and in coherence with government communication strategy, the OECD report (2003) informs us that there are at least three major advantages of e-democracy. The reports says that it allows us 'to produce better quality policy', 'to build trust and gain acceptance of policy', and 'to share responsibility for policy making' considering that democracy is built on the belief that the power comes from the people and is for the people. However, to achieve these advantages, it should be grounded in the global vision of communication strategy and democracy. Accordingly, Landow (2003, cited in Banda, Mudhai, & Tettey, 2009) argues that 'new media technologies should be existing on a continuum or spectrum rather than in any fundamental opposition to one another' (p.2). In doing so, government communication strategy considers online participation in democracy with equal consideration to the other traditional means of participation, especially in Burundi where most of the people do not yet have access to online participation means. So, as much as e-democracy is an alternative for facilitating and enhancing all the citizens in their different categories and capabilities, government communication should value the advantages e-democracy offers (text, audio, image, video, reactivity, engagement...) and appreciate those who have access or whose e-participation is important.

Considering that government communication is one of the political communication facets, this study used interchangeably government communication. According to McNair (2011), government communication is part of political communication and considers this latter as political organization. In his definition, he opines that political communication incorporates 'all forms of communications undertaken by politicians and other political actors for the purpose of achieving specific objectives; communication addressed to these actors by non-politicians such as voters and newspaper columnists; communication about these actors and their activities, as contained in news reports, editorials, and other forms of media discussion of politics' (p. 4). In agreement with Canel and Sanders (2015), this involves providing information, explaining and promoting policies, and engaging with citizens, media, civic groups, business organizations, and other states in multichannel platforms in order to implement policy aims (p. 450). Using ICTs which is the distinctive feature of e-democracy, the integration of this latter in government communication entails the following elements:

- (1) The existence of information concerning the specific topic to be dealt with
- (2) Dissemination of information, requirements, obligations, and the process behind participation
- (3) Clear objectives behind the formulation of participation strategies
- (4) Personnel trained to handle the information gathered through participation, and
- (5) Infrastructure that supports the logistics of participation (Ziccardi, 2004b, as cited in Gil-Garcia, & Miranda, 2010, p.59).

To achieve effective citizen participation, Christiansen (2004, as cited in Rahman, 2010) lists a series of concrete actions that government communication agency should consider. They include;

ICTs must be developed to facilitate democratic representation. Governments must direct financial and human resources to develop tools, pilot projects and evaluation exercises facilitating the input of citizens. Government must provide tools to support online communications with citizens. Citizens must have access to computers and computer literacy skills to participate in e-democracy initiatives. The value of citizen engagement must be recognized and supported through the efforts of both governments and citizens communicating through e-democracy (p.287).

In addition, the integration of e-democracy entails a certain number of strategic promises. From a government communication perspective, e-democracy refers to how the internet can be used to enhance our democratic processes and provide increased opportunities for individual and communities to interact with government (Anderson & Bishop, 2005, p.12). Accordingly, Mokgobu (2005) states that internet 'has the capacity to enhance citizen participation in existing political spaces. He reports that 'many commentators have pointed to the Internet's potential to create entirely new political spaces or to update those historical spaces that have been lost as a consequence of the increased complexity of social and political life' (p.76).

To illustrate this, Tedesco (2004, citing Barber et al., 1997), says that "the internet contains the following structural possibilities for electronically enhanced democracy: (a) inherent interactivity; (b) potential for lateral and horizontal communication; (c) point-to-point and non-hierarchical modes of communication; (d) low costs to users (once a user is set up); (e) rapidly as a communication medium; (f) lack of national or

other boundaries; and (g) freedom from the intrusion and monitoring of government" (p.8).

Similar to the concept of e-democracy, citizen participation, by extension, online participation generally called e-participation is conceived in different ways. In order to adhere to the conception of e-democracy and citizen participation in this study, it was important to make clear the perspective considered towards this latter. In its theoretical conception, e-participation has been conceptualized by various scholars. For some, e-participation as well as citizen participation is conceived as a means while others conceive it as a process.

As a means, e-participation is the use of ICTs to engage the public in the democratic processes with the objective of facilitating and enhancing citizen participation in governance" (Wabaki & Grönlund, 2015). In this perspective, Stanford (2007, as cited in Manoharan, & Holzer, 2012), notes that e-participation is understood as technology-mediated interaction, between the civil society sphere and the formal political sphere, and between the civil society and the administration sphere. Equally important, this concept is also understood as the "the use of ICTs to support information provision and "top-down" engagement, i.e. government-led initiatives, or "ground-up" efforts to empower citizens, civil society organisations and other democratically constituted groups, to gain the support of their elected representatives" (MacIntosh & Whyte, 2008p.16).

Similarly, Manoharan and Holzer (2012, citing Fuchs, 2006) argue that 'E-participation is a means of empowering the political, socio-technological, and cultural capabilities of individuals; allowing the opportunity for people to involve and organize themselves in information society. As a result, the ultimate effectiveness of e-participation results in the fact that citizens change roles, from passive consumers of

information to active participants in decision making (Fedotova, Teixeira & Alvelos, 2015).

However, other scholars conceptualize citizen participation and e-participation, by extension, as a democratic process. In a broader way, Lisk (1985, as cited in Chikerema, 2013) defines citizen participation 'as the involvement of the broad masses of population in the choice, execution and evacuation of programs and projects that are designed to bring out significant upward movement in the living standards of people'. Considering the important role of the citizen in democracy, Lisk emphasizes that participation implies involvement of the population at large scale in order to influence the process of decision making in favour of their needs and aspirations (p.87).

In accordance with the theory of citizen participation, "Citizen Participation is a process which provides individuals an opportunity to influence public decisions and has long been a component of the democratic decision-making process" (Aikins, 2010, p.134). In this perspective, Haruta and Radu (2010) argue that the contribution of the citizens resides within their political and civic engagement, through which they effectively hold political leaders accountable and demand a greater degree of responsiveness from them. With respect to these two major perspectives, this study approached citizen participation or e-participation as a democratic process. This is moreover coherent with the perspective taken towards e-democracy as a political communication means which is likely to facilitate and enhance effective citizen participation in decision making.

However, these promises of e-democracy are still under debate between cyber-optimists and cyber-pessimists. The latter do not believe in the real positive impact of ICTs in e-democracy while the former believes the opposite. Similar to any new form

of communication, "the use of ICTs in political communication has triggered both hopes of its potential democratic impact, as well as raised concerns for impending adversities" (Poulakidakos & Veneti, 2016, p.120). Therefore, the middle position taken by this study is that e-democracy should be integrated with other means of political communication as an alternative for a continuum objective to improve democratic practices. Accordingly, Barreda, Batile, Cerrillo, Padro-Solanet, Peña-Lopez, and Serrano (2012) note that beyond some normative bias and technological determinism, implicit in these two approaches, a realistic position contends that ICT offers an opportunity for citizens to participate in politics, but also that traditional political actors and institutions continue to have a relevant role (p.93).

Considering these important promises along with cyber-pessimistic positions, various scholars have conducted studies whose intention was to evaluate whether the integration of e-democracy in government communication strategy has the capacity to enhance and facilitate citizen participation.

In their study, Alathur and Gupta (2014) used a survey method to assess determinants of e-participation in a communication perspective. Their findings show that factors related to efficacy of ICTs "including those like participants" familiarity may contribute to e-participation". Their findings emphasize that it is important to design "participation tools in line with the existing procedural framework for improving e-participation" (p. 460). In fact, in another study done by Gunter (2006) using a survey, he found that e-democracy (which is conceived in his study as e-government), is beyond improving services. His findings show that the use of ICTs by the UK government was regarded as one avenue of development that might reverse the growing political alienation of the electorate as witnessed in poor turnouts over successive general, local, and European elections' (p. 364).

To address the issues raised in the above findings, government communication should integrate e-democracy as a political communication strategy for various advantages. In a comparative study done by Balog and Badurini (2017) using a survey in Croatia, they examined the level of trust of government information shared online. Respondents (Croatian students) trust most (mean 3.47) the information found on the national, regional, or local government Webpages, although, when asked about the safety of their personal data, they were not convinced that their data would be secure if they left it there (mean 2.51). In addition to the trust, the integration of new e-democracy in government communication strategy has a positive impact on government's image. In a study done by Kim and Lee (2017) using a survey in Seoul, South Korea, they found that citizen participation in offline and online programs designated to engage citizens during policy agenda setting was significantly and positively associated with their perception of transparency. Their findings emphasize that online participation gives citizens more convenient access to information that facilitates their participation and better interactivity with government. But they nuanced their finding on the significance between citizen online participation and government transparency. They discovered that the significance is limited for various reasons such as lack of physical observation of how government officials consider citizens' inputs in decision making (p.2747).

To be relevant, the integration of e-democracy in government communication has to be proved. In evaluating the state of e-democracy and e-participation in Slovenia municipalities, Kukovic and Brezovsek (2014) conducted a review of the e-tools that individual municipalities offered to their citizens. They found that 'all Slovenian municipalities, i.e. 211 (100 per cent), have an official website which provides e-access to various officials publications, such as local regulations, tenders,

contests, events, strategies, forecasts, various reports, convocation of meetings of municipal councils (sometimes even minutes of meetings), applications, forms among others (p.463). In addition, they found that all Slovenian municipalities have a publicly available e-mail address either a general one, by section or even by individual civil servants. As a result, they found that all of the Slovenian municipalities allow citizens the opportunity to establish electronic communication' (p. 463).

Another importance of integrating e-democracy in government communication is the possibility to engage social groups such as the youth who are generally active on ICTs rather than traditional means of participation such as meetings, radio or TV. In a study done by Van Belle and Cupido (2013), they used a survey to examine the thoughts of South African youth about using their mobile phones to participate in government decision making. They found that the youth believed that they can participate using their mobile phones because; it is easier, quick and saves time. But their findings also indicated that the youth have a feeling of 'disempowerment', and lack of trust in government. As a matter of fact, 31% of the respondents did not trust government whereas 30% are unsure. Considering that, in Africa, the youth are the majority in numbers and among the ICTS users; governments have to make efforts to use ICT to improve their trust and image.

To deal with the situations such as those shown in Van Belle and Cupido (2013) study, integration of e-democracy in government communication strategy requires a consideration of some critical factors such as to make clear the objectives of e-democracy, to consider citizens' contributions in decision making, and distinguish this latter with e-government on one hand. On the other, it has to pay attention to criticism such as the ones who consider e-democracy as a means to

perpetuate social divide in what is called digital divide. By definition, digital divide 'is about the existence or nonexistence of infrastructure, the provision of the physical access and most importantly, real access, which includes cognition and cultural capital as well as technical resources (Li, 2016, p.165). In fact, the internet risksserving those who are already active in politics and lag behind those who are disengaged or not interested (Min, 2010). In view of this, the implementation and practice of e-democracy by government should consider to motivate and engage all those who have access to ICTs as well as keep using traditional means of participation so that every citizen can be given a chance to participate.

In a study done by Anderson and Bishop (2005) in Australia, they made a clear distinction between e-government and e-democracy. Discussing the impact of internet beyond government service delivery, they used case studies to analyse the way Queensland government understands and practices e-democracy. They found that Queensland government created a department called "Community Engagement Division" created at the Premier Minister Cabinet as a sign that they are engaged to consider citizens' inputs in decision making. A website was created for this engagement with the intention to explore ways in which internet can strengthen participative democracy within Queensland'. Such department was able to deal with issues of digital divide which is considered as the weakness of e-democracy.

In view of the above theoretical and empirical literature, it became obvious that the integration of e-democracy in government communication has the potential to facilitate and enhance citizen participation. However, as noted earlier, the presence of ICTs only does not guarantee effective e-democracy. Different factors mentioned have to be considered for various reasons. They include; avoiding digital divide, to set up mechanisms which facilitate everyone to participate and guarantee to consider

citizens' contribution in decision making. Equally importantly, scholars such as Kumar (2017) suggest that 'e-democracy should be integrated in government communication strategy and not just as IT tools disconnected with the global strategy'. Hence, e-democracy framework matters in facilitating and enhancing citizen participation.

### E-democracy Framework and Citizen Satisfaction

To be relevant and efficient, e-democracy should be designed in a framework which is likely to meet citizen satisfaction because citizen participation constitutes a cornerstone in any form of democracy. In 2010, Burundi government adopted "National Development Policy of Information Communication and Technology of Burundi (2010-2025)". This document defines the way ICTs are to be integrated in all sectors of the country including governance, democracy, and citizen participation. With regard to democracy and citizen participation, this policy framework envisions transforming the relationships between government and citizens by enabling this latter access to information and participation in decision making. In a concrete way, this policy framework indicates that the government has to establish electronic or online platforms to promote dialogue between the political leaders and the public (National Development Policy of Information Communication and Technology of Burundi, 2010-2025, p.41). In view of this, it is important to care about appropriate and adapted e-democracy framework.

According to Ayo, Oni, and Mbarika (2013), the 'e-democracy policy framework captures the technological, legal and political processes to back e-democracy implementation' (p.3). But Liden (2015) argues that the political system of each country influences the effectiveness of e-democracy. As a result, he does not believe much that the greater number of internet and mobile phones users imply

effective e-democracy and citizen participation. Conversely, 'e-democracy constitutes the possibility of using ICT in political processes concerning information, discussion, and decision-making, and in addition comprises all the political and civil rights that are characterized as democratic' (p.700). In fact, 'one of the key issues in e-democracy development is to acquire an e-democracy system that considerably meets the needs of citizens to participate in the democratic process and the government's needs to provide citizens with adequate participation channels' (Funikul&Chutimaskul, 2009, as cited in Oni &Okunoye, 2018, p.3562). Therefore, 'a successful e-democracy implementation should target developing a system that will meet the government's needs and provide citizens with adequate participation channels' (Oni &Okunoye, 2018, p.3561). To do so, Di Maria and Rizzo (2005) suggest that 'building an e-democracy framework calls for the appropriate management of the transformation and harmonization of procedures and services so that they can be accessed in an interactive manner on the one hand, while remaining coherent with the evolutionary trends of technology (diversification and specification of communication means) on the other (p.78).

To assess these assertions, scholars have conducted studies to assess the importance of e-democracy framework with respect to the fact that 'effective citizen participation in public affairs is essential to the healthy functioning of any democracy' (Buss, Redburn, and Guo, 2006).

In a study done by Williamson (2007), he found that new or modified strategies, processes and systems occur on the technical sphere through a transformative praxis that originated in the ideas and actions taking place in the social sphere, through awareness building and advocacy. Using a mixed method, his findings show that ICTs must be available and so policy framework must guide ICT

adoption, targeting effective use. In a very comprehensive way, Handerson, Horgarth and Jeans (2001) conducted a case study of "E-Democracy Policy in Queensland". They discovered that this State of Australia has a well-defined framework which guides both the implementation and the use of e-democracy in order to facilitate citizen and enhance citizen participation. They found that the policy framework defines the following critical elements of e-democracy:

a specific definition of e-democracy, centred on Internet use; an explicit commitment by government to using Internet technology to strengthen representative democracy in Queensland; specific acknowledgement that it is the government responsibility to expand the channels of communication to reach as many as possible; a clear statement that e-democracy processes will complement existing forms of consultation; a commitment to addressing key issues of equitable online access, responsiveness, privacy, security and authentication; a reporting protocol for government's response to citizen input; reference to specific standards for addressing privacy and information security; links to related government policies, such as the Queensland Communication and Information Strategic plan; introduction of e-democracy initiatives on a trial basis to be evaluated after two years; and a commitment to continuing to explore e-democracy and the opportunities provided by new technologies (p.456).

Taking an example of Queensland, a policy framework ought to be a reference and a kind of contract between the government and the citizens. Thus, it is possible to measure the level of citizen satisfaction with respect to the way government defines and practices e-democracy. The satisfaction of the citizens is a major indicator of policy framework relevance. In a study done by Ayo, Oni and Mbarika (2016) in

Nigeria, using Grounded Theory Method, they discussed the critical role of framework for e-democracy development and sustainability. Among the results, '90% of the participants agreed that the frameworks offer a comprehensive view of e-democracy implementation program; 70% agreed that the framework has the plausibility to guide governments in e-democracy implementation, and 70% agreed that the framework has the plausibility to serve as springboard for e-democracy in the nations of the world' (p.470). In the same line, Chutimaskul and Funilkul (2004) conducted a study in Thailand to examine the importance of e-democracy framework. Using a survey, they found that the 'e-Democratic framework consists of the generic sustainable e-Democracy and e-Democracy application' (p.28). Their findings indicate that, in Thai, the e-democracy framework consists of 4 external components: management and stakeholder; business driver; methodology; and technology driver. They explain that management and stakeholder component consist of service delivery by the government towards the citizen. This is more similar to e-government which is mainly concerned with government efficiency; the business driver component focuses on expectations. Business driver stresses on: a) raise the value of citizen lives, b) reduce the gap between government and citizens, c) increase the efficiency of parliament, d) reduce the difference of citizens, and e) support the development of making Thailand equivalent to other developed countries (p.28); methodology component stresses that 'the efficiency of e-democracy must establish citizens' participation to take part in government policy making'; and lastly the technological driver which is 'to increase the efficiency of providing online information and communication from each government sector'.

Still, suitability of the framework is measured by the level of satisfaction of the citizens using ICTs in e- democracy. This is the reason it is vital to assess the level

of satisfaction of the citizens who are the major stakeholders in e-democracy. According to Carreira, Machado, and Vasconcelos (2016), the importance of assessing satisfaction resides in the fact that 'if individuals are unsatisfied with the results of their participation in public policy, then they will be unlikely to participate in other public issues'. For instance, Milakovich (2010) states that citizen participation implies a readiness on the part of both citizens and government institutions to accept certain pre-defined civic responsibilities and roles; it also means that each contribution is accepted, valued and possibly used in decision making (p. 2). Hence, Lisk (1985) and Parker (2000), opine that concrete facts should be pointed out to evaluate the level of satisfaction of the citizen in their participation in e-democracy.

According to Kim (2006) and Ngwenya (2016), supply and demand factors are the conditions for e-democracy to be effective and satisfy the citizens. In their argument, the supply factor is associated with the level of development of the ICT coupled with citizen education on the use of the ICT. The demand factor is associated with the fact that the citizens are no longer just consumers of government communication. Instead, they argue that they are proactive in decision making processes. Considering that satisfaction is function of many factors, it is important to measure citizen satisfaction in regard to those factors considered in e-democracy framework. In addition, elements of e-democracy are not satisfactory at the same level. For this reason, various scholars have conducted studies to evaluate citizen satisfaction in e-democracy.

In a study done by Balog and Badurina (2017), on the level of satisfaction as one of his study objectives, he used a survey to assess it. He looked at Croatia students of humanities and social sciences and e-democracy. He found that the low score of satisfaction was associated with the non-response from the government. His

findings indicate that half of the students who participated in decision-making processes via e-democracy did not get any feedback from the Croatian authorities - only 10 (45.5%) out of 22 students who took part in those activities, did receive feedback (p. 272).

Equally important, the level of satisfaction is associated with the tools' utility in e-democracy. In the study of Bojic, Marra, and Naydenova (2016), researchers have also measured the level of appreciation of the tools (Facebook page, Facebook closer group, online forum Better, and e-deliberation platform/consultation forum Better Neighbourhoods) used by citizens, politicians and city officials. They found that '67 % of citizens were satisfied with Better Reykjavik tool compared to 69% of those satisfied with Better Neighbourhoods; 47% of politicians were pleased with Better Reykjavik and 67% were satisfied with Better Neighbourhoods; 50% of city officials were happy with both efforts (Better Neighbourhoods and Better Reykjavik). These results indicate that it is not possible to predict the level of satisfaction unless through research. Citizens, as well as other political actors appreciate differently the tools of participation. Similarly, in a study done by Van Belle and Cupido (2013), using a survey in South Africa, they found that citizens were very satisfied by the mobile phone when it is about interacting with government officials. Their findings indicate that respectively 70.2% and 21.4% of the interviewees strongly agreed and agreed that 'mobiles phones were convenient because they could be used anywhere, anytime, and it helped to save time.

As mentioned, within one e-democracy framework, some aspects of e-democracy may be very satisfactory rather than others. In a study done by Olokesusi and Aiyegebajeje (2017) in Lagos (study mentioned earlier), there are aspects of e-democracy which are satisfactory rather than others. Contrary to monitoring aspect

which succeeded in Lagos, the e-voting is disappointing. They found that factors such as legal framework do not allow online voting. Similarly, in another study done by Nkohkwo and Islam (2013) he found that infrastructure, financial, political, organizational, socio-economic, and human aspects are the major factors which explain why the level of e-democracy is not satisfactory in Sub-Saharan countries. Using content analysis, he explains that infrastructures aspects are associated with the 'internet access and connectivity', and 'power supply'; the financial aspect is related to the cost of internet for citizens and government financial capacity to implement e-democracy; the political aspects is associated with the leadership because some government view the advent of ICTs as a threat to their power; the organizational aspects are related to lack of skilled people to manage e-democracy whereas some government prefer less skilled people but who are fanatic to protect their power; the socio-economic aspects are associated with socio-culture, and socio-development in which e-democracy is implemented; and human aspects is associated with the awareness and ability of the citizens, as well as the lack of qualified staff (p.259).

All these factors need to be considered in e-democracy framework in order to satisfy citizens by facilitating them to participate. Studies such as this current one are needed to evaluate the current state in our countries. As mentioned earlier, the presence of ICTs or the increasing number of mobile phone users does not imply automatically effective e-democracy. Based on the empirical studies examined here, it was critical to evaluate the e-democracy framework in Burundi in relation to the citizens' satisfaction.

#### Means of Participation in e-democracy

Actually, the ICTs offer diverse tools for citizen participation in e-democracy. From the informative to the interactive tools, citizens choose their preferred ones

depending on their ability to manipulate them and their motivation to engage with political actors or engage with other citizens. Similarly, governments use various means of information and communication for different reasons and objectives. However, referring to the theory of Uses and Gratification, none can just assume that the means used by the government are the one used or preferred by the citizens in their participation in e-democracy unless verified through research. For this reason, it was important to assess whether the means used by the government correlated with the ones used by the citizens to participate in e-democracy. In this section, focus has been on tools as well as other factors which influence the use of certain tools by the citizens.

According to Ambrose, Azeta, Azeta, Olaniyan, Azeta, and Ayeni (2015), ICT has grown at an exponential rate, and does not only focus its attention on the internet but also spreads its wings to cover telecommunication, whereby people are connected and can communicate to themselves through cell phones, home personal computers and other medium (p.11). Just to name few, the tools used by citizens include: Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Google, Google+, LinkedIn, hi5, Bing, Flickr, Xing, Slideshare, StumbleUpon, Vimeo, Yahoo, YouTube, Meerkat, Houseparty, Bloggs, Wikipedia, Snapchat, Plaxo, Agorapulse, Bufer, Delicous, MyLife, Ning, Howcast, iTune, Myspace, Periscope, Instagram, Local Vox, Path and Pinterest. In an argument by Kumar (2017), these tools are important because they 'enable citizens to access the information, to collaborate and to actively participate in decision making' (p.543). Irrespective of the tool used, the aim of e-democracy tools is to provide more choices for people about how they can participate and make themselves feel that their opinions make a real difference in their society, eventually resulting in more trust (Savvas, Bassiliades, Pimenidis, 2014, p.73).

In practice, depending on the motivation of the individual citizen, government, media, political organization and political parties, these tools can facilitate networking, and participation in decision making, sharing information and ideas, promoting ideas or political actors. However instrumental these tools remain, what matters is their capacity to offer choice and means for citizen participation in matters which affect their lives. Well used, e-democracy tools have the potential to enhance trust towards government (Emmanuel, Panagiotis, & Magdalini, 2014). As a result, Kukovick and Brezovsek (2014) argue that 'citizen can freely choose the desired form of cooperation, whether it relates to the use of new technologies to easily communicate initiatives, complaints and complements; convey criticism and comments; express opinions, interests and points of views; gain online access to earlier suggestions and the course of proceedings in connection with those suggestions; launch petitions and collect signatures; file requests for information on topics in an open forum or just communicate with decision-makers' (p. 458). Furthermore, ICTs can help to 'increase coherence of information since it enables citizens to cross-reference and link pieces of information, making it easier to understand patterns of governmental actions and policies' (Dobra, 2012, p.76).

In agreement with Norris (2007), 'the choice of which tools to use and which share of the whole information to give and the communication offerings e-democracy tools will have in relation to other media and forms (e.g. print media, physical meetings) varies, depending on the subject, the scope and range, and the addressees of the participation offering in question' (p. 207). Although the tools offered by the ICTs in e-democracy are appreciated by both government and citizens, some factors have to be considered for them to be effective. With such a consideration, the socio-political context in which e-democracy is implemented is catered for so that the ICTs are not

be used to exclude some citizens. According to Grönlund (2003), e-Democracy can be no better than the political processes they are used in (p. 98). As a matter of fact, the OECD (2013) warns that 'the digital divide and its implications for political equality are potential danger areas for democracy'. The OECD explains that 'for several years, a central worry in many OECD countries has been the consequences of unequal access, lack of a digital divide, excluding many, particularly those in already socially disadvantaged groups, from the perceived benefits of the Information Society' (p.60).

In view of the opportunities that ICTs tools can offer to e-democracy users along with the concerns that ICTs tools might cause if not well handled; scholars have conducted studies to assess the means used by citizens in e-democracy use and challenges they face. The experience of elsewhere guided this study in assessing the means used by Burundians who participated in e-democracy. As mentioned earlier, Yuan (2010) conducted a study in China to examine if e-democracy works. He found that means such as websites, blogs, online petitions, verbal protests, hosting of campaign websites, or hacking were very effective in pushing some very sensitive agenda, which would not be possible with traditional means of participation.

In Thailand, Chutimaskul and Funilkul (2004) used a survey to examine the major tools used by citizen and government to interact. They found that the major tools for citizen participation in government action and decision making are: 'e-mail, video conferencing, private discussion rooms, online polling, and survey, online chat, and SMS messaging' (p.28).

Likewise, studies by Zheng (2016) in China, and Olekesusi, and Aiyegbajeje (2017) in Nigeria also proved that the means of participation in e-democracy are important. They found that means such as social media were used in e-monitoring of projects as well as corruption scandals whereby citizens discussed via websites and

social media platforms (like Facebook and Twitter), instant chatting, online discussion board, and electronic polls; all these permitted citizens to get involved in decision-making, attracted attention from the media and put pressure on the government to take action.

However, different tools are not used at the same level. The preferences are justified by the motivation of the citizens. Using a survey, Kristina (2010) conducted a study to compare the use of online tools among European Union country members. She found that tools commonly used are e-consultation, e-discussion, and webcasts. In a very elaborated way, her findings show that, among the EU citizens, 88% use e-discussion, 41 e-initiatives, 53%- e-petition, 94% e-consultation, 59% feedback, 71% e-complaints, 65% e-polls, 47% e-voting, 71% e-campaigning, 29% e-budgeting, 53% e-consulate or e-embassy, 82% webcasts, 47% e-meetings, 35%e-democracy games, 29% e-awards, and 59% on others.. Equally important, Facebook page, Facebook closer group, online forum Better, and e-deliberation platform/consultation forum Better Neighbourhoods were found by Bojic, Marra, and Naydenova (2016) study as major tools for citizen participation in Reykjavick (Capital of Iceland). Using online surveys, their findings show that the Facebook Page helps to improve communication between citizens and officials. Although this communication is viewed as informal, when an official responds to a citizen's question or comment, he/she puts her name to make it a bit official; the Facebook Closed Group is the initiative of the citizen whereas the Facebook Page is the government initiative. It helps to facilitate communication among the citizens and address issues of the neighbourhood; the Better Reykjavik is an 'online consultation forum where citizens are given the chance to present their ideas on different issues regarding their city'. This forum permits citizens to influence decision making through their ideas, debate, and online vote

when necessary; Better Neighbourhoods is a platform whose main idea is to promote and encourage citizens to participate in budgeting; Citizens suggest and give ideas on projects that might improve their conditions of life and they participate in the process until decision on the budget and its affectation is complete.

In relation to government communication, there are various tools to use for engaging citizens in decision making. In the study by Kukovic and Brezovsek (2014) mentioned earlier, the Slovenian municipalities use e-mails, e-survey, e-forum, government websites, and e-access. However, their findings indicate that '38 Slovenian municipalities (18 per cent) have published an e-survey on their official websites'; 'only 8 municipalities (3.8 per cent) use e-forum; 'few municipalities (1.4 per cent) offer a subscription to an e-newsletter, which registered users receive in their inbox'. Considering that these findings are related to means of participation by citizens in e-democracy, it is critical to note that there are many tools that citizens and government use to engage and participate in decision making. However, if the tools used by governments do not correspond to the ones used by citizens, it would be problematic to talk about interaction and citizen participation in e-democracy. Equally important, is that tools depend on the motivation, the suitability to the objectives, and the context. In this regard, it became interesting to conduct this study in the context of Burundi so that we establish which means were mostly used, in which context, for which purpose.

### Conceptual Framework

Referring to the studies analysed, the effectiveness of e-democracy is a function of many other factors rather than just the presence of ICTs. Thus, it was important to determine the independent variables, the dependent variables and the control variables. In view of this, the independent variable in this study was e-

democracy while the dependent variable was citizen participation. E-democracy, by principle, is a means which facilitates and enhances citizen participation. But it was important to note other variables called control variables, also called political variables, which were associated with citizen participation in order to determine the effectiveness of e-democracy in a particular context such as Burundi. Factors such as access to ICTs; communication about the platform; political efficiency (citizens' feeling that their contribution matters and influences decision making); knowledge and awareness (awareness of the e-democracy platforms on one hand, and skills for using e-democracy platforms on the other); trust of the government; and interest in political participation which influence citizen participation.

With regard to these variables, the conceptual framework of this study was as follows: The proposed model was an adaptation of the model proposed by Clift (2003).

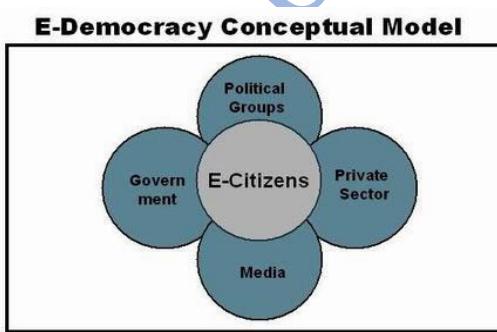
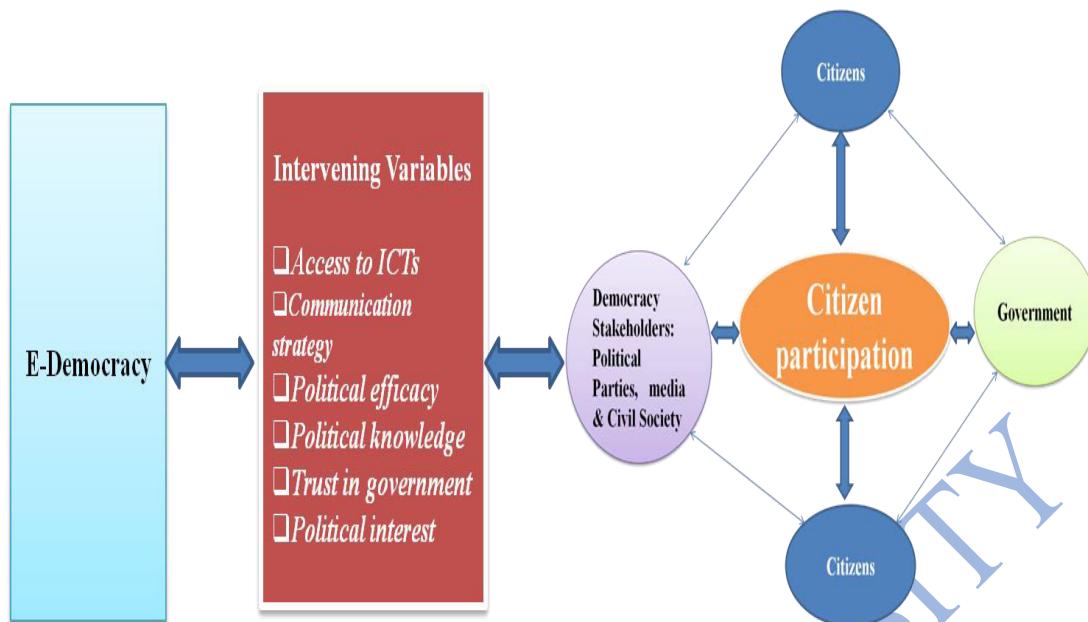


Figure 2.1: E-Democracy Conceptual Model by Clift  
Source: Clift (2003)

Referring to the current model of e-democracy, this study suggested this one as an improvement. The model used in this study is represented as follows:



*Figure 2.2: E-Democracy Conceptual Model by Clift Researcher, 2019*

This modification captured the perspective taken in this study which considered e-democracy as a means which facilitated citizen participation in a two-way perspective. Two-way in the sense that, it involved democratic actors, that is communication between citizens and government. At the same time, citizen is seen twice to emphasize that in participating in e-democracy, citizens engage with government, among themselves as well as with other stakeholders. Being at the centre, e-democracy entails all online means or online channels that citizens and other democratic stakeholders used to engage with the government in the decision-making process. Equally important, the replication of citizen implied its importance in participatory democracy. In this perspective, participatory democracy was grounded in the belief that the power and the capacity to participate in decision making on issues have an impact on citizens' lives (Florida, 2013). Moreover, this model indicated that the effectiveness of e-democracy was effective citizen participation considering intermediary factors as indicated in the variables zone.

This model corresponds to one of the models supported by different scholars (Kim, 2006; Walsh, 2007, Ngwenya, 2015 & Kumar, 2017) who have defended the interactive model. This model gives importance to the two-way communication, interactivity and engagement between and among democracy stakeholders in decision making. This perspective is opposed to other models such as the informational model or e-governance as they give less importance to interaction and other factors which are critical to make e-democracy effective.

Moreover, the model showed that e-democracy is not limited to interaction between government and citizen only. It also recognized the importance of interactions with democracy stakeholders such as political parties and civil society organisations.

Lastly, e-democracy, as it is conceived here, recognized that citizen participation was not limited to voting and online vote consequently. E-democracy gave possibility for full participation in decision making on all matters which affected people's lives. To do so, e-democracy, enlightened by uses and gratification theory, availed many channels through which citizens participated according to their preference and for different reasons.

## Discussion

Throughout the theoretical and empirical literature, what came out is that e-democracy is a wide area of research considering that it can be applied in politics and to any organization. Also, it can be approached from different angles with consequent implications in understanding and implementation. Equally, e-democracy can be easily confused with e-governance if one does not pay attention. Moreover, it has been revealed that effective and effectiveness of e-democracy depends on many factors. Therefore, the discussion about the literature reviewed here has focused on

the following elements: the current state of the study, the theoretical conception of e-democracy, the research methods used and findings.

### Current State of the Study

From the literature, studies related to e-democracy have been marked by diverse challenges. The most remarkable are the so-called digital divides. As viewed in the theoretical framework, the first level of digital divide is marked by the difference between western countries and the developing countries in terms of access to ICTs. The second is marked by the differences within countries between those that use ICTs in e-democracy and those who do not, either because of lack of motivation or because they do not have the capacity to use them. Referring to Balog and Badurini (2017) in Croatia, most of students (youth) say they are not motivated to participate in e-democracy though they have access to internet and mobile phones. The factor “consideration of citizens’ inputs is important. Not to consider citizens’ contribution in decision making can discourage them from participating. And if citizens do not actively and fully participate, the relevance of e-democracy is questioned.

The literature has also shown other important factors which influence citizen participation or not. This is the adequacy between “demand” and “supply”. Supply is associated with the availability of ICTs tools for citizen participation whereas the demand corresponds to the ability and motivation of the citizens to participate in political actions either at the initiative of the citizen or government initiative. In addition, the factor policy framework is also important. As mentioned previously, the policy framework is a legal and technical framework which guides the way e-democracy is implemented, practiced and enjoyed by the citizens. As a result, governments as well as other political actors, especially civil society, shall assess as often as possible if the balance is still there between supply and demand. Otherwise

governments risk to invest in tools which are not used by their citizens in participation. This balance is established by evaluating the level of satisfaction by citizens. However, satisfaction may be general, or it can be different among the constituents of e-democracy. For this reason, this literature (general and empirical) served as reference for conducting this study and collecting data in Burundi. The experience of other countries mentioned here served as reference to evaluate the current situation of e-democracy in the context of Burundi.

### The Theoretical Conception of e-democracy

Along the history of e-democracy studies, two perspectives have prevailed. These are the technological and cultural determinism. The latter believes that e-democracy is effective depending on the socio-political context in which it is implemented. The former believes that e-democracy is depended on the availability of ICTs only. In view of the factor “demand and demand”, the radicalism to contrast the two perspectives would be very unfair. The two are compatible and complementary. It just needs to be approached from a holistic approach. This approach does not consider that e-democracy is sufficient on its own to improve democracy. It needs to be integrated in a wide political communication strategy so that it can be approached as an alternative for other means of participation in democracy. To assess this, one of the objectives evaluated whether e-democracy in Burundi integrated government communication strategy.

Theoretically, e-democracy is also marked by the ambiguity on terminology. Some scholars (Norris, 2003; Long, Hoa, & Anh, 20017) use e-government interchangeably with e-democracy. But others (Clift, 2003; Chadwick, 2004, 2008) conceive e-democracy in the way followed by this study. To make this distinction clear, scholars such as Margolis and Moreno-Riano (2016) have carried out studies to

differentiate that e-government is concerned with use of ICTs for efficiency whereas e-democracy is concerned with the use of ICTs to facilitate participation in democracy. Similarly, the Australian case study' findings (Anderson & Bishop, 2005) indicate that e-government is mainly concerned with the use of ICTs by governments to deliver service whereas e-democracy's major concern is the use of ICTs for citizen engagement and participation in 'what should and shouldn't be government policy'. These different conceptions of e-democracy determine the way it is understood, implemented, and practiced. Some conceive e-government as entailing e-democracy and vice versa.

### Research Methods

The literature reviewed has shown a diversity of methods used to carry out the studies. As mentioned, the three methods - qualitative, quantitative and mixed method- are all used for different purposes. Considering that the choice of method affects the way studies are conducted and the findings, I found that there was coherence between the methods and the kind of studies. But the quantitative method remains dominant in many cases. Thus, the study chose to follow those who used mixed method as it combined the qualitative and quantitative methods to understand better the quantitative and qualitative elements. Accordingly, Bryman (2012), mixed methods has the advantage of completeness. He explains that the quantitative and qualitative methods are put together in logic of complementarity by filling the gaps left by each of them. For instance, with respect to the purpose of this study, it was incomplete to evaluate the relationship of the two variables - e-democracy and citizen participation- without combining qualitative and quantitative data. While it was good to know the number of ICT users, it was also essential to know why they used them

with respect to e-democracy and the ability to facilitate and enhance citizen participation.

### Findings

It is interesting to discuss the findings of the reviewed literature. The practice and experience of e-democracy vary depending on the country and aspect of e-democracy evaluated. This corresponds to the idea that e-democracy was evaluated in a specific context and time. Also, many studies have challenged the technological determinism because of other factors beyond the presence of technology to be considered for e-democracy to be effective. For instance, factors such as "supply and demand"; ability, capability and motivation of the citizens to participate; and policy framework are important. Referring to two studies (Yuan, 2010 & Zheng, 2016) in China, it became clear also that the influence of ICTs in political communication and democracy keeps growing. Whether we like it or not, the influence of ICTs in political communication and e-democracy by extension keeps growing and the laws will be forced to keep improving and adapting to the reality and aspirations of the citizens to participate in decision making not only during elections but also in other aspects of their lives. As a matter of fact, the Chinese studies mentioned here have proved improvement between 2010 and 2016. Considering that no had been carried out in Burundi, this study may serve as a reference for evaluation in the future.

Besides, the findings indicated that the issue of e-democracy is not yet so much researched on in Africa. Apart from Nigeria and South Africa, it was so difficult to find studies related to e-democracy and citizen participation in East Africa for instance. Nonetheless, studies related to the use of ICTs in politics are there though they lack the holistic aspect which this study pursued. In view of this, this study filled this gap by assessing e-democracy in conjunction with citizen participation in a

holistic manner. As it filled the general gap, it also filled sub-gaps as identified in the different sections of the general and empirical literature. In this sense, this study contributed to empirical data as well as formulating recommendations for improving e-democracy in Burundi.

Conclusively, it has been considered necessary to give, briefly, the current state of democracy in Burundi. Subsidiary, the state of democracy in Burundi helped to establish how this study was pertinent in the context of Burundi.

### State of Democracy in Burundi

Burundi adopted democracy as mode of governance with the 1992 new constitution. From the independence in 1962, Burundi was ruled by single-party system. It is by change of the constitution in 1992, that Burundi adopted Democracy as a governance system and multiparty system. Burundian, through the 1992 constitution, voted for a presidential democracy system and it remains the same until now. The President is both the head of the State and Government. He is assisted by two Deputy-Presidents. The first is in charge of political and security affairs Ministries whereas the second is in charge of economic and social affairs Ministries. In addition, Burundi has a Parliament and a Senate to formulate laws, monitor and approve government's actions. Lastly, there is judiciary that checks the arms of government through the application of the law. These are the separated powers that characterize Burundi democracy system.

During the first elections in June 1993, the ruling party at the time (UPRONA) which had brought Burundi to independence was defeated by the FRODEBU. This party was formed by majority of HUTU who had been in exile from 1972 to 1991 because of the UPRONA regime dominated by TUTSI. Unfortunately, a few months later, the president elect in 1993 was killed during a coup along with

many of his collaborators. As a result, Burundi lived a crisis which caused millions of death while others were exiled from 1993 up to 2005.

From the 1993 crisis, many rebel groups emerged and many initiatives for peace agreement were attempted. First to be formed was the Arusha Agreement in 2000 for Peace and Reconciliation between the Government and Political parties, secondly, was the ceasefire agreement in 2002 with CNDD-FDD rebel group which is currently the ruling part, and lastly, the ceasefire agreement in 2003 with FNL, the last rebel group which is currently the opposition leader. These agreements brought stability to Burundi up to 2015.

From 1993 to 2005, there were no elections in Burundi. However, there were successions of coalitions and transitional regimes. In 2005, the second general election for a term of 5 years took place. This election was followed by subsequent ones in 2010 and 2015. Unfortunately each of them has been followed by political crises which ended up being violent. As a result, many people died while others were exiled. Apart from the 1993 one, it is the 2015 post electoral crisis which has caused a lot of deaths and exiled many citizens. According to the UN reports (2018), there are 431 000 refugees out of the country and BIT (2018) reports that more than 1000 people were killed after 2015 crisis.

In 2015, the current President was nominated by his Party to run for a third term while the Burundi constitution and the Arusha Agreement for Peace signed in 2000 made it clear that none shall run for more than two consecutive terms. In the opinion of his party, they said that he had right to run for another term because the first term of 2005, he was voted by the Parliament and not by universal suffrage. On the other hand, some political parties from the opposition and some civil society organisations interpreted the same Arusha Agreement and Constitution to mean

nobody was to run for more than two consecutive terms irrespective of how they were previously voted. Because of these disagreements, those opposed to his third term organized demonstrations around the country. In May 13, 2015, some Police and Military officers attempted a coup which failed the following day.

After this coup failure on May 14, 2015, some private media (Radio and Television Renaissance, Radio Isanganiro, Radio Public Africaine, Radio Boneshe, and Radion & TV Rema) were banned. Some say that it is the government which banned them while this latter accuses those who attempted the coup to have done that. Apart from Radio and TV Rema which according to others is controlled by the ruling part, and Radio Isanganiro; the rest of these media are not allowed to broadcast in Burundi the Government accused them of instigating the coup. In August 2015, the current President was elected for a third term. Since then, some reports from international organisations cited in this study report that there is no longer independent media in Burundi. Therefore, they opine that democracy is in bad shape considering that media is a cornerstone for democracy since it guarantees equal access to discordant voices in the country.

In addition, after the coup failure in 2015, some political leaders from opposition and civil society who were involved in the demonstrations have been killed, jailed, and others exiled. Actually, they keep intervening in public affairs through ICTs, especially mobile phones, social media, and international media which broadcast in Burundi. The existing media rarely gives them space because of fear of repression. As reported in the findings, one media manager who gave space to a political leader in exile was summoned the following day to the intelligence services.

It is in this context that this study is situated as a way of contributing to the scholarship by testing the concept of e-democracy in facilitating citizen participation

on one hand and contributing to improving our democracy by exploring alternatives means of participation in democracy and civic engagement through e-democracy on the other.

### Summary

In summary, the literature review chapter focused on the theoretical framework, the literature review both general and empirical, the conceptual framework, and the discussions. Throughout the chapter, the theories chosen showed relevance in the study of e-democracy in relation to citizen participation. In addition, the theoretical framework served as a pragmatic guide in conducting this study. Furthermore, considering that the gap filled in this study was to conceive e-democracy in a holistic perspective of political communication strategy, it was the two-way model that privileged considering that both government and citizen can initiate debate and deliberation in decision making. Equally important, citizens can engage in discussions among themselves by using the diverse tools offered by e-democracy. Finally, the discussion helped to point out the state of the study, the research methods used, and the relevance of the findings compared to this study carried out in Burundi. More importantly, the discussion permitted the connection of the literature review with the objectives of this study. In view of different studies interacted with, this study was part of the ongoing discussion on how e-democracy can be an effective and efficient alternative to improve our democracy. To do so, the next chapter has defined the methodology used to carry out this study.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

This chapter has stressed the issue of research methodology process and the philosophical belief which is associated with this study. The philosophical approach that underpinned this study was pragmatism. Throughout the development of this chapter, the suitability of this research philosophy was linked to the following elements of research methodology: research approach, research design, target population, sampling technique, sampling size, data collection instruments, type of data, data collection procedures, pretesting, data analysis plan, and ethical considerations. This chapter ended up by a summary of the discussed elements.

#### Research Approach - Mixed Method

This research was guided by a mixed method approach. This approach coheres with this study as it integrates qualitative and quantitative procedures in data collection, analysis, and interpretation of findings (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Said differently, mixed method approach integrates qualitative and quantitative to collect data, and to analyse them in same project (Leavy, 2017). As a combination of qualitative and quantitative method, Wheeldon and Ahlberg (2012) define mixed method as “an abductive process that values the expertise, experience, and intuition of the researchers themselves” (p.115).

In fact, the mixed method addressed the weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative designs used separately. According to Atieno (2009), “the main disadvantage of qualitative approach to corpus analysis is that their findings cannot be extended to wider populations with the same degree of certainty that quantitative analysis can”. This is because the objective of a qualitative study is not statistical. As a consequence, policy makers might accord less credibility to results from qualitative

approach because of generalization issue (Rahman, 2017). Equally, qualitative research has weaknesses related to time consumption. On the other hand, the quantitative research also has its weaknesses. For instance, quantitative research accords less importance to social experience, because of its positivism perspective; it cannot explain how social reality is shaped and maintained (Rahman, 2017). In this sense, the results are not generative but evaluative; it is more descriptive rather than explicative; it is only appropriate when the issue to be studied is known and the language used by the consumers to describe the issues is known (Nykiel, 2007). It is in this context that this study chose to use mixed method to avoid these constraints. Considering that the phenomenon of e-democracy is concerned with the citizens' experience as well as their level of satisfaction on the way e-democracy is practised by government, mixed method was judged appropriate to generate these findings.

In terms of advantages, mixed method approach is very appropriate for a study whose purpose is to describe, explain and evaluate (Leavy, 2017). In this context, mixed method can be appropriate as 'insights generated from one method can help to enhance what is learnt from another; data collected with one method can guide in implementing 'the next round of alternative methods'; the researcher can use one site with the two methods at the same time or alternatively (Axinn & Pearce, 2006). Furthermore, Denzin and Lincoln (2000, as cited in Sreejesh & Mohapatra, 2014) indicate that 'this mixed method research design helps the researcher to go for inductive and deductive reasoning techniques in order to more accurately answer the study's questions that cannot be completely answered through qualitative or quantitative alone'. In the same perspective, Wheeldon and Ahlberg (2012) argue that mixed method permits to value 'both deductive and inductive approaches' although 'it relies principally on expertise, experience, and intuition of researchers' (p.117).

In practice, "mixed method represents an important departure from the either/or assumptions of quantitative or qualitative approaches because it allows that both methods may be valuable depending on the type of research question under investigation" (Wheeldon & Ahlberg, 2012). In mixed method, Creswell (2003) notes that there are three types; *phase designs, dominant/less dominant design, and mixed methodology designs*. He explains that the phase design refers to the scenario where qualitative and quantitative methods are used separately. Irrespective of the order, they are used one after another. The dominant/less dominant design refers to the scenario where one approach is dominant and the other is used in a marginal way. Lastly, the mixed method design refers to the scenario where the two approaches are linked along the whole process of the research. In this study, it is the second approach that was used because the qualitative approach was dominant. As such, "an important dimension that characterizes a qualitatively driven mixed methods project is a commitment to privileging a *qualitative approach* (in the form of a qualitatively driven epistemology and methodology) that forms the core of the over MMR project with the quantitative approach and method taking on a secondary role in the mixed method design" (Hesse-Biber, Rodriguez, and Frost, 2015, p.5).

Equally, the use of mixed method in research has been done following different approaches. The major trends are the convergent design, explanatory sequential design, and exploratory sequential design. In this study, the explanatory sequential design was used as it permitted the understanding of the relationship between variables (Deforge, 2010). As a matter of fact, it allowed the researcher to explain how e-democracy, the intermediary factors (indicated in the model of e-democracy) and citizen participation were related to one another. In practice, the explanatory sequential designs proceeds by collecting quantitative data and finishes

by the qualitative ones for explaining the results in an depth manner (Caruth, 2013; Creswell, 2015). This approach correlated well with the purpose of this study as it sought to investigate first the position of the citizens with respect to the way government practices e-democracy with regard to facilitating and enhancing their participation in democracy and decision making. As a result, the quantitative responses of the citizens enriched the interviews with government representatives, and civil society as it made possible the comparison of their discourse with the citizen's experience and thoughts. Citizen's opinions were also very interesting during focus group discussions with representative of political parties and representatives of the survey participants. In the focus group discussions, political parties were represented by the presidents of youth movements and their communication officers while the representatives of the survey participants were 9 students picked randomly. Each of the three universities targeted was represented by 3 students. Discussing with them made clear different ideas collected through questionnaires.

Like any other research method, mixed method was underpinned by philosophical assumptions in order to justify its relevance in this study. In fact, philosophical assumptions play an important role as they define and give sense to the choice of the methodology to be used. In the event that we are aware or not, we always bring philosophical assumptions in terms of how we know what we know (Ontology), the nature of reality (epistemology), and values (axiology). Accordingly, Creswell (2012) argues that philosophical assumptions to our research 'are deeply ingrained views about the types of problems that we need to study, what research questions to ask, or how we go about gathering data'. Similarly, Myres (2013) opines that all research, whether quantitative or qualitative, is based on some underlying assumptions about what constitutes 'valid' research and which research methods are

appropriate (p.36). Therefore, the discussion about philosophical assumptions focused on mixed method which was used in this study as a research approach.

In relation with mixed methods approach, the researcher chooses the philosophical approach which was more appropriate among the following: post positivism, constructivism, and advocacy/participatory, and pragmatism. With respect to the purpose and objectives of this study, the philosophical paradigm focused on was pragmatism. In fact, the major characteristics of pragmatism are consequence for actions, problem centered, pluralistic, real-world, and practice oriented (Creswell, & Clark, 2007). Historically, pragmatism originated from America and has been marked by various scholars, but the major ones are Charles Sanders Pierce, William James, and John Dewey. According to Pathak (2007), 'Pierce was the originator of the idea from which pragmatism has grown, James popularized the idea and lent it some shades of meaning and Dewey turned it into a full-fledged philosophy making it more experimental than what both Pierce and James intended to be' (p.64).

Originally, Pierce (1903) argued that pragmatism is both a method and principle of 'right thinking'. In his opinion "pragmatism is the principle that every theoretical judgment expressible in a sentence in the indicative mood is a confused form of thought whose meaning, if it has any, lies in its tendency to enforce a corresponding practical maximum expressible as a conditional sentence having its apodosis in the imperative mood" (Pierce, 1993, p.111). In the idea of Pierce, pragmatism shall not be conceived as theory of truth. Rather, it shall be conceived as a theory of meaning (Scheffler, 1974). In other words, the idea of Pierce consists in the fact that to be able to determine the meaning of an idea, it has to be put in practice 'in the objective world of actualities and whatever its consequences prove to be, these constitute the meaning of that idea' (Pathak, 2007). Following this line of thinking,

William James defines pragmatism as 'the doctrine that the whole "meaning" of a concept expresses itself either in the shape of conduct to be recommended or of experience to be expected' (Thayer, 1970; Hookway, 1997). In reality, 'James conceives pragmatism in terms of degree of permanence. For him, truth can be accepted as truth if it is certified 'by the pragmatic principle, as having a degree of permanence' (Pathak, 2007). This notion of truth is conceived in other terms by Dewey.

According to Hickaman (2009), the central idea of Dewey about pragmatism is that the meaning or truth of an idea lies in its possible consequences. Hickaman explains that the thought of Dewey about the truth is similar to the relationship between a key and lock; he means that any key cannot open any lock; therefore, for a key to fit in a lock, there has to be 'objective conditions that must be taken into consideration'. In reality, Dewey conceives pragmatism in a naturalistic way with less attention to the degree of permanence (Pathak, 2007). Although the three major thinkers have approached pragmatism in different ways, they share one general idea that: 'in order to determine the meaning of an idea, it must be put into practice, the consequences which follow constitute the meaning of the idea (Pathak, 2007, p. 64). This idea corresponded to the way e-democracy was approached here considering that the main objective was to assess whether the practice of e-democracy by Burundi government likely facilitated and enhanced citizen participation.

These major scholars have inspired the current conception of pragmatism by actual scholars with special focus on the outcome and matter-of-factness. Having in mind that the founding father, Pierce, James, and Dewey focused on evaluating any concept by practice and the outcome consequences, the current scholars such as Cresswell and Clark are more concerned with the application of a concept in a

perspective of bringing solution to problems. In this perspective, the pragmatism of a concept is function of its capacity to resolve an issue. In this particular study, the pragmatism was associated with the capacity of e-democracy to contribute to resolving the issue of citizen participation.

Taking the example to Creswell (2007), pragmatism is concerned with the "applications", "what works", and "solutions to problems". In his argument, Creswell says that 'individuals holding this worldview focus on the outcomes or the research-the actions, situations, and consequences of inquiry-rather than antecedents conditions (p.22). Compared to the original idea of Pierce, pragmatism 'considers what effects that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have (Nijhoff, 1963, p.96). Although some individuals still seek to participate in the paradigm debate, many mixed method writers have moved on to identify it as the "best" paradigm that provides a foundation for mixed method research (Creswell & Clark, 2011, p.42). They exemplify that at least 13 different scholars consider pragmatism as an appropriate paradigm or worldview for mixed methods. In this perspective, 'pragmatism in its simplest sense is a practical approach to a problem and has strong associations with mixed methods research' (Cameron, 2011). In order to discuss the pragmatism in practice, the following section has established the ontology, epistemology, and axiology of mixed methods approach.

Concerning the ontology, the term ontology comes from the Greek words '*ontos*' and '*logos*', meaning '*being*' and *study* (Rothe, 2000). He explained that it is the study of being, or in modern terms, the study of reality. Put differently, ontology is concerned with the nature of reality and what there is to know about the world (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormeston, 2013). According to these scholars, 'key ontological questions concern whether or not there is a social reality that exists

independently of human conceptions and interpretations. Closely related to this, is whether there is a shared social reality or multiple, context-specific ones (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013). If the researcher is not part of the study and believes in objective reality then the position may be termed as objectivist; in opposite, "if the researcher sees the reality from the participants" point of view and considers his/her role to explore reality, then this position is termed as 'subjectivist' (Ansari, Panhwar, & Mehasar, 2016). Therefore, our ontological framework refers to our understanding of what constitutes reality, how we perceive the world around us' (Walter, 2002). In addition, to ask "what is the nature of reality?" as a philosophical question affects the way we do research or engage in other forms of inquiry (The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research, 2014, p.16).

In mixed method approach, the situation is different because 'objectivists' and 'subjectivists' are in logic of association rather than opposition. In fact, the ontological position is balanced, contrary to the traditional opposition between subjectivists (qualitative), and objectivists (quantitative). As a result, the researcher adopted an intermediary position because of the necessity of the subjective and objective views in the study (Ansari, Panhwar, & Mahesar, 2016). However, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) recognize that depending on the situation, qualitative or quantitative approach can be more appropriate separately. In other words, they think that to put 'together insights and procedures' taken from qualitative and quantitative together can generate superior results. The discussion about the nature of reality is associated with the way we know, which is the major concern of epistemology.

Etymologically, epistemology is derived from the two Greek words '*episteme*' which means knowledge and '*logos*' which means theory (Ekure, 2015). Epistemology is the theory of knowledge that concerns itself with establishment of

what constitutes truth and knowledge, all from the human standpoint (Ozumba, 15, cited in Ekure, 2015, p.68). According to Ritchie, et al. (2013), epistemology is concerned with ways of knowing and learning about the world and focusing on issues such as how we can learn about reality and what forms the basis of our knowledge. In other words, "conceptions of knowledge are grounded in the theories, beliefs, values, and different epistemological views that affect the methods we choose to interrogate our research questions" (Klenke, 2016, p.15). In this regard, epistemology raises many questions including:

how reality can be known, the relationship between the knower and what is known; the characteristics, the principles, the assumptions that guide the process of knowing and the achievement of findings; and the possibility of that process being shared and repeated by others in order to assess the quality of the research and the reliability of those findings (Gialdino, 2009, p.2).

In epistemology, how we know and find out about the social world and the limits to that knowledge can be approached in two different ways (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormeston, 2013): inductive logic and deductive logic. In their explanation, inductive logic involves building knowledge from the bottom up through observations of the world, which in turn provide the basis for developing theories or laws. On the other hand, deductive logic is a top-down approach to knowledge.

In relation to mixed methods, epistemology is conceived differently from the quantitative where 'positivism' is dominant, assuming that there is one single 'objective reality'; or qualitative where 'phenomenology' is dominant, assuming that for knowing, there has to be an interaction between the researcher and the subjects under study. In view of this, Ansari, Panhwarand Mahesar (2016) opines that there is an intermediary position between the two which is the position of mixed method.

They explain that, in mixed method, the epistemological position acknowledges the necessity to focus on interaction between the researcher and the subjects. In this sense, the epistemology emphasizes the fact that 'research approaches should be mixed in ways that offer the best opportunities for answering important research questions' (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). As a result, these scholars call this epistemology the 'practical epistemology' to emphasize the strong relationship between pragmatism and mixed method. In the same fashion, nature of reality and the way we know is also linked to the values which underpin the research process. The values and beliefs are the major concern of axiology.

The term axiology originates from Greek word 'axios', meaning value (Killam, 2016, p.6). In his research, Killam explains that axiology refers to what the researcher believes is valuable and ethical. Accordingly, axiology is concerned with how values and assumptions of the researcher influence the process, as well as what actions the researcher takes with the research produced (Lincoln et al., 2013 cited in the Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research, 2014, p.83). In this regard, much qualitative research today rests on the assumptions that research is "radically relational" and is inevitably shaped, and even intentionally informed, by the researcher's orientation, values, and personal qualities (Wertz et al., 2011, p.84 cited in The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research, 2014, p.83). The link between a researcher's axiological position and their research raises the contested issue of value in research (Walter, 2002). In Walter's argument, a traditional perspective, quantitative/positivism perspective, holds that researchers must aim to produce value-neutral knowledge based on observed objective facts.

In relation with mixed method, the axiology is concerned with qualitative and quantitative aspects of mixed method. But this aspect is discussed well in the ethical considerations section.

### Research Method

For conducting a study, researchers can use different research methods depending on the suitability of the method to the study and the appropriateness compared to the research approach chosen. With respect to the mixed method chosen as research design, the research methods considered the quantitative and qualitative aspects.

On the qualitative part, data were generated through document review, interviews, and focus group discussions. Document review "is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents - both printed and electronic (computer based and Internet-transmitted) material" (Bowen, 2009, p.27). As such "documents analysis requires that data is examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge" (p.64). In this study, the document analysis concerned was primarily Burundi National Policy on the development of ICTs. The information collected in this document permitted the researcher to understand the way Burundi government defined e-democracy, it helped to prepare interview guides, focus group guides and the questionnaires. Bowen (2009) argues that document analysis presents many advantages as it is combined with other methods such as interviews, focus group and survey in this study. He opines that document analysis can "provide important information about the context and history of the case under investigation and thus be a basis for further data collections; can hint to topics and questions that are important to consider in the interview phase" (Kospel, p. 75). Secondarily, the document analysis also considered the Burundi constitution

and the last statistics of the Ministry of High Education and Academic Research. These two documents provided important information related to the political and civil rights on one hand and the number of students per university on the other. In addition to document analysis, this study used focus group with youth political leaders and their communication officers. “The original idea of focus group-the focused interview-was that people who were known to have had a certain experience could be interviewed in a relatively unstructured way about that experience” (Brayman, 2012, p.503). With respect to the people targeted at this method, they were experienced as they were voted by their peers as youth leaders and communication officers. Their experience and knowledge enlightened the information collected during the survey. In practice “focus group consists of small group of people, usually between six and nine in number, who are brought together by a trained moderator (the researcher) to explore attitudes and perceptions, feelings and ideas about a topic” (Dlshad & Latif, 2013, p.192). In this study the number of focus group participants was six as I invited two representatives (youth leader and communication officer) from each of the two political parties and the political coalition. Similarly, another focus group was conducted with representatives of survey participants. They were 9 which meant that each university had 3 representatives. This was critical to enhance understanding of views expressed through the survey. The last research method on the qualitative part was interviews.

Interviews consist of a process of asking questions by a researcher and responded by a target person for his suitability to the study and capability to provide the information needed (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p.697). By their nature, interviews have “several advantages for gathering high-quality and in-depth data: Being face-to-face and bilateral in nature, interviews can create deep insights into the perspectives,

experiences and knowledge of the interviewee" (Kopsel, p.93). Researchers can use different forms of interviews, including semi-structured interview. This study used the semi-structured form whereby "the researcher has a list of questions of fairly specific topics to be covered, often referred to as an interview guide, but the interviewee has a great deal of leeway in how to reply" (Brayman, 2012, p.471). According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), "there is evidence that face-to-face encounters improve the response rates" (p.218). To do so, interviews were organized in the offices of the target personalities.

On the quantitative aspect, data were generated through a survey. To conduct this survey, the questionnaire was used as a data collection instrument. This led us to look at the research population this study was concerned with.

#### Population

By definition, 'a population refers to all constituents of any clearly described group of people, events, or objects who are the focus of an investigation' (Drew, Hardman, & Host, 2008, p.83). In other words, the research population is 'the entire set of objects or people which is the focus of the research and about which the researcher wants to determine some characteristics' (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995, p.84).

With respect to the above conception of the research population, the population concerned by this study was divided into three major groups: Burundi government, Burundi citizens with a focus on students from public and private universities in Burundi and other democracy stakeholders (political parties and civil society). These categories were also called target population. The pertinence of these categories resides in the fact that government was expected to guarantee and facilitate democracy participation for every citizen; the Burundi population was the target

group of government services and it was the one that gave their appreciation; and lastly the civil society played an important in evaluating the quality of services offered by government to the citizens.

### Target Population

This study's target population was essentially composed of the government of Burundi and the Burundi university students who used ICTs. These students came from the public university, two private universities, Université Lumière de Bujumbura and Great Lake University. However, the effectiveness of e-democracy is also a function of involvement of all democratic stakeholders. As such, in addition to government and Burundi citizens, the study extended interest to political parties and civil society as stakeholders in the democratic process.

The Government of Burundi is composed of 19 Ministries plus the offices of the President, and his two Deputy Presidents. However, this study targeted two Ministries: the Interior Ministry, Patriotic Formation and Local Development and within this Ministry, I targeted the General Director in charge of Patriotic formation because he is the one directly in charge of civil and political rights; democracy processes and political parties management. He was interviewed along with the communication officer of the Ministry. Also considered was the Youth Ministry, Posts, and Technologies of Information Within this Ministry, I targeted the General Director in charge of ICTs and the communication officer who were both interviewed. This department is the one that coordinates the implementation of the national policy on the development of ICTs. To do so, the General Director of the ICTs is the chair of interministerial commission in charge of its implementation. This commission is composed of representatives of different ministries that compose Burundi

government. These two Ministries are the ones which are primarily concerned with the issue of ICT, democracy and citizen participation.

For the Burundi university students; this category represented citizens who had access to ICTs and who had attained the age required to participate in public affairs, politics in particular. This study focused on students from public and private universities who were Burundi citizenship by birth or acquired as indicated in the definition of what citizen means in this study. The assumption behind this category was that the youth are among the categories of people who are more active in using ICTs rather than other citizens in Burundi. In addition, the students from private and public universities represented the diversity in terms of gender, political affiliation, ethnic groups, and regions considering that some were in the city while others were in the rural areas. At the end of 2018, the Burundi Ministry of High Education and Academic Research counted 38 active universities with a total of 60,191 students. In terms of geographical localization, the majority were in the capital city while others were in the rural provinces. It is from this population that the sample was taken.

In terms of political parties, Burundi has 42 accredited political parties and one political coalition but only two political parties (CNDD-FDD and UPRONA) and the Coalition AMIZERO y'ABARUNDI are members of Government and Parliament. Similarly, to some other African countries, among the 42 political parties registered in Burundi, the majority of them exist just by name. For instance, in the two previous elections in 2015 for presidential elections and 2018 referendum for the change of the constitution, only the two political parties and the coalition participated in the rally. The CNDD-FDD, the ruling party, the UPRONA which is pro-government, and the Coalition made of opposition political parties. Thus, this study considered these three political formations for a focus group. Considering that Burundi citizens were

represented by the youth in this study, it is the youth leaders and communication officers of these two political parties and Coalition that were targeted. In terms of numbers, the focus group was formed by 6 people, 2 per political formation.

As for civil society, this study considered those involved in democracy and governance. In fact, civil society organizations play an important role because they are considered as one of the conditions to have so as to be regarded as an 'effective' and 'efficient' democracy as they can 'act as a channel of influence upon government and a check on its powers' (Holden, 1984; Beetham, 1994). For this reason, we sampled the Burundian civil society organizations involved in governance, democracy and the youth. The chair of local NGOs was been interviewed as an official spokesperson of civil society in Burundi.

### Sampling Techniques

In research, sampling is very critical as it requires one to ensure that the sample is representative enough to generate the information needed for the credibility of the data and for justification. In Daniel's (2012) opinion, 'sampling may be defined as the selection of a subset of a population for inclusion in a study'.

In sampling, there were two major techniques - probability and non-probability (purposive and convenience). In this study, considering that it was mixed method, non-probability sampling (purposive sampling) was used for the qualitative data collection whereas multiple probabilities were used for the quantitative data collection.

According to Daniel (2012), 'purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling procedure in which elements are selected from target population on the basis of their fit with the purpose of the study and specific inclusion and exclusion criteria' (p.121). Similarly, Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2016) argue that 'purposive sampling

techniques are primarily used in QUAL studies and may be defined as selecting units based on specific purposes associated with answering a research study's questions. Said differently, purposive sampling is a type of sampling in which particular settings, persons, or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten from other choices.

Additionally, purposive sampling is composed of different constituents. Accordingly, Daniel (2010) notes that purposive sampling is composed of maximum variation sampling, homogeneous sampling, typical case sampling, extreme, critical case sampling, total population sampling, and expert sampling. With respect to the study, the homogeneous sampling technique was used. In fact, homogeneous sampling is interested in respondents who share similar characteristics in terms of the topic; their similarity can be looked at in terms of their jobs, culture, age, or life experience (Ludico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2010). Therefore, this technique was used for the qualitative part of this study as it intended to conduct interviews with Government officials involved in democracy and ICT; focus group with political leaders; and interviews with civil society representatives. The purposive sampling technique was homogeneous as people who were at the same level were interviewed (Director Generals and communication officers in the two ministries), focus group1 (Youth Leaders and Communication officers of the two political parties and the coalition), focus group (representatives of survey participants chosen randomly).

In reference to the target population, Burundi Government was represented by two Ministries: Interior Ministry, Patriotic Formation and Local Development on one hand. In this ministry I conducted an interview with the General Director in charge of Patriotic Formation and political parties' management along with the communication officer. On the other, it is the Youth Ministry, Posts and Technologies of Information.

In this Ministry I conducted an interview with the General Director in charge of ICT along with the communication officer. This is the department that gives orientation to other ministries on the use of ICT.

Political parties were represented by the youth leaders, also called youth league leaders and their communication officers from political parties represented in the Government and Parliament. With this group, I organized a focus group discussion based on the opinions given by the youth from universities. All these representatives were at the same position in each of the groups represented. This focus group enriched quantitative data and gave an opportunity to cross check information collected from questionnaires.

On the quantitative part, this study used probability sampling technique. According to Kemper, Stringfield, and Teddlie (2016), one of the goals of a research that uses probability sampling techniques is generalizability (external validity) or the ability to extrapolate findings from a subset of a population or particular setting to a larger defined population of people (population validity) or settings (ecological validity) (p. 277). Within the probability sampling, Teddlie and Yu (2008) distinguish four types: random sampling, stratified sampling, cluster sampling, and sampling using multiple probability techniques. With respect to the complexity of the target population, it was the multiple probability sampling that was used.

Defined as the combination of two probability techniques, this part of the study combined stratified random technique and simple random technique. The stratified sampling technique requires one to “divide of the sampling frame into strata, categories of the stratification variable (s), creating a sampling frame for each stratum” (Daniel, 2012, p.131). Concretely, the stratifications involved dividing the universities into national public universities; private universities operating from the

city; private universities operating from rural provinces; and universities which had more than 5000 students. Thus, there were three universities which came out based on these considerations. These were the national public called University of Burundi (17959 students); the Great Lakes University which is a private and operates from the South of Burundi (7980 students) and Université Lumière de Bujumbura which is a private and operates from the Capital City (5246 students). The last consideration to choose these three was also important. Among the 38 universities accredited in Burundi, there are some which exist just by name while others have less than 60 students.

The other component of the multiple probability sampling is simple random technique. Simple random technique is defined as sampling technique where “each individual in the population has an equal probability of being selected (Creswell, 2003, p.156). As a result, students of Year1, Year2 and Year3 from the selected universities had equal chances to be selected. The study targeted these groups to guarantee that we had respondents of same level of education and approximately agemates. In addition, Year1, Year2, and Year3 exist in the three universities. This excluded Postgraduate students (Master and PhD) as Great Lakes University did not have master’s and PhD programs. To establish the sample size, this study used the calculation formula for a known population with 95% of confidence level and 0.05 margin of error. The global sample size was distributed proportionally among the selected universities.

### Sample Size

To establish sample size is a major task in research because the sample has to represent the population in all its characteristics. According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000), good sampling implies: a 'well-defined population', 'an adequately

chosen sample', and 'an estimate representative of the whole population the sample is, that is, how well in terms of probability the sample statistics conform to the unknown population parameters' (p.84).

Having in mind the target groups; the sample sizes were as follows:

Burundi Government: The Burundi Government was represented by two ministries: the Interior Ministry, Patriotic Formation and Local Development and the Ministry of Youth, Posts and Information Technology. The representation of these ministries lay in the following reasons: the interior ministry is the one which is in charge of political parties' management; civil society (NGOs, Local Associations, and Churches); and citizen participation in democracy. The other is the Youth Ministry, Post and Information Technology which manages ICTs. The choice of these ministries gave enough insight to understand the way in which e-democracy is understood, practiced and appreciated by Burundi Government.

Burundi citizens - As mentioned in the target population section, the sample was taken from the students from private and public universities in Burundi. The recent statistics (Academic Year, 2016-2017) of the Ministry of High Education and Scientific show that Burundi has 38 active Universities with a total number of 60191 students. Among the 38 universities, 32 are private while 6 are public. Thus, the sampling encompassed determining the sample size for universities and students. The first sampling technique used was multiple probabilities sampling technique. Multiple probabilities is a stratified sampling technique. The 3 universities chosen represented public and private universities and had more than 5000 students. Among the private universities there was also a consideration of the geographical representation: city and rural provinces. Hence, these are the Universities: the National Public University (17959 students) and it had campuses in the city and in the rural provinces; Université

Lumière de Bujumbura (5 246 students), a private university located in the city; and Great Lake University (7980 students), a private university located in the Province of Bururi, South of Burundi. When comparing the total number of Burundi students (60191 students) in the 38 Universities, these three on their own had more than 50% (31185 students).

Using the sample size calculation formula for a known population (95% of confidence level and 0.05 margin of error), the sample size for the 3 universities was 383 students. The formula and table used are in the appendix. Secondly, simple random sampling was used for selecting the respondents among the students in the 3 universities targeted. However, considering that among the 3, only University of Burundi and Université Lumière de Bujumbura had postgraduate programs (Master & PhD), the target population comprised students from Year1, Year 2 and Year 3 as they existed in each of the 3 universities and these students were relatively agemates. Therefore, the distribution of the global sample size (383 students) was distributed proportionally according to the population size of each university as follows:

- The *University of Burundi* which had 17,595 students. This is the national university and it represented the public universities. It has campuses in town as well as in Gitega, central of Burundi. It represented 58% of the sample and therefore had 220 respondents ( $383 \text{ students} * 100\% / 58\% = 220 \text{ students}$ ). These 220 students were selected randomly among the Year1, Year2 and Year3 students.
- The *Université Lumière de Bujumbura*: This the most populated among the private university in the Capital City of Bujumbura. It has 5,246 students. This University represented the private universities in the Capital City of Bujumbura. It represented 17% of the sample and therefore had 64

respondents (383 students\*100%/17%=64 students). These 64 students were picked randomly among the students of Year1, Year2 and Year3.

- The *Great Lakes University*: This is the most populated among the private university across the country and it is located in South of Burundi. It had 7980 students. It represented 26% of the sample and therefore had 99 respondents (383 students\*100%/26%=99 students). These 99 students were picked randomly among the students of Year1, Year2 and Year3.

In summary, the distribution of the sample is as follows:

*Table 3.1: Distribution of the Sample*

Names of Universities	Number of Students	% per university compared to 100%=383 students	Number of sample/students/University
National Public University of Burundi	17 959	58	220
Great Lakes University/South of Burundi	7 980	26	99
Université Lumière de Bujumbura/The City	5 246	17	64
Total of the 3 representative Universities	31185	100	383
Sample size (95% confidence level & 0.05 margin of error) from the 34 857 students		383	

Compared to the total number of Burundi students from private and public universities registered (60191 students), the 31185 students from the 3 representative universities represented 51.81%

Political party's youth leaders - Considering that Government implements the policies promoted by the ruling party and other parties present in the Government and

Parliament, this section focused on political parties represented in the two institutions. As such, it is CNDD-FDD (Ruling Party), UPRONA (Pro Government) and the Coalition AMIZERO YABARUNDI (Opposition) as they are the ones that form the government and parliament. These parties were each represented by the youth leaders and communication officers. These 6 representatives participated in a focus group discussion which was viewed as a more appropriate tool for data collection. As leaders, the assumption was that they participate in the global communication strategy of their political parties and therefore are able to establish the current nature and state of e-democracy with respect to citizen participation.

Civil society - Considering that civil society plays a big role in enforcing accountability and good conduct in government, this study was interested in the way these latter appreciate how government uses e-democracy to facilitate and enhance citizen participation. In this regard, the study targeted Organizations which were involved in Governance and civic rights. An interview was conducted with the chair of local NGOs. As a chair, he was deemed to have a global picture of governmental action and the appreciation of the local NGOs through meetings they held.

#### Data Collection Instruments

To generate data, researchers can use different instruments. According to Zohrabi (2013), 'the main instruments in the mixed method researches consist of close-ended, open-ended questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations' (p.254). In this study, it was the close-ended questionnaires that were used to collect quantitative data while interviews guides were used to collect the qualitative data.

In the case of closed-ended questionnaires, the respondent is asked to select an answer from among a list provided by the researcher (Babbie, p.257). Closed-ended

has advantages in that they easily give statistics based on uniformity or differences of responses.

For collecting qualitative data, the interviews and focus group were conducted in a face-to-face mode with representatives of government, political parties, and civil society. Interview guides yielded relevant data that related to the research questions of the study. So, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted among the selected participants. The semi-structured in-depth interview has advantages in that it allows 'free-flowing interaction' like in conversation; it is also flexible when other interesting questions come in mind while they were not thought about before (Morris, 2015). However, an interview guide remains indispensable so that the focus can remain on the purpose of the study. In addition, the interview guide entails an 'introduction', 'opening questions', 'key questions', and 'closing questions' to be effective (Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey, 2011). In the same manner, an interview guide was designed for the focus group discussion.

Considering that most of the respondents targeted in the qualitative part were top officials with many responsibilities, a recorder was used so as to save time as well as enhance safe keeping of important information. However, permission from each of them was required before recording. At the same time, key words or key information were noted in a notebook so that it would be easy to emphasize or come back to the same aspects during the interview. In fact taking notes also enabled me to remember key information. It also helped me not to interrupt the respondents when they were giving information or clarifying certain information.

#### Type of Data

In mixed method, data to be collected was both qualitative and quantitative. In this study, data was of three categories:

- 1) Qualitative data: were collected from the interviews with the government representatives and civil society; qualitative data were also collected from focus group discussion with youth political leaders and their communication officers. However, before the interviews and focus group discussion, there was qualitative data, also called secondary data collected from document analysis. These documents included the Burundi constitution, the recent statistics of the Ministry of High Education and Academic Research (2016-2017, statistics of number of universities, number of students per university, curriculums, and infrastructure) and the National policy on the development of ICT in Burundi. These documents enabled the researcher to understand the orientation taken by Burundi government with respect to the use of ICTs in democracy and citizen participation in particular as well as the statistics of students from which the sample was taken. This analysis generated information on the current practice of e-democracy with regard to enhancing citizen participation in decision making and the current number of students and universities in Burundi.
- 2) Quantitative data were collected from the survey using the questionnaires administrated in the 3 representative universities in Burundi.

#### Data Collection Procedures

First of all, data collection required permission from competent authorities. In the case of Burundi, to conduct the collection of data required permission from the

Government officials who were to be interviewed. In practice, a concept note was sent in advance so that these officials had an idea of the study and its objectives. Once they had seen the document, I requested their secretariat to grant me a date for interview.

For the university students, their institutions gave authorization for administration of the questionnaires. Equally, the student respondents were briefed on the objectives of the research, thereafter they signed a consent form before filling the questionnaire. These students were found in their campuses and the questionnaires (hard copies) were filled and collected.

In addition, the process of collecting data in mixed method can use a parallel form whereby quantitative and qualitative data are 'collected and analysed concurrently'; or data collection can be done using a sequential form whereby 'one type of data provides a basis for collection of another type of data' (Mertnes & McLaughlin, 2004). In this study, it is the sequential one that was used. In terms of order, I started with the secondary data, proceeded with quantitative, and ended up with the qualitative. Collecting citizens' views through questionnaires (quantitative) enriched the interviews with the government respondents and other democracy stakeholders. Hence, it was interesting to confront their discourse with the data collected from the citizens and other democratic stakeholders mentioned.

Finally, considering that most Burundians are French speakers, questionnaires were written in French. But they were translated to English for Daystar University administration which uses English.

### Pretesting

The pretesting was very important to ensure success of the study. Pretesting concerns the content (i.e. order of questions, appropriateness of the words used and clarity of the questions) and the instruments (i.e. questionnaires and interview guides). Whether the data collection includes surveys, observations, less structured interviews, or focus groups, pretesting always improves the chances of subsequent success (Axinn& Pearce, 2006 p.38). Equally important, the rule that each question must be relevant to the respondent is usually bent somewhat in pre-test, as researchers need not be careful that pre-test respondents have the exact characteristics of the respondents in the final study (Bailey, 1994, p.144). In this sense, the pretesting is for testing the data collection process and the data collection instruments. Therefore, the pretesting was done on the survey for quantitative data and semi-structured interviews for qualitative data. However, the participants in the pre-test did not participate in the final study. The pretesting feedback was very critical as it confirmed whether the questions were clear and were understood as the study intended. Otherwise, changes were made accordingly.

In view of the importance of pretesting, this study administered the questionnaires for the survey, and conducted interviews to test the suitability of the content and format of the questionnaires and interview guides. As emphasized by Axinn and Pearce (2006), the participants in pre-test were picked from the same groups targeted for data collection. Their feedback was integrated before conducting the final study. In addition, so as to avoid the influence on the respondents' responses during pre-test, Wimmer and Dominick (2014) suggest that discussion on the project is done after they have completed the questionnaire or responded to the interview.

This pretesting was done before administrating the general questionnaire to the student respondents. To avoid picking the same respondents for the main study, those who participated in the pretesting were picked randomly during the administration of the general questionnaire and they came from different universities other than those selected for the study. This pretesting was done in an organized conference room in Bujumbura city where the respondents from different campuses access easily. A neutral place allowed all participants to feel at ease and at the same level with others. After filling the questionnaires, the feedback helped the researcher to ascertain whether the set questions were clear and whether their comprehension of the questions corresponded to the purpose of the study. Also, as a result of the pretesting, the respondents disclosed that the questions were clear, but the questionnaire was too long. Therefore, I reviewed the length of the questionnaire without compromising the critical questions.

#### Data Analysis Plan

In mixed method, the data analysis plan consists of organizing and analysing qualitative and quantitative data. Mixed analysis involves the use of both quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques within the same framework, which is guided either *a priori*, *posteriori*, or iteratively (representing analytical decisions that occur both prior to the study and during the study) (Onwuegbuzie, 2011, p.3). Onwuegbuzi argues that the analysis is based on one of the paradigms. In coherence with the pragmatism chosen as the guiding philosophy of this study and the research method approach developed earlier (explanatory sequential design), the results were analysed in logic of complementarities. The complementary approach refers to the overlap as well as differences in data that may emerge (Borman, Clarke, Cotner & Lee, 2011).

Although the complementarity was dominant, there was also a triangulation as there was a comparison between quantitative and qualitative data. While complementarity sought to elaborate, to enhance, to illustrate, or clarify by comparing results from one method to another, the triangulation seeks convergence, or correspondence of the results from quantitative and qualitative methods (Schoonenboom, & Johnson, 2017). This interaction between the two approaches becomes very interesting and useful during interpretation of the findings. For instance, it was interesting to compare the discourse of the government officials, and the citizens' as well as the one from the other democratic stakeholders. Similarly, the way government understands and practices e-democracy in comparison with citizens' experience and expectation enriched the interviews conducted and the data.

In practice, Castro and Coe (2007) suggest that 'descriptive and correlation analyses may be conducted to examine associations among the qualitatively constructed thematic and the quantitatively based measured variables'. Hence, it was strategic to proceed by analysing data from each method which allowed for the identification, the complementarity and triangulation. Similarly, the qualitative analysis part followed the quantitative analysis process. As such, this analysis process used thematic analysis. The goal of a thematic analysis is to identify themes, i.e. patterns in the data that are important or interesting and use these themes to address the research or say something about an issue (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). This approach proceeds by coding information collected into data, categorizing it and establishing key themes that emerge from the transcription of the interviews. Accordingly, Braun and Clark (2006, p.87) suggest six phases for conducting thematic analysis:

1. To familiarize with the data: this consists of transcribing the data, to reading and re-reading as well as taking note of key ideas.
2. Generate initiation codes: this involves systematizing the coding of interesting features found in the data; giving a code to relevant data
3. Search for themes: collation codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme
4. Reviewing themes: Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Lev1) and the entire data set (Lev2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis'
5. Defining and naming themes: Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme
6. Producing report: The final step which involves selecting of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

For the quantitative data, the analysis process used 'descriptive numeric analysis'. According to Dewberry (2004) descriptive numeric analysis is one of the two aspects of the statistics. The two are descriptive and inferential. He distinguishes them as follows: descriptive statistics focuses on describing numbers as it establishes relationship between them for capturing the essence of those numbers, to give a summary of them so that they can be easily understood. On the other side, the inferential focuses on analysing numbers for drawing conclusions from them. In this study, the two were used at the same time. The numbers on their own were not sufficient for drawing conclusions in this study as it used mixed method which

integrated quantitative and qualitative data. In practice, the researcher used regression and correlation analysis to draw conclusion on the relationship between the variables.

In an elaborated way, Bradbeer (2004, p.3-4) opines that there are general steps that each researcher may adapt according to the specific tables of data. These six steps are:

- 1) Describe, and if Necessary, Explain the Column Headings
- 2) Describe, and if Necessary, Explain the Row Titles
- 3) For each Column Variable Describe the Range and Any Clustering in the Data
- 4) For Each Column Variable Rank the Data, and then Compare Ranking across Columns
- 5) Explore Plausible Explanation for the Associations that Appear
- 6) Remember to Describe the Big Picture and Avoid the Temptation to Try to Describe Each Cell in the Table.

In mixed method approach, the critical phase in data analysis involves integrating qualitative and quantitative data so as to draw conclusions. The integration may take the form of complementarity and triangulation depending on the variables to be analysed and their correlation. In whichever way, 'the analysis of mixed method data seeks, where applicable to the research question, to place the findings from both qualitative and quantitative data in conversation - perhaps to test out ideas or even reformulate a research problem (Hesse-Biber, 2010, p. 216). Additionally, the analysis has to prove the validity and credibility of the findings. In traditional qualitative research or quantitative, internal validity is associated with the coherence between data collected and the research problem whereas the external validity refers to the capacity of transferability and generalizability of the data beyond the context of research. In mixed research, the situation is different. The challenge is the validity of

qualitative and quantitative data combined. In mixed studies, the validity criteria from qualitative and quantitative models are used to meet the investigation's thoroughness of the respective models (Ponce & Pagan, 2014, p.104).

Finally, analysis of data collected from the questionnaire (quantitative), interviews and focus group (qualitative) was done separately. This was coherent with the explanatory sequential mixed design which involved collecting and analysing quantitative data then, collecting and analysing qualitative data. The final step of the analysis integrated the quantitative and qualitative in order to interpret the data and make conclusions.

### Ethical Considerations

In scientific research, ethical considerations are very critical for various reasons. Ethical considerations are taken to account in the whole process of the research. One has to be clear on distinguishing own ideas and other people's ideas. Shrader-Frechette (1994) argues that, 'research ethics is important not only because it helps students, the public, and experimental subjects avoid research-related harm, but also because it provides a framework for examining the ends and goals that research serves' (p.9). In addition, Resnik (2015) opines that the following reasons justify the importance of ethical considerations in research: trust by the respondents and trust of the society in the research, avoidance of error, and accountability of the researcher towards the society, mutual respect between researcher and respondents, fairness and obedience to the law.

In mixed method, the ethical issues are associated with its two components; qualitative and quantitative. On one hand "quantitative studies require researchers to obtain permission, protect anonymity, avoid disruption of sites, and communicate the purpose(s) of the study accurately"; on the other "qualitative studies require

researchers communicate the purposes(s) of the study accurately, avoid deceptive practices, respect the study population, respond to potential power concerns, and confidentiality" (Caruth, 2013, p.115). Equally important, for collecting qualitative data, the ethical consideration shall take into consideration the respect of privacy, veracity, fidelity when transcribing information and informed voluntary participation (Flick, 2009; Graham, & Bond, 2013). Likewise, using a recorder during interviews requires permission from the interviewee.

In fact, the issue of ethical consideration is more than a practice but a philosophy. In this regard, it is the axiology part of the philosophy concerned as it looks at values, beliefs, and mindset. As a Christian, I chose Christian worldview guiding values in this study. In agreement with Strom (2009), "we can define a Christian worldview as the beliefs, values, behaviours, and assumptions we as biblically informed Christians hold that guide our perceptions about who we are , what the world is like, and why we are even here in the first place" (p.20). In other words, Christian worldview constitutes lenses through which we conduct research, consider the reality and more importantly the values which support our research. Taking reference in the Bible (NIV), Colossians 3:23-24 "23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving".

In research, worldview is key in influencing values that underpin research process. In agreement with Harrison (2004), "the Christian worldview does not narrow and distort knowledge, but expands and clarifies it, explaining aspects of experience that cannot be accounted for adequately by postmodern or naturalistic models" (p.30). In fact, "a Christian worldview is an expression of the basic beliefs

embedded in the narrative of Scripture that are rooted in faith in the God of Scripture, revealed most completely in the person of Jesus Christ, and that shape and direct Christian life"(Franklin, 2010, p.38). Hence, to integrate faith in research requires one to have and shape a Christian mind (Page, 2009, citing Blamire). His argument is that "a mind trained, informed, equipped to handle data of secular controversy within a framework of references which is constructed of Christian presuppositions"(p.41). With respect to this worldview, the axiology part of this study is thus embedded in Christian worldview.

Concretely, the researcher took a commitment to follow ethical consideration: to aligned with Christian worldview values in the whole process of this study. Values of honesty, respect, and respect of the promises given to the participants prevailed; to produced authentic work; to ensured veracity of the sources; honesty by distinguishing my own ideas from other scholars and sources; to seek permission before starting investigations; to seek permission from the respondents before using the recorder during interviews; to ask for consent from the respondents of questionnaires and people to be interviewed after explaining the purpose of the study. It has been made clear in advance that every respondent voluntarily participated by signing the consent without manipulation or incites; confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents; fidelity during transcribing responses; respect of the respondents' privacy; to pay the assistant researchers (for administrating questionnaires) on time according to the agreement; to ensure validity and reliability; to explain to survey participants before filling the questionnaires that there is no stipend given after; interview participants who had expressed their wish to have access to the findings were granted access; and a copy of the final thesis will be given to the two government representatives as promised during interviews. Equally important,

considering that knowledge is meant to be shared, the dissemination of the findings will be done through sharing in conferences and other scientific gatherings.

Lastly on the validity and reliability, reference is made to qualitative and quantitative aspects which make mixed method. For the quantitative part, validity is of two kinds, internal and external validity. The internal validity 'refers to the confidence we have that the results of a study accurately depict whether one variable is or is not a cause of another' (Rubin, & Babbie, 2010, p.157). The external validity is the degree to which results of investigations can be generalized beyond a specific investigation (Taylor, 2013, p.12).

In complement to the quantitative part, the validity and reliability in the qualitative data relies in trustworthiness. Privitera (2014) argues that 'as an alternative to using validity and reliability, many qualitative researchers instead use four criteria of trustworthiness; credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of a qualitative analysis' (p. 202). In relation to quantitative part, he explains that credibility and transferability correspond to internal and external validity, dependability corresponds to reliability, and confirmability corresponds to the objectivity of a qualitative analysis. Thus, the validity and reliability of the mixed approach used in this study is the end result of combining the two methods (quantitative and qualitative).

As a matter of fact, the validity, reliability and generalizability of this mixed method relied on the representativeness of the sample both qualitatively and quantitatively. On the qualitative part, the representative of the two Ministries (Youth & ICTs; and Interior Ministry) were enough as they are the ones in charge of implementing the use of ICTs on citizen participation; in addition to the rigour in analysis and interpretation. In practice, SPSS was used to analyse quantitative data

while thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative data. In this case, crosschecking the qualitative analysis relied on the appropriateness of the tools and rigour during data analysis. After integrating the two kinds of data, it was possible to interpret and draw conclusions. Since the study used the mixed method, the overall objective of the findings was not generalization but to give insights in terms of knowledge with regard to impact of ICTs in enhancing citizen participation.

In view of the methodology process described above, the following chapter will consist in presentation, analysis and interpretation of the findings. Considering that this study has four objectives, the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the findings will be split into two chapters. The two first objectives will constitute chapter four and the two last ones will constitute chapter five. The last chapter six will consist in discussion, conclusions, and recommendations.

### Summary

Chapter three was concerned with the methodological process that guided this study. Methodology constituted a distinctive framework which made this study unique compared to others which have studied this topic. Therefore, the chapter outlined and discussed mixed method as research design, the philosophical approach which is the practical pragmatism, research methods which are survey, interviews and focus group discussion.

Considering that e-democracy and citizen participation can be looked at by using various types of population, the study chose to target the Burundi government and students as one of the Burundi citizen categories, along with other democratic stakeholders such as political parties, and civil society. Considering that it was not possible to survey or to interview everyone, it was important to determine the sampling techniques. First, multiple sampling technique was used. Secondly, stratified

sampling technique was used to select the universities and lastly, simple random sampling technique was used to choose participants in the survey. With regard to survey respondents, the formula of known population size was used with 95% level of confidence and 0.05% margin of error. On qualitative, purposive sampling technique was used to select the convenient respondents both in the interviews and focus group discussion. After sampling, I established the data collection methods and instruments. On quantitative, the survey research method with questionnaire as data collection instrument was used. Qualitative data was generated by the interviews and focus groups discussions using interview guides and observations and note taking.

Considering that mixed method uses both qualitative and quantitative research, the data collection procedures first began with the quantitative data then proceeded to the qualitative. This order was also valuable for the pretesting phase.

On the data analysis, the thematic analysis approach was used for analysing qualitative data whereas descriptive numeric analysis was used for analysing quantitative data. Specifically, SPSS was used for analysing quantitative data while qualitative data was analysed using qualitative methods. As the study used mixed method, the critical step was the integration of quantitative and qualitative data for addressing the four objectives of this study. It is from this integration of quantitative and qualitative data that it was possible to draw interpretation and conclusions.

The last part of this chapter outlined the ethical considerations. In scientific research, ethics occupy an important place not only for formality but importantly for making a study worth and respectable. For this study, Christian worldview was developed as a philosophical guide for the axiological aspect.

Otherwise, this chapter on methodology laid the foundation for concrete actions of collecting data, presenting, analysing, and interpreting the findings. These steps constitute the next chapter four that follows.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### PART I: Objective 1 and 2

##### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to assess the extent to which e-democracy facilitates citizen participation in Burundi. This chapter first presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents, followed by the presentation and interpretation of study findings. Quantitative data was collected through a survey with students from National University of Burundi, Great Lakes University, and Université Lumière de Bujumbura. In addition, Interviews were conducted with government and civil society representatives while focus group discussions were done with representatives of political party members of parliament and government as well as representatives of students who participated in the survey. In coherence with mixed method, the presentation, analysis, and interpretation was done by the means of explanatory sequential design. The quantitative findings have been integrated with qualitative findings in line with the first two objectives of this study which were:

- To establish how Burundi citizens participate in e-democracy and their level of satisfaction.
- To assess the place of communication strategy in e-democracy.

##### Response Rate

The target population was made up of university students from both public and private universities. The valid questionnaires were 373 out of 450 distributed representing a response rate of 82%. While the desired target was 383, I oversampled in order to obtain a high response rate closer to the target and given that questionnaires were distributed and picked at later date, the oversampling was meant to anticipate the issue of some respondents who did not give back questionnaires or

did not fill correctly. According to Mangione (1995, as cited in Rovai, Baker, & Ponton, 2014) response rates are considered as follows: "higher than 85%: excellent rate; 70% to 85%: very good rate; 60% to 70%: acceptable; 50% to 60%: barely acceptable; below 50%: not scientifically acceptable" (p.51). Similarly, Sekaran, (2008) argues that any response above 75% is classified as best. As a result, the response rate of this study (82.2%) was considered as very good.

#### Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Data was collected on the following demographic characteristics; age and current level of study. The findings are presented in the subsequent figures.

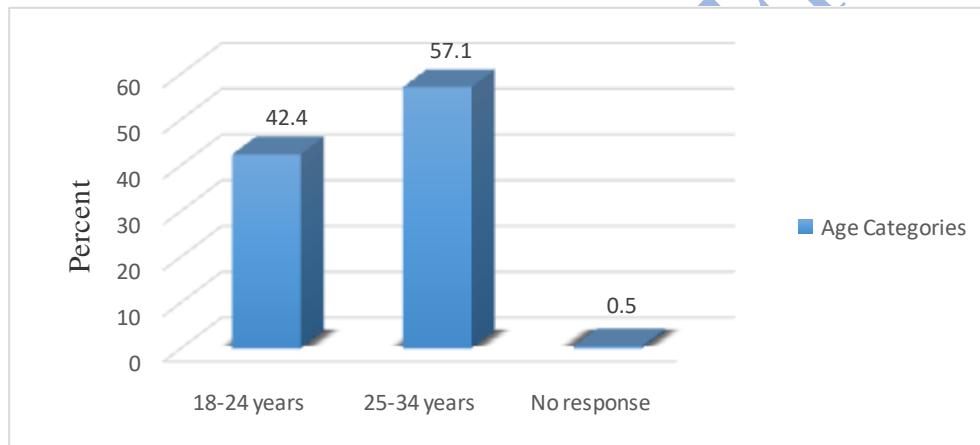


Figure 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by Age Category

As shown in Figure 4.1, 57.1% of the participants were aged between 25 to 34 years, while 42.4% were aged between 18 to 24 years. Age distribution was deemed a key factor in assessing citizen participation in Burundi through E-democracy, as age is a vital aspect in understanding various levels of civic engagement. It is understood that in general age is one of the most widely studied variables (Zukin et. al. 2006, O'Toole, 2003).

In addition to age, the demographic considered the level of study. Figure 4.2 shows the level of study distribution.

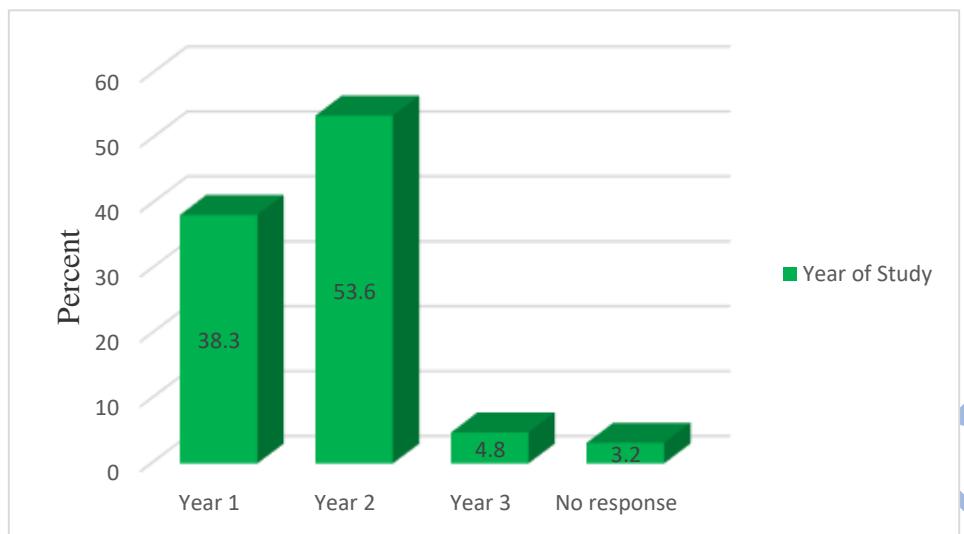


Figure 4.2: Distribution of Respondents by Level of Study

On respondent's education level, 53.6% were in year 2, 38.3% were in year 1, while 4.8% were in year 3. This denoted that most of the respondents were in their second year of study.

#### Internet Accessibility

Internet accessibility was a key component in this survey, as the study sought to find e-democracy participation in Burundi.

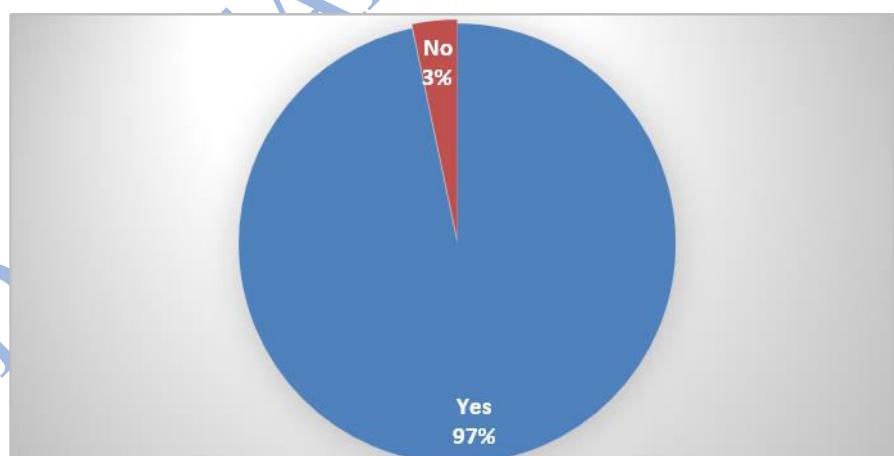


Figure 4.3: Internet Accessibility

Respondents were asked whether they had access to internet or not. Figure 4.3 reports that 3% did not access internet while 97% reported to have access to internet. Although this 97% was not a representation of internet penetration which is currently

at 5% in Burundi, it indicated that students from universities largely have access to internet. This further suggested that a high proportion of the respondents had access to internet.

After identification of the respondents, the following part will consist in presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data.

### Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

Findings and discussions of the study in line with the two first objectives are presented in sub sections that follow.

#### How Burundi Citizens Participate in E-democracy and their Level of Satisfaction

Objective one sought to establish how Burundi citizens participated in E-democracy and their level of satisfaction. The findings on this objective are presented in sub-sections below.

##### Participation of Burundi Citizens in E-democracy

To establish the level of citizen's participation in E-democracy, the participants were provided with questions in various scales that assessed their interest in politics and governance, ICT platforms used in e-democracy and their frequency of ICT use. The given scales were assigned scores, and the sum total of the scores that each participant attained was used to categorize them into low, moderate and high levels. Summary of the findings is presented in the subsequent sub-sections.

### Interest in Politics and Governance

The respondents were required to indicate their interest level in participation in politics in social media. The findings on the frequency are presented on Table 4.1.

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Table 4.1: Interest in Politics and Governance

Interest in Politics and Governance	SD		D		N		A		SA		NR	
	Freq	%										
Always pay attention to political information	45	12.1	42	11.3	43	11.5	132	35.4	67	18.0	44	11.8
I really pay attention to political information	59	15.8	97	26.0	50	13.4	76	20.4	32	8.6	59	15.8
I am indifferent to political information	18	4.8	60	16.1	82	22.0	82	22.0	69	18.5	62	16.6
Most of the time I agree with political opinions posted by friends on social media	89	23.9	76	20.4	69	18.5	70	18.8	20	5.4	49	13.1
Most of the time I disagree with political opinions posted by friends on social media	6	28.6	4	19.0	8	38.1	3	14.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Political information on social media contradicts my opinion	25	6.7	105	28.2	70	18.8	60	16.1	57	15.3	56	15.0
Political information on social media agrees with my opinion	22	5.9	44	11.8	105	28.2	73	19.6	74	19.8	55	14.7
When I find opinions which I disagree with on social media, I criticize them	79	22.8	76	20.4	111	29.8	27	7.2	17	4.6	57	15.3
When I find opinions which I disagree with on social media, I delete/block them	16	21.2	75	20.1	85	22.8	55	14.7	21	5.6	58	15.5
When I find opinion which I disagree with on social media, I ignore them	31	4.3	36	9.7	86	23.1	94	25.2	84	22.5	57	15.3
When I find opinions which I disagree with on social media, I appreciate them without agreeing	105	8.3	66	17.7	77	20.6	63	16.9	76	20.4	60	16.1
When I find opinions which I disagree with on social media, I embrace them		28.2	91	24.4	85	22.8	23	6.2	16	4.3	53	14.3

From the findings on Table 4.1, 35.4% of the participants agreed that they always paid attention to political information, while 26% disagreed that they really paid attention to political information. Further 28.2%, strongly disagreed that they embraced information that they disagreed with on social media, while 29.8% indicated being neutral on whether they criticized information that they disagreed with on social media. Equally important, findings show that even if a high number (35.4%) of the respondents agreed that they always pay attention to political information shared on social media, few of them (7.2%) dare criticize when they find opinion that are opposed to theirs. This denotes that there is no freedom of expression as citizens are interested in political information, but do not dare criticize them.

#### Level of Interest in Politics and Governance

The study further sought to establish the levels of interest in politics and governance. In order to assess the level of interest in politics and governance in social media, the scale was collapsed into three levels and items that were negative were reverse coded. Since the total number of items on the scale was 12, the minimum possible score for an individual in the scale was 12 (1x12) and the maximum possible score was 60 (12x5). The scores were then categorized into 3 levels where scores ranging from 12 to 30 represented low level of interest, scores ranging from 31-42 represented moderate level of interest and scores ranging from 43-60 represented high level of interest. The findings are presented in the subsequent tables.

*Table 4.2: Level of Interest in Politics and Governance*

Level of Interest	Frequency	Percent
Low Interest	76	23.3
Moderate interest	228	69.9
High interest	22	6.7
Total	326	100.0

From Table 4.2, 69.9% of the participants had moderate interest in participating in politics and governance in social media, 23.3% had low interest, while 6.7% had high interest in participating in politics and governance.

Data on the level of interest in politics and governance was further analyzed descriptively in terms of means and standard deviation. The findings are presented in Table 4.3 below

*Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics for Levels of Interest in Politics and Governance*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Interest in Politics	326	12	51	34.18	5.684
Valid N (listwise)	326				

As shown in Table 4.3, the lowest level of interest score attained by the respondents was 12, while the highest score was 51. The mean score was 34.18 ( $SD=5.684$ ), signifying that on average the participants interest in politics and governance was in the moderate level.

Data was further analyzed for the level of interest in politics and governance in relation to age category. The findings are presented in Table 4.4 and 4.5.

*Table 4.4: Level of Interest in Politics and Governance by Age Category*

Age category		Frequency	Percent
18-24 years	Low Interest	36	27.1
	Moderate interest	91	68.4
	High interest	6	4.5
	Total	133	100.0
25-34 years	Low Interest	40	20.8
	Moderate interest	136	70.8
	High interest	16	8.3
	Total	192	100.0

From the findings in Table 4.4, 68.4% of the respondents aged between 18 to 24 years had moderate interest, while 70.8% of those aged 25 to 34 years also had a moderate interest in politics and governance.

*Table 4.5: Levels of Interest in Politics and Governance by Age Category*

Age		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
18-24 years	Level of interest	133	19	51	33.63	5.429
	Valid N (listwise)	133				
25 to 34 years	Level of Interest	192	12	51	34.57	5.851
	Valid N (listwise)	192				

From Table 4.5, the lowest level of interest score attained by the respondents aged 18 to 24 years was 19 while that attained by respondents aged 25 to 34 years was 12. The maximum score attained was 51 for respondents aged 18 to 24 years and those aged 25 to 34 years. The mean score for respondents aged 18 to 24 years was 33.63( $SD=5.429$ ), indicating a moderate level of interest, whereas the mean score for the respondents aged 25 to 34 years was 34.57( $SD=5.851$ ), also indicating a moderate level of interest.

From the findings, it is obvious that the interest in politics and governance was moderate. This situation was explained by different stakeholders in different ways. In view of the government, the GOV\_ ICTs explained that:

People do not invest in ICTs primarily for political reasons. It is in first place for their personal needs that they invest in a smart phone and internet.

A representative of civil society agreed that people did not invest in ICTs for political reasons but for personal reasons. The CS added that:

The political environment does not encourage people to get interested in politics and governance. When people give opinions opposed to the ones of the ruling party or the government, they are either threatened, arrested or jailed. In this context, people prefer not to give their

opinions for security reasons. As civil society, we are regularly defending cases of citizens who have been arrested or jailed just because of expressing their opinions.

Equally important, the representative of the opposition, PP3, in the focus group discussion informed the study that citizens do not comment or share their opinions on social media because of fear. Yet they are so much interested in the political information shared on social media because of lack of independent media. He argued that:

Many Burundian actually are interested in political information shared on social media and international media. This is because independent media were burned in May 2015 when the current crisis started, and professional journalists are in exile. Therefore it is social media where different people in the country, journalists in exile and politicians out of the country have the freedom to say what they want. And international media are also helping in this as some of them broadcast online. For instance the Government has suspended BBC and Voice of America to broadcast in Burundi for political reasons. But all of us who have access to internet keep following them on their Facebook pages.

From these findings, the low frequency in use of ICTs in politics did not denote that citizens were disinterested in political information or they did not have opinions. Actually there were political factors that curtailed them from expressing themselves freely and publicly.

### Frequency of Use of ICT Platforms

Participants were provided with a list of ICT platforms as well social media sites and were required to indicated how frequently they used them on a Likert scale of 1 to 7 (more than once a day, daily, thrice a week, twice a week, once a week, fortnightly and once a month). The findings are presented on Table 4.6.

*Table 4.6: Frequency of ICT Use*

Interest in Politics and Governance	More than once a day		Daily		Thrice a week		Twice a week		Once a week		Fortnightly		Once a month	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Facebook	148	39.7	91	24.4	34	9.1	25	6.7	23	6.2	6	1.6	22	5.9
Whatsapp	154	41.3	125	33.5	17	4.6	13	3.5	8	2.1	4	1.1	7	1.9
Twitter	23	6.2	17	4.6	20	5.4	15	4.0	10	2.7	13	3.5	49	13.1
Linkedin	10	2.7	9	2.4	8	2.1	9	2.4	7	1.9	7	1.9	38	10.2
Snapchat	13	3.5	13	3.5	8	2.1	17	4.6	10	2.7	6	1.6	38	10.2
Mobile phones	166	44.5	112	30.0	2	0.5	7	1.9	9	2.4	4	1.1	5	1.3

From Table 4.6, 44.5% of the participants indicated that they used their mobile phones once a day, 41.3% also indicated using WhatsApp more than once a day, 13.1% used twitter once a month, while 4.6% used Snapchat twice a week.

The study also sought to find out the level of ICT use by collapsing the scale into three levels. Since the total number of items on the scale was 6, the minimum possible score for an individual in the scale was 6 (1x6) and the maximum possible score was 42 (7x6). The scores were then categorized into 3 levels where scores ranging from 6 to 21 represented low level of frequency, from 22 to 27 represented moderate frequency and from 28 to 42 represented high frequency. The findings are presented on Table 4.7.

*Table 4.7: Frequency of ICT Use*

Frequency of ICT Use	Frequency	Percent
Low Frequency	176	80.4
Moderate Frequency	33	15.1
High Frequency	10	4.6
Total	219	100.0

From the findings in Table 4.7, 80.4% of the participants indicated low frequency in ICT platforms use, 15.1% had moderate frequency, while only 4.6% indicated high frequency of ICT platforms use.

Data on the frequency of ICT use was further analyzed descriptively in terms of means and standard deviation. The findings are presented on Table 4.8

*Table 4.8: Descriptive Statistics on the Frequency of ICT Use*

	N	Minimu m	Maximu m	Mea n	Std. Deviation
Frequency of ICT Use	219	6	32	13.8	7.172
Valid N (listwise)	219			7	

From Table 4.8, the lowest frequency of ICT use score attained by the respondents was 6, while the highest score was 32. The mean score was 13.87 ( $SD=7.172$ ), signifying that on average the participants had low frequency of ICT use.

Data was further analyzed on the frequency of ICT use in relation to age category. The findings are presented in Tables 4.9 and 4.10.

*Table 4.9: Frequency of ICT Use by Age Category*

Age Level of Frequency	Frequency	Percent
18-24 years	Low Frequency	79
	Moderate Frequency	21
	High Frequency	7
Total	107	100.0
25- 35 years	Low Frequency	96
	Moderate Frequency	12
	High Frequency	3
	Total	111
		100.0

From Table 4.9, 73.8% of the participants aged 18 to 24 years had low frequency of ICT use, while 86.5% of those aged 25 to 35 years had low frequency of ICT use.

*Table 4.10: Descriptive Statistics for Frequency of ICT Use by Age Category*

Age Category		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
18-24 years	Frequency of ICT Use	107	6	32	15.52	7.653
	Valid N (listwise)		107			
25-35 years	Frequency of ICT Use	111	6	31	12.31	6.347
	Valid N (listwise)		111			

From Table 4.10, the minimum score attained by the respondents aged 18 to 24 years was 6 while that attained by respondents aged 25 to 34 years was also 6. The maximum score attained was 32 for respondents aged 18 to 24 years and 31 for those aged 25 to 34 years. The mean score for respondents aged 18 to 24 years was 15.52( $SD=7.653$ ), indicating a low frequency of ICT use, whereas the mean score for the respondents aged 25 to 34 years was 12.31( $SD=6.347$ ), also indicating a low frequency of ICT use.

These implied that although the frequency of ICT use was higher on some platforms, the frequency of use in most of the other platforms was low, indicating a low frequency of use across all the platforms. In addition to political factors already mentioned, the use of ICT was still considered expensive to some people, as indicated by respondent F in FGD with representatives of the survey participants, who noted that:

Considering that internet and smart phones are still expensive, most of the people do not have access to ICTs. Therefore, when sharing opinions, the majority use the traditional media, like radio in first place. Also, the culture shall not be forgotten in

this as well. Burundians have oral traditions, therefore the majority remain believing in the power the radio has over other ICT platforms. As a result, radio remains an important means of participation.

As a matter of fact, asked how satisfied they were with government's ICT platforms in comparison with the traditional ones in accessing information and engaging the government, respondents in the survey confirmed that traditional means remained credible. For instance, only 20.9% (78 respondents) were satisfied with government's Facebook platform and 15.5% (58 respondents) were satisfied with government's websites. In contrast, 29.2% (109 respondents) were satisfied with newspapers, and 32.4% (121 respondents) were satisfied with radio. These findings enhanced the idea that government considered ICTs as alternative means for citizen participation and integration in the global communication strategy which incorporate traditional and new means of information and communication in logic of continuity and not separated from each other.

In addition, some of the respondents were critical on the use of ICT especially for political purposes. The fear of repression by government was also a considerable factor that explained the low level of frequency in use of ICTs by some citizens. For instance, in the focus group, the representative of the opposition, PP3 explained that:

People do not share their political opinions on social media because of fear. Citizens are afraid of government's repression. Government can use intelligence services to follow people. For this reason, citizens prefer to discuss politics with friends whose opinions they are sure of.

PP3 added that because of the fear of repression:

There is mutual suspicion among the citizens which results to lack of trust among the citizens. Some government officials change their names so that they spy on what citizens are sharing.

Considering the findings, the reason why the level of frequency use was low can be associated with many factors. Some are economical, while others are political and both hinder access and use of ICTs. As such, government needs to consider these factors in order to make e-democracy efficient.

#### Level of Satisfaction in E-Democracy

To establish the level of citizen's satisfaction in E-democracy, the participants were required to rate how important ICT was in e-democracy, importance of social media in politics and their satisfaction with online participation. Summary of the findings is presented in the subsequent sub-sections.

#### Importance of ICT in E-Democracy

To assess the importance of using ICT, the participants were provided with 17 items that assessed the importance of ICT on a scale of 1 to 5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree). The summary of findings is presented on Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Importance of ICT Use

Importance of ICT in E-democracy	SD		D		N		A		SA		NR	
	Freq	%										
I find ICTs quite useful in knowing what is happening in the country	38	10.2	20	5.4	17	4.6	150	40.0	118	31.6	30	8.1
I use ICTs to expand my understanding of social and political affairs	58	15.5	52	13.9	30	8.0	93	24.9	83	22.3	57	15.3
I use ICTs to seek information	16	4.3	11	2.9	15	4.0	122	32.7	180	48.3	29	7.9
I use ICTs to network	86	23.1	44	11.8	33	8.8	75	20.1	50	13.4	85	22.8
I use social media to share my opinions about new stories	43	11.5	34	9.1	38	10.2	129	34.6	72	19.3	57	15.3
I use ICTs to share my own opinion	56	15.0	32	8.6	27	7.2	127	34.0	71	19.0	60	16.1
I use ICTs to market my ideas	61	16.4	48	12.9	36	9.7	75	20.1	71	19.0	82	22.0
I use ICTs to learn	28	7.5	18	4.8	12	3.2	137	36.7	119	31.9	59	15.8
I use ICTs to connect with real and virtual friends	66	17.7	36	9.7	30	8.0	105	28.2	82	22.0	54	14.5
I use ICTs as a psychological therapy (expression of my positive and negative emotions)	87	23.3	72	19.3	46	12.3	63	16.9	38	10.2	67	18.0
I find ICTs useful in entertainment	60	16.1	47	12.6	33	8.8	93	24.9	64	17.2	74	20.4
I use ICTs for social recognition	64	17.2	36	9.7	37	9.9	98	26.3	60	16.1	78	20.9
I use ICTs for social acceptance	96	25.7	70	18.8	39	10.5	51	13.7	41	11.0	76	20.4
I use ICTs for activism	65	17.4	40	10.7	30	8.0	86	23.1	56	15.0	96	25.8
I use ICTs to access global data and information	40	10.7	18	4.8	17	4.6	106	28.4	142	38.1	50	13.4
I use ICTs to access people that I cannot access in real life	58	15.5	47	12.6	37	9.9	83	22.3	79	21.2	69	18.5
I use social media to report breaking news in my community	55	14.7	28	7.5	23	6.2	109	29.2	102	27.3	56	15.0

From Table 4.11, majority of the participants (48.3%) strongly agreed that they used ICT to seek information, 38.1% further strongly agreed that used ICT to access global data and information, 36.7% agreed that they used ICT to learn, while to expand my understanding of social and political affairs. This denotes the political efficacy of e-democracy in Burundi. It helps people to access information, and it helps people to learn and expand their knowledge about social and political affairs. However, on matters of voicing opinion, the numbers go lower. As findings show that only 19% of the respondents use social media to share their opinion. Compared to the high number (48.3%) of those who have strongly agreed that they use social media to seek information, this implies that the level of interaction is, as a result, moderate., ,

The study further sought to establish the level of importance. Since the total number of items on the scale was 17, the minimum possible score for an individual in the scale was 17 (1x17) and the maximum possible score was 85 (5x17). The scores were then categorized into 3 levels where scores ranging from 17 to 42 represented low level of importance, scores ranging from 43 to 59 represented moderate level of importance and scores ranging from 60 to 85 represented high level of importance. The findings are presented in Table 4.12.

*Table 4.12: Importance of ICT Use*

Level of Importance	Frequency	Percent
Low Level of Importance	97	28.2
Moderate Level of Importance	141	41.0
High Level of Importance	106	30.8
Total	344	100.0

Majority of the participants (41%) indicated that the use of ICT was moderately important, 30.8% indicated that it was highly important, while 28.2% indicated a low level of importance towards use of ICT.

Data was further analyzed descriptively in terms of mean and standard deviation. The findings are presented on Table 4.13.

*Table 4.13: Descriptive Statistics on the Importance of ICT Use*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Importance of ICT Use	344	17	85	51.12	14.804
Valid N (listwise)	344				

The minimum score attained was 17, while the maximum score was 85. The mean score was 51.12 ( $SD=14.804$ ), indicating that on average, the participants attached a moderate level of importance on the use of ICT in e-democracy.

Data was further analyzed on the importance of ICT use in E-democracy in relation to age category. The findings are presented in Table 4.14

*Table 4.14: Importance of ICT Use by Age Category*

Age	Level of Importance	Frequency	Percent
18-24 years	Low Level of Importance	48	34.0
	Moderate Level of Importance	58	41.1
	High Level of Importance	35	24.8
Total		141	100.0
25-35 years	Low Level of Importance	49	24.4
	Moderate Level of Importance	81	40.3
	High Level of Importance	71	35.3
Total		201	100.0

As shown in Table 4.14, 41.1% of the participants aged 18 to 24 years indicated that ICT use was moderately important in e-democracy and 40.3% of those aged 25 to 35 years also noted that ICT use was moderately important in e-democracy. This implied that importance of ICT in e-democracy was considered

moderately important across the age categories under study, which comprised mostly of the youths. Importance of ICT use among the youths was further emphasized by the youth leaders who participated in the FGD. For instance, A indicated that:

As far as there is not yet a democracy culture, it is difficult to say on social media what we cannot say in real life. Our leaders do not have a culture of interaction and integration of different opinions. Because of that, even social media are used mostly for informing and giving direction. It gives an impression that our political leaders are afraid of feedback. Equally important government does not tolerate contradictory debate. Since the crisis of 2015, every person who gives an opposing idea is considered an enemy of the country. In this context, ICT users are afraid of being considered as enemies of the country.

These findings imply that ICT was considered moderately important by majority of the students across the various levels of study. Political factors mentioned above are among the justification.

#### Satisfaction with Online Participation

To assess the participants satisfaction with regards to participation in online public affairs, the participants were provided with 6 items that assessed how satisfied they were with their online public participation on a scale of 1 to 5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree). The findings are presented on Table 4.15.

*Table 4.15: Satisfaction with Online Participation*

Satisfaction with online participation	SD		D		N		A		SA		NR	
	Freq	%	Freq	%								
My online participation matters to voice my opinion to Government's actions	103	27.6	65	17.4	58	15.5	78	20.9	36	9.7	33	8.8
My online participation helps me to be in touch with the Government	82	22.0	89	23.9	84	22.5	58	15.5	28	7.5	32	8.6
My activities online attract government's attention	112	30.0	64	17.2	78	20.9	52	13.9	31	8.3	36	9.4
With my online participation, I can influence government policy and action	96	25.7	81	21.7	71	19.0	49	13.1	38	10.2	37	9.9
My online signature on petitions can influence government's policy	103	27.6	90	24.1	92	24.7	32	8.6	21	5.6	35	9.4
My online contribution counts to change policy	89	23.9	72	19.3	76	20.4	59	15.8	45	12.1	32	8.6

From the findings, 30% of the participants strongly disagreed that their online activities attracted government attention, 27.6% further strongly disagreed that their online participation mattered to voice their opinion on government actions, while only 15.8% agreed that their online vote counted in changing policy. As a result, findings indicate that 23.9 % of the respondents strongly disagreed that their online contribution counts to change policy.

The study also sought to establish the levels of satisfaction. Since the total number of items on the scale was 6, the minimum possible score for an individual in the scale was 6 (1x6) and the maximum possible score was 30 (6x5). The scores were then categorized into 3 levels where scores ranging from 6 to 15 represented low level of satisfaction, from 16 to 21 represented moderate level of satisfaction and from 22 to 30represented high level of satisfaction. The findings are presented on Table 4.16.

*Table 4.16: Satisfaction with Online Participation of Public Affair*

Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percent
Low level of Satisfaction	170	49.7
Moderate level of Satisfaction	137	40.1
High Level of Satisfaction	35	10.2
Total	342	100.0

As shown in Table 4.16, 49.7% of the participants indicated a low level of satisfaction with online participation in public affairs, 40.1% indicated a moderate level of satisfaction, while 10.2% indicated a high level of satisfaction.

Data was further analyzed descriptively in terms of mean and standard deviation. The findings are presented on Table 4.17.

*Table 4.17: Descriptive Statistics on Level of Satisfaction with Public Affairs*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Level of Satisfaction	342	6	30	15.11	4.977
Valid N (listwise)	342				

As shown in Table 4.17, the minimum score attained was 6, while the maximum score was 30. The mean score was 15.11( $SD=4.977$ ), indicating that on average the respondents had low level of satisfaction with online participation in public affairs. These findings are coherent considering the high number (23.9%) strongly disagreed that their online contribution counts to change policy. The finding that majority of the participants had low level of satisfaction with participation in public affairs was supported by the students who participated in the FGD. For instance, C noted that:

The government uses ICTs to inform on different aspects of the country but there is less interaction. Even when people give their opinions, it is rare that they respond to them.

Equally important H noted,

ICTs are mainly used by government to influence the youth and other ICT users rather than facilitating interaction.

Data was further analyzed on satisfaction with online participation in public affairs in relation to age category. The findings are presented in Table 4.18.

*Table 4.18: Level of Satisfaction with Online Participation in Public Affairs*

Age	Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percent
18-24 years	Low level of Satisfaction	55	39.6
	Moderate level of Satisfaction	65	46.8
	High Level of Satisfaction	19	13.7
Total		139	100.0
25- 35 years	Low level of Satisfaction	114	56.4
	Moderate level of Satisfaction	72	35.6
	High Level of Satisfaction	16	7.9
Total		202	100.0

From Table 4.18, 46.8% of participants aged 18 to 24 years had a moderate level of satisfaction, while 56.4% of those aged 25 to 35 years had a low level of satisfaction with online participation. This implied that majority of the youth above 25 years were less satisfied with online participation of public affairs, compared to those who were below 25 years.

Data was further analyzed descriptively in terms of means and standard deviation on the level of satisfaction with online public participation by age category. Findings are presented on Table 4.19 below

*Table 4.19: Level of Satisfaction with Online Participation by Age Category*

Age		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
18-24 years	Level satisfaction	of 139	6	30	15.96	5.224
	Valid N (listwise)	139				
25-35 years	Level satisfaction	of 202	6	27	14.55	4.733
	Valid N (listwise)	202				

From Table 4.19, the minimum score attained by the respondents aged 18 to 24 years was six while for respondents aged 25 to 34 years was also 6. The maximum score attained was 30 for respondents aged 18 to 24 years and 27 for those aged 25 to 34 years. The mean score for respondents aged 18 to 24 years was 15.96( $SD=5.224$ ), indicating a moderate level of satisfaction, whereas the mean score for the

respondents aged 25 to 34 years was 14.55(SD=4.733), indicating a low level of satisfaction of online participation in public affairs.

Consequently, the older youths were less satisfied with online participation in public affairs compared to their younger counterparts. This could be explained by the fact that as time goes by and peoples' opinions in online public participation are not taken care of, they become more dissatisfied. This was further highlighted by the respondents in the FGD: Respondent E indicated that:

Citizens' contributions are not taken into consideration. This discourages people from getting involved in politics in public. In fact it is risky to get involved in politics and there is no need to take a risk for an opinion that will not be considered.

C agreed with E that;

Political leaders do not care about what citizens say. Political leaders have their own agenda which does not reflect people's needs.

In the same manner," F indicated that;

Citizens do not share their opinions because their security and their opinions are not taken into consideration.

Asked whether government cares for citizens' online contribution and also matching online platforms used by the citizens, civil society representative responded that:

Yes the government does care about what the citizen's say, especially influential people - in politics and civil society. But I do not think that their intention is to enhance citizen participation but to influence and follow up what those

influential people are communicating. If it were for the interest of the public to participate, I believe there shall have been a study to know what ICT tools people use, for what purpose. But I am not aware whether such study has been conducted.

This implied that advancement in level of studies came with more satisfaction with online public participation, which could be explained by the fact that those who had advanced in the level of study were more likely to be informed on better ways of public participation and were also more likely to participate as youth leaders compared to their counterparts in their first and second years of studies.

#### Satisfaction with Use of Social Media in Politics

To assess the participants' satisfaction with use of social media in politics, the participants were provided with 9 items that assessed how satisfied they were with how social media was used for political purposes on a scale of 1 to 5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree). The findings are presented on Table 4.20.

*Table 4.20: Satisfaction with Use of Social Media in Politics*

Satisfaction with Use of Social Media in Politics	SD		D		N		A		SA		NR	
	Freq	%										
There is too much political information on Social Networking Sites.	63	16.9	148	39.7	32	8.6	33	8.8	57	15.3	40	10.7
I enjoy engaging in political discussions on Social media	74	19.8	72	19.3	90	24.1	70	18.8	27	7.2	40	10.7
Political messages should be blocked/stopped on social media	28	7.5	48	12.9	76	20.4	84	22.5	97	26.0	40	10.7
My friends are too political on social media	21	5.6	53	14.2	73	19.6	84	22.5	100	26.8	42	11.3
There should be more political information on social media	54	14.5	49	13.1	58	15.5	118	31.6	50	13.4	44	11.8
I enjoy reading and sharing political messages on social media	88	23.6	99	26.5	79	21.2	39	10.5	29	7.8	39	10.5
Most of my friends post political information on social media	108	29.0	78	20.9	64	17.2	60	16.1	26	7.0	37	9.9
Social media is mostly used by politician to divide the people	48	12.9	89	23.9	78	20.9	48	12.9	74	19.8	36	9.7
I can't stand political information posted on social media	34	9.1	68	18.2	86	23.1	64	17.2	83	22.3	38	10.2

From Table 4.20, 36.7% of the respondents disagreed that there was too much political information on Social Networking Sites, whereas 31.6% agreed that there should be more political information on social media and 29% strongly disagreed that most of their friends posted political information on social media.

The study also sought to establish the levels of satisfaction. Since the total number of items on the scale was 9, the minimum possible score for an individual in the scale was 9 (1x9) and the maximum possible score was 45 (5x9). The scores were then categorized into 3 levels where scores ranging from 9 to 22 represented low level of satisfaction, from 23 to 31 represented moderate level of satisfaction and from 32 to 45 represented high level of satisfaction. The scores that were negatively worded were reverse coded. The findings are presented on Table 4.21.

*Table 4.21: Level of Satisfaction with Use of Social Media in Politics*

Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percent
Low level of Satisfaction	51	15.1
Moderate level of Satisfaction	243	71.9
High Level of Satisfaction	44	13.0
Total	338	100.0

From Table 4.21, majority of the participants (71.9%) had a moderate level of satisfaction with use of social media in politics, while 15.1% had low level satisfaction.

Data on level of satisfaction with social media use in politics was further analyzed descriptively in terms of mean and standard deviation. The findings are presented on Table 4.23.

*Table 4.22: Satisfaction with Use of Social Media in Politics*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Level of satisfaction	338	10	40	26.42	4.347
Valid N (listwise)	338				

From the findings on Table 4.22, the minimum score attained was 10, while the maximum score attained was 40. The mean score was 26.42 ( $SD=4.347$ ), indicating that on average, the participants had a moderate level of satisfaction with the use of social media in politics. This implied that majority of the people considered their political opinion on social media to be important but the majority were not satisfied with their participation. Participants in FGD explained this situation by the fact that government did not value their online contribution. For instance, participant G from FGD conducted with students representing survey participants indicated that:

On social media, the information is just given; the feedback is not taken into consideration. On the other hand, during meetings or radio programs, there is a possibility to engage political leaders and we have a chance to be heard. In this sense, I have an impression that political leaders do not know the role of social media with regard to interacting and involving us in decision making. They are undermining the vision of founders of WhatsApp, Facebook and other social media because of political leaders who tend to reduce these tools to informing rather than interacting.

Data was further analyzed on satisfaction with the use of social media in politics in relation to age category. The findings are presented in Table 4.23.

*Table 4.23: Level of Satisfaction with Use of Social Media in Politics*

Age	Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percent
18-24 years	Low level of Satisfaction	20	14.4
	Moderate level of Satisfaction	104	74.8
	High Level of Satisfaction	15	10.8
Total		139	100.0
25-35 years	Low level of Satisfaction	31	15.7
	Moderate level of Satisfaction	138	69.7
	High Level of Satisfaction	29	14.6
Total		198	100.0

As shown in Table 4.23, 74.8% of the participants in the age bracket of 18 to 24 years had a moderate level of satisfaction with the use of social media in politics, while 69.7% of the respondents aged 25 to 35 years also had a moderate level of satisfaction. This showed that the youths in the sampled age categories were moderately satisfied with their political contributions on social media.

This indicates that students consider their political participation via social media as moderately important. This is valid irrespective of the age differences.

#### Cross-tabulations

To further answer the objective, chi-square cross tabulation were conducted to establish whether there was an association between level of interest in politics and governance and frequency of ICT use, with levels of satisfaction with online public participation and level of satisfaction with use of social media in politics. The findings are presented in the subsequent tables.

*Table 4.24: Politics and Satisfaction with Online Public Participation*

		Satisfaction with online public participation			Total
		Low level of Satisfactio n	Moderate level of Satisfaction	High Level of Satisfaction	
Level of interest in politics and governance	Low Interest	Count	47	24	2
		Expected Count	36.2	29.1	7.8
		% within Q13c	64.4%	32.9%	2.7%
		% within Q9c	29.7%	18.9%	5.9%
	Moderate interest	Count	100	93	31
	High interest	Expected Count	110.9	89.2	23.9
		% within Q13c	44.6%	41.5%	13.8%
		% within Q9c	63.3%	73.2%	91.2%
		Count	11	10	1
Total	Low Interest	Expected Count	10.9	8.8	2.3
		% within Q13c	50.0%	45.5%	4.5%
		% within Q9c	7.0%	7.9%	2.9%
		Count	158	127	34
	Total	Expected Count	158.0	127.0	34.0
	Moderate interest	% within Q13c	49.5%	39.8%	10.7%
		% within Q9c	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		%			

### Cross Tabulation

From the cross-tabulation findings, the actual count was more than the expected count for the respondents who had moderate interest in politics and governance; and those who had moderate and high level of satisfaction with online public affairs participation. This implies that a high level of interest in politics and

governance was associated with a higher level of satisfaction with online public affairs participation. To confirm whether this association was significant, it was measured using chi-square of association with the significant level of 0.05 as presented on table 4.25.

*Table 4.25: Chi-Square of Association Findings*

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.747 <sup>a</sup>	4	.013
Likelihood Ratio	14.409	4	.006
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.864	1	.015
N of Valid Cases	319		

a. 1 cells (11.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.34.

A chi-square test for association was conducted between level of interest in politics and governance and satisfaction with participation in online public affairs. 1 cell had an expected count of less than 5. There was a statistically significant association between level of interest in politics and governance and satisfaction with participation in online public affairs,  $\chi^2(4) = 12.747$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . This implied that high levels of interest in politics and governance was correlated with higher levels of satisfaction in online participation of online public affairs. Consequently, people who were more interested in political and governance issues were also more likely to be satisfied with their online public affairs participation as a result of constant participation and their patience based on their level of interest. This was further emphasized by one of the respondent who participated in the FGD. Representative A in the FGD with representatives of the survey participants indicated that:

It is true that the youth have a feeling that their ideas are not considered. But sometimes, the youth have a wrong conception of the change. Change takes time, the youth might keep in mind that change will take time.

Table 4.26 presents the findings on the cross-tabulation between frequency of ICT use and satisfaction with online public affairs participation.

*Table 4.26: ICT Use and Satisfaction with Online Public Participation*

		Satisfaction with online public participation			Total
		Low level of Satisfaction	Moderate level of Satisfaction	High Level of Satisfaction	
Frequency of ICT Use	Low Frequency	Count	76	74	18
	Frequency	Expected Count	70.6	77.1	20.3
		% within Q5c	45.2%	44.0%	10.7%
		% within Q9c	87.4%	77.9%	72.0%
	Moderate Frequency	Count	10	14	6
	Frequency	Expected Count	12.6	13.8	3.6
		% within Q5c	33.3%	46.7%	20.0%
		% within Q9c	11.5%	14.7%	24.0%
	High Frequency	Count	1	7	1
	Frequency	Expected Count	3.8	4.1	1.1
Total		% within Q5c	11.1%	77.8%	11.1%
		% within Q9c	1.1%	7.4%	4.0%
	Count	87	95	25	207
	Expected Count	87.0	95.0	25.0	207.0
	% within Q5c	42.0%	45.9%	12.1%	100.0%
		% within Q9c	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

aCross Tabulation

From the cross tabulation findings on Table 4.26, the actual count was more than the expected count for the respondents who had moderate frequency of ICT use and those who had moderate and high level of satisfaction with online public affairs participation. This showed that a higher frequency of ICT use was associated with a higher level of satisfaction with online public affairs participation. To confirm whether this association was significant, it was measured using chi-square of association with the significant level of 0.05 as presented on Table 4.27.

*Table 4.27: Chi-Square of Association Findings*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.945 <sup>a</sup>	4	.139
Likelihood Ratio	7.239	4	.124
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.327	1	.038
N of Valid Cases	207		

a. 4 cells (44.4%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.09.

A chi-square test for association was conducted between frequency of ICT use and satisfaction with participation in online public affairs. 4 cells had an expected count of less than 5. The association between frequency of ICT use and satisfaction with participation in online public affairs was not statistically significant,  $\chi^2 (4) = 6.945, p > 0.05$ . This indicated that although people who used the ICT platforms more were likely to be satisfied with their online satisfaction, it was not significant to conclude the presence of a relationship. This may also have implied that some of the respondents who used ICT frequently were less satisfied with their online public participation. This was supported by respondent H in the FGD, who indicated that:

Even if every contribution made online is not considered, citizens who have access to ICTs use them to voice their opinions.

The idea of H corresponds to the argument that that the lack of independent and credible traditional media because of 2015 crisis constrained citizens and made them to look for information on social media. Equally important, they used social media to voice their opinions even if majority of them did not believe that their contributions were taken into consideration 'if they do not meet government's direction', said the representative of opposition political parties during FGD.

Table 4.28 presents the findings on the cross-tabulation between level of interest in politics and governance and satisfaction with use of social media in politics and governance.

*Table 4.28: Politics and Satisfaction with Use of Social Media in Politics*

		Satisfaction with use of social media in politics			Total	
		Low level of Satisfaction	Moderate level of Satisfaction	High Level of Satisfaction		
Level of interest in politics and governance	Low Interest	Count	12	58	4	74
		Expected Count	11.0	53.2	9.8	74.0
		% within Q13c	16.2%	78.4%	5.4%	100.0%
		% within Q12c	25.0%	24.9%	9.3%	22.8%
	Moderate interest	Count	33	165	30	228
		Expected Count	33.8	164.0	30.3	228.0
		% within Q13c	14.5%	72.4%	13.2%	100.0%
		% within Q12c	68.8%	70.8%	69.8%	70.4%
	High interest	Count	3	10	9	22
		Expected Count	3.3	15.8	2.9	22.0
		% within Q13c	13.6%	45.5%	40.9%	100.0%
		% within Q12c	6.3%	4.3%	20.9%	6.8%
Total		Count	48	233	43	324
		Expected Count	48.0	233.0	43.0	324.0
		% within Q13c	14.8%	71.9%	13.3%	100.0%
		% within Q12c	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

### aCross Tabulation

From the cross-tabulation findings, the actual count was more than the expected count for the respondents who had moderate interest in politics and governance and those who had moderate level of satisfaction with use of social media in politics. This implied that a high level of interest in politics and governance was associated with a higher level of satisfaction with use of social media in politics. To

confirm whether this association was significant, it was measured using chi-square of association with the significant level of 0.05 as presented on Table 4.29.

*Table 4.29: Chi-Square of Association findings*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.829 <sup>a</sup>	4	.001
Likelihood Ratio	15.587	4	.004
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.059	1	.008
N of Valid Cases	324		

a. 2 cells (22.2%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.92.

A chi-square test for association was conducted between level of interest in politics and governance and satisfaction with use of social media in politics. 2 cells had an expected count of less than 5. There was a statistically significant association between level of interest in politics and governance and satisfaction with use of social media in politics,  $\chi^2 (4) = 18.829$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . This indicated that high levels of interest in politics and governance was correlated with higher levels of satisfaction in the use of social media in politics. Therefore, majority of the people who had interest in politics and governance were more satisfied in their political contributions on social media.

Table 4.30 presents the findings on the cross-tabulation between frequency of ICT use and satisfaction with use of social media in politics.

*Table 4.30: ICT Use and Satisfaction with Use of Social Media in Politics*

		Use of social media in politics			Total
		Low level of Satisfaction	Moderate level of Satisfaction	High Level of Satisfaction	
Frequency of ICT Use	Low Frequency	Count	25	119	21
	Expected Count		25.1	118.1	21.8
	% within Q5c		15.2%	72.1%	12.7%
	% within Q12c		80.6%	81.5%	77.8%
					100.0% 80.9%
Moderate Frequency	Count	4	20	6	30
	Expected Count	4.6	21.5	4.0	30.0
	% within Q5c	13.3%	66.7%	20.0%	100.0%
	% within Q12c	12.9%	13.7%	22.2%	14.7%
High Frequency	Count	2	7	0	9
	Expected Count	1.4	6.4	1.2	9.0
	% within Q5c	22.2%	77.8%	0.0%	100.0%
	% within Q12c	6.5%	4.8%	0.0%	4.4%
Total	Count	31	146	27	204
	Expected Count	31.0	146.0	27.0	204.0
	% within Q5c	15.2%	71.6%	13.2%	100.0%
	% within Q12c	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**aCross Tabulation**

From the cross-tabulation findings on Table 4.30, the actual count was more than the expected count for the respondents who had moderate frequency of ICT use and those who had high level of satisfaction with use of social media in politics. This implied that a higher frequency of ICT use was associated with a higher level of satisfaction use of social media in politics. To confirm whether this association was significant, it was measured using chi-square association with the significant level of 0.05 as presented on Table 4.31.

*Table 4.31: Chi-Square of Association Findings*

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.778 <sup>a</sup>	4	.596
Likelihood Ratio	3.795	4	.434
Linear-by-Linear Association	.072	1	.789
N of Valid Cases	204		

a. 4 cells (44.4%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.19

A chi-square test for association was conducted between frequency of ICT use and satisfaction with use of social media in politics. 4 cells had an expected count of less than 5. The association between frequency of ICT use and satisfaction with use of social media in politics was not statistically significant,  $\chi^2(4) = 2.778, p > 0.05$ .

This implied that although majority of the people who frequently used ICT platforms were more likely to be satisfied with their political satisfaction on social media, it was not significant enough to conclude presence of an association. Therefore, there was a possibility that even for those who frequently used ICT platforms, they were not satisfied with their political contribution on social media.

Considering the findings, it was generally concluded that the level of satisfaction with regard to online participation varied from low to moderate. Participants in focus groups gave explanations as follows. For instance, respondents A indicated that:

When there is important information such as the rise of fuel price, it is through social media that many people get to know what is going on and people get a chance to comment and give their opinions. In addition, people from within and out of the country have a chance to express themselves on different matters because of ICTs.

Likewise, respondent D agreed that:

ICTs have a positive impact as they allow people to get informed and share their views.

Equally important, H said that:

Even if every contribution made online is not considered, citizens who have access to ICTs use them to voice their opinions.

For instance, F also noted that:

On February 05, it is a Unity Day in Burundi. This year 2019, many among the youth from different parts of the town were mobilized to meet the Mayor in town to celebrate the day. Seeing the high level of participation, it is obvious that social media is important as many among the youth participated by the use of social media.

However, the opposition, PP3, gave a nuanced appreciation of the satisfaction with regard to the way government uses ICTs in e-democracy. The PP3 argued that:

The issue is not the fact of commenting or taking action. Actually, there are two kinds' problems: on one hand the action or comments are selective. If it is a publication or a feedback which goes in the sense of the Government's will, the feedback is considered, and action is sometimes taken. Conversely, feedbacks given by opponents are either ignored and government communication officers introduce another topic so that citizen can forget the publications done by the opposition. On the other hand, even when they respond to opposition it is rare to agree or to give clarification. Most of the time it is either for justifying the government or to fight the opposition by accusing the opposition of faults that have nothing to do with the topic initiated by the opposition. In this way, it is obvious that the primary motivation of the government in using ICTs is not to encourage citizen participation but to defend itself

by showing that it is doing very well and others, I mean opposition and some organizations of civil society are doing badly.

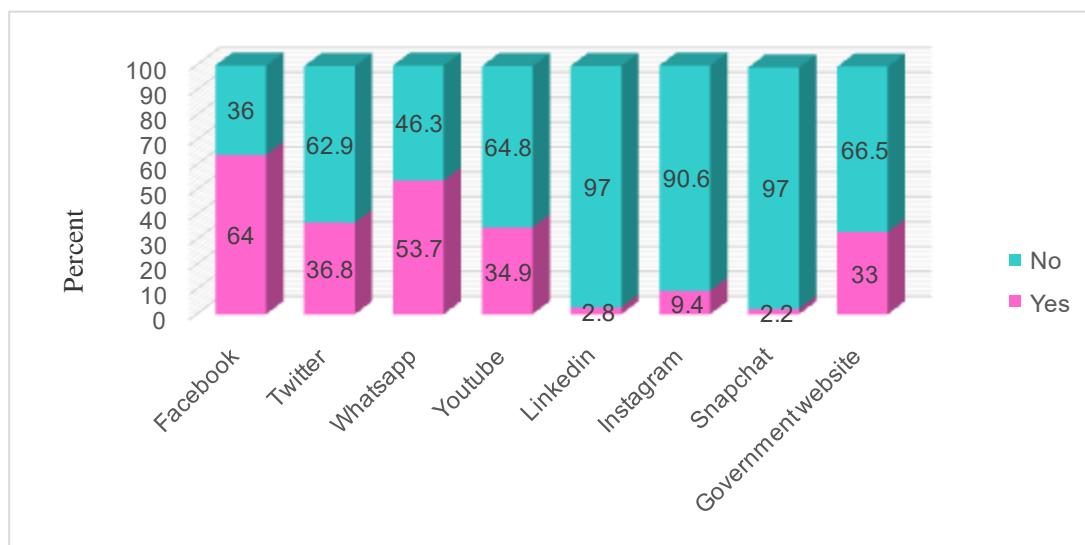
In view of the survey findings that showed varied levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in relation to interviews and focus group discussions, it was established that there was no consensus on all levels of satisfaction. On some aspects, different democracy stakeholders were satisfied with the way government used ICTs with regard to facilitating and enhancing citizen participation while they disagreed on others. From example, citizens' contribution on matters that were not directly opposing the government was well received and both government and citizens were satisfied. On the contrary, political parties from the opposition were not satisfied in general as they claimed that there was no freedom of expression. They accused the government of using ICTs to spread propaganda and enhance one-way communication instead of privileging interaction and diversity of opinion. Moreover, the government considered that citizens would be happy when it took action based on their contribution. More importantly, all stakeholders believed that ICTs have potential to improve citizen participation even if there are still issues that need to be addressed in order to make them efficient.

#### The Place of Communication Strategy in E-democracy

Objective two sought to establish the place of communication strategy in E-democracy. To answer this objective, the participants were required to indicate the ICT platforms that they used to access government information and communication and their perception on the integration of ICT in other means of communication used by the government. The findings on this objective are presented in sub-sections below.

### ICT Platforms Used in E-democracy

The respondents were provided with a list of ICT platforms and were required to indicate yes or no as to whether they used the platforms to access government information. The findings are presented in Figure 4.4.



*Figure 4.4: ICT Platforms Used to Access Government Information*

Majority of the participants (64%) indicated that they used Facebook to access government information and communication, 53.7% used WhatsApp, while 33% used government websites. These findings were further supported by representatives of the survey participants in the FGD. Respondents A, B and C agreed that WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter are the major ones used for political reasons. Especially tweeter is used by educated people in general. Otherwise depending on the level of competency and exposure, the youth use other tools such as Snapchat, Instagram, and LinkedIn

With regard to WhatsApp, the three - A, B and C equally agreed that it remains the major ICT tool that people use in various occasion including politics. Every Burundian who has a smart phone is likely connected to WhatsApp. As matter

of fact people belong to different WhatsApp groups for diverse reasons including politics. Moreover, the youth use various ICT tools, but WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter remain the major ones.

This is also confirmed by the representative of the Interior Ministry. The GOV\_IINT said that:

I believe that WhatsApp along with Facebook remain one of the major ICT tools used by Burundi citizens. As said earlier, considering how many groups our Ministry manages, it is an indication that it remains an important one. Every morning we receive news from the provinces via WhatsApp. Sometimes, Radio and TV report news that we already know because of different groups with different stakeholders in different parts of the country.

As a matter of fact, during demonstrations against the third term of Pierre NKURUNZIZA, the Burundi current president in April 2015, WhatsApp was shutdown. Even if government said that it was the opponents who did it, while others thought that it was government that interrupted communication, it is an indicator that WhatsApp, as well as other social media tools, are efficient tools for informing, interaction and mobilization of the people.

#### Perception of Participants on Integration of ICT in other Means of Communication

To assess the participants perception on integration of ICT in other means of communication by the government, the participants were provided with 6 items that assessed how satisfied they were with the government integration of ICT in other means of communication on a scale of 1 to 5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree). The findings are presented on Table 4.32.

*Table 4.32: Integration of ICT in other Means of Communication*

Integration of ICT in other means of communication	SD		D		N		A		SA		NR	
	Freq	%										
The majority of citizens are aware of the ICTs used by the government	105	28.2	73	19.6	69	18.5	57	15.3	13	3.5	56	15.0
The Government has run a communication campaign to promote the use of ICT platforms in order to facilitate and enhance citizen participation	83	22.3	85	22.8	70	18.8	70	18.8	10	2.7	55	14.7
Government considers online contributions/opinions as important as the ones expressed via traditional media (Radio, Newspaper, TV, and Meetings)	67	18.0	67	18.0	78	20.9	67	18.0	34	9.1	60	16.1
The usage of ICT by the Government is integrated in other means of communication	58	15.5	43	11.5	87	23.3	99	26.5	27	7.2	59	15.8
Government information and communication received via ICT is the same as the one received via traditional means of information and communication (Radio, TV, Newspaper, Meetings)	82	22.0	79	21.2	73	19.6	54	14.5	28	7.5	57	15.3
The way ICTs are used by the government constitute an alternative in terms of diversification of means of communication to enhance citizen participation in decision making	89	23.9	72	19.3	76	20.4	59	15.8	45	12.1	32	8.6

From the findings, majority of the participants (28.2%), strongly disagreed that majority of citizens that used ICT were aware of ICT used by the government, 22.3 strongly disagreed that the Government had run a communication campaign to promote the use of ICTs platforms in order to facilitate and enhance citizen participation, and 22% strongly disagreed that government information and communication received via ICT is the same as the one received via traditional means of information and communication (Radio, TV, Newspaper, Meetings). It is also important to note that findings have shown that 18% strongly disagreed and 20.9% are neutral on the fact that Government considers online contributions/opinions as important as the ones expressed via traditional media (Radio, Newspaper, TV, and Meetings). These findings indicated that there is not quite a good integration of ICTs with traditional means of communication.

The study further sought to establish the level of perception on integration of ICT in other means of communication. Since the total number of items on the scale was 6, the minimum possible score for an individual in the scale was 6 (1x6) and the maximum possible score was 30 (6x5). The scores were then categorized into 3 levels where scores ranging from 6 to 15 represented negative perception, from 16 to 21 represented moderate perception and from 22 to 30 represented positive perception. The findings are presented on Table 4.33.

*Table 4.33: Integration of ICT in other Means of Communication*

Level of Perception	Frequency	Percent
Negative Perception	144	45.6
Moderate perception	149	47.2
Positive perception	23	7.3
Total	316	100.0

From Table 4.33, 47.2% of the participants had a moderate level of perception towards government integration of ICT in other means of communication, while 45.6% of the participants had a negative perception.

Findings on the perception towards integration of ICT in other means of communication were further analyzed descriptively in terms of means and standard deviation. The findings are presented in Table 4.34.

*Table 4.34: Integration of ICT in other Means of Communication*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Perception	316	6	30	15.75	4.299
Valid (listwise)	N 316				

From the findings on Table 4.34, the minimum score attained was 6, while the maximum score attained was 30. The mean perception score was 15.75( $SD=4.299$ ), implying that on average the participants had a moderate perception towards integration of ICT in other means of communication. This indicated that majority of the people were moderately satisfied with the effort that the government was making in integration ICT in other means of communication. The Interior Ministry respondent in an interview highlighted that the government was making efforts to integrate ICTs for communicating as often as possible with the citizens. He said that:

In politics we notice that ICTs have improved communication between citizens and electorates. Before the advent of ICTs, citizens and electorates were communicating primarily during electoral campaigns and some occasional meetings. But now whenever a citizen notices something or has a need to communicate, it has become possible. With twitter for example,

it has become possible to engage even the President of the Republic without asking for an audience or any form of permission. This is to stress the intention to facilitate and make easier communication between electorate and citizens because of ICTs.

Data was further analyzed on the perceptions towards integration of ICT in other means of communication by age category. The findings are presented on Tables 4.35 and 4.36.

*Table 4.35: Integration of ICT in other Means of Communication*

Age	Perception	Frequency	Percent
18-24 years	Negative Perception	46	34.6
	Moderate perception	74	55.6
	Positive [perception	13	9.8
Total		133	100.0
25- 35 years	Negative Perception	98	53.6
	Moderate perception	75	41.0
	Positive [perception	10	5.5
Total		183	100.0

From the findings in Table 4.35, 55.6% of the respondents aged between 18 to 24 years had moderate perception towards integration of ICT in other means of communication, while 53.6% of those aged between 25 to 35 years had a negative perception.

The descriptive findings in terms of means and standard deviation are presented in Table 4.36.

*Table 4.36: Integration of ICT in other Means of Communication*

Age		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
18-24 years	Perception	133	7	30	17.02	3.767
	Valid (listwise)	N 133				
25-35 years	Perception	183	6	25	14.82	4.432
	Valid (listwise)	N 183				

From Table 4.36, the minimum score attained by the respondents aged 18 to 24 years was 7 while that attained by respondent's aged 25 to 34 years was 6. The maximum score attained was 30 for respondents aged 18 to 24 years and 25 for those aged 25 to 34 years. The mean score for respondents aged 18 to 24 years was 17.02( $SD=3.767$ ), indicating on average that there was a moderate level of perception on the integration of ICTs in other means of communication, whereas the mean score for the respondents aged 25 to 34 years was 14.82( $SD=4.432$ ), indicating on average there was negative perception towards integration of ICT in other means of communication. Fortunately, said the representative of civil society, Burundians try to share information received from traditional platforms to the ICTs and vice versa. For instance, the CS said that:

The government tries to match the tools with the ones used by the citizens although it is difficult as the technologies keep changing. But the good thing is that even when important news passes by one platform, citizens spread it using other platforms. For instance as the majority of the Burundian users of ICTs use WhatsApp and Facebook, information shared on Twitter ends up in those other platforms and vice versa. This happens also when important news passes by traditional media, citizens share audio or video on social media.

Moreover, the perception of people regarding the government integration of ICT in other means of communication varied among people of different age groups (Table 4.38.), with the younger youth being more positive than the older ones. The older ones were more critical compared to the younger ones. This difference was further brought out in the Focus group by opposition representative, PP3 who said that:

Yes, the government tries to follow the platforms used by the citizens for various reasons. On one hand it is for trying to influence the opinion by informing and contradicting the opinion given by the opposition. Further, it is for monitoring and to spy what is being shared by the citizens. For instance, during the crisis of 2015, people would publish information on social media. Some hours later, the person would be arrested. This is just one among many examples and this justifies the reason why some people prefer silence because of the situation that they have witnessed.

The findings indicate that most of the participants had a moderate perception towards government integration of ICT in other means of communication.

#### Cross-tabulations

To further answer the objective, chi-square cross tabulation were conducted to establish whether there was an association between level of interest in politics and governance and frequency of ICT use, with perception towards integration of ICT in other means of communication. The findings are presented in the subsequent tables.

*Table 4.37: Integration of ICT in other Means of Communication*

		Perception towards Integration of ICT in other Means of Communication			Total	
		Negative Perception	Moderate perception	Positive [perception]		
Interest in politics	Low Interest	Count	41	25	4	70
		Expected Count	31.8	32.9	5.3	70.0
		% within Q13c	58.6%	35.7%	5.7%	100.0%
		% within Q17c	29.5%	17.4%	17.4%	22.9%
	Moderate interest	Count	88	111	16	215
High interest		Expected Count	97.7	101.2	16.2	215.0
		% within Q13c	40.9%	51.6%	7.4%	100.0%
		% within Q17c	63.3%	77.1%	69.6%	70.3%
	High interest	Count	10	8	3	21
		Expected Count	9.5	9.9	1.6	21.0
Total		% within Q13c	47.6%	38.1%	14.3%	100.0%
		% within Q17c	7.2%	5.6%	13.0%	6.9%
	Count	139	144	23	306	
	Expected Count	139.0	144.0	23.0	306.0	
	% within Q13c	45.4%	47.1%	7.5%	100.0%	
	% within Q17c	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

**aCross Tabulation**

From the cross-tabulation findings, the actual count was more than the expected count for the respondents who had moderate interest in politics and governance and those who had moderate perception towards integration of ICT in other means of communication. This indicated that a higher level of interest in politics and governance was associated with a more positive perception towards integration of ICT in other means of communication. To confirm whether this association was

significant, it was measured using chi-square of association with the significant level of 0.05 as presented on Table 4.38.

Table 4.38 presents the chi-square findings on the significance of the relationship.

*Table 4.38: Chi-Square of Association Findings*

	Value	Df	Asymptotic (2-sided)	Significance
Pearson Chi-Square	8.453 <sup>a</sup>	4	.076	
Likelihood Ratio	8.189	4	.085	
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.056	1	.044	
N of Valid Cases	306			

a. 1 cells (11.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.58.

A chi-square test for association was conducted between level of interest in politics and governance and perception towards integration of ICT in other means of communication. 1 cell had an expected count of less than 5. The association between level of interest in politics and governance and perception towards integration of ICT in other means of communication was not statistically significant,  $\chi^2 (4) = 8.453$ ,  $p>0.05$ .

From the findings, although the association was not significant, people who were more interested in politics and governance were more likely to have a positive perception on government integration of ICT in other forms of communication. This could be explained by the fact that in their interest in politics, they were more likely to come across instances where the government had been able to integrate ICT in other means of communication. This also came out clearly in the FGD with the representatives of the survey participants, where respondents A and B argued that:

To ensure inclusivity in citizen participation, the government uses radio and TV programs so that those who do not have

access to ICTs can have a chance to get involved in public affairs. The public and private media have initiated programs which give a chance to the population within and out of the country to give their contributions. Sometimes there is a combination of the ICTs and radio. An example is the program Karadiridimba on Radio Isanganiro. This radio station broadcasts in the classical way and online. With their program Karadiridimba, Burundian citizens who are out of the country are given a chance every Sunday afternoon to give their contribution using Internet as they broadcast live on internet. Sometimes, there are government official who are invited in the studio to respond to the concerns raised by these citizens.

However, considering the findings mentioned at Table 4.11, it is obvious that this integration ICTs and traditional means of information and communication is not yet well established. Otherwise, there is need for a balance in terms of satisfaction with regard to ICTs and traditional means of information and communication.

Table 4.39 presents the findings on the cross-tabulation between frequency of ICT use and perception towards integration of ICT in other means of communication.

*Table 4.39: Integration of ICT in other Means of Communication*

		Perception towards Integration of ICT in other Means of Communication			
		Negative Perception	Moderate perception	Positive perception	Total
Frequency of ICT Use	Low Frequency	Count	69	70	10
		Expected	63.9	74.9	10.2
		Count			149.0
		% within Q5c	46.3%	47.0%	6.7%
		% within Q17c	85.2%	73.7%	76.9%
					100.0%
	Moderate Frequency	Count	9	19	3
		Expected	13.3	15.6	2.1
		Count			31.0
		% within Q5c	29.0%	61.3%	9.7%
		% within Q17c	11.1%	20.0%	23.1%
					100.0%
	High Frequency	Count	3	6	0
		Expected	3.9	4.5	.6
		Count			9.0
		% within Q5c	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%
		% within Q17c	3.7%	6.3%	0.0%
					100.0%
					4.8%
Total		Count	81	95	13
		Expected	81.0	95.0	13.0
		Count			189.0
		% within Q5c	42.9%	50.3%	6.9%
		% within Q17c	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
					100.0%

aCross Tabulation

From the cross-tabulation findings, the actual count was more than the expected count for the respondents who had moderate frequency of ICT use and those who had moderate perception towards integration of ICT in other means of

communication. This implied that a higher frequency of ICT use was associated with a more positive perception towards integration of ICT in other means of communication. To confirm whether this association was significant, it was measured using chi-square association with the significant level of 0.05 as presented on Table 4.40.

Table 4.40 presents the chi-square findings on the significance of the relationship.

*Table 4.40: Chi-Square of Association Findings*

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.517 <sup>a</sup>	4	.341
Likelihood Ratio	5.192	4	.268
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.578	1	.209
N of Valid Cases	189		

a. 4 cells (44.4%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .62.

A chi-square test for association was conducted between frequency of ICT use and perception towards integration of ICT in other means of communication. 4 cells had an expected count of less than 5. The association between frequency of ICT use and perception towards integration of ICT in other means of communication was not statistically significant,  $\chi^2 (4) = 4.517, p > 0.05$ .

This implied that although the people who had a higher frequency of ICT use were more likely to have a positive perception on the integration of ICT in other means of communication, the association was not significant to make conclusion on the presence of a relationship. This could be explained by the fact that the government was more inclined towards the traditional means of communication compared to ICT

platforms. This was further highlighted in the interview with the government officials.

The GOV\_INT informed that:

ICTs and other media complement each other. We do adapt the message depending on the public concerned. We do still use meetings, radio, TV, sketches, newspapers so that every citizen has a channel to get information and express themselves. In many cases, they complement each other. For instance during patriotism campaigns in 2017, we have first sent some information online so that we can have an idea of what people think about our campaign. These information have been very important in face-to-face meetings. Another way of integration is that during crises there are many rumors. They start on social media and end being known by the general public. In this case, we take initiatives to inform via traditional media so that the majority can know the government's position about what is circulating. Recently in December 2018, there was a vaccination campaign. Some people had invented rumors on social media that the vaccination aims to prevent people from giving birth. The vaccination was for every person between 1-30 years. This category is the one in the age of procreation. The health ministry had taken initiative to pass through traditional media and social media to inform the truth and dissuade those who were afraid.

The integration still has a long way to go considering the variances in terms of perceptions whether the government has integrated well ICTs in the global

communication strategy. In addition, seeing that even young people still believe that traditional means remain powerful compared to ICTs to have their voice heard, it means that the information shared on social media does not have the same consideration as the one shared through traditional media. This was confirmed during the focus group discussion with students who represented those who participated in the survey. Respondents gave the following responses:

I said that "there are many reasons associated with that. Considering that the opinions shared on social media are not considered, ICT users tend to believe that it is traditional media which is considered by the political leaders. In many cases, opinions shared in meetings are considered." H added that "considering that government can use intelligence services who can fake people's accounts on social media, we believe more traditional media because on radio or TV, political leaders are identified and these latter are conscious of their responsibility when they communicate via traditional media." In addition, E said, "important information is shared on traditional media such as meetings and on radio. In this sense, traditional media is considered very important and therefore the youth think that radio and newspaper are the best ways to make credible our contributions".

Moreover, G argued that "on social media, the information is just given, the feedback is not taken into consideration. However, during meetings or radio programs, there is a possibility to engage political leaders and we have a chance to be heard. In this sense, I have an impression that political leaders do not know the role of social media with regard to interacting and involving us in decision making." Furthermore, B thought that "many among the youth do not believe in traditional media as an effective means of participation by conviction. It is related to the fact that political leaders use traditional means of communication to engage the citizens. As a

result, even ICT users will believe that traditional means remain effective if one is to be heard or share an opinion that needs to be considered in decision making”.

Lastly, F said that “considering that internet and smartphones are still expensive, the majority of the people do not have access to ICTs. Therefore, for sharing opinion, the majority pass use traditional media like the radio.

The findings indicated that there was a certain level of integration of ICTs and traditional media in government communication strategy, but the general trend was that people perceived traditional media as more credible compared to social media. In addition, citizens did not think that government viewed social media tools as serious channels for information and interaction. To this perception, the government argued that they consider social media like any other media and considered contributions shared through social media. The GOV\_INT gave an example that social media informed local and international media in order to emphasize that it was considered as a credible channel. In his argument, he said that:

In some circumstances, citizens follow international media to get verified information. In other stances even those international media pick information from social media. For instance in May 2018, the current President officially announced that he was not going to run for another term in the office. It is the citizens that were present at that event who shared this information. It was announced around 12:00. In less than one hour, even France24 was using the same sequence of information to relay the news.

However, it is contradictory to state that political information on social media is highly considered credible to the point that there is no need to consult local media, international media, and friends, and yet citizens claim that they are not efficient in improving their political knowledge and understanding. To this issue, the opposition members who participated in the focus group gave it an interpretation. PP3 argued that:

Government does not use ICTs with consideration of citizen participation. Instead, it wants just to influence, and this affects the way citizens perceive what is shared on social media. It had divided the citizens. Those from the ruling party believe without questioning while those in opposition tend to reject automatically information shared by the government as they think that it is pure propaganda. At the same time, government does not listen to us; whatever we share on social media either they ignore, or they justify themselves even before verification.

This denotes that e-democracy has chances to be effective in this context where a high number of internet users trust information found on social media. However, the communication aspect, two-way communication, shall be stressed so that ICTs are not be reduced to mere tools for information but critical tools for interaction. Through interaction, there is hope that understanding and political knowledge shall be improved. In this sense, the government should share same information on ICTs platforms and traditional means of information and communication.

Furthermore, the results from the study indicate that ICT has a critical role in dissemination of information. That is why technology will continue to be at the center of advancing not only the access of information but also the creation of communication messages (Hernandez, 2018). Communication will never be complete

if its product does not reach the intended users or consumers. However, ICT ensure that communication achieves its intended objective of reaching the masses. Without technology, mass communication would not be able to achieve its goal (Hernandez, 2018).

### Summary of Key Findings

Findings on the demographics established that; 57.1% of the participants were aged between 25 to 34 years, while 42.4% were aged between 18 to 24 years. 53.6% were in year 2, 38.3% were in year 1, while 4.8% were in year 3. In addition, 97% of the respondents had access to internet.

Findings on objective one established that majority of the participants had a moderate level of interest in politics and governance. On average, there was low frequency of ICT use across the age categories and level of study. Participants further attached a moderate level of importance of ICT in e-democracy, while on average the respondents had low level of satisfaction with participation in online public affairs. It was also established that participants had a moderate level of satisfaction with the use of social media in politics. The study further established a statistically significant association between level of interest in politics and governance and satisfaction with participation in online public affairs,  $\chi^2 (4) = 12.747$ ,  $p<0.05$ . A statistically significant association was also established between level of interest in politics and governance and satisfaction with use of social media in politics,  $\chi^2 (4) = 18.829$ ,  $p<0.05$ .

Objective 2 found out that majority of the participants (64%), used Facebook to access government information and communication, and followed by those that used WhatsApp (53.7%). On average, the participants had a moderate perception

towards integration of ICT in other means of communication. No significant association was established between frequency of ICT use, interest in politics and governance with perception towards integration of ICT in other means of communication. As a result, the majority of respondents still believed that traditional media (radio and newspaper) remained efficient in political engagement. Respondents also had an impression that traditional media allowed more interaction while ICTs were mainly used by the government for information dissemination and less interaction. Furthermore, this implied that government needs to be more careful when sharing information so that the same can be accessed through social media and traditional media. This would be concretized by a good integration of e-democracy in the global communication strategy.

## DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

### PART II: Objective 3 And 4

#### Introduction

Following the two first objectives presented, analyzed and interpreted in Part I, this Part II will present, analyze and interpret the data of the last objectives. The quantitative findings are integrated with qualitative findings in line with the objectives three and four:

- Objective three: To assess if the ICTs policy framework in Burundi fosters democratic and civic engagement.
- Objective four: To investigate the extent to which e-democracy facilitates citizen participation in Burundi

To assess if the ICT policy framework in Burundi fosters democratic and civic engagement

Objective three established whether ICT policy framework in Burundi fostered democratic and civic engagement. To answer this objective the participants were required to indicate the ICT platforms that they used in civic engagement and their frequency of engaging in democratic and civic engagement. The findings on this objective are presented in the following sub-sections.

#### Document Review Findings

The document review has been conducted on the national policy for information communication technologies in Burundi (2010-2015). The purpose of this document review is to assess the current e-democracy framework with regard to its capacity to foster democratic and civic engagement. The mission of the national policy for information communication technologies is "to coordinate and implement the transformation of Burundi economy into a knowledge-based information society

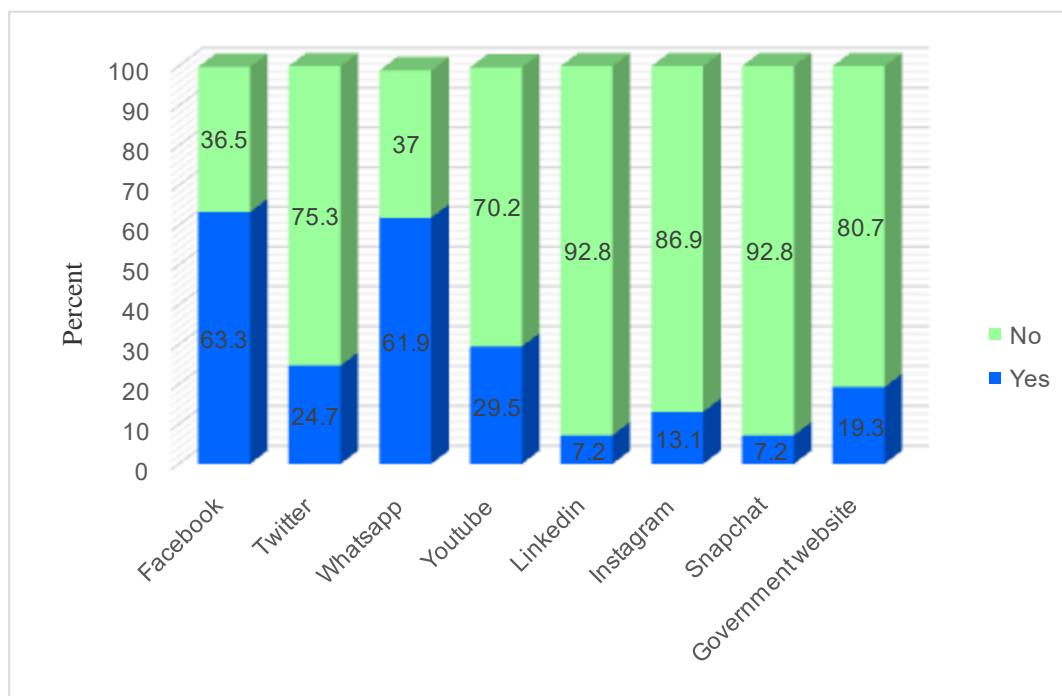
economy". With respect to e-democracy, this document indicates use interchangeably e-democracy with e-governance. As such the document defines the mission of e-democracy as "processes and structures that encompass all forms of electronic interaction between government officials and the citizens". As such, this document indicates that the mission of e-democracy is to improve the sense of responsibility, transparency; and citizen participation in governance.

The findings show that e-democracy is not the major concern of the current ICT policy framework. With respect to the place it occupies, e-democracy does not appear anywhere in the introduction or the preamble. It appears on two pages out of the 74-page document somewhere at page 39 and 40. In addition, it is defined as e-governance. Even if it has well a clear mission such as to improve transparency, responsibility and citizen participation, it is not well developed in terms of how they will be implemented. In addition, this ICT policy framework does not indicate the roles that different democracy stakeholders are expected to play in order to make it effective. Moreover, there is no single e-democracy platform indicated so that citizens can know whereby to pass to participate. Equally important, it does not indicate how citizens might monitor that their contributions are taken into consideration.

Despite its weakness, Burundi citizens participate by the means of their ordinary ICT platforms. The following section will indicate different platforms that they use to participate.

### ICT Platforms used in Civic Engagement

The respondents were provided with a list of ICT platforms and were required to indicate yes or no regarding which platforms they used in civic engagement. The findings are presented in Figure 4.4.3.1.



*Figure 4.5: ICT Platforms Used in Civic Engagement*

Majority of the participants (63.3%) indicated that they used Facebook for civic engagement, 61.9% used WhatsApp, while 24.7% used twitter. During an interview with the civil society representative, the CS noted that:

The youth are among the categories of those who prefer to communicate via ICTs. For this reason, we primarily use WhatsApp when it is about mobilizing them for an event or a meeting. We also use Facebook when we need to know their views on certain project.

In the same manner, the representative of the ICTs Ministry, GOV\_ICTs acknowledged that social media, especially WhatsApp is largely used in civic engagement. She said that:

I do believe that WhatsApp is one of the major tools that most of ICTs users prefer. In addition to WhatsApp, I think Facebook for the public in general and twitter for elites. Surprisingly, those who have access to WhatsApp end up sharing the same information on WhatsApp and Facebook so that most ICTs users can get the information and comment.

As a matter of fact, the representative of the interior ministry, GOV\_INT, during interview, gave an example that:

During moments of crisis such as flood, WhatsApp and Facebook are very effective. They are easy and quick to alert and mobilize the public to rescue their fellows in trouble.

As civic engagement does not imply automatically political engagement or sharing political ideas, the rate of participation using ICTs is higher than the rate of ICT users for political reasons. From the findings of the respondents who said that they fear of repression, civic engagement is less political and citizens run a lesser risk.

#### Frequency of Civic Engagement

To assess the participants frequency of civic engagement, they were provided with 6 items that assessed how frequently they engaged in various civic engagement activities on a scale of 1 to 5 (Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree). Summary of findings are presented on Table 4.41.

Table 4.41: Frequency of Civic Engagement

Civic Engagement	Often		Somewhat often		Neither often or rarely		Somewhat rarely		Rarely		N/A	D/N		
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%		
Volunteering for Province/Commune/Zone dealing with community issues	55	14.7	32	8.6	55	14.7	34	9.1	54	14.5	60	16.1	19	5.1
Going to see, speak to, or write to members of local authorities about needs or problems	34	9.1	35	9.4	66	17.7	36	9.7	54	14.5	61	16.4	21	5.6
Working with others in the community to solve community problems through community forums	61	16.4	25	6.7	66	17.7	37	9.9	54	14.5	44	11.8	19	5.1
Taking part in a protest or demonstration on a local issue	43	11.5	26	7.0	63	16.9	37	9.9	46	12.3	70	18.8	20	5.4
Taking part in forming a group to solve community problems	46	12.3	28	7.5	60	16.1	34	9.1	44	11.8	63	16.9	31	8.3
Mobilizing others for a cause	31	8.3	15	4.0	64	17.2	25	6.7	31	8.3	52	13.9	32	8.6

From Table 4.41, 17.7% of the participants indicated that they rarely went to speak to or wrote to members of local authorities about needs or problems, as well as working with others in the community to solve problems through forums respectively. On the other hand, 12.3% indicated that they often took part in forming groups to solve community problems.

The study further sought to establish the levels of civic engagement. Since the total number of items on the scale was six, the minimum possible score for an individual in the scale was 6 (1x6) and the maximum possible score was 30 (6x5). The scores were then categorized into 3 levels where scores ranging from 6 to 15 represented low frequency; scores ranging from 16 to 21 represented moderate frequency and scores ranging from 22 to 30 represented high frequency. The findings are presented on Table 4.42.

*Table 4.42: Frequency use of ICTs for Civic Engagement*

Frequency of Civic Engagement	Frequency	Percent
Low Frequency	62	24.7
Moderate Frequency	82	32.7
High Frequency	107	42.6
Total	251	100.0

Results in Table 4.42 indicated that majority of the participants (42.6%), indicated a high frequency of civic engagement, 32.7% had moderate frequency of engagement, while 24.7% had low frequency of engagement.

Data on frequency of civic engagement was further analyzed descriptively in terms of means and standard deviation. The findings are presented on Table 4.43.

*Table 4.43: Descriptive Statistics on Frequency of Civic Engagement*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Civic Engagement	251	6	30	19.80	6.367
Valid (listwise)	N 251				

From the findings in Table 4.43, the minimum score attained was 6, while the maximum score attained was 30. The mean score attained was 19.8(SD=6.367), indicating that averagely the participants had a moderate level of civic engagement. The finding that majority of the participants had a moderate level of civic engagement could be explained by the fact that the government took into consideration some of their input. The GOV\_ICTs when interviewed on whether the government took into consideration views and opinions from ICT users indicated that:

Yes it does. As said earlier, government has changed some decisions because of citizen mobilization done on online platforms, especially via WhatsApp groups and Facebook. Even if we do not say clearly that we respond to a particular person, some decisions tend to respond to a public concern especially when many ICTs users tend to agree on the way an issue should be handled. For instance, the issue of electricity. During dry season, we do not have enough electricity as the city of Bujumbura is expanding. Sometimes the Managers of the company in charge of water and electricity have been accused of favoritism for zones where the VIP live over ordinary citizens. People have strongly protested online. Consequently, the company has been obliged to disclose how it organizes the

shift to have electricity. This one has been published online and newspapers. Therefore, citizens were able to organize themselves accordingly.

Data was further analyzed on the frequency of civil engagement in relation to age category. The findings are presented in Table 4. 44.

*Table 4.44: Frequency of Civic Engagement by Age Category*

Age	Civil Engagement	Frequency	Percent
18-24 years	Low Frequency	24	23.3
	Moderate Frequency	31	30.1
	High Frequency	48	46.6
Total		103	100.0
25- 35 years	Low Frequency	38	25.7
	Moderate Frequency	51	34.5
	High Frequency	59	39.9
Total		148	100.0

From the findings in Table 4.44, 46.6% of respondents aged 18 to 24 years had high frequency of civic engagement, while 39.9% of those aged 25 to 35 years also had a high frequency of civic engagement. This implied that the youths across the age categories had a high level of civil engagement. This could be explained by the fact that use of ICT made it easier for the youth to participate in civic engagement as compared to before. This was further highlighted in the FGD, where respondent C indicated that:

The use of ICTs by the youth in politics and civic engagement has improved after the 2015 crisis. Due to the fact that some independent media have been banned by the government, the ICTs are playing a critical role as alternatives. The current traditional media are either controlled by the government or are afraid to say the truth as it ought to be

Data was further analyzed on the frequency of civic engagement in relation to level of study. The findings are presented in Table 4.45.

*Table 4.45: Frequency of Civic Engagement by Level of Study*

Level of study		Frequency	Percent
Year 1	Low Frequency	16	20.3
	Moderate Frequency	35	44.3
	High Frequency	28	35.4
Total		79	100.0
Year 2	Low Frequency	38	25.5
	Moderate Frequency	44	29.5
	High Frequency	67	45.0
Total		149	100.0
Year 3	Low Frequency	5	35.7
	Moderate Frequency	2	14.3
	High Frequency	7	50.0
Total		14	100.0

From the findings in Table 4.45, 50% of the participants in year 3 had high level of civic engagement, 45% of those in year 2 also had a high level of civic engagement, while 44.3% of those in year 1 had moderate level of civic engagement.

Findings show that that the youth moderately participated in civic engagement. This finding could still be mediated by the fact that ICT platforms provided an opportunity for civic engagement. In addition, civic engagement does not imply automatically political action or opinion. It is more of community engagement for defending cases. As a result, citizens will felt free to engage local authorities on community issues but rarely on political issues. From the findings, the majority of respondents (26%) preferred to discuss politics with their friends in order to avoid government's repression.

### Cross-tabulation

To further answer the objective, chi-square cross-tabulation was conducted between respondents' frequency of ICT use and frequency of civic engagement. The findings are presented in the subsequent tables.

Table 4.46 presents the cross-tabulation between frequency of ICT use and frequency of ICT engagement.

*Table 4.46: Frequency of ICT Use and Frequency of Civic Engagement*

		Frequency of Civic engagement				Total
Frequency of ICT Use	Low Frequency	Low Frequency	Moderate Frequency	High Frequency		
Frequency of ICT Use	Low Frequency	Count	37	42	44	123
		Expected	31.1	38.9	52.9	123.0
		Count				
		% within Q5c	30.1%	34.1%	35.8%	100.0%
		% within Q19c	92.5%	84.0%	64.7%	77.8%
	Moderate Frequency	Count	3	6	18	27
		Expected	6.8	8.5	11.6	27.0
		Count				
		% within Q5c	11.1%	22.2%	66.7%	100.0%
		% within Q19c	7.5%	12.0%	26.5%	17.1%
	High Frequency	Count	0	2	6	8
		Expected	2.0	2.5	3.4	8.0
		Count				
		% within Q5c	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%
		% within Q19c	0.0%	4.0%	8.8%	5.1%
Total	Count	40	50	68	158	
	Expected	40.0	50.0	68.0	158.0	
	Count					
	% within Q5c	25.3%	31.6%	43.0%	100.0%	
	% within Q19c	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

aCross Tabulation

From the cross-tabulation findings, the actual count was more than the expected count for the respondents who had high frequency of ICT use and those who had high frequency of civic engagement. This implied that a higher frequency of ICT use was associated with a higher frequency of civic engagement. To confirm whether this association was significant, it was measured using chi-square association with the significant level of 0.05 as presented on Table 4.47.

*Table 4.47: Chi-Square of Association Findings*

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.303 <sup>a</sup>	4	.010
Likelihood Ratio	15.171	4	.004
Linear-by-Linear Association	12.099	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	158		

a. 3 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.03.

A chi-square test for association was conducted between frequency of ICT use and frequency of civic engagement. 3 cells had an expected count of less than 5. There was a statistically significant association between frequency of ICT use and frequency of civic engagement,  $\chi^2 (4) = 13.303, p < 0.05$ .

This implied that higher frequency of ICT use was correlated with higher frequency of civic engagement. This revealed the higher the frequency of ICT use led to the higher frequency of civic engagement. This relationship could be explained by the fact that ICT platforms provided an opportunity for youths to participate in civil engagement. This finding was complemented by the FGD findings, where respondent A, B and C noted that:

The use of ICTs is not primarily for political reasons.

Burundians use ICTs for various reasons such as family affairs,

professional affairs, and politics of course. Equally important, the youth are among the categories of those who use ICTs and believe in social media information the most.

For instance, A, B, and C added that:

The mobilization of the youth for most of the demonstrations is done via ICTs. Those who do not have internet, we send them SMS.

In fact, people in the society can maintain social connections and support networks that otherwise wouldn't be possible and can access more information than ever before. The communities and social interactions young people form online can be invaluable in bolstering and developing young people's self-confidence and social skills. The use of social media and networking services such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat have become an integral part of the current society, through which ideas are shared and learning takes place. Social networking services are designed to support users working, thinking and acting together. They also require listening and compromising skills. In the current society and among various communities, there is the need to ask others for help and advice in various tasks that may require a global input for comparison purposes. This gets to be achieved by making the world a global village through which ICT through social media platforms are able to instrumentally influence the knowledge sharing process (Tunner, 2018).

#### To Investigate the Extent to which E-democracy Facilitates Citizen Participation in Burundi

Objective four sought to establish the extent to which e-democracy facilitated citizen participation in Burundi. To achieve this objective, participants in the study were required to indicate their satisfaction with the ICT platforms used by the

government in enhancing citizen participation, as well as their level of satisfaction with the way the government used ICT in enhancing citizen participation. The finding on this objective are presented in following sub-sections

### ICT Platforms Used by the Government in Enhancing Citizen Participation

Participants were provided with the three main ICT platforms used by the government (website, social media platforms and SMS platforms) and were required to rate their usefulness in enhancing citizen participation, on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 (not at all, somewhat, neutral, agree, agree to a great extent). The findings are presented on Table 4.48.

*Table 4.48: ICT Platforms Used in Enhancing Citizen Participation*

ICT Platforms	Not at all		Somewhat		Neutral		Agree		Agree to a greater extent		No response	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Websites	64	17.2	65	17.4	61	16.4	75	20.1	27	7.2	80	21.4
Social media platforms	31	8.3	49	13.1	56	15.0	112	30.0	58	15.5	67	18.0
SMS services and platforms	72	19.3	49	13.1	52	13.9	90	24.1	41	11.0	69	18.5

From Table 4.48, majority of the participants (30%) agreed that the government used social media platforms to enhance citizen participation, followed by those who agreed that SMS services and platforms were used (24.1%), while 20.1% also agreed that websites were used in enhancing citizen participation.

The study further sought to establish the levels of satisfaction in ICT use in enhancing citizen participation. The scale was thus collapsed into scores to enable categorization into levels of satisfaction. Since the platforms were three, the lowest score attained by each participant was 3 (3x1), while the maximum score was 15 (3x5). The scores were subdivided into three levels, where scores ranging between 3

and 7 represented low level of satisfaction, 8 to 10 represented moderate level of satisfaction and those between 11 and 15 represented high level of satisfaction. The findings are presented in the subsequent tables.

*Table 4.49: Satisfaction with Government ICT Platforms*

Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percent
Low level of Satisfaction	112	35.1
Moderate level of Satisfaction	135	42.3
High Level of Satisfaction	72	22.6
Total	319	100.0

As shown in Table 4.49, 42.3% of the participants had a moderate level of satisfaction, while 35.1% had low level of satisfaction with the ICT platforms used by the government in enhancing citizen participation in decision making.

Data was further analyzed descriptively in terms of mean and standard deviation. The findings are presented on Table 4.50.

*Table 4.50: Satisfaction with Government ICT Platforms*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
	319	3	15	8.58	2.710
Valid (listwise)	N 319				

The minimum score attained was 3, while the maximum score was 15. The mean score was 8.58( $SD=2.71$ ), indicating on average the respondents were moderately satisfied with the government ICT platforms used in enhancing citizen participation in decision making. The findings that majority of the people had a moderate level of satisfaction could be explained by the fact that the government has become more responsive on the use of ICT platforms. This was also highlighted

during an interview with the civil society representative. The CS representative indicated that:

I believe that the current government is different from the government of before 2015. Before the 2015 crisis, the government was neglecting the ICTs as serious tools of communication and citizen mobilization. It is during the crisis that they noticed that it is a real force as they have been used to protest against the third term of the current President.

However, the fact that appreciation is moderate is also associated with the fact that citizens do not have a feeling that their contributions are taken into consideration. In the FGD with students, they said that:

"The youth think that their ideas are not considered, this true, said G. G explained that "citizens keep giving their ideas but nothing changes. For this reason, many among the youth are so tired because their ideas are not considered". In the same manner, D argued that "the fact that citizens give ideas that are not considered, we end up thinking the government is not sincere, it is a kind of distraction when it shares information meant to be discussed. Government will keep taking decision without considering any of our opinions". In addition, F added that there is a generation conflict may be. For F "most of our political leaders think that ICTs are used by the youth and in our country youth are considered as not mature enough to be involved in decision making. It is this perception of the youth that is associated with the way government considers online participation."

Data was further analyzed on satisfaction with government ICT platforms used in enhancing citizen participation in relation to age category. The findings are presented in Table 4.51

*Table 4.51: Satisfaction with Government ICT Platforms*

Age		Frequency	Percent
18-24 years	Low level of Satisfaction	44	33.1
	Moderate level of Satisfaction	64	48.1
	High Level of Satisfaction	25	18.8
Total		133	100.0
25- 35 years	Low level of Satisfaction	68	36.8
	Moderate level of Satisfaction	71	38.4
	High Level of Satisfaction	46	24.9
Total		185	100.0

From Table 4.51, 48.1% of respondents aged 18 to 24 years had moderate level of satisfaction, while 38.4% of those aged 25 to 35 years also indicated a moderate level of satisfaction with the ICT platforms used by government in enhancing citizen participation. This implied that the youths across the two age categories were moderately satisfied with government use of ICT, which was also accounted for by the change in attitude by the government on use of ICT as also highlighted by an interview with civil society representative:

Sometime back, the government considered ICT users as people who always wanted to disturb while these latter just want to be heard and contribute on matters that affect them or affect the country in general. In addition, some information given through social media is not always considered seriously. In contrast, information that comes through traditional media is more trusted. But the government of today is different from the one of before 2015. Before, they minimized social media information. But with 2015 crisis, they get to know that social media is a strength that needs to be taken care of.

As a matter of fact, the representative of the interior ministry, GOV\_INT, was asked during the interview whether they consider online contribution. He replied that:

We do consider online contribution because decisions are regularly taken based on information shared online. The way they know that we have considered their contribution is the way we react to their information they have shared. This does not mean that whatever the public says is true. But the fact that we take action when it is true or give the right information when they have shared rumors is a way to show them that we care about their contribution. For instance, we are grateful to the way citizens collaborated with us in fighting against prohibited drinks. It would be very difficult for the police to know exactly who are selling them. Actually because of ICTs, citizens inform the exact address, sometimes with pictures. When the police go to arrest them, there is no risk to fail their mission. This gives courage to the population as stakeholders of their own security and they feel considered as they witness themselves that we have used their information for their own safety.

Data was further analyzed on satisfaction with government ICT platforms used in enhancing citizen participation in relation to level of study. The findings are presented in Table 4.52.

*Table 4.52: Satisfaction with Government ICT Platforms*

Level of study	Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percent
Year 1	Low level of Satisfaction	38	33.0
	Moderate level of Satisfaction	52	45.2
	High Level of Satisfaction	25	21.7
Total		115	100.0
Year 2	Low level of Satisfaction	70	39.5
	Moderate level of Satisfaction	66	37.3
	High Level of Satisfaction	41	23.2
Total		177	100.0
Year 3	Low level of Satisfaction	2	12.5
	Moderate level of Satisfaction	10	62.5
	High Level of Satisfaction	4	25.0
Total		16	100.0

From the findings in Table 4.52, 45.2% of the participants in year 1 had moderate level of satisfaction, 39.5% of those in year 2 had low level of satisfaction, while those in year 3 had moderate level of satisfaction with ICT platforms used by the government in enhancing citizen participation in decision making. This indicated that there was a slight variation in the perception of the youths in the three levels of study towards government use of ICT. This variation could be explained by the difference in perception on how the government utilized ICT. The civil society representative during an interview noted that:

In other stances, ICT is viewed as a strong means that can help to fight against opposition (political weapon) instead of considering it as an educational tool to the population. For example, there is no plan that aims at capacity building in different ministries. Many times we have assisted top officials using social media to criticize what opponents have said or

done instead of responding to the issue raised. This brings me back the fact that the government tends to use ICTs for information and propaganda rather than communication. It looks like there is no active listening. However, since the 2015 crisis, I believe that the government tends to improve by involving people in decision making and facilitating access to critical information. For instance, actually parliament debates can be followed online on a computer or smart phone. Every Burundian who has access to internet can follow what is going on in the parliament. This has increased responsibility on members of parliaments. Even if we still have a long way to go in using ICTs in active citizen participation, I salute the political leadership for deciding to allow to follow those debates live. In the past, the parliamentary spokespersons used to treat the information in a certain way but every citizen who has access to ICTs is able to judge by himself/herself the way citizens' interests are defended in the parliament. This has a direct consequence on the votes. Citizens will be likely to vote for those who represent well their interests.

#### Government Use of ICT in Enhancing Citizen Participation

Participants were provided with 13 statements that assessed their level of satisfaction with the government use of ICT in enhancing citizen participation in decision making, on a likert scale of 1 to 5 (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree). The findings are presented on Table 4.53.

Table 4.53: Government Use of ICT in Enhancing Citizen Participation

Use of ICT in Enhancing Citizen Participation	SD		D		N		A		SA		NR	
	Freq	%										
ICT technologies make it easier to access government services	72	19.3	38	10.2	46	12.3	125	33.5	41	11.0	51	13.7
New technologies make it possible to provide feedback to government	70	18.8	40	10.7	71	19.0	103	27.6	27	7.2	62	16.7
ICTs enable me to engage with local and national government leaders	92	24.7	45	12.1	74	19.8	72	19.3	28	7.5	62	16.6
My views online are considered by the government	107	28.7	63	16.9	82	22.0	37	9.9	20	5.4	64	17.2
ICTs enable me to participate in government and public affairs	69	18.5	55	14.7	82	22.0	80	21.4	21	5.6	66	17.7
ICTs have made me a more politically active citizen	96	25.7	54	14.5	72	19.3	63	16.9	21	5.6	67	18.0
ICTs have empowered me as a citizen to voice my opinions	67	18.0	52	13.9	65	17.4	99	26.5	21	5.6	69	18.5
ICTs has removed the social divide barriers associated with access to traditional means	81	21.7	60	16.1	68	18.2	63	16.9	36	9.7	65	17.4
ICTs have allowed me to play my role as a stakeholder in democracy	96	25.7	55	14.7	61	16.4	69	18.5	27	7.2	65	17.4
The Government cares about matching the tools we	90	24.1	61	16.4	82	22.0	51	13.7	22	5.9	67	18.0

(Government & Citizens) use to be able to interact	89	23.9	57	15.3	74	19.8	59	15.8	26	7.0	68	18.2
Online contributions are considered in decision making	96	25.7	72	19.3	73	19.6	46	12.3	17	4.6	69	18.5
Government organizes ways to seek online opinions in decision making												
Online opinion are considered as important as the ones expressed via traditional means (Radio, Newspaper, TV, and Meetings)	86	23.1	47	12.6	73	19.6	46	12.3	17	4.6	69	18.5

From the findings, 33.5% of the participants agreed that ICT technologies make it easier to access government services, 28.7% strongly disagreed that their views online are considered by the government, while 26.5% agreed that ICTs have empowered them as citizens to voice their opinions.

The study further sought to establish the level of satisfaction on the government use of ICT in enhancing citizen participation. The scale was then collapsed into scores to enable categorization into levels of satisfaction. Since the items were 13, the lowest score attained by each participant was 13 (13x1), while the maximum score was 65 (13x5). The scores were subdivided into three levels, where scores ranging between 13 and 32 represented low level of satisfaction, 33 to 45 represented moderate level of satisfaction and those between 46 and 65 represented high level of satisfaction. The findings are presented in the subsequent tables.

*Table 4.54: Satisfaction with Government Use of ICT*

Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percent
Low level of Satisfaction	128	40.9
Moderate level of Satisfaction	154	49.2
High Level of Satisfaction	31	9.9
Total	313	100.0

From Table 4.54, 49.2% of the participants indicated a moderate level of satisfaction, while 40.9% indicated a low level of satisfaction with government use of ICT in enhancing citizen participation in decision making. The GOV\_INT was asked during an interview whether the motivation of the government in putting in place the National Policy for the Development of ICTs was to enhance citizen participation in decision making. She replied that:

Because the government provides service to the citizens, the promotion of ICTs is one of our responsibilities as government in order to improve services and enhance citizen participation. We have stressed citizen participation because it is the essence of democracy. It is the power of the people and for the people. To fulfill this objective, we have to create means through which they can give opinions and communicate with government. People in Burundi start knowing their rights in terms of using ICTs to influence governance. For instance, on social media people from within and out of the country say what they think about some decisions. Depending on the Ministry concerned, spokespersons have been obliged to give clarifications via social media, radio, and TV.

Data was further analyzed descriptively in terms of mean and standard deviation; the findings are presented on Table 4.55.

*Table 4.55: Descriptive Statistics on Satisfaction with Government Use of ICT*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Level of Satisfaction	313	13	61	34.09	8.763
Valid (listwise)	N 313				

The minimum score attained by the respondents was 13, while the maximum score was 61. The mean score was 34.09 ( $SD=8.763$ ). This implied that on average, the participants had a moderate level of satisfaction towards the extent to which e-democracy enhanced citizen participation in decision making. This also revealed that majority of the youth were moderately satisfied with the government use of ICT to

enhance citizen participation. This was confirmed by an interview with a government representative, GOV\_INT, who indicated that:

In our government we mainly use radio, newspapers, TV, and ICTs. They work in complementarity as our audiences are diversified. For instance, the youth use less traditional media. For them we stress the ICTs and social media in particular. For intellectuals, even if they use all those means, we stress newspapers and radio.

Data was further analyzed on levels of satisfaction with government use of ICT in enhancing citizen participation in decision making by age category. The findings are presented in Table 4.56

*Table 4.56: Satisfaction with Government Use of ICT*

Age	Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percent
18-24 years	Low level of Satisfaction	46	35.4
	Moderate level of Satisfaction	75	57.7
	High Level of Satisfaction	9	6.9
Total		130	100.0
25-35 years	Low level of Satisfaction	82	45.1
	Moderate level of Satisfaction	78	42.9
	High Level of Satisfaction	22	12.1
Total		182	100.0

From Table 4.56, 57.7% of respondents in the age category of 18 to 24 years had moderate level of satisfaction, while 45.1% of those aged 25 to 35 years had a low level of satisfaction with government use of ICT in enhancing citizen participation in decision making. This indicated that there was a slight difference in the level of satisfaction among the youth in the two age groups, which could be

accounted for in reference to the challenges experienced by government use of ICT.

This was further explored in the FGD with the youths who indicated that:

To make e-democracy efficient in Burundi, it requires to tackle the challenges we face. Government should guarantee freedom of expression so that people can feel secure; government should work in a way that promotes because people do not trust much what is shared by the government as it tends to be more propaganda rather than communication. Otherwise many people just read the government information and move on to comment in other platforms.

This implied that respondents were moderately satisfied with the government use of ICT in enhancing citizen participation. In agreement with this finding, the representative of civil society claimed that there was some progress even if there were still some challenges facing the making of e-democracy effective in the context of Burundi. He said that:

From experience, I noticed that in Burundi, there are two categories (among our political leaders) with regard to the use of ICTs in e-democracy. On one hand, there is a category of those who think that the ICTs are for the youth. On the other, there is a category of those who believe that they are effective tools to communication with different stakeholders. Actually, communication is a great indicator in every sector including politics and citizen participation. The fact that ICTs have been integrated in public sector and management of the country, there has been improvement in terms of citizen participation.

With regard to citizen participation, I think the government is also taking seriously the role of ICTs in enhancing citizen participation. For instance, parliament debates can be followed online on a computer or smart phone. Every Burundian who has access to internet can follow what is going on in the parliament. This has increased responsibility among members of parliament. Even if we still have a long way to go in using ICTs in active citizen participation, I salute the political leadership for deciding to allow us to follow those debates live. In the past, the parliamentary spokespersons used to screen the information a lot. Now every citizen who has access to ICTs is able to judge by himself/herself the way citizens' interests are defended in the parliament. This has a direct consequence on the votes. Citizens will likely vote for those who represent their interests well.

Based on the findings, different stakeholders surveyed, interviewed, and held focus group discussions believe that ICTs have potential to be efficient in democracy, especially citizen participation in decision making. However, something needs to be done in terms of the way government uses ICTs so that citizens can feel that the intention is to facilitate them and enhance their participation in democracy and decision making. As long as the citizens who are the cornerstone in any democracy do not feel that whatever is done is intended to confirm their importance in democratic process, the ICTs risk remaining at the level of tools instead of being enablers.

To further answer the objective, a multiple regression was conducted to determine how much variation in the respondent's civic engagement was explained by frequency of ICT use, use of social media in politics, government use of ICT and

integration of ICT in other means of communication. The findings are presented in the subsequent tables.

*Table 4.57: Model Summary<sup>b</sup>*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.515 <sup>a</sup>	.266	.258	9.779	1.996

a. Predictors: (Constant), Government use of ICT, Frequency of ICT use, integration of ICT in other means of communication, use of social media in politics

b. Dependent Variable: Civil engagement

From table 4.57, the independent variables explained 25.8% of the variation in the dependent variable.

*Table 4.58: ANOVA<sup>a</sup>*

Model		Sum Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12702.201	4	3175.550	33.205	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	35097.788	367	95.634		
	Total	47799.989	371			

a. Dependent Variable: Civil engagement

b. Predictors: (Constant), Government use of ICT, Frequency of ICT use, integration of ICT in other means of communication, use of social media in politics

As shown in Table 4.58, government use of ICT, frequency of ICT use, integration of ICT in other means of communication and use of social media in politics statistically significantly predicted civic engagement,  $F(4, 367) = 95.634, p < .05$ .

Table 4.59: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		95.0% Interval for B		Confidence Correlations		Collinearity Statistics			
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	3.909	1.611		2.426	.016	.741	7.077				
	Frequency of ICT use	-.024	.067	-.01	-.351	.726	-.156	.109	.057	-.018	-.016	.975
	Integration of ICT in other means of communication	.409	.078	.278	5.239	.000	.255	.562	.440	.264	.234	.711
	Use of social media in politics	.254	.072	.193	3.531	.000	.113	.396	.406	.181	.158	.667
	Government use of ICT	.487	.161	.166	3.024	.003	.170	.804	.395	.156	.135	.661

Dependent Variable: Civic Engagement

From table 4.59, multiple regression was conducted to predict civic engagement from frequency of ICT use, integration of ICT in other means of communication, use of social media in politics and government use of ICT, three of the variables statistically predicted civic engagement,  $p<0.05$ , while frequency of ICT use did not statistically significantly contribute to civic engagement,  $p>0.05$ .

Therefore, from the multiple regression findings, the general equation for predicting civic engagement would be:

$$\text{Civic engagement} = 3.909 + 0.409 (\text{integration of ICT in other means of communication}) + 0.254 (\text{use of social media in politics}) + 0.487 (\text{Government use of ICT}).$$

Unstandardized coefficients indicate how much the dependent variable varies with an independent variable when all other independent variables are held constant. Therefore, considering the effect of integration of ICT in other means of communication, the unstandardized coefficient, B, is equal to 0.409. This means that an increase in integration of ICT in other means of communication, there is an increase in civic engagement by 0.409. Similarly, for every increase in the use of social media in politics and government use of ICT, they equate to an increase in civic engagement by 0.254 and 0.4787 respectively. Frequency of ICT use was not statistically significant ( $P>0.05$ ) and therefore was not factored in the multiple regression equation. In other words, these findings confirm the model of e-democracy that this study has suggested in the literature review as it considers that, in addition to technology, other factors such as communication strategy, citizen's access to ICTs, proper use of ICTs by government are likely to make e-democracy efficient. In this case e-democracy shall be efficient in increasing citizen's political knowledge, political efficacy and trust in government.

## Summary of Key Findings

Considering the findings on objective three and four, the summary of key findings is as follows:

Objective 3 established that the major platforms used in civic engagement included Facebook (63.3%), WhatsApp (61.9%) and twitter (24.7%). The respondents on average had a moderate level of civic engagement. There was a statistically significant association between frequency of ICT use and frequency of civic engagement,  $\chi^2 (4) = 13.303$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . In comparison to the findings of objective 2, respondents were more active on social media in engaging local authorities and their fellows less than how they engaged other categories on political issues. This cohered with the findings that respondents prefer to engage their friends in politics rather than other categories whether their parents and their classmates.

Objective 4 established that on average the respondents were moderately satisfied with the government ICT platforms used in enhancing citizen participation in decision. Participants had a moderate level of satisfaction towards the extent to which e-democracy enhanced citizen participation in decision making. Different stakeholders and respondents acknowledge that e-democracy had improved a slightly citizen participation as there was a possibility to share opinions from the country and out of the country. From the qualitative findings, some respondents thought that the government was selective in considering citizen participation. Contributions that supported the sense of the government were considered compared to the other ones that opposed it. As a result, e-democracy was considered by citizens as a means for information rather than a means to interact. In addition, respondents had an impression that e-democracy was used to inform

rather than engage them in a communication. With respect to communication, respondents wished to engage government officials through e-democracy.

Furthermore, respondents informed that there were a considerable number of citizens who had access to ICTs but did not dare share their political opinions because of fear of government's repression. As a matter of fact, when it was about access to ICTs for political reasons, their participation is low (Table 4.7). In contrast, when it was for civic engagement, their participation on ICTs was generally high (Table 4.42). As a result, this situation created a certain suspicion between citizen and government on one hand and among citizens themselves on the other hand. These findings generally indicated that the citizens did not believe that their online contribution was susceptible to influence Government's policy and action. In this sense, the pertinence of e-democracy is questioned.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study on the extent to which e-democracy facilitates citizen participation in Burundi. Following the four objectives of this study, there is a discussion of the findings per each objective. Each part is followed by recommendations towards policymakers and suggestions for further areas of research.

#### How Burundi Citizens Participate in E-democracy and their Level of Satisfaction

##### Discussion and Conclusion

Objective one sought to establish how Burundi citizens participate in E-democracy and their level of satisfaction.

How citizens participate in e-democracy varies from one sociopolitical context to another. The findings indicated that Burundian participate by the means of different ICT platforms such as Facebook (64%), WhatsApp (53.7%) and government websites (33%) to voice their opinions on social and political matters. Respondents in interviews explained that majority of the citizens who had smart phones used Facebook and WhatsApp while Twitter was still limited to the educated people. However, civil society respondents revealed that irrespective of channel of information used, the same information ended up being shared and discussed on WhatsApp or Facebook ICT platforms used in Burundi. In other contexts, earlier studies have shown that citizens uses different e-democracy means to participate. In the context of China for instance, Yun (2010) and Zheng (2016) find that e-democracy has a positive impact on citizen

participation on issues such as "corruption" and "social disparities." Citizens use "websites and blogs" to voice their opinions and influence policies related to issues of corruption and social disparities. In another context, in Lagos, Olekesusi and Aiyegbajeje (2017) establish that citizen participation in public affairs is effective in monitoring projects. In this sense, they find that there is a positive correlation between e-democracy and citizen participation. Concretely, they discover that citizens use different ICT platforms such as "e-campaign," "e-monitoring," and "e-poll" to get involved and inform authorities from different parts of Lagos, how they appreciate the project being implemented in their area. In fact, from the literature review, different scholars (Chadwick, 2003; Clift, 2004; Norris, 2004; Ayo, Adebiyi, & Fatudimu, 2008; Aikins, 2008; Funikul & Chutimaskul, 2009; Kumar, 2017 and Oni & Okunoye, 2018) accord that e-democracy is capable of facilitating and enhancing citizen participation. In general, e-democracy is observed in terms of "information generation," enabler "to enhance deliberation among citizens," and enabler in "participation in decision making" (Kumar, 2017, p.53) by the means of ICT platforms. Equally important, e-democracy can facilitate citizen participation in terms of "consultation" and "deliberation" (Chadwick, 2008).

Even if scholars agree with the fact that e-democracy has the potential to facilitate and enhance citizen participation, its effectiveness and efficiency is seen through levels of satisfaction by citizens. Referring to the uses and gratification theory, citizens participate because of the gratification they expect by using certain ICT platforms. In fact, "the approach simply represents an attempt to explain something by which individuals use communication, among other resources in their environment, to satisfy their needs and to achieve their goals, and to do so by simply asking them" (Katz,

Blumer & Gurevitch, 1973-1974, p.510). As a matter of fact, findings in this study established that even if citizens who had access to ICT platforms participated, the majority of them (41%) conceived ICT as being moderately efficient in e-democracy for various and individual reasons such as not considering their online contribution. Equally important, the citizen satisfaction on the way government used ICTs with respect to e-democracy was low ( $M=15.11$ ,  $SD=4.977$ ). This low level satisfaction as explained by FGD participants was also related to non-consideration of online citizen contribution, selective responsiveness, ICTs used by government were merely used for informing rather than interacting and sociopolitical context of Burundi was hostile to divergent opinion. Referring the participatory democracy theory, the lack of interaction weaknesses the core essence of e-democracy because "in the participatory model of e-democracy, interaction is regarded as constitutive of democracy itself" (Chadwick, 2013, p.449). This was further explained by Carreira, Machado, and Vasconcelos (2016)'s findings which indicated that, if individuals are not satisfied with the consideration of their participation, they are unlikely to be motivated to keep participating in other public affairs. As a matter of fact, in a study conducted by Balog and Badurina (2017) in Croatia, they find that "the low score of satisfaction was associated with the non-response from the government." In their study, they found that over 50% of the participants in e-democracy did not get feedback. This demotivated citizen participation and affected the way citizens consider the use of ICTs by the government. In another context, Olokesusi and Aiyegebajeje (2017) reveal that while tools such as e-monitoring, e-campaign and e-poll worked very well, e-voting was not. The reason behind this is that the legal framework did not allow e-voting. In addition to the legal framework, an earlier study conducted by Nkohkwo and Islam

(2013) in Sub-Saharan countries established that barriers that affect citizen participation in e-democracy negatively are associated with "infrastructure, financial, political, organizational, socioeconomic, and human aspects."

Nonetheless, like in other contexts, there were some aspects of e-democracy that were appreciated in e-democracy in Burundi. This is stated by the civil society representative who said that, in Burundi, the fact that parliament debates are followed online or through traditional channels like radio, and TV is a democratic act as it permits citizens to follow what is being discussed. In addition, the representative of interior ministry added that ICTs are playing an important role as they permit the citizens to participate in issues such as security, fighting against prohibited drinks and sharing information during floods which occur often during the rainy season. The FGD participants and the government respondents agreed that in these instances there was good interaction and involvement. The researcher noted that the sociopolitical context was limited in terms of citizen participation. In fact, issues not related to politics seemed to have the consensus of different stakeholders while those related to politics were highly restricted. Other findings such as Olokesusi and Aiyegbajeje (2017)' in Lagos, they also found e-democracy was effective and efficient in involving citizens in monitoring projects only and was not in e-voting.

In conclusion, the first objective sought to assess how Burundian citizens participated in e-democracy and whether the way the Burundi government used ICTs was likely to facilitate and enhance citizen participation by assessing citizen satisfaction. The findings showed that Burundian citizens participated in e-democracy using different ICT platforms, but their level of satisfaction was low. The fact of not taking into account

people's contribution, lack of responsiveness by the government and selective responsiveness, hostility to opposed opinion, lack of interaction which is likely to make effective involvement in decision making are the reasons behind the low level of satisfaction of the citizens who participate in e-democracy in Burundi. These findings are opposed to the promise of e-democracy as the ultimate effectiveness of e-participation results in the fact that citizens change roles, from passive consumers of information to active participants in decision making (Fedotova, Teixeira & Alvelos, 2015). Considering the findings, Burundi e-democracy is still at the level of provisional as it stresses information access with minimal interaction.

Considering that democracy is about the people exercising power and influence in policymaking through different means, the findings imply that Burundi citizens had less power to influence policymaking. As a matter of fact, 25.7% strongly disagreed, 21.7% disagreed, 10.2% strongly agreed, and 13.1% agreed that their online participation can influence government policy and action. In many cases, they participated in issues that did not involve politics. When it was about politics, the findings indicated that 23.9% strongly believed that their online contribution counted where change of policy was concerned while only 12.1% strongly believed that their online contribution counted. Consequently, these findings align with earlier findings that access to ICTs does not imply automatically efficient and effective e-democracy (Nkohkwo and Islam, 2013).

This is moreover illustrated by the case of Rwanda, where it is advanced ICT services and highly ranked in this (Transparency International, 2016) but it is poorly ranked in terms of democracy and civic rights (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

In fact, even if the use of ICTs allows a certain freedom, the status of e-democracy indicates the state of democracy in the country. In the context of Burundi, the decline in citizen participation has been accelerated by the 2015 crisis when the current President forced a third term considered which was considered illegal by civil society and opposition. During this crisis, all traditional independent media were banned by the police, many of the civil society and opposition leaders went to exile. As a result, the freedom of expression has been compromised. For this reason, majority of the respondents preferred to keep their opinion to themselves, not only because of a lack of consideration but also because of fear of repression. In this sense, the advent of ICTs does not contribute a lot as the democracy principles are compromised. This conclusion coheres with the recent report of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2017), which reports that Burundi and Nigeria are among countries that have shown a decline in representative government. This also confirms the position supported by this study that ICTs access does not automatically entail e-democracy efficiency. There are other factors such as political, technological and socioeconomic that have to accompany e-democracy implementation for it to be effective.

In reference to the discussion and conclusions on objective one, the subsequent part suggests ways in which Burundi decision makers can improve the current state of e-democracy, followed by suggestions for further areas of research.

#### Recommendations and Suggestions for further areas of research

The recommendations towards policymaker's concern barriers that affect the satisfaction of the citizens with regard to the way the government uses ICTs in e-democracy. These are:

Technological barriers: Considering that the internet penetration is at 8% (2018), I suggest that government increases the investment to address equal access and equal participation, which are a key component in democracy. Concretely, the government can address the issue of internet cost and gadgets that permit people to participate in public affairs via ICTs. In Burundi, and probably in other African countries, the internet remains a luxury reserved for a few people. By addressing these issues, it would be possible to raise the number of citizens who participate in e-democracy and bridge the gap between those who have access and those who do not.

Political barriers: Politically, the government of Burundi could consider improving the sociopolitical environment so that every citizen can feel secure even when he/she has a divergent opinion from that of government or the ruling party. This will enhance a situation where citizens use ICTs not only for accessing government information but also for interacting by giving their opinions on matters that affect their lives. Equally, the consideration of citizens' contribution is a better way to motivate all those who have access to ICTs but do not participate. In other instances, the government may avoid being selective while addressing citizens' contributions to ensure equal consideration among the citizens. As discovered by Nathanson (2005) while evaluating the impact of e-democracy in European Union Countries, he avers that "the objective of obtaining real citizen engagement is unlikely further down the road we go with governments taking the initiative and deciding what information they want to put online and what issues they want to consult about, with whom, and with what framework" (p.26). Based on the potential that is in ICT, government as well as citizens should have an equal possibility to engage or initiate a topic for discussion.

Lastly, I would encourage the Burundi government to take full advantage of ICTs by privileging interaction instead of one-way communication. This will not only allow the government to know what the people think but also it will pose a question of their pertinence, considering that ICTs are grounded in a two-way communication perspective. As indicated by Tedesco (2004, citing Barber et al., 1997), the internet has a great potential to enhance democracy because of its "inherent interactivity." Consequently, as there is no interaction, there is silence and non-communication between government and citizens. This silence is interpreted by the government as a sign that the people agree with their policies while the citizens prefer silence because of the political barriers already mentioned. Under these conditions, government should improve the current state of e-democracy so that it can effectively facilitate citizen participation.

In addition to policymakers, this study suggests further areas of research. Given the findings, it is evident that the issue of e-democracy is far from being settled (Freenberg, 2009, p.5). Although there are some general rules about the implementation of e-democracy, the case of Burundi has brought some new insights that are likely to inspire future research as it will be discussed later. As such, conducting a similar study in other countries would bring insights that might enrich the scholarship.

In addition, because of political barriers, there is a silence and lack of communication explained differently by government and citizens. Thus, conducting the same study with the spiral of silence theory of Noelle-Neumann would bring new insights. The relevance of this theory lies in "the interplay between four elements: mass media, interpersonal communication, and social relations, individual expressions of opinion, and the perceptions which people have of the surrounding 'climate of opinion' in

their environment" (McQuail, 2010, p.519). According to Porten-Cheé and Eilders (2015) "the spiral of silence theory (Noelle-Neumann, 1974, 1993) proposes that individuals fear social isolation and only, therefore, speak out in public if they perceive themselves to be in the present or future majority on an issue (p.144).

Citizens do not participate in e-democracy because of fear of repression while governments claim the all online platforms are open to everyone. This lack of interactivity is interpreted differently.

Lastly, referring to other studies (Yun, 2010 and Zheng, 2016) done in the same context (China) but at different moments, the findings have shown some improvements in terms of the way e-democracy facilitates and enhances citizen participation. Thus, I would encourage future researchers interested in e-democracy to conduct a similar study in Burundi at another moment to establish whether there have been changes in the way government uses ICTs with respect to citizen participation.

After discussing and concluding on how Burundians participate in e-democracy and their level of participation, the following part will discuss the place of communication strategy in e-democracy.

### The Place of Communication Strategy in E-democracy

### Discussion and Conclusion

Objective two sought to establish the place of communication strategy in E-democracy. Findings on the perception of citizens on the extent to which Burundi government integrated ICT in other means of communication established that majority of the participants (28.2% strongly disagree, and 19.6% disagree vs. 3.5 strongly agree, and

15.3% agree) said that they were not aware of ICTs' used by the government. As a result, the level of citizens' perception was further established to be on the moderate level ( $M=15.75$ ,  $SD=4.299$ ). This indicated that there was a moderate level of interaction between government and citizen through ICT platforms and the traditional means of communication. The representative of the Interior Ministry, during an interview, further illuminated this when he pointed out that ICTs had brought changes as they allowed citizens to engage any official including the President and Ministers without protocol as it is with meetings. He added that they combine ICTs with radio, newspapers and TV as the majority of the population does not have access to internet. In his conclusion, he said they combine ICTs with traditional means because "every citizen's opinion counts". From the literature review, other scholars (Chadwick, 2008) found that communication is "constitutive of democracy." In addition, the efficiency of e-democracy lies in designing "participation tools in line with the existing procedural framework for improving e-participation" (Alathur and Gupta, 2014). This implies that two way communication is at the heart of democracy and e-democracy by extension. As a matter of fact, in participatory democracy theory, "Habermas conceives a two-level model in which the informal networks of opinion formation of the public sphere and the formal deliberations of political institutions are portrayed as complementary democratic mechanisms" (Born, 2013).

In fact, findings have shown that the current integration of e-democracy in other means of communication is moderately satisfactory. Considering the response of the representative of the opposition parties during FGD and the FGD discussion run with the representative of the students who participated in the survey, they said that they do not

trust the government because the information shared on social media is not always the same as the one shared on traditional media. In fact, 22% strongly disagreed with the fact that government information received via ICTs is the same as the one received via traditional means of information and communication (Radio, TV, Newspaper, Meetings). Only 7.2 strongly agreed the opposite. In this sense, not only it implies that there is an issue of integration of ICTs in existing means of participation. As a result, ICTs might not be considered as a credible alternative for citizens who prefer ICTs over traditional means of participation. In the context of Burundi, this was explained by participants in the FGD discussion who informed that on one hand, government information received on social media was not always similar to the information received through the traditional media. On the other hand, participants explained that "through traditional media, political leaders were well identified and they were more conscious of what they said. On the contrary, on social media, some government officials changed their names so that they could spy on the citizens". While a lack of a good integration of e-democracy in other means of communication is susceptible to cause issue of trust of the government by the citizens, it has increased it where the integration has been successful. From the literature review, Balog and Badurini in Croatia (2017) found that a good integration of e-democracy in other means of communication increases the trust (mean 3.47) on the information found on the national, regional, or local government webpages. Besides, it has a positive impact on the government's image. Equally important, in South Korea, Kim and Lee (2017) found that "citizen participation in offline and online programs designated to engage citizens during policy agenda setting was significantly and positively associated with their perception of transparency.

Moreover, a good integration of ICTs in other means of communication shall help to involve categories of the population that are not naturally interested to participate in public affairs such as the youth. Findings indicated that the youths in Burundi still believe that traditional means of communication are more credible rather than the ICTs. It is even surprising considering that the survey participants are youth from universities. Findings indicated that 23.9% strongly disagreed on the fact that way ICTs are used by the government constitute an alternative in terms of diversification of means of communication to enhance citizen participation in decision making. Only 12.1 strongly agreed so. Even if it is the case in Burundi, findings from South Africa have indicated the opposite. Van Belle and Cupido (2013) findings established that the youth were willing to participate in decision making by means of their mobile phones as it is "quick and saves time."

Consequently, the youths were more likely to be excited with their participation in accessing government information using ICT platforms and hence had a more positive perception as compared to the older youths who were perhaps interested with more than just accessing the information but also wanted to interact and provide their opinions and suggestions to the government. This notion is brought out clearly in the participatory democracy model where From the Chi-square findings, the association between level of interest in politics and governance and perception towards the integration of ICT in other means of communication was not significant,  $p>0.05$ . Nevertheless, people who were more interested in politics and governance were more likely to have a positive perception of government integration of ICT in other forms of communication. This could be explained by the fact that in their interest in politics they were more likely to come across

instances where the government had been able to integrate ICT in other means of communication. Considering that the level of integration was perceived moderately by the citizens, it implied that the integration was not yet well established.

In conclusion, the second objective of this study investigated the extent to which Burundi government had integrated e-democracy in other means of communication. The study concludes that the extent to which Burundi government had integrated e-democracy in other means of communication was moderate. Different factors explained the moderate level. They included lack of trust; majority of the citizens believed that their online contribution was not given the same consideration as the one done through traditional means of communication; majority of the citizens were not aware of the government ICT platforms that they were to use so as to participate effectively in decision making. In addition, majority of the citizens still believed that they were satisfied with the information received through newspapers (20.9%); radio (22.8%); and TV (29%). Compared to ICT platforms, findings showed that 20.9%, 13.4%, and 15.5% were respectively satisfied with government's facebook page, twitter, and website. Elsewhere, in South Africa, Van Belle and Cupido (2013) findings indicated that ICTs offer an opportunity to engage and involve the youths who are not naturally active in citizen participation. Even if the representative of the Interior Ministry explained that government used both traditional forms of communication and ICTs to engage with the population, the concerned target (citizens) did approve that it was well done to a point where it enhanced their participation.

Moreover, the moderate level of the satisfaction of the citizens with regard to the way Burundi government integrated e-democracy was related to lack of trust. As findings

showed, citizens were not aware of the means through which they could use to participate and they also thought that government used ICTs to spy on them. The issue of not having specific means of participation known by the citizens was likely to feed the suspicion between citizens and government.

In order to address the issues related to the integration of ICTs in other means of communication, it is important to apply the current perspective of uses and gratification theory as it stresses that citizens are actually active and use different media based on the gratifications they expect from using them. This theory, as stated by Roggiero (2000) argues that citizens are attracted and use media that respond to their need by their content, convenience and more importantly the gratification they get by using them. In the case of Burundi, findings have shown that the government shall care about the kind of media citizens use and why they use them. Seeing that in south Africa ICTs have been able to attract the youth to get involved in public affairs and in Burundi the youth still believe that traditional means are more effective for citizen participation over ICTs, the uses and gratification theory might guide government to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of e-democracy means it uses. In fact, Biocca (1985) indicated that the uses and gratification theory has helped to understand that the audience are active and know what they want by using a specific media. He indicated that "the very definition of the active audience as it is found in the communication literature implies a vigilant, self-directed, rationalistic consciousness aware of its needs and motivations, bending media materials in pursuit of these motivations and in the maintenance of cognitive independence" (p.63). As such government shall care much about citizen's media they use and go deeper to seek to know why some media are preferred compared to others. From the findings, citizens believe

that their online contribution does not have the same consideration as the one done through traditional media. Therefore they still prefer traditional media in order to have the gratification in terms of being heard and attempt to influence government's action.

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In practice, a good integration of e-democracy in other means of participation shall meet the promises of participatory democracy theory. In fact effective participation, in participatory democracy perspective, has to meet the following criteria: "throughout the process of making binding decisions, citizens ought to have an adequate opportunity, and equal opportunity, to express their preferences as to the final outcome; they must have adequate and equal opportunities to place questions on the agenda and to express reasons for endorsing one outcome rather than another" (p.84). These criteria, especially those in relation to citizen participation and equal chances to participate are grounded in the democratic principles as it was in the Athenian democracy which is the origin of the current democracy (Robert Dahl, 1989, as cited in Nyborg & Spangen, 2000). As such, a good integration of e-democracy, conceived in logic of continuum and complementarity with existing means of participation shall be able to make e-democracy a credible means of participation. As a result, it shall give equal chances to citizens to participate through different means be their ICTs or traditional means (radio, TV, newspaper).

In view of the above discussion and conclusions, these following sections will suggest Burundi policy maker's ways in which they shall increase the level of satisfaction of the citizens with respect of integration of e-democracy in communication strategy.

#### Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Areas of Research

Considering that e-democracy was conceived as a means of participation in this study, it was conceived in logic of continuum and alternative with other means of

participation. This was so critical to note that a majority of respondents thought that traditional means were best effective compared to than ICTs. Therefore, this study suggests that Burundi government review its communication strategy so that ICTs might be considered not in isolation but in a good integration with existing means of communication.

In addition, the findings revealed however that there was a certain integration of ICT platforms with traditional means of communication even if the level of satisfaction was low. Therefore, the study suggests to Burundi government to improve on this, so that citizens can use any media with the assurance that they access the same. Otherwise this might cause inequality or not well-informed participation in decision making.

Moreover, a number of respondents were not aware of the existence of ICT platforms used by the government; I would suggest Burundi government to run a communication campaign to inform people of the existence of those platforms and their importance with respect to how they might improve their participation in decision making. As a result, this would have a positive impact on the trust of the citizens. As indicated by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2003), a well-integrated e-democracy permits to "build trust and gain acceptance of the policy."

Lastly, considering findings from other studies that ICTs provide opportunities to engage categories of the population that are not naturally involved in public affairs, I would suggest Burundi government to use every strategy to engage the youths as they are among the categories of people who use ICTs more than others.

In addition to Burundi policy makers, this study has suggestions as well towards future researchers interested in the issue of integration of e-democracy in communication strategy. In fact, the issue of e-participation, like e-democracy, can be approached either as a means of participation or as a process. This study chose to approach it as a democratic process. Thus, future researchers can explore e-democracy as a means of participation in democracy.

Considering that the issue of e-democracy and citizen participation is equally associated with the framework in which it is designed and implemented, the following section will discuss the ICT policy framework in Burundi with respect to its capacity to enhance democratic and civic engagement.

#### To Assess if the ICTs Policy Framework in Burundi Fosters Democratic and Civic Engagement

#### Discussion and Conclusion

Objective three sought to establish whether ICT policy framework in Burundi fostered democratic and civic engagement. This study's findings on the ICT platforms used in civic engagement indicated that Facebook was used by a majority of the citizens (63.3%) in civic engagement, followed by WhatsApp (61.9%) and twitter (24.7%). Further, the study established that the citizens had a moderate level of civic engagement ( $M=19.8$ ,  $SD=6.367$ ). This could be explained by the fact that the government was accused by respondents of not considering their contribution. As indicated in previous findings (p.138), government representatives claimed that they considered citizen's contribution while these latter accused government of selective responding. Topics that

are not related to politics and opinions that are not opposed to the government were well received compared to political ones, said opposition representatives during FGD. Moreover, citizens were unhappy because they did not know well which ICT platforms were more appropriate for efficient participation. Findings have indicated that 28.2% strongly disagreed and 3.5% strongly agreed on the fact that they were aware of the ICT platforms used by the government. As a result, as indicated earlier (p.183) citizens do not believe that their online contribution counts to influence government action.

From the literature review, the findings of this study are different from others found in other sociopolitical context. Earlier studies which assessed this showed different model of e-democracy and their pertinence with respect to e-democracy. In Thailand for instance, Chutimaskul and Funikul (2004) found that e-democracy framework had addressed critical issues that are likely to make it efficient and effective. Their findings indicated that "e-democratic framework consists of the generic sustainable e-Democracy and e-Democracy application". Their findings indicated that e-democracy framework addressed the following key elements:" a) raise the value of citizen lives, b) reduce the gap between government and citizens, c) increase the efficiency of parliament, d) reduce the difference of citizens, and e) support the development of making Thailand equivalent to other developed countries (p.28). In this sense, their e-democracy framework addressed elements that are susceptible to make e-democracy efficient as it is citizen-oriented. When e-democracy framework is well conceived, it meets citizens' expectations and citizens' satisfaction as indicated earlier is a measurement of efficient and effective e-democracy.

Following these findings, this study noted with regret that there had not been any form of evaluation of the current ICT development policy in Burundi. Since its inception in 2015, no evaluation had been done yet it was meant to serve for five years, which will end 2020. Under these conditions, it is difficult for the government to establish which aspects of e-democracy work well and which ones do not. Elsewhere, findings have shown how it is important to conduct such evaluation. From the literature, Olekesusi and Aiyegeba (2017) evaluated the effectiveness of e-democracy framework in Lagos and found that it was effective in monitoring projects through specific ICT platforms designed and communicated to the citizens. At the same time, their findings indicated that e-democracy framework was not efficient in e-voting. Similarly, Oni and Mbarika (2016) in Nigeria found that "90% of the participants agreed that the frameworks offer a comprehensive view of e-democracy implementation program; 70% agreed that the framework has the plausibility to guide governments in e-democracy implementation, and 70% agreed that the framework has the plausibility to serve as springboard for e-democracy in the nations of the world" (p.470). These levels of satisfaction that are over 70% are likely to confirm that e-democracy framework is critical in making e-democracy effective and efficient.. As demonstrated earlier, citizen satisfaction is a critical indicator of the efficacy of e-democracy. But without evaluation, it becomes difficult to know what works better and what does not. As a result, a well-crafted e-democracy framework is likely to foster citizen participation in decision making and civic engagement.

In addition, during interviews with the representative of civil society and representative of the opposition political parties, they said that they were not even aware of the existence of this policy framework. Only the representatives of the ruling party

were aware of its existence. Considering that political parties and civil society are key stakeholders in democracy, this indicated how this e-democracy framework was not likely to foster citizen participation. In reality, earlier findings indicated that among key components of any democracy act, the civil society has to be involved in decision making. From the literature review, findings from Beethama (1994)' study indicated that "civil society is the nexus of associations through which people organize independently to manage their own affairs, and which can also act as a channel of influence upon government and a check on its powers".

Equally important, findings on the current e-democracy framework in Burundi are a subsection among others in the ICT development policy. Out of 74 pages, e-democracy which is vaguely confused with e-governance occupies two pages (page 39& 40). By definition, this document indicates that the major contribution of e-democracy is to improve the accountability by the government, to improve the transparency, and to enhance citizen participation in governance. Although the mission is clear and looks good, the framework does not go further to indicate how concretely the citizens can participate and by which e-democracy platforms they can use to pass their grievances. These findings are different from the ones found by Henderson, Horgarth and Jeans (2001) in assessing the e-democracy framework of Queensland. Their findings indicated that it was conceived in a comprehensive document that showed the definition of e-democracy, its objectives which is "to strengthen representative democracy", the modalities of implementation, and the modes of uses so that citizens can be facilitated in participation. Moreover, they found that e-democracy was conceived in logic of complementarity with existing modes of participation and consultation. Equally

important, they discovered that the government takes a commitment to ensure "equitable online access" and "responsiveness." Conversely, the current e-democracy in Burundi does not address these critical issues that are likely to facilitate and enhance citizen participation. The Burundian e-democracy framework is limited to just explaining the meaning of the three objectives that are: to improve the accountability by the government, to improve the transparency, and to enhance citizen participation in governance.

Lastly, findings indicated that majority of respondents (28% strongly disagreed) were not aware of appropriate ICT platforms to use for engaging government and their perception of whether the government used ICTs to enhance their participation was moderate. In reality, some citizens participated but they had an impression that their contributions were not taken into consideration. In addition to other reasons mentioned earlier, it can also be associated with the fact that the current e-democracy in Burundi has not set specific ICT platforms that citizens are expected to use for participation. Citizens use the same ICT platforms they use for private affairs. These findings are opposed to the ones found in Queensland (Handerson, Horgarth & Jeans, 2001), European Union Countries (Christian, 2010) and Lagos (Olekesusi and Aiyegbajeje, 2017) e-democracy framework. In their e-democracy, these two States have set up specific e-democracy platforms to be used for citizen participation. In Lagos for example, "e-campaign", "e-monitoring", and "e-poll" were set for facilitating and enhancing citizen participation in monitoring projects.

In conclusion, the third objective was assessing whether the e-democracy framework in Burundi was likely to foster democratic and civic engagement. The

findings showed that current ICT development policy is not likely to foster citizen participation. The current one is not primarily citizen-oriented. Rather it was closer to e-government and economy-oriented as it stressed the benefits that government agencies and the private sector could gain by integrating ICTs in the existing means of serving the citizens. On the other hand, referring to other studies' findings, the efficacy of e-democracy is citizen-oriented. In this sense, it is able to define what its intention are, what it wishes to address and how citizens are likely to participate and more importantly to take a commitment that every citizen's contribution counts in decision making. Yet nothing of that could be found in the current ICT development policy of Burundi. In reality, there was no proper e-democracy framework as e-democracy was just a subsection among other ICT benefits.

Also, the findings of this study implied that the current ICT development policy was not likely to foster citizen participation because it was not inclusive. As a matter of fact, key stakeholders such as political parties and civil society organizations involved in governance and democratic processes were neither involved in its realization nor informed about its existence. Yet it is meant to end in 2020. This denotes another aspect that shows that, at its current stage, it is not likely to foster democratic and civic engagement because "the ideology of citizen participation has firm roots in democratic political values, especially relating to the concept of participatory democracy" (Milakovich, 2010, p.2).

More importantly, considering that communication is "constitute of democracy, the current e-democracy has issues of communication. Compared to other e-democracy frameworks, the Burundian one has not set up specific channels through which citizens

might participate and expect to be heard. As such, it is not likely to foster democratic and civic engagement as two-way communication is not yet implemented. In fact, the efficiency of e-democracy shall be grounded principles of participatory democracy theory. This theory emphasizes that idea of e-democracy refers to the effort to enhance citizen participation in political actions, enabling connection among citizens, and interaction between citizens and their representatives via the ICTs (Baarda & Luppicini, 2017). As far as e-democracy does not facilitate and enhance citizen participation, the sense of participatory democracy would be compromised because "the ideology of citizen participation has firm roots in democratic political values, especially relating to the concept of participatory democracy" (Milakovich, 2010, p.2).

In line with the discussion about the current e-democracy in Burundi in relation to its capacity to foster democratic and civic engagement, the following section will formulate suggestions towards policy makers and future research.

#### Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Areas of Research

In view of the findings, the recommendations towards Burundi government are as follows:

To draw an e-democracy framework on its own which defines all that is likely to facilitate and enhance citizen participation. It should define how Burundi government understands e-democracy, the objectives of e-democracy, how e-democracy is integrated in existing means of participation, to defines who does what among the different democracy stakeholders, to ensure responsiveness and equal chance to participate and to

ensure respect for divergent contribution so that those who have ideas opposed to the government can feel free to express themselves.

In order to foster citizen participation, I would recommend that Burundi government refers to other countries by putting in place concrete and efficient e-democracy platforms. In this sense, there would be accountability because citizens and government will be communicating through the same channels.

In addition, considering that a healthy democracy is supposed to be inclusive, I would suggest that Burundi government involves different stakeholders in democracy when they will evaluate the current ICT development Policy as it ends in 2020. By involving them, there is a chance that the new one will be more representative and owned by the people as the stakeholders may help to inform on its integration.

Lastly, even if it is not yet done, I would suggest that Burundi government organizes a communication campaign so that every Burundian citizen can be aware of the existence of the ICT development policy.

Besides the policy makers, this study suggested also areas for further research. It suggests that a similar study shall be conducted after 2020 so that there can be an evaluation of whether the new ICT development framework is more inclusive. 2020 is when the current ICT policy development will end. Equally important, further research might also get interested to evaluate the communication that accompanies the implementation of e-democracy framework.

## The Extent to which E-democracy Facilitates Citizen Participation in Burundi

### Discussion and Conclusion

Objective four sought to establish the extent to which e-democracy facilitates citizen participation in Burundi. Analysis on the platforms used by the government to facilitate citizen participation established that the government majorly used social media (30%), followed by SMS platforms (24.1%) and then websites (20.1%). The fact that the citizens majorly used social media platforms as opposed to the other platforms could be best explained by the use and gratification model whereby citizens choose their preferred platforms depending on their ability to manipulate them and their motivation to engage with political actors or engage with other citizens. Considering that the participants in the study mainly composed of the youths, they were more likely to be on social media and therefore perceive the government as communicating more on social media compared to the other platforms. In agreement with Norris (2007), 'the choice of which tools are used and which share of the whole information and communication offerings e-democracy tools will have in relation to other media and forms (e.g. print media, physical meetings) varies, depending on the subject, the scope and range, and the addressees of the participation offering in question' (p. 207).

The level of citizens' participation in the government use of these platforms to enhance citizen participation was established to be moderate ( $M=8.58$ ,  $SD=2.71$ ). The findings showed that the majority of the people had a moderate level of satisfaction. This fact was explained by the citizens as associated with the fact that the government was not responsive as it ought to be. In addition, there were other political factors such as fear for repression, fear of isolation and others that did not encourage some citizens to participate

in e-democracy. In practice, the extent to which e-democracy was likely to facilitate and enhance citizen participation was measured in two ways. On one hand, the level of participation (quantity) and the perception of the citizens with regard to considering their contribution (quality).

In terms of level of participation, the findings indicated that for communicating with government and accessing government information, citizens use the following ICT platforms: Facebook (64%); WhatsApp (53.7); Twitter (36.8%); Youtube (34.9); Government website (33%); Instagram (9.4%); LinkedIn (2.8%); Snapchat (2.2%). Referring to studies done elsewhere, the level of participation through different means availed by the government have shown different findings depending. Christina (2010) who conducts a study to evaluate the efficacy of e-democracy platforms in European union country members found that 88% use e-discussion, 41 e-initiatives, 53%- e-petition, 94% e-consultation, 59% feedback, 71% e-complaints, 65% e-polls, 47% e-voting, 71% e-campaigning, 29% e-budgeting, 53% e-consulate or e-embassy, 82% webcasts, 47% e-meetings, 35%e-democracy games, 29% e-awards, and 59% on others." In fact, the difference between Christina's findings and the ones of this study are different not only by the fact that means used Burundians and Europeans are different. But more importantly, the difference lies in the fact that Christina's findings indicated that European countries had set specific e-democracy platforms for facilitating and enhancing citizen participation. This is equally valuable with Olekesusi and Aiyegbajeje (2017) findings in Lagos. The State has set up specific means of participation in monitoring projects. These special e-democracy platforms put in place are dedicated to facilitating citizen participation in decision making and public affairs in general. But in Burundi, it

was the initiative of the citizens to look for platforms that are used by the government to access information and communicate their opinions. There were no special e-democracy platforms that were dedicated to facilitate e-democracy. Citizens use ordinary social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and tweeter. Moreover, findings showed that the extent to which e-democracy facilitated citizen participation in Burundi was moderate because of the way the government considered citizens' contribution. In fact, although a large number of respondents (22%) agreed that ICTs had enabled them to participate in government and public affairs, only 9.9% of them agreed that the government considered their online contribution. These figures explain the moderate level of appreciation by the citizens and they show the extent to which e-democracy facilitated citizen participation. This finding was further explained in the FGD with students representing their peers who participated in the survey.

The FGD participants noted that although the youth gave their views, they were not considered by government in its decision making. The youth added that this made them think that government was not sincere. Rather it was just a kind of distraction whereby it shared information meant to be discussed but did not consider their contributions. They noted that the government kept taking decisions without considering any of the youth's opinions. Others added that there was a generation conflict whereby most of the political leaders thought that ICTs were used by the youth and the youth are generally regarded as immature and cannot be involved in decision making. Consequently, governments have to be careful when they pretend to involve citizens in the decision-making process without being committed to take into account citizens' contributions. The risk associated with that is that "if individuals are unsatisfied with the

results of their participation in public policy, then they would unlikely participate in other public issues" (Carreira, Machado, & Vasconcelos, 2016).

In conclusion, the fourth objective sought to investigate the extent to which Burundi e-democracy facilitated citizen participation in Burundi. Findings indicated that the extent to which e-democracy facilitated citizen participation in Burundi was moderate. On one hand, there were no adequate e-democracy platforms that were likely to facilitate citizen participation. While other countries have designed specific e-democracy platforms that allow government and citizens to engage and, therefore, allow a proper evaluation of the levels of participation, in Burundi citizens used common tools that they used both for participation in public affairs and private affairs.

In addition, this study concluded that the extent to which e-democracy facilitated citizen participation in Burundi was moderate because of the low level of citizens who believed that their contribution was considered in decision making. However, it didn't mean that there was no any form of considerable citizen participation. There were though the citizens would wish to raise its level.

Lastly, this study concluded that the extent to which e-democracy facilitated citizen participation in Burundi was moderate because the citizens' hopes were not yet met. Citizens hoped that with the advent of ICTs, the traditional barriers associated with traditional means of participation and communication was going to disappear. In opposition to the traditional means of participation, the participatory democracy theorists argued that "people can access easily internet without restrictions and generally without paying highly as opposed to newspaper; as such, it allow inclusivity for those who have

access and people can debate irrespective of their classes and geographical localization".

In relation to the pragmatic position taken in the study, the relevance of e-democracy was seen through its capacity to resolve the problem. In this case, it was to enable citizen participation in decision making and public affairs in general but in Burundi it does to a moderate extent because of reasons explained earlier.

In view of this discussion and conclusion, the following sections intend to provide recommendations towards policy makers and further areas of research.

#### Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Areas of Research

In regard to the way citizens considered the extent to which e-democracy facilitated citizen participation, the following recommendation were formulated towards Burundi government:

The Burundi government should consider improving the current e-democracy as it does not meet citizens' expectations. For instance, by taking into consideration citizens' contribution and find a way to ensure them that the concerns raised has retained government's attention.

Additionally, the Burundi government should consider setting up specific e-democracy platforms which will be used to effectively respond to citizens' contributions instead of doing it randomly as they do now as this will facilitate and enhance citizen participation.

Besides Burundi government, this study suggests further areas of research.

In many cases, civil society and opposition parties are so critical to the government with the way it has put in place e-democracy so as to involve citizens in decision making. However, further researchers can assess the extent to which civil society and opposition parties have integrated e-democracy with respect to facilitating and enhancing their members in decision making.

In addition, as indicated in other parts, it would be interesting for other researchers to evaluate the extent to which e-democracy facilitates citizen participation at another moment in the future in order to note the changes.

In general conclusion, the purpose of this study was sought to investigate the extent to which e-democracy facilitated and enhanced citizen participation. Findings indicated that Burundians participated in decision making through e-democracy using different means but have a low level of satisfaction. They accessed government information through the different ICT platforms, but the major issue was that their contribution was not considered. Consequently, this had a negative impact on their level of satisfaction with respect to the government use of ICT platforms. In the opinion of the majority of respondents, ICTs were more used for provision of information rather than for interaction. As far as political factors such as fear for repression, non-responsiveness on citizens contributions, lack of integration of e-democracy in other means of communication, fear of feedback, and lack of a specific and well-adapted e-democracy framework are not well catered, e-democracy will remain at provisional level despite its "inherent interactivity" asset. In fact, "decision makers may feel threatened by the development of e-democracy. They think that e-democracy may take away some of their prerogatives, duties, and responsibilities. It must be made clear to decision-makers that

this is not what e-democracy is about. E-democracy can, on the contrary, facilitate the work of decision makers. E-democracy provides decision makers with new and additional opportunities to communicate with citizens in a direct and effective way" (Council of Europe report, 2009,p.51).

In addition, this study confirms the hypothesis that e-democracy - "its application and effectiveness"- is well assessed when it is done in a specific sociopolitical context (Breindl & Francq, 2008). In fact, the political system of each country influences the effectiveness of e-democracy (Liden, 2015). As a result, while there were some aspects of e-democracy found in Burundi that were similar to other countries. Similarly, there were other aspects of e-democracy that were specific to Burundi. For instance, the fact that parliament had adopted that debates be followed online or through the traditional means of communication was not common in many African countries. In addition, based on the nature, "lack of national or other boundaries," e-democracy has influenced civil society and opposition leaders to keep participating in Burundi democracy and decision making from exile. Even if the government might not acknowledge it, influential civil society and opposition leaders have influenced somewhat some decisions. Lastly, some criticism from the respondents indicated that the government has not yet integrated e-democracy in other means of participation. Yet various scholars (Alathur & Gupta, 2014; Balog and Badurini in Croatia, 2017) agree that conceiving e-democracy in a logic of continuum with other means of communication and participation is critical in ensuring equal access to information and equal participation through means preferred by the citizens. Otherwise, the Burundi government runs the risk to being accused of digital divide and undermining the potential that ICTs have.

## Summary of the Chapter

This chapter was about the discussion of findings in line with the findings of the literature review. The discussion has stressed on the relationships between the findings of this study with the four objectives. Based on the discussion, it was possible to draw conclusions on different aspects of e-democracy in Burundi. In general, it was concluded that the way the Burundi government used ICTs facilitated access to information but did not facilitate and enhance effective citizen participation as it stressed on provision of information rather than interaction. Other conclusions were about other aspects which contributed to making e-democracy efficient such as a good integration of e-democracy in communication strategy and the importance of an appropriate e-democracy framework.

Based on the conclusions, it was possible to suggest ways in which Burundi government shall take advantage of the potential of e-democracy with regard to facilitating and enhancing citizen participation. One of the major suggestions was for the government to create an environment where citizens feel secure when they are to share their opinions and consider the online contribution so that citizens might get confidence that their contributions matter. This would adhere to the essence of democracy as the power of the people by the people.

In fact, as underlined in this study, as far as factors such as trust, consideration of citizen contribution and facilitating the access by the majority of the population, e-democracy efficacy will remain a concern. As a result, instead of being a tool for communication and citizen participation in democracy, it risks becoming a tool for information and "propaganda". With respect to communication, to be effective, e-democracy should be grounded in a global communication strategy. If it is not grounded

in communication strategy, e-democracy will remain at the level of ICT tools separated from other means of communication. In this case, there will be lack of complementarity whereas this is the key in communication. Moreover, it is key in the context of Burundi where the majority of the population does not have access to ICTs. If e-democracy acts in accordance with other traditional means of communication, there will be coherence and it will reduce the manipulation that those who have access to ICTs might have over those who do not.

Lastly, even if e-democracy is still in its early "information provisional" and "consultative" phase in Burundi, this study encouraged different stakeholders not to let down the guard. As stated by Bimber, Stohl, and Flanagin (2010), the advent of ICTs will influence in a way democracy as it allows ordinary citizens to engage top leaders. Even if the respondents were still moderately satisfied with Burundi government, there is hope because people concerned are considering ICTs as an alternative means to participate in public affairs and debates on topics that affect their lives.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Document Review Guide

The document review is applied on "the national policy for information communication technologies in Burundi (2010-2015)". With regard to the topic of this study, this document's findings, along with quantitative data, was expected to inform the objective three which is to assess whether the ICT policy framework fosters civic and democratic engagement in Burundi.

- What is the overall objective of the document review?
- What is the specific document to be reviewed?
- Where to find the document? (Hard copy; soft copy or online copy?)
- Is there authorization needed to access the document?
- What are the general information about the document?
- What place e-democracy occupies compared to the volume of the document?
- How e-democracy is defined in national policy for information communication technologies in Burundi (2010-2015)?
- Is e-democracy differentiated from e-governance?
- Did the ICT policy framework established how e-democracy will be in complementarity with existing means of participation and communication?
- Did the ICT policy framework mentioned specific e-democracy platforms or means to be used by the citizens to participate in decision making?
- Did the e-democracy framework defined mechanisms to respond to citizens' contributions in order to guarantee accountability?

## Appendix II: Questionnaire

### Survey Introduction

My name is Yves NDAYIKUNDA, I am PhD student at Daystar University Kenya. I am kindly requesting you to fill this questionnaire for an academic study on “Enhancing Citizen Participation through E-democracy in Burundi”. Should you need to contact me for any reason related to your participation in this study, please do on [yndayikunda@gmail.com](mailto:yndayikunda@gmail.com) or tel. + 257 79 999 886. Your demographic information and responses will remain confidential and strictly used for the purpose of this study.

Respondent's consent by a signature

#### I. Demographic information

Q1. AGE (Please Pick where it applies)	
18-24years	
25-34 years	
35 and above	
Refused to answer	

Q2. Current level of study? (Please Pick where it applies)	
Year 1	
Year 2	
Year 3	
Master	
PhD	

#### II. Access to ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies - computer, social media, mobile phone, websites)

Q3.Thinking about all the devices that you use in your daily activities, to what extent would say you are proficient to successfully use them in your daily life using a scale of 1 to 5 (1 means not at all proficient and 5 is extremely proficient? Select one answer per device

	Not at all proficient	Somewhat proficient	Medium proficient	Proficient	Extremely proficient
Computer-Desktop					
Computer-Laptop					
Ordinary cell phone (feature phone)					
Smart Phone					
IPad					
Other (please specify_____)					

Q4. Do you have access to the internet? Pick a single response

Yes	
No	

III. Use of ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies - computer, social media, mobile phone, websites)

Q5. Approximately, how frequently do you normally use the following social networking sites? (Pick all that apply)

	More than once in a day	Daily	Thrice a week	Twice a week	Once a week	Fortnightly (Every 2 weeks)	Once a month

Facebook							
WhatsApp							
Twitter							
LinkedIn							
Snapchat							
Mobile Phone (ordinary & smart phone)							
E-mail							

Q6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements relating to the importance of using ICTs, using a scale of 1 to 5 (1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree) Single response per statement

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
I find ICTs quite useful in knowing what is happening in the country						
I use ICTs for expanding my understanding of social and political affairs						

I use ICTs to seek information						
I use ICTs for networking						
I use social media to share my opinion about new stories						
I use ICTs for sharing my own opinion						
I use ICTs for marketing my ideas						
I use ICTs for learning						
I use ICTs for connecting with real and virtual friends						
I use ICTs as a psychological therapy (expression of my positive and negative emotions)						
I find ICTs useful for entertainment						
I use ICTs for social recognition						
I use ICTs for social acceptance						
I use ICTs for activism						
I use ICTs to access to global data and information						
I use ICTs to access to people that I cannot access in real life						

I use social media to report breaking news in my community						
--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Q7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements relating to the use of social media in politics, using a scale of 1 to 5 (1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree) Single response per statement

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
The political information I find on social media is generally credible						
The political information I find on social media has improved my political knowledge and understanding						
To confirm a political information found on social media, I have to check with local traditional media (newspaper, radio, TV)						
To confirm a political information found on social media, I have to check with international traditional media (RFI, France24, TV5 Monde, Al Jazeera,)						
To confirm a political information found on social media, I have to check with my friends						

#### IV. Means to access government information and communication

Q8. In your opinion, which ICTs platform(s) do you use in accessing government information? (Pick all that apply and multiple answers are possible)

ICTs platforms	Access
Facebook	

Twitter	
WhatsApp	
You tube	
LinkedIn	
Instagram	
Snapchat	
Government websites	
Other (specify)	

Q9. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about participation online in public affairs, using a scale of 1 – 5 (1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree? Single response per statement

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
My online participation matters to voice my opinion to Government's actions					
My online participation helps me to be in touch with the Government					
My activities online attract government's attention					
With my online participation, I can influence government policy and action					
My online signature on petitions can influence government's					

policy					
My online vote counts to chance policy					

Q10.What challenges have you encountered in while using modern technologies to interact with government or accessing government information (Pick where that apply and multiple answer possible)

High cost of internet	
High cost of a smart phone	
High cost of maintenance (cost of data bundles)	
Platforms not accessible with my device	
Unreliable internet connectivity	
Lack of training/ knowledge	
Few information speak to my real need	
Other Specify (_____)	

#### V. Political efficacy

Q11.To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your interest in politics and governance, using a scale of 1 – 5 (1 means strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree)? Single response per statement

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I am interested in politics					

I like following news about political events and developments					
I am interested in news about government					
I actively seek out information about government					
I like engaging with government and government officials online					
I keenly follow what politicians and government leaders are doing and saying					
I like sharing posts of my preferred political leaders					
I like reacting to political publications online					

Q12. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the use of social media in politics, using a scale of 1 – 5 (1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree? Single response per statement

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
There is too much political information on Social Networking Sites.					
I enjoy engaging in political discussions on Social media.					
Political message should be blocked/stopped on social media					
My friends are too political on social media					

There should be more political information on social media					
I enjoy reading and sharing political messages on social media					
Most of my friends post political information on social media.					
Social media is mostly used by politician to divide the people					
I can't stand political information posted on social media					

#### VI. Interest in politics and governance

Q13. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your interpersonal discussion on social media, using a scale of 1 – 5 (1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree? Single response per statement

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I always pay attention to political information					
I really pay attention to political information					
I am indifferent to political information					
Most of the time I agree with political opinion posted by friends on social media					

Most of the time I disagree with political opinion posted by friends on social media					
Political information of social media contradict my opinion					
Political information of social media agree with my opinion					
When I find opinion with which I disagree on social media, I criticize them					
When I find opinion with which I disagree on social media, I delete/block					
When I find opinion with which I disagree on social media, I ignore					
When I find opinion with which I disagree on social media, I appreciate without agreeing					
When I find opinion with which I disagree on social media, I embrace it					

Q14. In the last month, how often did you engage in discussions of political issues with the following?

	Often	Somewhat often	Neither often nor rarely	Somewhat rarely	Rarely	Never	Don't Know
1. Parents							
2. Siblings							
3. Lecturers							

4. Friends							
5. Schoolmates							
6. Government Officials							
7. Politicians							
8. Religious Leaders							
9. Civil society workers							

Q15. In your opinion, to what extent would say government's use of the following ICTs platforms facilitates and enhances citizen participation, using a scale of 1 to 5 (1 means not at all and 5 means to a very great extent ?Select one answer per device

	Not all	at	To somewhat	Neutral	I agree	To a very great extent
Websites						
Social Media platforms						
SMS services and platforms						

## VII. Government use of ICTs and citizen satisfaction

Q16. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your satisfaction with regard to the way Government ICTs in order to facilitate and enhance your participation in decision making, using a scale of 1 – 5 (1 means strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree)? Single response per statement

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
ICT technologies make it easier to access government services					
New technologies make it possible to provide feedback to government					
ICTs enable me to engage with local and national government leaders					
My views online are considered by the government					
ICTs enable me to participate in government and public affairs					
ICTs have made me a more politically active citizen					
ICTs have empowered me as a citizen to give my voice					
ICTs has removed the social divide barriers associated with access to traditional means (radio, tv, and newspapers): any ordinary citizen can access government information and/or share an opinion					
ICTs have allowed me to play my role as a stakeholder in democracy					
The Government cares about matching the tools we (Government & Citizens) use to be able to interact					

Online contributions are considered in decision making					
Government organizes ways to seek online opinions in decision making					
Online opinion are considered as important as the ones expressed via traditional means (Radio, News paper, TV, and Meetings)					

Q17. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the integration ICTs in other means of communication used by the government, using a scale of 1 – 5 (1 means strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree)? Single response per statement

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
The majority of citizens who use ICTs are aware of the ICTs used by the government					
The Government has run a communication campaign to promote the use of ICTs platforms in order to facilitate and enhance citizen participation					
Government considers online contributions/opinions as important as the ones expressed via traditional media (Radio, News paper, TV, and Meetings)					
The usage of ICT by the Government is integrated in other means of communication					

Government information and communication received via ICT is the same as the one received via traditional means of information and communication (Radio, TV, Newspaper, Meetings)					
The way ICTs are used by the government constitute an alternative in terms of diversification of means of communication to enhance citizen participation in decision making					

Q18. Considering that the government uses various ICTs platforms and traditional means of information and communication (meetings, radio, newspapers, TV) to inform and communicate with the citizens, how satisfied are you with the following tools on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not satisfied at all and 5 is very satisfied? Select one answer per device

	Not at all satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Indifferent	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Facebook					
Twitter					
Youtube					
You tube					
Government website					
Newspapers					
Radio					
TV					

### VIII. Civic Engagement

Q19. How often did you do the following during the last two months?

	Often often	Somewhat often	Neither often or rarely rarely	Somewhat rarely	Rarely	N/A	D/N
1. Volunteering for Province/Commune/Zone dealing with community issues							
2. Going to see, speak to, or write to members of local authorities about needs or problems							
3. Working with others in the community to solve community problems through community forums.							
4. Taking part in a protest or demonstration on a local issue.							
5. Taking part in forming a group to solve community problems							
6. Mobilizing Others for a cause							

Q20. In your opinion, which ICTs platform(s) do you use in civic engagement  
Multiple answer possible (pick all that apply)

ICTs	Access
------	--------

Facebook	
Twitter	
WhatsApp	
You tube	
LinkedIn	
Instagram	
Snapchat	
Government websites	
Other (specify)	

### Appendix III: Focus Group Discussion Guides

#### Focus Group Discussion1 - Democracy Stakeholders: Youth Political Parties leaders

Name interviewer	of Yves NDAYIKUNDA, PhD Candidate Topic: Enhancing Citizen Participation through E-democracy: A Case of Burundi Government
Name interviewee	Presidents of Youth Leagues from different political parties & their communication officers
Focus	Conference Room in the city of Bujumbura to ensure neutrality
Date of focus group discussion	December14, 2018

#### Identification

- 2 representatives of CNDD-FDD: Ruling party - member of parliament and government. These ones are called PP1 for the sake of keeping their anonymity.
- 2 representatives of UPRONA: Neutral party but close to the ruling party - member of parliament and government. These ones are called PP2 for the sake of keeping their anonymity.
- 2 representatives of Coalition Amizero y'Abarundi (Coalition of 2 political parties from Opposition): Opposition - member of parliament and government. These ones are called PP3 for the sake of keeping their anonymity.

#### Questions

1. Do you think the youth under your leadership uses ICT for participating in democracy?
2. Do you think the advent of ICT has increased youth participation in democratic process?

3. Do you believe ICT has the potential to enhance citizen participation?
4. Do you believe the way Burundi government uses ICTs facilitates and enhances citizen participation?
5. Do you believe government considers your online contributions?
6. The Youth Ministry has initiated a National Policy for ICT Development. What do you know about it?
7. During the crisis of 2015, government tempted to block access to WhatsApp but the population managed to overcome this by the use of VPN code. Do you think WhatsApp is one of the major tool whereby citizen can participate actively? What are the other tools do you think Burundians use most among the ICTs?
8. In your opinion, what are the major tools used by the youth in political participation?
9. Do you think government cares about matching its online tools of communication and the ones preferred by the citizens?
10. Some of the youth you are in charge of do not have access to ICT. How do you ensure inclusivity in decision making? Do you believe traditional means of communication remain relevant in the democratic process towards the youth?
11. What are other uses of ICT with regard to citizen participation?
12. What would you suggest to make e-democracy more efficient in Burundi?
13. Do you have something else you wish to add on e-democracy and citizen participation in Burundi?

## Focus group discussion2: With students representing survey participants

### Identification

- 9 students from 3 universities: 3 from University of Burundi, 3 from Université Lumière de Bujumbura and 3 from Great Lakes University
- Ages: 4 have 18-24; 5 have 25-34
- Education level: Year 2 & 3 (4 Year2, & 5 Year3)
- For making easier the interactions, participants have been called A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I.

### QUESTIONS

1. Many scholars agree that ICTs have the potential to enhance citizen participation. What do you think about ?
2. From the findings, a large majority of the respondents have access to internet, are interested in politics but most of them do not share their political opinion on social media. Why that?
3. Most of respondents prefer to discuss, using ICTs, with their friends rather than their families, political leaders and their lecturers. Why?
4. Most of the respondents have a feeling that their ideas are not considered by the government?
  - What do you think?
  - How do you know that they are not considered?
  - How would you want them to be considered?
5. Some respondents say that they do not know the ICT tools used by the government?
  - What do you think?
  - What can be done for increasing the level of the awareness of the tools used by the government?
6. Some respondents say that the government considers their contribution. Others say that government is selective either by responding to issues raised by members of ruling party or issues that are in the interest of the government. What do you think about this assertion?
7. Some respondents say that the information that get from traditional media (radio, TV, and NP) is not the same with the one received on social media (from government)?
8. Why some respondents (youth) still believe that radio information is more credible compared to social media one?
9. Do you have something else to add?

## Appendix IV: Interview Guides

### Guide interview - Democracy Stakeholders: Civil Society Leaders

Name interviewer	of	Yves NDAYIKUNDA, PhD Candidate
	Topic:	Enhancing Citizen Participation through E-democracy: A Case of Burundi Government
Name interviewee	of	Secretary Generals/Executive Directors
Place of interview		Their Offices
Date of interview		December 24, 2018

#### Questions

1. What do you think about the use of ICT to facilitate and enhance citizen participation?
2. Do you believe the way Burundi government uses ICTs facilitates and enhances citizen participation?
3. Do you believe government considers contributions from citizens who use ICTs in democracy and other aspects of life which require public opinion?
4. Do you think citizens are well informed and educated on the use of ICT to participate in decision making on matters that affect their lives?
5. During the crisis of 2015, government tempted to block access to WhatsApp but the population managed to overcome this by the use of VPN code. Do you think WhatsApp is one of the major tool whereby citizen can participate actively? What are the other tools do you think Burundians use most among the ICTs?
6. Do you think government cares about matching its online tools of communication and the ones preferred by the citizens?
7. Do you think the citizen believe that their online contributions in decision making are considered?
8. Do you think there is a good integration of ICTs and traditional means of communication which enable citizen participation?
9. Are you involved in the preparation and implementation of the National Policy on the ICTs Development?

10. What would you suggest to make e-democracy more efficient in Burundi?
11. Do you have something else you wish to add on e-democracy and citizen participation in Burundi?

Guide interview -Youth Ministry, Posts and Information Technology

Name of interviewer	Yves NDAYIKUNDA, PhD Candidate  Topic: Enhancing Citizen Participation through E-democracy: A Case of Burundi Government
Name of interviewee	Director General of ICT -Ministry of Youth, Posts, and Information Technologies
Place of interview	Her Office
Date of interview	December 27, 2018

Questions

Your department has coordinated the creation of the National Policy on ICT development.

1. To what ultimate need did you wish to address? With respect to democracy and citizen participation, what did you wish to address?
2. As a Ministry in charge of the youth and ICT management, what is your opinion about the following considerations:
  - 1) Would you explain me please what the youth do with ICTs?
  - 2) Why some tools are preferred compared to others?
3. In your document on National Policy on ICT Development, you intend to integrate ICT in every sector of people's life including democracy. In democracy, you have stressed citizen participation.
  - 1) Why citizen participation has retained your attention and what forms of citizen participation did you think about?
4. To facilitate and enhance citizen participation, there has to be a matching between the tools used by government and the ones used by the citizen. In which way is this true in Burundi? (How do you know?)

5. In which way do you make sure that there is a matching between the tools used by government and the ones used by the citizen to ensure participation in decision making?
6. Among the youth, there is a category of them who do not have access to ICT, how do you associate them in decision making or participation in general?
7. In which way the use of ICTs can improve citizen participation in decision making?
8. Do you think citizens are well informed and educated on the use of ICT to participate in decision making on matters that affect their lives?
9. During the crisis of 2015, government tempted to block access to WhatsApp but the population managed to overcome this by the use of VPN code. Do you think WhatsApp is one of the major tool whereby citizen can participate actively? whatelse tools do you think Burundians use most among the ICTs?
10. Do you think Burundi Government takes into consideration opinions and contributions from ICT users?
11. Do you think the way government uses ICTs facilitates and enhances citizen participation?
12. What opportunities do you see in e-democracy with respect to facilitating and enhancing citizen participation?
13. What are the major challenges do you face in e-democracy?
14. How do you envision to resolve those issues?
15. Do you have something else you wish to add on e-democracy and citizen participation in Burundi?

#### Guide interview - Interior Ministry, Patriotic Formation, and Local Development

Name of interviewer	Yves NDAYIKUNDA, PhD Candidate
Topic:	Enhancing Citizen Participation through E-democracy: A Case of Burundi Government
Name of interviewee	General Director of Patriotic Formation – Ministry of Interior, Patriotic Formation and Local Development
Place of interview	His Office
Date of interview	January 03, 2019

## Questions

1. The Ministry of Youth, Posts and Information Technologies has initiated “National Policy on the Development of ICT in Burundi” and your Ministry participates in its implementation. In this document, they emphasize citizen participation by the means of ICT.
2. Would you explain me please the added value of ICT in citizen participation?
3. How do you involve the youth in democratic process?
  - a. What are the means of communication do you use to involve the youth in democratic process?
  - b. How do you use ICT to involve the youth in democratic process?
  - c. Is the use of ICT integrated in the global communication strategy of your Ministry?
    1. If no, what are the reasons?
    2. If yes, would you explain please?
2. Do you believe that ICT is able to facilitate and enhance citizen participation?
3. To ensure citizen participation, it is mandatory to match government tools and the ones used by the citizens. In which way do you care about this?
4. Do you think citizens are well informed and educated on the use of ICT to participate in decision making on matters that affect their lives?
8. During the crisis of 2015, government tempted to block access to WhatsApp but the population managed to overcome this by the use of VPN code. Do you think WhatsApp is one of the major tool whereby citizen can participate actively? whatelse tools do you think Burundians use most among the ICTs?
9. How do you consider/integrate online contribution from citizens? And how do citizens know that you consider their online contributions?
10. Do you think the way you practice e-democracy facilitates and enhances citizen participation?
11. What are other opportunities do you see in e-democracy to facilitate and enhance citizen participation?
12. How do you integrate e-democracy and other traditional means of citizen participation considering that the majority of Burundians do not have access to ICTs?
13. Is e-democracy integrated in the communication strategy of your Ministry?
14. As your Ministry is in charge of patriotic formation and local development, in which other ways do you promote the use of ICT in involving the citizen in decision making?
15. What are the major challenges do you face in e-democracy?
16. How do you envision to resolve those issues?
17. Do you have something else to add on this issue of e-democracy in relation with citizen participation?

## Appendix V: Ethical Approval

Daystar University Ethics Review Board

Our Ref. DU-ERB/11/12/ 2018 /00216

Date: 11-12-2018

Yves Ndayikunda

Dear Yves,

### ENHANCING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION THROUGH E-DEMOCRACY IN BURUNDI

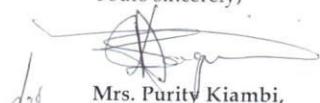
Reference is made to your request dated 19-11-2018 for ethical approval of your proposal by Daystar University Ethics Review Board.

We are pleased to inform you that ethical review has been done and approval granted. In line with the research projects policy, you will be required to submit a copy of the final research findings to the Board for records.

This approval is valid for a year from 11-12-2018

This approval does not exempt you from obtaining a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI).

Yours sincerely,



Mrs. Purity Kiambi,  
Secretary, Daystar University Ethics Review Board



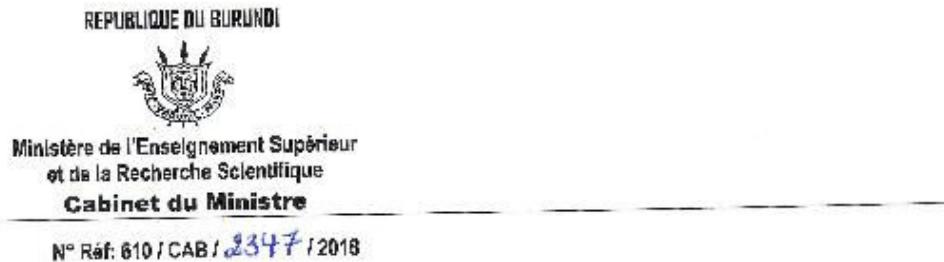
**Athi River Campus**  
P. O. Box 17-90145  
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Tel: 045 6622801 [2] [3]  
Fax: 045 6622424 [0]  
Email: [admissions@daystar.ac.ke](mailto:admissions@daystar.ac.ke)

**Nairobi Campus**  
P. O. Box 44400 - 00100,  
Nairobi, Kenya  
Tel: 020 2723 002 [3] [4]  
Fax: 020 2728338  
Email: [admission@daystar.ac.ke](mailto:admission@daystar.ac.ke)

[www.daystar.ac.ke](http://www.daystar.ac.ke)

"...until the day dawn and the **daystar**  
arise in your hearts"  
**2 Peter 1.19 KJV**

## Appendix VI: Research Permit



To Mr Yves NDAYIKUNDA  
Burundian Researcher from Daystar University - Kenya

Dear Mr Yves NDAYIKUNDA

**Ref:** Permission to conduct research

Following your request, I the undersigned, Dr Gaspar BANYANKIMBONA, PhD, Minister of High Education and Scientific Research in Burundi grants your permission to conduct your research whose topic is "Enhancing Citizen participation through e-democracy in Burundi". The permission granted will allow you to conduct a survey at University of Burundi, Great Lake University, and Université Lumière de Bujumbura. In addition, this permission allows you to conduct interviews and focus group discussion with different democracy stakeholders in Burundi concerned by your study. Please note that this permission is valid for one year.

In case there was any problem, please allow to contact us on +257 22229450.

Bujumbura, November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2018



Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique  
B.P. 1990 Bujumbura, Burundi. Boulevard de l'UPRONA. Tél: (+257) 22 22 94 50

## Appendix VII: Anti-Plagiarism Report

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All sources	100	Internet sources 27   Organization archive 8   Plagiarism Prevention Pool 44
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