

Hutu Rwandan Refugees of Dzaleka:
Double-exile and its Impact on Conceptions of Home and Identity

By: Caitlin Sievert

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Department of Social Sciences

Faculty of Arts

University of Ottawa

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Abstract:

The majority of empirical literature on refugee identity and homeland attachment focuses on single exile trajectories: one migratory movement out of the homeland and possibly repatriation. It largely neglects more complex experiences of exile and their implications. Double-exile, a second fleeing of one's homeland after repatriation, adds complexity to our conventional understanding of refugee perceptions of home and identity. This study explores double-exile experiences of the Rwandan Hutu refugee population of Dzaleka refugee camp to examine its impacts on notions of home and identity construction. This ethnographic study found that the Rwandan Hutu refugees have a unique relationship to home and identity. Double-exile ended their sense of belonging to Rwandan society. Thus causing a break in the conventional longing for home and deterritorializing their identity. These impacts are apparent through the juxtaposition of study participants' notions of home and their experiences of return and double-exile, a lack of connection or desire to return to Rwanda, and an absence of pride in their Rwandan identity and cultural practices. These findings suggest that more importance must be placed on the role of pre-flight experience of refugees as an integral element to their construction of notions of home. It also indicates that, contrary to more conventional exile trajectories where refugee identity is derived from a historical consciousness, double-exile refugees construct identity through a present-focus.

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Introduction

As the 1994 Rwandan genocide came to an end, roughly 2.5 million Hutus fled the country and claimed refugee status in neighboring Tanzania and Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of Congo (Anacleiti 1996, p.305). Only a year later the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) deemed the conditions in Rwanda had improved to the extent that the majority of refugees in Tanzania could repatriate without fear of repercussions (Waters 1997, p.3). By December of 1996, UNHCR, in partnership with the Tanzanian government, declared that “all Rwandese refugees in Tanzania are expected to return home by 31 December 1996” (Whitaker 2002, p.1). At the same time, in Zaire, the Rwandan government conducted a series of attacks on Hutu refugee camps along the border in an effort to eliminate any remaining genocide perpetrators who sought sanctuary among the refugee population. The Rwandan campaign in Zaire massacred thousands of Hutu refugees and forced many to despairingly flee back into Rwanda (International Refugee Rights Initiative and Refugee Law Project 2010, p. 11 and Longman 2005, p. 37).

Established in the late 1990s, the Dzaleka refugee camp is located in the Dowa region of Malawi, a 45 minute drive from the capital, Lilongwe. Dzaleka is a common African holding camp, a camp style where no attempt is made to integrate refugees into the local economy and society (Rogge 1994, p.15). Over 20,000 refugees inhabit the camp with the majority of refugees from Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo). Many of the Rwandan refugees of the Dzaleka camp formally inhabited the camps in Tanzania and DR Congo and failed to successfully repatriate to Rwanda in 1996. Many individuals and families returned home to Rwanda only to flee for a second time due to retribution for the events of 1994. They therefore have had a unique experience of double-exile. Evidently repatriation was not, for

these refugees, the success for which the UNHCR, Tanzanian and Rwandan governments had hoped.

The term 'double-exile' is being used here specifically to capture a complex refugee experience. For the most part current literature on migration and refugees has failed to account for these particularly complex 'double-exile' trajectories. UNHCR has no specific category for refugees who have multiple experiences of exile, but rather uses terms such as 'stateless people' and 'others of concern', which may encompass refugees who have been forced to flee their homes more than once, but is not specific to them. Academic literature also refers to 'circular migration', the repeat migration from home to host areas. However, these three terms are not exclusive categories that focus on the unique experience of double-exile. They also comprise other special types of refugees, such as seasonal migrant workers in the case of circular migration, or gay and lesbian asylum seekers in the case 'others of concern'. Though not well known, 'double-exile' is a term used by Tibor Frank to show how refugees who escaped Hungary in the wake of the Bolshevik revolution of 1919 were forced to flee again after Hitler came to power. As Frank explains, Hungary's Jews fled first to Germany or Austria and were forced to flee from Germany for the United States (2009), experiencing exile for a second time. This is different from the case of the Rwandan refugees in Dzaleka, as the Hungarian Jews never returned to their homeland. Frank's term nonetheless best describes the experience of this specific subset of Rwandan refugees.

This category of refugee not only fails to be categorized properly, but also is largely neglected in mainstream Anglo-academic literature. English literature on refugees and migration lacks empirical studies that examine how the particular experience of double-exile has affected how these refugees understand home and homeland, and how they define themselves. The

refugee perception of home is a complex topic and simplistic assumptions regarding the meaning of home for refugees fail to capture these complexities. Experiences of double-exile add another layer of complexity to our understanding of this topic as refugees have been forced to flee their homes twice and therefore it can be presumed that these refugees experience a unique relationship to home. However, the mainstream Anglo-academic conversation on refugee notions of home and identity does not deeply explore how this specific refugee trajectory has shaped refugee conceptions, and done so presumably differently than more traditional experiences of exile. I postulate in this research that the experience of double-exile has resulted in a very particular, complex conception of home and homeland for refugees, as well as impacted how they define themselves.

According to literature on exile, the notion of ‘home’ occupies a central position in refugee narratives (Lambo 2012, p.22, Chowdhory 2012, p.6, Kibreab 2003, p.26). Safran’s conceptualization of displaced people notes that diaspora communities maintain a memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland (1991, p.83-4). They regard their original homeland as a place of eventual return when the time is right and define themselves by upholding relations with the homeland (Ibid.). This signals that land and spatial attachment remains a central component of refugees’ identity, which, once lost, makes their identity incomplete (Wolff 2001, p.53). Refugees therefore use narratives and practices to actively negotiate and renegotiate perceptions of ‘home’ in an effort to combat their sense of identity loss (Malkki 1995 and, Allen and Turton 1996).

It is therefore conventionally held that for most refugees, the image of home evokes a strong desire to reclaim their lost homeland (Malkki 1995, Brah 1996, Stefansson 2004b, Lambo 2012, Chowdhory 2012) and according to Kibreab, nothing is more important to those who have

been violently driven from their home and homeland than to be able to return and live safely with dignity (2003, p.27). Being rooted in a homeland is a fundamental need of humanity (Weil in Malkki 1992, p.24) and those who have been displaced “have [a] strong, compelling urge to go home. Their yearning to return is not reduced by the time they spend away” (Dixon-Fyle in Dolan 1999, p.97). Malkki notes that a collective return to Burundi was widely predicted and desired amongst the Burundian Hutu refugees of the Mishamo camp in Tanzania (1995, p. 192). The Burundian Hutu refugees in Tanzania narrated their experience of exile to create a historical trajectory that was based on their identity as the ‘rightful natives’ of Burundi and envisioned themselves on a path that would ultimately allow them to reclaim their homeland of Burundi (Malkki, 1995, p.192). Similar studies done on Somali refugees in Kenya conclude that despite current conditions in Somalia, Somalis in exile continue to idealize home and hope for an eventual return to Somalia (Lambo 2012, p.1). Syrian refugees in Lebanon also expressed their desire to return home (Reitano and Perkins 2013).

In the African context, it has only been in the last decades that refugees have begun to see their exile as permanent (Rogge 1994, p.19). Cases with refugees opposing repatriation have begun to increase in number and UNHCR has been the target of much criticism for their surge in repatriation efforts of involuntary refugees (Barnett 2001). A distinction must therefore be made between the nostalgic desire for an eventual return home and the realities of repatriation. For many refugees the realities of returning home before the conditions are right induces a sense of fear and anxiety, yet none imagined that their children or grandchildren would grow up in foreign lands and hostile environments lacking in freedom (Rogge 1994, p.19-20). A longing to return home cannot therefore be equated with a desire for repatriation. A differentiation exists between an idealistic longing to return home and the realities of repatriation. Therefore refugees

may return for practical or idealistic reasons or be subjected to pressures to return even in the absence of practical and idealistic rationales. Unlike in Western societies, refugees in developing countries rarely enjoy citizenship rights (Kibreab 2003, p.24), such as freedom of mobility (Lambo 2012, p.3), and in the absence of these rights opt to return home. Refugees also imagine an eventual return home because of their attachment to the cultural geography of home (Stefansson 2004a, p.5), which justifies their suffering while in exile (Makanya 1994, p.113), and because the absence of realistic solutions causes them to hold onto thoughts of return (Adelman and Barkan 2011, p. 252). Finally, one's sense of belonging depends on a perceived sense of attachment to a certain land and the resulting identity (Chowdhory 2012, p.3, Stefansson 2012, p. 4). Given that refugees are often discouraged from belonging to their host society through policies of encampment and the use of holding camps, they maintain a nostalgic vision of home and a longing to eventually return and regain their sense of belonging. But for those in an experience of double-exile, could their nostalgic notion of home be impacted?

Few empirical studies exist on how refugees conceptualize home (see Malkki 1995, Hammond 1999, Lambo 2012, Burnett 2013 as examples) and none of these studies focus on the experience of double-exile and its impact on identity, place and home. In contrast to the Somali, Burundian and Syrian refugees, the refugees of Dzaleka had once returned to Rwanda and encountered various types of retribution at the hands of the government, local officials and neighbors, causing them to flee to Malawi. Has the concept of home remained static as prevailing refugee policy and traditionalist scholars hold or has this unique group of refugees renegotiated a more deterritorialized understanding of home and identity? And if the Rwandan refugees of Dzaleka have negotiated a new understanding of home, have they developed a new sense of home in Malawi or has the experience of double-exile impacted them in a new way?

Finally, has this experience and reconceptualizing of home minimized the importance of place within their identity? The following research explores whether these failed experiences of repatriation broke the mythical idea of home and homeland thus deeply impacting their notion of home and identity.

The meaning and value refugees attach to their homelands are to some extent shaped by their pre-flight experiences (Hassanen 2014, p.88). For single case refugees the nostalgic longing for home as it existed before exile can have a stronger impact on their historical narrative than the trauma that led to exile. For example, in Malkki's research the events that led to the Burundian refugees' exile only reinforced their narrative as the rightful people of Burundi who would eventually return. However it may be surmised that for cases of double-exile the pre-flight experiences shape refugees' historical narrative in a new way. I hypothesize that the Dzaleka Hutu refugees' experience of double-exile has broken the mythical idea of home and homeland as conventionally held by refugees and impacted not only their conception of home but also their identity and sense of belonging to Rwanda.

Hence, the proposed project will contribute to the existing body of literature that empirically studies how refugees conceptualize home by conducting exploratory research on a distinctive group of refugees who are currently absent from this body of knowledge. Current studies on refugees' identity in relation to home and homeland focus on cases of single exile. However, experiences of double-exile have not been examined, creating a gap in the literature on the topic. This research seeks to provide a preliminary understanding of how this subset of refugees may differ from traditional experiences of exile. Additionally, this work seeks to give voice to a marginalized group within an already marginalized society, that is the refugee population. Driven from their homes countless times, the Hutu refugees of Dzaleka have been

left without an outlet to voice their distinct struggle or needs. Too little is known on the impacts of double-exile. Without a significant understanding of these refugee realities, desirable and durable solutions to the barriers they face remain absent from the refugee paradigm.

Moreover, this research intends to highlight the problematic disjuncture between current refugee policy and desirable solutions, as held by the double-exile Hutu Rwandan refugee population of Dzaleka. Currently, countries hosting Rwandan refugees are working in collaboration with UNHCR and the African Union on strategies for repatriation of Rwandan refugees (UNHCR Press Release 2015). However, after failed repatriation efforts of the 1990s, and subsequent second exile of Hutu Rwandans, it is unlikely that the majority of these refugees will view repatriation as voluntary or a desirable solution. Without representation during proceedings concerning their future, the opinions, sentiments and struggles of Hutu Rwandan refugees are unlikely to be considered in the creation of desirable solutions to the protracted Rwandan refugee crisis. Should their notions of home, identity and sentiments of belonging be vastly different from that of conventional cases of exile, returning such a large group of refugees could be destabilizing to an already volatile region. And while this research will not delve deeply into repatriation policy, it hopes to highlight human rights and policy implications caused by more complex refugee trajectories.

The following chapters will situate the research within the literature on refugees, home and identity, outline the research process, analyze the data, and illustrate the contribution of the research findings within the relevant literature. The first chapter will explore the relevant literature on refugees, home and identity. The literature review examines the role of place within identity creation, various interpretations of the meaning of home within refugee literature and the refugee paradigm, and how identity creation is impacted by how refugees conceptualize home.

Chapter two outlines the theoretical framework for the research and the methodologies employed for data collection. This chapter also includes ethical considerations of the research and how these issues were addressed prior to field research and while collecting data in the Dzaleka refugee camp. The third chapter consists of two sections; a historical contextualization of the Rwandan Hutu refugees' trajectories followed by an analysis of the collected data. The final fourth chapter concludes the research justifies the need to view double-exile case refugees through a different theoretical lens by embedding it within the current literature, and briefly explores the disjuncture between current displacement policies and desirable solutions for Rwandan Hutu refugees.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

Identity creation and place

The debate surrounding the relationship between people, identity and place is longstanding amongst social scientists. At the macro level, this debate focuses on the territorialisation of identity with academics divided as to whether people need a deep and lasting bond with a certain homeland (essentialist theories of identity) or if in our globalized era there ceases to exist the need for a strong attachment to place (deterritorialised/antiessentialist theories of identity). Essentialist theories are based on the principle that culture and identity are understood through a place-centric lens. A descriptive concept using arboreal language and imagery is often employed, depicting people as being rooted in place. Being rooted in place is to be at home, a social-cultural construct from which we derive a sense of belonging and identification (Chowdhory 2012, p.6). Tuan asserts, “it is a current and popular belief that people do not know who they really are unless they can trace their roots” (1980, p.6 quoted in Brun 2001). And identity and place are a crucial contribution to the creation of social and economic prosperity (Kibreab 1999, 385). Place is crucial to the creation of identity as it is the nucleus of culture, it is where family trees grow and roots take hold. It is where we derive our sense of belonging.

Conversely, advocates of deterritorialised identity contend that the current age of globalization and extreme mobility has created a social paradigm categorized by displacement (Warner 1994, Appadurai 1991, Gupta and Ferguson 1997). Appadurai explains that the experience of living in a globalized world with increased mobility allows for individuals to imagine a wider range of possible lives, loosening the bond between people and place as we become more globally aware of new ideas and opportunities (1991). Increased global

connectivity and mobility has cheapened our connection to the physicality of place. Warner takes this view further, explaining that since we are all mobile, there is no 'home' but rather we are in a perpetual state of 'homelessness' and that we are all refugees (1992, p.368).

However, globalization and increased mobility have not permeated all societies and corners of the world. Place remains central in the creation of identity within societies where livelihood and culture are tied to the land (Kibreab 1999, p.387). Kibreab explains:

... in most third world countries, e.g. in Africa, rights of access to, and use of, sources of livelihood are still apportioned on the basis of territorially anchored identity. In such a situation, not only is deterritorialization of identity impossible, but to be outside that physical context often entails loss of rights to belong to an ethnic or national group which is physically grounded. In such societies, the original occupiers have the right to exclude or deny entry to outsiders, or if they allow them to enter, they can impose conditions of entry and residence, as well as resource use (1999, p.387).

This example highlights the territorialisation of space, a process of exerting control over a physical location to control people and relationships. Today the territorialisation of space remains as relevant as ever before, not only for developing countries where land and livelihood remain strongly entwined but also in more globalized societies. For example, space is territorialized through Western policies and attitudes towards the 'invasion' of refugees and migrants that hypothetically pose threat to Western society and economic well-being (Parker and Brassett 2005, p.234). In this context land is territorialized. Identity and membership is derived from one's connectedness to the land, those who do not belong are outsiders, foreigners to the land. Space continues to be territorialized to create an "us" versus "them" mentality. Despite arguments of antiessentialism, ethnographers continue to note the existence of the bond between people, culture and place and that place and home continue to be vital sources of identity

(Stefansson 2004b, p. 3). Therefore it is imprudent to speak to identity without reference to the role of place in its creation, at least in certain contexts.

The meaning of ‘home’

Given the continued importance that is attributed to place in the study of identity, the concept of ‘home’ has become of crucial importance in academic and policy discourse when dealing with displaced peoples. The study of displacement is fundamentally linked to identity formation through the widely accepted presumption that fleeing across an international border leads to a loss of culture and identity for refugees¹. Displacement, or exile, means being physically present in one location while simultaneously feeling a sense of belonging somewhere else (Brun 2001, p.15). This creates an intrapersonal conflict between place and belonging which deeply affects one’s identity (Burnett 2013, Rose 1993). Being a refugee therefore can be described as being uprooted (Sorensen 1996 quoted in Brun 2001); moving from one place to another, forced to confront the loss of culture and identity (Stein 1981, quoted in Malkki 1995, Brun 2001). Refugees are therefore in a continuous process of negotiating and renegotiating perceptions of ‘home’ as a means to counteract feelings of displacement and loss of identity. Yet, despite its significance, there are few empirical studies on how refugees perceive the notion of ‘home’ and how their notions of home impact their identity.

‘Home’ as country of origin is a central concept within the African refugee system as one of the principle ideas within the ‘African refugee paradigm’². It considers the status of refugees

¹ According to Milligan (2003), displacement causes a disruption in identity (p.381) and the literature on displacement and identity often points to the idea that there exists a presumption that exile causes a loss of culture and identity for refugees.

² The term ‘African refugee paradigm’ refers to the theories and accompanying methodology pertaining to the treatment of refugees as employed by policy makers, governments, regional and non-governmental

as a temporary phenomenon and expects refugees to return ‘home’. This is reflected in the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (Article V), which highlights voluntary repatriation of refugees as the solution to refugee issues, ignoring alternative means of handling refugee flows or suggesting alternatives when repatriation is not voluntary. This notion of home is also exercised in national legislation and state practice (Kibreab 2003, p.25). Creating a safe environment for refugees to return home has been an initiative of many NGOs and is promoted by the United Nations Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights³. Examples include the UNHCR led tripartite agreement with Kenya and Somalia to assist in the voluntary repatriation of 500,000 Somali refugees (BBC 2013). Other examples of the African refugee paradigm at work include tripartite agreements to repatriate Ethiopians and Eritreans from Djibouti, Burundians from Tanzania, Mozambicans from Malawi and Ethiopians from Somalia (Harrell-Bond 1989, p.42) and more recently all Rwandese refugees from hosting countries (UNHCR Press Release 2015). This places the concept of home at the center of refugee issues within Africa and clearly demonstrates that ‘home’ is defined by the territorial limits of the nation state. Refugees are perceived as temporary guests that are expected to return ‘home’ following the eradication of conditions that led to their initial displacement.

At a macro level attempts to return refugees to their homeland is well reasoned.

Memories of home, of particular belonging to a highly localized place, may act to counterbalance feelings of dislocation and displacement (Lovell 1998, p. 5) as home is considered to be the source of one’s sense of belonging and identity. Thus it is commonly held that populations in exile maintain a desire to return to their homeland, a place with which they maintain a sense of

organizations. It includes government rhetoric on desirable solutions to refugee situations and existing policies.

³ As seen through Resolution 1998/26

belonging. For example, Jewish, Armenian and Palestinian diaspora populations cultivate a collective myth about home and homeland. The desire to return to their ancestral homeland defines their communal awareness and is the center of their political mobilization (Safran 1991, p.87). According to authors, for refugees, the absence of realistic solutions (either resettlement to a third country or local integration) causes them to desperately and nostalgically hold onto thoughts of returning home (Adelman and Barkan 2011, p. 252).

However, the study of 'home' is much more complex. Studies conducted on place and identity from refugee perspectives have unearthed differing notions of home and highlighted different means refugees have used to counteract feelings of displacement and create a sense of belonging. The meaning of 'home' for refugees largely depends on how they construct the term and what kind of attributes they associate with it. In other words, it cannot be assumed that 'home' is a pre-defined notion. Home and belonging have pragmatic characteristics, such as physical places, and emotional or cultural qualities that are constantly changing and reinterpreted (Black 2002, p.126). Lovell (1998) argues "locality and belonging may be moulded and defined as much by actual territorial emplacement as by memories of belonging to particular landscapes whose reality is enacted only through the acts of collective remembering" (p.1-2). Therefore the way in which refugees conceive the idea of home is not only based on a sense of belonging to physical place but through a number of factors such as nostalgia and dreams of creating a better future (Stefansson 2004b, p.4).

How does the notion of home impact identity?

The notion of home is tied to the definition of being a refugee, since a refugee is by definition someone who has been forced from his or her home. Understanding refugees' conceptualizations of home is important because "fundamental components of mental health are

rooted in its protective functional and psychological meanings” (Simich, Este and Hamilton 2010, p.200) That is to say that the way in which home and identity are conceptualized during times of trauma can impact the continuity or stability of one’s identity (Simich, Este and Hamilton 2010 p.200, Milligan 2003). Moreover, place remains a major repository of rights and membership (Kibreab 1999, p.407). Therefore, the link between notions of home and identity is the stable sense of belonging it creates. This sense of belonging, to a specific community and place serves to provide a sense of cohesion and cultural commensality (Lovell 1998, p.4). This is all the more important in cases of exile because one’s sense of belonging is violently disrupted by perpetrators of the same national identity (Wolff 2001, p.53). The conflict in Rwanda itself bears testimony to the complex issues of belonging and localization for that very reason. But how do various refugee experiences impact nostalgia, perceptions of home and identity? The following paragraphs will explore different conceptualizations in the literature of the link between home and identity.

The dominant narrative of refugees’ relationship to home is that of a deep desire to return home. Lambo’s 2012 study of Somali refugees in Nairobi offers an example of these simplistic and conventionally held notions of home and identity. Conducting research on cultural identity and attachment to home, she notes that Somali refugees continue to idealize home and strongly subscribe to a Somali identity, hoping for an eventual return home (2012, p. 1). According to her, regardless of the length of exile, the majority of refugees rarely developed any emotional ties to Kenya. The representation of Somalia as home had not diminished through the experience of exile, instead their sense of home is strongly associated with memory, loss and nostalgia (p.22), even for younger generations with few or no memories of home (p.14-15). Moreover, in cases of resettlement to a third country refugees maintained a desire to return home to Somalia (p.21).

Their sense of home and belonging remains strongly linked to Somalia. This nostalgic longing for home is however in contrast to the realities of repatriation. Somali refugees wistfully call Somalia home but that is not synonymous with a desire to be repatriated through UNHCR-Kenyan led initiatives (Medecins Sans Frontieres 2013)⁴. Maintaining a strong connection to the homeland and subscribing to a Somali identity indicates that their conception of home is directly linked to their homeland. A desire to eventually return home is based in the continuity of the sense of belonging they derive from their relationship to the homeland and their identity centers on this nostalgic recollection of their ancestral homeland. This continued relationship to the homeland is the foundation of the African refugee paradigm and while Lambo's findings are in line with conventional understandings of populations in exile and the presumed notion refugees maintain a deep connection to their homeland, not all cases of exile so strongly support this perception. As pre-flight experiences vary for each refugee population so does the way in which they renegotiate understandings of home and sentiments of belonging.

Kunz (1981) has suggested three categories of refugees: majority identified refugees, self-alienated refugees and event related refugees. Majority identified refugees are those who maintain a strong conviction that their opposition to the events that lead to exile is shared by the majority of their countrymen. This group maintains a resilient notion of home and identity that is linked to their homelands and are the most likely to maintain a desire to return home (Kunz 1981, p. 42). Somali refugees, who fled due to governmental collapse in 1991 and subsequent civil war, drought, famine and ongoing insecurity, are most likely to fall under this categorization. Self-alienated refugees on the other hand are those who have gone into exile for individual beliefs or philosophies and are the least likely to want to return home (p. 43). They are

⁴ Why refugees repatriate or not is another topic that will not be addressed here as often there exists a disconnect between maintaining a relationship to the homeland with a desire to eventually return and the realities of repatriation. For more on why refugees repatriate see Kibreab 2003

also the least relevant category to the study of African refugees (Rogge 1994, p.32). The final and most relevant category to this study is the events related refugees. These refugees feel the most discriminated against and alienated from the rest of their homeland due to the events that led to their departure. They are less likely to have a desire to return home, especially in the absence of fundamental changes to the political or social systems that alienated them (p. 43). The ethnic conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi have created refugee populations that fall under this category. However, as Malkki's work (1995) demonstrates, events related refugees can maintain a desire to return home, especially given a lack of social and economic integration into the host country.

As Kunz contends, refugees flee for a variety of reasons, each differently impacting their perception of home and connection to homeland. Malkki's 1995 comparative study of Burundian refugees in Tanzania examines connections to home for what Kunz would refer to as 'events related refugees'. Her research however plays to both aspects of the place-identity debate as it compares the viewpoints of Burundian refugees living in a local township to those of Burundian refugees residing in the Mishamo refugee camp. These refugees fled under the same circumstances however their contrasting perspectives challenge Kunz's understanding of 'events related refugees' and demonstrates the complexity of the word 'home'. While Malkki's conclusions contest the idea of a natural relationship between identity and place, her study reveals a divergence in how different groups of refugees view identity in relation to place. Town refugees, Burundians who integrated into the Kigoma township, perceived their identity as "lively cosmopolitanism" (p. 3), whereas the camp refugees of Mishamo continuously told and retold their history as Burundians, constructed and reconstructed their identity as the wronged Hutu refugees of the Burundian state. This telling and retelling of their history and identity

strongly placed home and homeland at the core of their identity, regardless of the traumatic experiences that led to their flight. The camp refugees were continuously trying to fit into the national order of things, to become a nation like others (p. 253), rooted in place. For the camp refugees, the concept of home related to their country of origin, Burundi. Conversely, town refugees seemed to be trying to elude national categorization, viewing themselves as neither rooted or uprooted but rather having a more fluid, cosmopolitan identity.

Studies on returnee refugee populations also demonstrate how the concept of home is renegotiated based on current conditions. A study conducted by Hammond (1999) on the Tigrayan returnee settlement in Ethiopia noted the nuanced renegotiations of the concept of home across generations. Hammond notes that while returnees had no former attachment to the land⁵, they eventually developed a new relationship and sense of home with the new land. The degrees of attachment however varied from generation to generation. Older generations maintained a preference to return to their homelands, to die near the place where their umbilical cord was buried (p.237), while younger generations had no need or want to return to the highlands and instead focused on creating new lives in the lowlands (p.240). However, these younger generations still derived their identity from their ancestral lands, although it was only a representation of those communities created in the refugee camp and upon resettlement in Ethiopia. Formal links to those homelands were less common (p.238). For this particular group of refugees, economic realities caused them to reformulate the connection between identity and place, even if for older generations this meant a struggle between idealistic preferences and practical options. ‘Home’ was both the lands they had fled and the new lands they had settled.

⁵ They had been displaced from the highlands but were returned to the lowlands, an environment that more closely resembled the refugee camps in the Sudan than the lands they had fled years ago.

Identity derived from the land of their birth but was renegotiated to fit into new settlement realities.

As Hammond's study finds, going or returning 'home' is not the recapturing of a nostalgic past. As times pass during a prolonged absence, home changes and develops, as do the populations living away from home. Because of these transformations of place and self, returning home leads to surprise, rupture and disillusionment as returnees' confront their "new/old home". Because of the mismatch between the imagined home and the realities of the actual homecoming, returning home can be more difficult and emotionally destabilizing than anticipated (Stefansson 2004b, p. 4-10). As such the experience of going home can force returnees to renegotiate their conception of home and identity, as seen with the Tigrayan returnee settlement.

Different experiences of exile and return mean that refugees confront feelings of dislocation through varying means. Lambo's study of Somali refugees examines a population who fled their homeland once under conditions shared by the majority of their countrymen and has yet to return. Their experience of exile sharply contrasts with that of the refugees in the proposed study, whose exile is categorized differently and therefore Lambo's study is unlikely to give much insight to how the Rwandan Hutu refugees of Dzaleka conceptualize home and identify. Malkki's conclusions however argue for studying home and belonging based on the multiple forms of attachment that people create through living, remembering and imagining places and not solely based on place of birth. That is, people can create a sense of attachment to multiple places based on their experiences; attachment is not exclusively reserved for one's homeland. As such, Malkki's study, in comparison with that of Lambo, explores identity, notions of home and belonging or attachment more profoundly. Malkki examines how refugees have

constructed their identity and how their notions of home are presented through their narratives, whereas Lambo offers a more simplistic understanding of these concepts. However Malkki's study also focuses on single-exile case refugees. Their continuous telling and retelling, conceptualizing and reconceptualizing of home and historical identity is based on their perceived identity as the rightful Burundian population. They long to return home, to the place they in which they feel they rightfully belong. In a case of single exile, it would be fair to assume that other refugee populations would carry similar sentiments. However studies on experiences of double-exile are unlikely to come to similar conclusions. This is because, as Hammond suggest, returning home means refugees must confront the changes and developments in the homeland that transpired during their time in exile. This can be emotionally destabilizing due to the mismatch between the imagined home, nostalgically remembered for years or decades, and the realities of the actual homecoming. Because of transformations of place and self, returning home can cause disillusionment as returnees' confront their "new/old home" and must once again renegotiate their notion of home and sense of belonging. With this said, Malkki's multiple forms of attachment are likely to be relevant in more complex cases of exile. For cases such as double-exile it is likely that individuals construct conceptions of home and identity that are based on their multiple experiences of exile, although whether multiple forms of attachment have been created or not remains to be explored.

Finally, Hammond's findings are of some interest to this research. Her study focuses on returnee refugees who were experiencing positive resettlement into their home country. While they were not returned to their original homeland they were provided with land, access to health care and education and other necessities to build a life and community in their country of origin. The same cannot be said for the refugees of this study, their experience of repatriation failed and

they find themselves again in exile, in a second host country. However, Hammond notes that the returnee settlement chose to forge a connection to their homeland by creating representations of those communities in their new environment. Networks were redefined as to allow people to feel that because they were with their people it was not necessary to return home (p.239). Cases of double-exile may draw similar conclusions to those of Hammond in that identity in relation to homeland is maintained through representations of their ancestral communities and the continuity of culture from the homeland. The current literature ignores the double-exile subset of refugee experiences and we are therefore uncertain if social networks have been maintained and reproduced to create a representation of homeland within refugee camps containing refugees experiencing double-exile or if these social networks deteriorated significantly through multiple experiences of trauma.

Each of the refugee populations explored above negotiated different meanings of 'home'. In some instances the concept of home was maintained and even reinforced during exile while other experiences caused refugees to redefine home or to give it lesser importance in identity formation. The conventional idea that all refugees subscribe to the same perception of home and maintain a longing to return to this homeland should therefore be questioned. Malkki's conclusions challenge this presumed relationship between countries and roots (1995) as the town refugees had the ability to lose their identity and move through identity categories as a form of social freedom and security (p.16). Yet, as Lambo argues, even if people's identities and sense of belonging are not entirely dependent on being rooted to a physical location, place is still relevant in the construction of an identity because it can be reterritorialized (Lambo 2012, p.22). The works of Lambo, Malkki and Hammond demonstrate the various ways in which the literature understands refugee notions of home and identity. It is a complex, ever-changing concept. Yet, in

each of these studies there remains some connection to homeland. Whether it is nostalgically longed for as Lambo suggests, part of their identity, as Malkki notes with the camp refugees, or maintained through representations of homeland in a reterritorialized space (Hammond 1999), home and homeland remain connected. This exploratory research seeks to begin to understand how an experience of double-exile has impacted the construction of identity and sense of belonging for a unique refugee population, double-exile Rwandan Hutu refugees in the Dzaleka camp. It questions whether a connection between home and homeland exists within the Rwandan Hutu refugees' notion of home, as studies such as Lambo, Malkki and Hammond's suggest, or if it resulted in a very particular, complex conception of home, homeland and identity.

Chapter 2: Framework and Methodology

Theoretical Framework:

Although the study of place and identity continues to be debated at larger theoretical levels, this study seeks to examine these notions from an empirical perspective looking specifically at the experience of double-exile as experienced by Hutu Rwandan refugees in the Dzaleka camp. Similar to the research conducted by Malkki, Hammond, Lambo and others, this study adds to the growing body of literature that empirically examines the impacts of exile on people's identity and connections to home. This particular research, however, addresses the knowledge gap regarding double-exile and its impact on home and identity. The paper explores how the Rwandan Hutu refugees in Dzaleka have conceptualized home through their multiple experiences of exile. In addition it seeks to understand how this unique group of refugees has viewed their identity since their initial flight from Rwanda.

Traditional notions of exile refer to an individual or community that is driven from their home and country of origin. It is a single act of leaving one's place of origin for elsewhere as a means of survival. However, refugee flows have become much more complex. In the search for a dignified life of peace, refugees can experience multiple migratory flows, passing through numerous countries to find asylum and returns home. Double-exile is one of these more complex migratory flows of refugees. It is a unique experience for refugees where forced migration and exile are experienced for a second time due to reoccurring insecurities. In cases of double-exile refugees have fled their homeland once, repatriated after their first experience of exile and then have been forced to flee for a second time. It varies from cases of single exile as repatriated citizens have returned home under the promise of a return without risk and to take up a normal and peaceful life without fear of being disturbed or punished, only to encounter the reverse.

Those who have experienced double-exile have repatriated only to find themselves facing the same factors that caused them to flee initially.

In cases of single exile it is commonly held that a connection remains between the diaspora community and the homeland. Refugees often hold, to varying degrees, attachment to their place of origin and long to return home. This longing, while typically fueled by nostalgia, is produced by the process of identity reformulation that transpires while adjusting to life as a refugee and is often evident in collective discourse and the recreation of homeland communities in new environments. There is a belief, fueled by the nostalgic past of belonging, that eventual return to the homeland is the best means of creating better, more satisfying futures. Yet the eventual act of returning home alters this nostalgic connection to place as refugees transition to the new realities of home. Returnees must then renegotiate their understanding of home and the identity they derive from it.

In cases of double-exile, it can be surmised that there has been a possible break in the nostalgic interpretation of home. Since this unique category of refugee has experienced a failed return home, their attachment to place of origin and longing to return is likely to be at odds with cases of single exile. When nostalgia and reality meet, refugees are forced to reconceptualize home, to reconcile what once was with what currently is and identity is reshaped based on the present condition of home. Knowing that the conditions that cause people to flee impact their perception of home, this study is likely to uncover that the experience of double-exile has had a greater impact on refugee conceptions of home and identity. Therefore, the project's central hypothesis is that experiences of double-exile cause a break in the nostalgic recollection of home and deeply impacts refugees' perceptions of home and the resulting identity.

Given the multiple experiences of exile, the circumstances causing their increased migration, and multiple attempts to create safe living spaces, it is likely that their definition of home is ambiguous. Since the nostalgic home is unlikely tied to place, like in cases of single exile, but instead tied to the past, it is doubtful that current notions of home will incorporate the nostalgic home as meaningful to current or future identities. Their notions of home are more likely to be fluid, difficult to define and may be tied to people/community or intangible characteristics such as education or basic rights rather than physical place. However, due to the longstanding ethnic conflict between Hutu and Tutsi, these historical ethnic identities may more heavily influence this particular group of refugees' perceptions of home and the resulting identities. If this is the case, these particular refugees may never have identified as Rwandan but rather as ethnic Hutus. If this holds true, the identity of these refugees may have been more deterritorialised and tied to their ethnic community rather than place. Therefore while their conception of home may have been impacted by the experience of double-exile, it may not alter their identity if their identity was deterritorialised prior to exile. However, similar to the Burundian refugees, a strong influence of the ethnic conflict may lead to a connection and identity to Rwanda as the rightful natives. This could lead this group of refugees to recreate elements of their homeland communities while in exile to maintain a relationship with the homeland as demonstrated with Hammond's findings (1999). It could also mean that if members of this refugee population do subscribe to the same understanding of home as stated in African policy and practice, the experience of double-exile may have impacted the way they self identify. The discrimination towards the Hutu population and estrangement from their homeland by the new Tutsi government and armed forces that lead to their exile may have also led to an alienation of a Rwandan identity. Understanding their life history and past connections and perceptions of

home will be integral to establishing whether an impact may exist between experiences of double-exile and perceptions of home and identity.

The aim of this study is therefore to present exploratory ethnographic research with refugees in cases of double-exile, more specifically the case of the Hutu Rwandan refugees in the Dzaleka camp. Ethnographic research aims to understand cultural behavior through in-depth studies of members of the cultural group. Rather than generate strong scientific hypotheses, ethnographic research is grounded in the notion that questions and hypotheses or hunches become working guidelines rather than truths to be proved (Thomas 1993, p.35). Given the nature of ethnographic research, the central hypothesis for this project has served as a guide through the observational data collection process.

Methods & Methodology:

For the study, a qualitative, ethnographic approach was used, as the research question is qualitative in nature. Additionally, the project employs a single-case analysis, typical of qualitative and ethnographic research. An analysis building on a single case requires broad knowledge of the case and uses qualitative data or information collected from field observations and experiences to make interpretations about the case (Goertz and Mahoney 2012). Moreover, qualitative research reveals how people experience and interpret events and social relations (Agee 2009, p.439) and emphasizes the necessity of understanding realities from the actors' viewpoints (Strauss quoted in Agee 2009, p.432). Qualitative methods allow for research that delves in depth into the complexities and processes of a problem and for research on little-known phenomena (Marshall and Rossman 1999, p.57). Given the lack of empirical data on the impacts of double-exile on refugee populations and their conceptions of home and identity, qualitative

ethnographic research is best suited to explore this under-studied event and to initially explore the complexities of this experience through the actors' perspectives. Using a qualitative approach for data collection allowed for the research to be driven by the views of those in the study setting (Schensul p.69), essential for a study that seeks to understand the impact of a complex phenomenon or trajectory on a population at the individual and collective level.

Ethnographic research collects data through observing and interviewing a particular population. It uses detailed descriptions of cultural practices, resistance, and change and the meaning and symbolic importance given to them by the members of the particular population to understand the meaning of the social phenomenon being studied within a broader cultural context (Riemer 2012, p.165). As such, ethnographic research requires that the researcher embed themselves into the society or population of study, creating meaningful relationships with the community and generating an understanding from within. This methodology is thus well suited to a research question that is seeking to understand deep social and cultural events and changes, and their significance.

Prior to departing for research, the researcher had spent 3.5 months, in 2014, working in the Dzaleka refugee camp and with the Rwandan community on unrelated topics. During this time, the researcher engaged with the Rwandese community, met community leaders and created relationships with Rwandan refugees. This allowed for the researcher to quickly embed herself into the Rwandese community upon arrival in Dzaleka for this research. During the research period, the researcher lived directly in the Dzaleka camp with an elder of the Rwandese community and built on the trust and respect of the Rwandan community members that had been established in 2014. This allowed the researcher to create more meaningful relationships with the Rwandan community. Living in the camp also allowed to observe and participate in community

life throughout the 5-week research period to a much deeper degree than if she had commuted to the camp on a daily basis. The five weeks of research involved two steps; the observation and participation in the day-to-day activities of willing participants, and interviews. During the first stage of data collection, the researcher took detailed notes of daily life including cultural and religious events. Daily journaling produced in depth notes on the experiences, feelings, sights and conversations observed through living with the refugee population, sharing life experiences and participating in their day-to-day activities. This data was meant to study the level of connectedness within the Rwandan Hutu refugee population of Dzaleka to their homeland. The way in which people hold onto the past, discuss their homeland or a lack thereof was meant demonstrate the day-to-day relationship with homeland, without the prodding of interview questions, and perhaps give insight into how individuals identified.

This first step also informed the second stage of the data collection process: through observation and participation a culturally relevant understanding was developed to help adjust language and terminology to best convey questions and give a deeper initial understanding of refugees' notions of home and their identity. Observation and participation in day-to-day activities was at the heart of the research for the first week and a half of field research, giving the researcher an opportunity to focus on observation, and contribute to the recruitment of participants for the second step of the research. It nonetheless continued throughout the month long research, though the focus shifted after the first week and a half to the interview process. The observation process initially appeared to yield minimal detail on the way in which participants engaged their past. There were no regular communal gathering places where the Hutu Rwandan population reminisced; their trajectory or identity was not a major theme at celebrations or church services, stories of the past were not shared at bars or the Tuesday

markets, shop keepers did not discuss Rwandan news. Consequently there are not rich reports of observational detail. However, this apparent lack of data later became significant as it informs the discussion of their daily lives and connection to Rwanda. It also holds meaning by informing on their understanding of home and identity by juxtaposing the Hutu Rwandan lack of past engagement with the significance of historical consciousness for refugees experiencing more conventional exile trajectories.

The second stage of the research process centered on interviews. It involved the use of open-ended interviews with 31 participants. Qualitative ethnography learns from participants rather than treating them as a passive object of inquiry and treats knowledge as subjective rather than an objective truth (Marshall and Rossman 1999, p. 4). This signals that the participants direct the study to allow understandings and conclusions to be derived from participants' perspectives. This is important as the study means to understand the impacts of double-exile on refugee notions of home and their identities. Insight on this impact can only be gained through those who have experienced it. Therefore the tools of ethnographic research can adjust to suit the study as increased insight into the culture and phenomena are gained. This was true during the data collection of this research. As the researcher gained a more nuanced understanding of the Rwandan Hutu refugees' lives and its central elements, the data collection could focus on those areas as to understand their significance.

The second phase of the research employed semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions. Semi-structured interviews allowed for individuals to provide a historical narrative, and highlight the events that are important from their perspective. Moreover, interview questions and language were built in a flexible manner that had questions divided into themes that allowed the interviewer to select appropriate questions and prompts from those themes. This allowed for

a more culturally sensitive conversational interview. The format of the questionnaire also allowed for skipping between questions when answered during other segments of the interview. The questions were also broad enough to accommodate for different interpretations. These interviews were used to gain a deeper knowledge of observational data already collected. When analyzed as a collection, these personal histories were meant for a collective narrative to be weaved together to understand the commonly held conceptualization(s) of home within the Hutu Rwandan refugee community in Dzaleka and whether double-exile is a defining factor in their identity creation. Allowing participants to guide the interview rather than a more rigidly structure survey also helped to gain a sense of how double-exile impacted refugees' identity, individually and as a population. Indications of how or where double-exile has impacted the participants came from the areas of their historical narrative that indicated a change in sentiments and connection towards home and identity after their return to and subsequent second exile from Rwanda.

Interviews were conducted in the Dzaleka refugee camp with Rwandan Hutu refugees who had formally resided in Tanzania and DR Congo as refugees. Interviews were conducted in Kinyarwanda with the assistance of an interpreter. They lasted roughly one hour. Follow-up interviews were at the discretion of the participant when they wished to add information to one of their answers, revisit a question or provide additional details on their experiences in Rwanda. Several participants met with the researcher on multiple occasions to further discuss their perspectives on Rwanda, the Rwandese government and the Rwandese Hutu refugee experience. Data was collected from both men and women aged 40 and older, as this population bracket had spent their childhood in Rwanda and are old enough to have memories of the events involved in this study. Interviewing Rwandese Hutu refugees from this population bracket also allowed for

the researcher to speak with individuals who had formed an initial identity in relation to ethnicity or homeland.

Interviews were conducted in a mutually agreed meeting place to ensure safety, comfort and a degree of anonymity. Complete anonymity however was difficult to ensure in a camp setting. Because of the difficulty of identifying a location for interviewing where participants would not be recognized, the interviewer made participants aware of the inability to provide complete anonymity within the camp. Complete anonymity within the written research however was guaranteed as this research omits identifying details of interview participants. This was of particular importance to the Rwandan Hutu refugees as most fear the repercussions of speaking out against the current authoritarian regime, known within the Hutu Rwandan refugee community for assassinating dissidents.

The data was analyzed using inductive discourse analysis. Data interpretation began with a general organization of interview material, where an initial read helped identify large trends and produce a reading key of thematic codes. These initial categories were those that stood out of the material, and hence significant to the participants rather than created by the researcher (Marshall and Rossman 1999, 154-5). This helped identify the large trends and recurrences, as well as the differences. Observational data was used to provide context to the data collected during interviews. It was also coded into relevant categories to note cultural trends.

Ethical Considerations:

The first step in addressing ethical considerations was to secure the proper authorizations for the research. Aside from obtained approval from the University of Ottawa's Research Ethics Board (REB), the researcher also received proper authorization from UNHCR Malawi, the

Dzaleka camp administrator, a Malawian government representative, and from Coordinator for Refugees in the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Malawian government. However, proper authorization does not minimize many of the possible ethical issues of social science research. Collecting information from a culturally different population who has experienced traumatic events is challenging and raises many important ethical issues. Although it is impossible for researchers in such circumstances to understand intimately the realities of their study, the researcher nonetheless made every attempt to minimize risks to this study's participants by devising an appropriate manner to obtain informed consent, avoid coercion, maintain confidentiality and navigate the challenges of using cultural insiders.

In anticipation of the potential psychological and emotional risks, such as recalling memories of suffering or events leading to exile, the research took a series of measures to mitigate emotional discomfort or at a deeper level distress to participants. Multiple strategies were implemented to ensure the comfort and well-being of participants who lived highly traumatic experiences. Before beginning the interview, the researcher informed the participants that they were welcome to end the interview at any time or refuse to answer questions. The researcher was mindful of changes in participant comfort levels and proposed to end the questions or interview when noting unease or discomfort from the participant. This was employed twice during the research. The researcher was also cautious in avoiding discussion of the background events and trauma that participants had experienced and kept the interview focused in the present. However, when individuals continued to drift towards sharing these events the interviewer reminded participants that they need not speak to these topics if they were not comfortable. When participants insisted on sharing their stories the researcher listened respectfully, allowing participants to share the details with which they were comfortable.

Additional steps were also taken after the interview process to ensure the mental well-being of participants. Respondents were given the contact information of the researcher if they wished to engage in further discussion. The researcher also prepared to provide information on health resources available in the camp to respondents who wanted to discuss their past with health professionals however the majority of participants were already engaged in trauma classes.

Moreover, all participants had been victims of personally directed violence during their brief return to Rwanda and as the researcher had anticipated this, the researcher discussed at length the means of providing anonymity to potential participants. However those involved in the interview process felt compelled to share their stories, as they believe that the global community ignores their narrative and struggles. Although refugees are typically granted asylum and have the benefits of legal status and protection, many of the refugees who participated in this study were denied refugee status and consequently felt vulnerable based on prior experiences. Some participants shared stories of refugees who had disappeared or been murdered due to their participation in similar studies. Hence a small number of participants were slightly apprehensive about sharing their testimony and opinions. The researcher therefore clearly communicated the voluntary nature of participating in the research, confirmed that the rigor of confidentiality was well communicated to potential participants again before commencing interviews, and ensured the confidentiality of respondents by omitting their names from interview recordings. In some cases the researcher refrained from the use of recording devices altogether. Participants were also concerned for the safety of the researcher⁶ and as such the researcher reassured participants of her willingness to conduct this study. With this said, refugees who participated in the study appreciated the opportunity to share their experiences. Given the domination of the official

⁶ Within the Rwandese Hutu refugee community it is widely accepted that the Rwandese government views all those who share stories that deviate from the official government narrative as enemies of the state. For further discussion on the Rwandese government and dissidents see page 46-47

narrative promoted by the Rwandan government regarding the genocide and contemporary Rwanda, and the politics surrounding the refugee status of Hutu Rwandans in exile, those who participated in the study were thankful for the opportunity to give voice to their personal narrative. As many had been refused refugee status, they felt as though their traumatic experiences had been denied or deemed as false. The opportunity to be heard and believed, along with assurances of anonymity meant the Hutu Rwandan community did not shy away from participating in the study.

There was also the potential for social risks during the research process. The Dzaleka camp is home to Rwandese, Congolese and Burundian refugees and a study focusing on issues of the Rwandese community had the potential to stir feelings of resentment within the other camp communities. The researcher was sensitive to these possible sentiments and therefore also made efforts to foster positive relationships within the other camp communities. Establishing positive relationships with all refugee communities within Dzaleka created a more welcoming environment in which to conduct research as the presence of the researcher did not go unnoticed by the camp at large.

Prior to departure the researcher also identified the potential for social risks of scepticism within the Rwandese community towards the intentions of the study. The Hutu community has cultivated great distrust towards the Rwandese government leading people to question the reasoning of the research and whether data collected would be shared with the Rwandese government. Working closely with UNHCR and the camp director upon arrival helped to mitigate these concerns, as the authorization given to the researcher to reside in the camp and conduct research assisted in building the validity of the study for academic purposes. For this reason establishing relationships within the Rwandese community, especially with community

and religious leaders was essential to further increase community acceptance. As such the researcher resided with a well-known and respected Hutu Rwandan widow and her daughter for the length of the study. The researcher also met with Rwandese community leaders prior to recruitment of participants for the interview stage of data collection as their support of the research minimized, if not eliminated, distrust towards the researcher and research purpose.

Creating relationships within the community where the research took place was a great asset in navigating cultural differences during research, but could have inadvertently created issues with coercion and confidentiality. Researchers often use cultural insiders, individuals with a deep understanding of the culture and language of the participants in a study and who may have lived the same experiences, to assist them in their data collection. They can for example act as interpreters or guide the researcher through proper cultural conduct. However, the researcher must ensure that the results are not biased towards the perspectives and experiences of this cultural insider. While it can be of benefit to the research to have an insider assist in approaching individuals potentially willing to participate in the study, it can cause the results to be focused on one section of the community as the insider may direct the researcher towards participants who share common perspectives on the issue at hand. To minimize these risks the researcher employed a variety of strategies to inform the Rwandese community of the research and recruit participants for interviews. The researcher hung information posters in communal areas of the camp, used a variety of cultural insiders to introduce the researcher to potential participants, regularly attended mass at Rwandese churches where the researcher introduced themselves to the congregation, mentioned their research and encouraged interested individuals to speak with the researcher, frequented local Rwandese bars, and attended a Rwandese wedding during the early

stages of the research. This ensured that participants were from a range of segments of the population studied.

However having members of the community assist in the data collection process can also be problematic because respondents may feel that fellow refugees may not honour the researchers promise of confidentiality. Therefore the researcher ensured that all interpreters and cultural insiders were fully aware of the importance of confidentiality and anonymity, and discussed the meaning behind these concepts and how to employ them. The researcher also had all interpreters sign an agreement of confidentiality to uphold the anonymity of participants and confidentiality of was said during interviews.

In addition, working with cultural insiders, in particular in terms of recruitment, may raise the issue of coercion. The researcher recognized that working with community leaders and insiders to gain respect within the community could leave some refugees feeling as though their participation was less than voluntary. Cultural insiders tend to recruit amongst their inner circles, which can lead to individuals feeling pressure to participate because of the pre-established relationship. The same is true for support from community and religious leaders within the Hutu refugee population. They can play important roles in supporting the data collection process but it is important to ensure that their support be non-coercive. To ensure non-coercive support the researcher did not ask community leaders or other individuals to ask their compatriots to participate in research as this could have caused individuals to feel pressured from the community to participate. Instead, attending community events allowed for non-coercive support, as the presence of the researcher demonstrated acceptance into the community. Establishing relationships with individuals at community events as well as at local bars, community shops and food stands, and at water pumping stations started the recruitment process

for interviews. Those who were interested in speaking with the researcher about their presence in the camp and within the Rwandese community were approached as possible volunteers for interviews. Moreover, the optionality and voluntary nature of the interviews was continuously stressed to all those approached as possible participants.

Voluntary participation and informed consent are a prerequisite for an individual's participation in research. The need to sign informed consent forms however would have created great fears about loss of confidentiality. Refugees have had past experiences and heard stories of research where anonymity failed and research participants disappeared or were murdered that has lead them to have some distrust towards researchers, questionnaires and assurances of confidentiality. Many respondents were also illiterate rendering consent forms useless. The research therefore used oral consent in an attempt to minimize distrust towards the researcher and to ensure the parameters of the research, the voluntary nature of participation and consent were fully understood by potential participants. The parameters of the study and the researcher's responsibility to the participants were provided verbally and oral consent was noted and witnessed by the interpreter.

Anonymity and confidentiality are crucial elements to ensure the safety and peace of mind for research participants. Anonymity is difficult to secure in a refugee camp where people live in tight quarters and know most members of the population. Moreover with refugees barred from leaving the camp, study participants were unable to meet for interviews outside of the camp. Therefore ensuring complete anonymity or participation in the study from neighbours and community members could not be guaranteed. This was clearly indicated to participants. In written notes however the researcher used pseudonyms to protect the identity of participants. Data collected is currently stored in password protected computer files and in a locked journal to

further protect participants' identity. While it was difficult to meet with participants for interviews where they would not be recognised, mutually agreed upon meeting locations were used for interviews to best provide anonymity.

Chapter 3: Context and Analysis

Refugees' Trajectory:

Rwanda is steeped in a rich and complex history, one that cannot and must not be solely understood through the lens of its genocide. Moreover the history of Rwanda as propagated by the current government is not to be taken as impartial. Rwanda's recent history focuses on the division between the Hutu and Tutsi population and the Hutu massacre of Tutsis. Yet this picture of Rwandan history drastically minimizes regional conflict and political differences within Rwanda, and disregards the influence of neighboring countries' politics, both factors that contributed to the genocide. Moreover, this view of Rwandan history ignores Tutsi-led massacres of Hutu Rwandans, omits problems caused by the spontaneous and unorganized return of the old caseload Tutsi refugees after the genocide, and turns a blind eye to the new authoritarian government, dominated by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). Therefore, to contextualize the exile-repatriation flows of Rwandan Hutus and the events that construct their historical narrative, it is critical not only to understand the genocide but also the complex circumstances surrounding the events of 1994, the multiple narratives that construct Rwandan history and the country's current political and social environment. The following section will briefly outline the colonial history, ethnic and regional tensions within Rwandan society and neighboring politics that contributed to the genocide. It will also explore, in more depth, the continued tension between the Hutu and Tutsi that has seeped into neighboring countries, and the current conditions within the country under the authoritarian RPF government, both major elements defining the Rwandan Hutu experience of exile.

Colonialism came to Rwanda in the 1900s and saw the Germans and later the Belgians rule indirectly through the "more advanced" Tutsi population (Gilbert and Reynolds 2008, p. 406

and Orbinski 2008, p. 41). Using the “Hamitic hypothesis” the colonial rulers claimed that the Tutsis could be distinguished from the Hutus on a scientific basis that indicated they had Christian origins, making them genetically closer to civilized Europeans and thus fit to rule over the barbaric Hutu (Orbinski 2008, p. 41-2, Osabu-Kle 2000, p.216-9 and Des Forges 1999, p.36). During this time Tutsis were a mere 14 percent of the population, Hutus created the majority 85 percent and the Twa the remaining 1 percent (Bruce 2013, p. 122-3 and Des Forges 1999, p. 38).

During the late 1950s intellectuals of the Hutu majority began to mobilize socially and politically against their oppression. With global pressure for self-determination for all colonized people and the push towards Western majority-rule democracy, the Belgians switched allegiance from the Tutsi minority to the Hutu majority (Bruce 2013, p. 123). The shift in politics and power prompted the beginning of ethnic violence between the Tutsi and Hutu (Des Forges 1999, p. 39-40). In 1961, the first partisan elections were held and because of the Tutsi disadvantage in numbers they lost almost everywhere⁷. With a political system favoring the Hutu majority, the Tutsis felt excluded and alienated from a system they had dominated for centuries and caused many Tutsis to flee the country⁸ (Gilbert and Reynolds 2008, p. 406, and Osabu-Kle 2000, p. 223).

However the political system was not ideal for all Hutus either. The new government was seen as favoring Hutus originating from Central and South Rwanda (Des Forges 199, p. 41) and

⁷ For some of the Tutsis in exile, violence was the only solution to this political injustice. Post-independence ethnic armed violence began in the early 1960s when a Tutsi guerrilla organization called *Inyenzi*, or Cockroach, based in Tutsi dominated Burundi led small attacks into Rwanda (Des Forges 1999, p. 40-41). Due to its support by the some of the Tutsi population within Rwanda, the Hutu government reacted with mistrust against all Tutsi, no longer treating them as equal Rwandans (Osabu-Kle 2000, p. 224-5, Des Forges 1999, p.41 and Prunier 1998, p. 121).

⁸ Over the next few years several thousand Tutsis were slaughtered due to political mistrust (Longman 2005, p. 26) and hundreds of thousands consequently fled the country and sought refuge in neighboring Burundi, Uganda and Zaire. By the 1980s an estimated 700,000 Tutsis, about one third of the Rwandan Tutsi population, were living in exile (Bruce 2013, p.123) and by 1991 Tutsis only accounted for 8.4 percent of the population (Des Forges 1999, p. 41)

some in the North felt the ruling government held many of the same characteristics of privilege as the Tutsi lead regime⁹. As a result, a 1973 military coup within Rwanda brought Major General Juvénal Habyarimana, a Northern Hutu Rwandan, to power. He justified himself as president by promising to control the ongoing regional and ethnic tensions. Backed with international support for Habyarimana, Rwanda saw a decade of relative peace and economic growth. However the government's planned liberalism saw the emergence of an elite class of wealthy rather than overall growth for Rwandans (Des Forges 1999, p. 45-50). This caused an increase in intra-Hutu conflict created through unequal development and single-party politics, which now both favored Northern Rwanda. By the end of the 1980s frustration with the Habyarimana regime was on the rise.

During this time political events in neighboring Burundi and later Uganda would also impact Rwanda and its ethnic tensions. In 1972 the Tutsi supremacist regime in Burundi and their army massacred thousands of Hutus. As Hutu Burundian refugees fled into Rwanda they brought with them stories of violence and anti-Tutsi sentiments. This generated fear and retribution within Rwanda and aggravated partisan politics (Des Forges 1999, p.75). In Uganda, mistreatment of the Tutsi refugees and violent politics between the Ugandan government and militia forces caused the Tutsi refugees to seek self-determination. Splintering off from Uganda militia groups they had joined in exile, many of the young Tutsi refugees formed a political and military group called the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). After living peacefully within Uganda for more than 20 years mistreatment by the Uganda government pushed Tutsi refugees towards the RPF and its radical mission to retake Rwanda (Prunier 1998, p.120-7).

⁹ It should be noted that under colonial rule there were also Tutsi who were disadvantaged by the system. There were both Hutu and Tutsi impoverished by the colonial regime however overall Tutsis benefited in greater numbers from the colonial system.

After refusing the return of the Tutsi refugees for years, Habyarimana began negotiating with the refugee Tutsi opposition in Uganda, the RPF, and finally agreed to the return of selected Rwandan Tutsi refugees beginning in November 1990 (Waugh 2004, p. 50). But The RPF did not trust the Habyarimana government who had long opposed their return and so in October 1990, the RPF launched its first attack into Rwanda¹⁰.

This was a critical time of political tension for Rwanda, the intra-Hutu conflict created a group of Hutu extremists who opposed the return of the Tutsi refugee population and believed in their right to rule the country (Longman 2005, p. 30)¹¹. In an attempt to remain in power, the Habyarimana government began making efforts to quell political frustration and opposition. Internally the government promised multi-party politics and economic reforms; externally, Habyarimana took the initiative to resolve conflict with the RPF diplomatically with the assistance of the United Nations; first with cease-fires and then through negotiations with the RPF, who were killing hundreds of civilians and displacing thousands more (Africa Watch 1992, p. 22-23). Between July 1992 and August 1993 the president offered political concessions to the RPF during the Arusha peace process: the creation of opposition politics and the return of Tutsi refugees. However these promises were not well received. The RPF were wary of trusting the Habyarimana regime and the Hutu extremists were concerned with disproportionate military quotas for the RPF (Anacleiti 1996, p. 307-8).

With ethnic and regional tensions high, a massacre of Tutsis in Northern Rwanda in 1993 triggered an RPF response that captured more territory in northern Rwandan, killing many Hutu and displacing a million, mainly Hutu, people (Longman 2005, p. 29). Under immense international pressure, the Arusha Peace Accords were signed on April 6, 1994. However, as

¹⁰ For more information on the RPF, its ties to Uganda and its political ideology see Prunier 1998.

¹¹ There was also a more moderate opposition for the Habyarimana regime that emerged at this time.

Habyarimana and the president of Burundi were returning from the signing in Dar es Salaam, a rocket shot down their plane. The presidential guard blamed the RPF who mistrusted the Habyarimana government and the RPF blamed the presidential guard who were unhappy with the power-sharing agreement (Bruce 2013, p. 215). With the president dead, the Hutu extremists took control of the government and set off the organized murder of Tutsis and opposition or moderate Hutu. The RPF waiting along the Rwandan border moved in and those in Kigali spread out, fighting those they believed to be Hutu extremists or other supposed participants in the genocide (Des Forges 1999, p. 13-4). Over the course of 100 days between 500,000 and a million Tutsis and Hutu were slaughtered, 1 million people were displaced internally and 2 million were refugees (Reyntjens 2004, p. 178).

Here the historical narrative on the genocide splinters. The account given by the Rwandan government, now controlled by Paul Kagame and the RPF, and generally supported by the international community, affirms that the RPF put an end to the genocide (Waugh 2004, p. 68-9). This narrative also contends that the vast majority of those who died during the 100-day struggle were Tutsi; the government figure claims that at least 94 percent of the victims were Tutsi (Reyntjens 2004, p. 178). However this narrative downplays the role of the Rwandan Tutsi refugee extremist groups in Burundi, who attacked Rwanda in the 1960s, and the RPF in Uganda who attacked in the 1990s. It wholly ignores that RPF soldiers executed purported genocide perpetrators¹² during and in the weeks following the genocide as well as massacred innocent civilians, many of them women and children (Des Forges 1999, p. 13-4 and Reyntjens 1995, p. 40). Finally, this narrative also minimizes the fact that those killed by the Hutu extremists of the

¹² They often relied on accusations made by survivors or their own interrogations to determine culpable parties without any actual evidence. They also were known to execute people who were linked with parties that opposed the RPF or showed potential for political leadership rather than because of any actual guilt related to the genocide (Des Forges 1999, p. 13-4)

old regime were Hutu and Tutsi alike. In downplaying these events, this narrative stereotypes the events of 1994 as ‘ethnic’ warfare but the violence was much more political in nature. The opposing narrative stresses that genocide was a tool used by both Hutu and Tutsi extremists. Allison Des Forges (1999) a supporter of this view concluded that there were high numbers of both Hutu and Tutsi victims of violence between April and June 1994 and that the killings were so widespread and hectic during the months of the genocide that it is difficult to find exact numbers of those who died and at the hands of which extremist group (p. 15-16). In this account the RPF is viewed not the saviors of Rwanda but also perpetrators of mass violence, which continued after the genocide. It is this narrative which provides the context for the Hutu refugee flows that are examined by this study.

Post Genocide: The Alternative Narrative

Between 1994 and 1995 there were mass inflows and outflows of Rwandan refugees. Roughly 700,000 mainly Tutsi refugees, those who had fled in 1959 and in the following decade – known as the old caseload refugees, returned to Rwanda (Bruce 2013, p. 125) and settled in conveniently located properties that had been left by those who fled the genocidal fighting (Huggins 2009, p. 69)¹³. This unorganized return of the Rwandan diaspora consequently lead to the illegal occupation of fields, houses and shops on an enormous scale; more than half the property of Kigali and outer towns were occupied by these new returns. Worse yet, those who did try to reclaim their property were often the victims of disappearances, violence or murders at the hands of the RPF acting on behalf, and in favor of the new occupants. In other cases, they

¹³ It should be noted that Tutsi genocide survivors also fled the country after the genocide due to discrimination by the new government. They felt that they had been sacrificed by the RPF who was more interested in military victory than saving lives (Reyntjens 2004, p. 180-1). Indicating again that the social and political issues of Rwanda cannot be described as a strictly ethnic conflict.

were accused of participating in the genocide and again were arrested or disappeared (Reyntjens 1995, p. 39-40).

At the same time, the violence and a fear of RPF reprisal caused between 1.2 and 1.5 million Hutu to be displaced internally (Kleine-Ahlbrandt 1998, p. 8). Many of these people fled to the southwest of the country to 'safe humanitarian zones' established by the French Operation Turquoise¹⁴. However as the French operation was coming to an end, many fled the country (Kleine-Ahlbrandt 1998, p.8). Between two and three million Hutu fled Rwanda mainly for Zaire and Tanzania (Bruce 2013, p. 125, Huggins 2009, p. 69) and an estimated 390,000 remained in 33 internally displaced persons (IDP) camps (Kleine-Ahlbrandt 1998, p.8). The new government, who sought to bring genocide perpetrators to justice, believed that IDP camps provided sanctuary for genocide perpetrators and sought to shut down the camps. Efforts were made to encourage IDPs to return home and by April 1995 130,000 had returned (Doctors Without Border 1995, p. 65). Nonetheless, 250,000 remained in the camps as stories of arbitrary returnee arrests and illegal occupation of homes deterred many Hutu from leaving the camps (Kleine-Ahlbrandt 1998, p. 8). Before the new government could implement a strategy to officially shut down the camps and return IDPs, a RPF led massacre at the Kibeho camp in April 1995 left several thousand Hutu dead and caused more to flee to neighboring countries (Huggins 2009, p.69, Longman 2005, p. 37, and Kleine-Ahlbrandt 1998, p.9). Although the attack at Kibeho is only one of many suspicious actions perpetrated by RPF forces in the months following the end of the genocide. Military personnel with the UN Mission to Rwanda noted 'military zones' held by the RPF contained hundreds to thousands of bodies that later mysteriously disappeared and Tutsi witnesses observed large numbers of Hutus executed by RPF soldiers who accused them of being genocide perpetrators (Reyntjens 1995, p. 40). Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International

¹⁴ This operation was meant to save both Tutsi and Hutu lives (Des Forges 1999, p. 1014)

also recorded hundreds of deaths at the hands of the RPF, who often used community meetings as a means of gathering people for slaughter (Des Forges 1999, p. 1072-8)¹⁵.

The RPF, now the new government of Rwanda, also concerned itself with the new Hutu refugee camps in Zaire. Former members of the Hutu extremists, now known as *génocidaires*, mixed with the refugee population in order to regroup and restructure within the safety of the camps. Without an ability to distinguish the *génocidaires* from the refugee population the new Rwandan government implemented a series of attacks into Zaire on the pretext of rooting out genocide perpetrators. In September of 1996 thousands of Hutu refugees were slaughtered in the camps along the Zaire-Rwanda border (International Refugee Rights Initiative and Refugee Law Project 2010, p. 11 and Longman 2005, p. 37). These attacks caused many refugees to return to Rwanda to avoid death at the hands of the RPF while others fled deeper into Zaire.

At the same time, hundreds of thousands of Hutu refugees in Tanzania were forcibly repatriated. Despite ongoing campaigns to bring all *génocidaires* to justice and the difficulty in actually identifying genocide perpetrators which led to mass arbitrary arrests and a military operation in Zaire killing thousands of Hutu refugees, UNHCR had deemed that conditions in Rwanda had improved enough to allow the majority of refugees in Tanzania to repatriate without fear of repercussions (Waters 1997, p.3). By December of 1996 the Tanzanian government working with UNHCR declared, “all Rwandese refugees in Tanzania are expected to return home by 31 December 1996” (Whitaker 2002, p.1). Between late 1996 and early 1997, a total of 1.3 million Hutus returned to Rwanda (Huggins 2009, p. 69). Upon return many refugees found their homes occupied by RPF soldiers or returning Tutsis. The Hutu who did try to reclaim their land were regularly accused as *génocidaires* and arrested and detained without merit and many

¹⁵ Reyntjens (1995) notes that it is not possible to say if these practices were centrally planned by RPF leaders and systematically carried out (p.40) but they happened nonetheless and with impunity.

land disputes ended in murder or disappearances, just as they had in early 1995 (Huggins 2009, p 70 and Reyntjens 1995, p. 39-40).

Today former RPF leader Paul Kagame is president of Rwanda. He is backed by the international community who are encouraged by the country's recent economic development and some continued guilt for non-intervention during the genocide (International Refugee Rights Initiative and Refugee Law Project 2010, p. 12 and Reyntjens 2004, p. 179). Despite UN reports with strong evidence that the RPF committed war crimes (Freedom House 2013), the RPF has not been held accountable for its actions and attacks against Hutu IDPs and refugees. Moreover, these killings have not received close to the same attention as the events of 1994.

With Kagame and the RPF treated with impunity (Reyntjens 2004, p. 179), they are able to maintain a strict regime that opposes and punishes dissent. Shortly after the RPF took control of the country, they made a number of unilateral amendments to fundamental laws that have consolidated their hold on political power (Reyntjens 2004, p. 178). Kagame's regime has maintained a tight hold over elections and constricted government opposition. The strongest opposition party, Hutu led Democratic Republican Movement, was declared illegal in 2001 (Freedom House 2013). Recent elections have also been tightly controlled by the RPF with EU elections observers noting elections campaigns fraught with arrests, disappearances and intimidation, and irregularities and fraud during the voting process (Reyntjens 2004, p. 186).

Moreover, new laws equate criticism of the RPF-led government with denial of the genocide and 'divisionism' (Freedom House 2013, Reyntjens 2004, p. 184), which has led to arrests of Victoire Ingabire, leader of an opposition party (Reyntjens 2011, p. 66), and her American lawyer Peter Erlinder, as well as an indictment of the BBC for their documentary *Rwanda's Untold Story* which challenges the official government narrative of the

genocide (Garrison and Erlinder 2014). Despite criticism for vague terminology these laws have been used to arrest hundreds to thousands and the banning of many opposition parties (Jansen 2014, p. 193, Reyntjens 2011, p. 65 and 2004, p. 184). At first the victims of the RPF were Hutu however as time has progressed the regime has silenced any and all dissent. Dissidence, in all forms is not tolerated, reporters who speak against the regime are threatened, political opposition are beaten or disappear and in some cases assassinated (Reyntjens 2011, p. 65 and 2004, p. 193-197)

Within Rwanda the official narrative is remembered and reinforced through Ibuka, an organization for genocide survivors in Rwanda that addresses issues of justice, memory, and social and economic problems faced by survivors. From April 7-14 every year Ibuka organizes a week of remembrance in Rwanda, commemorating the start of the genocide but has been criticized for wholly ignoring Hutu deaths and reinforcing notions of collective Hutu guilt (International Refugee Rights Initiative and Refugee Law Project 2010, p. 27). Nonetheless these remembrance ceremonies are attended by high political figures (Attwood 2014).

Outside Rwanda, Kagame has strongly pushed for repatriation of all Rwandan refugees, due to their political liability and potential security threat. The Hutu refugees that remain in exile are viewed with suspect as Kagame has created a discourse that implies that those who do not return to Rwanda do so because they fear justice and therefore must be *génocidaires* (International Refugee Rights Initiative and Refugee Law Project 2010, p. 13).

Ignoring the crimes and minimizing the brutalities perpetrated by the Tutsi RPF and Kagame government against the Hutu people is deeply relevant to the context in which the Hutu refugees construct their historical narrative. Viewing Hutu refugee exile-repatriation flows through a singular lens of the genocide completely disregards the complex history of the Hutu

people and assumes their collective guilt. It is the complex circumstances surrounding the events of 1994 and its aftermath, and the multiple narratives that construct Rwandan history and create the foundation of the Hutu experience. As shall be seen below, the Hutu refugee experience, particularly the experience of double-exile, has been heavily defined by land disputes leading to arbitrary arrests, disappearances and murder, tight government controls over politics and society, and the notion of collective Hutu guilt which also denies the Hutu loss of life.

Data Analysis:

From the data collected it can be concluded that experiences of double-exile have caused a break in the nostalgic longing for home as country of origin for the Rwandan Hutu refugees of Dzaleka and an identity that not longer is a reflection of belonging but a bureaucratic title of identification. As will be illustrated below, this break is apparent through the juxtaposition of participants' notions of home and their experiences of return and double-exile, a lack of connection or desire to return to Rwanda, a lack of pride in their Rwandan identity and a letting go of Rwandese cultural practices. Through observation of the daily lives of these refugees, it was apparent that maintaining a connection to their native homeland was not a priority. The Hutu Rwandan refugees dedicate their days to understanding and resolving the hardships of life within the refugee camp. It is not a priority to engage in discussions of the past, or to keep up to date with the politics or news of Rwanda. Walking through the camp, there are no communal gathering places of the Hutu Rwandan refugees. At bars, Hutu Rwandans interact with Congolese and Burundian refugees, discussing Chelsea and Manchester United football matches or Malawian politics. Speaking with a former Rwandan community leader, and asking where one may listen to Hutu Rwandans discussing their past or Rwandan news, he responded, "We

Rwandans are too busy trying to survive. Me, I am busy drying and pounding maize into flour to support my family, I have no time to worry about Rwanda. Rwanda does not concern me, it does not feed me so there is no point talking about Rwanda” (conversation with a former Rwandan community leader in front of his house in Dzaleka).

Moreover more than half of the participants in the study directly indicated that their perceptions of home, identity and Rwanda were negatively impacted by their experience of repatriation and double-exile. The following pages will give first hand accounts from the Rwandan Hutu community on their experiences of exile and explore their notions of home and perception of their identity. These stories will demonstrate how the event of double-exile broke the commonly held nostalgic longing for home and caused the Rwandan Hutu Refugees of Dzaleka to abandon their desire to return home to Rwanda. The experience of double-exile also ended their sense of belonging to Rwandan society, which deterritorialised their identity.

Notions of Home

The African refugee paradigm contends that the most desirable solution to displacement is repatriation and it is commonly held that refugees maintain a desire to return home. Initially this was true for the Rwandan Hutu Refugees of Dzaleka; during their first experience of exile they held a longing to return to Rwanda;

“When I was in Tanzania... I had hope that one day we would go back” - participant 10

“When I first left Rwanda I felt like I still had a connection to it and I felt like I wanted to go back” - participant 20

“When war broke out we fled the country, some people went to Tanzania, Congo, Burundi, Uganda... and we were expecting that one day we would go back home when peace comes” - participant 31

However the realities of repatriation altered their connection to their homeland. This is due to the traumatic experiences these refugees faced upon return to Rwanda in 1996-1997, despite being guaranteed peace and safety in the country. During interviews, participants shared their stories and struggles of repatriation.

“[When we returned in 1997], the property consisting of houses and land belonging to my family had been confiscated by a certain soldier with his companions by the time we arrived back. My father made efforts to retrieve the property but was instead caught and detained. He was tortured in detainment and released in 2000, but in a very devastated and lousy health condition. He eventually died in the same year. We were living in the slums by that time since there was no other place to go. My mother made efforts as well to get back the property but was unsuccessful and threatened to be killed if she persisted defying their orders.” – conversation with a young Rwandese man at a neighbor’s house

“For us that felt innocent and felt that during war or genocide we didn’t do anything, we left Tanzania and went to Rwanda but when we reached there we were all arrested. As long as you were Hutu, whether you killed or you didn’t kill, you had to be arrested. As for me, I was arrested for ten years for no reason. So there you would be arrested for no reason and you would be arrested for a numberless time. I was lucky that after some time I was taken for the court of Gacaca and that’s where I was convicted and found innocent... What normally happen[s]... is that after you leave the prison and you are sent back to the world, normally the Tutsi that are around you, they feel jealous and then they make up stories and lies against you and you end up going back to prison for more years. When I left prison I was given positions for work... so the Tutsi people around me felt jealous and start[ed] attacking me. So I was tortured and I was being told that I was going back to the court and would be convicted of crimes I committed ten years ago, yet I had been in prison for ten years” – participant 7

“When we arrived back in Rwanda everyone was afraid of the authorities, whenever we saw that people were in charge of anything in Rwanda we would start hiding

because we were afraid of what could happen to us. When I arrived in Rwanda my sister was pregnant and one time that authorities came and took her away and beat and tortured her but because she was pregnant they released her but asked her if there were other people remaining in her family. So she came home bleeding everywhere and warned me to be careful because the authorities were looking for other member of my family. When I saw this happening all over my community and all over my district, I decided to move away and went to another district... even though I had moved to another district, the soldiers from the other district came looking for me and when they found me and took me to the police station but I escaped and that's when I went away.” – participant 11

“When I went back, my family and I were arrested. I went back pregnant and gave birth in prison where I was beaten. We found our house occupied by people from outside and when we went to get the house back we were arrested... When I was released from prison [Rwandan soldiers] used to come sometimes to my house so they could take me away. When they wouldn't find me they would take my oldest child. They would take the child to the prison and when I would go to collect my child they would put me in prison and then release the child...” – participant 20

“My family, my wife and three children were forcibly repatriated to Rwanda and tried to return home and reclaim our land. I had not participated in the events of 1994 but was being accused as a way to try to imprison me and steal my property. For fear of my safety and the safety of my family, I wouldn't spend the nights at home. Rather I would go into the brush at night and hide, hoping that because I wasn't home it would keep those searching for me away from my family. After doing this for a while I returned home one morning to discover the bodies of my wife and children. They had been butchered with panga knives and machetes by the people trying to find me and steal my land. That very day I started my journey to Malawi, knowing I would never be safe.” – conversation with an older Rwandan man at a bar in Dzaleka

These harsh realities lead to the majority of participants indicating that they no longer felt connected to Rwanda and that the country no longer held meaning to them. “It's not that I don't even have a connection to Rwanda, it's that even Rwanda itself has no connection to

me...[Rwanda] means nothing to me” (participant 24). Instead many participants equated Rwanda with loss, tragedy and trauma; they no longer felt a connection to the cultural geography of home.

In fact, a disconnect exists between the definition of home held by the Rwandan Hutu refugees of Dzaleka and their currently held views of the country based on their experiences in Rwanda after repatriation. This indicates that there is a lack of connection between the notion of home and country of origin. Unlike Lambo’s study where the Somali refugees’ notion of home was related to Somalia, the Rwandan Hutu Refugees of Dzaleka held definitions that were tied to ideals and needs rather than place. When asked to define home or explain what home meant to them, participants described characteristics that were important for them to feel at home or call a place home. Refugees interviewed did not associate the notion of ‘home’ with country of origin. “I don’t call [Rwanda] home. I just call it my country of origin... This place I would call it home because [...] I call it my host country and my host home but it’s the only place that I’ve lived in a while that I’ve felt comfortable and have peace” (participant 7). For the Rwandan Hutu refugees of Dzaleka, notions of home are more difficult to define and are tied to intangible elements such as rights, safety and education.

“Home is a place where you live and have peace. It is a place where you work, where you go to work and come back and have peace and are always happy” – participant 2

“Home is a peaceful place, where you walk freely and upright, not a place where you walk hiding under or sleep under the bed during the night” – participant 13

“Home, according to me, is a place where a person has full rights. So there’s the right to food, right to education, right to health services. A place where that is provided is a place that I can call home.” – participant 22

“Home to me is a place where you have peace and you have the rights to being a human” – participant 24

“Home is a place where one has every social needs in daily life. Where your children go to school and you have food.” – participant 27

The majority of participants explicitly stated peace was a requirement in their definition of home. However, other definitions of home included the ability to work, rights and citizenship, access to education, close family and community ties, freedom, health, food, and assurances for the future. This reveals a definition of home tied to ideal characteristics rather than a geographical location. As such, many participants indicated that the notion of home was tied to anywhere one resides, implying that their conception of home is as a transitory place; it can be found anywhere that provides some of these characteristics. Examples of this can be seen in participant responses to questions regarding where they wish to raise their children: “I would just wish for them to live wherever they would get citizenship” (participant 1), “I feel like I can live anywhere but except Rwanda, as long as my children go to school then I would love living there” (participant 3).

This contrasts with the way in which they now view Rwanda. During the interviews, participants spoke of the Rwanda to which they returned. They spoke of a Rwanda filled with violence, discrimination and a lack of the characteristics that defined their notion of home.

“[When I was a] leader of the Rwandan community around 2004 we sent people, with help from the Government [of Malawi] and UNHCR to go [back] to Rwanda and explore the country. When those people came back what they explained was a shock and after most of those witnesses were hunted and killed” – participant 4

“[Hutu] children hardly go to school, and there is discrimination. When it comes to jobs, there is discrimination... Houses that we had left and that we had built, our property in general, you can never be allowed to access them or your children to access them at any time... Hutu people are not given any value. If you see on the occasion of June 4th every

year where there is the Ibuka, where they remember the dead Tutsis, the Hutu people are not also given their chance to mourn over the 3 million people that died” – participant 5

“When you’re from exile, they think you will [re]claim your property back and the government officials living in them find a way of getting you out of the way, now what happens is that during the day people walk freely but during the night people come and knock on your door and when you come out you’re shot or murdered. Even for me, I did not own much but still they took everything from me. And the soldier that killed my husband and my children is the one that now posses everything. The reason we fled is because we were at risk, people who are in your property; instead of giving it back to you they plan to kill you. It’s the only way to keep the property.” – participant 13

“[The] politics [of Rwanda] are not shown, like people are treated well in town but otherwise people are systematically suffering in the villages. I got news that in Rwanda that every Hutu child, no matter what age, are obligated to say sorry to the Tutsi tribe¹⁶ because he never knows if his parents committed genocide so having their parents committing that crime its like he is also part of it and needs to answer for it. A good example is that all the Hutu children are charged so much money when it comes to school fees and are not supported in any way and yet the children from the Tutsi tribe are being assisted and are called the survivors. They are treated like as if their parents have been killed or even if their parents were there they are paid and given everything. For Hutu children they can never get access to tertiary education and even for high school it’s even becoming too hard.” – participant 29

Their experiences upon return and the stories that they hear from other Rwandan Hutus depict Rwanda as a place of discrimination for the Hutu people, where their children cannot go to school and employment or property is unobtainable. A strong conviction is held within the Rwandan Hutu community of refugees in Dzaleka that the conditions and fears that led to their initial exile have not ceased but rather deteriorated. Their stories of repatriation recount

¹⁶ During this interview, and others, the word that was translated was ‘tribe’ however the correct term to use would be ‘ethnicity’. When quoting interview transcriptions ‘tribe’ has not been substituted for ‘ethnicity’ to maintain the integrity of the interview.

increasing instability, ethnic conflict, arbitrary imprisonment and judicial procedures, intolerance of dissent, inequality, disappearances, rape, torture, killings and general dictatorship like conditions. Older generations carry painful memories of their loved ones and friends being slaughtered, of being personally tortured and threatened during their time of return. It is a time and a place to which they do not want to return or remember. “If you just mention this name, Rwanda, it really causes me pain and I really feel like crying” (participant 15). Speaking about Rwanda is a painful experience for many of the Hutu refugees, “the country of Rwanda is a country I don’t even think about, I don’t even wish to hear about it because I lost everything in Rwanda” (participant 9). Even in the daily lives of the Rwandan Hutu refugees there is little mention of Rwanda. Bars do not play Rwandan music or sporting events, Rwandan newspapers are not brought into the camp, and no streets or shops within the camp are called by Rwandan names. Although when these refugees are willing to discuss Rwanda, there are many stories of how the Hutu people and Tutsis who are unsupportive of the RPF government live, the harsh dictatorship conditions where anyone who speaks out goes missing, where people are killed for land, even after they have willingly given up any attempt to reclaim what was once theirs. Many people feel they would be hunted down and that their family lines will be eliminated if they return. There is no longing to return to a homeland that they were once driven from because they have returned once before and faced the reality that is Rwanda today. They hold that a return would yield nothing but further pain and suffering. During interviews, reminders of Rwanda often pained participants. Although many commented that they felt compelled to discuss the topic, they also explained they appreciated the ability to share their stories, considering it painful but gratifying, as these refugees are not often listened to or understood. Political situations¹⁷ has

¹⁷ Such as attempts by the Malawian government to repatriate refugees, and the relationship between the Rwandan and Malawi governments (Rwandan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, October 14,

caused many of the asylum claims of the Hutu Rwandans in Dzaleka to be rejected, often leading to the feeling that their suffering is denied. Nonetheless, speaking on these topics can be traumatic and led some interviews to be cut short due to the noticeable sorrow that washed over participants at the mention of Rwanda.

Due to the negative impact the experience of double-exile has had on these refugees' notion of home, it is no surprise that the majority of participants stated, without being asked, that they would not return to Rwanda or that they had no desire to return. In fact, many likened a return to Rwanda to personal suicide,

“I can never go back to Rwanda but would rather kill myself” – participant 2

“If you decided to put me on a mountain and there is no food and I should choose, I would prefer to stay on that mountain where there is nothing and die of hunger rather than go back to Rwanda” - participant 9

“No one refuses to go back or hates where ones comes from, but not a place like that one, I would rather commit suicide, maybe find a lake and drown myself” – participant 13

“I would like to emphasize that telling people to go back to Rwanda is like killing them. I would never go back to Rwanda, I accept the current suffering, my child having problems and giving birth to a lame child... I have to do everything on my own but I accept that rather than going back to Rwanda, I can't go back” – participant 17

“If you asked people to return only a few would go back, most people would commit suicide and that includes me too” – participant 20

“If I felt connected to Rwanda I would have gone back there a long time ago. But I don't because of that, so I don't even wish that any member of my family would go

there, I can't advise anyone ever think of going to Rwanda because of what I know about it and what I've seen in it. So I don't even wish to think about that country" – participant 26

In the case of Rwandan Hutu Refugees of Dzaleka the longing to return home is replaced by a longing for citizenship abroad. When asked where participants would like to live, see their children grow up and where they would like their final resting place to be, not one participant answered Rwanda.

"Of all the countries in the world, it's just that I don't have much choice. But telling me to go back to Rwanda, that is a place I will never go back. So I wish to rest in a place that gives rights to people, any country, like most developed countries they give rights to their people, so a person is free to do things, so in such countries are the places where I wish could be my last resting place" – participant 6

"It's hard to explain exactly where I would like to be but I would just make it that except any of the countries that I've been to, that's Tanzania, Rwanda, Malawi and any other African countries, I would, I can be in any other places where I can live peacefully and be treated fairly and be sure I am living safely" – participant 18

"I would live anywhere where the well-wishers wish me to be as long as it's not Rwanda and it's not Africa. Because our African countries lack democracy, they don't even look after refugee applicants. I don't wish to be in Africa anymore" – participant 21

"Talking about a place where I want to rest, every single human being wishes to rest in a place where there is peace, where he feels safe and where he doesn't have the memory of what happened to him. So I would also wish that I could rest in such a place. I don't have any specific place where I could point my finger but I know that the UNHCR has better places that it could provide to me so I pray that one day they can give me that chance. And I would like to add that without being very specific, European countries they are places that I hear and see that they obey human rights and

the rights of the people and that's the place I wish to see in my last times" – participant

23

All participants wished to find a place, usually somewhere outside Africa all together, where they could find their definition of home. These refugees have faced traumatic retribution at the hands of the government, local officials, neighbors and police officers within their homeland. Their experience with repatriation saw many mysteriously dying on the route back to Rwanda as the Rwandese army escorted them and they have heard and shared stories of refugees being killed in exile by Rwandese government spies. "Even here I feel like am still near [Rwanda] and that's why I don't trust living in any of the African countries because [the Rwandan government] can get you" (participant 10). Rather than a desire to return home, there is a fear of Rwanda, the Rwandese government and repatriation. "Malawi denied me and my family [refugee status]. When I first got here the Rwandan government came here and I made it clear that there is no peace in Rwanda, and that all the Rwandan community does not want to go back, and I really request for immediate help because my whole family is at stake" (participant 2).

It may be noted that a possible bias could exist within these finding. Participants were speaking to a researcher whom they may have viewed as someone possibly having authority to change their situation and assist in relocation. Many asked for help in changing their current conditions and wanted their stories to be shared so that the global community might take action. "What I would also like to say is that you are someone who took your time to come and listen to our situation and our story, I would like to urge you to make every effort to make our story heard" (participant 26). However the likelihood that participants' responses were impacted by the researcher and perceived benefits are low as a strong desire for relocation is consistent with their desire to find a home that provides rights, freedoms, education, health care and peace, their

sentiments towards Rwanda and the current conditions in which they live¹⁸. Moreover, the conclusion that experiences of double-exile have caused a break in the nostalgic longing for home as country of origin for the Rwandan Hutu refugees of Dzaleka is strengthened by a majority of respondents indicating a negative change in their definition of home, identity and connection to Rwanda occurring after repatriation and second exile from Rwanda.

“The country of Rwanda, if I felt interested in it, I would maybe go back but I cannot feel interested because when I left for the first time I was running away from something and then when they told me that that thing was over, I went back to Rwanda. But then I found it worse than when I had left Rwanda. So till this day I don’t think anything about Rwanda and I don’t take it as something that I take my time dreaming about” – participant 6

“[Rwanda stopped being home] when I fled for the second time because at that time they harmed my people and did a lot of things that were bad. So from that time I hated the place” – participant 12

“I am a woman who had 9 children and lost all of them because of returning to Rwanda...[my feelings towards Rwanda changed] in 1997, that’s when I started hating Rwanda” – participant 13

“Rwanda before 1994 and before the second time of fleeing was at least a good place... When I first left Rwanda I felt like I still had a connection to it and I felt like I wanted to go back. And then there was the repatriation so I went back but after leaving for the second time I decided that I could no longer go back. Now I wish I could delete my status of Rwandan” – participant 20

“When the war broke out we fled the country, some people went to Tanzania, Congo, Burundi, Uganda and we were expecting that one day we would go back home when

¹⁸ Additionally, the researcher was aware of creating potential biases within the research and therefore clearly communicated to participants that participation was solely an opportunity to give testimony to their experiences of exile but would not impact their refugee status or any relocation efforts.

peace comes and now we went back and found my things already taken, my property, my land, my house, taken by other people so I feel that now I don't have a home. I just have to live like this and I will die wherever I die. So this changed when I fled the country for the second time" – participant 31

The Rwandan Hutus of Dzaleka interviewed stated a direct correlation between the experience of double exile and a change from the commonly held thought that a connection remains between a diaspora community and their homeland. In fact, the Rwandan Hutu refugees in Dzaleka were adamant that they were not a diaspora Rwandan population. To them, the diaspora Rwandan community is the group of Tutsis who never returned to Rwanda and maintain connection to the country. The research assistant and translator warned not to refer to the Rwandan Hutu refugee community in Dzaleka as a diaspora population. They explained that the Rwandese diaspora community is not refugees but Rwandese passport holders who live in Lilongwe and other cities and who work with the Rwandese government to spy on the refugee population. In opposition to this, the Rwandan Hutu community in Dzaleka has made it clear that they do not maintain a connection to their homeland and retain no desire to reconnect or return due to their experience of double-exile. Their experiences of repatriation and return, and their sentiments towards the nation have not only impacted their understanding of home but also the identity they derive from it.

Identity

Questions of identity were more difficult for participants and often met with looks of confusion. "I can't clean off myself the name of who I was born to be" (participant 26). It appears that due to their extended years spent in exile, identity is understood through a bureaucratic perspective rather than self-given meaning. The majority of respondents indicated

that their identity was Rwandan because they were born in Rwanda and that was an unalterable fact.

“Normally when people write, they write your name and that you are a refugee of this and this country. So normally when we start describing ourselves we start describing the country and then your tribe.” – participant 6

“I don’t even feel like I am a Rwandan in myself. It’s just that it’s something that I can’t change but I no longer feel like I’m a Rwandan” – participant 31

“Even if I had the possibility to change being a Rwandan I would delete this identification but it’s because it is impossible” - participant 25

For these refugees identity is an unchangeable attribute. “I’m called a Rwandan and have the title of Rwandan but not from the heart. You are what you are” (participant 6). For the Rwandan Hutu refugees of Dzaleka identity is directly related to country of origin however there is no positive association between home, place and identity. Their identity as Rwandans is a fixed characteristic and the title of Rwandan does not signal an attachment to the country or a desire to return.

“There is no relation [between my identity and where I feel at home] except that I want to let the people who want to help me know where I come from” – participant 2

“I can’t delete the name of being a Rwandan. I am just a Rwandan and being a Hutu is also my race and I can’t change it. But that doesn’t mean I want Rwanda, no. I just want to find any place where I can just be, but not to call myself a Rwandan” – participant 19

Rather their sentiments towards their identity have changed, most no longer taking pride in their Rwandan identification.

“I would rather be a refugee than being a Rwandan because after what I witnessed in Rwanda I don’t wish to be called a Rwandan” – participant 3

“I don’t feel proud of being a Hutu Rwandan but it’s how it is and how am supposed to be so I just accept it” – participant 4

“I don’t have any pride in being a Rwandan, I’d rather call myself a Malawian” – participant 17

“It is just that being a Rwandan is not a choice, it’s something I have to be. But otherwise when I walk and someone calls me a Rwandan I feel very uncomfortable... it’s not something that I am proud of” – participant 18

“I don’t take pride in being called a Rwandan. But I just accept it because I don’t even have a refugee status, I don’t have anywhere to go but if I get the chance of having any country hosting me, I would then change who I am” – participant 24

“I’m not as proud of it anymore but there’s nothing I can do about it, I am still Rwandese” – participant 30

The lack of pride towards their Rwandan identity runs so deeply that some refugees even considered using other nationalities for identification. “Of course there is time when I thought of changing my nationality and I was no more proud of being called a Rwandan, but I could not” (participant 19). This is due to their experiences of exile, “...because of what happened, I feel like I was cleaned of the title of being a Rwandan” (participant 20). “[When I] went back and saw that Rwanda was being harsh to me and everything that is in Rwanda is just the worst, is when my identification changed that I cannot be proud of being a Rwandan” (participant 24). Some had experiences that so profoundly impacted their connection to Rwanda that while they identified as Rwandan in a bureaucratic sense, they felt more connected to their refugee identity.

“I no longer identify myself as a Rwandan... I don't identify myself as being anything else but a refugee” (participant 12).

Moreover, this lack of pride in the Rwandan identity has caused the Rwandan Hutu refugee community of Dzaleka to actively relinquish ties to their country of origin as seen through their abandonment of cultural practices. Rwandan cultural practices are infrequently celebrated. When asked about their Rwandan culture many participants indicated that they do not celebrate the same traditions today as from their childhood in Rwanda, and that the elements of the culture that are performed today are imprecise and only for the sake of entertainment. Through conversations with the Rwandese Hutu community of refugees in Dzaleka, it became apparent that they viewed their culture through two elements: social behaviors, and ceremonies and practices. “Talking of the Rwandan culture, I didn't mean that we follow the culture in terms of ceremonies and other traditions. What normally happens is that because we started our culture, it was put in us, we have certain behavior, and that is the one that we maintain” (participant 23). As observed and later explained by many participants, ceremonies or other traditions are not upheld by the Rwandese Hutu in Dzaleka but the learned social behavior, acquired as children in Rwanda, is the fragment of culture that has remained. This portion of the Rwandese culture that has been maintained, that of social behaviors, has been maintain for socialization, especially in the rearing of children. “Like going to funerals or teaching children respect in the Rwandese culture, that is the culture we still practice” (participant 29). Displacement forces refugees to confront a loss of culture. However for the Rwandese Hutu refugees of Dzaleka, their loss of culture appears to be more by choice than by force.

“I don't live in Rwanda and don't wish to go back so I see no use for the Rwandan culture” – participant 2

“Because of the pain and tragedy we faced in Rwanda, we don’t practice the Rwandan culture anymore” – participant 9

“The Rwandan culture, of course we follow it and use the language but certain aspects, we don’t want it. Because of what happened, I don’t want the culture of Rwanda” – participant 13

“Following the Rwandan culture will lead us to nothing. It’s a useless culture for now we just have to forget it and move on” – participant 26

Displacement and identity are fundamentally linked through the widespread presumption that the act of crossing an international border leads to a loss of culture and identity for refugees. This is true for the Hutu Rwandan refugees of Dzaleka. However, this loss cannot solely be attributed to the act of crossing an international border. There is also an element of willful neglect as a means to step away from the past and relinquish ties to Rwanda. “I don’t live in Rwanda and don’t wish to go back so I see no use for the Rwandan culture” (participant 2). Nevertheless, they have reformulated components of culture for the sake of entertainment rather than as a means of preserving their ties to Rwanda.

“We mix the culture with our host cultures and pick only that which is good in the Rwandan and the host culture and make one new culture... when you look at our kids perform at school or different place, they don’t necessarily do the real Rwandan traditions. Instead they do foreign ones, Congolese students do Rwandan dances and Rwandan students do Burundian drumming” – participant 14

“When it comes to cultural practices like dances and other beautiful things that are in the Rwandan culture, I think it’s good to maintain them and share them with people in other countries so they should at least be entertained by the Rwandan culture.” – participant 19

This use of culture for entertainment is observable through the celebrating of special milestones within the camp. For example, during a graduation ceremony for students' aged 18-24, the program stated that a traditional Rwandese dance was to be performed. However, the performers were not only Rwandan refugees, but also Burundian and Congolese. The students wore western styled clothing draped with a Malawian fabric and the music was a mix of Rwandan circa 1980s and more recent Nigerian music. At a Rwandese wedding, a similar 'traditional' Rwandese dance was also performed, as was a Spanish salsa dance. Community members explained that the dance was not performed for ceremonial reasons, but to entertain guests.

Through observation of culture in practice and the statements made by participants, it is apparent that elements of the Rwandese culture have been maintained as a form of entertainment and joy to be shared in the camp. The cultural practices do not hold special meaning within the Rwandese community as they adapt the practices to their new environment and other cultures that now surround them. The reformulation of Rwandese cultural practices has not been to maintain a connection to the homeland, but rather a means of raising children through social behaviors and a source of entertainment.

This letting go of many Rwandese cultural practices is a means of severing ties with Rwanda, which the Rwandan Hutu refugees of Dzaleka actively fear. The community holds a collective narrative and identity of victimization. "Sometimes things are done to you just because you're a Rwandan. You will find that we face troubles innocently because we are Rwandans. Some people will do you harm because you are Rwandan" (participant 23). It was repeatedly stated that the Rwandan government systematically discriminates against the Hutu people in terms of education, employment, healthcare and ownership of property. "Rwanda is a torturing country, what normally happens is a Tutsi has a right to take away anything he wants from a Hutu...we

the Hutu people in Rwanda are suffering because we are being tortured and we have no rights to our property because a Tutsi can come and snatch everything away from you” (participant 7). However, the identity as victims extends beyond the border of Rwanda. The Rwandese Hutu community in Dzaleka continuously shared stories of victimization at the hands of the Rwandan government and its agencies while in exile.

“The other problem that we have as a Rwandan community we have a problem Tutsi people or Tutsi sent by the government come here and pretend to be refugees. And some of them we know them and we see them and we know them even back in Rwanda. So when they come they pretend to be refugees and they spy on the Hutu refugees and they cause insecurities amongst us” - participant 7

“The Rwandan government keeps following people and killing them and the government of Malawi doesn’t even follow up with these issues” – participant 21

“Before we started the interview I asked if we were safe because I know that even in the camp there is more spies from the government of Rwanda and I know that almost every person that comes here I am sure they are not counting me and they are trying to find ways of what this might mean and do us harm. So the Rwandan government keeps hunting people and keeps following people” – participant 24

“When you look at the Rwandan community we are the people who are always in trouble, we are always facing problems. In every country we go our government is following us, in every place we go.” – participant 26

“Nowadays you talk to your relatives in the country through a voice call and [the government of Rwanda] tape the whole thing and then at the end they are reporting trouble that you are speaking to people outside of the country who are our enemies” – participant 29

According to the Rwandan Hutu Refugees of Dzaleka narrative, the Rwandan government sees the Hutu refugee population as a threat. Stories are shared of Rwandan spies coming into the

camp to murder Rwandan refugees while in exile and there is a general sense of insecurity as the Rwandan Hutu Refugees of Dzaleka community contends that the Rwandan government hides the truth from the world as to the realities within its borders. Warnings came from numerous community members during the research process that advocating for the Hutu people was treasonous and would make those doing so enemies of the Rwandan state.

The identity of victimization extends into the treatment of Rwandan Hutu refugees by host countries. It is believed that there is a lack of assistance for the Rwandan Hutu refugees of Dzaleka community because of the relationship the Rwandan government has built with Malawi and other nations. “They don’t treat us as other refugees” (participant 18). The Hutu Rwandans in Dzaleka explained that the Rwandese government misleads refugee host nations, which has impacted the assistance received by Rwandan Hutu refugees in Dzaleka.

“Most of us when answering the determining questions for refugee status, we give them vivid examples and we prove to them everything and tell them the truth. But when we count the percentage of those people who get status you find that amongst 100 refugees from Rwanda who are Hutu who apply for refugee status, only 5 people are given the refugee status and the rest are not...we find that during the refugee status determining they look at political issues, not necessarily what happened to people... we think there are some people, from the government of Rwanda, and they try to scandalize the stories of Rwanda and effect the government and we end up like that” – participant 7

“Rwandan is the one which is not granted resettlements” – participant 9

“Even here in Malawi people would come from Rwanda, kill other people and go back and the government would do nothing about it” – participant 16

“We people from Rwanda community, when we go everywhere with our problems concerning what happened in our country, like to the UNHCR, governmental or

nongovernmental and international organizations that stand in position to respond, they don't find solutions for our problems" – participant 18

"Just as you see in the camp, you will find that they are helping the Congolese community, Burundian community, and then some of us Rwandans wish we were not Rwandan because we would have been assisted as well" – participant 18

"Even now when it comes to the Rwandan community, we are almost left out in everything; we don't get as much assistance as the rest of the communities in the camp" – participant 22

"Rwanda knows we went to exile because we wanted to seek peace and maybe calm our minds but they keep hunting us, showing that they don't even appreciate that they still want to do us harm. And the reason we are not granted rights as refugees in the refugee camps is because of the Rwandan government that keeps deceiving other governments and other organization" – participant 24

As a result, the Rwandese Hutu community in Dzaleka has developed a deeply rooted identity of a forgotten group of refugees, desperately in need of assistance. "The Rwandan community is full of people who have undergone pain and that's why we ask that the responsible organization can instead of all other help, take us out of this place to a better place" (participant 3).

The experiences of double-exile have caused the Rwandan Hutu refugees of Dzaleka to break from the traditional nostalgic longing for home. For these refugees home does not relate to country of origin and their notions of home are incompatible with their experiences of return and sentiments towards Rwanda. They lack a desire to return to Rwanda, do not take pride in their Rwandan identity and have not maintained cultural practices as a means of severing ties to the country. As a result of their detachment to Rwanda they no longer maintain a sense of belonging to the Rwandan identity. Instead this group of refugees views their Rwandan identity in a bureaucratic sense void of emotional connection to a homeland. These refugees feel continuously

victimized and search for assistance in not returning to Rwanda. “If you could help us, tell the world that the Rwandan people, the Rwandan community in Dzaleka have sent you, that they need help in not going back to that country” (participant 6). For the Hutu Rwandans of Dzaleka, the experience of repatriation and double-exile directly altered their perceptions of home, identity and Rwanda. For the Hutu Rwandans of Dzaleka, Rwanda is not home and in their heart they do not feel Rwandan.

Chapter 4: Conclusions and Policy Considerations

Conclusion:

The Rwandan Hutu refugees in Dzaleka did not experience double-exile as a collective group. After the events of 1994, Hutus from all areas of Rwanda fled the country and sought exile in Tanzania, DR Congo, Burundi and Uganda. Wars in the region and obligatory repatriation efforts forced Hutu Rwandan refugees to return to Rwanda. Refugees returned to all regions of the country before fleeing again to Malawi over the course of the last 5 to 15 years. Despite these vast differences in migratory experiences, the Hutu Rwandan community in Dzaleka has become a coherent group. Similar to the existing empirical studies on how refugees conceptualize home and identity, the Rwandan Hutu refugees of Dzaleka have cohesive answers, felt and experienced repatriation similarly and have created a collective narrative, which further binds this group of refugees despite the different experiences that led them to Malawi. The cohesion amongst these refugees allows for their experience of double-exile to be comparable to other empirical studies on refugee notions of home and identity and therefore contributes to this body of literature.

However, not all refugee experiences are the same, particularly if the experience of double-exile is compared to refugee experiences of single exile. Even Kunz (1981) categorization of three types of refugees, majority identified refugees, event related refugees and self-alienated refugees, does not entirely incorporate the full spectrum of refugee experiences. Failing to recognize the impact of various types and multiple encounters of exile ignores the severity of these events on the human condition. It has long been established that becoming a refugee, the act of crossing an international border, profoundly impacts one's sense of belonging and identity, but the impact differs for each refugee, with commonalities only seen within their

respective grouping. As demonstrated by this research, cases of double-exile are vastly different from cases of single exile and therefore these groups of refugees must be understood through different theoretical lenses. For the Rwandan Hutu refugees of Dzaleka, their experiences of repatriation and return, and their sentiments towards Rwanda has caused this refugee population to renegotiate their understanding of home and the identity they derive from it. As a result of their double-exile there is an evident break in their nostalgic longing for home, creating a group of refugees who are 'present focused'. Moreover, their perspective on identity has been altered and their desire for belonging contrasts from that of single exile cases.

Refugees' notion of 'home' largely depends on how they construct the term and what attributes they associate with it. Therefore it cannot be assumed that 'home' is a pre-defined notion. Home and belonging have pragmatic characteristics, such as physical places, and emotional or cultural qualities that are constantly changing and reinterpreted (Black 2002, p.126). According to studies conducted on cases of single exile, refugees' notions of home continue to place country of origin at the centre of their definition, even as refugee groups renegotiate their relationship with the homeland (Malkki 1995, Hammond 1999, Lambo 2012). Refugees maintain an emotional connection of nostalgic longing to return home as a means to regain their sense of belonging and justify their time spent in exile. This reasoning held true for the Rwandan Hutu refugees of Dzaleka, at the time they lived in Tanzania, DR Congo, Burundi and Uganda, before their return to Rwanda. During their first experience of exile, Rwanda remained home and they maintained a desire to one day return. It was not until their precipitated repatriation to Rwanda that their sentiments and understanding of home began to shift.

The experiences of repatriation and repatriated life for the Hutu Rwandan refugees in Dzaleka caused a break in the nostalgic recollection of home and deeply impacted their

perceptions of Rwanda. When nostalgia for return was met with the reality of repatriation, the Rwandese Hutu refugees of Dzaleka were forced to reconceptualize home, to reconcile what once was with what is currently. That meant accepting the current anti-Hutu discrimination and mistrust towards returning refugees and realizing that they may no longer peacefully belong to Rwanda as it stands today. This broke their emotional connection to the cultural geography of home and forced them to reconceptualize their notion of the word.

According to Hassanen (2014, p.88) the meaning and value refugees attach to their homelands are to some extent shaped by their pre-flight experiences. For the Hutu Rwandans of Dzaleka it was the horrors of repatriation and the time spent in Rwanda after that impacted their reconceptualization of home. Their reconceptualization grew out of the characteristics that were no longer present in Rwanda and that these refugees desired in a place they could call home. Unlike other refugee populations in situations of single exile who wistfully remember home, the Rwandan Hutu refugees have a pragmatic view of Rwanda and therefore do not dream of eventual return. Given the atrocities these refugees faced upon return, they no longer dream of regaining the Rwanda they knew from their childhood. Rather they have a desire for relocation; they yearn for any home that embodies their idealistic notion of the word.

It therefore cannot be assumed that double-exile case refugees are similar to diaspora populations. Diaspora communities therefore maintain a memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland; regard their original homeland as a place of eventual return when the time is right; and define themselves by upholding relations with the homeland (Saffran 1991, p.83-4). Doing so allows them to continuously belong within the national categorization of their homeland while outside of its borders. This is in direct opposition with the Rwandan Hutu refugee of Dzaleka's relationship to their original homeland. They do not maintain positive

memories of Rwanda, do not regard their original homeland as a place of eventual return and are not defined by upholding relations to Rwanda. The Rwandese Hutu community in Dzaleka no longer maintain a feeling of connectedness to their homeland that is reflected in their avoidance of discussing Rwanda and their abandonment of Rwandese cultural practices. The community willfully neglects many Rwandese cultural aspects in favor of Malawian practices as a means to step away from the past and relinquish ties to Rwanda. The Rwandan Hutu refugees of Dzaleka are not continuously trying to fit into the national order of things by retelling their past to carve out their own national categorization within Rwanda. Their time is not spent remembering the past or keeping up to date with current events of their native homeland. Speaking with Hutu Rwandans on the streets or after church, and in the bars and shops of the camp, people were more interested in discussing their current struggles and hardships. These refugees were not concerned with sharing stories of their past, of discussing the hardships that lead to their exile or plans for eventual return to lands which rightly belong to them. Instead they accept their current condition. They preferred to share their current struggles; the lack of food in Dzaleka, the number of rejected asylum by Rwandan refugees and overall lack of assistance to Rwandan refugees. This indicates that more of an importance must be placed on the role of exile-trajectories of refugees as an integral element to their construction of notions of home. That is to say that the events from the past are a strong indicator of how refugees currently construct their notions of home and engage or neglect with their history.

In cases of single exile where nostalgia is maintained, refugees continuously engage in their past, the Hutu Rwandan refugees of Dzaleka however are different. The break in the longing for home has caused this group of refugees to be 'present focused'. Much of the current literature on refugees describes a historical consciousness, a remembering and retelling of their

past as a means of maintaining a connection to the homeland. There is a belief, fueled by the nostalgic past of belonging and prosperity, that eventual return to the homeland is the best means for creating a better, more satisfying future (Stefansson 2004b, p.4). However, observation of the Rwandan community showed no indication that the Rwandan Hutu refugees of Dzaleka were engaging with their past or collectively remembering their history. Instead these refugees are present focused, going back is not seen as the means of creating a desirable future. The community is continuously engaged with understanding their current struggles and discrimination through politics of the day and not a historical consciousness, as seen through their narrative of victimization. The Burundian refugees studied by Malkki (1995) were also occupied with their current struggles but restructured current events through the same themes of mythico-history as used in their narration as the rightful natives of Burundi. The experience of double-exile has caused the Rwandan Hutu refugees to relinquish their past and craft notions of home and identities in response to the practical circumstances of their daily lives.

The present-centric consciousness of the Rwandan Hutu refugees of Dzaleka has also had an impact on their understanding of identity. Unlike single cases of exile where refugees understand their identity through a historical context, which maintains a connection to the homeland, identity for the Hutu refugees of Rwanda in Dzaleka is understood through a bureaucratic perspective. Country of origin is an important identification in refugee camps where UNHCR and other refugee service providers track refugees based on country of origin. When accessing services in the camp, refugees must identify themselves based on country of origin. Due to the extended years spent in exile, identity for the Hutu Rwandans of Dzaleka is understood through this bureaucratic perspective rather than self-given meaning. This is the result of and reinforced by the administrative system of processing refugees and refugee issues

where identity based on country of origin is essential. Identity for the Hutu Rwandans of Dzaleka does not preserve a cultural identity of belonging within Rwanda. Identity is therefore not a reflection of self-conception and self-perception used to create or maintain a sense of belonging to a certain land; it is a label for which with they are obligated to live.

Spatial attachment does however remain central to identity for the Rwandan Hutu community in Dzaleka, but is in direct opposition to the role it plays in cases of single exile. According to essentialist theories of identity prevalent in refugee literature, a person's identity depends on their sense of belonging through a perceived feeling of attachment to a certain land (Chowdhory 2012, p.3, Stefansson 2012, p. 4). Memories of home, of particular belonging to a highly localized place, may act to counterbalance feelings of dislocation and displacement (Lovell 1998, p. 5). It is for this reason that refugees in cases of single exile renegotiate their perceptions of home. As Malkki (1995) observes, the telling and retelling of history is an attempt to fit into the national order of things, to become a nation like others, belonging to their homeland (p. 253). Place is therefore crucial to the creation of identity as it is where we derive our sense of belonging which in turn helps build identity. However, for the Hutu refugees of Rwanda residing in Dzaleka, the move into exile for the second time caused an intrapersonal conflict between place and belonging that deeply affected their identity. The Rwandan Hutu refugees of Dzaleka do not sustain a sense of belonging to a certain land and this disconnect with their country of origin has manifested in an abasement of their identity. Since the Rwandan Hutu refugees in Dzaleka are devoid of a sense of attachment to Rwanda, their Rwandan identity is no more than an attribute of birth. In this sense, the means in which the Hutu Rwandan refugees in Dzaleka now understand home and create their identity is explicable through the deterritorialised theory of identity. This is contrary to the conventional understanding of refugees and their notion

of home and identity. As explored in works by Lambo, Malkki and Hammond, place remained a central factor in many refugee notions of home and identity. In these cases refugees had employed a variety of means to maintain a stable sense of belonging to their homeland. These more conventional cases of exile strongly support essentialist theories of identity, as did the first experience of exile for Rwandan Hutu refugees now residing in Dzaleka. Therefore it is not that one theoretical perspective is more accurate in accounting for refugee notions of home and identity but rather that either can be employed to understand the refugee experience, dependent on the individual refugee experience.

Unlike other refugees who negotiate and renegotiate perceptions of home in an effort to combat the sense of identity loss, the Hutu Rwandan refugees of Dzaleka accept the refugee identity as preferable to the Rwandan identity. The Rwandan Hutu community in Dzaleka does not take pride in their Rwandan identity and are eager for citizenship abroad so they can relinquish their final ties to Rwanda – the title of being Rwandan. As a result of an identity that is not created through a sense of belonging to a highly localized place, the Rwandan Hutu refugees of Dzaleka are not trying to understand where they belong within the national order of things. Contrary to single exile refugees, the Hutu Rwandans refugee community in Dzaleka is not trying to regain a lost sense of belonging. Their collective identity as the forgotten refugees who are continuously victimized because of their Hutu Rwandan identity replaces the sense of belonging to Rwanda and creates a new identity of victimization. Moreover, as their longing for the homeland is replaced with a desire for relocation their identity is deterritorialized, void of membership to Rwanda, its culture or society. As opposed to an identity tied to place, the Hutu Rwandans of Dzaleka are ready to immerse themselves in other cultures, to engage with different societies and take on new citizenship. Double-exile has caused a more impactful loss in identity

that is not renegotiated to maintain a stable view of identity but rather replaced with new views of identity that parallel their lack of relationship to the homeland.

The study of refugee notions of home and identity has uncovered that refugees have diverse notions of home and means of creating an identity that combats their sense of displacement. However, by failing to recognize and account for these particularly complex double-exile trajectories the literature on refugees and migration paints an incomplete picture of how refugees define home and create identity. As a result, we have a narrow understanding of how and why refugees understand home and derive identity. It is flawed to assume that all refugees understand their current situation and future desires through as historical consciousness. Pre-flight experience and multiple encounters of exile greatly impacts the relationship between refugees and their homeland, thus impacting their notion of home and the identity they derive from these changes. As a result of double-exile, the Rwandan Hutu refugees of Dzaleka no longer held a nostalgic longing for home but became present-centric and desired pragmatic solutions to their displacement. This in turn has impacted their perception of identity. Without a desire to belong to the homeland and protracted living in a refugee camp, identity is not seen through self-conception and self-perception. It has become a bureaucratic title void of cultural linkages and a new narrative has emerged that reflects their disconnect to the homeland.

Policy Considerations:

While the current African refugee paradigm is based in the presumption that returning refugees to their homeland is the most desirable solution to displacement, the experience of the Rwandan Hutu refugees in Dzaleka and their sentiments towards their homeland and return reveals a problematic disjuncture between policy and desirable solutions. The OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa highlights voluntary repatriation

of refugees as the solution to displacement. This is echoed in national legislation and state practice (Kibreab 2003, p.25) and states hosting Rwandan Hutu refugees are continuously trying to repatriate refugees to Rwanda (see Nyasa Time 2013 and UNHCR Press Release 2015). In October 2015 a Ministerial meeting was held at UNHCR Headquarters to discuss the implementation of the Comprehensive Solutions Strategy for Rwandan Refugees. Represented were the ministerial delegations from the main countries hosting Rwandan refugees (Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, DR Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Republic of Congo, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe) as well as from Rwanda, the African Union and UNHCR. The ministerial meeting sought to review key issues and find a way forward to bring the Rwandan refugee crisis to its conclusion. However the Rwandan refugees themselves were not represented at the proceedings, which concluded with voluntary repatriation as the main solution to the Rwandan refugee chapter (UNHCR Press Release 2015).

However, the failed repatriation efforts of the 1990s and subsequent persecution of returning Hutus has created very strong sentiments amongst the Hutu Rwandan refugee community in Dzaleka in regards to Rwanda. If these sentiments are shared amongst other Hutu Rwandan communities, repatriation efforts would not only be unwelcome and opposed, but could also lead to violence. Returning these refugees to a country, which they view as systematically denying their fundamental human rights¹⁹, and to which they do not feel a sense of belonging, would further violate their human rights, freedom and dignity. Ignoring the opinions of these refugees, their sentiments towards their native homelands and their desire to return, disregards the protection guaranteed to these individuals. The Rwandan Hutu community in Dzaleka clearly indicated that a return to Rwanda was the least desirable solution with most

¹⁹ Such as Article 5, 7 – 10, 17.2, 25...etc. of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

preferring death to return. It would be imprudent to assume that 300,000 plus²⁰ refugees could peacefully return to a homeland to which they do not wish to belong and associate with violence, discrimination and loss. The Rwandan refugee population must be represented in decisions concerning their destiny and their perspectives considered in the creation of peaceful and sustainable solutions.

²⁰ Reliable statistics concerning the number of Rwandan refugees are unavailable. UNHCR estimates that there are roughly 79,411 Rwandan refugees as of December 2014 however registration exercises carried out in DR Congo in 2014 resulted in a figure of 243,000 Rwandans (UNHCR 2015b)

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