

ENDURING DISPLACEMENT, ENDURING VIOLENCE:  
CAMPS, CLOSURE, AND EXILE IN/AFTER RETURN  
(EXPERIENCES OF BURUNDIAN REFUGEES IN TANZANIA)

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## ii. Abstract

“Return home” was the joint message by the Burundian and Tanzanian presidents in 2017, just two years after hundreds of thousands Burundians were recognized as refugees in neighbouring countries, and as more continued to seek refuge or asylum each month. In Tanzania, where refugees are subject to strict encampment, the vast majority of Burundian refugees had previously been refugees at least once before. Many returned to Tanzania less than three years after their prior return to Burundi, which, as camps were closed, had been framed as a “durable solution” to their displacement. This thesis explores the interrelated dynamics of enduring displacement, encampment, and closure, by drawing on life history research with Burundian refugees in two camps in Tanzania (2017-8), as well as semi-structured interviews with government and humanitarian staff, and ethnographic methods. Empirically, this dissertation contributes to knowledge by tracing the diverse prior trajectories of current Burundian refugees, both within and beyond camp boundaries, challenging there-and-back-again geographical imaginary of refuge management. It highlights an understudied but constitutive aspect of camps—their ultimate closures—by recounting refugees’ memories of the violent closure of Mtabila camp, as well as its *fearful* afterlives and present-presence. The violence of past camp closure is part of the violence of current encampment due to its evocation as a disciplinary dispositif to “encourage” return, threatening and anticipating future violence. State and humanitarian practices “close” and harden space for those deemed “undesirable,” through forced encampment, camp closures, and coerced or forced return. In so doing, they produce and prolong displacement, in which varied spatio-temporalities of violence endure. Burundian refugees’ life histories thus trace the ways displacement *endures*, and is *endured*.

### iii. Acknowledgements

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*Bukebuke bukomeza igihonyi*

*Slowly, slowly, the bananas ripen (Kirundi proverb)*

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Above all, I am deeply indebted to all those who shared their time and stories with me during my time in Nyarugusu and Nduta camps, Tanzania. This dissertation does not nearly do justice to the richness and diversity of the stories shared, nor the many poignant critiques and analyses they contained. While the four interpreters who made most of the interviews possible remain anonymous (at their request), without their immense knowledge, skills, tact, reflections, discussions, friendship, and encouragement this dissertation would not exist. I am further grateful to the many others working in a wide variety of organizations in Tanzania who participated in semi-structured interviews. Thank you to all of those who facilitated introductions, and advised on permits, accommodations, transportation, etc., and ultimately made challenging work feasible and often amicable.

\* \* \*

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\* \* \*

Given the politics of Burundian and Tanzanian history and current events, I feel it necessary to state that those listed here, including those who participated and supported the research, do not necessarily agree with the arguments or historical and political analysis in this dissertation—and may hold quite opposite opinions. The largely solitary and distanced nature of writing and revising this dissertation makes the rote statement that “any errors of fact, interpretation, or omission are my own,” feel particularly true in this case. I will continue to learn through the errors and omissions and misinterpretations which are undoubtedly present in this as in any such work. I would write it all differently now if I were starting again, and I suppose that is the learning inherent in the process.

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## vi. List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

|          |                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AFDL     | Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo-Zaïre, Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire                                      |
| AIRD     | African Initiatives for Relief and Development                                                                                                                            |
| AP       | Associated Press                                                                                                                                                          |
| APA6     | Sixth edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association                                                                                         |
| APRODH   | Association Burundaise pour la protection des Droit Humains et des personnes détennues (Burundian Association for the protection of human and prisoners' rights)          |
| AU       | African Union                                                                                                                                                             |
| BVMN     | Border Violence Monitoring Network                                                                                                                                        |
| CARL     | Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers                                                                                                                                   |
| CARFMS   | Canadian Association for Refugee and Forced Migration Studies                                                                                                             |
| CBO      | Community-Based Organisation                                                                                                                                              |
| CECAB    | Conférence des Evêques Catholiques du Burundi (Conference of Catholic Bishops of Burundi)                                                                                 |
| CEFAN    | Chaire pour le développement de la recherche sur la culture d'expression française en Amérique du Nord                                                                    |
| CHT      | Centre d'Hébergement Temporaire (Temporary Shelter Centre)                                                                                                                |
| CCCM     | Camp Coordination and Camp Management                                                                                                                                     |
| CNDD     | Conseil Nationale pour la Défense de la Démocratie (National Council for Defence of Democracy)                                                                            |
| CNDD-FDD | Conseil Nationale pour la Défense de la Démocratie-Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie (National Council for Defence of Democracy-Force for the Defence of Democracy) |
| CNRS     | Commission Nationale de Réhabilitation des Sinistrés (National commission for the rehabilitation of sinistrés)                                                            |
| CNTB     | Commission Nationale des Terres et Autres Biens (National Land and Property Commission)                                                                                   |

|                 |                                                                                                         |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| COSTECH         | Commission of Science and Technology                                                                    |
| CRRF            | Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework                                                                |
| CRS             | Centre for Refugee Studies                                                                              |
| CRS             | Catholic Relief Services                                                                                |
| CSTB            | Cour Speciale Terre et Autre Biens – (Special Court for Land and other Goods)                           |
| DRC             | Danish Refugee Council                                                                                  |
| DRC             | Democratic Republic of Congo (former Zaïre)                                                             |
| DRS             | Department of Refugee Services                                                                          |
| EAC             | East African Community                                                                                  |
| ECHO            | European Commission’s Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations |
| ECL             | Ethnic Community Language                                                                               |
| ECS             | Eastern Coastal Swahili                                                                                 |
| En              | English                                                                                                 |
| EU              | European Union                                                                                          |
| FAO             | Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations                                                 |
| Fbu             | Burundian Franc(s)                                                                                      |
| FDD             | Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie (Force for the Defence of Democracy)                            |
| FNL             | Forces Nationale de Libération (National Forces of Liberation)                                          |
| Fr              | French                                                                                                  |
| FRODEBU*        | Front pour la Démocratie du Burundi (Front for Democracy in Burundi)                                    |
| FRODEBU-Nyakuri | Front pour la Démocratie du Burundi – Nyakuri (« le vrai » ; The true Front for Democracy in Burundi)   |
| FRONTEX         | The European Border and Coast Guard                                                                     |
| GCR             | Global Compact on Refugees                                                                              |
| GoT             | Government of Tanzania                                                                                  |
| HCR             | (United Nations) High Commission for Refugees (Abbreviation of UNHCR)                                   |
| HDI             | Human Development Index                                                                                 |
| HRW             | Human Rights Watch                                                                                      |
| ICG             | International Crisis Group                                                                              |
| ICRC            | International Committee of the Red Cross                                                                |

|                |                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| IRC            | Immigration Removal Centres                                                                                                                      |
| IRC            | International Rescue Committee                                                                                                                   |
| IDMC           | Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre                                                                                                          |
| IDP            | Internal Displaced Person                                                                                                                        |
| IFRA           | Institut français de recherche en Afrique (French Institute for Research in Africa)                                                              |
| INGO           | International non-governmental organisation                                                                                                      |
| IOM            | International Organisation on Migration                                                                                                          |
| IRIN           | Integrated Regional Information Network                                                                                                          |
| IRRI           | International Refugee Rights Initiative                                                                                                          |
| JRR            | Jeunesse Révolutionnaire Rwagasore (Revolutionary Youth of Rwagasore)                                                                            |
| Kir            | Kirundi                                                                                                                                          |
| (lit: )        | (literally: ) – indicates a literal translation                                                                                                  |
| LOI            | Letter of Information                                                                                                                            |
| LRCS           | League of Red Cross Societies                                                                                                                    |
| LWF            | Lutheran World Federation                                                                                                                        |
| MDG            | Millennium Development Goals                                                                                                                     |
| MHA            | Ministry of Home Affairs                                                                                                                         |
| MSD            | Mouvement pour la solidarité et la démocratie (Movement pour solidarity and democracy)                                                           |
| NGO            | Non-governmental organisation                                                                                                                    |
| NNT            | Newly Naturalized Tanzanian                                                                                                                      |
| NRC            | Norwegian Refugee Council                                                                                                                        |
| OAU            | Organization of African Unity                                                                                                                    |
| OED            | Oxford English Dictionary                                                                                                                        |
| OHCHR          | Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (also referred to as UN Human Rights)                                                            |
| ONU            | Organisation des Nations Unies (United Nations)                                                                                                  |
| Palipehutu-FNL | Parti pour la liberation du peuple Hutu-Forces nationales de liberation (Party for the liberation of Hutu people-National forces for liberation) |
| PARESI         | Projet d'appui au rapatriement et à la réinsertion des sinistrés (Project of support for the repatriation and resettlement of Sinistrés)         |

|         |                                                                                               |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (pl)    | plural                                                                                        |
| PNUD    | Programme des Nations Unies pour le Développement (see UNDP)                                  |
| PRS     | Protracted Refugee Situation                                                                  |
| PRSP    | Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper                                                              |
| RC      | Regional Commissioner                                                                         |
| RDC     | République Democratique du Congo (see DRC)                                                    |
| REDES0  | Relief to Development Strategy                                                                |
| RIV     | Rural Integrated Village (see also VRI)                                                       |
| RFI     | Radio France International                                                                    |
| RoB     | Republic of Burundi                                                                           |
| RPA     | Radio Publique Africaine                                                                      |
| RPA     | Rwandan Patriotic Army                                                                        |
| RPF     | Rwandan Patriotic Front                                                                       |
| RRP     | Regional Response Plan                                                                        |
| RSD     | Refugee Status Determination                                                                  |
| (sg)    | singular                                                                                      |
| SDG     | Sustainable Development Goals                                                                 |
| SNR     | Service national de renseignement (National Intelligence Service)                             |
| SSHRC   | Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council                                               |
| Sw      | Swahili                                                                                       |
| THARS   | Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Services                                                    |
| TCPS II | Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans<br>(2018 version) |
| TCRS    | Tanganyika Christian Refugee Service                                                          |
| TUKI    | Taasisi ya Uchunguzi wa Kiswahili (Institute of Kiswahili Research)                           |
| TZS     | Tanzanian Shillings                                                                           |
| UN      | United Nations                                                                                |
| UNDP    | United Nations Development Programme                                                          |
| UNESCO  | United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation                               |
| UNHCR   | the UN Refugee Agency (Also known as: United Nations High Commissioner for<br>Refugees)       |

|         |                                                              |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| UN HRC  | United Nations Human Rights Council                          |
| UN      | United Nations                                               |
| UNSC    | United Nations Security Council                              |
| UPRONA* | Union pour le progrès national (Union for National Progress) |
| US      | United States                                                |
| USSR    | Soviet Union                                                 |
| VolRep  | Voluntary Repatriation                                       |
| VRI     | Village Rurale Intégrée (see RIV)                            |
| WASH    | Water, Sanitation and Hygiene                                |
| WFP     | World Food Program                                           |
| WWI     | World War One                                                |
| WWII    | World War Two                                                |

\*Following conventions in Burundian publishing, only the first letter of the acronym will be typically capitalized when the acronym of a political party is commonly used thus, i.e. Frodebu rather than FRODEBU, Uprona rather than UPRONA. (See, for example, publications from Editions Iwacu.)

## vii. Glossary

This multi-language glossary includes some of the frequently used non-English terms for readers unfamiliar with the context of the research. As in-text translation is included in brackets for nearly all uses of languages other than English, the glossary is not exhaustive of all non-English terms used.

- (A)bantu (Kirundi) (plural) Humans, people (singular: umuntu); N.B. this word shares the “—ntu” “root” with “Ubuntu,” using the human aba/umu prefix, rather than the “ubu” prefix used for abstract concepts. See: Ubuntu
- Amahoro (Kirundi) Peace
- Amoko (Kirundi) (plural) types, kinds, groups, categories; often: ethnicities, ethnic groups (Singular: Ubwoko) (Paviotti, 2021, pp. 33-35)
- (A)Barundi (Kirundi) Burundian people (Singular: (u)murundi)
- (A)Bashingintahe (Kirundi) (plural) wise people (primarily—but not exclusively—men), of advanced age, with integrity and authority, who act as traditional mediators or judges, also playing a role as local counsellors, and, historically, counsellors at the royal court (Singular: mushingintahe). The etymology is described by Laely (1992, p. 78); See also Albert (1963, p. 212; 1964, pp. 45-46).
- (u)Bushingintahe (Kirundi) The institution of mediation and counsel, carried out by the Bashingintahe, described above.
- (u)Buha (Kirundi/Kiha) The region/territory of the Ha people
- Colline (French) Hill; A local administrative unit in Burundi, usually quite literally delineating a hill, further divided into sous-collines (sub-hills) (Kirundi: umusozi (s))
- Commune (French) Administrative unit in Burundi, below the provincial level. At present, provinces contain anywhere from 3-11 communes
- Ganwa (Kirundi) ((a)baganwa (pl) (u)muganwa (s)) Former royal caste of Burundi, not recognized within the ethnic power sharing agreements of the Arusha Accords (and thus now often grouped as Tutsi), but which retains a distinct self-identity
- Itongo (Kirundi) (both singular and plural) Plot of land
- Imbonerakure (Kirundi) The youth wing of CNDD-FDD (Lit: those who see far) (both singular and plural)

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Impunzi      | (Kirundi) Refugee (both singular and plural)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Itongo       | (Kirundi) Field, property, especially arable land (plural: Amatongo)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Lazima       | (Swahili) Approx.: emphasis of necessity, compulsion, inevitability                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Mwami        | (Kirundi) King (plural: Abami)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Prima Facie  | (Latin) “At first appearance,” referring to refugee status when granted, often to groups, based on recognition of circumstances in the country of origin, rather than requiring individual status determination, see (UNHCR, 2015c)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Raconteur(s) | (French) Storyteller; person who tells/recounts [stories, events, etc.]; In this dissertation, a raconteur is a person who formally shared a life narrative within the context of the research                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Regroupé(e)s | (French) Person or people subjected to forced agglomeration/encampment. In the Burundian context this predominantly refers to Hutu forcibly agglomerated by the military in makeshift camps during the war in the 1990’s as a form of securitization, surveillance, and at times a human shield. (Daley, 2007b, pp. 121-122; Longman, 1998)                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Regroupement | (French) Agglomeration/encampment of a population, referring in this dissertation to forced concentration of people by the military. While framed as a security measure, it was an incredibly violent process. The term originated in the French colonial war in Algeria, as a violent colonial anti-insurgency measure (Longman, 1998) See: Regroupé                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Sinistré(e)s | (French) (plural) A recognized group in the Arusha Accords for Peace and Reconciliation in Burundi, encompassing people affected by diverse forms of forced displaced, including internally displaced people, people subject to forced <i>regroupement</i> , and returnees ("Accord d'Arusha pour la Paix et la Réconciliation au Burundi," 2000, p. 81)                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Tabu Tupu    | (Swahili) Approx: nothing but misery; only problems; tout est foutu (Fr: everything is terrible) etc. TUKI Kamusi (dictionary): Tabu – “distress, difficult circumstances, misery” Tupu: i.a. “mere,” only (TUKI, 2000)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Ubuntu       | (Kirundi) “Humanité réussi” (Fr: The achievement of humanity) “la consistance interne de l’homme [sic] et en même temps l’ouverture à tout homme [sic]” (internal consistency of man [sic] and at the same time, openness to every man [sic]) (Abbé Adrien Ntabona cited in Kwizera, 2020a); “The state of being human,” which is realized relation with others (Kuhumba, 2021, p. 136). N.B. The Kirundi meaning and construction of both the prefix and root resonates with the more broadly recognized South African use of the term, due to commonalities |

across *Bantu* languages (languages sharing the root –ntu in designating humanness) (Kuhumba, 2021; Praeg & Magadla, 2014)

Umutekano (Kirundi) Security

Véridique (French) Truthful

#### viii. Note on Languages and in-text Translations

Whether or not to italicize non-English words and phrases used in Anglophone texts, is an ongoing debate, particularly with regard to African languages (Pather, 2016; Verissimo, 2019). Although APA style does recommend italicizing non-English terms which do not appear in an English dictionary, **in this dissertation I have chosen not to specifically italicize non-English words or phrases—whether Kirundi, French, Swahili, or even Latin.** Otherwise, italicization does follow recommended APA style, so that non-English words may be italicized for emphasis or definition as equally applies to English words in APA style (American Psychological Association, 2019). I provide in-text translation in parenthesis for non-English words or phrases following their first use in a chapter, or as a footnote if the excerpt is particularly lengthy. Except where otherwise indicated, all textual translations are my own, while interview transliteration draws from both interpretation by research assistants and my own translation to English. I also provide a multilingual glossary of many key terms. When directly quoting a source that uses italicization for non-English words, the italicization has been retained as in the original.

## ix. Notes on orthography across languages

Rather than applying a strict rules on spelling for Kirundi and Swahili terms, and particularly the use of noun class prefixes in Bantu language terminology, I rely on contemporary use conventions (though these are debated). For example, I use the noun class “ki” prefix to refer to the Kirundi language (and Kiha) as is common in contemporary foreign-language texts (French and English) on Burundi (rather than “Rundi,” which was common in older sources). However, I do not use the noun class “Ki” prefix in most references to Swahili language, as is more common (though debated) in English language texts referring to the (ki)Swahili language. I do not generally use noun class prefixes in referring to ethnic identity groups, whether singular or plural, apart from in direct quotations. (For example, Tutsi (plural and singular), rather than abatutsi or batutsi (plural)/umututsi or mututsi (singular) (Kirundi); (plural)/mtutsi (singular) (Swahili).) As an exception, I retain the “ba/mu” (pl/sg) Kirundi prefix for other groupings of people, (ex: bashingintahe/mushingintahe; Barundi/murundi) and the prefixes for “I” class nouns (ex: impunzi (pl/sg) rather than mpunzi). I retain full prefixes for most other Kirundi nouns, however I am not strict in consistent use or omission of initial vowels in prefixes, with flexibility for context, flow, and ‘sound,’ as is common in regional multilingual contexts. Wherever possible prefer contemporary Burundian spellings, rather than more dated options, except in direct quotations (dated spellings included “baami,” “tusi” or “batoa”).

Kirundi does not have a “lateral l” (Nassenstein, 2019), and has other phonetic rules which differ from Swahili (including the noun class prefixes), which is why at times Burundian news sources and Kirundi speakers use different orthography of Tanzanian place names, including, for example, “Mutenderi,” in referring to Mtendeli camp. Accordingly, in this dissertation, transcription of such place names when citing Kirundi speakers may take either Kirundi or Swahili orthography, depending on pronunciation, reflecting the multilingual context of the research.

#### x. In-text citation of e-books

This dissertation largely follows the APA6 style guide. Where e-books are consulted, whether online or using an e-reader, APA6 does not include indication of their format in the reference list. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resultant restrictions on library access and travel, I have accessed many books online or as e-books and have not been able to cross-verify pagination in physical copies. As some e-books and online books do not use pagination, the APA style guide recommends citing the chapter number, subsection title (if applicable), and paragraph number to indicate the location of a quote for in-text citations (American Psychological Association, 2020). Where chapter, section, and paragraph numbers are used instead of page numbers, I

## I. Introduction: Tabu Tupu



Figure 1: *Tabu Tupu*. Photo shared anonymously by WhatsApp 2018 (Artist name blurred for anonymity)

A man in a blue shirt hangs precariously, holding on to a tree branch, dangling over a lake. The branch looks thin and slants downwards, as if it is drooping under his weight. A crocodile waiting below stretches upwards out of the water. Its teeth are bared and its mouth is opening just centimeters from the man's bare foot. At the base of the tree, a lion with a large mane shows its sharp teeth and paws the ground. Even the branches of the tree are not safe: a yellow and orange snake at least twice as long as the man winds its way through the branches. The snake's head is reaching down towards the branch where the man's hands are positioned, its forked tongue stretches towards him. And the tree is being cut down. Both an axe and a machete

lay at the foot of the tree, and a large wedge, reaching nearly half the diameter of the trunk, has already been chopped out. Ominous, large birds approach in the otherwise blue sky.

The man's facial expression is not clear. Is he calling out? No one is around to help, or to witness his predicament (except for those of us viewing the mural, and the animals circling him within it). The rest of the landscape is deserted, apart from scattered trees on green hills in the distance. It would be a serene landscape, were it not for the action in the foreground. Yet the man has survived this far. Perhaps he escaped the lion to make it into the tree, before realizing the tree itself was not safe? Although there does not appear to be a clear way out of the dangerous situation, he is somehow still hanging on. How long can he hang on? Will he escape? The figure had already been frozen in place on the mural for a couple years when I first saw him—stuck at the centre of the striking composition.

In red capital letters, the image is entitled “TABU TUPU,” a Swahili phrase that Claude,<sup>1</sup> an interpreter and research assistant, explained to me as “tout est foutu”—meaning, more or less, that everything is terrible and hopeless, he elaborated. All is lost. A formal dictionary states that “Tabu” can mean misery, difficult circumstances, or distress; while “tupu” in this context means “merely” or “only” (TUKI, 2000). To say that there are “difficult circumstances” or “distress” illustrated in this mural might be an extreme understatement of the situation of the man hanging from the tree.

This mural was located in a pub just off the main thoroughfare of a large refugee camp in western Tanzania where Claude and hundreds of thousands of other Burundian refugees have lived since 2015. Nyarugusu and Nduta, the two camps in which I conducted doctoral research, resemble archetypal imaginaries of refugee camps in Eastern Africa. Less than forty kilometres from the Burundi border, they are located the largely-rural Kigoma province in northwestern Tanzania (UNHCR, 2018a, 2018b), a region that is not new to hosting refugees. At the time of this research, together with the nearby Mtendeli camp, they hosted around 315,000 Burundians who had registered as refugees and asylum seekers since April 2015 (UNHCR, 2017g). Over 115,000 Burundians have been registered as refugees and asylum seekers in Uganda, DRC, and Rwanda since 2015, and many have sought asylum further afield, from Canada to South Africa (UNHCR, 2017a). Yet, while the camps are currently defined by their opening and registration

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<sup>1</sup> A pseudonym

of refugees from 2015, their histories are decades older, and the story of refuge in the region is longer still.

The majority of the Burundian refugees who registered from 2015-7 had previously been refugees (Masabo, Kweka, Boeyink, & Falisse, 2018; Peter, 2015)(Interviews, 2018). Many had already spent decades in exile, sometimes in multiple countries, and had diverse experiences of displacement. One UNHCR official estimated that up to ninety percent of those registered in Tanzania in 2015 had previously been refugees (Notes, 2017).<sup>2</sup> Although this estimated percentage likely decreased over the next year, as many as 60-80% of current refugees (at the time of research) may previously have been refugees at least once before (Notes, 2017)(Peter, 2015). Most had also experienced repatriation to Burundi, which was framed as an official durable solution to their displacement, but which had not lasted. Other Burundian refugees, although new to camps, had often also experienced displacement, and/or border-crossing, prior to seeking refuge.

Just two years after the arrival of Claude and his family, and as thousands of Burundian refugees continued to be registered each month, the Burundian president visited a city in the border region with Tanzania. He and the Tanzanian president announced that Burundi is peaceful, and instructed refugees that they should return to Burundi again. Tri-partite meetings between the Tanzanian and Burundian governments and UNHCR ensued, launching a formal “Voluntary Repatriation” program, that would soon begin to transport hundreds of returning refugees to Burundi in several convoys each week. In public speeches in the camp, Tanzanian officials reminded refugees of the violence of the closure of former camps, and told them that they must [Sw: lazima] register for voluntary return. Decrees introduced new rules in the camps, further limiting livelihood activities at the same time that already minimal food aid rations were reduced, and making life less and less liveable for those, like Claude, who chose to remain. Businesses—like the bar where I first saw the mural—were shut down.

\* \* \*

Refuge is often thought of as a one-way, one-time movement, solved when refugees are able to return to their country of origin. Refugee encampment, although critiqued for violating rights such as mobility, is broadly taken-for-granted and ubiquitous—the dominant way in which states and humanitarian organizations manage large-scale forced movements of people. The

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<sup>2</sup> There are no official statistics on prior refuge (Notes, 2017)

context of Burundian refugees' refuge after prior returns and camp closures raises important questions around displacement which are at the heart of this dissertation, including what displacement is, and how it is managed, perpetuated, and experienced. More specifically, drawing on life history and semi-ethnographic research with Burundian refugees in Tanzania, and semi-structured interviews with state and humanitarian informants, this dissertation asks:

- How do multiple, prior forced displacements (including the displacements of encampment, camp closures, and return,) shape current refugees' lives in camps and their perspectives on enduring exile? In other words, how are past displacements, including camp closure, present for refugees now? How does the present emphasis on return shape how refugees' recount their life stories?
- How should we theorize displacement, including its temporalities, spatialities, and relation to violence?
- What can attention to past and anticipated camp closures teach us about camps?
- Can resistance and agency exist for refugees in camps faced with forced closure? How? What is the relationship between endurance and resistance?

\* \* \*

The Tabu Tupu mural hung prominently in the walled-in area of a pub's largely outdoor seating area, painted onto a repurposed UNHCR tarp, obscuring the ubiquitous logo. The tarp had likely been distributed to construct shelters when the camp first opened, but now covered a mudbrick wall—one of many examples of repurposed aid visible not only in the camp where the mural was located, but throughout the region. The mural was on the exterior wall of a small house built to standardized specifications. The bar had been added-on to the house—not atypical of bricolage construction in the region, both inside and outside the camp.

The mural was a surprise to me, though the sentiment was not. More typical restaurant and bar paintings in the camp advertise the name of the establishment, offer some decoration such as stylized flowers, or illustrate common food and beverage offerings: perhaps barbequed goat or beef brochettes; plates of cooked or fried ibitoke (starchy bananas); sour fermented manioc ubuswage; Amstel and Priumus beers imported from Burundi by the bicycles and motorcycles that plie the small paths to and across the border; and other offerings that may or

may not have been available on a given day. While unpretentious, the construction of the bar and the inclusion of the mural created not only a business, but added a layer of meaning to this meeting place. The décor in this bar likely reflected frequent topics of conversation for its primary patrons. (Given the difficulties of refugee life, Claude had once mused, refugees either turn to prayer or to drink. Surely this statement is an overgeneralization, but this bar was a place for the latter.)

While there are many possible interpretations of the image, I believe this mural goes beyond standard restaurant-bar advertising, and shares a perspective on life in the camp that echoes many of the stories that were shared by interlocutors in the research at the core of this dissertation—stories of making lives in a context of repeated displacement, enduring extended encampment, precarious refuge, and uncertain futures. Stories of holding on—having escaped threats more than once, but still in peril—facing the approach of other dangers, and not yet seeing a way out.

The mural itself suggests a story—an act of art, of creation, political expression, and metaphor. It contributes to the transformation of a place and through the creative re-purposing of standard material aid. I imagine the mural as created within a version of the existential conditions that it seems to represent. Is the tree in the mural symbolic of the camp in which the mural was created and viewed? Does its cut trunk, and the axe at its bottom represent the threats to close the camp—the precarity of even this enclosed refuge? Does the eagle represent the Burundian ruling party, whose emblem it seems to echo? Is it merely watching, or perhaps spying? Is it also attacking? Having escaped the lion by climbing the tree, how can the man escape the snake which was in his refuge—are these threats within the camp? The threat of political infiltration by Imbonerakure (the youth wing of the political party in power in Burundi)? Or is it perhaps the everyday threat and experience of hunger, when the ration distributed is frequently far below even minimal recommendations? Where can he go with the crocodile below—does it perhaps represent the policing of migration and targeting of Burundians outside of the camp? Where can he find refuge? Is any of this what the artist meant?

\* \* \*

Months later, Claude and I would see another version of the same scene. Created by the same artist, though much smaller, this painting hung in the home of Paul,\* a research

interlocutor, who had been a friend of the painter. We had already visited his small plot in the camp several times, but I had never been inside Paul's mud-brick house, built to the design instructed by the NGO in charge of "the shelter sector" in the camp. Previously, we sat on stools in the shade of the small yard to chat, between a cluster of tall banana plants, and a wooden pen for goats. This time we were invited in to share a lunch of corn ugali, with a sauce of small ndagara<sup>3</sup> fish. In the small front room, between religious posters featuring Mary and Jesus and calendars distributed by NGOs, the smaller version of *Tabu Tupu* again made for a talking point. It still seemed salient. To Paul the painting reflected his experience of and thoughts about the camp. It also seems to tell the story of camps in his past. They shape how he views where he is now, and what the future may hold.

Paul, like many other Burundian refugees, was not new to encampment in Tanzania. Paul first sought refuge with his family as a child in 1993, when massacres and over a decade of warfare followed the assassination of the first democratically elected, and first Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye. Others, like Claude, had first fled during state genocidal violence in 1972—At that time, Paul's parents had remained in Burundi, even though his grandfather had been killed. From the early 1990's onwards, Paul grew up in a camp not far from the camp he lives in now. At first, as a child, the camp was a haven from the violence that he had fled, which had shattered the perspective he had on his home community:

In my childhood, I didn't see any problem [in Burundi]. I saw that we lived well there, bose bakundana (all people loved each other). Ego, mugabo (yes, but), after a short time, war broke out, which caused me to be very afraid. [I was] still a child... et j'ai vu les choses effrayant (and I saw frightening things). People killed one another, killed one another a lot. Ni kuvuga (which is to say), I saw the war break out, it was terrifying. I saw planes bombing. So, that is when we fled. I was a child, I was in first year of primary [school]. So we fled, we fled to [a camp] in Tanzania. Donc (so), in [the camp] it was like amahoro (peace) returned. Naruhuka mu mutima (I rested in my heart/consciousness), but in the night when I dreamed it came back— the situation of the war in my dreams. In my dreams, always, it came back, the history of the war—even if I was in the camp. I continued my life. After, the situation in the camp changed also... (Paul, Interview, 2018)

Although his initial perception of the camp had been one of peace, later, increasingly strict encampment and policing changed his perspective. He felt they were not treated as abantu (humans). More and more refugees returned to Burundi, and the remaining camps were

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<sup>3</sup> Kir. alternate spelling: ndagala; Sw: dagaa

consolidated. Those who remained, like Paul's family, were moved from one camp to another. They were forced to go back to Burundi in 2012, during the violent closure of Mtabila camp—the last of the camps that had opened for Burundian refugees in the 1990's. After years of increasing restrictions in the camp meant to push Burundians “home,” refugees were stripped of their formal legal status. The Tanzanian military surrounded the camp. In the final push for closure he was separated from his wife and children, when they were forced to board the bus “like wild animals” (Interview, 2018). It was several days before he and his wife and children reunited at a reception centre in Burundi.

Return to Burundi was meant to be a durable solution to their displacement, but Paul's family was threatened when they returned to his father's itongo (Kir: plot of land). The land had been occupied by a family member, a fellow former refugee, who had supported the party now in power during the rebellion, and was still active in the party. Paul and his father had not supported the party while in the camps, and were unable to reclaim their land. They fled again, this time within Burundi.

Thus, instead of returning to the place of his childhood home, Paul moved closer to the border with Tanzania, in case his family would need to flee further, again. Still, he feared the border and Tanzania. Unlike many residents of the border region, including many former refugees, he never crossed for work or visits: “naratinye gose, naratinye gose... (Kir: I was completely afraid, so afraid...) I saw Tanzania as an enemy country because of the forced repatriation, so I was afraid to cross the border.” Less than three years later his family was forced to flee and cross the border again, surviving a violent attack on their house, within the broader political violence in 2015. He thought his wife had been killed in the attack, as he escaped separately, but they were reunited again, this time in back in a Tanzanian camp.

Paul discussed the current camp context and emphasis on return drawing on his knowledge and recalling prior encampment, violent camp closure, forced and non-durable return, and ongoing exile. He described feelings of fear, memories which remained with him in times of which seemed “like peace,” and his current distress about possible return. “Akazoza sindakabona,” (Kir: I don't see a future,) he stated, and shared that his father had said he would rather be shot and killed than forced to return to Burundi by gunpoint again. “Ntivyoroshe, nitvyoroshe,” (Kir: it's not easy, it's not easy,) he uttered, pausing before continuing our discussion.

\* \* \*

Such trajectories, interpretations, emotions, and the narratives in which they are positioned, are at the heart of this dissertation. The narratives shared by Paul and other Burundian refugees challenge dominant, state-centric geographical imaginaries of violence, displacement, and peace, which work to harden boundaries and close space for those deemed “undesirable.” In so doing, state and humanitarian practices such as refugee and migration management, encampment, camp closures, and forced return, produce further displacement through varying temporalities of violence. These stories thus trace the ways displacement *endures*, and how, it is *endured*.

Tanzania’s refugee policies reflect broader historical patterns, and global trends in migration management. Strict encampment, migration policing, and closure of space for refuge echo colonial durabilities in global migration governance, and present “closures” of many other countries to asylum and refuge for people seeking liveable lives (Davies & Isakjee, 2018; Haines, Howell, & Keles, 2017; Mayblin, Wake, & Kazemi, 2020). Tanzania’s past and ongoing refugee conditions and camp closures have arguably received less critical attention than many other refugee situations, with Tanzania, Burundi and Burundian refugees geopolitically even more marginal to the concerns of hegemonic world powers. Yet Tanzania’s policies of closure are far from exceptional, globally—a fact of which Tanzanian officials are very aware (Interviews, 2017) (M. J. Thomson, 2017).<sup>4</sup>

In 2021, over 89 million people were recognized within formal categories of forcible displacement globally (UNHCR, 2022a)—a number that has been increasing each year since 2011, and which is itself incredibly narrow its definition of displacement (Pull, Lind, Tsoni, & Baeten, 2020). As has been stated many times over the past decades, more and more people are spending longer and longer in exile—again, a fact which does not capture many of the ways that displacement endures beyond and because of formal categorization, and official solutions (Hyndman & Giles, 2017b). At the same time stricter (en)closures are being operationalized at

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<sup>4</sup> Moral outcry about state responses and obligations to refugees is often “paraded more strongly when it comes to claims about the obligations of others” (Bakewell, 2021, p. 64). For example, when threatening to close Somali refugee camps Kenya faced international consternation, while at the same time European countries have been enacting increasingly “finer grained categories” to facilitate the rejection of more asylum claims, and denying the rights of “convention refugee status” within new categories of admission (Bakewell, 2021, p. 64).

many scales. Refugee-migrants are variously kept on the move and prevented from moving, both of which work together to violent prevent people from attaining or remaining in places that could become homes (Tazzioli, 2020a, 2020b). While a comprehensive overview would be far too extensive for this introduction, brief attention to closures to refuge elsewhere highlights the ways that they produce and prolong displacement for people on the move.

Some of these closures are clear and physical. For example, Poland began building border wall with Belarus (Tondo, 2022), while across the world the Dominican Republic began building a border wall with Haiti (Daniels, 2022)—just two of an increasing number of physically hardening borders (Minca & Rijke, 2017; Rosière & Jones, 2012). Since 2015 border closures have become common across Europe, with Hungary “closing” its border with Croatia in October 2015, and Slovenia “closing” their border to asylum seekers in November (and then erecting a razor-wire fence) (Tazzioli, 2020b). Violent destructions of encampments are regular (Hagan, 2018, 2021; I. Katz, Martin, & Minca, 2018; Singh, 2020; Tazzioli, 2020b). Border controls have been strengthening throughout Europe and North America, seeking to hamper the mobilities of racialized migrants (CARL, 2021a, 2021b; Davies, Isakjee, & Obradovic-Wochnik, 2022; Kjellmo Larsen & Gordon, 2021; Panayotatos, 2020). Migrants are pushed back across borders, in and beyond the continent, including from France and Austria to Italy and Slovenia, from Croatia to Bosnia, and from Hungary to Serbia (BVMN, 2021); at sea; and within North Africa. Externalization also closes off space to refuge in other contexts from North America to Oceania (Boochani, 2018; Hyndman & Mountz, 2008; Nair, 2022). A strong emphasis on return remains and is rooted in racist ideas of who belongs where. Camps are threatened with closure, removing even containing forms of refuge (NRC, 2017; Teferra, 2022). Ongoing deportation programs are massive and often deceptively named “voluntary return” programs which themselves are state-sanctioned displacement—often to places where the problems that people fled remain (Lennard, 2021; Mehrdad, 2021; Sajjad, 2020; Syal, 2022). While only a minor overview, all of these closures extend rather than resolve displacement for people already enduring displacement.

[Contributions] Space-times of Displacement and Violence, In and Beyond Camps and Closures

This dissertation explores the interrelated dynamics of enduring displacement, encampment, and closure, by drawing on life history research with Burundian refugees in Nduta

and Nyarugusu camps in Tanzania (2017-8), as well as semi-structured interviews with government and humanitarian staff, and ethnographic methods. Empirically, this dissertation contributes to knowledge by tracing the diverse prior trajectories of current Burundian refugees, both within and beyond camp boundaries. Throughout this dissertation, their narratives are woven together with broader themes in the research. They defy the linear *there-and-back-again* geographical imaginary of state-centric refuge management. While repatriation is a formally recognized and preferred durable solution for refugees by states and humanitarian organizations, the past and ongoing returns of hundreds of thousands of refugees and migrants to Burundi have not been lasting for many Burundians, who have experienced diverse forms of displacement, sought refuge, and crossed borders multiple times. They share stories of displacement stretching to the genocide in 1972, and even further back.

Burundian refugees' life histories highlight an understudied but constitutive aspect of camps—their *ultimate closure*. Specifically, refugees recount memories of the violent closure of Mtabila camp in 2012, as well as its fearful afterlives and ongoing presence across space and time. Empirically, this dissertation contributes to the history of refugee hosting in Tanzania by documenting memories of Mtabila camp and its closure, which have been neglected in the academic literature. It traces how processes of closure are experienced in everyday life. While much of the camp literature has been attentive to their spatialities, consideration of closures draws attention to time and experiences of time in the study of camps (Asoni, 2022). Notably, a number of camp researchers emphasize the ontological insecurity of seemingly never-ending liminality experienced in camps which may endure for decades, despite their stated temporariness (Agier, 2016; Hyndman & Giles, 2011; Miletzki, 2014; Pasquetti, 2015; Picker & Pasquetti, 2015; Ramadan, 2013). When closures are threatened as imminent the insecurity experienced by camp residents is qualitatively different. Theoretically, attention to closures contributes to new understandings of the sovereign power, camp governance, violence and displacement, as well as geographies of fear.

Camp studies have emphasized the contradictory nature of refugee camps: they provide care and minimal humanitarian aid, while also operating through carceral logics, containing people seeking refuge (Asoni, 2022; Feldman, 2015a; Hyndman, 2001; Martin, Minca, & Katz, 2020; Simon Turner, 2010). When camps provide ostensible refuge, their ultimate closure, if foreclosing the desired spatial trajectories of inhabitants rather than resulting in the opening of

space for them, also constitute displacement. Closures can thus be considered within the framework of humanitarian violence, and the inherent violence of encampment (Weima & Minca, 2021).

The multiple displacements of Burundians within and from Burundi, their enclosure in camps in Tanzania, and their forced return through camp closures and deportations is the basis for my theorization of *displacement*. Displacement is a common term in geography, but is often taken-for-granted (Elliott-Cooper, Hubbard, & Lees, 2020; Gregory, 2013; Pull et al., 2020). Elliott-Cooper et al (2020) theorize displacement as “violent un-homing,” not only in relation to direct violence, but also to slower, structural violence, such as through gentrification. This conceptualization of displacement draws attention to time, or more accurately space-time (rather than just space (Cresswell, 2006)) in the study of displacement, by relating it to already well established work on the temporalities of violence (O’Lear, 2021).

Violence has been a central focus within political geography for over two decades (Gregory & Pred, 2007; Staeheli, Kofman, & Peake, 2004), including among scholars of displacement (Hyndman & De Alwis, 2004; Oslender, 2007, 2016). Geographers have been attentive to a range of temporalities of violence and their inter-relation. Direct violence is theorized as the most visible, quick, physical forms of harm. While it may be the most spectacular, direct violence cannot be separated from slower structural, cultural, and epistemic forms of violence that receive less attention (Christian & Dowler, 2019; Galtung, 1969; Mayblin et al., 2020; Nixon, 2011; O’Lear, 2021; Peluso & Watts, 2001; Watts, 2011, 2013; Žižek, 2008).

Sometimes fast and direct, sometimes slow and indirect, varied temporalities of violence are entwined in creating and reinforcing ongoing displacement of Burundian refugees. Even as homemaking and emplacement are practiced in everyday life, various forms of slow-violence in encampment underly the governance of camp life and camp closures. They thus create slow-displacement. In Tanzania the violence of past camp closure is part of the violence of current encampment because of the way memories of past closures are mobilized to create fear of future violence, in order to coerce return. Fear also prevents refugees from feeling secure in-place in the present. Displacement is thus linked to both past (remembered) and future (anticipated) violence, while experienced in the present.

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“...all of this integrally, and significantly, spatial” (Massey, 2005, p. 183)

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How space and place are understood matters to the questions and contexts of displacement. In hegemonic refugee management regimes, *space* is often conceived in the abstract.<sup>5</sup> Abstract space is a taken-for-granted and often static stage on which the dynamic play of human history is located, such as the “flows” of refugees indicated in arrows reaching across borderlines on static maps, tracing journeys from one point to another (Massey, 2005; van Houtum & Bueno Lacy, 2019). Such a view of space is often bound up with essentializing perspectives on *place* and *belonging*: certain people are seen as naturally belonging to certain *places*, often coinciding with state boundaries and citizenship categories (Sparke & Mitchell, 2018). Refugees crossing borders are thus framed as “matter out of place” (Malkki, 1992).

Several scholars have highlighted how state and humanitarian agencies often (and perhaps necessarily) work from shared terminology (such as the categories of refugees and migrants). I posit that they also work from shared understandings of *space* in seeking to govern refugees and other people on the move. *Displacement*, in such frameworks, is largely defined by this locational move—one of the most rudimentary definitions of the term (Cresswell, 2006). In this sense, displacement is a move from a place of legal and ontological belonging to a place of non-belonging. Displacement is resolved by return—from point ‘B’ to point ‘A,’ so to speak. Return becomes *the* solution to the problem of this out-of-placeness. Return as *the* solution effaces many underlying reasons for displacement. It also ignores changes that have occurred over time in the places from which people have fled, and in which they seek refuge. Deportability becomes normalized, while the politics and responsibility underlying displacement are effaced (Darling, 2009, 2010). This has become the case for Burundian refugees in Tanzania. They face strict encampment, and an unwavering emphasis on return as the only solution to their displacement according to the state-humanitarian complex—a closed spatial imagined trajectory, even when reality has already defied that trajectory.

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<sup>5</sup> By “hegemonic humanitarian and state refugee and migration management” I refer to the dominant forms of knowledge and practices by which states seek to control who may move, where, and when. Humanitarian and state management of refugees and migration may at times be at odds, discursively, however they both predominantly work within a state-centric system.

Doreen Massey wrote she was spurred to articulate her theory of space due to concerns with a context of “grim inequalities” within globalisation, along with the “the perniciousness of exclusivist localisms,” and the challenges of responding to these issues (Massey, 2005, p. 6). As she struggled with debates in which “the terms don’t fit what it is you’re struggling to say,” she became attentive to hidden, underlying imagined and imaginative geographies in dominant approaches to these issues (Massey, 2005). Nearly two decades later, pernicious localisms not only persist, but seem to be hardening in many places. More and more people are forced to move, but the deep interconnections between places that shape the underlying reasons for their movement are effaced in hegemonic understandings of displacement, including colonial and neo-colonial responsibility for both direct and structural violences underlying displacement (Daley, 1993; Danewid, 2017; Darling, 2009; Davies & Isakjee, 2018; Gregory, 2004; Ibeanu, 1990; Sparke & Mitchell, 2018). Dominant humanitarian responses work within state frameworks seeking to keep specified populations on the move from exercising secure emplacement in places where they are not wanted (Tazzioli, 2020a; Weima & Hyndman, 2018). And, by and large, none of this *works* for the vast majority of people at the harsh end of these realities.

Displacement is increasingly lasting for longer and longer periods (even when only counting limited formal definitions of refuge and internal displacement (UNHCR, 2021a)). The closure of borders and hardening of boundaries only extend the periods which many spend out-of-place—making journeys to safety more difficult. For example, camps seek to exclude those out-of-place from the imagined-as-pure national-space. In camps, lives are diminished in regimes which “care” for biological existence, but offer little possibilities for much real *life*—which people nevertheless eke out in the interstices of increasingly closing spaces of “refuge.” Voluntary return, touted as a “solution” has been possible for fewer and fewer people, and has not been truly voluntary or durable for many. Regimes of deportation and forced return displace those already displaced. There seem to be few options for justice in the face of the immense injustices of these situations. In diverse sites around the globe, violent displacement (including in response to displacement) is normalized though silent but powerful ways of thinking about (and largely ignoring thinking about) space (and place). Accordingly, as Massey insisted, the political possibilities of thinking about space matter. In this dissertation, I draw on this assertion, along with her theories of space, place, and power geometries. I introduce each briefly here, and

engage further with these conceptualizations in outlining the key concepts shaping this research in the following section, as well as highlighting Massey's related theorization of return.

**Space:** In contrast to the abstract understanding of space outlined above, Massey outlines three key interrelated propositions for a relational understanding of space. In brief, first, space is a “product of interrelations; as constituted through interactions” (Massey, 2005, p. 9). How we understand and experience space in the present is the result of past and present interactions, including, for example, the creation of borders and nation-states, and camps (Stoler, 2016).

Massey's second proposition is that space is “the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity” (Massey, 2005, p. 10). Space is made up of difference, heterogeneity, and distinct, coexisting trajectories, rather than a singular way of organizing societies and economies, or defining and managing displacement and migration. Historically, different modes of imagining territory and belonging, and managing displacement have been practiced and remain possible—even as current systems are shaped by colonial durabilities, it is not their sole influence, nor the only possibility (Boeyink, 2022; Brankamp, 2021a; Brankamp & Daley, 2020; Kweka, 2007; Mbembe, 2018; Ongpin, 2008; Sparke & Mitchell, 2018) .

Massey's third proposition is that space is fundamentally open, “always in process”—bound up with, rather than in static opposition to, the dynamism of history and time (Massey, 2005, pp. 9-12). Space, then, is always space-time, and never static. Each of these propositions has implications for the conceptualization of the management of displacement, including encampment, camp closures, and return. In this dissertation, attention to space-time allows for new insights into camp geographies by looking at moments of closure, and the temporalities of camps. It also allows for new considerations of displacement in relation to violence, as experienced through time, and not just as movement in space. Finally, it allows for more understanding of how places change through time, allowing for critical understandings of return, which are discussed further below.

**Place:** While the focus of this dissertation is largely *displacement*, challenging hegemonic understandings of displacement requires what Massey refers to as a “progressive sense of place” (Massey, 1993). Place, for Massey, is not a bounded location, nor do places have coherent identities. People's experiences of a place vary greatly, depending on their own engagement with it and other places. She argues that places can have “multiple identities,” and that they need to be thought of in the context of their relations to other places through time,

including relations of imperialism and colonialism (Massey, 1993, p. 66-7). Massey's conception of place is thus related to her theorization of space in that it emphasizes interrelation, multiplicity, and even internal contestation. Even as places do have their particular specificity, it is through continual reproduction rather than a static identity.

**Power Geometries:** Whether people are crossing borders, facing containment in camps, or being forced to return to their supposed country of origin, their mobilities are shaped by power geometries. *Power geometry* is a concept proposed by Massey (1993), which highlights the power which shapes mobilities and immobilities. Although initially imagined in the context of critiquing theories of time-space compression which did not consider factors shaping its unevenness—beyond capital—the concept is useful in considering humanitarianism and the management of displacement (Massey, 1993). She explains,

...different social groups and different individuals are placed in very distinct ways in relation to these flows and interconnections [of capital]. This point concerns not merely the issue of who moves and who doesn't, although that is an important element of it; it is also about power in relation to the flows and the movement. (Massey, 1993, p. 62)

Power geometry is a useful analytic when considering how the management of displacement and sites of humanitarianism are shaped by past histories of colonialism, enduring relations of coloniality, and diverging geopolitical interests. As the management of displacement relies on the mobility of personnel, goods, money, and ideas, and creates immobility itself, "mobility and control over mobility both reflect and reinforce power." (Massey, 1993, p. 63). It is through power geometries that Massey addresses the issue of spatial *closure*.

The argument about openness/closure, in other words, should not be posed in terms of abstract spatial forms but in terms of the social relations through which the spaces, and that openness and closure, are constructed; the ever-mobile power-geometries of space-time. [...] The issue is one of power and politics as refracted through and often actively manipulating space and place, not one of general 'rules' of space and place. For there are no such rules, in the sense of a universal politics of abstract spatial forms; of topographic categories. Rather there are spatialized social practices and relations, and social power. (Massey, 2005, p. 166)

Massey does not see closure as essentially bad or unjust, nor essentially good, but rather, contingent on "the terms on which the argument is based," and in relation to other spatialities of openness and closure, and their interaction (Massey, 2005, p. 165).

**Return:** Drawing on Massey's conceptions of space-time and power geometries can provide new perspectives on return and repatriation. Defining repatriation and return often relies upon the equally problematic imaginaries of "home," "country of origin," and "place of origin." Further assumptions are embedded in the "re" prefix. Particularly when refugees have been born outside their parents, or even grandparents, country of origin, as is increasingly the case given protracted refugee cases, the idea of "place of origin" highlights understandings of place and belonging as necessarily tied to some essential, ancestral, blood-based lineage. Return is clearly a misnomer in any literal sense for such "returnees" who have often before been to the locations to which they are "returned." But beyond those who have never been to a location previously, return to a "place of origin" may also be thought of as a myth in that no place remains the same through time,

A Masseyian conception of space and place highlights what Massey refers to as the "myth of return" in space-time:

Space has time/times within it. This is not the static simultaneity of a closed system but a simultaneity of movements. And that is a different thing altogether. It means, for one thing, that *you can't go back in space: the myth of the return.* (Massey, 2003b, emphasis added)

The implication is that even when one returns to a location, the place is not exactly the same. The power geometries which shape the reasons people leave continue to work and transform places people have left. The act of leaving and returning is part of the changing constellation of any place, and the continued change of the place itself. While one may re-visit a specific location, the place will have changed, as all places/space changes through time:

'Here' is where spatial narratives meet up or form configurations, conjunctures of trajectories which have their own temporalities (so 'now' is as problematical as 'here'). But where successions of meetings, the accumulations of weavings and encounters build up a history. It's the returns (mine, the swifts') and the very differentiation of temporalities that lend continuity. But the returns are always to a place that has moved on, the layers of our meeting intersecting and affecting each other; weaving a process of space-time. Layers as accretions of meetings. (Massey, 2005, p. 139)

The myth of return, then, does not mean that return does not exist in a locational sense. The myth is the belief that any return is a return to the same place, or a return to the past. Places move on through time, and so return is another meeting up of trajectories. Recognizing the myth of return has implications for how return and repatriation are studied. It requires conceptual reframing that is already practiced in many ethnographic studies of the practices of return-

oriented and returnee communities. Doreen Massey has written about the (im)possibilities of return in much more mundane contexts and even shorter timelines than those of forced migration. In writing about a quick day-trip by train (from Manchester to Liverpool) she proposes:

this movement of yours is not just spatial; it's also temporal. So, you're barely out of Manchester, [...] when Manchester itself has moved on. Lives have pushed ahead, business has been done, the weather has changed. That collection of trajectories that is Manchester is no longer the same as when you left it. It has lived on without you. And Liverpool? Likewise it has not just been lying there, static on the map, awaiting your arrival. It too has been going about its business; moving on. Your arrival [...] when you step off the train, begin to get into the things you came here to do, is a meeting-up of trajectories as you entangle yourself in stories that began before you arrived. This is not the arrival of an active voyager in an awaiting passive destination but an intertwining of ongoing trajectories from which something new may emerge. (Massey, 2003)

The “meeting up” takes into considerations more actors, a broader lens. The trajectories through space-time of those that remain in place are equally included (Lubkemann, 2008). This is important as mobilities and immobilities are often tied to power relations. A Masseyian conception of the “myth of return” provides a new lens for considering the power geometries which shape the hegemonic state and humanitarian emphasis on return, and the myths and spatial imaginaries which underpin it.

[Lexicon in Context] (Beyond) State and Humanitarian Terminologies <sup>6</sup>

This thesis both draws on and challenges many normative humanitarian and state labels and categories, whose creation and definition are used to “manage displacement” (Hyndman, 2001) and migration. Like *return*, labels and terms such as *refugee*, *camp*, and *protracted refugee situations* are part of the state and humanitarian displacement management lexicon. Their formal definition and use is bound up with power relations, created in and for systems shaped by racial hierarchies and colonial logics (Brankamp & Daley, 2020; Mayblin, 2014). All of these terms are spatial in their definition. Their hegemonic definitions are underpinned by and in turn uphold

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<sup>6</sup> My discussion of several of these terms draws on excerpts of a chapter I co-wrote with Jennifer Hyndman, in the *Handbook on Critical Geographies of Migration*, entitled “Managing Displacement: negotiating transnationalism, encampment, and return” (Weima & Hyndman, 2018). While the chapter was co-written, the excerpted portions are primarily of my own composition. Additionally, I include material from an unpublished course paper, “Myths of Return: Geographical Perspectives on Refugee Return and Repatriation” written for GEOG 5010 at York University in 2016.

imaginaries of space, and particularly the nation-state, as static, taken-for-granted “containers” (Massey, 2005). Their use is political.

Yet, social science research also relies on labels and categories, to build understanding across contexts, and to engage or speak-back, however critically, to the hegemonic systems whose terms we may critique (Bakewell, 2021). Bakewell (2021) argues, “This does not mean that we accept these categories as given, nor do we need to base our analysis on them. The puzzle we face is how to challenge and possibly subvert these categories to provide alternative perspectives” (p. 67). The following three sub-sections provide brief discussions of key terms in this dissertation: *Refugee*; *Camp*; and *Protracted Refugee Situations*.<sup>7</sup>

### Refugee

In my first interview with Leah, she differentiated crossing the border from Burundi to flee the civil war in the 1990’s with being brought to a camp registered as a refugee a few years later, and then “becoming a refugee” in Tanzania. She brought out old refugee cards from her childhood in the 1970’s and 1980’s in Rwanda, from the 1990’s at another camp in Tanzania, and from her most recent registration, showing the birthplaces in Rwanda and Tanzania of herself and her children. Given her attention to these documents, all of which formally identified her as a refugee, I asked her, through an interpreter, what the label meant to her. She responded with an experiential explanation,

Me, I see that being called a refugee is losing all your goods, leaving your country to live in another country, and living in a very difficult situation where you are deprived of all rights; and the important rights we find they are flouted/violated (fr: bafoué). And the situation becomes difficult, we can’t see the future.

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<sup>7</sup> Beyond the key-words introduced in this section, additional “taken-for-granted” categories (Bakewell, 2008) are present throughout this dissertation, and intersect with the above lexicon in particular ways in the context of this research. In particular, the nation-state terminology of “Burundi” and “Tanzania,” or “Burundians” and “Tanzanians” could also be problematized as constructed territories and identity categories—as can all states, nations, and nationalities. (The historical context section below briefly introduces some relevant background on the creation of these states). National identity categories are employed with a critical perspective on what Malkki terms “the rooting of people and the territorialisation of national identity” (Malkki, 1992). The life histories in this research both speak to the power of these categories in shaping life possibilities (and indeed further categorization) for many people, however they also challenge essentialised understandings of narrowly defined autochthonous or indigenous citizenship, belonging, and identity (Mamdani, 2002).

During a certain period of life, one finds that one hasn't done/accomplished anything. We can't plan [or provide] anything for our family. Me, I see that living as a refugee, is too dangerous and difficult.

Here it's different than other countries –[elsewhere] you can be a refugee but be stable in the head because you are well established there. You continue to live like a citizen, you live your life, and even though you are a refugee it's normal, you can be ... But if you are here [in Tanzania] they mistreat you. They tell you, tomorrow you could be forcibly returned. You can't work, you can't do anything; everything is blocked (fr: bafoué) (Leah, Interview, Tanzania, 2017)

The label *refugee* is frequently invoked in this dissertation, and in the context where this research was conducted. It is easily taken-for-granted (Bakewell, 2008). In the conversation above, the term is described through lived experience of a woman who had been born as refugee in Rwanda in the 1970's where she remembers relative local-integration. She also describes increasingly strict encampment in Tanzania in the 1990's and 2000's, forced return in 2012, and return-to-refugee status in 2015. Leah notes not only the losses of fleeing one's country, but also the material, social, and psychological dimensions of the instability of liminal refugee status which may be revoked. Her critique of refugee management that violates rights, and acknowledgement of the fact of varied treatment of refugees in different countries, reflects the fact that "refugee," while a formal category in international law, is shaped by changing politics and the hierarchical categorization of human life within a normative nation-state system:

As a particular kind of political migrant, refugees are an expression of the salience of states, international borders, and their crossing in contemporary political discourse. In other words, they are an expression of state-centric "ways of seeing" migration, which in turn shape how one might analyse the governance of refugees as migrants "forced" to leave their country and seek asylum. Legally, refugees are persons fleeing persecution or targeted violence in another country.<sup>8</sup> And yet the category "refugee" is also exclusionary, and leaves out many people fleeing immediate violence and state-led human rights atrocities (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018). What does one call a person who flees her country to seek asylum, is granted refugee status, returns home when violence declines,

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1 This legal definition applies in signatory countries of the United Nations 1951 Geneva Convention and 1967 Protocol on Refugees. The 1969 Organisation of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, and the 1984 Cartagena Declaration by Central American states were based on more regionally specific contextual analyses, by states whose experiences of large-scale forced migration differed from the European context which the Geneva Convention was designed to address. Both regional agreements provide critical interpretations of the causes of forced migration, and broader recognition of refugees, including those forced to move due to events "seriously disturbing the public order." While implementation varies, the regional agreements are actually existing legal frameworks that provide different ways of understanding and governing migration.

only to flee again and seek asylum but this time be refused by the same government? (Weima & Hyndman, 2018, p. 30)

The legal definition of *refugee* has changed through time, and across contexts (Chimni, 1998; Musalo, 2015; Tague, 2015). The right “to seek asylum and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution” was first recognized as an international human right in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Mayblin, 2014, p. 4, Article 14.1; United Nations General Assembly, 1948). The right to refuge was then more specifically outlined as applying to certain groups in the 1951 Convention on the Status on Refugees, drawing on the mandate of the European-focused International Refugee Organization (IRO), created to respond to displacement within Europe following the second World War. The 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees is a key document in shaping the legal recognition of refugees today, however it was created with intentional exclusions of, and even hostility towards, refugees from outside of Europe, by Britain, other imperial powers, and settler colonies at the time (Mayblin, 2014). Such exclusions were contested by delegates from many other countries, who highlighted the persecution faced by people within colonies (Mayblin, 2014, p. 434).

While a common perception is that most refugees were European and within Europe at the time, millions of people were fleeing violence and conflicts elsewhere (Mayblin, 2014). Poignantly, many such refugees at the time were fleeing persecution in European colonies including the violent suppression of independence struggles, or displacement caused in the imperial tracing of new borders and exclusions (such as the partition of India and Pakistan) (Mayblin, 2014; Musalo, 2015). This racist and exclusionary foundation of supposedly international human rights continues to shape refugee recognition today (Chimni, 1998; Mayblin, 2014).

The refugee definition is thus part of a broader system of migration management, seeking to distinguish and categorize people on the move, within and across borders, including the management of migration and displacement in Tanzania (Brankamp & Daley, 2020; Wilson et al., 2021). The refugee label can be laden with diverse connotations. For example Malkki (1995a), critiques a stereotyped figure of the refugee as a feminized, “singularly expressive emissary of horror and powerlessness,” particularly in universalizing depictions of “bare humanity,” “*stripped of the specificity of culture, place, and history*” (pp. 10, 11, 12, emphasis original). Although all human identities are relational and fluid (Massey, 2004), the categories of refugee and asylum seeker are often essentialized and concretized in order to manage people

deemed out-of-place (Daley, 2021a), including through policies such as containment within camps.

The refugee label can seem overdetermining or dehumanizing. It is rejected by some scholars, activists, and people-on-the-move. While I sometimes refer more broadly to *border-crossers*, I find this latter term lacks precision. Border-crossers can equally be commercial traders, tourists, humanitarian workers and other privileged labour migrants—and I met Burundians in all these categories in Tanzania. As researchers we are also border-crossers. In the context of this research, the term *refugee* retained salience for political reasons.

Burundians refugees arriving in Tanzania from 2015-6 had received prima-facie refugee status as a group, meaning that their status was based on recognition of circumstances in the country of origin, rather than requiring individual status determination, see (UNHCR, 2015c). In 2017, however, Tanzania aligned with the position of the Burundian government, and stated that Burundi was a safe and peaceful country. They thus stopped automatically granting refugee status to Burundians seeking refuge, and instead registered those arriving as asylum seekers, requiring them to go through an individual refugee status determination (RSD) process. (All Congolese asylum seekers who underwent this process during my research were denied refugee status, and thus the status was troubling to many Burundians.) Soon, even asylum seekers were turned away, and in some cases new arrivals at the camps were returned to Burundi (Notes, 2017-8).

Many Burundian refugees had also previously experienced refugee status cessation when forced to return to Burundi in 2012. *Cessation* is the formal process by which refugee status is removed from individuals or groups when the situation in their country of origin is deemed to have substantially changed in an enduring way (McConnachie et al., 2013). They thus recognized that the Tanzanian and Burundian state discourse that Burundi was peaceful challenged their right to remain in Tanzania, as it challenged the basis of their status as refugees, and therefore insisted on the language of *refugeeness* as a justification that they not be forced to return (see also Wilson et al., 2021).

## Camp

The range of sites subsumed in the field of camp studies is incredibly extensive, reflecting a vibrant research field—including studies of colonial regroupement camps,<sup>9</sup> concentration camps, formal asylum centres, diverse refugee camps, informal migrant encampments of diverse temporalities, protest camps, and more (Agier & Lecadet, 2014) (Abourahme, 2020; Agier, 2016; I. Katz et al., 2018; Martin et al., 2020; Simon Turner, 2016b; Weima & Minca, 2021). It is difficult to define what a camp *is*. Nevertheless, “something connects all of these senses and form” (Abourahme, 2020, p. 35) (Weima & Brankamp, 2022). The term encompasses locations in which “varied forms of shelter and modes of care coincide and conflict with technologies of control, governance and containment of refugees, migrants and displaced people” (de Hasque & Lecadet, 2019; Weima & Minca, 2021, p. 263). Camps are ubiquitous, and enduring, such that “refugee camps particularly, have become a permanent presence in today’s political geographies globally” (Agier & Lecadet, 2014; Martin et al., 2020; Weima & Minca, 2021, p. 262). This research addresses what is perhaps the most archetypical form of contemporary camp: the institutional refugee camp. The camps in this research reflect a model of encampment of displaced people that has spread globally since World War Two (WWII) (Lecadet & de Hasque, 2019).

The politics of life and survival are central to the creation and management of camps (Agamben, 1998; Hyndman, 2000; Hyndman & Giles, 2017a; I. Katz et al., 2018; Pasquetti, 2015; Redfield, 2005; Seshadri, 2008). More specifically, the creation of camps entails the separation of a specified group of people from the broader population and territory, and the humanitarian provision for their biological survival. In camps, “one might say that the ancient right to take life or let live was replaced by a power to foster life or disallow it to the point of death” (Foucault, cited in Redfield, 2005, p. 339). Rather than a Foucauldian “make live” or “let die” biopolitics, the provision in many camps is so limited that it has been called a “don’t die” regime of mere biological survival (Foucault, 1990, 2008; Hyndman & Giles, 2011, p. 362).

A key characteristic of many refugee camps is their containment of refugees, and their justification through “security” discourse: “Refugee encampment is often justified as both

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<sup>9</sup> France created what they termed “regroupement camps” in colonial Algeria, to forcibly assemble Algerian people in what they framed as a counter-insurgency measure, during violent colonial rule and warfare opposing independence (Longman, 1998)

providing security *for* refugees, and security *from* refugees” (Weima & Hyndman, 2018, p. 31). This both depends upon and reifies the construction of refugees as dangerous and Other:

The grouping of refugee populations in camps and away from other residents emphasizes the fact that they do not belong (Hovil, 2014). National security concerns may link-up with global geopolitics, such as the American “War on Terror,” contributing to even greater securitization and militarization of camps, and greater limitations on refugee rights and mobilities. (Weima & Hyndman, 2018, p. 33)

Yet, even as camps are bounded, they do not exist in distinct abstract spaces. They are often spaces of immense transnational interaction, assembled by diverse actors, and characterized by the creative world-making of people in incredibly difficult circumstances (Holzer, 2015; Msoka & Kweka, 2022; Ramadan, 2013; Singh, 2020). Camps, as all spaces, are the product of interrelations:

they do not exist in political isolation but often tend to reveal something more profound about the broader environments and societies of which they are part. What occurs in camps always has repercussions beyond their geographical confines and, vice versa, the sociopolitical landscapes that surround them impact and shape experiences of encampment. (Weima & Brankamp, 2022, p. 339)

Refugee camps have often been considered as emblematic of sovereign exception, meaning that they are often created through state decrees and in states of emergency, despite their violation of national and international law (hence, their “exceptionality”) (Agamben, 1998; Edkins, 2000; Minca, 2005; Redfield, 2005). They thus exist in “zones of indistinction” both in and beyond law. Overtime, multiple actors, including governments, humanitarian agencies, and other actors negotiate governance and sovereignty (Minca, 2006; Ramadan, 2009; Ramadan & Fregonese, 2017).

Focusing solely on camps as technologies of control and experiences of encampment may obscure how migrants and refugees negotiate safety through extensive and often transnational networks involving placement and displacement, refuge and return, stasis and movement. “On the ground” border-crossers are managing their own security, livelihoods, and families, sometimes in exile, often transnationally, and always in ways that defy easy theorizing. The specificities of the camps in this research is discussed further, particularly in chapters four, five, and seven.

## Protracted Refugee Situations

Despite the emphasis on return, refugee numbers are increasing globally, and voluntary returns have decreased. More and more people recognized as refugees are remaining in refuge for longer and longer periods (UNHCR, 2021a; Weima & Hyndman, 2018). To highlight this phenomenon, UNHCR uses the terminology of Protracted Refugee Situations (PRS) (Crisp, 2003; Loescher & Milner, 2005; UNHCR, 2004), to describe situations “in which 25,000 or more refugees from the same nationality have been in exile for at least five consecutive years in a given host country” (UNHCR, 2021a, p. 20). While in 2016 UNHCR classified two-thirds of all refugees as in protracted refugee situations (UNHCR, 2017e), by 2021, this had increased by over ten percent—76% of all refugees, or 15.7 million people (UNHCR, 2021a, p. 20). UNHCR further describes PRS as “a long-lasting and intractable state of limbo” (UNHCR, 2004, p. 1). This is certainly the case for millions residing in camps for decades (Agier, 2003; Hyndman & Giles, 2017a; Weima & Hyndman, 2018).

In 2020, UNHCR (2021) officially recognized that the “situation of Burundian [...] refugees [...] became protracted” (p. 20)—however this formal status fails to capture the ways their displacement had already been enduring, and continues to endure for many of those who have been forced “home” in recent years. Their ongoing experiences of forced migration and encampment challenge the humanitarian spatial-temporal category of “protracted refugee situations,” as, after decades of displacement their situation was not recognized as “protracted” when seeking refuge in 2015.

Hyndman and Giles (2017) propose the idea of “extended exile” as a way of “decentering” state-centric language of PRS, and its focus on “policy and technical fixes,” while paying attention to the ways that displacement is persisting for many (Hyndman & Giles, 2017b, p. 1). While extended exile speaks to the long times people may live in exile, the term exile seems to highlight time away from one’s country of origin. Hyndman and Giles (2017b) emphasize that they equally consider the situations of long-term internally displaced people, and people who cross borders and “return” multiple times. This dissertation builds on their work and examines displacement as a process and ontological experience cutting across locations, borders, and state-humanitarian categories.

[My Contention] Endurance: Enduring displacement, Enduring violence (enduring camps, enduring closure...)

This dissertation contends that state and humanitarian practices “close” and harden space for those deemed “undesirable,” through forced encampment, camp closures, and coerced or forced return. In so doing, they produce *displacement*, in which varied spatio-temporalities of violence endure.

In a recent *Progress in Human Geography* report, Adam Elliot-Cooper, Phil Hubbard, and Loretta Lees (2020) argue that displacement may now be “now one of the most frequently-invoked concepts in human geography” (p. 492). The term has further salience across and beyond disciplines, as the current era has been called an “age of displacement” (McGrath & Young, 2019), with particular salience in the interdisciplinary fields of Forced Migration and Refugee Studies (Pull et al., 2020; Ramsay, 2020a; Ramsay & Askland, 2020).

Highlighting the scale of war-induced displacement (which is selectively represented so that much enduring displacement is invisibilized), Derek Gregory has noted that despite the centrality of *place* to the discipline, that geographers “have somehow failed to engage with the enormity of forced *dis*-placement” (Gregory, 2013). By its “enormity” Gregory does not primarily refer to scale, but particularly “the way in which violence severs those intimate ties, material and affective, between particular people and particular places” (2013). Given the study of refugees and other forms of forced displacement within geography, “the absence of a close engagement with the concept that is in many ways at the heart of *displacement* is none the less a striking absence from all those paeans to place” (Gregory, 2013).

One common-sense understanding and use of the term is that displacement describes involuntary movement, with an impelled or forced character. It thus has meaning and is bound up with power relations beyond abstract movement. As with other discussions of “forced” (versus voluntary) migration, the degree of force and consideration of human agency destabilize straightforward understandings of the term when applied to many case studies.

Theorizing from attention to gentrification, Elliot-Cooper et al (2021) describe displacement as “a form of violence that removes the sense of belonging to a particular community or home-space” (p. 503). Or, more briefly but evocatively, displacement is “violent un-homing.” “Un-homing” does not necessarily imply movement, as the loss of a sense of home can occur without locational movement due to other changes in a place. Such a definition aligns

with literature refers to experiences of displacement without location movement, particularly from within urban geographies (Annunziata, 2020; Stephen C. Lubkemann, 2016; Pull et al., 2020; Ramsay, 2020a; Ramsay & Askland, 2020; van Lanen, 2020). Displacement is thus conceived as a process and experience—an increasing sense of non-belonging and difficulty in maintain “livable lives”<sup>10</sup> while in remaining in a location. Displacement is definitionally linked with violence, but, as this definition draws on gentrification literature, the violence may be structural, and the process of displacement may be slow—rather than only a fast flight due to direct violence. Applying this concept to the life trajectories of Burundian refugees, experiences of displacement (and thus of violence) exceed formal humanitarian recognition, and, often, are extended by them.

Burundian refugees’ life histories thus trace the ways displacement *endures*, and is *endured*. Endurance is a central theme of this dissertation, with multiple overlapping definitions. The Oxford English Dictionary traces the meanings of the verb “to endure” as including:

Endure, v. [...]

**Etymology:** < Old French *endure-r* to make hard, to endure, = Provençal *endurar*, Italian *indurare* < Latin *indūrāre*, < *in-* (see *in-* prefix1) + *dūrāre* to harden, to endure, < *dūrus* har [...]

†**I.** To harden, strengthen. To indurate, harden. Hence *figurative* to make callous or indifferent. Also in good sense: to make sturdy or robust, to strengthen.

*Obsolete [...]*

**II.** To last; to suffer continuously.

**2. a. intransitive.** To last, continue in existence. Also, to persist, ‘hold out’ in any action, etc. †Formerly also, to continue in a certain state or condition, remain in a certain place (with complement expressing the state or place). [...]

†**b.** To keep up *with*. *Obsolete. rare.*

†**c.** To be continued through space; to extend from one point to another.

*Obsolete. rare.*

†**d.** quasi-*transitive* with *out*: To last out, persist during the continuance of (an event or action).

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<sup>10</sup> “Livable lives” is a term used by Judith Butler (J. Butler, 2004). It includes but exceeds minimal biological life. Butler does not prescribe a single universal meaning for livability. Rather, they elaborate “to live a life is to live a life politically, in relation to power, in relation to others, in the act of assuming responsibility for a collective future” (J. Butler, 2004) page 226. The collective future is not defined, but unknown, contested, and political. It thus relates to Massey’s (2005) relational, political conception of space as always open, and not singular. In *Frames of War*, Butler (Judith Butler, 2010) extends the concept of *livable lives* to consider which lives are considered worth living and grieving, or may be destroyed, while in *Dispossession* (J. Butler & Athanasiou, 2013), Butler considers livability as curtailed by structural dispossession and (unlivable) precarity.

3. **a. transitive.** To undergo, bear, sustain (continuous pain, opposition, hardship, or annoyance); (sometimes more narrowly) to undergo without succumbing or giving way. Also *absol.* [...]
- b.** Of things: To support (a strain, pressure, wear and tear, etc.) without receiving injury; formerly also *absol.* Also in weaker sense, to undergo, suffer, be subjected to.
- †**c.** To withstand as an adversary, support, sustain. *Obsolete.*
4. **a.** (a) To suffer without resistance, submit to, tolerate; to contemplate with toleration. [...]
- †5. Of things: To permit of, be compatible with. *archaic.*  
(OED, 2021)

In brief, enduring, can be a hardening or strengthening, an increasing callousness or indifference, a continuation or persistence through space and through time. It can be a withstanding, despite pressure, or suffering and toleration. Around the world, and in and from Burundi, displacement is enduring in that it continues, and persists through time. People's experiences of displacement continue in encampment, in long-term liminality of non-belonging, and despite (and because of) "solutions." Displacement is also enduring in the sense of getting harder, more difficult—spatial closures endure, hardening borders and the boundaries of camps. Outside of camps, increasing migration controls in the border region makes place-making and liveable lives in the border region more tenuous. Inside of camps, increasing restrictions and decreased aid and services make living and surviving in displacement harder, and push people to return. After decades in exile, denied local integration and not welcomed following past returns, many Burundian refugees experience displacement as ontologically enduring—becoming harder to imagine overcoming in places which do not offer the ontological security. And yet, there is no other option but to endure. Those who have been refugees for longer see themselves as better able to withstand and navigate worsening camp conditions than those who are refugees for the first time. Whether they chose to stay in the camps as life becomes increasingly restricted, or to return, the options feel constrained—not really a "choice," not a "livable life" or space of life, but endured closure and displacement. Endured violence.

I also draw on Stoler's (2016) related theorization of "duress," through which she highlights ways colonial histories endure in the present. Notably, "the hardened, tenacious qualities of colonial effects; their extended protracted temporalities; and, not least, their durable, if sometimes intangible constraints and confinements" (p. 7). Duress suggests "damaging and disabling" qualities, and she sees it as a "relationship of actualized and anticipated violence," that

is not often easily evident (pp. 4; 6; 8). Rather than mere weak “traces” or immaterial “hauntings,” colonial duress is inscribed in landscapes in ways which a “now hardened and more intractable than stone” including borders, prisons, and spatial practices of control such as encampment (Stoler, 2016, pp. 5-6). Colonial duress shapes spatial closure, and thus Burundian refugees’ enduring displacement today.

#### Outline of Chapters

This dissertation is “front heavy,” in that it spends substantial time on the context, methods, and methodology of the research. It does so to help readers approach the incredibly complex and contentious context of the research, which is also, therefore methodologically and ethically difficult. The presentation of Burundian history, and histories of refugee reception in the region, is not mere background, but integral to the argument about the long *durée* of spatial closure, violence, and displacement, as shaped by complex transnational power geometries. As Massey aims to challenge hegemonic stories of particular places by highlighting the meeting up of trajectories and the power geometries which shape them, the contextual chapters of this dissertation aim to highlight some of the complex trajectories and power relations which shape and are shaped by violence and displacement in Burundi, in the long *durée*.

I break with some research presentation conventions in weaving empirical material through all chapters, including the contextual and methods chapters (rather than waiting until after the presentation of methods). This disruption means that the “front-heavy” format does not delay empirical engagement. Rather, it allows the rich material generated in research to speak to and shape understandings of the context and methodology. The longest life histories in this research include memories of the late 1950’s and the atmosphere and displacement preceding Burundi’s independence. From that point onwards, life history material is woven into the presentation of the background. Refugees’ perspectives speak with the formal secondary materials about the context of violence and displacement they have experienced—which is the focus of this dissertation. They provide expertise on the context which is too often dismissed. They also speak to research methods and ethics, precisely because ethical and methodological deliberations and decisions should be in conversation with research participants. Literature review and analysis are woven through the chapters as relevant to the topic of each, rather than standing alone.

More specifically, Chapters II and III provide a background on the origins and history of enduring displacements within and from Burundi, and their relation to spatial closures and violence under colonial rule, continued (*enduring*) in the post-independence state. They also examine shifting grounds of refugee hosting in Tanzania, tracing present-day hardening (*enduring*) encampment to racialized colonial migration policies.

Chapter II specifically traces the history of the pre-colonial and colonial periods, to highlight the ways in which European colonialism created and hardened spatial and socio-political boundaries, and imposed state-extractivist economies. The colonial violence described in this chapter is direct (which describes more immediate violence such as military massacres, battles, torture of prisoners), structural (which encompasses slower forms of harm such as detrimental agricultural policies, excessive taxation, exclusions from education, etc.), and epistemic (such as racism, Eurocentrism, imperialism, but also taken-for-granted borders, nation-states, etc.). These forms of violence are often entwined (Christian & Dowler, 2019). All of these forms of violence both produced massive displacement during colonial rule, and endure—producing and prolonging ongoing displacement. Outlining the extensive direct and structural violence and related displacements of the colonial state challenges narratives that frame violence and displacement in Africa in racist and essentialist terms (e.g. as atavistic, timeless tribalism).

Chapter III traces the enduring effects of colonialism in violence and displacement of Burundian refugees in the post-independence period. It provides the most immediate background of the violence and displacements experienced by the participants in this life history research. The post-independence genocidal violence against Burundi was not itself a rupture with the past. As argued in the previous chapter, too often violence in Africa is “explained away” or normalized through racist and dehumanizing discourses of ancient tribal violence, and language such as “bloodbaths” (Daley, 2007b). Genocidal violence in post-independence Burundi was preceded by the genocidal dehumanization of African people in colonial rule, and shaped by heavy durabilities of colonialism and ongoing coloniality in post-independence geopolitics and geoeconomics. As international reports often sever the chronology of political violence in 2015 from historical context, and frame these events as distinctively emerging around the 2015 elections (S. Bigirimana, 2021), it is important to understand the production of displacement as inseparable from much longer histories. I thus argue that recent displacement is thus not a rupture with past displacement, but it many ways experienced as a continuation of it.

Chapters IV and V recount the questions and decisions about methodology, methods, and ethics raised in the design and implementation of this research, and situate this research within feminist methodological approaches to political geography. Chapter V also contributes an empirical and contextual argument and analysis, as methodological and ethical considerations should always be shaped by and responsive to the contexts of research.

The detailed recounting and reflection on methods and methodology is central to the feminist ethics of (reflexive) care that has pervaded all stages of this project, particularly due to the politically sensitive, post-genocide context, traumatic topics, and uneven power geometries shaping research encounters. Not only is this research largely focused on Burundi and Tanzania, in Africa, which Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013a) terms “the postcolonial neocolonized world” (p. 3), but also, as Hanno Brankamp and I argue (2022), not only the camps themselves, but how they are studied “remains inseparable from the haunting geographies of race and empire” (p. 340). The extended discussion of methodology expresses “constant questioning” of geographical research praxis that aims to be de-colonial (Murrey, 2019 drawing on de Sousa Santos, 2007). As Edward Said stated clearly, “[i]nnocence is now out of the question of course” in researching and representing once-colonized Others (Said, 1989, p. 213). Yet, “Western camp scholarship itself risks furthering the inimical effects of encampment by perpetuating a decidedly colonial gaze” (Abushama, 2021; Weima & Brankamp, 2022, p. 341) Even with detailed reflection and recounting, many methodological, ethical, and practical considerations of this research remain unaddressed, and many of the dilemmas that are addressed remain unresolved (Massey, 2003a; Peake, 2017).

Methodology, here, is understood as encompassing the philosophical underpinnings of research (beliefs about how the world of the topics under study *is*, and beliefs about the nature production of knowledge), and their interrelation with the ways in which knowledge is generated through research. The latter encompasses the framing of research questions, the categories employed, the specific techniques of data generation (i.e. “methods”), as well as approaches to interpretation and representation (Crang, 2009; Weima & Brankamp, 2022). This necessarily includes ethical and political considerations (Peake, 2017). These varied elements of methodology are conceived here as in an iterative, rather than hierarchical, relationship, so that, for example, while understandings of the world may influence the framing of research questions,

data generation may, in-turn, re-shape the questions asked, and the ontological conceptualization of the sites or issues at hand.

More specifically, Chapter IV situates this research within feminist geographical methodologies, while detailing the methods of data generation used in this research—life history interviews; semi-structured interviews; and ethnographic methods—and the relationship between these methods. The chapter addresses recruitment, sampling, consent, rapport, and other practicalities in research, in relation to ethics, positionality, and validity, and the credibility of interpretations, within the particularities of the research sites and topics. I aim for a careful balancing of the consideration that all data generation is necessarily situated and incomplete, while at the same time advocating the validity of narratives and perspectives shared by refugees’ in this research.

Chapter V expands on the argument and content of my published article, “Ethically (un)bounding camp research: life histories within and beyond camp boundaries” (Weima, 2021a). While formal refugee camps are sites that are officially delineated by state authorities, marking an “inside” and “outside,” I situate this research both within the broader feminist geographical tradition of challenging the boundaries of the “field,” and the more recent trend in camp studies to “blur” the locational and categorical boundaries of camps. Research has an ethical imperative to challenge exclusionary boundaries and categories, recognizing the many ways these constructed boundaries are already and continuously crossed and contested. However, in contexts where camp boundaries are being actively “hardened” researchers must be attentive to possible effects of research across boundaries for those who are targeted by encampment. In this vein, the chapter discusses the approvals and official permits processes that shaped the boundaries of my research project and access to camps. In conducting life history research with Burundian refugees in Tanzania, I chose to “bound” my research with Burundian refugees to within camp boundaries to reduce possible risks to research participants. At the same time, the stories recounted in this research, within camps, reach far beyond camp boundaries, and include experiences of Burundian border-crossers seeking liveable lives in diverse places and situations. Life histories thus weave an imperfect, inchoate “minor cartography” (Tazzioli, 2020) of often-invisibilised, diverse sites of refugee lives, bound up with the changing power and

policing of camp boundaries shaping refugees' trajectories in the broader "campscape"<sup>11</sup> over time.

Chapter VI delves into the argument that displacement has been enduring, beyond categories. The refugee label applied to refugees in camps implies a simple spatial and temporal trajectory: a past (one-way, one-time, cross-border) displacement; present, provisional containment; future return (or other once-for-all settlement) as a "solution." Yet there is growing evidence of re-displacement in many situations. Little research has addressed repeated refuge and return. Accordingly, this chapter focuses on the enduring, recurring displacement of Burundian refugees over five decades. Life history narratives from two camps in Tanzania in 2017-8 highlight diverse trajectories which defy past binary groupings of Burundian refugees as either the "1972" or "1990s" cohort, the "town" or "camp" refugees. I argue that the linear spatial-temporal imaginary of "refugee," contributes to and is shaped by state-centric categories including Protracted Refugee Situations (PRS), and "solutions" such as encampment and return—both of which may be experienced as displacement. This imaginary effaces displacement that is not only repeated, but enduring through diverse routes to refuge, and the making and re-making of lives in varied locales.

Chapter VII draws offers a theorization of camp closures, and a history of the violent closure of Mtabila camp. While camps are, by definition, temporary and intended to close, few have studied the actual events and spaces of camp closures and return, or their afterlives (Weima & Minca, 2021). This chapter highlights refugees' perspectives on the geopolitics shaping closure, and theorizes the interplay of petty sovereign power and governmental power in the process of refugee status cessation and the gradual restrictions slowly closing the space of the camp. Humanitarian narratives claim Mtabila's closure was "orderly," and that refugees returned in "safety and dignity," having accepted the need to return. Refugees' testimonies, while broadly effaced, tell a very different story of enduring both slow violence through years of pressure to return, and direct violence and dispossession in the final events of forced return.

Chapter VIII addresses camp afterlives, by looking specifically at how the memory of Mtabila's closure is present for refugees today, and is mobilized to create fear as part of the current process of closure. I argue that governance through fear to coerce return is a form of slow

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<sup>11</sup> "Campscape" is a term introduced by Diana Martin (2015), to encompass the interrelation of camps and their surrounding landscapes. The term is further elaborated in chapter five.

violence, alongside the increasing restrictions limiting possibilities for liveable lives in exile. This slow violence limits possibilities for ontologically secure home-making in exile. Encampment is thus experienced as prolonged (slow) displacement, through the anticipation of further direct displacement from the camp. While many refugees resist being forced to register for “voluntary return” and endure such conditions, drawing on their past experience, enduring fear is exhausting.

Chapter IX offers conclusions and reflects on ongoing closures of space for refuge in Tanzania, and globally. State violence and the duress of spatial closure from the colonial period onwards has caused enduring displacement within and from Burundi. The trajectories of many current refugees challenge a simplified, linear there-and-back-again geographical imaginary of refuge management. Refugees’ trajectories reveal spatial-disobedience, crossing borders and camp boundaries. However secure lives beyond camp boundaries are increasingly difficult when camp boundaries harden, and policing increases—possibilities for emplacement diminish and displacement endures. An unwavering emphasis on return effaces past histories of prolonged exile, and the violence and continued displacement experienced in past return. State and humanitarian practices “close” and harden space for those deemed “undesirable,” through forced encampment, camp closures, and coerced or forced return. In so doing, they produce and prolong displacement, in which varied spatio-temporalities of violence endure. Burundian refugees’ life histories thus trace the ways displacement *endures*, and is *endured*. While tens of thousands of refugees have returned, tens of thousands have not registered, and persist in the camps.

## II. Colonial violence and displacement

### Introduction

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*Ewe Burundi, ngira ndakuririmbe,  
Ewe Burundi, ngucurarange ...  
Usa n'ijuru rishariji nyenyeri,  
Usa n'akayaga ko ku mugoroba,  
Usa n'amazi y'umugarara ...*<sup>12</sup>  
(Canjo Amissi, n.d.)

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*It was sunrise every morning  
the same land  
same sky  
same rivers  
hills & valleys*

*it was the same road that led away & back home  
[...] words leapt into our eyes & burned this new knowledge that was never new  
but it was the earth that betrayed us first [...]*  
(Bitek, 2016, "Day 99")

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Current Burundian refugees are often framed as having fled political violence and instability in 2015-6, and, to a lesser extent, emerging hunger due to drought in 2016. Even

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<sup>12</sup> Translation: Oh Burundi, I'll sing to you; Oh Burundi, I'll play for you; Simply the stars shining in the night sky; Simply (alt: just, only) the light breeze in the evening; Simply the fresh, clean water... (Alternative spellings: Canco, Hamisi). Why open the chapter with this song? Writing about Burundian history primarily through the lens of political violence is conventional, and perhaps such focus is necessary within this academic writing given it's topic—but it also seems impoverishing. It sidelines broader, richer perspectives on social, cultural, and even political life. This song by a treasured Burundian singer highlights beauty, diversity, enjoyment, and the humanity of Burundi. Yet the violence that has taken place cannot be denied, and it is addressed in this chapter even as the chapter opens with an ode to Burundi's beauty. Hence the lyrics are followed by Bitek's poem "Day 99," part of a collection of 100 poems written as a response to the Rwandan Genocide in 1994, and how it was being commemorated 20 years later (Bitek, 2016, 2020). The betrayal of the earth and it's beauty before, throughout, and after the horrific events of genocide resonate with the beauty of Burundi as described by Hamisi's song, the violence of genocide in Burundi as well, as well as Burundi's entanglements with the events in Rwanda.

though multiple prior displacements are well documented, analyses repeatedly overlook their relationship to the present context of displacement. International reports often sever the chronology of political violence in 2015 from historical context, and frame these events as distinctively emerging around the 2015 elections (S. Bigirimana, 2021). Even when state discourse does recognize prior displacements, it oversimplifies the relationship of past to present displacements to blame people who have been displaced multiple times for becoming “dependent” on humanitarian regimes (Interviews, Dar es Salaam, 2017). Yet, from the colonial period onward, violence and displacement within and from Burundi have endured (Daley, 2007b). Past displacements shape the experiences of present-day refugees in ways which surpass simplistic chronologies and defy “dependency” labels. The violence and displacements of 2015 are bound up with political structures, social relations, and ways of knowing that endure from the colonial period, and through post-independence regimes of state and humanitarian governance. Accordingly, in focusing on pre-colonial and colonial Burundi, this chapter provides essential historical background for understanding displacement in the post-independence periods, and its management, which are outlined in the following chapter. These two chapters together provide the context in which the life history interviews of current Burundian refugees are situated.

Scholarship on conflicts and displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa predominantly focuses on factors that are supposedly “internal to the state.” Connections with other places are downplayed, including “colonialism, neocolonialism, globalization, trade, economic liberalization and aid” (Daley, 2007b, p. 5). A “container-space” analysis of displacement sees it as emerging discretely from within a single state, with “flows” and of discrete refugee “populations” to another where they are “managed,” and frames humanitarian assistance as a disconnected, depoliticized factor arriving from outside. Such framing is an epistemic spatial closure, based in abstract conceptions of space (Massey, 2005). It echoes and reaffirms the violently created borders dividing Africa. Accordingly, this and the following chapter highlight some of the connections to other places and their power geometries through which the space of Burundi has been shaped.

Typical overviews of Burundian history are periodized into pre-colonial, colonial, and post-independence stages. This chapter addresses the pre-colonial and colonial periods. A brief overview of the pre-colonial period is included in order to highlight the changes imposed during colonial rule. Outlining the extensive direct and structural violence and related displacements of

the colonial state challenges narratives that frame violence and displacement in Africa in racist and essentialist terms (e.g. as atavistic, timeless tribalism). In tracing and critique colonial violence and its enduring effects in Burundi, I rely substantially on the scholarship of Patricia Daley (Brankamp & Daley, 2020; Daley, 1993, 2007b, 2013b; Daley & Murrey, 2022). Daley's scholarship highlights the ways in which racist hierarchies and dehumanization of African people shaped imperialism and colonialism including the borders carved, militarization and authoritarian rule, capitalist extractivism and Eurocentric ideas of development, and the management of African mobilities. Daley argues that such structures and ways of knowing, shaped genocidal violence in Burundi, as well as the ways Burundians' displacement was defined and managed in Tanzania. In the following chapter, I use Stoler's (2016) terminology of "colonial durabilities" (outlined in Chapter I) in discussing the ways in which such structures endure.

The violence described in this chapter is direct (which describes more immediate violence such as military massacres, battles, torture of prisoners), structural (which encompasses slower forms of harm such as detrimental agricultural policies, excessive taxation, exclusions from education, etc.), and epistemic (such as racism, Eurocentrism, imperialism, but also taken-for-granted borders, nation-states, etc.). These forms of violence are often entwined (Christian & Dowler, 2019). As just one example, the use of direct violence enforced modernist agricultural policies, extracting value for the colonial state while impoverishing Burundi peasants.

Beyond specific events "the politics of knowledge is relevant both to the phenomenon of violence and its supposed solutions" (S. Bigirimana, 2021, p. 214). As violence is entwined with displacement, the politics of knowledge is equally relevant to the phenomenon of displacement. The histories of Burundi in this and the following chapter (like histories of any place) remain contested, mythologized, and avowedly political (Jefremovas, 1997). They are bound up with debates on how they have shaped violence and possibilities for peace, from pre-colonial and colonial history, through the various regimes of the post-independence period, and interpretations of more recent events (S. Bigirimana, 2021; Jefremovas, 1997; Lemarchand, 1996, 2004; D. Manirakiza, 2010; C. Newbury, 2004; Nimubona, 2021). I follow Bigirimana (2021) through attention to the politics of knowledge production, while also asserting that even "[c]onsidering these different, often contradictory, narratives there is still a need to clarify the nature of the different acts of violence that have affected Burundi's history" (p. 214).

## The kingdom of Burundi: Regional relations and de-essentializing ethnicity

Writing of “a precolonial period” can be ambiguous, reflecting an essentialized picture of a primordial society and unchanging traditional culture.<sup>13</sup> Most writing on Burundi’s precolonial refers *de facto* to the period of the monarchy. The kingdom likely dated three to five centuries prior to colonization, and changed greatly both territorially, and in the division of rule through that period (Mworoha & Mukuri, 2004; Vansina, 1961; Wagner, 2005a).<sup>14</sup> Most accounts focus particularly on the socio-political and dynastic structures in the decades immediately prior to and at the time of colonization (Mworoha & Mukuri, 2004).<sup>15</sup>

With few other written sources, historical accounts of pre-colonial Burundi and Rwanda sift through racist accounts created at the beginning of the colonial period (D. Newbury, 2001), and oral histories often mediated through colonial knowledge production (Gahama, 1983).<sup>16</sup> The colonial production of “knowledge” on the kingdom of Burundi and its histories was shaped by dehumanizing racialized hierarchies and the divisive domination of colonial rule (Daley, 2007b; Gahama, 1983; Jefremovas, 1997). Such sources contributed to understandings of Burundi (and Rwanda) as embroiled in atavistic “tribal hatreds” based on essentialized identities (Daley, 2007b). While less poignant now than in previous decades (Bouka, 2013), the nature of ethnicity in the precolonial period, and particularly of the nature of relations between Hutu and Tutsi, have figured intensely in debates about and the shaping of violence and conflict in the post-

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<sup>13</sup> Issa Shivji (2014) notes that “[d]ominant Eurocentric discourses either demonise or romanticise precolonial African cultures, ideologies and philosophies,” but that a positive, afro-centric reaction aims to “strike a balance” (p. 137). The challenge is to “understand the course of human thought and history and how it is constructed in actually existing struggles” (Shivji, 2014, p. 137).

<sup>14</sup> I cite Mworoha, a prominent Burundian historian, with knowledge of his position as secretary of the JRR in 1972, and the uncertainty and suspicions surrounding his role at the time (A. Mbazumutima, 2013).

<sup>15</sup> Burundi’s monarchies may date from as early as the fifteenth century. Little written or oral record attests to the pre-monarchic period (Mworoha & Mukuri, 2004). The archeological record suggests an incredibly early, long, rich, and diverse history of human habitation and migration (Schoenbrun, 1998; Wagner, 2005a). Linguistic and archeological records provide evidence that cattle and herding were strong in the region long before the monarchic period, and not tied to any particular “cultural or social group immigrating” (D. Newbury, 2001, p. 269). (Some colonial historians believed that Tutsi migrations brought cattle to the region, then dominated local groups).

<sup>16</sup> At times the precolonial history of Burundi conflated with that of neighbouring Rwanda. Both countries do share similar ethnic compositions, languages, and cultures. While both were sophisticated kingdoms, their pre-colonial governance and social structures varied in important ways, particularly in the decades immediately preceding colonization, in which the Burundian kingdom was less internally exclusionary, and “more stable” (Daley, 2006b, 2007b; Jefremovas, 1997; Uvin, 1999; 2009, ch. 1 para 1).

independence period (Daley, 2006b; Jefremovas, 1997; Lemarchand, 2004; Schraml, 2014; Uvin, 1999).<sup>17</sup> (Further perspectives on precolonial ethnicity and these debates are included, in brief, in Appendix A). As elsewhere in Africa, precolonial direct violence in Burundi did not involve a “racial order of identities” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013a, p. 126) (though there was social discrimination and even dehumanization of Twa people (Quétu, 2020), which could be described as cultural violence).

Following Uvin (1999), I do not attempt to define pre-colonial inter-ethnic social relations. They were undoubtedly diverse, changing through time and in across regions, and intersecting with a wide variety of other factors shaping social relations (Daley, 2007b; D. Newbury, 2001). Rather, it is important to trace how “one particular form of social identification” became so central to governance and politics in the colonial and postcolonial periods (even as other forms of identification which shaped conflict are sidelined in many analyses) (Daley, 2006b, 2007b).

Colonial accounts also framed pre-colonial state-structures as bounded and isolated (D. Newbury, 2001). In reality, the boundaries of these pre-colonial kingdoms were not fixed, but were contested and changing through time. Both the external boundaries, and the division of internal territories between dynastic lineages, were variable and permeable. Rather relying on broad ethnic classifications as a key factor through which to examine Burundian and Rwandan history, Newbury emphasizes the histories of varied regions (D. Newbury, 2001).

As persist today, there were notable regional differences within Burundian territory, rather than a single culture, accent, environment, social relations, etc. (Jefremovas, 2000; Vansina, 1961). Oral histories include the possibility that the first mwami [Kir: king] came from

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<sup>17</sup> Ganwa and Hima are most often subsumed as Tutsi in such debates, while Twa --and arguably, to a lesser extent, also Waswahili--are marginalized in formal histories as in society. Some scholars question whether these categories are really ethnicities, given shared language and culture, with Prunier (2016b) arguing that these categories are best described as “orders,” Mamdani (Mamdani, 2002) referring to “political identities” (in the Rwandan context), and Mbonimpa (in French) analysing societal “castes” (M. Mbonimpa, 1993). Paviotti (2021) notes that the Kirundi term for these groupings, ubwoko, is also used more generally to mean “type” or “category.” I do use the term ethnicity, with the understanding that these categories are socially constructed but have had profound material effects for many, and that the meaning of ethnicity is political and changing. As Jefremovas notes “[d]ifferent interpretations of ethnicity and statehood have been used to create and justify policies of exclusion and inclusion, and claims to legitimacy, from the colonial period to the present day” and the debate remains intense, including in academic writing through “emphasis and omission” of different scholars and sources (Jefremovas, 2000, pp. 298-299).

Buha, across the Malagarazi [alt: Maragarazi] river;<sup>18</sup> or from the north, in present-day Rwanda (Gahama, 1983; Mworoha & Mukuri, 2004; Vansina, 1961), connecting the history of the kingdom of Burundi to places beyond its territory from its origin myths.<sup>19</sup> At times the extent of the kingdom included land in present-day Rwanda as far as present-day Huye,<sup>20</sup> and present-day Kigoma, Tanzania, in Buha<sup>21</sup> (Vansina, 1961). Armed conflicts with external groups played a role in the Burundian kingdom's territorial shifts (Vansina, 1961); however these were never ethnic conflicts between Burundi (Accord d'Arusha pour la Paix et la Réconciliation au Burundi, 2000; Daley, 2007b; Paviotti, 2021; Uvin, 2009). (Precolonial regional relations are described in further detailed in Appendix B.)

### Colonial Duress

The European colonial incursion is described by Burundian historians as a stranglehold on the region (Mworoha & Mukuri, 2004). Conquest was accompanied by a deadly trifecta of disease, famine, and military incursion (Botte, 1985b). It forcibly integrated the people of the Great Lakes region into the global economy under military constraint, demolishing many aspects of existing societies (Botte, 1985b; Mworoha & Mukuri, 2004). Although brief when considered in the long durée—just over a half-century—the colonial period was critical in shaping the history of the region (Mworoha & Mukuri, 2004). This period created new spatial closures, new forms of extraction, new hierarchical socio-political categories of humanness, and new forms of state violence, with enduring effects. It “laid the foundations for genocide” and displacement (Daley, 2007b, pp. 9-10). This section cursorily highlights the ways that racist forms of knowledge shaped the violent domination of Burundi and countries in the region, including the carving of state borders, the transformation of social and political institutions along hierarchical, racialized lines, and the creation of extractivist economies forcibly displacing Burundians across newly-defined borders to adjacent countries.

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<sup>18</sup> Informal conversations with Tanzanians in the city of Kigoma suggest that some Ha ascribe to the history as well (notes, 2017)

<sup>19</sup> Plants from the Americas, including maize and beans, were introduced to the region in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries through trade (Cochet, 2003). This produced a major change in agriculture, as farmers were able to cultivate two crops in a single plot in a year. By efficiently using cow manure, a practice that may have begun as early as the first century (for sorghum and elusine/millet crops), both production and the population increased (Cochet, 2003).

<sup>20</sup> A city established as “Astrida,” after the Belgian Queen in the colonial period, also previously known as Butare

<sup>21</sup> Kir & Kiha: the land of Ha people

The racist imposition of colonial rule over the territory of present-day Burundi can be dated to the Berlin Conference of 1885: “the time that European robber statesmen sat down in Berlin [...] to decide who should steal which parts of Africa” (Rodney, 1973, ch. 4.4 para 2). This conference followed several centuries of European mercantile capitalism and trans-Atlantic slavery, in which the “hierarchical institutionalization of racial difference” dehumanizing African people was co-produced with violent relations of power and governmental organization (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013b; Rodney, 1973; Thomas & Kamari Clarke, 2013, p. 308). The consensus that emerged among European powers at the Berlin Conference served to “justif[y] colonialism and laid the basis for global coloniality” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013b, p. 338). As Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) states, “[t]he scramble for and partition of Africa among European powers amounted to an open disregard and disdain for the African people’s dignity, rights and sovereignty” (p. 338).

The Berlin conference’s “cartographic violence” (Daley & Murrey, 2022, p. 3) and dismissal of the humanity and sovereignty of African peoples, assigned the approximate location of present-day Burundi to German East Africa, along with present-day Rwanda, and mainland Tanzania (Unangst, 2022). It was not until a year later that a German military expedition arrived to establish a camp on the northern shore of Lake Tanganyika (Wagner, 2005b).<sup>22</sup> Despite the differences in their weaponry, Burundians resisted years of German military incursions (Botte, 1985b; Mworoha & Mukuri, 2004). In 1902 communication between German military officers and king Mwezi Gisabo deteriorated. German military hunted Mwezi Gisabo, violently plundering and often burning swathes of the countryside until he surrendered in 1903 (Botte, 1985b; Wagner, 2005b). Under military rule, the German governor provided protection for the

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<sup>22</sup> Botte refers to this outpost, Usumbura, which later became Bujumbura, as “the base of operations for imperialism ... and disease,” tracing the particular spread of malaria and sleeping sickness (Botte, 1985b, p. 63). Prior to colonial conquest sleeping sickness outbreaks had been sporadic and largely confined to the lakeshore plain, large colonial convoys camped at the shore before heading into the highlands, with significant epidemioecological consequences: “the military columns, the caravans with their escorts, their aides, their porters, their “boys,” became redoubtable and efficacious agents disseminating the seeds of death: either by transporting the tsetse fly itself far from its original territory, or by the long-distance migration of trypanosomes carriers” (Botte, 1985b, pp. 59-60). Measures to reduce sleeping sickness were only undertaken when many Germans had been infected, but effectively further spread the illness to Burundians in areas that had not been effected, such that one European observer recorded that “everywhere there is desolation and death”; noting that “the German officers play with people’s lives,” (Quoted in Botte, 1985b, p. 61).

now subjugated Mwezi Gisabo, supporting the expansion of his (and thus their) territory; Ultimately, however, colonial authorities sought to “weaken royal power,” dividing the kingdom based on perceived political allegiances after Mwezi’s death (Botte, 1985b; Wagner, 2005b).

Cruel and destructive campaigns continued after the king’s surrender. German military expeditions stole thousands upon thousands of livestock, burned houses and crops, cut down banana groves, and directly killed thousands of Barundi with noted cruelty towards women and children on many occasions (Botte, 1985a, 1985b). The devastation was compounded: military incursions aggravated catastrophic famines, which multiplied and endured, while recurring outbreaks of new and existing diseases proved even more deadly for those weakened by hunger. One missionary source records a famine following a military excursion: “one could say that the entire population is dying; never before have we seen such misery” (Société des Missionnaires d’Afrique, Kanyinya, 16 December 1904, cited in Botte, 1985b, p. 67). Yet, Burundians continued to resist forced labour requirements, taxation, and imposed rule (Botte, 1985a).

At the onset of the First World War, many Rwandan and Burundian men were made to fight against Belgian attacks from Congo, until the German administrators fled in 1916 and the Belgian military assumed rule of the territory (Wagner, 2005b). The result of European imperialism and militarism, the First World War caused severe and lasting (but largely forgotten) destruction in Rwanda and Burundi. Warfare both caused and aggravated famines (including through mandated provisioning of troops and the destruction of arable land), in turn worsening outbreaks of disease, such that in some regions the population reduced by 20-50% through death and displacement (Botte, 1985a, pp. 301-302).

In 1924, after several years of Belgian military rule, the territory of Burundi, together with Rwanda, were “granted” to Belgium by the League of Nations, as Ruanda-Urundi. The territories were joined with Belgian Congo in an administrative union in August 1925; This conglomeration, accepted at the League of Nations, allowed for fulfillment of what Gahama aptly traces as a *Leopoldian* idea of empire, referencing the notoriously violent and dehumanizing imperial ambitions of King Leopold II (Gahama, 1983; Hochschild, 1998; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013a). What Belgian Governor General Ryckmans termed “the ‘Belgian peace’” was, in actuality, a project to “liquidate whatever subsisted of precolonial society (Botte, 1985b, p. 54). Imperial violence caused immense forced displacement in the Great Lakes Region. Tracing this history challenges the racist but common narrative of violence and

displacement as innately and atavistically African. Rather, European colonial domination and warfare caused displacement through entwined epistemic, direct, and structural violence, the durabilities of which continue to produce displacement following independence.

Defining the borders

Unlike many contemporary African states, Burundi did exist as a pre-colonial socio-political entity in its current location. However the present-day borders of Burundi were (approximately) defined by imperialist powers in 1922 (Daley, 1993, 2006b; Shantz, 1922). As Burundi and surrounding kingdoms were still changing and challenging their territorial extent prior to and in the early years of colonization, and did not have fixed borders, the colonial boundaries do not perfectly encompass the pre-colonial kingdoms, but rigidified boundaries<sup>23</sup> where they had previously been porous zones of connection.<sup>24</sup> Particularly in border regions, extended families were found either side of the border and retained ties for decades despite having been assigned different nationalities as colonial subjects through this mapping (Daley, 1993; Scherer, 1959). The border remained porous throughout the colonial period, even as it resulted in the categorization of people of the region along newly-created national lines they continued (and continue) to defy.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, the spatial closure of rigid colonial border creation *endures*—a locational demarcation that *persists* in defining legal identities in an essentialized nation-territory-belonging triad, and has *hardened* for Burundian border-crossers in recent decades.

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<sup>23</sup> I chose “rigidified” rather than “deepened” as it emphasizes that boundaries were increasingly hardened, and as a more apt antonym to “porous” in describing borders.

<sup>24</sup> In 1922, The Geographical Review (a publication of the American Geographical Society) published an extensive article on “Urundi, Territory and People,” funded by the United States (US) Department of Agriculture (Shantz, 1922).<sup>24</sup> Thirty-seven years after the Berlin Conference, Shantz voices excitement in an ongoing scramble for Africa by noting “intrinsic interest” in Ruanda and Urundi because of the “disposition of Germany’s former colonial possessions” (p. 329). He describes Burundi and Rwanda as “lands flowing with milk and honey,” both literally and metaphorically (p. 329). Even at this time, Shantz notes that “the boundaries of the old German province are somewhat indefinite,” following the Akanyaru and Rusizi Rivers to Lake Tanganyika, running east from Lake Tanganyika until it meets the “headwaters of the Mlagarasi River,” but with an “irregular line” north when the river turns south, so that the estimated area of different cartographic sources varied by about five hundred square miles (Shantz, 1922, p. 330).

<sup>25</sup> A survey conducted in 1951-2 recorded that fifteen percent of the population of south and southwest Kigoma identified as Burundian, while many more had Burundian, but also Rwandan and Congolese ancestry, and had integrated to the point of identifying with local groups (Scherer, 1959, pp. 845-846). “Fishermen and potters” along the Malagarasi and Muyowosi rivers were said to have come from Burundi, but “practically merged into the Ha population” (Scherer, 1959, p. 845).

The Eurocentrism that underpinned the imperial carving up of Africa was bound up with racist, hierarchical orderings of humanity. These “orderings” also divided African people through the creation of racialized hierarchical categorizations (Gahama, 1983; Mamdani, 2001; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013a, 2013b). German colonialism drew on existing racialized hierarchies, while turning them into “governmental categories of difference” within the colonial state (Unangst, 2022). Similarly, political re-organization imposed by Belgian governors relied on a colonial knowledge system with an already established “racial order of identities,” which was further imposed onto pre-existing ethnic differentiations (Botte, 1985b; Daley, 2006b; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013a, p. 126). As Jefremovas summarizes, “Ethnicity was not invented by the Belgians, but a racial ideology was imposed on these categories” (Jefremovas, 1997, p. 103). The “social construction of ethnicity” is often highlighted among the many destructive “accomplishments” of the Belgian colonial administration (Daley, 2007b, p. 49).

Europeans encountering the courts of the kingdoms of Burundi and Rwanda interpreted the societies they met through Eurocentric, hierarchical lenses of racial and cultural superiority. They were impressed both by the organization of the political systems in place, and what they interpreted as elegance and sophistication of the culture, and beauty of the people when Eurocentrically compared with other African peoples. They presumed that such traits must be less African and have come from elsewhere, through people who migrated, conquering and ruling local peoples through their superiority. Colonial administrators, missionaries and scholars thus classified Tutsi (and Ganwa) as *Hamitic* people,<sup>26</sup> theorizing they had migrated from Egypt

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<sup>26</sup> European hierarchical racial understandings at the time were inherited from those of the first centuries of mercantile-capitalist imperialism, which had been shaped through Judaeo-Christian cosmologies (Wynter, 2003). Black people had been projected, within the terms of the Judeo-Christian imaginary, as the “‘figure’ of the human made degenerate by sin” (Wynter, 2003, p. 304). This cosmology held that all Africans were descended from Ham, the son of Noah whose progeny were cursed to serve the descendants of Noah’s other sons. The cosmology seemingly naturalized slavery and colonial subjugation as uncontested divine will, while casting black people as inheritors not only of Ham’s curse, but also moral degeneracy (Wynter, 2003). By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, at the time of the Berlin Conference, these Judeo-Christian cosmologies were largely replaced by more secular, “rational” and “scientific” racialized epistemologies such as social Darwinism, which nevertheless reproduced prior hierarchies with new vocabulary and logics (Wynter, 2003). With the rise of social Darwinism and environmental determinism, the Hamitic hypothesis did not entirely disappear. Rather, it became enmeshed with evolutionary and environmentally deterministic understandings of race and civilization. This continuity is evident in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century European ethnography and geography during the colonization of Rwanda and Burundi (J. P. Chrétien, 2006). The Hamitic racial hierarchy described by

or the Horn of Africa, and were thus racially superior to supposedly more indigenous, more African Hutu and other Bantu people (J. P. Chrétien & Straus, 2006; Gahama, 1983; Leakey & Rounce, 1933).<sup>27</sup>

Burundians were thus divided into “three races” through colonial knowledge production, including geographical texts (Shantz, 1922, p. 341).<sup>28</sup> Geographers and other colonial scholars framed Hutu and Twa as naturally subservient, both to Tutsi, but also to Europeans (Leakey & Rounce, 1933; Shantz, 1922). While infantilizing Hutu, some believed that their intelligence, and any cultural traits perceived as “good” through the Eurocentric lens, was the influence of “watusi”—and had thus come through natural domination and servitude to superior people from elsewhere—similar to the “good” they believed colonial domination would do (Gahama, 1983; Leakey & Rounce, 1933; Shantz, 1922, pp. 343-344).

#### Cultural-Political Destruction

Paternalism, which Gahama aptly calls the corner stone of the Belgian colonial system, was built upon a foundation of white supremacy, which persisted through the colonial period “Quoique la perception de l’African, considéré au début comme u “sauva”e”, s’effacât peu à peu, on était convaincu de l’infériorité du coloni”é” (Although the perception of Africans, considered in the beginning as “savages,” moderated over time, they were convinced of the

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Wynter endured in a new iteration in the Great Lakes region, enmeshed with Eurocentric social Darwinist ways of knowing. (Weima, 2014: The information presented in this footnote is adapted from an unpublished paper, initially submitted as MA coursework at Queen’s University, Kingston.)

<sup>27</sup> Gahama (1983) cites colonial missionary Rev. Père Ménard who states that Batutsi are closer to whites than to black Africans (and specifically Bahutu), and continues reinforcing racial hierarchies of beauty, culture, and intelligence in elaborating these comparisons (p. 275-6). Such depictions of Tutsi included dehumanizing language, with different colonial sources re-iterating the theory that they came from elsewhere (not Burundi) while comparing them to Egyptian mummies or “demi-gods,” re-iterating their inferiority to and difference from Europeans, even while framing superiority to other Africans (Gahama, 1983, p. 279). Publishing in *Geography* in 1933, Leakey and Rounce write of “Watusi” (Tutsi or (a)batutsi) in Kigoma, that they are intellectually superior, and natural rulers of Abaha (Ha people). They Eurocentrically judge Tutsi cultural expressions and manners against the aesthetic customs of other African people which they term “hideous” (Leakey & Rounce, 1933, p. 298).

<sup>28</sup> Gahama (1983) notes that many contemporary texts reflect a further simplified understanding by framing and opposing just two ethnicities. This reflects the extreme marginalization of Batwa (or Twa) in Burundian society (to this day), and the common grouping of Ganwa as Tutsi. Indeed, little was written on Twa in the early colonial period (Shantz, 1922). When Twa were mentioned, they particularly degraded, dehumanized, and explicitly animalized in colonial categorizations and writings, which classified them as “pygmies” and inferior to other Africans (Gahama, 1983, p. 279). The Swahili population (alt: Waswahili) has also advocated for group recognition as a distinct ethnicity (M. Bigirimana, 2021; Paviotti, 2021).

inferiority of the colonized) (Gahama, 1983, p. 403). Hierarchical relations were a key part of this system, which infantilized black people (as well as non-Europeans in other parts of the world) to justify European “educating” rule (Gahama, 1983, p. 403).<sup>29</sup>

From the mid 1920’s to early 1930’s Belgian rule re-organized political structures and banned many customs in an attempt to accelerate westernization (Botte, 1985b; Gahama, 1983; Uvin, 2009). Burundians respect for the mwami was seen as powerful tool: “Customary” rule was supported as a façade, while actually emptying the king’s power and imposing the rule of the colonial apparatus (Botte, 1982, p. 281; Gahama, 1983, p. 401).<sup>30</sup> The judicial system underwent vast changes, deconstructing traditional community-based conflict resolution mechanisms, and introducing punitive and racialized imprisonment and corporal punishment (Deslaurier, 2022; Laely, 1992). For efficiency, Belgian administrative reform in 1925 began to successively eliminate a large number of minor regional rulers or chiefs. They grouped together larger portions of territory and population under a quarter of the previous positions (from sixty to fifteen over the course of four years) (Botte, 1982, p. 281; Gahama, 1983). Across Ruanda-Urundi, these changes concentrated power in the hands of a smaller, increasingly ethnicized elite, and “increased differentiation among social groups” (C. Newbury, 1983, p. 259).<sup>31</sup> By 1945 all Hutu chiefs had been dismissed. The Belgian authorities thus sought to consolidate what they saw as the natural and biological superiority of Tutsi (with whom they grouped Ganwa in Burundi) as a ruling class, and subservience of Hutu people (Daley, 2007b; Jefremovas, 1997; Prunier, 2016a). (For more on the role of chiefs and the introduction of prisons, see Appendix C.)

Identity cards were introduced, and what had once been a more fluid boundary became a concretized hierarchy in terms of its definition, and the systemic advantages and discrimination it

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<sup>29</sup> Colonial geography was certainly part of such hierarchical ways of knowing and understanding in the region. For example, Shantz wrote that Burundi had little “white domination” at the time of the first world war, and he believed Belgian colonization was proceeding for the “mutual good” of Barundi and Belgians (Shantz, 1922, p. 357).

<sup>30</sup> The administration and Catholic missionaries collaborated to eliminate the traditions that vested sacred power in the Mwami, including, for a period, silencing the sacred drums. They sought to create a Christianized, Tutsi ruling class. Where members of the Ganwa and the Burundian Mwami resisted, they established a more successful mission in the south among Hima (Daley, 2007b)(often considered a Tutsi sub-group of sorts). Religious hierarchy became embedded in society, and those not baptised became the last to drink at parties or ceremonies (Gahama, 1983).

<sup>31</sup> While sometimes referred to as “tutsification,” (including in the Rwandan context,) in Burundi Ganwa gained advantages of power, wealth, and education, while “political, social, and economic relations became more rigid, unequal, and biased against Hutu” (Uvin, 2009, pp. Ch. 1, “The Colonial Period” para. 1) (Prunier, 2016a).

bestowed (Daley, 2007b; Mamdani, 2001). Hutu were systemically discriminated in colonial education systems (Gahama, 1983), and Twa were completely disregarded and excluded (Rwantabagu, 2009). Very few Hutu—and no Twa—students were educated at the elite Astrida school (Daley, 2007b; Gahama, 1983; Rwantabagu, 2009). The category of “évolué” (“evolved”) provided special privileges to colonially educated (and thus almost de facto Tutsi and Ganwa) subjects who lived in accordance with defined European social, class, and gender norms, echoed social Darwinist and eugenicist language of the period (Daley, 2007b; Hunt, 1990; Jefremovas, 1997). Colonial rule thus transformed pre-existing but malleable socio-political groups into “rigid ethnic identities” interpreted through the lens of racialized hierarchies (Daley, 2006b, p. 644; 2007b).

#### Violence, Extraction, and Displacement

Les maladies attaquèrent les pommes de terre, le manioc que les Bazungu avaient fait planter, disant: “Avec ces legumes, nous vaincrons les famines. Nous autres, nous allons sauver le Rwanda, votre pays. [...] [...] Les greniers sont restés vides. Il n’y avait plus à manger que les raciness de bananier ou de fougères, des herbes sauvages. [...] Les bébés périssent les premiers, les mères n’ayant plus de lait, les enfants aux grands yeux vides mangeaient de la terre, les vieux se cachaient pour mourir, des colonnes faméliques erraient sur les pistes cherchant en vain un peu de nourriture. [...] Alors les hommes, les femmes, les enfants ont abandonné la colline. Des familles entières ont fui au Congo. Le pays est devenu stérile, désolé, déserté par les hommes comme par les Imana [dieux] qui donnent abondance de lait et de miel....<sup>32</sup>  
(Mukasonga, 2020, pp. 15-16)

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<sup>32</sup> Translation (of the longer, unabbreviated text): Diseases attacked the potatoes, the cassava that the Bazungu (white people) had made to be planted, saying “with these vegetables, we will defeat famines. It is us who will save Rwanda, your country. Plant cassava, potatoes, and they will save you from hunger.” But disease attacked the fields: the potatoes were eaten away by rot, by voracious fungi, and harassed by devouring flies. The cassava was found to be poison. The storehouses remained empty. There was nothing left to eat except the roots of banana plants or ferns, weeds. They made porridge with the dried leaves of banana plants. Some ate spiny fruits.

Babies perished first, the mothers not having any more milk; wide-eyed children ate soil; the elderly hid themselves to die; columns of the famished roamed pathways, seeking, in-vain, a little food. Someone had said, “there, on that hill, they still have something to eat.” And the hoard of skeletons began to walk and the vultures followed. The path was soon bordered by bodies. And those who followed didn’t find anything at the end of their journey apart from empty storehouses and abandoned villages. [...] So men, women, and children abandoned the hill. Entire families fled to Congo. The country became sterile, desolate, deserted by men as by Imana (gods) who gave milk and honey in abundance. (Author’s translation of Mukasonga, 2020, pp. 15-16).

Scholastique Mukasonga (2020) harrowingly describes the effects of colonial rule in Rwanda. Forced labour requirements, excessive taxation including in-kind levies on crops to feed labourers in extractive industries in Belgian Congo, and contributions to imperial “World War” in Europe, all contributed to deadly famines and mass displacement in in Ruanda-Urundi the colonial period yet again. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Burundi underwent an agrarian crisis lasting approximately half a century, or “most of the period of colonial rule” and for which the colonial administration had significant responsibility (Cochet, 2003). German and subsequent Belgian colonial conquest introduced and spread devastating illnesses, including cattle diseases (Botte, 1985a, 1985b; Cochet, 2003). Military operations destroyed croplands, and pillaged crops and cattle (Botte, 1985a, 1985b). The reduction of the cattle population decreased soil fertilization and crop yields (Cochet, 2003).

The Belgian administration sought to make the colonies profitable (Gahama, 1983). They introduced a per-capita monetary tax, along with the mandatory introduction of coffee as *the* primary cash crop (though palm oil was also important in the Imbo plain), and heavy forced labour (fr: *corvée*) requirements (Cochet, 2003; Gahama, 1983). Taxation was part of a broader monetization of exchange (Botte, 1982). Selling coffee was often the only source of money available to peasants. Regardless of the ecological region, all farmers were required to plant and mulch 51 trees. The policy was resisted, often covertly, particularly in places where coffee does not grow well (Cochet, 2003). Ultimately, the widespread uptake of coffee crops in the 1930’s is linked to direct violence: the use of multi-stranded hippopotamus-hide whips on those who did not comply (Cochet, 2003).<sup>33</sup>

Unlike in the pre-colonial period where labour requirements were determined per household, with flexibility for taking into consideration illness and ceremonies such as mourning, colonial *corvée* requirements were imposed on all “valid” adult men. This drastically affected households at a time they already had reduced cattle wealth (due to introduced bovine pest), and were being required to undertake new crops also requiring their labour (Botte, 1982; Cochet, 2003).

Agricultural changes were introduced due to the need to feed workers in extractive industries, especially in Katanga (Belgian Congo). There was an obligatory extension of

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<sup>33</sup> Geographers at the time echoed racist, capitalist colonial ideologies of progress, including praise for the introduction of cash crops, and specifically coffee (Leakey & Rounce, 1933).

traditional crops, while new crops were imposed. Export of several crops (outside of Belgian colonial territory) was prohibited (Gahama, 1983). As a famine prevention measure, peasants were forced to cultivate swampy land in valleys, increasing the spread of malaria (“impaludation”) of areas previously little affected by the disease. The increase in malaria caused far greater mortality than the famines, and made many sufferers more prone to other diseases (Botte, 1985b, p. 63).

Combined, these exigencies and land-use changes lead to “la paupérisation des masses” (the pauperisation of the masses) in the 1930’s (Gahama, 1983, p. 405). This decreased peoples’ capacity for mutual aid and solidarity, which had been characteristic of Burundian society (Gahama, 1983, p. 274). Facing always increasing work and monetary requirements, declining revenues, and little semblance of any “social investment” (such as hospitals or schools), many people undertook what Gahama terms “une réponse passive à la colonisation: l’émigration” (a passive response to colonisation: emigration) (Gahama, 1983, p. 37; 405). Botte records desertion of plantations in the Imbo plain, when greatly increased taxation of cash crops lead many peasant farmers to move to neighbouring Tanganyika, which was under British rule (present-day mainland Tanzania)(Botte, 1982, p. 300).<sup>34</sup> In addition to migration to Tanganyika, including to colonial tea, coffee, and sisal plantations, many left to other territories of British East-Africa, namely Kenya and Uganda (Gahama, 1983, p. 371). Characterising the migration of this period within a binary of “forced” and “voluntary” seems unable to capture both the coercion and violence faced by the Burundian peasantry, and the resistance enacted in leaving and refusing to contribute further labour and taxation to this system.

The colonial governance of migration in Tanganyika and elsewhere in British East-Africa (Uganda, Kenya) sought to control the movement of African bodies, creating and relying on racialized and ethnic categories and stereotypes to label and manage mobilities within Empire (Brankamp & Daley, 2020). Identity documents were introduced to distinguish between groups and define places of belonging and non-belonging for “native” and “non-native Africans. This “harden[ed...] ethnic territorial boundaries,” and was meant to control mobilities (Brankamp & Daley, 2020, p. 116). However, colonial extractive enterprises required extensive labour, and

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<sup>34</sup> Across the border, in Buha, Tanganyika, labour migration to coffee plantations in other parts of Tanganyika and was common from the early 19th Century. Colonial control of population movements and labour meant that such movements were often under contract, and “absconding” before finishing a contract could lead to imprisonment (Leakey & Rounce, 1933, p. 303).

thus colonial authorities also sought to promote (while controlling) East African men's labour migration (Brankamp & Daley, 2020). Ethnic stereotypes of Hutu as hard-workers, which contributed to their exploitation under the Belgian administration, also shaped their recruitment as worker-migrants within British industries, with the cooperation of the Belgian *tutelle* (Brankamp & Daley, 2020). A 1950 "UN Trusteeship Council" report estimated that "over 675,000 migrants from Belgian territory were in Uganda and Tanganyika, of which 157,000 were in Tanganyika" (Brankamp & Daley, 2020, p. 118). Migrant workers were subject to strict contracts requiring the completion of long contracts in harsh conditions for low pay. Burundians and Rwandans specifically were largely barred from acquiring land and settling in the region (Brankamp & Daley, 2020). Racial hierarchies and perceived utility to capital accumulation thus shaped migration policies in ways which endure today in Tanzania (and across the world) and shape the categorization reception of Burundian (and all other) border-crossers (Weima, 2021b).

Migration in the Belgian colonial territories also included direct displacement, due to the aims of capitalist extraction from the colonies. For example, the colonial administration introduced schemes to reduce the density of regions that they considered "surpeuplées" (overpopulated).<sup>35</sup> Although framed in terms of necessity for the wellbeing of the population, these forced migrations also equally sought to provide labour needed in mines and plantations. This involved the "transfer" of people from Ruanda-Urundi to Congo-Belge, and their displacement within the country, often to regions that were sparsely populated and which had poor conditions (Gahama, 1983, p. 293).

Further forced migration within Burundi included rural planning schemes which sought to agglomerate the population in newly created villages, rather than the traditionally dispersed farms of the countryside. This was believed to be a more rational model for economic development (Gahama, 1983; Sindayihebura, 2011; Weima, 2015). These regroupement schemes not only sought to re-arrange space for agricultural production, but also sought to change what were seen as deficient mentalities of the population, and to more easily access them with the services of the "civilising" mission. Poor living conditions and a reduction in soil fertility due to changed practices led to their abandonment by most inhabitants (Gahama, 1983; Sindayihebura, 2011)—both re-displacement to seek survival, but also, possibly, resistance.<sup>36</sup> Such schemes are

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<sup>35</sup> (Neo-)Malthusian framings of Burundian population density and growth continue to this day.

<sup>36</sup> I analyse these villages as a precursor to contemporary villagisation schemes in Weima (2015).

continuously resurrected, an ongoing form of spatial-epistemological violence contributing to further displacement, including in recent returnee resettlement schemes (Purdeková, 2016; Weima, 2015)

Resistance to the drastic changes, subjugation, and exploitation of the colonial administration was not always “passive”: numerous open revolts are recorded (Gahama, 1983, p. 274; Weinstein, 1972).

Independence Struggles: The murder of Louis Rwagasore

After the Second World War, and throughout the 1950s, independence movements gained traction across Africa, including in Ruanda-Urundi (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020; Russell, 2019).<sup>37</sup> In this period the first Burundians were able to study overseas, including Louis Rwagasore, the eldest son of mwami Mwambutsa (Deslaurier, 2010; Russell, 2019). Rwagasore returned to Burundi with new ideas about needed changes to rule and rights, marking the start of a “time of politics” and “turmoil” (Russell, 2019, p. 61).<sup>38</sup>

In Rwanda, an extremist Hutu political movement emerged, drawing on the colonial Hamitic hypothesis and making claims to a Hutu right to independence not only from Belgian colonialism, but also from Tutsi rule (Jefremovas, 1997; Mission de visite des Nations Unies dans les Territoires sous Tutelle de l’Afrique Orientale, 1963 (1957); Russell, 2019). From 1959-1961 land invasions, and then massacres targeted Tutsi. Thousands were killed, and hundreds of thousands were forced into exile, including the Rwandan king, with tens of thousands fleeing to Burundi, in what was still the shared territory of Ruanda-Urundi.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> The United Nations continued to approve and renew Belgium’s tutelle (protectorate) throughout the 1950’s (L’Institut Royal des Relations Internationales, 1963b), however the UN also began to assert pressure to reform Ruanda-Urundi’s discriminatory state structures. This had only a minor impact—some Hutu were able to access education, but not power (Jefremovas, 1997).

<sup>38</sup> Rwagasore drafted a constitutional project for Burundi, “le constitution murundi” (The murundi (Burundian’s) constitution)—the first major independence document of the Belgian colonies—and began to organize farmers into federated cooperatives so they could profit more directly from their crops without selling to middlemen (De Witte & Mazina, 2021) (Deslaurier, 2010). The cooperatives in particular were seen as threatening tools in the anticolonial fight by the colonizers (Deslaurier, 2010).

<sup>39</sup> The bloodshed led to increased pressure on Belgium by the United Nations, and a transition to separate independence of Rwanda and Burundi was advocated. Faced with this pressure, Belgium announced their intention to facilitate a transition, beginning by separating the rule of Ruanda-Urundi from its subordination to Congo-Belge, administratively dividing the two countries, and organizing elections—but still planning to retain a role for the “Résident belge” (the colonial administration) (L’Institut Royal des Relations Internationales, 1963a). Regarding the massacres and exile of Tutsi, United Nations and Belgian reports blamed “ancient” systems and what they saw as essential characteristics of discrete races, rather than the racialized ways of knowing and destructive oppression of colonial rule (L’Institut Royal

While news of this ethnicized political movement in Rwanda was published in Burundi, Burundi's independence movement had a different character. The urban Swahili population played an important role: they initiated Burundi's first independence-seeking political party, which had a panafricanist character (Russell, 2019). Their trade and family networks created connections to independence movements and leaders across the region (M. Bigirimana, 2021; Deslaurier, 2010; Russell, 2019). When they were joined by Rwagasore, the Uprona party (Unité et Progrès National – National Unity and Progress), gained national popularity, demanding immediate independence. Rwagasore sought to ease tensions between Burundians, and to concretely extend power and rights to those who had been excluded in the colonial ethnicized educational and administrative structures. He saw tribalism as a European tool to divide Africans, and voiced support for the unity of all Africans (Kaburahe, 2021a).

Casting Rwagasore as politically radical and a communist, Belgian administrators drew on cold war political logics to provide support to the Parti Democrat Chrétien (PDC) (Christian Democrats)—a party with ties to Belgium, seeking a much slower transition to independence (Daley, 2007b).<sup>40</sup> Rwagasore was placed under house arrest during early (tainted) elections for local-level administrators (which were therefore largely won by the PDC) (Daley, 2006b; Poppe, 2015; Russell, 2019). Nevertheless, Uprona won a large majority in parliamentary elections supervised by the UN in September 1961. Louis Rwagasore became prime minister, though plans to set the date for independence were not yet finalized when he was assassinated on October 13, 1961, aged 31 (Deslaurier, 2010, 2013; Poppe, 2015).<sup>41</sup>

The single gunshot which killed Rwagasore was fired by a Greek merchant, accompanied by two PDC members.<sup>42</sup> More recent studies provide substantial evidence for what many

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des Relations Internationales, 1963a; Mission de visite des Nations Unies dans les Territoires sous Tutelle de l'Afrique Orientale, 1963 (1957)).

<sup>40</sup> Unlike in Rwanda, in the late 1950's primary political parties in contention in Burundi were led by Ganwa, and sought democratic constitutional monarchies. They differed in policies such as the timeline of transition to independence and land tenure reforms (L'Institut Royal des Relations Internationales, 1963a).

<sup>41</sup> Rwagasore's murder less than a year after that of Patrice Lumumba in neighbouring Congo, and the implication of colonial responsibility, has led many to call him "Burundi's Lumumba," though he is undoubtedly less well known internationally (Deslaurier, 2010, 2013; Poppe, 2015)

<sup>42</sup> Colonial-administration investigations and post-independence trials led to the involvement of additional PDC leaders. These Burundians politicians were cousins of Rwagasore, and also Ganwa, though of a different clan. Belgian investigations at the time, as well as an incredibly brief UN inquiry, blamed what they framed as atavistic hatred and rivalry between the Bezi and Batare Ganwa clans (Dorinsville, Gassou, & Rahnema, 1963 (1961); Kaburahe, 2021b; L'Institut Royal des Relations Internationales,

Burundians have believed for decades: the implication and responsibility of the colonial administration and the Belgian government in the murder of Rwagasore and subsequent cover-up of any links (De Witte & Mazina, 2021; Kaburahe, 2021a, 2021b).<sup>43</sup>

The eve of independence was thus, in part, a time of rumours, fear, and suspicions for many Burundians (Deslaurier, 2005; Russell, 2019): “the excitement of Rwagasore’s campaign was brutally cut short, and in its place reigned fear and doubt” (Russell, 2016, p. 108). One of the oldest participants in this research recalls the reaction on his hill, as a young man (umusore) at the time. Young men hid in holes and trenches during the elections. “They thought it was a moment of war,” he explained. “Because of independence?” I asked. “Eeee (yes), it was the moment of independence, which is why they killed Rwagasore. They said the prince was killed, and we were scared. C’était fou (it was crazy)—nivyo (That’s how it was)” (Interview, 2018). Another man, Ndikuriro, shared that his parents had fled to Tanzania in 1958—the earliest story of refuge in this research: “They told me at the time they took refuge. They fled intambara [war] because there was a political party known as PDC. At that time they came during the night and they took a person saying he is called by the authorities and when you were taken you didn’t return” (Interview, 2018). These two stories echo historical accounts that the elections preceding independence were associated fear, rumours and violence (Deslaurier, 2005; Russell, 2019),<sup>44</sup> and even the need to hide or flee for survival because of the use of violence by those seeking to retain or shape the direction of power.<sup>45</sup>

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1963b). The criminal investigations and trials at the time led to capital punishment for many of those implicated, but were far from satisfactory. Statements from witnesses and the accused which implicated colonial officials were never further examined (De Witte & Mazina, 2021; Poppe, 2015). Many Burundians have felt for decades that the whole story was not clear from the available evidence (Kaburahe, 2021b).

<sup>43</sup> Numerous documents have been removed or “disappeared” from the relevant colonial archives (De Witte & Mazina, 2021; Kaburahe, 2021b).

<sup>44</sup> Deslaurier (2005) records fear surrounding “la rumeur du cachet” (the rumour of the stamp”) in northern Burundi in 1960-1. The rumour suggested that anyone who voted would receive a stamp on their ID, and would be targeted and need to leave following independence. The rumour led to extremely low voter turnout in Ngozi province where political tension was already high, and even to deaths (Deslaurier, 2005). Also in the north of the country, the PDC and colonial-supporting chief Baranyanka performed summary trials to imprison Uprona supporters, resulting in violence and political struggle, that was suppressed by Belgian military (Russell, 2016).

<sup>45</sup> Another participant remembered the words of Mwami Mwambutsa after the death of his son: “So the Mwami Mwambusta, father of Rwagasore, spoke after the death of his son. He said, je demande que vous ne pouvez pas verser le sang au Burundi (I ask you not to spill blood in Burundi). Burundi is a paradise for Burundians, so we don't spill blood because of my child [who was] killed.” (Interview, camp, 2018)

Violence targeting political opposition and causing displacement in the electoral period, while often analysed solely in relation to the post-independence period, thus began in the colonial period, as Belgium attempted to hang on to white rule and ensure ongoing capitalist extraction from their colony. This oppressive governance created an atmosphere of fear surrounding elections (which many use to describe recent electoral atmospheres), and included violence which specifically targeted young men. Colonial actors undermined democracy through political assassinations, even while espousing a civilizing influence and blaming the violence on African tribal divisions—epistemic violence to disguise direct violence.

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On the eve of Burundi's independence, Burundian priest Jean-Baptiste Nahokoja penned a national anthem, urging the country to honourably take its place among other nations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation, n.d.; Nikiza, 2019).<sup>46</sup> The line “warapfunye ntiwapfuye” has deep meaning for many (P.-C. Mbonimpa, 2017; see also Mikalachki, 2022, p. 15). It speaks to the violence of colonial rule, and the endurance of Burundian people: “Mutilé et meutri, tu es demeuré maître de toi-même”—mutilated and wounded, you remained your own master. They did not kill you, you survived. This need for endurance in the face of annihilating violence would persist following independence, as colonial durabilities and neo-colonial relations shaped post-independence rule.

## Conclusion

In the centuries preceding the European division of Africa, the boundaries of the Kingdom of Burundi were porous and changing. German colonialism was violently imposed, with catastrophic effects on the population through policies with promulgated disease, and through direct, military violence. WWI, the outcome of European imperialism and militarism, had catastrophic effects in the region, causing excessive death and displacements in Ruanda-Urundi which are largely forgotten in global history. The “granting” of Ruanda-Urundi to Belgium following WWI again reflects the racist imposition of violent rule, and the “cartographic violence” which defined borders, and thus created formal terretorialized categories

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<sup>46</sup> Without commending the nationalism of national anthems anywhere in the world, I feel it effectively introduces the violence of the colonial period and the endurance of Burundian people. The music was composed by Abbé Marc Barengayabo (P.-C. Mbonimpa, 2017)

of belonging and non-belonging to the state. Like German rule, Belgian colonial rule was authoritarian and militarized. Rooted in racialized hierarchies, Belgian rule imposed racialized and hierarchical categories onto Burundian people, transforming and rigidifying social categories, creating greater political stakes and class differentiation. Extractive state capitalism was violently imposed, along with an unaccountable carceral state. It transformed agricultural practices, impoverished peasants, and caused displacement. Displacement in regional African states, including Tanganyika, was managed through racialized understandings of productive and unproductive African bodies and their control and containment. Even at the moment of independence, political difference was not tolerated, and political dissidents were disappeared, killed, and displaced—a pattern more often attributed to post-independence regimes, but with its roots in colonial rulers' inability to accept Africans' independence. While post-independence violence in Africa is often framed as atavistic and primitive, the massive violence and displacement of European rule in Africa is often forgotten, with the colonial period framed as bringing development and civilization. Rather, the authoritarian, militarized structures of rule, extractive capitalist economies, racialized-ethnicized hierarchies, rigidified borders, and racist management of mobilities, endure and shape post-independence violence. The following chapter traces these colonial durabilities, and the ways they shaped violence, displacement, and the management of displacement in the post-independence period in ways which extend (rather than resolve) displacement for many.

### III. Violent Durabilities, Enduring Displacement: 1962-present

This chapter outlines how colonial ways of categorizing, governing, and violently oppressing Burundian people endure after independence in both direct and structural state violence as well as humanitarianism and migration management—extending, rather than resolving, displacement (Brankamp & Daley, 2020; Daley, 2007b, 2013a, 2013b).<sup>47</sup> The post-independence political history of Burundi is habitually described with a litany of “years:” most often 1972, 1988, 1993, and now 2015, perhaps; sometimes also including 1961, 1965, 1969, depending on the level of detail and political leanings in accounts (S. Bigirimana, 2021; Russell, 2016). The evocation of each denotes horrendous events. I echo a similar periodization in the organization of this chapter, while recognizing how these “temporal thresholds intersect with the politics of remembering and forgetting” (S. Bigirimana, 2021, p. 233; Russell, 2018). I interweave this chronology with the changing politics of refuge in neighbouring countries, with a focus on Tanzania, tracing hardening spatial closure in the governance of displacement. This chapter thus traces the context in which the enduring trajectories of displacement of the life stories recounted in this research are situated.

The post-independence genocidal violence against Burundi (Kir: Burundian people) was not itself a rupture with the past. As argued in the previous chapter, too often violence in Africa is “explained away” or normalized through racist and dehumanizing discourses of ancient tribal violence, and language such as “bloodbaths” (Daley, 2007b). Genocidal violence in post-independence Burundi was preceded by the genocidal dehumanization of African people in colonial rule, and shaped by heavy durabilities of colonialism and ongoing coloniality in post-independence geopolitics and geoeconomics. These durabilities (Stoler, 2016) included

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<sup>47</sup> Tracing of coloniality, colonial durabilities, and the violence of prior regimes is not an absolution of the current party in power. The CNDD-FDD (Conseil Nationale pour la Défense de la Démocratie-Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie (National Council for Defence of Democracy-Force for the Defence of Democracy) has used discourse around Western colonial interventionism to repudiate allegations of their own crimes (Jamar, 2022).

hierarchical dehumanization, violent militarism, authoritarianism, capitalist extractivism, as well as the management of African mobilities (Daley, 2007b).

Independence and Uprona rule: The consolidation of militarized political exclusion

On July 1, 1962, the flag of Belgium was lowered, and the new flag of Burundi was raised, as Burundi formally gained political independence (P.-C. Mbonimpa, 2017). Mworoha and Mukuri argue that across the region, “la date de l’indépendance retrouvée n’est qu’une rupture symbolique” (the day independence was recovered is only a symbolic rupture) (Mworoha & Mukuri, 2004, p. 81): “...les populations ne recueillant guère les profits de ce qui était en principe une libération” (the population reaped little of benefit from what was, in principle, liberation) (Mworoha & Mukuri, 2004, p. 81). The newly independent government inherited structures, techniques, and practices of decades of racist, exclusionary, militaristic, punitive, extractive, patriarchal and authoritarian rule (Daley, 2007b; Gahama, 1983).

Politics within Burundi became increasingly ethnicized and regionally polarizing over the next decade, with Uprona emerging as the parti unique (single party). Cleavages within the ruling party emerged.<sup>48</sup> Many of the king’s appointments favoured “the old regime and Tutsi elite” despite Rwagasore’s prior efforts for ethnic inclusion within Uprona (Daley, 2007b, p. 64; Mikalachki, 2020; Poppe, 2015; Prunier, 1995; Russell, 2016, 2019). The government feared the spread of (Hutu) ethnic extremism and violence from Rwanda, and responded with militarized violence and securitizing measures towards its own population (Russell, 2019).<sup>49</sup> Increasingly, the state demanded loyalty to Uprona and its structures, including official unions and youth movements. Through these structures the state sought/coerced participation in widespread surveillance by and of its subjects (Russell, 2016, 2019).

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<sup>48</sup> See Appendix D on divisions within Uprona

<sup>49</sup> A small minority of Rwandan-Tutsi refugees participated in cross-border incursions from Burundi in 1963, precipitating further massacres against Tutsi in Rwanda, and forcing more to seek refuge in neighbouring countries (Dorinsville, 1964). The incursions further soured relations with the Rwandan state, where the Hutu extremist party Parmehutu had formed a republican government, which opposed the continued role of the monarchy in Burundi (Russell, 2016). Tensions between Rwanda and Burundi nearly resulted in war, with skirmishes at the northern border in 1964 (Russell, 2016). However when Burundian military arrived in the region, they primarily targeted Burundi subjects, treating them as suspicious and potential enemy collaborators, arresting people they came across in the open, or in groups of more than two (Russell, 2016).

The year 1965 began and ended with tragic events. On January 15, Hutu Prime Minister Pierre Ngendandumwe was shot.<sup>50</sup> The exclusion felt by Hutu in politics was further heightened following the October elections of that year. Although the majority of MPs were Hutu, including within Uprona, the king appointed an unpopular Tutsi politician as prime minister. Frustrated politicians purportedly planned a coup which did not succeed. The attempt was followed by mass executions of Hutu politicians and army officers, often by their own Uprona comrades and commanding officers. When trials did precede executions, evidence of plans to overthrow the government was sparse (Weinstein, 1972).

Patterns of violent and disproportionate military suppression of opposition followed the pattern of militarized colonial conquest and rule, in which resistance was violently suppressed without any pretense of formal justice. Under colonialism this violence was racialized. In the post-independence period, it became ethnicized along the categories concretized and politicized in the colonial period—an enduring form of violence and displacement that would be repeated in the following decades. Following the politically targeted violence and suppression, a small uprising targeted and killed approximately 500 Tutsi in Muramvya province. The uprising was violently crushed, disproportionately killing 2000-5000 people (predominantly Hutu peasants) (J. P. Chrétien, 1990b).

The military operations in Muramvya were led by Captain Michel Micombero, who became Prime Minister in July 1966 and declared Burundi a Republic (UNSC, 1996) (Prunier, 1995; Russell, 2016).<sup>51</sup> Daley (2007b) situates this anti-democratic shift to militarized rule both within the longer history of militarized, authoritarian colonial rule, as well as the specificities of Cold War politics in the region, which had borne state capture by now-infamous military leaders in Uganda and Zaire. In September, 1969, and through 1970-1, Micombero's government executed many Hutu within the army and Hutu civilian leaders. They also targeted Ganwa and monarchist Tutsi from central Burundi (abanyaruguru). Trials at the time were shams (Weinstein, 1972). Along with re-organizations within the government, these purges meant that the army and government were now dominated by a single ethnic group (Daley, 2007b).

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<sup>50</sup> Appendix D elaborates

<sup>51</sup> Mwami Mwambutsa had been replaced by his son, Ntare V, earlier that year. Micombero abolished the weakened monarchy (Russell, 2015b).

While not often included in histories of this period or of displacement from Burundi, approximately 3000 Burundian were recognized as refugees in Rwanda in 1965—the earliest Burundian refugees in UNHCR records in the region (UNHCR, 2021b).<sup>52</sup> Other former members of parliament left to Tanzania in 1965 (J.-P. Chrétien & Dupaquier, 2007, p. 119) though the number is unclear.<sup>53</sup> Some Burundians targeted in 1969, including university students, fled to Tanzania at this time, followed by further students in 1971 (J.-P. Chrétien & Dupaquier, 2007, pp. 118-119).<sup>54</sup>

Ikiza. 1972: The Burundian Genocide

Ce qui est arrivé en 1972 a été le début d’une tragédie dont nous payons encore le prix.<sup>55</sup> (P.-C. Mbonimpa, 2017, p. 30)

In just a few months in 1972 the Burundian state killed 3.5 to 5% of the small country’s population (Daley, 2007b; Lemarchand, 1998, 2002)—with some estimating that 9-10% of Hutu men were murdered. Thousands of people had been killed in rebel attacks primarily targeting Tutsi, and in the following months 100,000-300,000 people were killed in state violence (Lemarchand, 1998). Hundreds of thousands more were displaced and dispossessed, with enduring effects today (Lemarchand, 2016; T. Mbazumutima, 2021; P.-C. Mbonimpa, 2017). Truth and justice remain elusive for many of those affected. Despite perhaps being the first incontrovertible genocide following the Holocaust, it was a genocide whose complex history, Lemarchand argues, has largely been obscured (1998, 2002, 2011). Just as the events of 1972 were shaped by violence and displacements originating in colonial domination and enduring in post-independence structures and relations, the wounds, injustices and displacements of 1972 endure for many, fifty years later.

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<sup>52</sup> These records are likely imperfect, and I suspect that the recorded refugees were not the first or only Burundians to flee in this period. See appendix E on UNHCR recognized Displacement from Burundi.

<sup>53</sup> Burundian refugees or asylum seekers are not recorded in UNHCR statistics of the time (UNHCR, 2021b). I surmise they were not registered as refugees as they were few in number, politically welcomed, and later possibly involved in armed trainings. Interestingly, UNHCR statistics do record 500 refugees in 1965 without recording the country of origin, and continues to record this “unknown” caseload into the 1970’s (UNHCR, 2021b). Further archival work would be required to understand the nature of this anomaly in the statistics, and whether it may refer to Burundian Hutu elites exiled at the time, or not.

<sup>54</sup> These flights are not recorded in UNHCR statistics (UNHCR, 2021b), potentially for the same reasons outlined in footnote 51, above. See appendix E on UNHCR recognized Displacement from Burundi.

<sup>55</sup> What happened in 1972 was the beginning of a tragedy for which we are still paying the price

On April 29, 1972, a group of as few as 400-4000 combatants attacked military and government posts in southern Burundi.<sup>56</sup> The aggressors included Burundian Hutu, but possibly also Congolese rebels and Burundian Tutsi monarchists (Daley, 2007b; Lemarchand, 2002).<sup>57</sup> In the south, rebels targeted Tutsi civilians killing as many as 2000-5000 people, with eyewitnesses recording gruesome atrocities (Daley, 2007b; Lemarchand, 2002).<sup>58</sup> While occurring within a context of systemic exclusion of Hutu from political power, the exact motivations of the rebels remain unclear, though Hutu supremacist rhetoric was recorded in tracts (J.-P. Chrétien & Dupaquier, 2007; Lemarchand, 2002; Russell, 2015b).<sup>59</sup> Micombero dissolved the government and declared a state of emergency.

The rebellion was crushed less than a week after it began (Russell, 2015b). However, the massacre of Hutu across the country was not limited to repression in the region of the attack. The “style and intensity” of violence varied across Burundi (Russell, 2015a, p. 440). The state shut down all media, and ordered local governments and the population to exercise “vigilance,” framing the rebels in dehumanizing, animalizing terms (Russell, 2015a, 2018). While the total number Hutu people killed by the Burundian state in 1972 remains unknown, reliable estimates range from 80,000-300,000 (Lemarchand, 2002; Uvin, 2009).<sup>60</sup>

The descriptor of *educated* Hutu somewhat veils the broad targeting not only of Hutu who had managed to advance in formal education in a still discriminatory system, but also those still in school, and those without formal education holding positions of authority or leadership in the community. It also obscures indiscriminate massacres of the civilian population. Across Burundi, those targeted included civil servants and clerks, doctors and nurses, priests, pastors, catechists, nuns, and other church leaders, tradespeople and merchants, drivers, and union leaders. Teachers and students were taken from universities, secondary schools, seminaries, trade

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<sup>56</sup> Government reports of the time claimed there were over 25,000 combatants (Lemarchand, 2002)

<sup>57</sup> Some scholars name university of Burundi students as possible leaders; having fled in 1969 they may have received refuge and training in camps in Tanzania, alongside Mozambican Frelimo freedom fighters (J.-P. Chrétien & Dupaquier, 2007).

<sup>58</sup> Weinstein also records the killing of Hutu civilians unwilling to participate in the uprising (Weinstein, 1972, p. 24).

<sup>59</sup> That same day, the young king Mwami Ntare V was killed near Gitega, having returned from exile and been imprisoned month before (Russell, 2015b).

<sup>60</sup> While these wide estimations seem crude, and the debates over numbers may be vulgar in the face of the immense pain and injustice of the events, denial of the genocide continues. And so the numbers, while not “truth” in themselves, do matter, even in such broad ranges, to affirming and witnessing the broader truth: the Burundian state committed genocide in massacring Hutu civilians in 1972.

schools, and even primary schools (Lemarchand, 2002, 2009). All Hutu army officers were executed (often after torture), and nearly all Hutu soldiers were purged—almost half of the army (Lemarchand, 2002, p. 556). In Bururi, where rebels had massacred a thousand Tutsi, the army, in return, massacred the Hutu population, killing 20,000 people (Lemarchand, 2002). Nearly all the educated Hutu in Burundi were murdered, the majority of whom were men, leaving tens of thousands of women widowed, and hundreds of thousands of orphans. In many cases all property of victims was confiscated or looted. Remaining family members were rendered destitute (Lemarchand, 2009).

Several participants in the life history interviews for this research shared the names and stories of family members and friends who were killed in 1972.<sup>61</sup> Unlike the mythico-histories recorded by Malkki among Burundian refugees in the 1980's (Malkki, 1995a), accounts of “the events of 1972” in these life histories was largely through unadorned narrative—simple statements of personal losses, fears, and displacements. The eldest participants recounted the deaths of several siblings in 1972:

The war (intambara) in Burundi started in 1972. I had mon frère (my brother), yari umuprofesseur hariya (he was a teacher over there) in Bujumbura, avec ma soeur (with my sister) yari umubikira iGitega (she was a religious sister/nun in Gitega) So, ce jour là, (on that day,) when the war broke out, it is to say that, both of them were caught by it.  
(Berahino, Interview)

Another participant from a southern province lost his parents and three brothers, and was injured himself when fleeing, showing us a scar across his torso as he recounted his story:

C'était chaud (it was hot (meaning very violent or conflictual)) at [my province\*] and they killed many people, including my parents and bene wacu (a term encompassing siblings, cousins, and family more broadly).

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<sup>61</sup> This is not a systematic overview of the losses and violence experienced by the life history raconteurs in this study. I did not systemically ask about such losses, and so only share what was shared by those who themselves chose to voice their stories. It is therefore possible (and I imagine, probable,) that many other personal losses and experiences of 1972 remain unrecounted. Further, I chose not to specifically code the interview transcripts to highlight deaths. Such coding would provide a more systemic overview and enumeration of what was recounted, but did not seem necessary. I do not have a strong methodological reason, apart from the personal, emotional geography that it felt uncomfortable to do so. Nevertheless, this dissertation project is, in a small way, a witness to these testimonies, however minor. This witness is important, as the testimony of current refugees is not included in the ongoing Commission Vérité et Réconciliation (CVR, Truth and Reconciliation Commission), even as their memories and past experiences pertain to the events under investigation by the commission. Anonymity requires the use of pseudonyms rather than recording the names shared—a lacuna, however necessary, given that these names were remembered and testified.

They brought people somewhere to kill them [unclear portion of recording]. Among mes petits frères (my little brothers) they killed three who were still at the school benches. One was called Aiden,\* another was called, Aloys\*; another called Amos\*... They were killed at that time. They were killed when they were in secondary school. I remained as one, alone.  
[...] We left to seek refuge, and arrived at the border of Nyanza; We fell into a military ambush. They killed many people, and that's where I was injured. I was helped by other people we were with, until [a town in Tanzania\*].  
(Basabose, Interview)

Several participants nearing or over fifty years old had lost one or both parents. Paul began his story by sharing he had been born that very year, in Bujumbura: “my father was killed in those even's of '72. [...] I was a refugee with my mother when I was a baby.” Other participants who lost parents were carried to refuge by grandparents. Some whose parents and family members were killed nevertheless stayed in Burundi at that time. For example Joseph remained in Burundi with his mother and siblings, following the death of his father in 1972. Paul had not yet been born, but shared in his life story that his grandfather had been killed. In many interviews these personal losses were more haunting, mentioned obliquely, and often quietly, or in passing.<sup>62</sup>

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The Burundian army led the genocide but did not act alone.<sup>63</sup> Zairian troops called for by Micombero offered support to the Burundian army (J.-P. Chrétien & Dupaquier, 2007; Russell, 2015b). France, Uganda, and Libya also provided military advice and equipment (Daley, 2007b, p. 71). There is evidence that some Rwandan refugees in Burundi participated in the state repression (Lemarchand, 2002, 2009; Weinstein, 1972). The Uprona youth movement, the Jeunesse Revolutionnaire Rwagasore (JRR, Revolutionary Youth of Rwagasore) played a well-documented role. Youth assembled roadblocks across the country, “filtering” the population, and preventing many from fleeing (A. Mbazumutima, 2013; Russell, 2015a, p. 443). These barriers,

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<sup>62</sup> Anecdotally, a man I met in Kigoma, who said he was Tanzanian (as his father was Tanzanian), had grown up with his Burundian mother's family in Burundi, and lost many members of his mother's extended family in 1972. He himself had been studying in Burundi at the time and escaped back to Tanzania. While I did not formally talk with many Tanzanians about 1972, and did not hear other similar accounts, it speaks to the ongoing familial ties across borders, and the way that the personal effects of the violence were not contained neatly contained by national categories.

<sup>63</sup> Debates continue as to the extent to which the state response was a planned elimination of Hutu, or “revenge and subjugation” under the pretext of suppressing an uprising framed as much wider than the reality (Daley, 2007b, p. 68; Lemarchand, 2002).

deployed quickly across the territory, became “a method of violence that exerted an image of absolute control and inescapable authority,” though many did not initially realize the role of their participation (Russell, 2015a, p. 443; 2018). The seeming bureaucratic authority of the barriers, and their “attitude of regulation and specification” exemplify colonial durabilities, as “traits of a recent colonial past” (Russell, 2015a, p. 443).

Denouncing violence or urging restraint was itself often deadly (Lemarchand, 2009). Those mobilized to create barriers were themselves disappeared if they recognized and called attention to the violence in which they were participating (Russell, 2018). Nevertheless, some Burundian Tutsi actively hid and sheltered students and staff, assisting many in seeking to escape (A. Mbazumutima & Nkurunziza, 2013). As per Jefremovas’ (1995) analysis of “Acts of Human Kindness” in the Rwandan Genocide, such acts disprove simplistic narratives that frame violence in atavistic and essentializing terms.

Although reports by foreign governments acknowledged the scale of the state violence against Hutu there was little sustained attention internationally,<sup>64</sup> even as the targeted state violence continued into 1973, and tens of thousands of Burundi sought refuge (which Weinstein already commented at the time) (Daley, 2007b; Russell, 2018, p. 65; Weinstein, 1972). International silence seems to signal, in part, indifference to the deaths of Africans, as well as Burundi’s “geostrategic” proximity to Zaire and the Micombero regime’s anti-left alignment within cold war geopolitics.

In both domestic and international discourse, the Burundian state reframed their violence as heroic and just action against guilty genocidal rebels. In June 1972, the Burundian Embassy in Washington, D.C. published a *White Paper* which claims that the “true” genocide in 1972 was against Tutsi (Jefremovas, 2000; Malkki, 1995a, p. 249; Weinstein, 1972). This state discourse framed all victims of state violence as having themselves been guilty of genocide, and thus dealt with justly (Russell, 2018, p. 66).<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> By the end of May, 1972, the Belgian Prime Minister stated that the repression of Hutu was not “a tribal fight but with a veritable genocide” (quoted in Weinstein, 1972, p. 26), and US state department communications referred to a “selective genocide” (Daley, 2007b, p. 70).<sup>64</sup> This categorization did little to slow, stop, or even bring broad acknowledgement of what was happening. The OAU openly supported Micombero for restoring order (Daley, 2007b)

<sup>65</sup> It states that “to terminate these fratricidal transgressions the Burundese Authority was obligated deal severely with the guilty responsible for this genocide” (Embassy of the Republic of Burundi, cited in Weinstein, 1972, p. 32).

The atmosphere of trauma and repression in and following 1972 meant that “[l]es gens qui ont vu les leurs partir n’ont pas pu pleurer, faire le deuil. Pire, après la vie devait continuer, “normalement”, alors que les cœurs étaient blessés, rongés par la douleur”<sup>66</sup> (P.-C. Mbonimpa, 2017, p. 30). In following decades, reference to “the sad events of ‘72” through euphemism and allusion occluded both the perpetrators and victims of the violence (Russell, 2018). For those who survived, the continuation of daily life was almost eerie, as the party responsible for the atrocities remained in power (P.-C. Mbonimpa, 2017). State violence thus “maintained its presence in society through the continuation of the regime of silence that had achieved it.” (Russell, 2018, p. 67).<sup>67</sup>

Day 75

There is evidence  
that this was a conspiracy of silence  
the insistence of green grass  
the luminosity of a full moon  
the leathered skin of the dead  
the smile of skull  
flowers  
the roar of the rushing river  
the endless endless hills

if there was a shocked response  
if this was an unnatural state of being  
if this was a never ever situation  
why didn’t the world turn upside down  
(Bitek, 2016, p. 63, "Day 75")

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<sup>66</sup> Translation: People who had lost their own were not able to cry, to mourn. Worse, afterwards life had to continue-- “normally”—even though hearts were broken, gnawed by pain.

<sup>67</sup> Only recently has genocide been officially acknowledged in Burundi (S. Bigirimana, 2021; Harerimana, 2021b). The recent announcement was framed as controversial in some domestic and international press. The debate on labelling genocides in Burundi is framed not only by what took place in 1972, but “which episodes of violence should be labelled as genocide” across Burundian history, with interpretations influenced by the international attention to genocide in Rwanda and Bosnia (S. Bigirimana, 2021, p. 216). Bigirimana (2021) presents a compelling account of the positions taken, including by diaspora groups in Canada, one of which denies genocide of Hutu in Burundi. Undoubtedly, politicians use of the terminology of Genocide can be used to draw attention away from the atrocities of their own regimes, or as justification for violence and repression, as in 1972. Nevertheless, euphemism occludes justice.

## Regional Refuge in the 1970's and 1980's: Aid and Agriculture

During the genocide, approximately 150,000 Burundians fled to neighbouring countries, primarily to Zaïre (now the DRC), Rwanda, and Tanzania.<sup>68</sup> In the years which followed, arrivals continued to be recorded, attesting to the ongoing violence and repression in Burundi.<sup>69</sup> The most extensive research and writing on this period has focused on refuge in Tanzania (Armstrong, 1988; Daley, 1989, 1991, 1992, 1993; Felleson, 2003; Malkki, 1995a; Sommers, 2001). This dissertation builds on and contributes to the Tanzania-focused literature, as it is primarily based on research with Burundians in Tanzania. It is therefore the context of refuge I outline in detail here. There is a significant gap in research considering Burundian refugees reception, management, and experiences in Rwanda and Zaïre in the 1970's and 1980's.<sup>70</sup> Notably, all three states largely undertook a settlement model geared toward the agricultural self-sufficiency for the majority of refugees, as was commonly promoted across Africa at the time (Kamanga, 2002; Rutinwa, 1999)(Interviews, 2017-8).

Tanzania: Welcoming guests and controlling refugees?

...[N]o true African socialist can look at a line drawn on a map and say "The people on this side of that line are my brothers [sic], but those who happen to live on the other side of it can have no claim on me." Every individual on this continent is his brother. (Nyerere, 1971, p. 7)

For several decades under the leadership of President Julius Nyerere, Tanganyika/Tanzania<sup>71</sup> was known for its hospitality and "open door" policy for refugees and asylum seekers.<sup>72</sup> This stance was based both in Tanzania's support for freedom fighters and political exiles of ongoing liberation movements (including from South Africa, Zimbabwe,

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<sup>68</sup> Appendix F: Chart 2 gives an overview of Burundian refugees and asylum seekers recognized by UNHCR within the Great Lakes Region, and their countries of refuge.

<sup>69</sup> Those who arrived over the next few years have tended to be grouped as "1972" refugees.

<sup>70</sup> Research on refugees and citizenship issues in Zaïre have largely focused on Kinyarwanda speaking minorities and Rwandan exiles, and these contexts certainly shaped the legislative and reception context for Burundians (Mamdani, 2001, 2002; D. Newbury, 2005). Some of the life histories in this research (as well as those shared in my prior MA research (Weima, 2015)) include experiences in both Rwanda and Zaïre. Digitized UNHCR archival documents also provide (somewhat cursory) information on the broader context of refuge in Rwanda and Zaïre in the 1970's-1980's. However systematic archival research is beyond the scope of this project.

<sup>71</sup> Present-day mainland Tanzania gained independence in 1961 as Tanganyika. Union with the Zanzibar archipelago in 1964 created the United Republic of Tanzania. I will largely use "Tanzania" to speak about continuity in policy in this period, and to avoid confusion.

<sup>72</sup> See appendix G, a photo of a mural of Nyerere with a quote about welcoming refugees.

Namibia, and Mozambique), as well as a belief in pan-African unity, and human-centred socialist society beyond the artificial boundaries of any particular state (Daley, 1991, 2013b; Kamanga, 2002; Kweka, 2007; Milner, 2009, 2013; Nyerere, 1967; 1969, p. 5; Ongpin, 2008; Rutinwa, 1999; Williams, 2015). Nevertheless, the early years of independence and nation-building saw shifts in categorization and governance of refugees,<sup>73</sup> linked both to colonial durabilities in the management of migration and definition of citizenship, ethnic-territorial categorizations and stereotypes, geopolitics, and changes in the international humanitarian regime.

Burundian refugees fleeing (largely) in 1972, arrived in a context already shaped by the international humanitarian response to Rwandan and Mozambican refugees. (This response is described in further detail in Appendix H, while Appendix K charts UNHCR Recognized Refugees hosted in Tanzania from independence onwards.) For both Rwandans and Mozambicans, formal categories had initially been fluid; people crossing the borders variously identified and were identified as refugees (Sw: wakimbizi), guests (Sw: wageni), exiles, watoro (those fleeing justice), labourers, migrants, settlers, farmers, and even citizens (or potential citizens)(Rosenthal, 2015; Tague, 2017). Despite this fluidity, the process of decolonization, and the nation-building projects which followed increased both citizens' sense of national-belonging and differentiation from non-citizens (Rosenthal, 2015). Categories hardened as containment in formal settlements was enforced, international humanitarian aid created distinctions, and people in border regions were increasingly subject to suspicions and concern about security threats. Tanzanians in these regions increasingly differentiated themselves from those now categorized as foreign, seeing themselves as citizens of the nation-state, rather than identifying with their boundary-crossing region (Rosenthal, 2015). Legislation also played a role.

While framed as a “golden era” of refuge, the period was not without contradictions in law and practice. Echoing the language of colonial refugee policy, Tanzania's 1966 Refugee Control Act created firmer definitions of refugees as opposed to “undesirable immigrants”

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<sup>73</sup> Prior to independence, British Tanganyika had formally hosted Polish refugees, expelled from the Soviet Union during WW2, and resettled across the world, including to British colonies in Eastern and Southern Africa (Nowak, 2019). Racial anxieties about non-British, impoverished white settlers, and maintaining “superiority” led to the introduction of encampment policies and restrictions on the mobilities of refugees, and the creation of “camp commandants” (Brankamp & Daley, 2020; Nowak, 2019). The first formal laws governing refugees in colonial Tanganyika were limited to the recognition of Europeans evacuated from war areas, and were explicit in language of “control” and the colonial administration's power of “expulsion” (Brankamp & Daley, 2020).

(Kamanga, 2002; Rosenthal, 2015; Rutinwa, 1999). It required all refugees to live in formal camps (when previously many had settled in villages and with family extended across borders), and to have formal refugee identification (Tague, 2017).<sup>74</sup> In practice, the Act's restrictions were unevenly enforced, with many Mozambicans in particular able to move between settlements and villages (Tague, 2017). However, in the late 1960's the state began to "round up" refugees living outside settlements and forcibly relocate them to camps, in part by arguing that this was necessary for them to become self-reliant, in-line with national villagization policy (Tague, 2017).<sup>75</sup> At the same time refugees were included, like citizens, in national development projects, and the very fact of their hosting was central to Tanzania's expression of Pan-African socialism (Tague, 2017).

Rwandans were particularly targeted by the 1966 Act as not meeting the requirements for asylum (which was echoed by UNHCR officials), and thus subject to deportation (or refoulement) (Rosenthal, 2015). Rwandan Tutsi were framed as lazy and unproductive (Rosenthal, 2015), echoing colonial ethnic and racial stereotypes (Gahama, 1983). Racialized hierarchies bound up with perceived utility for capitalist productivity thus continued to shape how independent governments sought to manage African mobilities (Brankamp & Daley, 2020).

#### Burundian Refugees: Settlements and Self-Reliance

During and following the arrival of tens of thousands of Burundians in 1972-3, the creation of settlements followed the models developed in the settlements created for Rwandan and Mozambican refugees (Chaulia, 2003; Tague, 2017). TCRS, UNHCR, and the government of Tanzania jointly identified sites and planned and administered the settlements (Daley, 1989). Ulyankulu was created in 1972, Katumba in 1973, and Misahmo (following flooding at Ulyankulu) in 1979.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Kamanga (2002) refers to many of these provisions as "draconian" and notes that they are at odds with the stipulations of both the 1967 Protocol extending the provisions of the 1951 Convention on Refugees (see Chapter One), as well as the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Refugee Convention. The OAU convention enshrined an "open door policy" not only for those fleeing specific persecution, but also people fleeing more generalized insecurity and violence (Kamanga, 2002; Rutinwa, 1999, p. 1).

<sup>75</sup> This forced encampment only narrowly preceded the larger forced villagization of the general Tanzanian population (Abrahams, 1985; Lorgen, 2000).

<sup>76</sup> Since the creation of new camps in the 1990's these settlements are now often referred to as the "old settlements" or the "1972 settlements."

The camps created were geared towards integration, providing agricultural land and Tanzanian curriculum schools (Chaulia, 2003). Following the “two-phase” model developed in the Mozambican settlements, Burundians were initially given food aid, but were also granted land to cultivate (though it remained state property) as well as agricultural supplies and seeds. In “phase two” refugees were meant to be self-sufficient and food aid was withdrawn (Tague, 2017; G. UNHCR, LWF, 1976). Incorporating refugees in national rural development schemes had economic objectives and contributed to bringing vast amounts of land under cultivation, road and infrastructure construction, and national revenue through the mandatory cultivation of cash-crops (Chaulia, 2003; Daley, 1991, 1993; Rosenthal, 2015; Tague, 2017).

Many life history interviewees recalled the difficult period of initially clearing the bush in settlement site chosen for their sparse population. The area was infested with tse-tse flies and inhabited by wild animals. Basabose recounted the difficulties when they were gathered and transferred to Ulyankulu:

At Ulyankulu, then, it was a bad place. The wild animals. The lions. Many types of animals. And that’s where Bucumi\* and Simuyobewe\* were killed by animals [...] They were friends, they were my friends... they were friends, we came from living in the same place. (Basabose, Interview)

Another participant described the challenge of clearing land at Mishamo, requiring felling and burning large trees, which caused several deaths, including the deaths of men he knew and named, and the child of one of the men killed.

While initially clearing and cultivating difficult brush, within a decade refugees were largely able to produce enough food for themselves, and for local markets. Nevertheless, incorporation in national labour markets meant that Burundian refugees were subject to the same market volatility and crises of social reproduction due to structural adjustment as the Tanzanian peasantry (Daley, 1991; Kweka, 2007).

A number of returnees I interviewed in 2014 who had lived in such settlements recalled their time in Tanzania fondly, especially those old enough to remember Nyerere’s welcome to them, and his visits to their settlements (Weima, 2015).<sup>77</sup> Others remembered difficulties and discrimination. Saidi mentioned times of hunger in which people ate flowers and grasses, without always exactly knowing which were edible in the unfamiliar Tanzanian environment. Ndayikengurukiye felt that the teachers favoured Tanzanian students (who also attended the

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<sup>77</sup> See Appendix J which highlights the memory of one participant

schools in the settlements), and that the national exam grading discriminated against Burundians (Interview, 2018). Two interviewees shared that their mobility was, at times, strictly policed and contained, including after their move to Mishamo.

Not all of those who fled to Tanzania during this period registered as refugees, and some who initially registered as refugees later left the camps. Many intentionally avoided the refugee system, because of its restrictions on mobility, and limited livelihood opportunities in the remote settlements (Daley, 1993; Malkki, 1995a; Sommers, 2001). Some joined extended family or other Burundians who were already established in Tanzania prior to 1972 (Daley, 1991; Weima, 2015). A small number of elites were formally granted permission to live in cities, while many more Burundian refugees moved to cities clandestinely to seek further opportunities for small business or employment, away from the containment and politics of camp life (Sommers, 2001). Malkki records that many employed strategies to “pass” as Tanzanian, including marrying Tanzanians and changing religions (Malkki, 1995a). So-called “town refugees” or self-settled refugees were often able to establish livelihoods outside of the camps, but may have faced other challenges such as accessing secondary education and the health care available of citizens (Interviews, 2014).<sup>78</sup>

Although formally banned, political activity in the camps was strongly shaped by the experience of ethnicized genocide, exile, and exclusion. For example, the Palipehutu-FNL<sup>79</sup> was formed in Tanzania in 1980 by Rémy Gahutu, with particularly strong operations in Mishamo camp<sup>80</sup> (Daley, 2007b, p. 91; Simon Turner, 2010). Gahutu’s ethnic ideology countered Uprona’s insistence that ethnic groups were only a colonial fiction, to advocate for Hutu right-to-rule because of their earlier settlement, and thus autochthonous right to the Burundian territory (Malkki, 1995a, 1995b; Simon Turner, 2010). It also, often, dehumanized the Tutsi as a “foreign” other (Malkki, 1995a). Gahutu’s discourse maintained belief in racial-ethnic difference, and essentialized territorial belonging, while also framing the struggle as one of emancipation and liberation (Simon Turner, 2010, p. 37).

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<sup>78</sup> Far less is known about this population and their migration patterns than about officially registered refugees (Daley, 1989). Many are registered through the national census, and UNHCR was undertaking a “census” along with the Government of Tanzania at the time of this research.

<sup>79</sup> Parti Pour la Libération du Peuple Hutu-Forces Nationales pour la Libération, Party for the Liberation of Hutu People-National Force for Liberation

<sup>80</sup> Mishamo is the camp where Malkki conducted the research on refugee mythico-histories described and analysed in *Purity and Exile* (1995a).

Mbonimpa's (2020a) semi-fictional account of Mishamo and Ulyankulu describes the contradictory Tanzanian overt and covert politics<sup>81</sup> towards the armed rebellion forming in camps at the time. Formal discourse criminalized political activity, however for many years the camp commandant and Minister of Interior turned a blind eye to such activities, a form of tacit support and acceptance of recruitment and training of combatants. Open dissent towards the political movement in the camp became nearly impossible as Palipehutu's political perspective become hegemonic. Anyone opposing the armed struggle was framed as a traitor, and competing groups were not allowed by the camp commandant (Daley, 1996; M. Mbonimpa, 2020a, pp. 76-77; Simon Turner, 2010, p. 35). Tanzania was thus able to maintain international humanitarian support for the settlements by stating their opposition to armed political activity, while supporting what was seen by many refugees as the only long-term solution for their return through armed struggle.<sup>82</sup> This tension speaks to both the negotiated sovereignties in/of camps (Ramadan & Fregonese, 2017) as well as how geopolitics always shapes refugee hosting and solutions (Chimni, 1998, 2004; Hyndman, 2011a, 2011b, 2012; C. D. Smith, 1995).

1970's-80's Burundi: From the first republic through the third: Violence, silence, and development

The period from the mid-1970's to late 1980's is sometimes recounted as a calm period of ordered development in Burundian history. The repression of this period is rarely acknowledged as it doesn't figure in the "litany of years" used to quickly describe the history of political violence in Burundi. Over the next two decades military dictators continued to rule within a single party, with exclusively Tutsi military councils (Daley, 2007b). In 1976, President Micombero was deposed in an intraparty coup by his cousin Colonel Jean-Baptiste Bagaza, who himself would also be deposed in a coup in 1987, and replaced by their cousin Major Pierre Buyoya. All three presidents were from the same Tutsi-Hima clan, from the same region in Bururi province, from within the upper echelons of both the army and UPRONA (Daley, 2007b;

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<sup>81</sup> The language of overt and covert policies is employed by Dunlop (2021) to describe the context of Burundian national unity discourse and discriminatory practice in the 1970's and 1980's (described further below).

<sup>82</sup> Tanzania's tacit acceptance of Gahutu's activities did not last forever, and he was arrested for political activities in a camp in 1989, and died in a Tanzanian prison the following year (Amnesty International, 1990; Malkki, 1995a).

Kamungi, Oketch, & Huggins, 2005; Reyntjens, 1994). Power remained consolidated in the hands of a military elite, framing themselves as protecting the unity of the nation, and promoting development. They promoted the narrative that no real ethnic differences existed (and thus ethnicity could not be source of exclusion, despite the recent history of violence and ongoing discrimination). In the Second Republic even discussing ethnicity was illegal.<sup>83</sup>

Displacement due to violence and dispossession continued. Burundians continued to seek refuge (although in smaller numbers): “A constant flow of educated Hutus seeking refuge in neighbouring countries indicated the persistence of violent episodes, arbitrary detentions, and obstacles to legitimate demands for political and civil rights” (Daley, 2007b, p. 74). Framing this period as peaceful “belies the militarization of society and the socialization of violence into everyday life” following genocide (Daley, 2007b, p. 72). The “peace” of this period was the silence of oppression and fear:” the ever-present threat of another slaughter was enough to discourage all forms of protest” (Lemarchand, 2009, p. 417; Russell, 2018).

The number of people “killed or disappeared during the years of political repression” is unclear (Bouka & Nyabola, 2016, p. 3). As one research participant observed, “when Bagaza came to power, the question of killings stopped a bit. It means people were killed, but in hidden ways, not overtly” (Interview, Tanzania, 2018). Hundreds of political prisoners were recorded, with severe beatings and deaths in prisons (Amnesty International, 1987), echoing the practices of colonial administrators in prisons which themselves are literal infrastructure of colonial rule (see Appendix C and previous chapter).

#### *Land Policies: Dispossession and development*

While these successive Burundian governments formally invited refugees to return, land laws and policies enacted formalized their dispossession and extended their displacement (T. Mbazumutima, 2021; Tchatchoua-Djomo, van der Haar, van Dijk, & van Leeuwen, 2018).

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<sup>83</sup> In the aftermath of violence, and with ongoing repression, “a code of silence” on ethnic subjects was common in public spheres (Dunlop, 2021, p. 158; Russell, 2018). There was an extreme “disconnect between overt and covert policy goals,” through which “covert objectives” of excluding Hutu from power and advancement were occluded (Dunlop, 2021, p. 153; Pabanel, 1988). Bigirimana records that “people would be imprisoned for simply referring to a person as a Hutu or a Tutsi” (S. Bigirimana, 2021, p. 226). The state thus sought to show “a united nation which had solved its ethnic problems” (Daley, 2007b, p. 72). A number of commentators have compared this aspect of the Burundian context to the current climate and hegemonic discourse on (non)ethnicity in Rwanda (See, for example, Purdeková, 2015).

During the 1970's and 1980's the Burundian government framed those who left in 1972 as traitors, rebels, and even the perpetrators of genocide (Lemarchand, 2011; Weinstein, 1972). Many of those who left had their land redistributed by the state to supporters of the government. State officials encouraged Tutsi from highly populated highland regions to inhabit land left empty following the genocide and displacement (Kohlhagen, 2011; Tchatchoua-Djomo et al., 2018).<sup>84</sup>

In 1976 the government introduced a law to legalize such occupation and formalize the despoilation of their prior owners (Kohlhagen, 2011). In 1977 a decree formalized legal ownership through use and occupation after fifteen years, whether the land had initially been legally occupied or not (a period which was extended to thirty years in 1986) (Kohlhagen, 2011).<sup>85</sup> Development policies further drastically altered the landscapes which many had fled and increased state coercion in the everyday lives of ordinary peasants. Kohlhagen characterizes the decade from 1982-1992 as “la décennie du remembrement” (the decade of re-parcelling) (Kohlhagen, 2011, p. 54). He traces major changes in property-delimitations and land use through coercive cash-crop oriented development projects,<sup>86</sup> and modernist villagization schemes.<sup>87</sup> As in Tanzania, the move to villages was in many cases a form of coerced or highly pressurized displacement (Lemarchand, 1996). While this program was relatively short lived,

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<sup>84</sup> Informal recognition and even signed documents by local authorities contributed to perceived legitimacy of still-then de jure illegal land theft (Kohlhagen, 2011; Tchatchoua-Djomo, 2017). Public institutions, as well as private companies of those close to or in government also gained land in this way, as well remaining extended family and neighbours of those who fled (T. Mbazumutima, 2021).

<sup>85</sup> Particularly in southern Burundi, the inhabitants of some areas changed drastically. For example, in Mutambara, Rumonge, the population had been replaced completely—not a single person who had lived and cultivated there in 1972 was living there ten years later (Kohlhagen, 2011, p. 54).

<sup>86</sup> The promotion of industrial palm oil cultivation in Rumonge gave a development organization the right to re-organize property, in order to develop large plantations, where there had once been small plots. Parcels were re-distributed to peasants who were forced to cultivate palm plantations, with only small plots meant for their personal food production (Kohlhagen, 2011).

<sup>87</sup> Re-tooling an earlier colonial regroupement scheme, and echoing Malthusian logics about land-pressure, the government promoted a rural villagization, constructing over 100 new villages in the late 1970's (Comité Central du Parti UPRONA, 1980; Daley, 2007b, p. 74; Kohlhagen, 2011; Kay, 1986, p. 8 in Lemarchand, 1996, p. 109; République du Burundi, 1980; Sindayihebura, 2011; Weima, 2015). The program emphasized order, expert planning, modernization, and using the spatial planning to change the mentalities of the population (Comité Central du Parti UPRONA, 1980; République du Burundi, 1980). In reality the villages provided little in terms of promised services, infrastructure, or economic benefits to their new residents, but increased labour requirements for many (Interview, Tanzania, 2017)(Interviews, Burundi, 2014). It was also perceived as increasing government surveillance and control of the population.

and soon abandoned by most residents, it remade the landscape—effacing former land boundary markers to create new plot delimitations. Often the location of former properties could no longer be recognized.<sup>88</sup>

### *Systemic exclusion*

Beyond changes to land policies, education policy also extended structural violence in the decades following the genocide, and is an often cited example of systemic discrimination in this period. For Hutu who remained in Burundi following 1972, many parents were afraid to send their children to school, contributing to significant disruptions and even the abandonment of education (Kamungi et al., 2005; Skonhofs, 2000). For example, Uruwayesu was in grade four in 1972. His family stayed in Burundi, though apprehensively—afraid that the events would be repeated:

U: ...[M]y parents were afraid (baragiye ubwoba) for us, but they thought that it would be a loss if we don't go to school. Sometimes we changed the routes, when we went to school with one route, we took another path to return home, so not to meet problems en route. And even, when we were at school, when we thought bad [or evil] things would be done, we left directly.

Y: What made you think that bad things would happen?

U: It's because at that time, people lived a lot with fear, it was a question of pretending [...] So we pretended, but when we heard an explosion [...] we ran.

Y: In '72, or the following years?

U: In '72 and even after, because the killing that started in '72, it continued to '74.

While he had been able to finish primary school (to grade six), like the vast majority of students he did not pass the notoriously difficult national exam to continue to secondary education.

Beyond the initial post-genocide years, by the late 1980's, Tutsi were still vastly over-represented at all levels of education, and regionalism was acute (Pabanel, 1988).<sup>89</sup> Limiting

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<sup>88</sup> Zairians/Congolese and Rwandans within Burundi were also subject to new restrictions. In 1976 and 1979 the Burundian government expelled large numbers of Zairians, and in the same period moved and regrouped Rwandans exiles (Kohlhagen, 2011, p. 54).

<sup>89</sup> Only 1/3 to as few as 1/5 of University of Burundi students were Hutu in the mid-1980's (Daley, 2007b; Uvin, 2009, Ch 1, "The first few years," para. 5), with faculties such as law and economics more than 90% Tutsi (Dunlop, 2021, p. 155). 15% of University students were from Mugamba commune in Bururi (Uvin, 2009). While refuted by educational leadership from the time, there is a widespread belief and evidence of systemic discrimination (and corruption) in national exams for both access to secondary school and post-secondary education, and the notation of students' ethnicity on exams (Dunlop, 2021). The use of French for the exams despite the kirundicization of primary education benefited students with parents were educated and spoke French (primarily Tutsi) (Dunlop, 2021; Lemarchand, 1996). National

access to education “allowed the Tutsi elite to remain hegemonic and dominant in politics and the public sector” (Daley, 2007b, p. 73). Through these policies the “large majority of the population was structurally excluded from advancing,” as the vast majority of formal employment was by the state and depended on education (Uvin, 2009, pp. Ch. 1, “The first few years,” para. 5). While the numbers varied somewhat throughout this period, in the mid-eighties there were times with no Hutu provincial governors, very few in the national assembly, and an even smaller proportion within the cabinet (Daley, 2007b). Of the 37 top positions within the military, 27 were from Bururi, and all were Tutsi (Uvin, 2009), while 96% of the army overall were Tutsi (Daley, 2007b).<sup>90</sup>

The systemic exclusion of Hutu leads some academics to compare this period in Burundi with South African apartheid—though without international attention, condemnation, or restrictions on aid to the regime (Lemarchand, 1989; 2002, p. 563; Uvin, 2009, pp. Ch 1, “The first few years [...],” para. 5).<sup>91</sup> Throughout this period the implementation of government policies and programs was highly funded and shaped by international aid, with Burundi a clear “donor darling,” receiving “substantial” aid from European governments, as well as the United

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exams can thus be seen as a covert method of “filtering” Hutu from formal education, while giving the pretense of advancement based on intellectual ability (Dunlop, 2021). Additionally, access to education was unequally distributed in the country. As much as 60% of foreign funding for education was directed to Bururi province (Dunlop, 2021; Uvin, 2009).

<sup>90</sup> Paviotti’s recent dissertation (2022) explored perceptions of ethnicity in contemporary Burundi. She included the following footnote, noting the difficulty and problems of providing demographic statistics on ethnicity in contemporary Burundi: “Reliable demographic data on the number of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa in Burundi currently do not exist. The percentages usually mentioned in descriptions of the population of Burundi (85% Hutu, 14% Tutsi, 1% Twa) date from colonial times and it is not always clear how they have been elaborated. The most reliable percentages of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa in Burundi (respectively 86.16%, 12.14% and 1.7%) were provided by Victor Neesen in 1956, after conducting a sample census in 1952 (I discuss this in chapter 2 of my thesis). These percentages are not valid today as they evidently do not take into account all the casualties of mass categorical violence that took place after 1956, and they also do not consider unions between *amoko*, following which out of two *amoko*, only one is transmitted to their descendants. The Arusha Peace Agreement (2000) adopts the percentages of +/- 85% Hutu and +/- 13% Tutsi (Appendix I, section I, B.16).” (Paviotti, 2021, p. 37)

<sup>91</sup> Chrétien et al. (1989) do record “attaques contre le régime de Bujumbura” (attacks against the Bujumbura regime) in the 1980’s, “notamment en Belgique, en Italie et au Canada, sur le thème de ‘l’apartheid ethnique’,” (notably in Belgium, Italy, and Canada, concerning “ethnic apartheid”) largely following the restrictions placed on the Catholic Church by President Bagaza. Chrétien’s use of quotes seems to indicate a critic of the apartheid terminology, and he argues that such critique contributed to creating fear of an imminent repetition of “1972,” particularly from 1985 onward. Debates between western Scholars at this time were heated in the pages of publications such as *Politique Africaine*, and *Issue* (see, for example J.-P. Chrétien et al., 1989; J. P. Chrétien, 1990a, 1990b; Lemarchand, 1989, 1990; Reyntjens, 1989).

States (US), the Soviet Union (USSR), China, and others (United States Department of State, 1985, 1988). The World Bank and IMF imposed neoliberal fiscal reforms and debt management measures through a structural adjustment plan, and Burundi was the largest per-capita low-interest loan recipient of the World Bank (Daley, 2007b; Uvin, 2009, p. 101). As in Rwanda, international aid was central to the functioning of the state, and contributed to, rather than challenging inequalities in Burundian society (C. Newbury, 1995; Uvin, 1998).<sup>92</sup> Throughout this period the military received foreign training and supplies, including from France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the US, the USSR, Libya, and North Korea (United States Department of State, 1985; 1988). Beyond having done nothing in response to genocidal violence in 1972, support for the regimes had largely continued, including praise for their efforts to reduce rural poverty and fight corruption (United States Department of State, 1985).<sup>93</sup>

1988 to 1991: From massacres and impunity to national unity?

Daley argues that the international community's failure to act in 1972 "gave successive regimes the green light to commit genocidal violence with impunity" (Daley, 2007b, p. 72). In August, 1988, the Burundian military once again responded to localized violence with indiscriminate massacres of Hutu people. Beginning in Ntega Commune, on August 14, and then continuing in Marangara until August 17 Tutsi homes were burned, and families were brutally murdered (J.-P. Chrétien et al., 1989; J. P. Chrétien, 1990b). As with other events of mass violence in Burundi, the reasons behind the initial unrest in northern Burundi are debated (Sikuyavuga, 2018).<sup>94</sup> The army arrived by August 16, and undertook a "repression rapidement aveugle contre les habitants hutu" (rapidly blind repression against hutu inhabitants) including many seeking to flee or hide (J.-P. Chrétien et al., 1989, p. 105). From 10-15,000 (J. P. Chrétien,

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<sup>92</sup> The world price of coffee drastically declined in the late 1980's, and fuel and transportation prices increased, affecting the livelihoods of many farmers and merchants across the region. Rather than alleviating the impacts, neoliberal IMF imposed measures made the effects harsher, and increased class inequalities (C. Newbury, 1995).

<sup>93</sup> The major critiques by the international community in this period were related to Bagaza's limitations on the Catholic Church and other religious groups. His replacement by Buyoya, who lifted restrictions on church activities, largely re-instated international support (Daley, 2007b).

<sup>94</sup> "The Buyoya government blamed the violence on an uprising planned by the Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People (Palipehutu), a then clandestine group based in refugee camps in Tanzania. ... informal documents (tracts) alleged provocation of Hutu civil servants by local authorities who suspected them to be part of a growing underground movement of contestation and who wanted to eliminate Hutu 'intellectuals', as it happened in 1972." (S. Bigirimana, 2021, pp. 226-227)

1990b) to 30,000 (Lemarchand, 1990; 2009, p. 417) Hutu were killed by the army.<sup>95</sup> The army was commanded to kill all Hutu found still in the country, so that in some regions Tutsi were killed alongside Hutu by soldiers who presumed that only Hutu lived in certain areas (P. Nkurunziza, 2016). As many as 40,000-60,000 Burundians sought refuge in Rwanda, and an unknown number were displaced internally, with the majority returning by 1989 (J. P. Chrétien, 1990b; Guichaoua, 2022; Lemarchand, 1989; P. Nkurunziza, 2016).<sup>96</sup>

This time the violent and tragic events in Burundi elicited more international response and pressure for reforms including democratization (Lemarchand, 2009; Uvin, 2009). Buyoya appointed several Hutu ministers, including prime minister Adrien Sibomana, and formed a commission charged with analysing the issue of national unity.<sup>97</sup> They gave a report the following year, proposing a Charter of National Unity (Ndabashinze, 2021) adopted by referendum in 1991 (République du Burundi, 1991).<sup>98</sup> A constitutional commission was put into place the following month, establishing a new constitution and legalizing the existence of further political parties the following year, ahead of elections set for 1993 (F. Manirakiza, 2020; Reyntjens, 1992; Simon Turner, 2010). The government equally set in place a commission meant to encourage the return of Burundian refugees. Rather than redressing despoiled land, it

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<sup>95</sup> The mémoire de licence (a substantial undergraduate thesis) of Philibert Nkurunziza includes testimony of several people who acted to save others from both initial riots and from the army during this “crise” (P. Nkurunziza, 2016, pp. 59-65). As Jefremovas (1995) argues (in the context of the Rwandan genocide), such stories counter narratives of irreconcilable ethnic identification and hatred, and provide “seeds of hope” (p. 28).

<sup>96</sup> Few participants from my research were from northern Burundi, and, of those from the region, few were still in Burundi at the time (having fled and not returned since 1972). My research thus includes few experiences from this period. The stories shared largely focused on flight. They did not recount details of violence in the region, nor did I ask direct questions about the violence at the time (see Chapter 3). One participant who lived in northern Burundi recounts fleeing to Rwanda at the time. Rather than living in camps, they went to churches, which built them accommodation and brought them food. Some of those staying at the church went to the hills to look for work as day labourers (Interview, Tanzania, 2018). Another fled within Burundi, receiving rides from strangers to reach a region where he had family (Interview, Tanzania, 2018).

<sup>97</sup> With equal numbers of Hutu and Tutsi (but no Twa or other members), the commission was tasked with debating Burundian history, but were expressly not to do so from the perspectives of their own positionality (Ndabashinze, 2021).

<sup>98</sup> The charter does not specifically address the crimes of the past, but refers vaguely to suffering and “déchirements” (tearings) and divisions, insisting that Burundi has always had a common heritage, without ethnic distinctions, and that it’s on this basis that unity should be built (République du Burundi, 1991). On February 5, 1991, Burundians voted in favour of the Charter of National Unity in a referendum (though the secrecy of the vote is questionable) (Reyntjens, 1992). It was adopted into law, and remains so (République du Burundi, 1991).

suggested attributing “terres encore disponibles” (still available land) to repatriates (Kohlhagen, 2011, p. 55). Returns from Tanzania increased.

To the north, although the Rwandan regime appeared to be undergoing slow changes towards political liberalization and regarding refugees, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) began an attack from Uganda, beginning a war in Rwanda in October, 1990.<sup>99</sup> Militarization, political repression, and targeted killing of Tutsi and other political opponents increased within Rwanda over the following years (Des Forges, 1999; C. Newbury, 1995).<sup>100</sup>

Burundi also faced attacks in November, 1991, in both Bujumbura, and in the North-West. Palipehutu forces initially attacked military patrols and camps, and then, as the events grew more disordered, targeted civil servants, civilians, and Rwandan refugees.<sup>101</sup> Yet again, army repression was indiscriminate in some areas, including summary executions in detention centres and military barracks (Daley, 2007b; Thibon, 1992). And again, the number of people killed remains inexact and politicized, though as many as one to two thousand people may have been killed in the repression (Daley, 2007b; Thibon, 1992). Tens of thousands of Burundi were displaced, with nearly 40,000 people seeking refuge in Rwanda and Zaire (UNHCR, 2021b).<sup>102</sup> In this context, with National Unity the slogan of the state, Burundi prepared for democratic elections after over four decades of Uprona-rule.

The 1990's: From “National Unity” to Genocide and War

Le 1er juin 1993 restera ainsi une date mémorable dans l'histoire de Notre pays.  
Ce jour-là ont été organisées pour la première fois dans l'histoire du Burundi des élections libres, pluralistes et transparentes destinées à doter le pays des

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<sup>99</sup> Rwandan Tutsi refugees who had been exiled in Uganda for decades, faced increasing xenophobia in their country of refuge and exclusion from citizenship, even as they had supported president Museveni's armed struggle for power (Mamdani, 2001; C. Newbury, 1995; Uvin, 2009).

<sup>100</sup> With war ongoing in the north, the Rwandan government nevertheless also proposed a new constitution in 1991, and legalized multiparty politics that year. However they did so in the context of war. With international pressure and support, Rwandan peace negotiations were hosted in Tanzania. The Arusha Peace Accords were signed in 1993. This agreement was meant to bring in a transitional government supported by the presence a UN Peacekeeping mission, yet its implementation hindered by numerous delays. (On shortcomings of the Arusha Accords, see C. Newbury, 1995).

<sup>101</sup> This attack may have been planned to challenge the state's ability to uphold the just-adopted National Unity Charter (Thibon, 1992).

<sup>102</sup> 13 293 Burundian refugees (primarily from 1972) had remained in Zaire in 1990. The records show 41,243 in 1991, meaning nearly 30,000 people had fled to Zaire. An increase of about 10,000 Burundian refugees was recorded in Rwanda, reaching a total of approximately 33,000 with the previously registered refugees.

institutions réellement démocratiques. La manière positive dont les différents protagonistes ont accueilli le verdict populaire montre que désormais le peuple burundais est convaincu que seule la voie de la démocratie, notamment dans son étape électorale qui consacre la volonté populaire et confère la légitimité, est la seule appropriée pour résoudre les problèmes connexes à l'accès et à la gestion du pouvoir./ Du reste, les élections législatives du 29 Juin 1993 devaient confirmer le voeu d'un peuple désireux désormais de vivre dans la paix.<sup>103</sup> (Ndadaye, 1993, p. 6)

The elections of June 1, 1993, are largely considered the first democratic presidential elections in Burundi. The results are framed as a surprise to Buyoya and Uprona.<sup>104</sup> Melchior Ndadaye won a 65% majority in the presidential election, and his party Frodebu (Front pour la Démocratie au Burundi) received 71% of the popular vote in the parliamentary elections which followed (UNSC, 1996, p. 23). His campaign had centred on the fight against injustice, without overtly raising the issue of ethnic discrimination (P.-C. Mbonimpa, 2017). At the time, the election of Burundi's first Hutu president was taken as an indicator of a transition to democracy, and a return to civilian leadership after decades of military rule (Guichaoua, 2022). For many Hutu he was seen as liberator (P.-C. Mbonimpa, 2017).

Ndadaye was sworn in on July 10, and offered general amnesty for vague (but understood) past events (Guichaoua, 2022). The first three months of Ndadaye's presidency were marked by harmony, but that some tensions remained notable (UNSC, 1996).<sup>105</sup> The government questioned key contracts and concessions allocated under previous regimes, and sought to levy taxes on a Free-Trade Zone linked to the processing of minerals from Congo (Daley, 2007b; UNSC, 1996). This confronted the economic interests and capitalist accumulation of established elites, including the army. The army was instructed to revise the admission

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<sup>103</sup> The first of June, 1993, will remain a memorable date in the history of Our country. That day, for the first time in the history of Burundi, free, pluralist and transparent elections were organised, which were destined to provide the country truly democratic institutions. The positive way in which the varied protagonists welcomed the popular verdict shows that from now on the people of Burundi are convinced that only the path of democracy, notably it's electoral process that consecrates the popular will and confers legitimacy, is the only [path] appropriate to resolve the problems connected to access and management of power. What's more, the legislative elections of June 29, 1993, confirmed the wish of a people who desire to live in peace from now on.

<sup>104</sup> Indeed, because Uprona membership was quasi-mandatory for public employment or advancement, many founding members of Frodebu were also formally members of Uprona (P.-C. Mbonimpa, 2017, p. 36)

<sup>105</sup> A coup attempt by army officers on July 3 aimed to prevent Ndadaye from ascending to office (UNSC, 1996).

criteria, to begin to change its discriminatory composition (P.-C. Mbonimpa, 2017; UNSC, 1996).

The transition encouraged thousands refugees who had been in exile since 1972 to return. Like Buyoya, Ndadaye recommended settling those whose land was occupied in peripheral regions or on unoccupied land.<sup>106</sup> However some newly elected Frodebu local authorities supported expulsions (UNSC, 1996). Within the haut cadres (high ranks) of Frodebu, Léonard Nyangoma, the Minister of Public Administration and Refugee Repatriation, believed refugees should be able to regain their land (Sikuyavuga & Kaburahe, 2013). Some of the occupants had themselves been displaced to these plots with the development and re-parcelling schemes of the prior decade. Many families were violently displaced by returnees. With nowhere to go, several hundred headed to Bujumbura in September, 1993, in order to protest the situation, mobilized by Uprona with the goal of weakening the new regime (Kohlhagen, 2011; Sikuyavuga & Kaburahe, 2013).

In early October, Ndadaye gave a speech at the United Nations, expressing the hope and optimism of this period, and the belief that the peaceful transition of power demonstrated true change for the people of Burundi (see the excerpt above) (Ndadaye, 1993). Less than three weeks later, on October 21, he was assassinated at a military camp during an attempted coup.<sup>107</sup> The president and vice president of the national assembly, and several other high ranking party members were killed (P.-C. Mbonimpa, 2017).<sup>108</sup> The assassinations crushing for those who had supported and known Ndadaye and the others killed: “Le ciel nous tombait sur la tête! C’était la catastrophe [...] Nous étions tous anéantis, notre rêve pour le changement s’effondrait.” (P.-C. Mbonimpa, 2017, p. 41).<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Kohlhagan (2011) speculates that perhaps this decision may have conversely motivated some refugees to return in order to try to reclaim their land.

<sup>107</sup> The army framed the coup and assassinations as an operation by rebellious soldiers, however the planning participation of highly ranked officers and the presidential guard seems evident (Daley, 2007b; Sikuyavuga & Kaburahe, 2013; UNSC, 1996). More recently, the former president Buyoya (in absentia, while in exile), and eighteen other people including several retired military officers, were convicted in relation to the death of Ndadaye. Most were sentenced to life imprisonment (Kwizera, 2020b). Comment on these trials is beyond the scope of this thesis.

<sup>108</sup> Other cabinet members, including the Prime Minister, Sylvie Kinigi, sought refuge in the French Embassy (P.-C. Mbonimpa, 2017; Sikuyavuga & Kaburahe, 2013). Kinigi became the de facto head of state for several months, until the legislative assembly elected Cyprien Ntaryamira as president, with a prime minister from Uprona.

<sup>109</sup> Translation: The sky fell on our heads! It was a catastrophe [...] We were all destroyed, our dream for change had crumbled.

Hearing the announcement of Ndadaye's assassination on national radio, Hutu militants blamed Uprona, which they equated with all Tutsi (P.-C. Mbonimpa, 2017). Predominantly beginning in the north-west, tens of thousands of Tutsi were massacred in different regions across the country, including students taken from schools and families in their homes (Amnesty International, 1995; Mercier, Ngenzebuke, & Verwimp, 2020; UNSC, 1996). Hutu who were seen as supporting in Uprona were also targeted in some places. Roads were blocked across the country, to slow the arrival of the military. In less than two months, as many as 25,000-50,000 Tutsi were massacred in genocidal violence, recognized as such by a UN Security Council Commission (Daley, 2007b; E. Nkurunziza, 2013; UNSC, 1996). The army response killed 30-80,000, predominantly Hutu people, with no effort by military authorities to prevent indiscriminate retaliation (Daley, 2007b; Lemarchand, 2009; UNSC, 1996).

Very few research participants shared details of this time, usually sketching the events surrounding the conflict and their flight in very general terms. One research participant summarized the general context thus,

[...] the killings in 1993, it was at the time of Ndadaye Melchior. Because, the Hutu people knew that Ndadaye is also Hutu, and because they knew the president of the republic was therefore Hutu, they tried to kill Tutsi in revenge. So, that's the moment when Hutu started to kill Tutsi. But unfortunately, because at that time, the soldiers of the republic were Tutsi, it means that they took the decision to kill Hutu. It's then that everyone took flight, whether they were Hutu or Tutsi, because there was the problem of killing, so everyone took flight (Uruwayesu, Tanzania, 2018)

Notably, while the above account uses broad ethnic categories, as I often do in this chapter (relying on secondary sources which do the same), many personal accounts complicate an essentialized and over-simplified binary ethnic narrative.<sup>110</sup>

In April, 1994, Burundi's president Cyprien Ntaryamira was killed en route from talks in Dar es Salaam, when the plane in which he and the Rwandan president were travelling was shot down in Kigali. While ethnic violence and repression had also been increasing in Rwanda, this

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<sup>110</sup> For example Pierre Claver Mbonimpa has recounted how his mother, a Tutsi, was killed in an IDP site by a Tutsi army officer, because of his own involvement in Frodebu (P.-C. Mbonimpa, 2017). In another account, a Hutu civilians sustained substantial machete injuries, trying to protect Tutsi neighbours from an rebel group attack (Longman, 1998, p. 139). The politicization of ethnicity and divisive militarization of society did not represent essentialized binary atavistic hatred, as Jefremovas (1995) demonstrates in the case of Rwanda, contra common media representations (Myers, Klak, & Koehl, 1996). Notably, Batwa are often excluded from ethnic accounts of the victims of war and genocidal violence, though they were not unaffected (Vandeginste, 2014)

event was the moment déclencheur (trigger) beginning the genocide against Tutsi in Rwanda. While the dynamics of genocide varied from region to region, among many other factors, the killing of Ndadaye in Burundi played a role in increasing anti-Tutsi racism and Hutu radicalism by political elites in Rwanda, and fomenting fear and differentiation (Des Forges, 1999; Jefremovas, 1997; Lemarchand, 2009; Longman, 2020; C. Newbury, 1995; Uvin, 1998).<sup>111</sup> As many as 500,000-800,000 Tutsi may have been killed in one hundred days (Des Forges, 1999; Verpoorten, 2005). Tens of thousands more Rwandans were killed by the RPF from 1994-1995, both prior to and after they took power, ending the genocide in July.

In Burundi, Sylvestre Ntibantunganye, the president of the national assembly, became president. While negotiations between parties continued, even reaching a “convention de gouvernement” to share power between Uprona and Frodebu, rival factions forming new parties created further instability. Notably, Leonard Nyangoma created the Conseil National de Défense de la Démocratie (CNDD)(UNSC, 1996), while new predominantly Tutsi parties also splintered from Uprona.

That year, Bujumbura had become nearly mono-ethnic in many neighbourhoods. Tutsi youth militia cooperated with the military, killing and expelling Hutu residents (with the exception of wealthy and Muslim-majority neighbourhoods) (UNSC, 1996). Called *Sans Echechs* (without failure) and *Sans Defait* (undefeated) the youth militia were in many ways a new iteration of the JRR (S. Bigirimana, 2021, p. 231; Hajayandi, 2021; Lemarchand, 2002). The youth wing of Frodebu, Jedebu (Jeunesse Démocratique du Burundi) participated in the ethnic cleansing of Kinama and Kamenge (peripheral, predominantly Hutu neighbourhoods of Bujumbura)(Berckmoes, 2015). These groups demonstrated the militarization of society and particularly of youth, and the tragic corollary was the frequent targeting of youth in massacres at schools of all levels (Amnesty International, 1995).<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> The 1972 genocide in Burundi had also been a factor in massacres in Rwanda, and Habyarimana’s rise to power through a coup the following year, and Lemarchand argues that it remained a fomenting factor for hate and violence (Lemarchand, 2002, 2009)

<sup>112</sup> Some such massacres were committed by fellow students, including at secondary schools and the university. A massacre of Hutu students by Tutsi peers at the University of Burundi caused many Hutu students to abandon the campuses, with some joining the Hutu armed struggle (Amnesty International, 1995; S. Bigirimana, 2021). Both the prior and current presidents joined CNDD-FDD after the massacres at the University of Burundi (S. Bigirimana, 2021). Other attacks by armed rebel groups targeted primary schools during exams, and a minor seminary where students refused to separate based on ethnicity and were massacred in their dorms (Amnesty International, 1995; Bukuru, 2004; Mikalachki, 2021). Many

CNDD formed an armed branch, the Forces de Défense de la Démocratie (FDD), attacking both the army and Tutsi civilians, while the army responded again and again with indiscriminate attacks (UNSC, 1996). The largest of the armed rebel groups (despite later divisions creating new factions) CNDD-FDD largely operated from Tanzania and DRC, while the Palipehutu-FNL (Forces Nationales de Liberation) primarily operated from Uvira, DRC (near the border with Bujumbura). These groups became involved in the Congo war, as did the Burundian army, supporting Burundian Tutsi militia (HRW, 1997a, 1997b; Longman, 1998). Political assassinations were common, with many targeting Frodebu leaders who had remained in the country, such as provincial governors (Longman, 1998).

In this unstable environment (which the army played a significant role in creating), Pierre Buyoya would again take power in a military coup in July 1996.<sup>113</sup> Buyoya embodied a military “strongman” that racist and patriarchal imaginaries deemed necessary to govern unruly Africans (Daley, 2007b). While formally participating in peace talks, he expanded militarization (Longman, 1998).<sup>114</sup> Buyoya stated he aimed to end violence and restore security, but quickly directed the army to the massive and violent forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of ordinary rural Burundians (Longman, 1998).

Warfare continued. The capital, now predominantly Tutsi, regained some calm. However violence increased immensely in rural areas (Longman, 1998). Just as colonial “pacification” of resistance had targeted ordinary people with indiscriminate violence, the Burundian army’s “pacification” once again did the same, creating massive displacement, dispossession and death. Rebel attacks continued, killing civilians and plundering. The army targeted people perceived as supporting the rebellion, the armed Hutu opposition targeted people perceived as supporting the army, and all armed groups killed indiscriminately, used sexual violence, destroyed homes, and plundered. From 1997 onwards, disagreement between Palipehutu and FDD, created new dynamics of violence. Palipehutu opposed CNDD’s participation in peace negotiations. Armed

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attacks also took place at churches, killing congregants, as well at crowded market places (Amnesty International, 1995; Longman, 1998).

<sup>113</sup> While African leaders condemned the illegal seizure of power, Western powers were largely ambivalent and even supportive of his return to power, despite his likely participation and leadership in the coup against Ndadaye, and the 1988 genocidal violence (Daley, 2007b)

<sup>114</sup> Mandatory military service was introduced for students wishing to continue to secondary and post-secondary programs, and “civil defense” programs trained and armed Tutsi civilians (Longman, 1998). Military spending vastly outstripped health and education expenditures, and included foreign support from the French government, up until mid-1996 (Daley, 2007b)

fighting between Hutu opposition groups led to hundreds of civilian deaths, and displaced tens of thousands of Burundians (Longman, 1998, p. 136).

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The war would last for over fifteen years. Approximately 300,000 Burundians were killed. More than 500,000 people sought refuge in neighbouring countries. And at the peak of internal displacement 800,000 people were recognized as displaced within Burundi—twelve percent of the population (Bouka & Nyabola, 2016, p. 3; Uvin, 2007, p. 39; Zeender & McCallin, 2013, p. 76).

Ordinary Burundi suffered immensely, and endured. Violence was unequally geographically distributed and varied over time—not all areas were equally affected. Whenever and wherever possible, ordinary life necessarily continued.

#### Displacement and Regional Refuge in the 1990's

The enduring violence in the region created and extended displacement for over a million Burundians, while the Rwandan war and genocide, and wars in Zaïre/DRC, and Uganda, displaced millions more, within and across borders. As ideologies, aid and trade, peace efforts and violence, combatants and refugees all crossed borders, the contexts cannot be disentangled (Mworoha & Mukuri, 2004). These places are interwoven in the life trajectories of many Burundian refugees who participated in this research. For example, many Burundians who had sought refuge in Zaire and Rwanda, whether in (or before or after) 1972, or following 1993, would later flee subsequent conflicts in those countries. Many of the Burundians fleeing other countries ended up in Tanzania in the mid-1990's (Daley, 2007b; Milner, 2009; G. Nkurunziza, 2011; Uvin, 2009). These border-crossing trajectories are further outlined in chapters V and VI, however the broader context in which they are situated is briefly outlined here.

#### *Internal Displacement and Regroupement*

With a population of less than 6 million people in the early 1990's, the displacement of more than 800,000 people within Burundi during the war violently reshaped both cities and the countryside (Bouka & Nyabola, 2016, p. 3; Longman, 1998). In the countryside, patterns of displacement created securitized camps which were largely (though not exclusively) ethnically divided.

First, particularly in northern and central Burundi, camps of internally displaced people (IDPs) formed, by Tutsi fleeing the massacres which followed the killing of Ndadaye in 1993, and rebel attacks in the following years (Longman, 1998; Purdeková, 2017; Tegegne, 1994a). Many Tutsi IDPs feared returning to their homes, which was justified when at least one group who did return in 1995 were killed (Longman, 1998, p. 162). In this early period, UNHCR also estimated that at least 10% of IDP camp residents were Twa, while 5% were Hutu in mixed marriages (Tegegne, 1994a, p. 2).<sup>115</sup> These camps were often adjacent to military posts, or in existing infrastructure such as schools, administrative centres, hospitals, health centres, etc. (Longman, 1998; Tegegne, 1994a). In 1995, UNHCR enumerated nearly 100,000 displaced people in 40 sites in northern Burundi, many of which were crowded, and had poor sanitation and frequent disease outbreaks. Consequently, UNHCR participated in site selection and planning to re-accommodate tens of thousands of people into fewer camps with improved infrastructure (Tegegne, 1994a).

Human Rights Watch (HRW) reports that the army promoted the militarization of civilians and supported ethnicized militias in some camps (Longman, 1998). Despite or because of the connection to the military, they remained sites targeted by the rebellion. For example, in July 1996, CNDD-FDD combattants attacked an IDP camp in Bugendana commune, killing as many as 648 Tutsi IDPs (A. Mbazumutima, 2020; Purdeková, 2017). Following the entrenched pattern, the army attacked (predominantly Hutu) civilians in the area outside the camp killing two to three hundred people (Daley, 2007b, p. 112). Although supposedly offering security, HRW records that in many IDP camps soldiers raped Tutsi women and girls, sometimes in exchange for food and shelter (Longman, 1998, p. 109).

More rarely, predominantly Hutu and ethnically mixed IDP camps formed. For example, Hutu fleeing urban displacement from and within Bujumbura created camps in peripheral neighbourhoods and the the areas surrounding Bujumbura, often at churches (Longman, 1998). In some places, the population joined existing IDP camps when faced with FDD attacks. Some

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<sup>115</sup> As Batwa (or Twa) are often overlooked in binary ethnic analyses, it was difficult to find data on how and why they may have been targeted in violence, and thus sought protection in IDP camps, however given their small proportion of the population, it seems substantial that they were 10% of IDPs in 1994. This statistic, and the lack of much additional information on Batwa during the civil war, points to an obvious lacuna in research on violence and displacement in Burundi (See, however (Quétu, 2020) on Twa identity, including in relation to discussions of violence and reconciliation).

such camps were subject to expulsions by the army, and Hutu civilians were forced to return to areas of insecurity, without state or humanitarian assistance (Longman, 1998). FDD also attacked mixed camps, including a camp at a Pentecostal church in Makamba (Longman, 1998, p. 136).

Primarily Hutu camps also emerged due to violent state securitization of the Hutu population. In 1995, 6-7,000 repatriates “provenant des différents exodes de ces 30 dernières années” (from the different exoduses of the past thirty years) were stuck in a camp in Kirundo province as military authorities did not provide secure corridors for their onward mobilities (Dross, 1995, p. 3). Many did not have identified land to which to return, and the government did nothing to address this. In 1996 state displacement of Hutu civilians exponentially increased, beyond the encampment of returnees. The governor in Karuzi (a province in northern Burundi), instigated the violent encampment of over 100,000 people (Longman, 1998, p. 26).<sup>116</sup> Termed “regroupement” camps, the policy was accelerated and expanded following Buyoya’s coup, with camps formed in seven provinces by 1998.<sup>117</sup>

Regroupement camps were framed by the government as a form of “protection” against rebels, and for “re-education” but were frequently termed “concentration camps” by observers tracing the similarities with notorious colonial anti-insurgency tactics in Algeria and Kenya (Longman, 1998, pp. 33, 43, 63). The process of regroupement was violent: “the armed forces killed, raped, and tortured thousands of Hutu civilians and pillaged and destroyed countless homes” (Longman, 1998, p. 33). Some people were forced to set fire to their own homes: The military evidently undertook the destruction of houses to prevent those civilians ordered to regroup from returning to their homes and also to eliminate potential hiding places for FDD combatants.” (Longman, 1998, pp. 54-55).<sup>118</sup>

Living conditions within the camps were terrible. People had been unable to bring anything, and almost no infrastructure was provided for sanitation. People were largely unable to

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<sup>116</sup> In formal humanitarian statistics, such as UNHCR statistics, regroupés and IDPs are counted together as internally displaced people, as in Appendix F.

<sup>117</sup> In addition to Kirundo, camps formed in Bubanza, Cibitoke, Kayanza, Muramvya, Bujumbura-Rural, and Bururi (Longman, 1998); Where regroupement was not used, the army used “extensive repression and violence to subdue the population” (Longman, 1998, p. 30)

<sup>118</sup> “The number of destroyed buildings whose ruins are visible when driving through Bubanza, Kayanza, Karuzi, Muramvya, and Bururi is astounding. In many rural areas, not a single building remains standing. Houses have not simply been burned, but walls have been demolished, so that nothing is left but piles of rubble” (Longman, 1998, p. 56).

cultivate or harvest from their fields. Food was inadequate. Disease outbreaks were common. Mortality rates were incredibly high (Longman, 1998).

*Regroupés* (the people encamped in regroupement camps) were unable to leave this form of carceral containment. People found outside the camps were presumed guilty by their location, and killed, including children and elderly people who were obviously not combatants—and who may themselves have been hiding from CNDD attacks in marshes and forests (Longman, 1998). In some cases, after the short deadline to assemble in a camp, the military conducted “cleanup operations, in which they systematically swept the hillsides, pillaging, burning and destroying homes, and capturing or killing anyone they encountered” (Longman, 1998, p. 48). Violence by soldiers continued in and around the camps including “rape, torture, extrajudicial execution, and pillage” (Longman, 1998, p. 33). Educated people were often killed, as well as anyone accused of participating in or supporting the rebellion. In some areas camps were formed following FDD attacks. Camps were also subject to attacks by FDD. In one case when the FDD pillaged a camp, but did not kill regroupés, the armed forces retaliated by killing at least fifteen camp residents. In other instances FDD burned houses in camps, and did kill residents (Longman, 1998).

In part due to international condemnation, the government began to close the camps by 1998 (Longman, 1998; Zeender & McCallin, 2013). In some cases, as larger camps were being closed they formed new, smaller dispersed camps. As camps closed in the north new camps opened in the south (Longman, 1998). The last regroupement camps were closed in 2000 (Zeender & McCallin, 2013, p. 76).

Less formally recognized forms of displacement were also widespread. In regions where attacks were threatened or ongoing people slept outside of their homes, in fields, bush, or swamps, afraid that their houses would be targeted in night attacks (Interviews, Tanzania, 2017-8) (Longman, 1998, pp. 121, 141). Makeshift camps in forests were unlikely to have been counted in formal enumeration of displacement (Longman, 1998, p. 161). Many Hutu left insecure areas to live with extended family or others in areas with less direct violence throughout the country, and are unable to return home (Longman, 1998, pp. 107, 157). Many people were “involuntarily immobile” (S. C. Lubkemann, 2008), unable to flee because of military or rebel control of roads and targeting of people on the move (Interviews, Tanzania, 2017-8). Poverty increased in areas affected by violence (Mercier et al., 2020). Areas controlled by CNDD were subject to extensive pillage, and malnutrition was frequent and often deadly, with people seeking

aid at health and feeding centres in other regions when able to flee (Longman, 1998, pp. 105, 162).

Throughout this period, Burundi also hosted refugees. Over 200,000 refugees arrived from Rwanda in July-August 1994, and were hosted in seven refugee camps, assessed and planned by UNHCR (Tegegne, 1994a). While around a quarter of these refugees attempted to continue to Tanzania in March, 1995, the border was closed to them and they thus returned to camps in Burundi (Dross, 1995).

*Rwanda: From one refuge to another*

Following the assassination of Ndadaye, and the beginning of the war in Burundi, the number of Burundian refugees in Rwanda increased ten-fold, from 25,000 in 1992, to 250,000 in 1993 (UNHCR, 2021b). By April, 1994, over 400,000 Burundian refugees were living in Rwanda, predominantly in camps in the south (C. Newbury, 1995, p. 16). By the end of 1994, following the genocide against Tutsi in Rwanda and subsequent RPF violence, only 6000 Burundian refugees remained (UNHCR, 2021b).

Outlining all of the camps created is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but some examples illustrate the context. Initially, almost 16,000 Burundians were registered in Cyangungu, bordering both Burundi and Zaire (Tegegne, 1994b). Camps were established near the Burundi border at Bugarama and Bweyeye. Approximately 15,000 Burundians arrived in Nyakizu, in Butare (present-day Huye)—approximately one-quarter of the population at the time—and a large camp was created at Uwimfizi (Des Forges, 1999, p. 251). Many Burundians stayed with Rwandan families, while others established themselves in towns and cities. Some life history interviewees noted that after the initial challenges seeking refuge and the establishment of camps, they were able to seek paid work in the surrounding areas to provide for themselves and their families, however this period was short-lived.

In April, soon after genocide began and violence increased across the country, tens of thousands of Burundian refugees again took flight, returning to Burundi, or heading to Zaire or Tanzania, depending on their proximity to each country and the routes available to them. In my interviews, Basabose recounted “...some [Burundian refugees] thought of returning to Burundi, others went to Congo, and others came here in Tanzania, and I was among them. [...] We arrived somewhere par hazard (by chance), even those who arrived in Congo’ they didn’t think of going to Congo, they left and after they found themselves in Congo” (Interview, 2018, Tanzania).

Rwandans also left in even higher numbers at this time, so that many Burundians travelled together with Rwandans, to all three countries.<sup>119</sup>

Many Burundian refugees had experienced violence by the predominantly Tutsi Burundian army, and researchers cite the mobilization and training of Burundian Hutu refugees as contributing to increased politicized ethnic hatred preceding the genocide in Rwanda in the areas they arrived (Des Forges, 1999; C. Newbury, 1995). Despite protestations by the UN, military training was common in or near camps (Des Forges, 1999). In several places hundreds, if not thousands of Burundian refugees are recorded as having participated in the genocide.<sup>120</sup> For example, two hundred Burundians participated in a massacre at a church where Tutsi had been sheltering in Cyahinda, Nyakizu. Many more Burundians were recorded as participating another massacre at Kansi church and school (Des Forges, 1999, pp. 265; 312-263). In Butare, the prefect attempted to reduce the participation of Burundian refugees in armed violence by ensuring that the tens of thousands who remained in the camps as late as May, 1994, received adequate provisions (Des Forges, 1999, p. 301). Subsequently, after the RPF took power, some Burundians who remained in Rwanda were targeted by the RPF soldiers, including a group sheltering at the Nzangwa mosque in Bugesera (Des Forges, 1999, p. 482). Around 15,000 Burundians repatriated from Rwanda in 1995, following the closure of a camp at Kibeho, with most continuing to Zaïre almost immediately (Dross, 1995).<sup>121</sup> The displacement of those already displaced continued (*endured*) from Rwanda back to Burundi and on to Zaïre, where they joined other refugees who would soon be displaced yet again.

*Zaïre/DRC: From one war to another*

In 1992, following encouragement of refugees to return to Burundi, only 10,000 Burundian refugees remained in Zaïre. From 1993-4, about 170,000 further Burundians sought refuge in Zaïre (UNHCR, 2021b). In early 1994, approximately 46,000 Burundian refugees were

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<sup>119</sup> Basabose noted that some Rwandans brought goats that were slaughtered en route, and that the food was shared so that his family was also able to arrive to Tanzania (Interview, 2018, Tanzania)

<sup>120</sup> In addition to refugees, in Burundi some armed civilians patrolled the river marking the border, returning and massacring Tutsi attempting to flee (Des Forges, 1999, p. 258).

<sup>121</sup> While not noted in the report by Dross (1995), This may be the same Kibeho camp where tens of thousands of Rwandan IDPs had sought refuge during the RPF advancement, at which 2000 Rwandan IDPs were massacred by the RPA (The former RPF became the Rwandan Patriotic Army when they took power) (Kleine-Ahlbrandt, 1998). Perhaps both Rwandan IDPs and Burundian refugees had been mixed at this camp, as they subsequently were at other camps within Rwanda (Kleine-Ahlbrandt, 1998)

recorded in Uvira, just across the border from Bujumbura (Tegegne, 1994b). Some were “scattered among the local population” while others lived in camps close to the border, which UNHCR evaluated as having substantial health and security concerns (Tegegne, 1994b). Near Uvira and Fizi, the camps were relatively small (at most a few thousand people), including Biriba, Kibogoye (which had been used in 1991, without prior planning), Kilimoni, Kiliba (at a Catholic mission school), Ndunda, Rwenena, Ngendo. UNHCR planned the consolidation of Burundian refugees in fewer, planned sites—though soon after they were contending with a much larger number of refugees from Rwanda, including re-displaced Burundian refugees among them.

In July 1994, approximately 850,000 refugees crossed from Rwanda in Zaire, primarily into the Goma region, “the largest refugee influx (in the shortest period) ever witnessed in UNHCR’s 43-year history” (Sarem-Kalali, 1994, p. 16). First three, and then two more officially recognized camps were formed, as well as smaller “sprawling, overcrowded, and chaotic” settlements in North Kivu (Sarem-Kalali, 1994, p. 16). The large, recognized camps included Lac Vert, Mugunga, Kibumba, and Katale, some of which had over 200,000 residents, and which UNHCR saw as “urban entities which are completely out of control” (Sarem-Kalali, 1995, p. 5). 50,000 refugees died of cholera alone in the first two years (Pottier, 1996, p. 428). Further Burundians sought refuge in June and July 1996, when Burundian army attacks killed civilians in Mpanda commune (Longman, 1998, p. 159).

UNHCR began to promote repatriation almost immediately after the RPF victory, feeling it was “the only rational option,” and because they simply “could not cope” with the cholera epidemic (Pottier, 1996, p. 428). To refugees, the emphasis on return demonstrated humanitarians’ ignorance of the dynamics of Great Lakes region politics. UNHCR promoted return without understanding the fear and insecurity many refugees felt towards the RPA, misinformation within the camps, or concerns around land occupation by returned Tutsi refugees (among other factors) (Pottier, 1996, p. 421; 427; 428).

In October, 1996, Ugandan and Rwandan forces invaded eastern Zaire in what is known as “the First Congo War” (or “Africa’s World War”) (Pottier, 1999). The AFDL<sup>122</sup> was supported by the Burundian government, Angola, as well as Congolese dissidents (HRW, 1997a,

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<sup>122</sup> Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo-Zaïre ; trans : Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire

1997b) (Pottier, 1999). While the causes were complex,<sup>123</sup> the RPA in particular sought to pursue genocidaires who had fled and who were continuing to organize in exile, including in refugee camps. The AFDL attacked several camps in October, 1996. As many as 400,000 people joined the 200,000 already living at Mugunga camp (Pottier, 1999). After coming to power through the invasion, president Laurent-Desiré Kabila ordered that the camps close. UNHCR informed refugees that returning to Rwanda was now their only way to escape the war. They stopped all aid including food distributions and services within the camp but made them available to returnees in Rwanda (Pottier, 1999).<sup>124</sup> The international community and humanitarian agencies largely celebrated this “voluntary repatriation,” covering up evidence that tens of thousands of refugees were “missing” and many massacred in attacks on the camps (Pottier, 1999, pp. 151, 166). Those who did return had been violently deported.

Camps of Burundian refugees in Uvira and Fizi were also attacked by the AFDL, because of the presence of FDD within the camps (Longman, 1998; Rutinwa, 1999, p. 13). Some of those who survived fled back into Burundi, and were again attacked by the Burundian army, fled again to camps in Zaire, and were soon repatriated again (Longman, 1998, pp. 159-160). The border was effectively closed to Burundian refugees in 1996 (Rutinwa, 1999). Many of those repatriated in this period were forced into regroupement camps (Longman, 1998, p. 31).<sup>125</sup> Other survivors crossed the lake to Tanzania, including several people interviewed in this research, who had already been refugees since 1972 (Interviews, 2017-8).

#### Tanzania

In the 1990’s Tanzanian refugee policy, like that of many countries in the world, changed significantly (Adisa, 1995; Chaulia, 2003; Milner, 2013; Simon Turner, 2010). By this time Tanzania had shifted away from its earlier ujamaa (African socialist) policy, which had been part of the basis for its hospitality to refugees (Kweka, 2007). In 1986 Tanzania adopted a Structural Adjustment Plan. Average Tanzanians faced many new difficulties with the withdrawal of state services, shifting government priorities to its own citizens (Adisa, 1995; Kweka, 2007; Loren B.

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<sup>123</sup> The war led to the overturning of Mobutu’s long dictatorship and his replacement by Kabila. The causes and consequences of this war (and the subsequent Congo war) are beyond the scope of this dissertation.

<sup>124</sup> While a cease fire and return corridor was negotiated, it was not implemented. The camps emptied over a three-day exodus (Pottier, 1999).

<sup>125</sup> FDD attacked one such camp in Bubanza in 1997 (Longman, 1998, p. 134)

Landau, 2003; Milner, 2009; Ongpin, 2008). The end of the Cold War decreased international responsibility sharing and benefits of hosting as the geopolitical importance of refugee populations declined (Chimni, 1998). Lack of aid from the international community in this period is a significant factor in reducing the perceived hosting capacities of states around the world, and increasing pressure for repatriation, in what UNHCR had termed “the decade of repatriation” (Chimni, 1998). Until the end of 1993, the emphasis in Tanzanian refugee programming had been on return, with active repatriation programs for Burundians, Rwandans, and Mozambicans (Adisa, 1995). Many of the shifts in practice in this period were enshrined in the 1998 Refugees Act (repealing the earlier 1966 Act), explicitly moving away from an “open door” policy and seeking to deter “refugee influxes” (Kamanga, 2005).

By the end of the 1993, 245,000 Burundian refugees had arrived. Initially, there were 45-50 dispersed small encampments in Kagera and Kigoma provinces, varying greatly from secondary schools and churches, to “local villagers’ huts to roughly made grass/stick shafts” (Mposha, 1993, p. iii). Five thousand more Burundians lived in a stadium in Kigoma before their transfer to other camps (Andreini, 1994). Many moved back and forth to Burundi as the security situation allowed, particularly as many had lived near the border (Andreini, 1994).

At first, UNHCR, in discussion with the government, proposed a regrouping of people from the diverse sites into 12-15 agricultural settlements across the region, with up to three acres of land per household (Mposha, 1993, p. 6). Yet, despite this initial discussion, by the following year only four camps had been established at Lukole (Ngara), Kanembwa (Kibondo), Mtabila (Kasulu), and Kigwa, Tabora (Andreini, 1994).<sup>126</sup> This seems to mark the shift from somewhat integrated agricultural settlements (though still camps, with restrictions), to more limited and restricted spaces of shelter and aid—a decision that would soon become even more hardened.

During the genocide in Rwanda, in April 1994, over just two days approximately 170,000 people sought refuge in Tanzania, walking over a single bridge across the Kagera river which largely marks the Rwanda-Tanzania border (Adisa, 1995). People continued to arrive from Rwanda in the hundreds each day, including Burundians who had been refugees in Rwanda. By June 1994 200,000 resided at Benaco alone, a site designed for maximum of 100,000 people (Mposha & Petersen, 1994).

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<sup>126</sup> A primary school in Mukugwa sheltered Burundians in mixed-ethnicity marriages, separately from other refugees (Andreini, 1994).

Large camps near the border hosted hundreds of thousands of people, discouraging (though never effectively entirely stopping) agricultural activity, and implementing restrictions. Whitaker records that “[t]he idea, according to one official, was to make their stay in Tanzania as temporary as possible.” (Whitaker, 1999, p. 6). As in Zaïre, rhetoric and practice intended to encourage return, and discourage the building of longer-term homes in exile. At times, Tanzania closed the border with Burundi, most notably in 1995 when the Tanzanian military turned back approximately 40,000 Rwandan refugees and Burundians seeking refuge (Adisa, 1995; Long, 2010, 2012a; Rutinwa, 1999; Whitaker, 1999). Faced with formal closure, some refugees nevertheless managed to cross into Tanzania clandestinely (Whitaker, 1999, p. 6). In 1996, as violence in Burundi increased, the border was re-opened. Towards the end of year, with the beginning of war in Zaïre, Zairian (Congolese) refugees began to arrive across lake Tanganyika, including Burundians who had been refugees in Zaïre. In addition to prior refugees, and newly arriving refugees from Burundi, genocide and violence in neighbouring Zaïre and Rwanda meant that from 1993-2000 Tanzania hosted more than 1.5 million refugees (Ongpin, 2008, p. 14). However, as in Zaïre, the Rwandan refugees would not be hosted for long.

Soon after the Rwandan invasion of Zaïre forced mass return, Rwandan government envoys visited Tanzanian authorities in Dar es Salaam to compel the immediate return of refugees (Whitaker, 2002). In this tense situation, Tanzania complied, announcing in December 1996 that Rwandan refugees would have three weeks to return to Rwanda. In response, as many as two hundred thousand Rwandans left the camp and sought to walk to the border with Uganda or Kenya, or otherwise flee the camp. At first, UNHCR used food distributions to try to convince people to return to the camp. Ultimately the Tanzanian military forced their return, first to the camp—then surrounded by the army—and then to the border with Rwanda (Whitaker, 2002). This return of about half a million Rwandan refugees was clearly not voluntary, yet UNHCR was nevertheless “closely involved in planning and implementing the operation (Whitaker, 2002) p. 2. Tanzania was far from alone in expelling refugees, with more than twenty expulsions from other countries in 1996 alone, and the international community provided no substantial critique (Chimni, 2004; Whitaker, 1999, 2002).

The trend of expulsion continued. In 1997 a “security crackdown” in the region bordering Rwanda and Burundi led to nearly 30,000 arrests of Burundians, Rwandans, and Congolese—with no advance warning for many who had been established in Tanzania for

decades (Nowrojee, 1999; Rutinwa, 1999, p. 12; Whitaker, 1999). About 2000 Rwandan Tutsi who had been established in Ngara since 1959 or the early 1960's were among those expelled—despite formal documentation and even citizenship (Rubagumya, 2017; Rutinwa, 1999). Burundians living in villages were also arrested and forced into the recently established camps, regardless of when or why they had arrived (Human Rights Watch, 1999; Nowrojee, 1999; Simon Turner, 2005a, 2010; Whitaker, 2002). Many were separated from family, including children, and lost all of their goods and belongings (Nowrojee, 1999). People with Tanzanian spouses were not spared, so that some Tanzanian women moved to the camps so as not to be separated from their Burundian husbands (Nowrojee, 1999). The move to stricter encampment, the expulsion of Rwandan refugees, and the “round-ups” in villages were explained in state discourse as responses to security and environmental degradation in the border region (Chaulia, 2003; Kamanga, 2005; Kweka, 2007; Nowrojee, 1999; Simon Turner, 2005a; Whitaker, 1999).

Technically, as in the older settlements, political activity was banned in camps, as is often the case as humanitarian aid seeks to continually reiterate an (impossibly) apolitical character (Hyndman, 2000; Simon Turner, 2005a). Nevertheless, the new camps (like the older settlements) were highly politicized spaces (Milner, 2013; Simon Turner, 2005a, 2010). As FDD were pushed out of Zaire during the war, they increasingly shifted to Tanzania (Longman, 1998, p. 181). Many interviewees suggested that CNDD-FDD, including Pierre Nkurunziza specifically, had received a minimum of tacit acceptance (through ignoring their activities) or even active support (as Tanzania had provided to many armed movements from other countries previously) (Interviews, Tanzania, 2017-8). The Burundian government also accused the Tanzanian government of being aligned with and supporting the rebellion (Longman, 1998). While formally criminalized in camps, armed groups actively taught their ideologies, recruited young people, and solicited or coerced financial and in-kind contributions in camps, in relation to the changing political dynamics in Burundi (Interviews, Tanzania, 2017-8; Burundi, 2014) (Simon Turner, 2010, 2016a). Competition between predominantly Hutu political and armed groups emerged in this period, creating new insecurities within camps, and changing the nature of the conflict in Burundi—especially after the Peace Accords and transitional government. Peacebuilding and “durable solutions”

In the late 1990's Tanzania hosted peace talks between Burundian political parties (but not all of the armed groups) in Arusha, Tanzania. Julius Nyerere led the mediation team, and was

later replaced by Nelson Mandela. Many different actors had very different ideas of what peace should look like in Burundi, and international donors contributing to the mediation process used their financial contributions to try to influence outcomes (Daley, 2006a, 2007a).

The Arusha Accords for Peace and Reconciliation in Burundi were signed in 2000 (Accord d'Arusha pour la Paix et la Réconciliation au Burundi, 2000). Beyond ethnic power sharing quotas for key institutions, term limits, and transitional governance guidelines, they also outlined principles for reconstruction, and the return and integration of sinistrés.<sup>127</sup> The Accords went even further in prescribing “economic development” as key to peacebuilding in Burundi, including the privatisation of national industries and improved environment for the private sector, supposedly to prevent ethnicized elite competition for control of the government and to promote development—a liberal-capitalist understanding of routes to peace (Accord d'Arusha pour la Paix et la Réconciliation au Burundi, 2000; Daley, 2006a, 2007b, 2013a, 2014; Weima, 2015). A new transitional constitution was adopted in January, 2002, installing a transitional “Government of National Unity” formed by both Uprona and Frodebu politicians. An African Union peacekeeping mission provided protection to political actors, including the alternating presidency (Guichaoua, 2022).

Contrary to common assertions in many media reports on Burundi (especially in and after 2015), the Arusha Accords themselves did not bring an end to conflict in Burundi. Rather, violence worsened in many regions of the country, before subsequent negotiations and ceasefires. Burundians continued to flee, and more sought refuge than returned until the beginning of 2002 (Zeender & McCallin, 2013, p. 76).

In 2003, the current ruling party, CNDD-FDD (*Conseil Nationale pour la Défense de la Démocratie-Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie* (National Council for Defence of Democracy-Force for the Defence of Democracy)), agreed to a cease-fire and became a recognized political party through the Pretoria agreement (Guichaoua, 2022). Their leader, Pierre Nkurunziza, became president through an indirect vote, following the elections in which CNDD-FDD won a majority of seats (Bouka, 2017; Guichaoua, 2022). Burundi then adopted a post-transition constitution (Guichaoua, 2022). Violence between the CNDD-FDD-led state and FNL continued in 2005-6 (Bouka, 2017). The Palipehutu-FNL (*Forces Nationales de la Liberation*

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<sup>127</sup> A term adopted in the peace-accords process to encompass those dispossessed by conflict, including refugees and IDPs

(National Liberation Forces)), another significant armed group (led by Agathon Rwasa) only demobilized in 2009 (Daley, 2006b; Daley & Popplewell, 2016; UCDP, 2003; Uvin, 2007).

In 2010, CNDD-FDD won the majority of seats again, and Nkurunziza was re-elected as president (Guichaoua, 2022). The vast majority of opposition parties had boycotted the elections after the first round due to increasing “harassment, intimidation, and arrests” of opposition leading up to the elections which limited their possibilities to campaign, particularly targeting demobilized FNL (Bouka, 2017, p. 21). Nevertheless, international observers largely considered the elections fair, particularly given the substantial turnout which seemed to illustrate popular support for the president and party (Guichaoua, 2022; Zeender & McCallin, 2013).

While undoubtedly this period was far less violent than the prior decades, and often framed as a model for liberal peacebuilding, state violence continued to close political space and cause displacement. Post-election, the intelligence service (SNR, Service nationale de renseignement), police, and the Imbonerakure—the youth wing of CNDD-FDD—continued to target FNL and other opposition groups, including with torture and extrajudicial killings, causing some to flee (Bouka, 2017; HRW, 2012; P.-C. Mbonimpa, 2017). While not one of the major periods of exile, UNHCR statistics record increasing year on year arrivals of Burundian refugees and asylum seekers in Uganda at this time (UNHCR, 2021b). The government largely framed this suppression of the opposition in security terms (HRW, 2012), again echoing previous regimes. The Burundian government’s involvement in international peacekeeping in Somalia meant that they have continued to receive formal military and police aid and capacity building in this period, particularly from the US military, but also Canada and Belgium (Daley & Popplewell, 2016)

Throughout this period, the Imbonerakure increasingly became a de facto branch of state surveillance and security (as the JRR and other youth organizations had under Uprona), undertaking nightly patrols in many areas (Bouka, 2017; Guichaoua, 2022). Many Imbonerakure were themselves demobilized from armed groups, and continued to receive weapons and military-like trainings (Guichaoua, 2022). Rather than being investigated or held responsible for intimidation and disappearances, this seemed to be their task (HRW, 2012).

Durable solutions

The Arusha Peace Agreements, subsequent ceasefires, and elections deemed fair by international community observers in 2005 and 2010, increased pressure for refugees to return to

Burundi (Milner, 2013). There was a sense among some in international organizations that as the government was now largely Hutu, and the civil war had ended, the grievances and fears of refugees should be resolved—oversimplifying the political histories of Burundi, and the extended displacement of generations of refugees. Refugees who registered as residing in the “old settlements” however, were again governed differently than those in the newer camps (or elsewhere).

In contrast to its return focused policy towards refugees in new camps, the Tanzanian government had spent many years discussing and negotiating the possibility of offering naturalization to the residents of old settlements (Milner, 2013). This offer was unprecedented globally, gaining Tanzania substantial international praise (IRRI, 2013b). Approximately 162,000 Burundians registered to receive Tanzanian citizenship—which some have framed as “challenging dominant discourses of citizenship in Africa” which equate citizenship with territorial notions of autochtony (Kuch, 2016, p. 16).

Those who registered in 2007 were classified as Newly Naturalized Tanzanians (NNTs), and revoked Burundian citizenship—however they remained in sort of stateless limbo for several years before finally receiving citizenship in 2014—a long period of uncertainty (Miletzki, 2014). The initial naturalization policy had stipulated that those who were naturalized would need to move to other regions from the settlements in which they had lived for decades—purportedly to avoid creating an ethnic enclave (Miletzki, 2014; Milner, 2013). While the NNTs were been allowed to remain in the settlements rather than being resettled, the status of the settlements remains murky, with the land still technically belonging to the state, and a camp commandant present, as some Burundians had elected for neither (Daley, Kamata, & Singo, 2018; Kuch, 2016) While on the one hand citizenship provides a form of political belonging and security, forms of Othering continue against these new citizens based on their prior refugee status, such that many seek to hide this aspect of their identity when outside of the settlements (Daley et al., 2018).

On the other hand, old-settlement refugees were also again encouraged to consider return—and approximately 20% did, largely from 2008-9 (Milner, 2013, p. 16). Some returnees were influenced by church leaders, political considerations, and promises of substantial support upon return (Milner, 2013; Weima, 2015). A smaller proportion of refugees in the old settlements opted for neither naturalization nor return, and remain refugees.

For refugees residing in the new camps, as had been the intention from their inception, the emphasis was only on return. The camp closures of this period, and particularly the closure of Mtabila, are the focus of Chapter VII, and are therefore only outlined briefly here. Lukole camp was closed in 2008, while with ongoing repatriation, the remaining refugees were increasingly moved and consolidated, and the newer camps were closed, until a single camp, Mtabila, remained. Mtabila was forcibly closed in 2012 (Hovil & Mbazumutima, 2012; IRRI & Rema Ministries, 2012a; UNHCR, 2013a; Weima & Minca, 2021).

In this same period other Burundians living outside of camps in Tanzania, and thus not recognized as refugees, were also subject to “crackdowns.” Framed as “illegal migrants,” they were returned and resettled, often alongside former-refugees, though with different levels of assistance provided by IOM rather than UNHCR (IOM, 2014).

In the decade following the Arusha Accords, the Burundian government and humanitarian partners were faced with the challenge of (re)integrating over 500,000 returnees, many of whom had been outside the country for decades, and some of whom had never actually been to Burundi, having been born in refugee camps and settlements (Zeender & McCallin, 2013, p. 77). Within Burundi, 117,000 people remained in IDP sites in 2005 (Zeender & McCallin, 2013, p. 77).

Assuring land and resource access for large numbers of new or returned citizens has been highlighted as particular challenge. Burundi is a relatively small country, just over 25,700 km<sup>2</sup> but with a population over ten million residents. The challenge of access to land is often framed through neo-Malthusian narratives, as well as being often scripted as being primarily a subsistence economy, when there are actually high rates of commodity production even within the predominately agricultural economy (Sindayihebura, 2011). (For a critique of such scripted contextual framings see Ferguson, 1990; Mitchell, 1995). The laws introduced in the 1970s and 1980s to expropriate land would later become significant when repatriating was strongly encouraged in the late 2000s—more than thirty years after the 1972 “caseload” refugees had left Burundi, many had difficulties accessing land. Land conflicts are a continuing cause of displacement, and rulings on disputes are frequently bound up with political alliances, and difficult to enforce (S. Fransen & Kuschminder, 2012; ICG, 2014; IRIN, 2013; IRRI & Rema Ministries, 2009; Kohlhagen, 2012; Lemarchand, 2011; T. Mbazumutima, 2021; Schwartz, 2019; SFCG, 2011; Tchatchoua-Djomo, 2017; Tchatchoua-Djomo et al., 2018; Tchatchoua-Djomo &

van Dijk, 2022). Many of the participants in this study described land conflicts following prior returns (often entwined with party politics) as a reason for ongoing displacement. Some referred to these often dangerous conflicts as the “guerre des terres” (war of land) emphasizing the widespread nature of seemingly individualized disputes, and others noted a “guerre des frères” (war of brothers) because of the violence of many intra-familial land disputes (Interviews 2017-8).

Special “peace villages” and Rural Integrated Villages (VRIs, villages ruraux intégrés) were created to settle high numbers of former refugees leaving camps in Tanzania, but without access to their former land or knowledge of their place of origin (S. Fransen & Kuschminder, 2014; PNUD, 2011). Critics of the villages in Burundi say they are hindering reintegration and full citizen participation (Falisse & Niyonkuru, 2013; IRIN, 2010; IRRI & Rema Ministries, 2009; PNUD, 2011; Weima, 2015, 2016). Rather than providing a durable solution and one-way trajectory to permanent settlement, the absence of livelihood possibilities or adequate aid in these villages has necessitated continued migration for many returnees, in order to survive, including to Tanzania, Congo, or further afield (Falisse & Niyonkuru, 2013; Purdeková, 2016; Weima, 2015).

While those returning without land were not the majority, other returnees also struggled. Aid to returnees was brief, with the expectation that they would soon become self-sufficient. Munoz Mora and Verwimp (2012) found that it took around eight to ten years after return for “the level of welfare of the displaced converges to that of the non-displaced” taking into consideration factors such as calorie intake. The effects of displacement thus endured, making life harder after return even for those able to return to their property.

2015 to present: Continued Conflict and Displacement

While political violence never entirely disappeared in the intervening years (HRW, 2012), April 2015 saw renewed political turmoil and increased displacement when Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza confirmed he would be running for a third term in office (Daley & Popplewell, 2016). Opponents claimed this candidacy violated the Arusha Accords, which stipulated that a President can only serve two terms, while the constitutional court ruled that he had not yet been elected to two terms, as his first term was a parliamentary appointment, rather than direct suffrage (Bouka, 2017). Demonstrations against the third term in the capital city were countered by police violence. Daley and Popplewell (2016) record that Nkurunziza framed this

opposition “in a militaristic sense” and that the police and military deployed seemed to frame the peaceful protesters as terrorists—perhaps drawing on the discourse and training of the Somali peacekeeping mission (p. 9). Dozens of people were killed and many more were injured (Amnesty International, 2015). Additionally, many opposition members were killed or disappeared, in suspected extrajudicial killings. Notably, reflecting the changing political dynamics of the prior decade, the political mobilization of ethnicity did not play a large role in the protests and repression in 2015 (Bouka & Nyabola, 2016; P.-C. Mbonimpa, 2017) .

On May 13, 2015, some members of the armed forces led a coup attempt, while Nkurunziza was in Tanzania for talks on the political situation. Although unsuccessful, this military attempt to take power (unironically in the name of protecting democracy) “transformed the tone of the crisis” (Daley & Popplewell, 2016). Independent media outlets were particularly targeted in response, for supposedly having worked with those accused of attempting the coup. In July, Nkurunziza won the 2015 presidential elections in an environment of fear and intimidation.

The following month the somewhat notorious head of the SNR General Adolphe Nshimirimana was assassinated, striking at the head of the violence against opposition (Daley & Popplewell, 2016). In seeming retaliation, prisoners and human rights activist Pierre-Claver Mbonimpa was attacked the following day. He survived a bullet through his jaw and was assisted in evacuation to Belgium, but his son and son-in-law were later killed (P.-C. Mbonimpa, 2017)

During this period, as following 2010, some opposition again formed small armed groups, primarily operating from DRC. In December 2015 armed groups attacked military camps in and near Bujumbura. The military responded with disproportionate and indiscriminate attacks on predominantly opposition neighbourhoods, killing hundreds of civilians including youth (Bouka, 2017).

From May 2015 onward Burundians increasingly began to seek refuge in neighbouring countries—by May 2017 over 483,000 Burundians had newly registered as refugees in neighbouring countries (UNHCR, 2017c). In Tanzania formerly closed or closing camps have been re-opened (UNHCR, 2015a). The context of reception in Tanzania and pressure for return will be examined in the following chapters.

Since 2015, Burundi, already one of the poorest in the world, has faced extreme economic difficulties, and several European countries reduced or added new conditions to

bilateral aid to the government. In 2016, hunger affected many provinces, causing further displacement (OCHA, 2017a). UNHCR acknowledged the deteriorating food security situation in Burundi as a key factor in the ongoing border-crossing at the time (UNHCR, 2017b). Indeed, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid (UN OCHA) estimated that three million people were in need of urgent humanitarian assistance within Burundi—nearly a third of the population (OCHA, 2017).

Constitutional change through referendum in 2018 would have allowed the president further terms, however he announced he would not run again (Guichaoua, 2022). Ahead of the 2020 elections he was replaced as presidential candidate for CNDD-FDD by General Évariste Ndayishimiye. Ndayishimiye was sworn in early following his election-win, after the sudden death of Pierre Nkurunziza. Since 2020, press freedom has increasingly returned, and geopolitical relations with Rwanda, the United States, and Europe have improved. Political discourse has vaguely condemned violence, and invited refugees to return. A number of exiled politicians have returned to Burundi (Eygusier, 2021). However the UN Human Rights Commission (HRC) has stated that “[b]ehind a façade of normalization, grave human rights violations continue” (UN HRC, 2021). While the vast majority of people in Burundi continue their daily lives, as has always been necessary, sporadically troubling news persists. Political disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and largely unexplained attacks on the civilian population continue to occur (Harerimana, 2021a; RFI, 2021).

Drawing on the Arusha Accords, a truth and reconciliation commission (CVR, Commission vérité et réconciliation) has been in place since 2014, charged with examining events from 1965, to the war in the 1990’s. The commission has supervised the identification and exhumation of mass graves of over 20,000 people. Among other aspects of their work, the exhumations have not been without controversy—with some family members of victims hoping to identify remains, while others oppose the literal digging up of the past (A. Mbazumutima, 2020; Nimubona, 2021). The exhumations have not followed international standards that would allow for forensic identification of victims, but have relied on those present to identify clothing, artifacts, or other particularities of the bodies—not an easy task given the decades which have past, though on occasion identifications have been made (Amnesty International, 2020; Nimubona, 2021).

Since 2018 the commission has also been tasked with examining colonial crimes. Nevertheless, Jamar (2022) outlines that the commission itself reproduces colonial durabilities and epistemic violences, even as it seeks to address past violence and injustice. More specifically, among other elements, the commission has been shaped by “western legal principles” and hegemonic “international standards” even as they are contested and fragmented (Jamar, 2022, pp. 3-4). It shifts responsibility for “truth” and thus for justice and reconciliation (within the assumed logic) to the victims, witnesses and others who are invited to testify (Jamar, 2022).

## Conclusion

Le début de ce siècle a été marqué par des guerres dévastatrices qui ont abouti à la cristallisation et à la biopolarisation des relations internationales. La guerre froide qui a suivi, mettant face à face les deux grands blocs idéologiques et militaires s’est traduite dans beaucoup de pays par l’installation de pouvoirs totalitaires. L’Afrique qui, en même temps sortant de la nuit coloniale, s’est trouvée entraînée, malgré elle, dans la dynamique de cette logique. Les peuples, théoriquement libérés du joug colonial ne se sont pas moins trouvés, à leur grande consternation, face à des pouvoirs imposés ou établis par force, des pouvoirs sans légitimité aucune qui rappelaient du reste l’ordre colonial auquel l’on venait théoriquement de mettre fin. (Ndadaye, 1993, p. 4)<sup>128</sup>

Together with the previous chapter, this chapter outlines the background of political and structural violence, displacement, and migration management, which shape the context of the research for this dissertation. As outlined above in the quote from Melchior Ndadaye, imperialist violence has left dynamics and logics in place that endure, despite the formal independence of African countries, recalling colonial orders. While Chapter II highlighted colonial violence and displacement, this chapter traces the dynamics, logics and orders that remain in place, and how they continued to shape direct and structural violence against and displacement of Burundian people.

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<sup>128</sup> Translation: The beginning of this century was marked by devastating wars which led to the crystallization and bipolarisation of international relations. The Cold War which followed, in which the two large ideological and military blocs faced off, was imported to many countries through the installation of totalitarian powers. Africa, at the same time as emerging from the colonial night, found itself drawn in, despite itself, to the dynamic of this logic. People who were theoretically free of the colonial yoke found themselves, to their great consternation, facing powers imposed or established by force, powers without legitimacy that recalled the remainders of the colonial order to which they had theoretically put an end.

The authoritarianism, racialized hierarchies, militarism, carcerality, capitalism, and extractivism of the colonial state endure in the post-independence period. These colonial durabilities are in large part due to colonial states' machinations in shaping an ethnicized, militarized political elite, both prior to and following independence (Daley, 2007b). While political power in Burundi has shifted from a predominantly Tutsi political single-party system, to a predominantly Hutu ruling party, the state continues to employ many of the same strategies and patterns of the prior regimes. While the political nature of the conflict has decreased the emphasis on ethnicity, a form of in-group and out-group differentiation along political party lines remains salient. Political opposition is largely framed as a threat to the nation's security and suppressed. The majority of the incredibly poor population remains subservient to the extractive state class and neo-colonial capitalist accumulation.<sup>129</sup> Both direct and structural violence continue to cause displacement.

The management of displacement in the post-independence period has also been shaped by colonial durabilities. These durabilities are evident in the very definition of the borders, to the way various people on the move are classified and governed (Brankamp, 2019a; Brankamp & Daley, 2020; Brankamp & Weima, 2021; Hyndman, 2018; Kweka, 2007; Mbembe, 2018; Nyerere, 1963; Weima, 2021b). In Tanzania this includes the encampment and forced return of Burundian refugees. Such policies harden and close the space for people seeking safe and livable lives, extending, rather than resolving, displacement for many.

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<sup>129</sup> I draw on Shivji's (1986) conception of the "state bourgeoisie" which describes the class character of state actors after formal independence, following the shift from colonialism to new forms of colonialism.

## IV. Narrative truth on uneven terrains: Feminist methodologies and research in campscaapes

### Introduction

Sketching the interrelated dynamics of persistent displacement, and the multiplicity of trajectories through which the violence of displacement has been endured, requires research methods able to navigate contexts which raise profound practical, ethical, and methodological challenges. The previous chapter argues that tracing the “duress” (Stoler, 2016) of colonial violence is necessary to understanding the political and genocidal violence of Burundi’s post-independence history (Daley, 2007b). Coloniality continues to shape the geopolitics and geographical imaginaries that structure the state-centric humanitarian management of displacement today—and particularly encampment and forced return (see also Weima & Hyndman, 2018). In Tanzania the closure of space for refuge includes the production of camps and “hardening” conditions of encampment. It further encompasses the unflagging and singular emphasis on the non-durable-“durable solution” of repatriation/return and camp closures. This contingent and conflictual campscape creates ethical and methodological challenges for research (Weima & Brankamp, 2022), which are the focus of this and the following chapter.

Broadly, this research draws from the rich and varied genealogy of feminist political geography in studying contexts of violence and injustice (Hyndman, 2019; O’Lear, 2021) (England, 2003; Staeheli et al., 2004). The primary research material was generated through life history interviews, semi-structured interviews, and ethnographic methods. The dissertation aims to centre Burundian refugees’ diverse trajectories and everyday, embodied experiences of enduring displacement, within and beyond state and humanitarian securitized management of (im)mobilities.

Feminist geographers have long been attentive to the embodiment of the social encounters through which research is (co-)created (England, 1994; Massey, 2003a; McDowell, 2018; Nast, 1994; Peake, 2017). Research encounters are situated within uneven terrains of power and knowledge production, shaped by enduring topologies of coloniality, racism, and

uneven capitalist development (Kobayashi, 1994; Mullings, 1999, 2005). Feminist approaches to qualitative research aim to be attentive to researcher positionality and to reflexive, contextually-specific considerations of conventional research ethics; however they also imagine researcher responsibility in terms of broader political orientations. Ethical and political concerns entwine in research within highly politicized research settings. This entanglement is profound in research centred on the experiences and perspectives of refugees, many of whom have experienced genocide and political violence, and endure the violence of continued displacement, insecurity, and impoverishment through encampment.

This chapter presents accounts of the techniques and key decisions in data collection for this dissertation because refugees stories are too often easily dismissed. Many refugee narratives are disbelieved on grounds of “credibility,” the pervasive state narrative of the “*réfugié menteur*” [the lying refugee] (Rousseau & Foxen, 2006), or accusations of researcher gullibility to “ethnographic seduction” (Robben, 1996)—which are themselves powerful narratives shaped by and shaping state bordering and exclusion practices (Davies et al., 2022). This dismissal is a form of epistemic violence, facilitating structural and direct violence against refugees and migrants, while denying the veracity of their testimony (Davies et al., 2022). “Truth” (while almost a taboo term) matters, particularly when confronting contexts where power shapes hegemonic imaginaries with material effects which entrench marginalization and violence.

At the same time, all narrative research is both contingent on memory, and created in social encounters. Research encounters are shaped in particular ways by the hierarchies of humanitarian power in producing camp-space, and the exigencies of refugee status determination and related processes, may shape the types and content of narratives shared with researchers, particularly when they may be hard to distinguish from foreign aid workers (Brankamp, 2021c; Carpi, 2021; Clark-Kazak, 2021; Clark-Kazak, CCR, CARFMS, & CRS, 2017; Hyndman, 2001; Krause, 2017; Pascucci, 2016; Pittaway, Bartolomei, & Hugman, 2010; Powles, 2004; Vermylen, 2016, 2019). I further consider the inevitability of biases and omissions in recruitment and narratives, which prejudice data generation and interpretation. In such a terrain, feminist methodology requires of careful balancing act: acknowledging how positionality shapes data creation and the necessarily situated and incomplete nature of life histories, while at the same time verifying and advocating the validity of empirical data shared through narratives of people who have been dispossessed and whose stories have been marginalized. I further seek to

balance these aims with academic humility as an outsider to the lives and context I study (as I undoubtedly get interpretations wrong).

The three primary sections of the chapter address the three key methods of data generation in my research: life history interviews; semi-structured interviews; and ethnographic methods. Each section opens with a definition and discussion of the method. The two sections which focus on interview methods discuss recruitment, the aims and outcomes of the “sample” of interviewees, and interviewing techniques. The section “ethnographic methods” largely centres on practices I considered as “ethnographic” in my methods, and how these practices enrich and relate to the other data collection techniques in this project. Consent is a key theme of the discussion of life history interviews, and is relevant to all methods in the chapter. Issues of consent are entwined with questions of power and positionality which are cross-cutting themes of this chapter, particularly in the highly politicized, camp(scape) context. Such considerations they cannot be “unpacked” in a singular way at any point in the research, but are “fluid” and relational (Baillie Smith & Jenkins, 2016, p. 961). Power and positionality further shape the data generated in the social encounters which make up these research methods, and have implications for understandings of validity, which are discussed across the three sections.

### Approaching Life Histories

Life histories, life stories, oral histories, oral testimonies, narratives, personal narratives, narrative-methodologies, and life narratives, all name interview-based research approaches, “designed to record an individual’s biography in his or her own words” (Jackson & Russell, 2010, para 1).<sup>130</sup> Through attention to lived experience, such methods may challenge essentialist and homogenizing stereotypes and categorizations, including state-centric imaginaries of people forced to cross borders (Clark-Kazak, 2009, p. 13; Eastmond, 2007; McDowell, 2016, 2018; Powles, 2004). I use the term *life history*, following the work of Susan Thomson (2013; S. Thomson, Ansoms, & Murison, 2013), whose work is a testimony to the strength of the approach in research with marginalized people in highly politicized settings, following genocide, war, and

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<sup>130</sup> I do not seek to define strict boundaries for any of these terms, which overlap as often as they also include internal variance. Jackson and Russell (2010) provide a discussion of the distinction between oral history and life history, and the role of life histories within oral history more broadly. Some uses of oral history and life history recording are intended for public archives, however this is not true of many social-science uses of the research approach. Indeed, university research ethics reviews, following the TCPS II, generally ask a time-frame for the destruction of data, rather than assuming indefinite storage.

displacement. In such contexts, life-history approaches to research are effective in building rapport, and providing a holistic picture of the diverse trajectories and experiences of research participants, and insight into everyday life including survival strategies and resistance (S. Thomson, 2010). Additionally, life history methods can reach across boundaries of time and space, and provide insight into events and places that are not easily accessible to researchers (Eastmond, 2007; McDowell, 2018; Weima, 2021a), including camps after their closures (Minca, 2021; Weima & Minca, 2021; Williams, 2012).

The following subsections address: recruitment, the diversity of participant characteristics and narratives, and the strengths and limitations of the “sample” of this research; a flexible, participant-responsive approach to life history interviewing, to improve the inclusion of women in research with Burundian refugees; and finally, the validity of life histories in challenging hegemonic narratives about refugees. Throughout, I reflect on how consent, positionality, and power shape the stories shared in research encounters.

Enumerating the final numbers of interviews and participants is a process of category creation. I chose what to delimitate as a formal life history interview, and who I count as a life history raconteur. It is a practice of cleaning up the messiness of “the field” and entangled research practices. My choices in this category creation are outlined in Appendix K. In summary, I enumerate 79 formal life history interviews with total of forty-eight life history participants, in 44 *sets* of interviews (where a couple or pair of friends is counted as a *set* when substantially interviewed together).

#### Recruitment Strategies for Purposive Diversity

Recruitment for life history interviews varied over the course of research, as I aimed for a “breadth of views to counteract homogenizing discourse” (Clark-Kazak, 2011, p. 21). Accordingly, these narratives themselves cannot be representative but do recount diverse experiences and a wide range of perspectives and opinions (Clark-Kazak, 2011). I aimed for parity of adult men and women participants, including people with a wide range of levels of education, employment, and ages. In so doing, the sample was diverse in other ways—it included people who self-identified as having disabilities, and people of varied religious affiliations, including Catholics, Protestants, varied Evangelical demoniations, Adventists, and Muslims.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> On one occasion I spoke informally with a representative of the camp’s Rastafarian community, mentioning their particular targeting by political violence as a small religious minority in Burundi,

Family statuses were less varied: most participants were (or had been) married; some were divorced, widowed, or remarried; nearly all were parents, and some were also foster-parents and grandparents.<sup>132</sup>

Although “ethnic group” is formally listed on official refugee registration documents in Tanzania (Research Notes, 2017), I was not comfortable asking people about their ethnic identity during recruitment or interviews. The politicization of ethnicity has not entirely disappeared, but is no longer as prominent in analyses of the current Burundian conflict as it was in prior decades (Bouka & Nyabola, 2016) (Alfieri, 2016). Direct questions about ethnicity seem intrusive because of histories of genocidal violence in which people were indeed targeted because of their real or perceived ethnicity. They unnecessary to the aims of this research. Accordingly, I did not specifically seek out ethnic diversity in recruitment, with one exception: Few studies of Burundian refugees have explicitly included the concerns of Twa refugees. Without having initially intended to “seek out” Twa for inclusion, I learned that a group of Twa from a hill I had visited on many occasions in Burundi had settled in a single village of the camp. I decided to stop by to inquire whether they would be interested in joining the study. We realized that we did indeed have a friend in common, and this contributed to our rapport and their participation. In the other camp a Twa couple was included through recruitment in neighbourhood clustered-recruitment (described below), rather than purposive ethnic sampling. While I never directly asked about ethnic identity in interviews, some people self-identified while recounting their stories. Although the majority of life story narrators are Hutu, in total, six people self-identified as Twa, and two self-identified as Tutsi. One man identified as Swahili, from urban Bujumbura.<sup>133</sup> Another woman identified as having Congolese father, and a Burundian mother—

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sometimes perceived as promoting “insurrection” through music (Ndayikeza, 2019). No one in the formal research identified as Rastafarian. I am not aware of any academic research including Rastafarian Burundians in studies on displacement, which is perhaps a shortcoming.

<sup>132</sup> The young men participants who were not married at the time of initial research all married and had their first children within two years. Echoing Turner’s (2010) analysis that many refugees perceive the camp as a place of moral degradation, a common critique I heard is that young people marry quickly in the camps. For some young men, the camp offers an opportunity to enter “adulthood” through marriage sooner than typical in Burundi, as dowry’s are far less often required for marriages in the camp. (Saving for a dowry can be a difficult impediment to marriage for young, poor men in Burundi.) Marriage was particularly helpful for bachelor men with incentive jobs, due to the time required to collect firewood, wait at distributions, cook, and do other household chores on top of the time required by such jobs.

<sup>133</sup> Unlike in Tanzania, Swahili is not a recognized ethnic group in Burundi, however it is an identity group that has long crossed ethnic and national boundaries (Nassenstein, 2019). Like many Swahili, his extended family crossed borders, including family members who are Tanzanian.

her mother had been a refugee in DRC from 1972. While she is not legally identified as Burundian within the camp, or within hegemonic patrilineal identification in the region, her story challenged categories and crossed borders. I chose not to police “Burundianess” for her inclusion in this research.

Similarly, I did not seek to identify political affiliations during recruitment. Political activity is not permitted in camps and questions about support for parties might have been misconstrued, particularly in initial introductions and research recruitment. Further, political violence based on perceived party alignments is the reason many camp residents had fled Burundi. Some participants shared stories of the marginalization and violence that followed being accused of belonging to opposition political parties, particularly those who were accused of being FNL. Asking about political alignment seem insensitive to me, as well as possibly suspicious given common fears of CNDD-FDD espionage in the camp. Nevertheless, some participants self-identified past affiliation with varied political groups in recounting their life stories. While affiliations were often mentioned vaguely (ex: “la rébellion,” or “l’opposition”), narrators sometimes mentioned specific parties including, Frodebu, Frodebu-Nyakuri, CNDD (Nyangoma), CNDD-FDD, Uprona, and MSD. This diversity suggests that although the sample is not generalizable, statistically, it nevertheless reflects a broad spectrum of Burundian refugee experiences and perspectives.

To purposively attain heterogeneity, my sampling approaches varied. I aimed to have “multiple entry points” as singular “snowballing” can make research less representative (even when statistical generalizability is not an aim)(Clark-Kazak, 2011, p. 37). Working in two camps and with different interpreters was part of this strategy. I would often strike up conversations while walking through the camp, either alone or with an interpreter. For example, on my first day in Nyarugusu camp, an interpreter and I stopped to chat with a group of carpenters. I described my research and asked if any of them would be interested in sharing their story in the research. Such incidental encounters were an initial recruitment strategy, which continued throughout the research period, combined with other recruitment techniques described further below.

The power relations in a camp are such that it is difficult to ever assure that consent is truly voluntary and informed (Hyndman, 2000, 2001; Krause, 2017). Therefore consent was treated as an ongoing process in all encounters, before more formal and detailed oral consent at every interview (see also Appendix L, on consent and recording). Most significantly, as a white

woman, I was often assumed to be a humanitarian worker, or a foreign-government resettlement worker. Brankamp argues that it is understandable that the distinction between humanitarian staff and researchers would be difficult for refugees in humanitarian spaces: “After all, researchers actively shape, and *are* shaped by, the arena of humanitarian intervention and its racialized mobilities” (Brankamp, 2021c, p. 48). Other researchers have commented on the difficulties of self-differentiating, particularly when access to camps may be facilitated by humanitarian organizations (Tallio, 2012; Vermeylen, 2016).

In chatting with both interpreters and research participants it became clear that such rumours about my role in the camp could have serious consequences. An interpreter who had previously worked for one of the large implementing humanitarian organizations recalled how three European research consultants had interviewed refugees as part of a humanitarian research project. He recounted that “some people who had interviews said they had been put on the list for resettlement, and took money from other people saying they could add them to the lists” (notes, 2018). Rumours about lists or resettlement could lead to ill-will between neighbours, decreasing the mutual assistance and cooperation between neighbours that was so often key to the fabric of daily life.

To perform distinction from humanitarian staff I explained my role as a student-researcher, with no connection to aid organizations, in nearly every short interaction with camp residents, regardless of whether I was seeking to recruit participants or just chatting. A basic level of Kirundi provided a certain degree of differentiation from nearly all white, foreign humanitarian workers (See Appendix M). In giving these introductory explanations myself, I reduced suspicion that interpreters might be hiding my true aims. I tried to dress differently than most humanitarian staff (which, although minor, was particularly noticed and commented on by Burundian women). Walking within the camp, or taking taxi-motos and bicycles (before they were banned) was also different from many (though not all) visibly-foreign humanitarian staff. Such distancing was not always possible (particularly after transportation restrictions were imposed).<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> For example, when I needed to cover large distances, given the limits on my time in the camp each day, I would “hitch” lifts from humanitarian vehicles, as I did most days to enter and leave both camps. I was careful to emphasize to participants that it was possible they would see me in organization vehicles, but it was only because I was asking for a lift—explaining that as a student I could not afford a car of my own, and was subject to leaving the camp early each day.

Even with distancing strategies, impressions of my positionality likely influenced peoples' decisions to be interviewed for this research. I therefore tried to offer ways that participants could politely decline or opt out, by simply not turning up for a scheduled interview, without having to decline in person. For example we explained to participants that if they changed their minds, or were busy with other work, they did not need to meet us. Despite numerous strategies to clarify my role, I would sometimes learn in later interviews that participants were still suspicious about my true position in the camp. Accordingly, two of my research recruitment strategies sought to further mitigate potential rumours and misunderstandings about my role in the camp.

Recruitment centred on residents from at or near my prior Master's research site was a second but unexpected approach to research sampling. On our way to meet the carpenter the following for our first arranged interview, Claude<sup>135</sup> and I saw a woman who had lived near the Rural Integrated Village (VRI) in Burundi where I had previously conducted research (Weima, 2015). We stopped to say hello, and when we spoke she remembered seeing me walking through the nearby village and market many times on my way to and from the VRI. While I was aware that many people I had known in Burundi had sought refuge since 2015, including in Tanzania, I had not expected to unintentionally run into people I knew or recognized, or who recognized me—and yet it happened in both camps. Running into people who knew or recognized me from research in Burundi was helpful. They were likely to understand that I was still just a student, simply talking to people as I had at the prior research site. Five people from that village were included in life history interviewing through chance encounters in both camps and with the help of the interpreter who had seen others from in and near the VRI now in the same camp. (I also visited informally with two additional former life history participants, sharing conversations and updates.) This “entry point” helped me to begin to understand trajectories former returnees had undertaken since 2014, and to re-examine and directly build on my prior research. These participants shared “updates” on the trajectories of several other people I had known, and on the village itself.

Place-focused recruitment may seem at odds with purposively sampling for a diversity of experiences. However, even centred on a single, small site of (recent) “origin,” the stories shared reflected a multiplicity of trajectories, as people had settled in and near the border-region village

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<sup>135</sup> An interpreter, introduced in the dissertation's opening vignette

for varied reasons (and often only briefly). Some former residents had been given places in the VRI as returnees, others as “vulnerable” residents, and some as deportees the following year. One woman had family ties in the region, while another couple settled nearby because they had fled a land conflict in their region of origin, and had wanted to live close to the border in case they needed to flee further. Place-focused recruitment thus contributed to tracing heterogeneous trajectories.

A third important sampling strategy is what I term clustered sampling. In this approach, I introduced myself to several neighbouring households, starting from near the residence of an existing participant. This tactic assisted in the inclusion of women participants, and naturally included diversity in ages, education levels, employment, and migration histories.<sup>136</sup> Clustering research was practical, due to the time required to walk long distances in a camp after several modes of transportation were banned through decrees (see Chapter V). I interacted with research participants and their families more frequently as I returned often to the same “cluster.” This increased rapport, and I gained a slightly fuller perception of the rhythms and concerns of their daily lives, enriching ethnographic observation. Importantly, returning often to the same “villages,” interviewing people in number of households, and intentionally speaking with many more neighbours to explain my role, greatly reduced rumours that I might be interviewing people for resettlement or aid. Clustering, then, while reducing the breadth of my familiarity with either camp, seemed like an appropriate response to reduce possible harms due to research.

Finally, on a number of occasions, I or an interpreter was approached by camp residents asking to be included in the research.<sup>137</sup> While some people requesting to join already knew that it was “just” a student research project of listening to stories, with no material benefit, or humanitarian protection benefits to participants, others approached me under the assumption that I worked with an aid organization. Like many researchers in settings shaped by highly unequal relations of humanitarian governance, I worried about whether my student role was truly understood, and the possible harms of misperceptions.

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<sup>136</sup> Plots were assigned based on registration, and while there was some informal movement within the camp, it did not drastically alter the varied demographic composition of most “villages.”

<sup>137</sup> People requesting to be included may have known a friend, neighbour, or colleague participating, or were friends or acquaintances of interpreters who heard about their work. In a of couple cases, they simply saw me and came up to talk. In all of these situations my first priority was again to provide information myself about who I am and what I was doing.

Early in my research I was approached by two women who wanted to speak with me after I had chatted on a couple occasions with a group of young people in their neighbourhood. After I explained my role and research, they insisted they still wanted to share their stories. In their initial interviews both shared stories of sexual violence, as a central focus in their life stories. These were not the only stories of sexual violence shared in life histories, however I was particularly worried about the potential harm to participants in sharing such stories. Ethical considerations regarding research on sexual violence are complicated, and often inadequate, particularly in research in Africa, requiring “sensitivity to local subjectivities,” and engagement with positionality (Daley, 2015, p. 438). Did these women approach me under the impression that I could offer them aid or services? On the other hand, I also felt uncomfortable to decline to hear stories of those who requested to share their experiences when I was indeed still recruiting research participants, and did have time to include them. Both women were adults with experience in navigating the camp context and its diverse actors, and both insisted on sharing their stories after my explanations of my role and aims.

While refugees are often labelled as a vulnerable research population (Pittaway et al., 2010), and African women who have experienced sexual violence are portrayed with many stereotypes, it is problematic for researchers to draw on such stereotypes in designing and framing research (Daley, 2015). Indeed, one of the women noted above became a longer-term research participant, as a “cluster” formed in her neighbourhood. She was the elected leader of her “village” within the camp. Having grown up in a former camp, her neighbours believed she could best navigate the camp structures and represent their concerns. She did not directly discuss sexual violence in further interviews, but focused on her navigation of life in the camp.<sup>138</sup> The longer-term relationships afforded in ongoing life-history interviews and ethnographic research situated the initial stories of horrendous violence shared by these two women within further interviews and ethnographic interactions reflecting the “everyday life” of the camp.<sup>139</sup> None of this provides easy or clear answers to the challenging ethical questions raised in such research

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<sup>138</sup> We also frequently saw the other woman, chatting with her informally, but not finding time for further formal interviews because of her challenges working for a Tanzanian business owner while a single mother in the camp.

<sup>139</sup> As Veena Das (2007) theorizes, the recovery of life after events of extreme violence is (perhaps necessarily) “through a descent into the ordinary,” yet “violence was always on the edges,” never erased (p. 12) (not only through memory, and the social forms created, but in this case, in the enduring violence of encampment). See Chapter VIII for further reflections on enduring (and) violence

(Norkunas, 2013; Sheftel & Zembryzycki, 2013). Indeed there are no clear answers for any contextually specific ethical negotiations (Massey, 2003a).

Through multiple recruitment approaches the stories I heard varied greatly. I never reached “saturation” when it came to the diversity of trajectories that participants had experienced, and informally heard about many more diverging spatial trajectories negotiated by those currently in the camp. (The diversity of these trajectories is traced in more detail in Chapters V and VI.) Indeed, “saturation” is not frequently a goal in life history research which emphasizes the uniqueness of individuals’ life stories, even as they are situated within broader social structures, historical events, cultural norms, and political shifts. However, with regard to refugee perspectives on specific events, such as the closure of Mtabila camp, or current conditions of encampment, refugee perspectives and accounts largely corroborated one another, “reaching saturation.”

#### Recruitment Boundaries, Limitations, and Strengths

The “boundaries” of recruitment conformed to camp boundaries and formal refugee or asylum seeker categories, as discussed in the following chapter. Relatedly, one shortcoming of my research sample is that people who were not present in the camp during the day, who were busy during the day, or who were away from the camp for longer periods, were less likely to be included in this research. Such patterns changed seasonally. Only a of couple interviewees regularly worked outside the camp, collecting firewood to sell, and working as agricultural labourers. Their external activity made scheduling interviews challenging.<sup>140</sup>

While I did purposively seek to include diverse refugee experiences and perspectives, I did not ultimately seek a representative balance in terms of participants’ year of arrival in the camps. Specifically, by not doing research in Mtendeli, and as my neighbourhood clustering did not include the furthest, most newly created zones of Nduta camp, the majority of the life history raconteurs in this research had arrived in 2015 and early 2016.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> While I needed to leave the camp by a designated time each day, they would be exhausted when first arriving back to the camp, and an interview would be an inappropriate intrusion. The seasonality of some agricultural work created opportunities as people returned to the camp for longer periods. Perversely, times when the boundaries of the camp were more strictly “closed” meant that, sometimes for days at a time, few people ventured out to their work.

<sup>141</sup> I did not specifically ask arrival dates for most participants, however the non-representativeness of this sample can be deduced from the geography of the demographic composition of the camps, and the many times participants did discuss their arrival in interviews.

Nyarugusu Camp was the first to house Burundian refugees arriving or identified in 2015, while Nduta camp was re-opened on 4 October, 2015, with the relocation of refugees from Nyarugusu (UNHCR, 2018a). By January, 2016, it had reached its initial capacity (50,000 residents), and refugees registered from January to October 2016 were sent to Mtendeli Camp, until it also reached its intended capacity at 50,000 (UNHCR, 2018a). Nduta camp was then “re-opened,” eventually hosting over 126,000 Burundians by June 2017 (over half of the recognized Burundian refugees in Tanzania) (UNHCR, 2017f).<sup>142</sup> Nduta thus received both refugees and asylum seekers who had arrived among the earliest and latest (until Tanzania effectively ended registration of Burundians as refugees or asylum seekers).

The new zones of Nduta were said to include a larger percentage people who were refugees for the first time (Research notes; Interviews 2017-8).<sup>143</sup> The newer zones were also said to include more people who arrived due to food insecurity due to inadequate government and humanitarian response to the effects of El Niño in late 2015, followed by “late, irregular and insufficient rainfall,” (FAO, 2016) both compounding and compounded by the political situation in Burundi more broadly. Hunger and food insecurity are not entirely separate from political issues at both highly local and national scales, including increased taxation (particularly of cross-border trade) and mandatory contributions to the political party in power (Interviews, 2017). Many people in these zones still lived in aging tents, and had not benefited from the construction of mud-brick shelters. The new zones were the most quickly emptying zones as repatriation began. People who arrived in 2016 and 2017 registered for return at much higher rates than those who arrived in 2015. The new zones were widely believed to be targeted by more active mobilization for return by Imbonurakure within the camp, and many interlocuteurs believed they included people specifically sent for this reason. The interpreters I worked with felt less comfortable in these areas, and I felt it would be unethical to encourage interpreters to work in areas where they had indicated they felt uneasy.

This disproportionality in arrival years means that a key strength of this research is precisely its focused attention to the experiences of people who have been refugees time and time again, and who persist in the camps despite increasingly difficult circumstances. It is

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<sup>142</sup> While some resettlement between camps occurred for the purposes of family reunification, and other refugees move between camps without formal permissions (though the number is likely quite small),

<sup>143</sup> While there were no official statistics on this, it was a generally accepted perception among aid workers and refugees themselves (Research notes and Interviews, 2017-8).

contextualized through ethnographic observation (discussed below), as well as a handful of initial departure centre interviews. Rather than seeing this disproportionality as a misrepresentative sample, I frame it as more specifically focused on the causes and effects of recurrent displacement. The sample is thus appropriately targeted for doing so, while purposively highlighting the multiplicity of trajectories that enduring displacement has entailed.

#### Interview Formats: Gender, Culture, and Inclusive Flexibility in Interview Structures

While life-stories are invariably broad, a life histories research approach often encourages interlocutors to focus on particular themes or “aspects of their lives” (Jackson & Russell, 2010; Powles, 2004). The objectives of a given research endeavor are an important factor in shaping the stories that are shared. The clear introduction of the topic and aims of a research project are key to recruitment and informed consent processes (CIHR, NSERC, & SSHRC), but also influence participants to shape stories based on what they believe may be of most interest within the framework of a given project (even when prompts to recount their life story are minimal). Life-histories are often told over many interview sessions, which has the added benefit of treating informed consent as an ongoing process rather than a one-time explanation and approval.

The extent to which life history interviews are structured varies. Some scholars advocate an open-ended approach, with minimal follow up questions after initial prompts. Others presume a structured approach to life narratives, in order to cover key topics and life stages. The latter facilitates greater comparability across diverse narratives and permit researchers to document memories of specific events or themes. However too much interviewer-led structure “may conceal the ways that an interviewee remembers the past, concealing his or her historical or geographical consciousness” (Jackson and Randall, 2010, ebook pdf p. 7). On the other hand, in open-ended interviews, interviewees have more control over their own life-story process. This may contribute to redressing power imbalances within research encounters (S. Thomson, 2010). However broad questions about one person’s life story may not be effective in cultural contexts where such “individualized discourse” is not common (Powles, 2004, p. 15).

In my approach to life history interviewing, I used both very open and more structured approaches. Following recruitment and the beginning of informed consent processes (discussed below,) I asked participants to tell the story of their life at length—their history—including the different places they have lived. While many men and women participants spoke freely and easily without much initial prompting, others spoke very briefly. More specifically, a

disproportionate number of women with low levels of formal education responded only very briefly to the initial prompt. This raised a dilemma, and required close attention to the possible reasons for brevity, and on the part of both myself and my interpreters (if present).

Men and women research participants may choose not to elaborate the stories of their lives in detail for a number of reasons, some of which have important ethical implications. First, responding with extreme brevity may be a way of indirectly withdrawing consent, but feeling unable to do so because of perceived power relations. Because consent is treated as an ongoing process, such situations required us to create opportunities for a participant to withdraw in a way which could be seen as polite, given the power geometries involved. Second, research participants may offer short or confusing responses when the memory of events is traumatic (Drozdewski, 2015). This sometimes (though not always) indicates that they do not wish to remember and share traumatic events within their life histories. Beyond these quite serious ethical concerns, Jackson and Randall (2010) also note that some narrators may simply feel more at ease being gently led through an interview with prompts, creating more a conversation rather than undertaking a solo-oration. A lack of “ease” in recounting a story may equally be due to questions of rapport, in relation to power relations and positionality, as well as trust and familiarity. Feelings of rapport may be gendered in intersubjective relations involving interviewees, interpreters, and researchers.

Some of the most well-known research with Burundian refugees has predominantly centered on the experiences and perspectives of men, specifically *Purity and Exile* (Malkki, 1995a), *Fear in Bongo Land* (Sommers, 2001), and *Politics of Innocence* (Simon Turner, 2010). These key works have broad acclaim and have provided important contributions to understanding the context and experiences of Burundian refugees in Tanzania, and refugee studies more broadly. Sommers (2001) and Turner (2010) both provide important perspective on masculinities which have at times been overlooked in refugee research which can feminize refugees and essentialize the image of the refugee as woman (Malkki, 1995a). In her research in the late 1980’s, Malkki noted that “women seemed to be less accustomed, and to feel less of an entitlement, to assume authorship of narrative expression” (Malkki, 1995a, p. 50). She noted women’s caution around her, perhaps due to her outsider status, their deferral to men in group interview settings, and that they spoke “timidly, in short sentences, in the give and take of dialogue, and not in longer, more sustained narrative form” (Malkki, 1995a, pp. 50-51).

Acceding to these dynamics, Malkki's principal informants were men. Sommers echoed this inability to engage with Burundian women in his research Dar es Salaam. Conversely, also drawing on research in the 1980's, Jefremovas' (1991) research with women brickmakers in Rwanda in a similar period demonstrates that although "timidity" may have been culturally valued, women could indeed be valued interlocutors sharing rich contributions to qualitative research.

Approximately a decade later, in the mid 1990's, Turner notes that although there was "a virtue [for women] in being shy and reluctant to express themselves in public," they joined "debate and entered heated discussions with the men" when women's behavior and morality was discussed. It is important to consider how gendered behavioral values were intentionally shaped by colonial programs seeking to educate acquiescent subjects according to Christian values (Daley, 2007b; Hunt, 1990), and have been subsequently re-imagined through ideas such as "empowerment" in international development and humanitarian programming (Hyndman, 1998; Manchanda, 2004; Simon Turner, 2010). While *timidité* (shyness) and quietude remains valued markers of virtuous Burundian femininity in many contexts, I know through my own friendships with Burundian women that such characteristics are not a barrier to rich conversations, nor to including women in research.

Careful attention to and discernment of spoken and unspoken cues about the (dis)comfort of a participant was ongoing in all interviews, with heightened sensitivity when interviewees seemed less "at ease" in recounting their stories. When working with an interpreter, we discussed our observations, including if and how to continue, and what might be an appropriate approach. Often, when initial responses were very brief, we began with a more directed series of questions and gentle prompting: first asking the interlocutor to describe the first place they lived; then, what everyday life was like there, how their relationships with others were in that place, etc.;—continuing a similar series of questions throughout the places they had lived and moved, and prompts responding to their answers. In some cases the interview remain stilted. In others, I felt a more flowing conversational rhythm develop. While a heavily guided process may not be considered ideal in some life history approaches, it accommodated participants who were less comfortable initially, unused to interviews, or simply less talkative than others.

The feeling of interviews is subjective but important to ethical encounters and interpretation. It requires cultural and contextual understanding (cultural "fluency" is discussed

further in Appendix M, on language). For example, not interpreting a lack of eye contact as a lack of comfort or trust, and not seeking direct eye contact (as rude in Burundian culture), was never learned by the fictional camp researcher in Mbonimpa's (2020) novel (see also Powles, 2004; Carpi, 2021 on cultural competency and ethical encounters). Without such awareness of Burundian culture, it would be easy to misinterpret a lack of eye contact as shyness, or to make participants uncomfortable by seeking direct eye contact.

If part of the value of narrative research is its capacity to dehomogenize dominant narratives about refugees, then surely women with low levels of formal education, or less ease in speaking with strangers, should not have their perspectives excluded or curtailed. Beyond recruitment, flexibility in the implementation of narrative methods may be important in addressing what the TCPS2 frames as "unjust exclusion" from research. As the diversity of participant stories is a lauded strength of life histories, researchers may need to also be attentive to how these diverse experiences shape ease narrating their own stories. No two interview encounters are ever exactly the same. Simply stopping interviews if participants did not speak at length in responding to initial questions in order to ensure the method was always implemented in "the same way" would be adhering to a falsely positivist idea of reliability in qualitative methods. It would reduce the richness of women's stories in this research. While varying interviewing approaches may limit certain kinds of comparability in data analysis, variability could itself be a factor in analysis and interpretation. Accommodating how participants may most richly co-create their stories may at times involve asking more questions, rather than fewer.

Most life history informants were interviewed more than once in this research. Before additional interviews I would usually try to listen to the full prior interview, and make a series of notes on what had been discussed. In so doing, I would note if anything was unclear, as well as events or themes that could be elaborated, and indicate where we had "left off." Occasionally such planning was pushed aside in favour of spontaneity, when I would encounter a prior interlocutor with having yet planned an additional interview. We would often begin subsequent interviews with briefly recalling and confirming the information shared in the last session at the beginning of each meeting.<sup>144</sup>

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144 I admire Thomson's (2010) use of full transcripts for verification of past life-history sessions by participants, but felt uncomfortable bringing such detailed documents to the camp, where a commandant or police could insist I turn them over. Even if somewhat anonymized, it may be possible to identify the narrator from those with whom I had been observed. I also would have been unable to produce full

Drawing on my notes and prepared questions, second interviews were often more structured than initial interviews. The shift in structure allows for greater triangulation of data, and more detailed tracing of diverse trajectories of enduring displacement. While Powles (2004) argues that more open-ended interviews allow for greater interpretation of the “genres” and the issues of importance to the interviewee, contrasting more structured questioning with initial stories can also provide insight into what was left out of initial histories.

One significant risk of more structured questions is the possibility of unintentionally touching on sensitive or traumatic information. Such an approach must weigh exploring significant topics without pressuring participants to discuss traumatic topics they do not wish to share. The informed consent process addressed the fact participants would be asked to account the events of their lives, that this may include difficult topics which they may not wish to discuss, and that they could choose not to answer any questions or discuss difficult topic. I reiterated the option to move on to other topics, and tried to avoid direct questioning on topics that could be particularly hurtful. Nevertheless, even the initial prompt of the most open-ended interviews asked where people had lived and why they moved over the course of their lives, which unvaryingly involved violence and forced displacement.

Additional interviews highlighted the limitations and necessary partiality of even multiple research encounters. For example, in a third interview with Marie, I asked whether her parents had been affected by “the events of ’72,” which she had not previously mentioned.<sup>145</sup> It was then, in this third interview, that we learned that she had been born in an old settlement in Tanzania.<sup>146</sup> For her, separation from her husband, and the difficulties of providing for her children, were the primary lenses through which she reflected on the story of her life across all of these interviews. That she had also been born in Tanzania seemed less important to her, but it was only when we learned this history that we could also observe that it is not important in her present framing of

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Kirundi transcripts on my own, nor did I have the energy to complete the transcripts in English or French, while also keeping up with a field notes practice. This reflects how my own suspicion in the camp context (Brankamp, 2021d) shaped my practical implementation of life history methods, and reduced the “editorial power” of research participants over their own narratives (Clark-Kazak, 2009, 2011). The use of much more minimal notes, as an aide-memoire for prior discussion, was thus a compromise.

<sup>145</sup> She had said she was from an area that had experienced high rates of violence and displacement at that time.

<sup>146</sup> She had previously discussed that her childhood was poor as her parents were farmers in a rural area, and had discussed their home region which is where she had married in Burundi, and how she had been a refugee in Mtabila.

her life narrative. Structuring questions beyond an initial narrative could trace fuller, clearer trajectories, however with any number of interviews substantial events are inevitably left out.

With greater understanding of the life history process after a first interview, participants themselves may reflect on how they wish to frame their history, and recall further memories or observations they wish to share. On a handful of occasions participants themselves prepared ahead of additional interviews. For example, Joseph prepared notes on the history of Burundi, including the history of the abami (kir: kings), and invited his children to listen while we recorded his second interview. He situated his life story in the broader history of Burundi as he understood it. When possible, intentional planning of additional interviews gives narrators a chance to reflect and re-approach the telling of their own life stories.<sup>147</sup>

When time permitted, and when it seemed appropriate within the “feel” of the interview encounter, I concluded many interviews with a brief number of more semi-structured questions. Specifically, I asked participants directly about their perceptions of terminology used in the research, including how, given their experiences, they understood the meaning of “peace” (amahoro) and “security” (umutekano). Such specific questions may fall more easily into a “semi-structured” interview category—however the context of these questions after discussion of narrators’ life stories, meant that the answers often were framed reflexively in relation to their life experiences. \

#### Interpreting Narrative Validity in Camps

As with all research methods, the stories generated through narrative approaches are shaped through encounters between researchers and subjects/participants. Writing on life history methods consistently and profoundly reflects on the relationality of encounters, to the extent that it is a noted strength of the approach (Jackson & Russell, 2010; McDowell, 2016; Powles, 2004). Such reflection is of particular methodological relevance in research in camps (whatever the methods employed) (Weima & Brankamp, 2022). Formal refugee camps are biopolitical spatial technologies of power, with dual aims of both care and control, entangled in the definition and

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<sup>147</sup> In second and additional interviews, I often also asked participants whether there was anything new or changed since our last discussion. At times, if something significant had happened within the camp (such as an important speech), I would ask if they had been at the event, and, whether or not they had, what they thought about it. It allowed me to more formally triangulate observations and informal discussions, with regards to the changing camp context over time—but also to understand how prior experiences shaped their perceptions of recent and anticipated events, within ongoing encampment.

segregation of refugees. These and other characteristics of camps influence data generation in ways that are similar to research in closed contexts (Koch, 2013), other iterations of carceral and obscured spaces (Maillet, Mountz, & Williams, 2016), highly politicized settings (Jessee, 2011; S. Thomson, 2010), conflict settings (Shesterinina, 2018), and include research with survivors of war, genocide, and other traumatic events (Carter-White & Minca, 2020; Drozdowski, 2015; Ogora, 2013). Situating research on/in camps may shape the choice of research methods and topics (Hagan, 2021; Vermynen, 2016), what voices are heard, and what information may or may not be shared (Simon Turner, 2016a; Williams, 2012), as well as how data generated may be interpreted (Minca, 2021).

*Humanitarian settings, story extractivism*

In humanitarian settings such as camps “refugee stories” can take on a particular “currency” (Brankamp), for reasons which may or may not benefit refugees, and create value for others in the extractive “refugee industry” (which includes researchers)(Morris, 2019). Stories may be elicited from refugees in high stakes refugee status determination procedures (Khosravi, 2008; Rousseau & Foxen, 2006), resettlement interviews (Vermynen, 2016), or to determine access to legal or material assistance (Cabot, 2016), as well as for humanitarian communications, for purposes as varied as reporting, advocacy, and fundraising (Malkki, 1995a), journalism (Darling, 2021), and the needs of researchers to generate data (Cabot, 2016, 2019; Morris, 2019; Pascucci, 2016; Pittaway et al., 2010; Silverman, 2021).

In some contexts refugees have expressed a sense that stories are being “stolen” for the benefit of others, without bringing about any meaningful changes in their lives and circumstances (Cabot, 2019; Omata, 2020; Pascucci, 2016; Pittaway et al., 2010). While over-research did not seem a problem for any participants in this setting (in part perhaps due to the large size of the camps, and not focusing on refugee leaders,) the absence of interactions with other researchers did not necessarily alleviate expectations of what this research could or should do (England, 1994). Yet, I also know that those who spoke with me are savvier than I of the realities of camp life and migration management—many shared that refugee voices and demands are often ignored, even when represented by others. They are aware that students, even from the West, have little power compared with camp commandants, and government decrees (See also Weima, 2021b).

Undoubtedly the space of the camp influences the stories told and heard, and their interpretation (Weima & Brankamp, 2022). In camps in particular, easy access to certain “populations” for researchers may lead to over-research and research-exhaustion (Omata, 2020; Pascucci, 2016). Refugees may already have needed to recount their stories many times (Clark-Kazak et al., 2017), which can shape the ways that stories are recounted, as refugees navigate requirements for particular stories at particular times (Vermeylen, 2016). Khosravi (2008) describes a trade in “cases” or stories, meant to meet requirements for status determination based on the narrow idea of persecution and contextual understanding of UNHCR protection officers (p. 325). Some researchers have noted that participants are forthcoming with standardized narrative formats in refugee settings, including camps, because of the frequency with which they have been asked to recount their stories. Vermeylen (2016) chose not to ask camp residents their life stories, because of the import of these stories in resettlement processes, and their often formulaic, practiced nature. Powles (2004), conversely, advocates analysis of such “formulas” as “genres” of storytelling, shaped by both humanitarian and cultural conventions, and interesting to interpretation in their own right.

In Tanzania, refugee recognition has largely been *prima facie*, so many Burundian refugees have not recounted their stories within formal humanitarian settings, apart from a small minority applying for further protection or resettlement.<sup>148</sup> Sometimes legally recognized protection concerns were mentioned in passing or incidentally, such as after we had stopped recording. This suggests that for most participants these stories were not rehearsed with knowledge of protection proceedings in mind, as they highlighted other aspects of their lives and trajectories.

Suspicious and uncertainty undoubtedly affect narratives recounted in camps (Brankamp, 2021d; Williams, 2012). Beyond my own positionality, that of interpreters, and neighbours, formal & informal structures of camp surveillance, and fears of espionage from Burundi, all shaped a sense of surveillance noted by other researchers in camp contexts (Malkki, 1995a; Williams, 2012), and which resonates with other closed or authoritarian contexts (Bouka, 2013;

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<sup>148</sup> While a more substantial number of participants had been formally interviewed during the cessation process towards the closure of Mtabila camp, the process was drastically uneven, falling short of international standards (McConnachie et al., 2013).

Gentile, 2013; Jefremovas, 2013; Koch, 2013; S. Thomson, 2010, 2013; Sarah Turner, 2013; Weima & Brankamp, 2022). Williams (2012) argues, “[u]nder such circumstances, and similar ones described by anthropologists who have worked inside other refugee camps, there may be considerable limitations to what most of them have been able to hear” (p. 75). Some voices “may appear ‘silent’ to others who are restricted to camps,” particularly where political elites (or camp authorities) may seek to control narratives (as may have been the case with Malkki’s work in Mishamo) (Williams, 2012, pp. 75-76).

Equally, raconteurs may choose to avoid certain topics. Melchior Mbonimpa (2020a), although in fictional narrative, highlights how refugees hid clandestine activities from researchers even when they form close relationships. Characters in Mbonimpa’s novel join the armed rebellion, and hunt elephants and other protected wildlife to fund political activity, not sharing this with a Scandinavian researcher despite their friendship.<sup>149</sup> Similarly, Turner notes, that his research participants did not discuss their (prohibited) military training in Lukole. It was not until years later, in Nairobi, that “they were more open to talk” (Simon Turner, 2016a, p. 42).

Camps shape narratives in ways which may elide certain themes or perspectives, but which open space for others. Like Nairobi, the current camps, while sometimes in the same sites, also provide distance from the past camps that seems to allow space for reflection on political mobilization in past camps. Equally, the current camps, in their distance from Burundi, may allow or create a context for types of reflection on the situation after prior returns, including villagization, that more overtly identify the role of the political party in power, CNDD-FDD in repression/oppression, including specific local dynamics (such as actors at the colline and village-level). Understanding how the entwined politics, history, and culture of a given context may shape silences, rumours, evasions, or other “metadata” has interpretive value beyond what is overtly said in highly political contexts (Fujii, 2010; Shesterinina, 2018; S. Thomson, 2013).

The theme of the danger being *véridique* (fr: truthful, someone who recounts the truth) recurred in a number of interviews, addressing both the context in Burundi and in the camp, fearing both Burundian and Tanzanian authorities. For some interviewees, being *véridique* was the reason they had to flee from Burundi, such as speaking out about injustices relating to the

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<sup>149</sup> The book takes place in fictionally-named countries, but in camps named Mishamo and Katumba (the “old settlements”). Landmarks in the home country named after Burundian topological features, and events seem to echo Burundian history.

electoral process in 2015. Many refugees shared that being *véridique* was perceived as risky in the camp, and that those who spoke out about corruption in aid, for example, could easily be accused of illegal “politics” and sent to jail or back to Burundi. When discussions about such risks arose I re-iterated to interview participants that they should not continue with interviews, or could choose not to address certain themes, if they felt it could cause them problems—nor did they even need to chat with me, even informally, if my presence could cause problems. Yet I also recognized their greater experience and expertise as informed adults weighing the risks in a context they know much better than I. On one occasion this was directly iterated by a research participant, after a discussion of the risks of being *véridique* (truthful), and the hierarchical, paternalistic power structures within the camp:

When you are an adult, you walk with intelligence. You can't run after things that can cause you problems. You know the situation here in the camp. If you say just anything you can find yourself carried away by the water. You need to see where are. We know Tanzanian communities, how they are. We've lived with them a long time. When there's something that can cause harm to someone else, we don't do it. If there's something that can cause me harm, I wouldn't do it either. So, be at peace. There's nothing bad that can happen. (Notes, 2018)

This statement speaks to the contextual knowledge of camp residents. Although often infantilized by camp authorities and humanitarian management (see also Manchanda, 2004), they are informed adults, who are experts on negotiating the uneven and risky camp context, and are able to choose whether to speak with me and what they feel they can recount.

How the past shapes current experiences, and how the present in-turn shapes “restorying ‘then,’” is a common theme across life history interviewing more broadly (Ellis & Patti, 2014, p. 93; Gluck, 2013; Powles, 2004). Interviewing refugees in a camp context, Powles (2004) cites Bruner, that like autobiography, life history is “is not *only* about the past, but is busily about the present as well” (Bruner, 2001, p. 29, cited in Powles, 2004, p. 8, italics in original). This relationship of past and present experiences of place and emotion in shaping present day narratives are central to this dissertation, and are addressed further in future chapters.<sup>150</sup> The present context of threatened camp closures undoubtedly shapes how past closures are featured in current refugees’ life narratives.

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<sup>150</sup> Specifically, chapter VI addresses how past processes and experiences of dis/emplacement shape current experiences of *enduring* displacement. Chapters VII and VIII focus on the violent closure of Mtabila camp, and its presence in Burundian refugees’ emotional geographies and everyday experiences of current camps, as reflected in life history narratives.

## Semi-structured Interviews

Beyond research located in camps, nearly all camp research includes varied locations, such as government, INGOs, and UN agency offices, archives, and remote access of reports, etc.<sup>151</sup> In addition to camp-based research, I conducted 25 semi-structured interviews with “key informants” in offices in Dar es Salaam, Kigoma, Kibondo, Kasulu, and Makere. I also observed inter-agency and inter-sector meetings. By “semi-structured,” I refer to face-to-face, one-on-one inquisitive conversation, which is structured through questions in the interviewer’s guide, but which may (and perhaps even should) also flexibly deviate from the guide to interactively delve further into topics raised in responses to the structured questions. These interviews aimed to generate information on the context of state and humanitarian responses to displacement in Tanzania, and the perspectives of people working directly on these issues.

Recruitment for this interviews varied. While applying for permission to access camps, I also began the process of requesting interviews within the Department of Refugee Services, with very formal, physical introduction letters, including my official COSTECH permit number.<sup>152</sup> As interview requests for the Department of Refugee Services were all formal, I only interviewed highly positioned staff. I sought interviews with UN agency staff and other organizations through email. I also sought interviews in-person as I met and was introduced to further employees of varied agencies and organizations. For example, the inter-sector and heads-of-agency meetings held at the UNHCR Kibondo sub-office and Kasulu field office were usually followed by tea and refreshments, creating an occasion introduce myself and my research. Finally, I “knocked on doors” of organizations in Kibondo, to deliver letters physical letters to request interviews, and chat about the research, and whether any staff may be appropriate and available for interviews.

The interviewees are diverse, representing the Department of Refugee Services, 4 UN agencies, 5 (I)NGOs. Some participants had previously worked in other organizations, and thus these interviews draw on broader experience with an even larger range of organizations involved in “refugee services.” Interviewees were primarily Tanzanian, but 6 other nationalities were also

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<sup>151</sup> The fact of research in different locations does not automatically avoid camp-centrism as these sites are crucial nodes in the power geometries of camp creation and humanitarian governance (Hyndman, 2000, 2001).

<sup>152</sup> I attached the formal letter of information, and a copy of the informed consent form, required by the “York University Graduate Student Human Participants Research Protocol,” outlining issues from informed consent, to the storage of data.

represented. Nineteen interviews were recorded, using an encrypted device. Six interviewees preferred that I take handwritten notes. The shortest of these interviews was twenty minutes, while the longest was two hours and forty minutes. The majority were between forty-five minutes to one hour (usually to accommodate the time scheduled for the interview by the interviewee).

Research on institutions “managing” refugees has been framed as “studying up,” and thus, to some extent, mitigating “some of the neocolonial power relations involved in study refugees themselves” (Hyndman, 2001, p. 263). Nevertheless, considerations of positionality remain relational, situated in the uneven terrains shaped by colonialism, global uneven development, as well as ongoing racism within the international humanitarian industry in which many participants are employed (Daley, 2013c; Hyndman, 2001; Mullings, 2005). My sense of the relational positionality of these interviews varied, depending on a wide variety of factors, which cannot be reduced to the nationality of the interviewee, the organization for which they worked, their seniority or position within the organization by which they were employed, race or gender.

Research taking place in workplaces is shaped by the power relations of employment, and expected employee behaviour in representing their organizations. All interviews took place in the personal offices of participants, except for one which took place in a meeting area of the INGO offices in one of the camps. While interviews were anonymous, I stated the obvious: that people within their organization would likely know they had participated in the research because of where the interviews were conducted. Formal letters of introduction and consent forms were appreciated by some interviewees, and even cited as a reason they felt comfortable participating in the research. Yet other subjects preferred not to have any trace of their consent on paper. Having read the forms, they gave oral consent. It seemed clear often that many interviewees most easily represented the views of their employers, even when they may have been critical of the policies of other actors. This itself is interesting. As with refugee life histories, there is merit in attention to the “silences” in the narratives of these interviews.

Like research within camps, research with actors related to refugee governance can also be contingent and must be attentive to broader, uncertain and changing contexts. Discussing research with development organization employees, Baillie Smith and Jenkins (2016) note that the “rapidly changing context of the Development industry” creates vulnerability and insecurity

for their research participants. The same is undoubtedly true of the humanitarian sector, in which people are often employed on short contracts, and political situations, access and funding can change fast.

Some participants' comfort in participating in interviews changed with the shifting political climate on refugee issues in Tanzania, and the "affective atmospheres" of institutions "managing displacement." For example, the announcement of the cancellation of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), or government accusations that UN agency and INGO personnel might be encouraging refugees not to return and could be banned from the camp, changed how questions on these topics were negotiated, and even the receptivity of some people to interviews, depending on the relation of their position to the programs or accusations at the time. Their perception of the risks and benefits of participation changed with the shifting political atmosphere. Some cancelled interviews, but others were simply more cautious in how they answered questions. While an early interview with a UN agency employee included the comment, "that's our baby," when discussing the CRRF (Interview, Kigoma province, 2017). After its cancellation, another employee, in discussing the future directions of protection, mentioned "but [the] CRRF, we are not authorized to even talk about..." (Interview, Kigoma province, 2018). Accordingly, I am cautious in writing about "issues [which] would risk uncovering identities and even jeopardizing careers" (Hyndman, 2001, p. 264).

I provide less detail on the semi-structured interviews than other methods, however this is not because such interviews deserve less reflection because they are seen as a relatively "conventional method"—as recent discussions on interviews demonstrate (Dowling, Lloyd, & Suchet-Pearson, 2016; Hitchings & Latham, 2020). Nor is this section shorter because the professional participant group raises fewer ethical and methodological questions, or reflections on power and positionality (Dowling et al., 2016; Hitchings & Latham, 2020; Hyndman, 2001). Rather, as I have chosen to centre refugee narratives in this thesis, and this is not primarily an institutional study, (and because this chapter is already so long,) I largely locate the main discussion of these issues in the section above, on the practice and interpretation of life history.

Further, and problematically, it seems that narrative research methods are more frequently challenged for their validity and reliability than other research methods, including semi-structured interviews, and particularly interviews with "experts" and key-informants (as some might classify the professionals in this interview group). These semi-structured interviews

undoubtedly provide valuable information on the context of displacement, refuge and humanitarian response in Tanzania. Yet, critical attention to these interviews as “narratives” is a key interpretative frame of this research. Humanitarian and government staff often take the categories with which they work for-granted, “seeing like a refugee agency” (Glasman, 2017). They may echo colonial perspectives or policies (Hyndman, 2000), reveal racism and other prejudices (Brankamp, 2021e), as well as myths and misconceptions that challenge the claims of refugees, including empirical untruths (Coddington, 2021). With no irony, such interlocutors may caution researchers on “getting close” to refugees, or believing their stories (Vermeylen, 2016). Issues of positionality, power and politics, emotions, rapport, and “truth” are equally relevant to semi-structured interviews, within the broader “campscape.”

### Bordering the Ethnographic

Beyond formal life-history and semi-structured interviews, I undertook observation and countless informal conversations—from sitting-in on humanitarian inter-sector meetings, to walking through the camp alone or with a research assistant, or chatting with canteen workers and moto drivers, etc. I recorded many of these interactions and observations in a regular, (though imperfect, and partial) research notes practice, along with critical self-reflection (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). Yet, I am tentative in grouping such practices as “ethnographic methods.” This caution echoes documented disquiet about whether one’s research truly counts as “doing ethnography” and whether such methods are adequate social science research (particularly for those trained outside of anthropology) (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2008; Mannay & Morgan, 2015). At the same time, there is reason for caution in considering what ethnographic research entails. Hitchings and Lantham (2020) note that for geographers who have travelled “far” for research, there is a tendency to use time “in the field” as a proxy for authority of the data and interpretation, rather than more detailed description of the specific practices and activities of their research (Hitchings & Lantham, 2020). While ethnography celebrates the validity of interpretation gained through long-term engagement, researchers also frequently highlight the possibilities of the unexpected, “momentary” (Johnson, 2014) or “accidental” (Fujii, 2015). Yet, as I discuss below, over-reliance on the “momentary” may lead to unreliable data and questionable interpretations. Accordingly, this section presents approaches to ethnography in geography. I then describe some of the activities I label as “ethnographic,” their role in complementing interviews, the ethical questions they raise, and their limits.

No longer the sole preserve of anthropologists, ethnography has been gaining popularity in geography, across diverse research contexts—though what ethnographic methods mean in the context of geographical research is often obscured by the evocation of the term (Hitchings & Lantham, 2020). Ethnography has many “variants” and cannot easily be defined, but broadly centres on “participant-observation” involving “considerable time observing and interacting with a social group” in their daily lives (Herbert, 2000, p. 551). It aims at “making sense of their making sense” (Ley 1988, p. 121 cited in Herbert, 2000, p. 551). It seeks to highlight what is “taken for granted” in terms of underlying structures and ways of knowing in the context of the research, through what Clifford Geertz famously described as “rich description” (Billo & Mountz, 2016; Herbert, 2000). Ethnography can be a powerful approach in critical political geography and in research in highly politicized contexts through its attention to power, practices, and the unsaid (Megoran, 2006; Fujii, 2015)

Researchers often experiment *in situ* with how best to respond to their research questions (Hitchings and Lantham, 2020) (and even what their questions should be). While drawing on a broad repertory of methods for elucidating data, ethnography is not contained within their discrete application—it has always involved improvisation attentive to the specific context, positionality, and interests of a given researcher (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2008; A. Watson & Till, 2010). Mannay and Morgan (2015) warn against a too-strict adherence to discrete, definable techniques of data creation, rather than “a holistic methodological approach” and “an ethnographic imagination,” open to accommodate the unexpected (pp. 168 & 171). Nevertheless, Hitchings and Lantham (2020) warn that the common lack of elucidation about what doing “ethnography” means in geographical research can “cast a shroud over our research practices, spiriting them away from the presented analysis, and allowing them to escape any scrutiny from outside” (p. 977). As they note that “[a]t times, it rather seemed that, if you’ve gone somewhere to do your study and you’ve noticed something outside of a formal interview, you should probably frame your work as ethnographic” (Hitchings & Lantham, 2020, p. 976).<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Perhaps the reason the “what” and “how” of ethnography is often so cursorily described is due to the standard length limitations and conventional format of papers in geographical journals, where methods sections are often necessarily brief when making non-methods-focused arguments, whatever methods have been used. Dissertation and thesis formats are perhaps unique in the space they provide to describe and discuss research methods, apart from methods-focused texts.

Note-taking practices are central to many explanations of ethnographic approaches (Emerson et al., 2011; Hitchings & Lantham, 2020; Megoran, 2006; A. Watson & Till, 2010). As discussed further in the following chapter, I “bound” my research practices, travelling “far” but not automatically beginning research. I attempted to balance a feminist methodological sensibility of being “always already in the field,” with formal requirements about research permits, ethical concerns about risk to participants, and reflexivity about research in the uneven terrains of post-colonial Tanzania. I thus only began a field note practice only when I received my COSTECH research permit (even though the process of obtaining permits was important to my experience of key-institutions in the research). My note-taking practice is described in Appendix N.

The ethics of informed consent in research are much trickier when concerning “observation” and “ethnographic methods” than formal consent in interview settings (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2008), particularly when they derive from unique and direct interactions, and privileged access to a setting. Even if interlocutors are aware I am a researcher, are they necessarily aware that I may later note down their words or actions as part of my research? What boundaries should researchers have in clarifying their roles and how can this be performed or otherwise indicated to interlocutors (Cuomo & Massaro, 2016)? Whether individuals may be identified, how such material is interpreted, and the ways it fits into the broader research picture, matter to ethical consideration of less-“open” ethnographic observation, as further discussed in the subsection below on the relationship between interviews and observation.

Through my note-taking practice I recorded the decisions and discussions that shaped my research, from figuring out accommodation and transportation, to decisions made about recruitment of interpreters and participants, language questions, and my own positionality. I noted observations and conversations that felt of possible relevance to my understanding of the context and research questions. In so doing I tried engage an “ethnographic sensibility,” filtered through an orientation to my research interests. I considered “threads” or themes arising in interviews, connections I was thinking about to literature, and questions I had about the context or events.

As an exception to hand-written note-taking, I was able to directly type notes during regular inter-sector and heads of agency meetings. I was permitted to attend and observe, but not record. I also attended a country-planning meetings, the assessment validation workshop for a

report, and a Kigoma Joint Programme Stakeholders meeting. The setting of most of these meetings within UNHCR offices meant that many meeting participants were also on computers during the meeting, and so typing notes during such meetings did not feel “out of place.” As with interviews, these were saved as separate “documents” within Nvivo, rather than part of my day-by-day field note practice and reflections, but were also reflected upon within a given day’s fieldnotes.

A holistic approach? The relationship of Interviewing and Ethnographic methods

While many researchers include interviews as part of the broader ethnographic “toolkit,” some are explicit and insistent in not treating interviewing alone as synonymous with ethnographic research. (Herbert, 2000; A. Watson & Till, 2010). Sometimes the differentiation of ethnography borders on exceptionalism through claims to authority about insight into everyday life. For example, Herbert (2000) states “I am careful not to conflate ethnography with other qualitative methods, such as interviews. Ethnography uniquely explores lived experience in all its richness and complexity” (p. 551).<sup>154</sup> He distinguished between ethnographic methods which observe what people *do*, and interviews which are attentive to what they *say* (Herbert, 2000). Yet, there are certainly situations in which interviews can and do provide insight into what people do and have done. Interviews can create space for participants’ own interpretations of their own and others’ actions. Such a clear-cut distinction between interviews and ethnography is not useful when, as Hitchings and Lantham (2020) find, nearly all geographers using ethnography also rely on interviews.

Rather than claiming ethnography alone provides “richness” that interviews do not, I follow Hitchings and Lantham’s (2020) suggestion that the relationship between interviews and other ethnographic methods be more explicitly analyzed. They note that in using ethnography with interviews, geographers have “sought to surpass a decontextualised analysis of respondent talk by seeing what further insights might come from a fuller engagement with social action in situ” (Hitchings & Lantham, 2020, p. 972). What does this “fuller engagement” provide? I outline five propositions:

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<sup>154</sup> Similarly, Watson and Till (2010), assert that “Interviews do not alone constitute ethnography, because, in many cases, interviewees cannot report upon what they ‘do’ — for ‘doings’ are often unconscious or unarticulated practices.” (A. Watson & Till, 2010).

First, an ethnographic note taking practice provides a record of how other methods were undertaken, and the decisions made throughout the research. Rather than a “collection” of data, ethnography is described as a relational and social “participat[ion] with others in the creation of knowledge and meaning through social interactions” (A. Watson & Till, 2010). Notetaking records and reflects on these interactions. It provides insight into the factors shaping research encounters, including interactions recounted earlier in this chapter such as research recruitment. Ethnographic notetaking creates a context for ongoing reflexivity on issues of positionality, power, rapport, consent, and how they shape material generated, which are never entirely resolved. Within interview contexts, this more specifically includes reflection on small cues, such as a tone of voice, or a look or gesture, or a silence in an interview that may indicate discomfort, and which may be meaningful, but may not be included in a transcribed interview. Note-taking may reflect on the broader context of the interview, such as how a conversation was shaped by interrupting rain, or moving to avoid the heat of the sun or a motorcycle driving by. It may include the embodied context of interviews, such as how my own or an interpreter’s fatigue or thirst shaped our (in)attention. As Sheftel and Zembryzcki (2013) note, interviewing is a “precious, fallible, and exciting human process” (p. 3). Accordingly, they argue that a holistic approach, combining oral history interviewing with honest, ethnographic reflection allows us to “learn more about *how* to do oral history” (Sheftel & Zembryzcki, 2013, p. 3 emphasis added). Ethnographic approaches complement life history methods through reflection, allowing for more in-depth consideration of contextual factors shaping interview interactions, interpretation, and ethics (Sheftel & Zembryzcki, 2013).

Second, ethnographic methods and observations may contribute to decisions about approaches to other research methods, such as life history, in an iterative relationship. Observation and many informal interactions can shape the questions asked in more formal research interviews, as well as rapport which underlies interviews. Yet the relationship between methods is not often noted (Hitchings & Lantham, 2020). Ethnographic interactions with interview subjects may allow researchers “to root our questions more fully in the contexts of their lives – to be sure that we know what to ask and how to ask it” (Hitchings & Lantham, 2020, p. 976). Further, the “deep hanging out” of ethnography may build trust, or “rapport” over time in settings of suspicion, which can create a context for richer interviews.

Third, ethnographic observation may contribute to validity of research by allowing for “triangulation” of data through diverse interactions. The interpretation of life stories is not only, or even primarily about veracity or establishing factual information. Silences, elision, concealment of information, or even “lies” can themselves be important to interpretation (Fujii, 2010). Interpretation requires the researcher to evaluate and weigh the stories being shared, and to understand them in a broader context, drawing on information and knowledge from beyond the interviews themselves. Fujii (2010) referred to several aspects of such knowledge as “meta-data”:

[...] the spoken and unspoken expressions about people’s interior thoughts and feelings, which they do not always articulate in their stories or responses to interview questions. Meta-data can take both spoken and unspoken forms. They include rumors, silences, and invented stories (p. 232).

Beyond rumours, silences, evasions, and denials, basic ethnographic “triangulation” can be helpful “data” in weighing “veracity,” whether interpreting life stories or ethnographic observations. For example in chatting with refugees, humanitarians, and local citizens, I learned additional perspectives about events recounted in life stories. When such conversations echo details or perspectives recounted in refugee life histories I can be more confident in claims about events such as the closure of Mtabila, or perspectives such as refugees feelings of animalization. This “triangulation” increases my sense of the reliability of my own witness of a context, and my interpretations. This is incredibly important, particularly for people conducting research outside of their home contexts, as we risk simply getting things wrong.

While ethnographic writing has celebrated the serendipitous, accidental, and “moments,” (Fujii, 2015; Hitchings & Lantham, 2020; Johnson, 2014), accidental or momentary observations may be particularly open to critique regarding their validity and reliability. When drawing on the “momentary” there is a risk that the claimed “thick description” of ethnography may be “thin,” not “resonating” with those with more substantial lived experiences of the contexts discussed.<sup>155</sup> I

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<sup>155</sup> While I greatly admire Fujii’s scholarship and thoughtful analysis of veracity and interpretation of “meta-data” in research on genocidal violence in Rwanda (Fujii, 2010), her argument for “accidental ethnography” (Fujii, 2015) begins with claims about dogs in Sarajevo that simply do not ring true to me as a frequent visitor and resident of Sarajevo over the past 6 years. Her claims that, unlike in Zagreb where the dogs are well-groomed and fed, Sarajevo dogs roam wild, is only a partial truth. For example, walking along Wilsonovo by the Miljacka river at any time of day, there are always countless dogs of notably “fancy breeds,” well-groomed, well-fed, and with their owners. While there are many street dogs, it is an oversimplification to assume that they all lack care and feeding. Beyond some small NGOs which provide more formal care, many citizens of Sarajevo actively care for and feed animals in their

do not claim here that using ethnographic methods to triangulate knowledge shared in interviews (and vice versa) resolves questions of validity or partiality of knowledge. As Hyndman (2001) wrote, “Where fieldwork findings are presented as immutable facts, readers beware. Not only is the experience of fieldwork an insufficient condition for certain knowledge, one’s findings in the field never capture the whole picture” (p. 267) (see also Cabot, 2016 on unknowing in refugee research). Even as we remain mindful of the relationality and partiality of all research as encounters (Massey, 2003a), and in methods that do not aim for statistical generalizability, a sense of judgement of the extent to which what we have learned may reflect the world as it is known and experienced by our interlocutors and others familiar with their context is an important basis for analysis and interpretation.

Fourth, and relatedly, the validity of interpretations and theorization can benefit from an iterative approach in which both conducting life history interviews and theorizing from them is shaped by ethnographic methods, and vice versa. Specifically, such an approach may assist researchers in gaining greater understanding of raconteurs own interpretations and meanings, which is of particular importance in highly politicized contexts, and which is a central strength of ethnographic approaches (A. Watson & Till, 2010). Reflecting his own experience and the work of several oral historians, Greenspan finds that “[t]he more one enters into the social and cultural worlds of narrators—rather than simply trying to extract an interview from them—the more likely it becomes that narrators’ terms begin to matter. Of course, there are no guarantees. But when one allows oneself to see things through the eyes, and within the lives, of one’s participants, oral history practice becomes increasingly embedded in ethnography” (Greenspan, 2013, p. 22). Ethnographic methods can contribute to the possibility of interpreting and theorizing from life histories in ways which are closer to raconteurs’ own terms, informed by broader understandings of a cultural and political context. In turn, life histories can allow for

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neighbourhoods, leaving food scraps and bones beside or apart from the garbage bins, so that the animals can easily access it. These factual errors are perhaps due to the “accidental” nature of observation, rather than what she would have found through more systematic or long term observation. Such factual errors, and unsystematic observation, undoubtedly influence interpretation. Billo and Mountz note that “[...] data drawn from interviews without the insights of participant-observation limit the claims a study can make to understand and interpret daily life in Geertz’s (1973) terms: detailed-oriented ‘thick description’.” (Billo & Mountz, 2016). The opposite seems true in this case of “accidental ethnography,” where data drawn from observation alone, without interviews or more systematic ethnographic study, limits understanding and interpretations.

systematic conversations on how interviewees understand their own experiences, beyond assumptions based on observations and conversation.<sup>156</sup>

Fifth, and finally, ethnographic methods contribute to unbounding “the field” broadly speaking, and “the interview” encounter specifically. Conversations which are not formally counted as life history interviews may still be noted, analyzed, and contribute to the interpretation of this research. Equally, interactions with people not formally “counted” as research participants may also be included (see appendix K on the limitations of enumerating interviews and participants). For example, three additional key informants, shared their stories in less formal conversations while walking through the camps, however I recorded these as research notes rather than as formal interviews. Relatedly, I had many significant conversations with formal participants, beyond a formal interviews, often sharing details of their lives in addition to those shared in interviews. This “unbounding” can create ethical questions, as consent to include information or stories shared in research outputs is less clear than in formal interviews and thus requires careful contextual judgement (Massey, 2003a).

## Conclusion

This chapter began with an extended discussion of how I approach life history interviews with Burundian refugees, the heart of this research. I outline the recruitment strategies I employed in aiming to present a diversity of experiences and trajectories, as well as the shortcomings and strengths of the ultimate research “sample.” I discuss introducing myself and the project as a first stage of consent, continued in the following section in which I outline my approach to recording interviews. The following sub-section outlines my flexible approach to life-history interviewing, with an aim of including the detailed perspectives of a diverse group of participants, and redressing the exclusion of women from much research with Burundian refugees. Finally, I reflect on the situated nature of narratives, in relation to the complex but

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<sup>156</sup> For example, Heather Johnson’s (Johnson, 2012, 2014) interpretation of her multi-sited ethnography focuses, in her words, on encounters that “were fleeting, momentary, and elusive.” Her description and interpretation of meeting a single Burundian working outside of a Tanzanian camp, and seeking to avoid repatriation, feels like “thin” rather than “thick” description, even as she references the event as resonating with other interviews within the camp. She interprets his desire to remain in Tanzania, and need to seek work beyond the camp, as “acts of citizenship.” Although the context has changed since her research, this interpretation and theorization does not seem to “resonate” with Burundian refugees own terminologies and explanations. It lacks interpretive validity, that can be drawn from more iterative processes of interpretation in conversation with interview participants and/or ethnographic engagement over a longer period.

important issue of research validity—particularly that in camp contexts shaped by suspicions, uncertainty, and traumatic violence, yet which aims to “speak truth to power.” Not only do past experiences shape interlocutors’ interpretations of their present context, but their context shapes how they “story” their past. Life histories, then, are a method well-suited to attention to the interplay of spatialities and temporalities.

The second section focuses on semi-structured interviews, also discussing recruitment, consent, and factors shaping the generation and interpretation of data, in the changing and politicized camp(scape). Although this section is substantially shorter (as the interviews are “secondary” to life histories, both in number and in “weight” in the analysis and redaction of this dissertation), this does not signal that there are fewer entanglements of power, positionality, or questions of voice, validity, and interpretation in such “expert” interviews.

The third section describes the ethnographic approach, which complements the other methods, centered on a note-taking practice. Combining ethnographic methods with more formal interviews allows for both to be strengthened through reflection on varied aspects of methods, ethics, and positionality; allowing interviews to be informed by broader contextual learning (and observation to be informed by interviews); contributing to the “triangulation” of information, and a better sense of the “validity” of data as well as analysis, interpretations, and theorization; and “unbounding” “the field” and “research” from formal interview settings.

Many of the ethical questions raised in such research go beyond institutional ethics review considerations (Daley, 2021b), and are not resolved simple statements of positionality (Peake, 2017)—a theme which is continued in the discussion of the “(un)bounding” of camp research in the following chapter. This research thus engage “feminist discomfort” (Baillie Smith & Jenkins, 2016), and anti/de-colonial “constant questioning” (Murrey, 2019). I hold the tension of seeking “validity” of interpretation through life history-centered research, to narrate often elided experiences and perspectives as “reliable witnesses” (Stengers, 1997 quoted in Whatmore, 2003) of “truth to power” (S. Thomson, 2013), while at the same time acknowledging limitations of the search for “epistemic truth” and the value of “not knowing” and “irresolution” in representations and interpretations of research encounters (Cabot, 2016).

## V. Uncertain boundaries: ethics and methodology in research within and beyond camps

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*What the map cuts up, the story cuts across.*

*(de Certeau, 1980/1984, p. 129)*

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Feminist reflections on research in geography have long played with boundaries, addressing modes of bounding and unbounding, crossing, blurring, being contained by, and challenging taken-for-granted sites, temporalities and ways of doing research (Cuomo & Massaro, 2016; Hyndman, 2001; C. Katz, 1994; Kobayashi, 1994; Massey, 2003a; Mullings, 2005; Nast, 1994; Sarah Turner, 2013). What does all this crossing, blurring, and unbounding mean, when applied to research in a formally bounded, yet often changing, refugee camp? My attention to how camp boundaries and uncertainty shape research arose through research for this dissertation with Burundian refugees in Tanzania from 2017 to 2018. Conducting life history research, along with ethnographic methods (as described in the previous chapter), I was particularly cognizant of the diverse trajectories of their lived experiences, both within and outside of camps.<sup>157</sup>

Boundaries are a defining feature of formal camps, delimiting their “inside” and “outside.” Yet recent research also emphasizes their permeability. Camps shape and are shaped by broader landscapes, by mobilities and immobilities, and by relational connections and entanglements with places, scales, and times not bound by their designated sites (Abourahme,

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<sup>157</sup> This chapter expands on a manuscript published in *Area* entitled “Ethics, methodologies, and boundaries: Research with refugees within and beyond camp” (Weima, 2021a) as part of a co-organized special section entitled “Camp methodologies: the ‘how’ of studying camps” (Weima & Brankamp, 2022). The special section derives from a conference session of the same title at the AAG, 2019, co-organized by Hanno Brankamp and myself.

2015; Agier, 2011; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2019; Ikanda, 2018; B. J. Jansen, 2016; Martin et al., 2020; Sanyal, 2010; Simon Turner, 2020). Camp boundaries are not static, and their performative power changes through time. The topological interrelation of camps and their environs despite their boundaries is captured in the term “campscape” (Martin, 2015). Martin’s (2015) conception of the “campscape” describes a context in which camp boundaries became more “fluid” and ambiguous over time (p. 14). In this chapter, however, I apply the term “campscapes” to Tanzania, where camp boundaries are *hardening* for Burundian refugees, in tandem with policing that creates and enforces state and humanitarian categories of inclusion and exclusion. This changing policing of boundaries is bound up with the exceptionality of camp space – the power of the sovereign to act or not – thus, the uncertain performativity of boundaries shapes how refugees negotiate lives in campscapes, and how researchers access and seek to create knowledge in such spaces.

This chapter builds on the previous in recounting research methods and decisions taken in this research, in relation to ethics and the underlying methodologies of this project. Methodology is broadly understood as the philosophical underpinnings or epistemologies that shape research, while methods are understood as the specific techniques of creating data within a research project. However this is not solely a methods chapter. This chapter bridges methodological and ethical concerns with empirical research and arguments about refugees’ negotiation of camp boundaries, and lives lived beyond boundaries, in the hardening campscape.

The chapter begins with a discussion of boundaries and categories, particularly as they relate to “the field” of “the camp,” and ethical questions in refugee research. I then discuss the role of formal research permits in creating boundaries in research, and their negotiation through post-colonial and feminist lenses. I outline how camp boundaries in Tanzania are *hardening* (rather than becoming more permeable,) related to ongoing pressures for camp closure and the exceptional rule-by-decree within camps. This dynamic context shaped everyday practicalities and the necessity of flexibility in my research design and practices.

Precisely because of the performative and changing power of camp boundaries, studying their transgression may raise ethical and methodological dilemmas. Significantly, the presence of researchers may visibilise people seeking livable lives beyond camp boundaries who are targeted by encampment, endangering those who participate in research (Khosravi, 2018; Krause, 2017; Landau, 2020; Neto, 2017; Polzer & Hammond, 2008), or those within camp boundaries without

formal status. Even though I believe ethical research should challenge the camp boundaries and categories, I chose to consciously create boundaries in my research design and practice (Cuomo & Massaro, 2016). I limited research with Burundian border-crossers to the formally recognized space of the camp, to reduce the risk of visibilising research participants.

In thus situating research, there is a real possibility of reproducing and reifying the boundaries created by state and humanitarian knowledge and power. But research in camps need not be camp-centric. Through attentive approaches, researchers can conscientiously reach beyond and challenge camp boundaries, without endangering border-crossers outside of camps. Although potentially possible through many methods, I specifically highlight how life histories conducted with refugees within camps reach beyond the formal camp space. Burundian refugees' boundary-crossing life histories sketch a "minor-cartography" of often-invisibilised refugee lives (Tazzioli, 2020). These stories situate the camps within broader transnational migratory fields in which people experiencing displacement seek livable lives, within and beyond camp boundaries and formal refugee categories. They both reveal "spatial disobedience" beyond camps (Tazzioli, 2020), while also highlighting the consequences of hardening of boundaries in the campscape for border-crossers. Such methods are necessarily engaged with "the politics of boundaries" (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018, p. 60), even from within, as those whose lives the boundaries seek to contain, actually negotiate, cross, refuse, choose, wait, and relate—across and within dynamic and uncertain campscales.

### Boundaries and Categories

Often used synonymously with 'borders,' boundaries have been an enduring theme in human geography (Jones, 2009; Newman & Paasi, 1998). 'Boundaries' denote to 'line-on-the-ground political division' (Jones, 2009, p.180) such as territorial borders demarcating states, or a formally gazetted camp perimeter. They also commonly signify the construction, division, and distinction of social categories (Fassin, 2011; Jones, 2009). Both uses refer to imperfect, incomplete processes, rather than natural, absolute demarcations (Jones, 2009; Paasi, 1998). For example, camp scholars highlight their permeability, the changing nature of camps' locational boundaries over time (Abourahme, 2015; Jansen, 2016; Martin, 2015), and the deficiency of entwined legal and humanitarian categories bound up with the state-centric management of displacement (Bakewell, 2008; Fresia, 2007; Hyndman & Giles, 2017; Ikanda, 2018). Nevertheless, in the context of many camps these porous 'lines' still have significant

performative power (Simon Turner, 2016). They distinguish a space and define a population subject to exceptional governance. For example, in Tanzanian camps decrees can be proclaimed and rules changed suddenly, outside of the law, differently shaping everyday life within and beyond camp bounds.

Locational and categorical bounding are intertwined in migration contexts, producing ‘populations’ and distinguishing their ‘desirability’ within a defined territory (Agier, 2011; Fassin, 2011; Tallio, 2012). Entangled with the policing of state-territorial boundaries, the policing of a camp’s locational boundaries is linked with the construction of identities such as ‘Burundian,’ the policing of legal categories such as ‘illegal aliens’ (subject to detention and expulsion from the bounded territory), and complementary legal-humanitarian categories, such as refugee (who, in Tanzania, must remain in a camp to retain the ‘protection’ of this category). In this way, camp boundaries rely upon and reify colonially constructed state borders, hierarchical categories of territorialized belonging and nonbelonging, and states’ desire to contain, and humanitarian ‘management’ of people cast as out-of-place (Brankamp & Daley, 2020).

#### Ethics and Boundaries in Research

Querying taken-for-granted physical and metaphorical boundaries of research, and the power relations that create and maintain them, has been a key disposition of methodological reflection for decades. Critiques of the bounding of “the field” emerged in response to conceptualizations of research locations as isolated sites, creating distance between the white, western, knowledge-producing researcher and the object-of-study as exotic and Other, facilitating colonial domination (Bouillon, Fresia, & Tallio, 2005; Nast, 1994). Accordingly, post-colonial and feminist geographers situate researchers and research sites with radical contemporaneity. Contemporaneity reflects relational understandings of space: no place or “field exists” as a “container” in our highly globalized world (Hyndman, 2001; C. Katz, 1994; Massey, 2003a; Murrey, 2019; Nast, 1994). Accordingly, “we are always already in the field” (C. Katz, 1994, p. 62), which is “both here and there, a continuum of time and place” (Hyndman, 2001, p. 265).

Nevertheless, Katz notes that “the questions raised by conducting fieldwork in human geography at once invoke boundaries and blur borders” (C. Katz, 1994). Practically, there is a need to define the scope of any project, even if the boundaries may be “malleable” and “fuzzy”

(Meissner & Hasselberg, 2012). Cuomo and Massaro (2016) argue that boundary-making is as essential to feminist methodologies as trespass, and note that boundaries may also be consciously constructed for ethical reasons (see also Hyndman, 2001). Boundary-making as a methodology has particular ethical implications in migration contexts shaped by state-created boundaries and the transgressive framing of their crossing for groups that states seek to contain (Khosravi, 2018).

Preventing harm to research participants is a central tenant of research ethics protocols (Clark-Kazak et al., 2017; Krause, 2017; Mackenzie, McDowell, & Pittaway, 2007). Researchers must weigh the risks of potential harm to participants with “serving the legitimate requirements of research” as well as avoiding unjust exclusion of any group (CIHR et al., 2018). In the context of my research this involved considering the implications of including or excluding Burundian border-crossers who did not fit in recognized protected categories within or beyond the camp, as I discuss further below.

Ethical considerations and methods choices in relation to camp boundaries are bound up with the methodologies that shape research. Patricia Daley (2021a) argues that ethical research with refugees must go beyond questions of immediate harm to research participants and also requires considering how the underlying philosophies of research (including research objectives and the terminology used) may also contribute to “the production of harm” (p. 13)(see also Stierl, 2020).

In the current Tanzanian context, the designation of Burundian refugees and refugee camps is intertwined. The refugee category relies upon and reifies colonially constructed state borders, hierarchical categories of territorialized belonging and nonbelonging, and states’ desires to contain and manage people cast as out of place (Brankamp & Daley, 2020). Additionally, there is evidence that academic representations of refugees have influenced policy response in Tanzania. Daley highlights how Liisa Malkki’s influential book *Purity and Exile* (1995a) frames Mishamo settlement residents as “essentially consumed by ethnic hatred, presenting a single, unified identity that drew on a ‘master narrative’” (Daley et al., 2018, p. 28). In researching the effects of Tanzanian citizenship for former Burundian refugees in Tanzania, Daley, Kamata, and Singo (2018) found policy advisors’ skepticism towards the naturalization of Burundians was influenced by this academic narrative:

Policies directed at long-term integration can be seen as futile, especially if, as one local policy advisor, who was exhibiting a degree of hostility towards the new citizens, states, “They are not really interested in staying. Did Malkki not say they want to return and overthrow the Burundi government?” Policy-makers’ transmission of histories of violence to the mainly second- or third-generation Burundians has the potential to negatively affect state approaches to their integration and the realization of the ontological security that the new citizens seek. (Daley et al., 2018, p. 28)

Academic narratives shape policy maker perceptions and thus possibilities for those displaced by violent conflict and exclusionary bordering. Consideration of the effects of academic narratives in understandings of ethics includes reflecting on whether the aims and terminology of research serve the interests of policy makers to contain, exclude, and expel people deemed out-of-place. As, Crawley and Skleparis (2018) state, “categories have consequences” (p. 49). They argue that “we need to explicitly engage with the politics of bounding, that is to say, the process by which categories are constructed, the purpose that they serve and their consequences” (p. 60). This paper considers the challenges and possibilities of methodologically aiming to challenge the boundary-politics of camps, while also recognizing how their power and policing of camp boundaries shapes research practices and ethical boundaries in the campscape.

#### Permits and the Boundaries of Research

While official permissions shape research in sites as varied as detention centres and game reserves (Engel, Gebauer, & Hüncke, 2015; Holterman, 2020; Maillet et al., 2016), permits shape mobilities to and from camps in particular ways (p. (Tallio, 2012; Vermynen, 2016), and thus shape research in campsapes. In Tanzania, I applied to the Department of Refugee Services for permission to enter specified *Refugee Designated Areas*, after acquiring a research permit from the Commission of Science and Technology (COSTECH), and the appropriate researcher class (*Class C*) visa from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). Once I had received the permits and travelled to Kigoma region, I delivered letters of introduction and copies of the permits to the Kigoma Regional Commissioner and the Kasulu and Kibondo District Commissioners, as I also planned to conduct interviews in humanitarian offices outside of the camp. In each camp, I formally introduced myself at the MHA Headquarters/Camp Commandant’s office, provided copies and received stamped acknowledgement on my camp entry permits.

While some of these permits can be applied for online, applying in person can reduce delays and make the processes go more smoothly. Other letters must be submitted directly to the offices concerned. While these processes can be done through a research partner or a hired agent, applying myself was an introduction to institutional cultures and procedures in Tanzania, and contributed to getting to know people and places in Dar es Salaam. As Engel et al. (2015) note, “the processes of trying to get a permit shape the researcher’s perception of the research environment and constitute their own identity as researcher” (p. 6). Together, the processes to attain all the required permits took five months, during which time I lived in Dar es Salaam.

The feminist geographical instance on being everywhere, always, “already in the field” is rooted in resisting the exoticization of the field as distant and other (Hyndman, 2001; C. Katz, 1994), yet a decolonial ethics in un/bounding “the field” may be more complex. The creation of boundaries, and being able to *not* already be in “the field,” may be equally important to post-colonial and feminist perspectives on research ethics and methodology. Accordingly, I “bounded” the initial months I spent in Dar es Salaam, as not-yet “in the field.”

Camp research, like all research, takes place in a research terrain that remains unevenly shaped by topologies of colonization (Mullings, 2005), so that engagement necessitates “constant questioning” (Murrey, 2019). Waiting for permits reflects an acknowledgement of independence and sovereignty in post-independence African states: simply being a white researcher from the “Global North” is not enough to permit research. But this permission is that of the Tanzanian state, and not specifically the people with whom I would conduct research. While decolonial ethics in knowledge production includes seeking permission to conduct research, state permissions are very different from those of a “community.” An easy to define “community” arguably does not exist in state-created camps (Hyndman, 1997, 1998), where frameworks of “participation” and representative refugee leadership structures are created by humanitarian organizations (Simon Turner, 2010).

While state permits allowed me to do research in camps, the requirement for refugees to obtain permits to leave the camps (a difficult or prohibitive process for many) contributes to their containment. Permits are a colonial technology, and part of what creates the carcerality of camps (Brankamp, 2019a). They re-enforce migration categories that originate in colonial racialized hierarchies, boundaries, and the differential governance of mobilities (Brankamp & Daley, 2020). I therefore struggle with state-approvals when it comes research with people contained

and marginalized by the state (which may be equally difficult in “Global North” contexts including Canada, where immigration detention is invisibilized and rendered difficult to access (Maillet et al., 2016)). There is an ambiguity to *permitted* research in camps, defining who and how the boundaries of the camp may be crossed.

In some cases researchers have been denied permits to access to camps, both in other contexts of camp closure, as well as in Tanzania (P. F. Neto, 2017; Sommers, 2001). While restrictions on researcher entry are minor in comparison with restrictions on refugees’ mobilities, they may be part of further enclaving refugees, cutting them off from the wider world and witnesses (Maillet et al., 2016). Seeking permits, when possible, although a lengthy process and fraught with ambivalence, enables a crossing of boundaries. Permitted research may then critically engage such space and processes. Throughout the period of my research in Tanzania the increasing restrictions within the camp context included increasing regulation of those permitted entry to the camp. My visa documents were specifically checked when re-applying for camp entry permits after my preliminary research. While they were rarely checked on initial visits, they were noted with greater frequency when entering camps in the final months of my research, re-affirming my decision to strictly follow all research permitting procedures.

Many researchers have emphasized the productivity and importance of “the waiting field,” the difficulty of defining when research starts, and the learning that occurs while waiting (Engel et al., 2015; Magolda, 2000; Mannay & Morgan, 2015). Nevertheless, while waiting for permits I chose to actively delineate research activities. Part of the way I performed the boundary of *not* “doing research” while applying and waiting was by not undertaking an ethnographic notes practice during this time. Additionally, I did not seek out contact with people and organizations in the refugee sector, apart from those required to obtain my permits. These practices delineated not “doing research” while waiting. As I have done for many years, including prior to beginning my PhD studies, I read relevant journal articles, and closely followed news on Burundi, Burundian refugees, and the Tanzanian context, saving articles to an NVivo database when relevant to my research. As I also did so when in Toronto, this activity was not particular to being in Dar es Salaam, and did not require particular permits.

Being in a place shapes how one lives and learns, even if not performing or “doing” research (Fujii, 2015). I tried to balance the feminist notion of being “already in the field” (C. Katz, 1994) and always learning, with a decolonial ethics that we are not automatically

everywhere entitled to “know.” Ultimately, waiting, while uncertain and frustrating at times, was a privilege. The mobilities of researchers continue to be shaped by vastly uneven bordering processes, resources, and racialization (Canadian Association of African Studies, 2019; Engel et al., 2015; Holterman, 2020). Moreover, my permitting-process was starkly different from the waiting and uncertainty of those imprisoned by the camps I sought to enter (Hyndman & Giles, 2011; Maillet et al., 2016).

#### Uncertainties: Hardening Boundaries, Flexible Research

Sarah Turner (2013) writes of research in closed contexts that “boundaries between formal procedures and on-the-ground negotiations are often flexible” (p. 397). In my experience, the flexibility was largely one-sided: I became more flexible, rather than the “procedures,” reflecting the exceptional governance of camps. My research routines were shaped by initial permits and uncertainties, and continued to change due to the increasingly strict rules being applied to camp residents. The research context was also shaped by questions of suspicion and legibility (Brankamp, 2021c), and uncertainty surrounding the threatened closure of the camps.

#### Practicalities

I initially chose two camps for research, wanting to build flexibility into my preliminary research, and to use the full extent of my then-meagre networks, but also due to uncertainty around ongoing access. I only had a few initial contacts in the camps when planning my research and applying for permits, including a couple who had lived in the VRI (Rural Integrated Village) where I had conducted my Master’s research and had now returned to camps. These contacts were in different camps, and I was not yet sure which of these initial contacts might lead to meeting possible effective interpreters and constructive working relationships. Although my existing networks were incredibly limited, I preferred to work through them rather than through humanitarian organizations, in order to create a boundary between myself and humanitarian organizations in shaping the research. I thus chose to begin preliminary research in both camps. I was further wary about focusing on only one camp because of advice from staff at the Department of Refugee Services, who pointed out that access to a particular camp may be unexpectedly restricted. There had been protests around food distributions in Nduta camp in the weeks prior to my camp-entry permit application, and humanitarian staff had been evacuated. The protest was framed as a riot, and resulted in a heavy police response. Informal discussions at the Department of Refugee Services suggested that if protests recurred, my access to a camp

could be restricted (notes, 2017). Although such incidents did not recur during my research period, I also knew that having permissions for more than one site would allow flexibility to continue research if access to one camp became restricted.

When I received my permits I was told that I was not allowed to stay in either camp past 5:00 pm each day, and was encouraged to leave earlier if possible. I was not allowed to live in the camp, or the adjacent compounds.<sup>158</sup> Such restrictions vary in different camp research contexts. For example Aurore Vermilyen was able to stay overnight with families when conducting research in camps in Thailand, allowing for rich ethnographic observation of family lives, but was not able to do so when conducting research in camps in Burundi (Vermilyen, 2016). Curfews are boundaries on the permitted observation of camp life, so that little camp research seems to address life at night (or early morning, for that matter), despite the importance of evening time to activities of social reproduction and discussion, years of daily early curfews, and mandatory rotating security patrol participation for men (though see Jolliffe, 2016 on night time in camps in Thailand). It was only when back in Canada that the time difference meant that I sometimes received WhatsApp calls in what was the evening, night, or very early morning, from interlocutors who were awake because of the time difference, or simply because they could not sleep (a common complaint, due to stress, worries, and/or small children). It was across this vast distance, and when my formally permitted research had ended, that I heard the quiet of the camp at night—the loud chirps of insects were like the night sounds in the village where I had stayed only a few kilometres away; a baby fussing; the early crows of roosters. Less often, I

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<sup>158</sup> The restrictions on staying in the camps meant that when conducting research in Nyarugusu I chose to live in Makere, a village in close proximity to the camp, staying at a simple, religious-run guesthouse. It was a welcoming space, and I particularly valued chatting over shared meals with Tanzanians from the region, whose knowledge of local history and culture in this border-region was vast, but who were only involved in the camps in a minor way (registering religious baptisms and marriages in their parish records). From Makere, I was able to take a wide variety of transit options into the camp. I observed differences at the checkpoint when hitching a ride with a local NGO vehicle, a UN agency vehicle (often waved through, or only briefly checked), a shared taxi carrying several passengers to the Common Market (stopped, sometimes searched), or a motorcycle-taxi (sometimes waved through, sometimes stopped). I chatted informally with the wide range of humanitarian workers and local residents heading to, from, and through Nyarugusu. While conducting research in Nduta, I lived in Kibondo, which was the location of a UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees) sub-office, and offices of many other humanitarian organizations. I sublet a room in a house which was rented by two Tanzanians working for humanitarian organizations, and which provided camaraderie with people of similar ages. The distance to the camp was much further than at Makere, but I was usually able to receive rides as a “waiver”<sup>158</sup> on a UNHCR bus with the Tanzanian registration centre staff.

heard worry in the voices of those who called on occasional nights when gunshots were heard in a camp (usually due to banditry, often targeting successful commerçants (merchants)), or when rumours circulated of insecurity. Technology and relational ties reached beyond the boundaries of the camp, and the formal research period (Cuomo & Massaro, 2016; Hyndman, 2001; Ulmer & Cohen, 2016; Vermeylen, 2019) .

#### Decrees

The role of Tanzanian commandants in the camps reflects the exceptional nature of camp governance (Agamben, 1998). In camps the state exercises a form of sovereignty in the suspension of law. Camps become sites in which sovereignty is enacted through “petty sovereigns” who are delegated “prerogatory power” (J. Butler, 2004, p. 56), able to rule by decree, rather than through law (Arendt, 1966). In one camp, when I first arrived and reported to the commandant with my documents the commandant seemed immediately suspicious of me. He noted that he had the power to kick me out of the camp, and even the country, if he suspected I was spying or conducting activities other than research. He re-iterated to me many times that I should not take pictures. There seemed to be some uncertainty around the documents I presented, and specific unfamiliarity with COSTECH permits: why was my research from the Commission on Science and Technology, when it was not “Science” or technology research? There were also assumptions about methods: What was the questionnaire I would be using? I My permits and explanations did not seem to assuage suspicion. I was required to report in-person to the commandant everyday when I arrived in the camp, and just before I left. The check-in was simple, usually just a wave, and not concerned with the content of research, but it took time each day. It was framed as being for my own security, and was not part of my formal permissions from the Department of Refugees to be in the camp.

Daily reporting, and the waiting it inevitably involved, effectively reinforced to me the commandant’s power in the camp, and shaped the daily rhythms of my research. It allowed me to observe the many others also waiting near the MHA and UNHCR offices, and the activities taking place there at the beginning and end of each work day. After walking several kilometres within the camp for interviews I would find a bicycle- or motorcycle-taxi to get back to report before the time I was required to leave. Later, as rules hardened, bicycles and motorcycles were banned in the camp (both as taxis and for personal use)—stalling livelihoods, and making the delivery of goods and the mobility of people much more difficult. While less important than the

effects of this and other restriction on the lives of camp residents, the transport ban changed how I as a researcher moved through the camp—needing much more time to walk or hitch rides to the office each day, and thus shaped how I concentrated my research in specific zones. Walking through the camp was already significant in shaping observations and discussions in my research. I highly valued time walking as central to my research, but the ban on in-camp taxis along with the requirement to report each day reduced time for other research activities.

Rules were not the same across camps. In the other camp, the commandant seemed rarely present. I reported my presence to his staff, shared copies of my permits, and occasionally checked in to maintain cordial relations. One exception to the seeming disregard for my presence occurred during World Refugee Day events in the camp. I was briefly approached by uniformed officers while audio-recording a public speech, an activity said to be permitted by staff at the head office in Dar es Salaam, precisely because it was a broadly attended occasion with a wide audience. To the camp commandant, however, it was not allowed—over-ruling other permissions. After having all my documents checked, I switched to note-taking by hand for the remainder of the speech.<sup>159</sup> The role of the commandant in camp governance thus shaped research conditions unevenly and unofficially, echoing, in a relatively minor way, the broader exceptional and uneven shaping of life in camps.

Another rule which was introduced part-way through my research (through speeches made in the camps to accelerate return processes,) was a prohibition on “discouraging return” (Notes & Interviews, 2018). This was primarily intended as a threat to humanitarian agencies who were framed as attracting refugees to stay in the camp through the aid and services they provided. Indeed, a high-ranking UN agency staff member was banned from the camps on such grounds. I worried that my research, which had always been framed around discussions of “durable solutions” could be misconstrued as discouraging return. I regularly asked about questions about prior returns in the course of life history interviews, including how these now shaped perspectives on encampment and return. Many refugees shared challenging memories of past returns, shaping negative perceptions of future returns in response to these questions. I had

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<sup>159</sup> An additional irony of this occasion was that I never took pictures or recorded video in the camp, having been explicitly told on a number of occasions not to do so, but at these events many refugees and humanitarian workers were snapping photos and taking videos of the events on their phones. While some may have had formal permissions to do so for their respective employers, it is unlikely that all the personal phones present were “permitted.”

been open about exploring questions relating to return in all of my research applications, and in my initial introductions within the camps. Nevertheless, given the ways in which rumours could operate in the camp, I wondered if asking questions about return could be framed as “discouraging return?” The atmosphere of suspicion in the camp (Brankamp, 2021d) made us alert and cautious in discussions about return.

#### Closure and uncertainty in camp research

Compared with the impacts on refugee lives, the uncertainty of fluctuating regulations only effected my research in a minor way. New rules frequently followed speeches urging return, and were part of the increasing pressure for refugees to “go back.” The spectre of return seemed to cloud the camps and the humanitarian sphere surrounding them with an atmosphere of increased uncertainty. Speeches and suddenly decreed rules changed the nature of camp boundaries—tightening and hardening the limits of the camps, with some restrictions changed temporarily, while others hardened the camp borders and limited life in the camp in a more enduring manner (Notes & Interviews, 2018). They raised the question: how soon would the camps close?

In 2017, an international agency officer suggested he had pertinent information and believed that the refugees could be gone by the following year (Notes, 2017). A Tanzanian parliamentary speech in 2018 stated the camps would be closed by the end of 2019 (Waziri wa Mambo ya Ndani ya Nchi, 2018). The following year Amnesty International reported “a leaked, confidential document” also suggesting return would be pushed regardless of voluntariness, closing the camps again: “The bilateral agreement signed by Tanzania’s Minister for Home Affairs Kangi Lugola and Burundi’s Minister of Interior Pascal Barandagiye on 24 August states that the new planned returns process would begin in the “second week of September and be completed by 31 December 2019” and that “returns would continue with or without refugees’ consent”” (Amnesty International, 2019a). Some humanitarian staff working in the context echoed concerns about immanent closure, wondering openly what humanitarian organizations would do if the army simply showed up with trucks (Notes, 2018); others were more cautious, also drawing on past experience. Previous closures were threatened and planned for many years before they actually took place. In informal conversations some scholars noted the geopolitics of threats of return in the region (and particularly regarding Kenya), including connections between threats of return and negotiations for additional humanitarian funding (Notes, 2017-8). I

wondered if the long, drawn-out return and closure process would be the same as in the past, or if camp closures would be different under the administration of a President nick-named “the Bulldozer” who was known for getting things done quickly (Notes, 2017). I never felt confident either way.

This uncertainty surrounding the future of the camps echoed the experience of Opportuna Kweka, whose doctoral research took place in the early 2000’s in camps in the same districts as my research (Kweka, 2007). During her preliminary fieldwork she was advised the camps could close, and that research with refugees might not be possible. She developed a flexible approach to her research, incorporating additional questions for research with officials, rather than relying solely on the possibility of research with refugees, and using diverse archives, satellite images, and maps (Kweka, 2007). In the context of shifting and closing camps along the “Balkan route,” Minca outlines the need for “makeshift” methods (Minca, 2021). While not formally outlining flexible methods, I kept in mind how my research could change—particularly if access to camps by researchers was restricted ahead of closures, as it had sometimes been restricted in the past. Ultimately, the camps did not close during Kweka’s doctoral research, or during mine—though in the years between our research projects they had indeed closed and reopened, forcing former refugees across borders, and seeking to contain them once again. (Since my research Mtendeli Camp closed once again in 2021.)

The uncertainty and threat surrounding closure did not end when I reached the end of my research timeline and returned to Canada. Threats of closure, and new restrictions on life in the camp, continued.<sup>160</sup> I was (and remain) uncertain whether the camps would close before I finished drafting, editing, and defending my dissertation. This uncertainty is far less grave and ontological for me than for those who live in the camps. Yet, precisely because of the relationships forged through research it weighed heavily on me throughout the dissertation process. Just as many participants in my research in VRIs (Rural Integrated Villages) had left the villages before I finished writing my Master’s thesis (Weima, 2015), some research participants have left the camps while I am still writing—though, to the best of my knowledge from a distance, many remain.

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<sup>160</sup> I followed these through local and international news coverage and through grey literature and humanitarian press releases, news pieces, and reports. I also received messages sent by Burundians in the camps.

## Ethical Boundaries of Research Recruitment in and beyond Camps

### Lives beyond camp boundaries told from within

Brankamp notes how “permits and papers are the bureaucratic currency needed for people's circulation within and beyond the camp” (Brankamp, 2019a, p. 73). While my privileged access to the appropriate permits and visa meant that I could easily enter the camp, access to permits to leave the camps was much more difficult for those imprisoned by encampment. Burundians without permits outside of camps are frequently framed as nefarious, linked to insecurity in government speeches, and the subject of campaigns to identify and deport “illegal migrants” (The Citizen, 2013). They are the nationality most frequently deported from Tanzania (Mulisa, 2020). While many “town refugees” self-settled in Tanzania in the 1970’s (Malkki, 1995a), Burundians who self-settled in later years were not recognized as refugees unless they moved to camps. Despite the long history of this practice, they face increasing precarity in seeking homes and livelihoods outside of camps (Brankamp & Daley, 2020; Masabo et al., 2018; Whitaker, 1999). Preliminary interviews with high-ranking civil servants in the Tanzanian Government’s Department of Refugees recognized the widespread practice and emphasized their strict stance: “...that's why we [...] carry out a number of –many times – operations, to nab them, refugees, and take them to the camps” (Interview, Dar es Salaam, 2017). Such interviews, along with awareness of forced encampment and deportation from prior research with returnees (Weima, 2015), shaped the “boundaries” of this research. The presence of researchers can draw unwanted attention, and may increase the risk of detection for people wishing to remain clandestine (Khosravi, 2018; P. F. Neto, 2017).

“Bounding research” to limit interviews with refugees to those with recognized status in camps did not necessarily mean excluding the experiences of Burundians outside of camps. Although Burundian refugees in Tanzania are categorized by legal status based on a single border-crossing and current encampment, their life stories reach far beyond simplified trajectories, and many included long periods outside of the camps in Tanzania (or in some cases Rwanda or the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)). These stories locate the camps, their boundaries, and their categories, within the broader political and economic landscapes and transnational migratory fields that in which people who have experienced displacement seek livable lives.

For example, Basabose, a man in his 60's, was initially a refugee in an "old settlement" in 1972, but moved to a fishing town on the lake with his wife: "[when we arrived] we didn't have anything" he recounted,

... [but] we met people, Burundians, [and] they had fishing boats. We had to beg there, so that we could work for them for a sum [of money] to dry fish [...]. So, I started learning fishing, and I was a fisher, and it's like that I gained the money to buy the fishing boat.

Eventually Basabose earned his own boats, employing both Burundians and Tanzanians. His wife sold fish, and his eight children studied. They lived on the lake for two decades and felt stable because of the refugee permits they had sought and possessed.

In 1993 the assassination of Burundian President Ndadaye instigated a civil war, and hundreds of thousands of new Burundian refugees began to arrive in Tanzania—but, as detailed in Chapter III, the policies towards refugees there had changed (Chaulia, 2003; Kweka, 2007). The Tanzanian government began to enforce strict encampment policies, and in 1997-8 conducted campaigns to capture foreign residents residing "unlawfully" in Tanzania, primarily targeting the region bordering Burundi (Human Rights Watch, 1999). Despite the permits that had made them feel safe, Basabose's family was subject to arrest without warning at 2am one morning. He says that perhaps his permits had been "cancelled" by the general leading the campaign. While most of the family was brought to Mtabila, one of their children disappeared during the raid: "maybe he is already dead, but we don't know... we haven't had news of him since that time. That's a reason this country is difficult for us." All of their belongings were left behind, including the boats he had worked hard to earn. They re-started life in the new camps, no longer willing to risk seeking life outside, despite their prior de-facto integration (Long, 2011; McEwan, 2005; Staeheli, Ehrkamp, Leitner, & Nagel, 2012).

The limits to passing "as Tanzanian," and to negotiating and establishing life beyond camp boundaries, was common in many trajectories.<sup>161</sup> For example, Niyonzima had lived in many different Tanzanian villages. Initially, in the 1980's, he negotiated for land with village leaders, and had few problems establishing his farm and family there. Later things became more difficult. In interactions with police, such as at rural road checkpoints, he drew on his language

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<sup>161</sup> On how "passing" continues to shape the lives of naturalized Tanzanians, see Daley, Kamata and Singo (2018); On markers and strategies for "passing" at checkpoints (and in society more broadly) in Sri Lanka, for both researchers and civilians, see Hyndman and De Alwis (2004, pp. 551-552).

skills, local knowledge, and small bribes when needed. For example, he described a time he was stopped:

I lied to them. I said, ‘yes, I am Tanzanian,’ because I know a lot of Swahili like Tanzanians, but they had doubts. They asked my grandfather's name. I lied to them again. Then they said, ‘take off your clothes,’ and they said, ‘no, no, you are not Tanzanian.’

Seeing the location of his vaccination scar they could tell he had received it in Burundi, not Tanzania (a biopolitical marker that was not foolproof for Burundians raised in Tanzania before the 1990’s). On that occasion, he negotiated further: “By luck, God saved me: I paid 10,000 [Tanzanian Shillings] and they let me go.” He soon decided to move to the camps due to the pressure and tension his family faced (in the 1990’s) and his inability to continuously pay such sums. Later, living outside the camps again he was caught and deported (in 2013) (in the large “Operation Cyclone” (The Citizen, 2013)). He then tried returning to farm rice with help from a Tanzanian friend far from his previous sites, but was caught, imprisoned, and then forced to move to a camp (in 2015). Having been dispossessed of his harvest and goods twice, he says he now intends to remain in the camp.

From within the camp such stories traced changing refugee management and migration policing. Camp boundaries hardened, making life outside of camps increasingly difficult. For some Burundians, moving to a camp was a strategic choice in a challenging campscape. Despite incredible efforts, and long-term convivial relationships in Tanzanian communities, others were arrested and dispossessed of their goods, facing fines, imprisonment, and encampment or deportation. These stories of policing ‘spatial disobedience’ (Tazzioli, 2020) attest to the fact boundary transgression is ‘not evidence for the camp’s less-than carceral nature, but expressions of a strong autonomous will to circumvent its constraining geography’ (Brankamp, 2021, p. 15). They reinforced my decision to not conduct research with refugees outside of camps, which could increase their visibility and risk of identification and encampment. Nevertheless, in highlighting varied experiences beyond camps, such narratives complement a methodological approach to camp research, which opposes encampment by highlighting how refugees’ have negotiated livable, convivial lives, transgressing camp bounds.

While I did meet Burundians (of varied migration statuses) outside of the camps while in Tanzania, I did not seek them out and did not try to conduct more formal research with them. The encounters inform my understanding of the context, but they are not central to my analysis.

Camps, their contexts, and researchers ourselves, vary greatly and change through time, as do spaces beyond camps, so I am not suggesting that my constructed boundaries are universal. For example, Sommers (2001) and Mann (2010) conducted careful research with clandestine refugees and asylum seekers in urban Tanzania, continually weighing ethical risks, and working to limit the attention they might draw to participants. Importantly, they took cues from their participants—trusting their expertise in navigating lives beyond/refusing encampment. The rural, border region, however, does not afford the same urban anonymity—including for researchers. My boundary derives from weighing study of the context with self-reflexivity on my linguistic and contextual inexperience and limitations in ethically navigating this highly sensitive campscape.

Boundaries within the camp: Reconsidering research boundaries and ethics

Just as refugees are imprisoned by encampment, people without formal refugee or asylum seeker status are excluded from the aid and protection provided to recognized camp residents. This does not mean that all people living in camps are legally recognized. In Tanzania, *prima facie* recognition of Burundian refugees ended in 2017. For months, new arrivals were classified as asylum seekers, but later all new Burundian arrivals were turned away, although other regional countries continued to receive and recognize Burundian refugees (Notes; Interviews, 2018). Nevertheless, both refugees and humanitarian organizations acknowledged that individuals and families continued to arrive clandestinely to the camp. They suggested that these new undocumented arrivals included people who had recently repatriated to Burundi through the Voluntary Repatriation (VolRep) program, but had in some cases received threats or felt insecure upon return. While the presence of unrecognized forced migrants in the camps is pertinent to challenging the categories and boundaries created by encampment, I did not seek to identify or interview them as it could draw attention to their presence and increase their risk of arrest and deportation. In this case, the temporal boundary of refugee recognition shaped where and with whom I felt ethically able to do research within the camp, as it also did after initial research in the camps formal departure centre (See Appendix O on the departure centre, and my decision not to do further research there).

The boundary of the camp, and the temporalities of refugee recognition thus shaped my decision to stop doing research with refugees at the departure centre, as they prepared to cross camp and state boundaries, and to not seek to do research with those who arrived clandestinely in

the camp. The decision not to conduct interviews at the departure centre meant that even though many Burundian refugees left or registered to leave Tanzania during my research period, few who left or were anticipating leaving are included in my broader sample. As discussed above, the intention of my life history approach was never to have a fully generalizable sample. The sample remains incredibly varied, and the inclusion of those leaving would have meant less diversity of experiences and perspectives among those remaining—there would have been an imperfect bounding regardless. Conscious bounding acknowledges the limits of the research, and refines the research focus and contributions, rather than feigning an un-situated, disembodied and generalizable perspective (Haraway, 1988). It is also attentive to the ways that a context can change: “when and what is sensitive and who might be vulnerable to the risks resulting from participation in research is not always clear and safeguarding human subjects requires consistent reassessment of risks and benefits during and after fieldwork” (Fujii, 2012; Shesterinina, 2018, p. 192). Simply being within the boundaries of the camp did not provide clear ethical and methodological boundaries for research because of their porosity, and what their transgression by Burundians may mean for both humanitarian protection and risk in research.

## Conclusion

The boundaries of the “the field” are always blurred and contested within relational conceptions of space; researchers cannot assume that the field of camp research overlaps with officially gazetted boundaries of camps. Accordingly, research is increasingly situating camps within broader landscapes, and blurring their boundaries. Even so, in contexts where camp boundaries are being actively hardened researchers must be attentive to the possible effects of research across boundaries for those who are targeted by encampment. Research has an ethical imperative to challenge exclusionary boundaries and categories, recognizing the many ways these constructed boundaries are already and ongoingly crossed and contested. It must also conscientiously negotiate and even defer to boundaries in research when participants may otherwise be at risk because of the underlying violence which maintains camps as discrete spatial technologies of power. Although I was interested in researching the diverse trajectories of Burundian border-crossers, not only defined by encampment, I consciously chose to limit my research with Burundian refugees to within camp boundaries. Changing politics and immigration enforcement in Tanzania has shaped the negotiation of boundaries in the campscape, and creates

fear for Burundians living in exile. During my research within the camps, sudden decrees enacted through the exceptional space of the camp, changed rules in ways which hardened camp boundaries and aroused uncertainty through threatened camp closures. Thus, the dynamic performativity of boundaries shapes how refugees negotiate lives in camps, and how researchers access and seek to create knowledge in such spaces. Nevertheless, the stories that I heard reached beyond camp boundaries, and included experiences of seeking liveable lives in diverse places and situations not always of their own choosing. They weave an imperfect, incoherent, “minor cartography” of often invisibilised camp history (Tazzioli, 2020), bound up with the changing power and policing of camp boundaries shaping refugees’ spaces and trajectories in the broader camp over time.

Ultimately, I wonder if it is ethical to use the contradictions of camps and their boundaries as I have: I used the protection and status afforded to recognized Burundian refugees in camps to reduce the risks of participating in my research, while at the same time this protection is tied to their containment. While research in camp contexts involves other risks and uncertainties, the research subjects in this project were not at risk of being identified or forcibly encamped through my research, as they were already identified, and already within the camp. Is this bounding of my research to the camp really ethical if it relies on the convenience of captivity? As Maillet et al (2016) note in their discussion of research in obscured places, ethical questions may be challenging and access may be difficult, but not conducting such research would “add to the silences of research and analytical understandings of these phenomena” (Maillet et al., 2016). Here the stories shared, and the ways they move in and out of camps, are a counter-boundary-politics to that which seeks to (but can never entirely) contain and exclude.

## VI. Enduring displacement, enduring violence: Burundian refugees' decades of displacement within and beyond categories

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*En grosso modo, I am a refugee of all the years*

*(Leah, Interview, 2018)*

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Leah is a Burundian refugee and has resided in a camp in Western Tanzania since 2015—however it is not the first time she sought refuge, nor is seeking refuge the only displacement she has experienced. Born and raised in a refugee camp in Rwanda, Leah first returned to Burundi in 1993 as an adult, both due to the increasingly insecure situation in Rwanda, and to visit her husband's family after their marriage in the camp. Months later she fled violence in Burundi, this time to Tanzania. Forced to return to Burundi in 2012, she did not have any specific place to which to return, nor was she able to establish an adequate livelihood. She regularly crossed the border to Tanzania for work until 2015, when she crossed the Tanzanian border to seek refuge, again. While official statistics are not available, experts estimate that 60-90% of Burundians who sought refuge in Tanzania since 2015 were previously refugees at least once before (My interviews, Dar es Salaam and Kibondo, 2017; Peter, 2015). Many have experienced multiple, prior forced migrations—sometimes from several countries—and have made and remade lives in diverse settings, yet have still found themselves now in camps (again). Research with Burundian refugees in Tanzania has been rich, highlighting the differences in management and diverse experiences of refugees in camps compared with those in villages; settlements from the 1970's and newer camps; or those living in urban areas with or without recognition, compared with camps (Daley, 1993; Daley et al., 2018; Hovil, 2016; Kweka, 2007; Malkki, 1995a; Miletzki, 2014; Sommers, 2001; Simon Turner, 2010). In diverse settings, at different times, different narratives about displacement emerge—including, ranging from a homeland and return orientations, to desire to fit-in as Tanzanian citizens (Daley et al., 2018; Malkki, 1995a).

Although the primary research for this paper was based in two camps, by drawing on life history interviews, it highlights how many Burundian refugees have moved between camps and other sites. Their narratives draw attention to displacements and place-making not considered in dominant refugee imaginaries—including displacements of encampment, camp closure, and return.

Numerous scholars in refugee studies draw attention to how top-down labels and categories do not adequately describe actual experiences and trajectories of displacement (Agier, 2011; Bakewell, 2000, 2008; Crawley & Skleparis, 2018; Gupte & Mehte, 2007; Pratt, Johnston, & Banta, 2017; Zetter, 1991, 2007). Nor are refugees living in camps homogenous communities (Agier, 2003, 2011; Daley, 1991; Hyndman, 1998; Simon Turner, 2010). Less attention has challenged the broader categories and dominant framings of displacement trajectories tied to sites of encampment for people living in camps. The labelling of a *Protracted Refugee Situation* (PRS) is based on a singular extended period of exile (usually in a camp, and always in the “Global South”), even in contexts of recurrent forced migration (Hyndman & Giles, 2017b; Loescher & Milner, 2005; Miletzki, 2014; UNHCR, 2004).

Between 2015 and 2017, 242,340 Burundian refugees were registered in camps in Tanzania, while more than 173,000 Burundian refugees were recognized in Uganda, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)(UNHCR, 2017d). There is now increasing recognition of the *recurrent* nature of their forced migration (Hovil, 2016; Hovil & Bueno, 2016; Peter, 2015). Yet even recurrent refuge may be imagined as repeated one-way trips, tracing and re-tracing the same routes to camps and back. Reality is more varied. There is increasing recognition of recurrent refuge, even after so-called ‘durable solutions,’ in many situations including Rohingya and Afghan refugees (McVeigh, 2018; Wake, 2018). My research finds that many Burundian refugees’ trajectories defy this spatial imaginary, as do their experiences of displacement.

Rather than seeing displacement and non-displacement as binary, recent scholarship has suggested that they be seen on a continuum (Bjarnesen & Turner, 2020; Vigh & Bjarnesen, 2016). This research highlights how experiences of displacement extend beyond formal categorization of refuge and may include “solutions” and return. Indeed, formal categorizations which fail to recognize how displacement endures can themselves contribute to displacements’ continuation. I argue that the rather than recurring, many Burundians experience their current

displacement as *enduring*. For example, even though many “post-2015” Burundian refugees had experienced prior displacement, their “situation” was not considered “protracted” until 2020—effacing longer histories of displacement. Rather than separate instances of displacement, interspersed with periods of non-displacement, ongoing displacement is linked to past displacement in a continuum, rather than temporally distinct. Further, displacement is prolonged through its very categorization as separate, distinctly “solved” instances.

This chapter begins with an overview of critiques of refugee labelling and categories. I highlight dominant spatial and temporal imaginaries of the trajectories of encamped refugees in relation to refugee management and ‘solutions’ to displacement. It proposes a theory of displacement as a process which may endure beyond and be extended by formal recognition and solutions. The chapter outlines the context of Burundian refugees in Tanzania which defies the dominant imaginary of refuge as a one-time, one-way migration; return as a durable solution; and displacement primarily defined through flight from a “country of origin”; and PRS only counted five years after the most recent refuge recognition (in spite of prior decades in exile). Challenging essentializing stories is a strength of life history research methods, which I discuss as an introduction to narrative vignettes of three life histories. The vignettes illustrate the diversity of Burundian refugees’ trajectories of enduring displacement. I contend that their experiences blur past and current categories and framings.

A multiplicity of trajectories: challenging sedentarist logics and linear geographical imaginaries of encamped refugees’ journeys

The international organizations and governments that manage displacement in camps often reproduce a salient but facile geographical imaginary: that refugees are displaced to another country, but will return home someday—two one-way, one-time movements, with the second re-tracing the first. For example, the 2015 electoral violence in Burundi and subsequent displacement is often cited as the temporally-bound cause of recent displacement (S. Bigirimana, 2021), disconnected from longer histories of state violence, forced migration and return. When refugees’ prior displacement is acknowledged, state officials (and some humanitarians) claim that many Burundians who fled in 2015 are “used to” refuge—or, in other words, that they are aid dependent due to their long prior encampment—and merely took advantage of the situation in 2015 to benefit from aid (Interviews, 2017-8). The solution, within such an imaginary, is to coerce return by making camp conditions unliveable. The complexities of prior trajectories are

effaced, including the displacements of long-term encampment and prior forced return. The fact that prior returns were not durable for many is ignored in the enduring emphasis on return as the durable solution for Burundians. Presentist state and humanitarian narratives efface the complexities of Burundian refugees reasons for flight, many of which are entangled with factors related to prior displacements, and pre-date 2015.

This chapter analyses homogenizing, taken-for-granted spatial and temporal stories, or geographical imaginaries, associated with the refugee label and related groupings, and the effacements resulting therefrom. Issues of representation have been a central concern of forced migration and refugee studies for several decades (Black, 2001; Crawley & Skleparis, 2018; Fresia, 2007; Zetter, 1988, 1991). Debates in the field have centred on the power, limitations, and implications of humanitarian and governmental categories, groupings, and labels including ‘refugee’ (Bakewell, 2008; Bataresh, 2019; Zetter, 1988).

The *refugee* label names a bureaucratic and legal category that is dynamic—shaping and shaped by geopolitics, the nation-state system, globalizing capitalism, and intersecting co-constructed categorizations embedded in social hierarchies, including race, gender, and class (Adelman & McGrath, 2007; Brankamp & Daley, 2020; Daley, 1992; Giles, 2012). Labels are also correlated with framing—the continual construction of narratives shaping understandings of what a label means. Moncrieffe (2007) notes that framing stories are often simplified, so that “contending stories—those that make the complete person and that put the problem into its wider historical and social context—become hidden.” The refugee label is critiqued because it is bound up with imaginaries that homogenize those it labels and exclude other forms of displacement—with material affects (Gupte & Mehte, 2007).

Many aspects of the imaginative geographies that shape the spatial ordering of the world are relevant to refugee imaginaries (Brankamp, 2019b; Cox, Durrant, Farrier, Stonebridge, & Woolley, 2020). Bordering and the nation-state system are notable geographical imaginaries—powerful ways of knowing and organizing people in space that are often taken-for-granted as natural, but are constructed and maintained. Along with related ways of dividing Earth and its inhabitants (eg: North/South, West/Rest), they undergird modern definitions and policies pertaining to refugees (Gregory, 2009). A related but less examined spatial imaginary is that of trajectories associated with refugees.

Imagined refugee trajectories are differently constructed across space and time, in relation to the geopolitics of refugee and migration management and “solutions” (Chimni, 2004). The refugee category as applied to encamped refugees in Eastern Africa implies a simple spatial and temporal trajectory: past (one-way, one-time, border-crossing) displacement; provisional containment (often through encampment); future return (or other sedentary settlement) as a “solution.” The term *trajectory* is itself laden (Massey, 2005). It can imply destined routes—predetermined temporal and spatial courses, with future directions foretold (Massey, 2005, pp. 12, 25-16, 70). But trajectories can also be conceived of relationally and openly, highlighting manifold, dynamic, coexisting trajectories (Massey, 2005, pp. 12, 64). Related to the way that critical refugee studies scholars have challenged the power/knowledge relation of humanitarian label and categorizing above, Massey argues that “insisting on the multiplicity of trajectories” contributes to “expose and undermine the power/knowledge relation” through which uneven “geographies of power” are maintained (Massey, 2005, p. 64).<sup>162</sup>

The “there-and-back-again” imaginary of encamped refugees in Eastern Africa differs from other spatial-refugee imaginaries. For example, Frontex, the European Union border and coast guard agency, maps migrants and asylum seekers worldwide through another dominant imaginary: people on the move, particularly from the Middle East and North Africa, are seen as following straightforward routes to Europe. These maps are part of the knowledge creation justifying externalization and containment efforts including deportation, as well as interception and return (van Houtum & Bueno Lacy, 2019). Both trajectory-imaginaries rely on closed conceptions of space, seeking to “tame” and uphold hierarchical divisions of space through the definition and management of “undesirable” or “out-of-place” people on the move (Agier, 2011; Cresswell, 1996; Massey, 2005; van Houtum & Bueno Lacy, 2019).

Existing critiques of refugee categories highlight how refugees’ experiences often do not align with the imaginaries tied to their labelling—particularly those that seek to distinguish refugees from so-called “voluntary” or “economic migrants” (Bakewell, 2002, 2008; Crawley &

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<sup>162</sup> Massey (2005) did not use ‘trajectories’ to apply only to movements by people between locations (though this was one way she used the term), but also more generally to processes of spatial change through time. Massey theorized that space can never be separated from time, so immobility at a location over time is also a trajectory. Immobility takes (and creates) place in relation to other trajectories. Immobility in a camp is as much a dynamic trajectory as a cross-border movement. Trajectories of encamped immobility meet up with, shape, and are shaped by the trajectories that create and enforce the bounding of the camps, demarcate the border, etc.

Skleparis, 2018; Fresia, 2007; Kay & Miles, 1988). For example, interviewing people arriving in Greece in 2015, Crawley and Skleparis (2018) highlight “complex and messy social realities” not captured by existing categories, noting that many people they interviewed had not initially planned to travel to Europe. Rather, most spent months, years, or decades in countries of refuge before moving again, often due to political and economic difficulties, discrimination, and fear of forced return. Accordingly “their onward migration can be considered a separate migration experience driven by its own motivations, decision-making, planning and aspirations” (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018, p. 9). These movements challenge “the categorical fetishism” which sees migration categories as naturally distinct, rather than politically constructed. Even the idea of “transit migration” which is meant to acknowledge the “increasingly protracted and fragmented nature of journeys to Europe” still assumes a linear trajectory between two fixed points (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018, p. 4). Increasingly, research on contemporary migration (including forced migration) to Europe is drawing attention to ways that “migration is neither a single and permanent move from home to host nation, nor a single pattern” (McDowell, 2018, p. 473).

The territory of a formal refugee camp is often directly correlated with the refugee label for its inhabitants. This correlation may be due to the iterative representation of camps as the “proper place” for refugees, and the related biopolitical management of camp spaces (even when self-settled refugees live nearby)(Tallio, 2004, 2006, 2012). The label is defined by past forced border-crossing, which is taken-for-granted as a one-way, one-time flight—and, for most, by accepting to reside in a camp, or else be criminalized as an “illegal migrant” and, in the case of Burundians in Tanzania, subject to forced encampment, dispossession, prison, and/or deportation. Research challenging refugee categories and spatialities across Africa has emphasized the need for research away from camps—and particularly with self-settled and urban refugees (Bakewell, 2002; Jacobsen, 2006; Kihato & Landau, 2016; L. B. Landau & Duponchel, 2011; Madhavan & Landau, 2011; Sanyal, 2017; Sommers, 1999, 2001). This expanded scope allows for new understandings of displacement and exclusion, as well as livelihoods, agency, and belonging, reflecting diverse realities of refugees and migrants today. Numerous scholars highlight how forced migration exists within broader transnational migratory fields (Bakewell, 2000, 2002; Brankamp & Daley, 2020; Daley, 1993; Fresia, 2006, 2014; Ikanda, 2018; Tallio, 2004; Thiollet, 2014). Such research illustrates that refugee movements are often bound up with longer patterns of border-crossing (Agier, 2011; Boeyink, 2022; Fresia, 2008; Thiollet, 2014)

(and being “crossed-by” borders (Anzaldúa, 2007)<sup>163</sup>) —including for people currently living in camps. If camps and the people in them are also not theorized as “cut-off,” but situated in broader contexts, then research within camps can join research situated outside of camps in challenging conceptions of refugee categories and spatialities.

Discussing entrenched camps in East Africa, Giles argues that “by segmenting these sites, politicized humanitarianism runs the risk of framing women's and men's lives as disconnected from a past or future, and from other women and men; and as existing outside of the continuum of mobility and livelihood” (Giles, 2012, pp. 217-218). They are caught in protracted refugee situations (PRS) —the recognized exile of groups of over 25,000 refugees in developing countries for over five years, and often for decades (Loescher & Milner, 2005, p. 154; UNHCR, 2004). Previously the majority of PRS were in Africa, and mostly applied to encamped refugees (Loescher & Milner, 2005), though refugees in other contexts, including Afghan refugees have also been categorized this way for decades. Hyndman and Giles link the term PRS to a “sedentarist metaphysics” in which encampment contains, but also cares for people on the move. Those whose lives have been disrupted by displacement are immobilized but kept alive. If they leave sanctioned spaces of refuge, they are often represented as a threat to other potential host states, no longer an object of humanitarian charity. Hyndman and Giles draw on geographer Tim Cresswell, who argues that “the metaphysics of sedentarism is a way of thinking and acting that sees mobility as suspicious, as threatening, and as a problem. The mobility of others is captured, ordered, and emplaced in order to make it legible in a modern society” (Cresswell 2006, 55 qtd in Hyndman & Giles, 2011).

Encampment is one-such capturing of “the mobility of others,” as is the emphasis on return (Hyndman & Giles, 2011; Malkki, 1995b). The humanitarian favouring of sedentarist management and solutions (in spite of operating in what are actually highly transnational settings) is particularly evident in Ikanda’s research in Kenyan refugee camps (2018). He traces how possibilities for resettlement hinge on humanitarian perceptions of vulnerability, favouring refugees who are unable to make lives outside of the camp, and who do not have relatives with Kenyan ID cards. Yet the life of the camp has been shaped by a transnational borderland context, including relationships and activities that constantly transgress its boundaries (Ikanda, 2018) (B.

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<sup>163</sup> By being “crossed-by” borders, Anzaldúa (2007) refers to people who lived in the places through which borders were drawn, where borders created territorial divisions between people.

J. Jansen, 2016). While supposedly a temporary response, Ikanda argues that “humanitarianism in its most recent guise puts a premium on long-term, disconnected camp residence,” creating distinctions between refugees based on when they had arrived (Ikanda, 2018, p. 593). Sedentarist metaphysics in managing displacement contains an imagined and ideal trajectory of resolving one-time displacement through encampment until permanent return. A different but related imaginary is tied to refugee resettlement to a third country—another UN-sanctioned durable solution. It is equally imagined as a one-time, linear, and ultimately sedentary response, resolving displacement.

Protracted refugee situations do not necessarily align with linear, homogenized trajectories of displacement—even when *prima facie* refugee recognition presumes simple “influxes” of displaced persons. As Loescher and Milner (2005) note, recurrent refuge is often a problem in situations of protracted displacement, including refuge after return. Repeated displacement may occur after “solutions” which were not durable (and which may have also been experienced as displacement, such as forced return). Recurrent displacement after return is in many ways a continuation (or protraction) of refugee situations that have not truly been resolved. The language of recurrence implies a simple repetition—the idea that people are tracing and retracing the same routes to the same places. Even when return occurs to the physical location from which people initially fled, it is never just a simple repetition of the same trajectory. Place is always in the process of changing through time, in relation to the diverse trajectories and people that populate it (Massey, 2003b). In this way places have trajectories, and so too, perhaps, does displacement. It too can be thought of as a process, rather than a fixed state, or experience in a single location.

Displacement is a broadly used term but rarely theorized. Recent scholarship in forced migration studies theorizes displacement and emplacement as a continuum, rather than binary and static states (Bjarnesen, 2016; Bjarnesen & Turner, 2020; Simon Turner, 2016a; Vigh & Bjarnesen, 2016). Displacement is thus not merely the result of forced movement between locations, but can be experienced in situ, when emplacement is prevented or curtailed (Elliott-Cooper et al., 2020; S. C. Lubkemann, 2008; Pull et al., 2020; Ramsay & Askland, 2020). Scholars have thus been more attentive to the temporalities of displacement—how it changes in relation to a sense of future security and continuity—rather than simply describing locational

moves. Yet, to borrow an out of context phrase from Massey (2005), perhaps this “proposition turns geography into history, space into time” (p. 5). *Place* can get lost in such theorizations.

Recent scholarship on displacement which looks beyond that deemed exceptional has been particular strong in pulling together the spatial, temporal, and thus always relational constitution of displacement (Elliott-Cooper et al., 2020; Pull et al., 2020; Ramsay, 2019). Building from attention to the temporal, Ramsay and Askland (2020) propose understanding “displacement as a rupture in the teleology of life, which derives from processes of dispossession” (p. 3). They are careful to note that teleological disruption alone (in other words, future uncertainty) is widely experienced, particularly due to capitalism’s creation of precarity, and is not distinctive of displacement (Ramsay, 2020b; Ramsay & Askland, 2020) .

This is where the *place* in *displacement* matters. The rupture of displacement is not only temporal, but equally a disruption to the particular experience of place that is a sense of home, and that this is due to “external forces” beyond individual control (Ramsay & Askland, 2020). This resonates with Elliot-Cooper et al.’s (2020) theorization of displacement as violent unhoming. While often seen as distinct from forced migration and refugee studies, urban scholars theorizations of displacement draw on case studies of displacement-in-place due to gentrification, as well as forced movement due to structural forms of violence in capitalism (Elliott-Cooper et al., 2020; Pull et al., 2020). To use more Masseyian terms, like experiences of place, displacement is bound up with the power geometries present in (but linked to places and process beyond) a particular locale, and the extent to which they allow and facilitate emplacement, or disallow and prevent it.

Such theorizations of displacement are attentive to displacement’s everydayness beyond “crises,” and formal labelling of refugees (Ramsay, 2020b). They have drawn on and allowed for new considerations “durable solutions” which are meant to resolve displacement, but in which displacement can endure. Recent case studies have traced how both naturalized and resettled former refugees may experience ongoing displacement due to state policies that curtail liveable lives and social belonging, and thus the ontological security of emplacement (Daley et al., 2018; Ramsay & Askland, 2020; Gawayed, 2022) . The same may be true following return, when former refugee status continues to shape ongoing exclusions and inadequate support for re-integration limits possibilities for secure emplacement (Daley, 2013b; Purdeková, 2016) (Weima, 2015). This is inarguably the case when “return” lasted less than three years for tens of

thousands of Burundians. Rather displacement endures through time, beyond the boundaries of formally recognized categories. Displacement is produced and prolonged by state and humanitarian management of forced migration.

#### Burundian Refugees in Tanzania: Context and Categories

While much research has analysed the changing state and humanitarian management of refugees in Tanzania, this research takes a different approach. I trace distinct journeys and places Burundian refugees have sought lives while negotiating changing contexts of displacement. Their varied routes and sites complicate the linearity of displacement and return. Rather, displacement for many has been produced and prolonged through policies and practices meant to manage and solve displacement.

Until 2015, it was common to give a quick overview of Burundian refugees in Tanzania, by quickly distinguishing the “1972 refugees” or “old caseload refugees” from the “distinct” “post-1993 refugees” in the new camps “who fled their homeland in the 1990s” (see for example Amnesty International, 2009; UNHCR, 2008; UNHCR & GoT, 2015; Wolfcarius & Ntwari, 2009). This shorthand cohort grouping lines up neatly with the dates of genocidal violence in Burundi, large “influxes” of refugees to Tanzania, and the distinct sites that sought to contain them through changing refugee policies. “Town refugees” are occasionally included as another distinct group of the “1972 cohort” (Malkki, 1995a), though they have just as often left-out when descriptions focus on issues and sites of relevance to state and humanitarian organization interventions. (Unlike in the 1970’s, most Burundians who self-settled at other times were not formally recognized as refugees unless they moved (or were moved) to camps.) For many Burundians who have again been recognized as refugees since 2015, and have again been forced to live in the camps created in the 1990’s, the shorthand categorizations simply did not fit in the 1990’s or 2000’s, and do not fit now.

Most recognized “1972 refugees” from Burundi lived the “old settlements” in Tanzania—large camps established in the 1970s in which refugees were allotted farm land, and encouraged to become self-sufficient. Others settled in villages and cities, especially in the border region—where they joined Burundians who had been settled in the region, crossed by the border, and crossing the border, for generations (Brankamp & Daley, 2020; Cochet, 2003; Daley, 1993; Gahama, 1983). (Just prior to Tanzanian independence one survey estimated that 15% of the population of Kigoma identified as Burundian, while many more had Burundian ancestry, but

had integrated to the point of identifying with local groups (Scherer, 1959).) Although “camp” and “town” refugees in Tanzania have been contrasted as distinct group identities (Malkki, 1995a), others have critiqued this binary, highlighting movement and relationships between people and sites in and outside of camps (Daley, 1996). By the 1990’s the management of refugees in Tanzania had changed, becoming much more spatially restricted. New camps allotted refugees small plots for shelters, rather than sufficient land for agriculture, reflecting broader changes in refugee policy globally, and particularly within Africa (Kweka, 2007; Milner, 2013; Ongpin, 2008). These sites came to define those residing in them as discrete cohorts.

The cohort categorization, emphasizing the distinctness of the two groups, is exemplified in official UNHCR communications on return for “1990’s refugees.” For example, an article published by UNHCR Tanzania and Burundi offices states: “The 1972 refugees differ from those who fled from Burundi to Tanzania in the 1990s and for whom UNHCR actively promotes return to Burundi. Numbering some 40,000, they are hosted at the Mtabila camp in the Kigoma region” (Wolfcarius & Ntwari, 2009). For those living in the newer camps, their trajectory was broadly painted as a direct flight from Burundi in the early 1990’s. Schwartz (2019) notes that the “1993 caseload” is a “misnomer” better describing the refugees place of residence in the “New Settlements” because it included those who had returned to Burundi before fleeing again (p. 123).

Longer and less-direct trajectories of migration were effaced, including the experiences of “1972 refugees” who ended up in the new camps. Of particular note, many “1972 refugees” who initially fled to Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo since 1996) or Rwanda were displaced to Tanzania by conflict in those countries in the 1990’s (Milner, 2013; Weima, 2015)(Interviews, 2017-8). Their experiences of refuge varied greatly, including settlement in camps, remote rural areas, villages, and cities—and movement between countries of refuge even prior to their arrival in Tanzania. Some who left Burundi in 1972, or at other times, and self-settled outside of camps were caught in immigration campaigns to “flush out” “illegal” residents. They were forced to the newer camps (or back to Burundi), often regardless of whether they had formal refugee status and official document or not (Human Rights Watch, 1999; Simon Turner, 2016a), or prior residence in the older settlements (Interviews, 2014; 2017-8). Others who had been in the old settlements had formally or informally returned to Burundi prior to renewed violence, and became refugees again, but were then grouped “1990’s refugees” based on their

most recent flight. A UNHCR report in 1993 estimated 30-40,000 of 245,000 arrivals were prior repatriates from the old settlements (Mposha, 1993, p. iii) and “had barely settled in areas of reintegration” and would have preferred return to the old settlements where they had established lives (p. 2) This does not include any estimate of “1972” refugees arriving to and/or from Rwanda and Zaire, either directly, or via Burundi after prior repatriation. Similarly, “1972” and “1990’s” refugees who were repatriated or deported prior to 2015 were re-categorized as “2015” refugees if they were again recognized as refugees and placed in camps in or following 2015.

Often, in the multiple movements of the mid-1990’s large groups moved between countries, including 15,000 Burundian refugees from Kibeho, Rwanda who returned to Burundi following the RPF victory in Rwanda, and then continued to Zaire (Dross, 1995). While effecting a smaller number, those from “old settlements” who had intended to return in 1993, but were still at departure and transit centres in Tanzania when Ndadaye was murdered in Burundi, were not permitted to return to their recent “old settlement” homes, but were transferred to the new camps. The 1972/1990 “groups” are thus much more entangled than implied by accounts that distinguish between the cohorts in quickly tracing the context of refuge in Tanzania, unintentionally invisibilizing more entangled and enduring histories of displacement.

Despite international accolades for the Tanzanian Government when it granted citizenship to 172,000 Burundians from the “old settlements,” not all Burundians who had sought refuge in 1972 were included. Their longer histories of forced migration of those who later ended up in the newer sites of encampment were effaced by their “1990’s” cohort labelling. Nearly all the “1990’s refugees” (the refugees in the camps created in the 1990’s, regardless of when they had sought refuge) were encouraged, coerced, or forced to return by 2012 (with a remnant identified for ongoing protection transferred to, and largely remaining still at Nyarugusu Camp). The final closure of Mtabila Camp is framed by UNHCR as “orderly return” (McKinsey, 2012; UNHCR, 2013a) effacing the violent displacement of tens of thousands of people (Hovil & Mbazumutima, 2012; IRRI & Rema Ministries, 2011, 2012a; Weima & Minca, 2021; IRRI, 2013a). (The closure of Mtabila is detailed and analysed in the following chapter).

The distinction continued after return, with aid groups providing additional assistance to those formally recognized as “the 1972 returnees” as opposed to those who fled in the 1990’s (Schwartz, 2019, p. 1266). While some returnees excelled, especially those actively involved in the political party in power, many faced difficulties in identifying and accessing their land, and

re-establishing livelihoods. Land conflicts were widespread and politicized, generating new forms of displacement (IRRI & Rema Ministries, 2009; Tchatchoua-Djomo et al., 2018). Programmes for landless returnees were insufficient, so that many were forced to migrate to seek livelihoods (Purdeková, 2016; Weima, 2015, 2016; Weima & Hyndman, 2018). The ongoing policing of “illegal” migration in Tanzania, including significant expulsions in 2013 (and again 2017 and 2019) (Bogdan, 2013; Karashani, 2019; The Citizen, 2017a), which deported former camp and town refugees alike (Interviews, Burundian VRI, 2014). (Burundians are the nationality most deported nationality in recent reports from Tanzania (Mulisa, 2020).) Binary cohort-categorizations, tied to distinct encampment sites, and the sedentarist logic underlying the emphasis on return as the ideal and permanent trajectory, shaped their life possibilities and further trajectories of forced migration.

“Refugees of all the years:” Burundian refugees narrate return after return

Sikujua Saidi

Sikujua Saidi chose a Tanzanian-sounding pseudonym because it is where she grew up and spent much of her life. She started her life story with a single-sentence summary of her various displacements: “First I fled in ‘72, and after in ‘93, and today I am here.” Over several interviews she told us how her grandparents brought her to Tanzania as a toddler after her parents had been killed in 1972. They built shelters, cleared land for cultivation, and began to establish livelihoods in a refugee settlement. Then Saidi and her grandparents were forced to move again due to flooding. Together with many other refugees they were brought to a new settlement. They cleared land and built shelters again. Years later fellow Burundians who travelled frequently between the countries told Saidi that they had seen her mother alive. An adolescent at the time, Saidi decided to return on her own to Burundi to look for her mother, but sadly, “it wasn’t her.”

After self-repatriation, Saidi says, “life was difficult because I wasn’t used to the place.” She soon married in Burundi, but her husband passed away. She was forced to move to a newly created village under a short-lived villagization scheme —another displacement. She was not able to grow vegetables near her house, and had to participate in collective cash-crop cultivation.

In 1993 the assassination of Burundian President Melchior Ndadaye was followed by genocidal violence and warfare. Saidi fled to Tanzania again, this time as an adult. She established a home in a fishing village where she still has friends today. Later, she was forced to

move to Mtabila camp. She lived at Mtabila for well over a decade, until the camp was closed in 2012. Saidi calls her forced repatriation from Mtabila torture, citing the use of guns and tear gas, as well as physical and sexual violence that she witnessed against other refugees. She was not allowed time to collect her belongings, and was thus dispossessed of the goods she had accrued in the camp after prior displacements.

Upon return to Burundi Saidi did not receive promised aid as a “returnee.” Her reintegration was made even more difficult by the fact that her late husband’s land was occupied. The land conflict was arbitrated by *abashingintahe*, traditional mediators, who decided that Saidi and the new occupant should share the land equally. Living next door to those who had taken her land meant ongoing threats of violence and re-appropriation.

Saidi sought refuge in Tanzania again in 2015, and was registered and settled in the camp where she lives now. She can pass as Tanzanian when needed, largely because she grew up and lived decades in Tanzania, but also because she was vaccinated in Tanzania. (Vaccination scars are a biopolitical marker presumed often by police to indicate nationality, as vaccinations are routinely given in a different bodily location in Burundi than in Tanzania). While I was conducting research, Saidi returned once, clandestinely, to Burundi to protect her land from encroachment—having received news from neighbours by phone. Passengers on busses in Kigoma region are frequently subjected to identity checks, but when her bus was stopped she passed as Tanzanian both in her speech and by mentioning the local leader of the village where she previously lived. She stopped in that village and stayed with another Tanzanian friend, but could not remain long despite having previously lived there. She felt that surveillance was now stricter and did not want to increase her risk of being caught outside the camp. In Burundi, too, Saidi felt insecure. She soon returned to the camp “under the radar.”

\* \* \*

Saidi’s trajectory has been deeply shaped by her exile in 1972—the first event noted in her introductory self-summary. In the Burundian context the naming of that year is a shorthand for the genocide against Hutu (Lemarchand, 2011), and the displacement of around 200,000 predominantly Hutu refugees. The more localized, flood-induced displacement from the first refugee settlement in which Saidi and her grandparents lived is not officially recognized displacement, as it did not change her formal status as a refugee. Fleeing home to live outside one’s country of nationality is the definitive criteria for “counting” refugee displacement.

Nevertheless, for Saidi and her grandparents this move involved re-establishing home again in a place that she was “not used to.”

The displacement Saidi experienced through centrally planned villagization is also not formally recognized. It did not take place during a recognized period of conflict in Burundi, but was implemented by an authoritarian government. Scholars link Burundi’s 1980’s villagization programmes to efforts at spatial reorganization for population surveillance and acquisition of land that refugees (and those killed) had vacated in 1972 (Kohlhagen, 2011; Lemarchand, 1996; Weima, 2015). The events of 1972 continued to shape Saidi’s experience of displacement in Burundi after return.

When Saidi fled to Tanzania again, her displacement to Mtabila camp from a fishing village is also not recognized as forced migration (though see Human Rights Watch, 1999). It was displacement within a country of refuge, dispossession of goods, separation from the community in which she had settled, and ‘starting over’ yet again. This new camp had a much stricter form of encampment than the settlements where she was raised.

For Saidi, return to Burundi from Mtabila camp was another violent forced migration, even though UNHCR frames Mtabila’s closure as “safe” and “dignified” (McKinsey, 2012) (UNHCR, 2012a). Returning to Burundi, Saidi experienced a qualitatively different displacement, sharing of half of her land with its occupier—a common outcome of mediated land conflicts (see Tchatchoua-Djomo et al., 2018). Finally, although she has lived in Tanzania most of her life, and is at times able to travel outside the camp ‘as a Tanzanian,’ she considers longer-term settlement in a village too risky, given current surveillance, and her prior experience of being caught. Refugees are expected to remain sedentary, within the bounds of the camp, despite the transnational fields in which the camps are located (Hyndman & Giles, 2011; Ikanda, 2018).

Like Saidi, many other “1972 refugees” in Tanzania were forced to camps established in the 1990’s—some without ever having returned to Burundi since 1972. For example, Basabose fled Burundi in 1972, and lived in all three old settlements, before moving to a village in Kigoma. After decades in Tanzania, his family was displaced from the village during a “round-up” in 1996. Disposessed of all his goods and home, he was imprisoned, and then placed in Mtabila, a “1990’s” camp. Another example is Ndayikengurikiye. He was born in an “old settlement” and given a Tanzanian name and education. He began the “return” journey through a transit centre in Kigoma province with his widowed mother in 1993. The assassination of the

first Hutu Burundian president, Melchior Ndadaye, occurred while they were at the transit centre, and was followed by genocidal violence, beginning the civil war in Burundi. They were unable to return. Ndayikengurukiye's mother passed away from cholera during an outbreak while stuck at the overcrowded centre—having never shown him the location of the land he would have inherited. Rather than returning to the old settlement where he had grown up, he was also taken to Mtabila. Finally, although the self-settlement of many 1972 refugees was formally recognized, (it is estimated that ~25,000 may still be recognized today,) many were nevertheless caught as illegal migrants and forced to camps in “round-ups,” especially in the late 1990's (Human Rights Watch, 1999). (Many more were deported in the mid-2000's and 2013 (ECHO, 2008; The Citizen, 2013; IOM, 2013).) In many cases their formal status (if they had any) appears to have been ignored, with no recourse for complaint after becoming grouped with 1990's refugees in the new camps. This reflects the changing refugee policy both in Tanzania and more broadly throughout the 1990's, and eventually led to forced-return for many. It is a displacement that has not largely been recognized because of the way the population of the 1990's camps were homogenously described as being those who fled Burundi in the 1990's.

Ndayishimiye Jean-Marie

Like Saidi, Ndashimiye Jean-Marie was a refugee from childhood. His trajectory is shaped by some of the same landmark political events and refugee-management policies, but takes different routes through different places. Jean-Marie also succinctly summarized his life-story at the outset: “I was born in Burundi and have been a refugee from when I was four years old until 2008. In 2015 I returned [to Tanzania to become a refugee again] and because I grew up as a refugee, life was not good and today this bad life (Kirundi: *ubuzima bubi*) continues.” Although his family is Tutsi, they too fled in 1972, seeking refuge in eastern Zaïre (present day Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)). They established their life in a rural area, rather than a refugee settlement, because of their ethnic difference from most other Burundian refugees. They spent over a decade in Mobutu's Zaire, forging a meagre subsistence through farming, and eventually moved to Rwanda with hopes of improving their livelihoods and security. In Rwanda, too, they settled in a rural area rather than a camp. They moved freely and continued farming. After more than a decade, they fled Rwanda in 1994, together with the hundreds of thousands of Rwandans who sought refuge in Tanzania due to civil war and genocide. After being moved between camps, Jean-Marie settled in Lukole Camp.

In Lukole Jean-Marie felt threatened. Burundian political groups claimed that Tutsi in the camp were spies who would give reports to the Burundian government. He spent many nights sleeping in the bush, rather than his house, afraid of being targeted and killed. In 2008, after twelve years in Lukole, he was forcibly repatriated to Burundi when the camp was closed.

Bussed to Burundi he did not know where to go on arrival. His parents had passed away in exile and following-up on their properties proved dangerous. Within months he fled to Uvira, a neighbouring city on Lake Tanganyika in DRC. He learned how to work as a fisherman and spent nights out on the lake in a boat. When conflict increased in Burundi in 2015 and camps reopened in Tanzania, Jean-Marie took a boat across the lake. He says, “I learned that there are Burundian refugees who came to Tanzania, and I took the decision to come and live with them and change my life because my life there was not good. And, the segregation [in DRC] took another turn. I risked rejection from the [welcome] I had there—they said I am Munyamulenge<sup>164</sup> because of my tall height.” After three months living in large shared hangers he was assigned a plot of his own. He has since married, and he and his wife have had their first child.

He recapped, “I’ve seen Burundi, and I’ve lived in Burundi, but I’ve never been at peace in Burundi.”

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Like Saidi, Jean-Marie Ndayishimiye’s story is shaped by “1972,” though his family was Tutsi, unlike the majority of Burundian refugees from both 1972 and in the 1990’s. They had to seek livelihoods, first in Zaïre, and then through their migration to Rwanda. These stories challenge the idea that Burundian refugees have become aid dependent due to long term exile. For many who have been refugees longest, long periods of exile were necessarily spent seeking their own livelihoods at times when their lives were not as strictly shaped by encampment. Like in Tanzanian settlements of the 1970’s, even those who did live in camps lived in Zaire were very highly self-sufficient through agriculture, and quite integrated with surrounding

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<sup>164</sup> Munyamulenge is the singular of Banyamulenge, a Tutsi Kinyarwandaphone group in Eastern DRC since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Mamdani, 2002). David Newbery writes: “the name is a neologism, it has nonetheless commonly been appropriated by outside observers (and Rwandan commentators, for their own purposes) to apply indiscriminately to all Kinyarwanda-speaking peoples (or sometimes only to presumed Tutsi Rwandan-speakers) in Congo today” (D. Newbury, 2005). Jean-Marie’s concerns about being misidentified as Munyamulenge likely relate to geopolitical tensions, and the dynamics of marginalization and conflict in the region (Kamanga, 2002; Mamdani, 2002)

communities. Rather, displacement was produced through state policies closing space to refugees (and former refugees) and curtailing their long term emplacement.

Jean Marie's story challenges the previously common "cohort categorization" of refugees. He had been a refugee since 1972, who had not returned to Burundi prior to his flight to Tanzania. He did not flee conflict in Burundi in the 1990's. Rather, he fled his second country of refuge, to a third, along with other Burundian refugees in Rwanda at the time. More Burundian refugees fled from Zaire to Tanzania in 1996, particularly when refugee camps were attacked during the First Congo War. Like other Burundian refugees who arrived in Tanzania in the 1990's from Rwanda and Zaire, Jean Marie was placed in a camp, and was therefore grouped as a "1990's refugee" despite his decades of exile.

Jean Marie's story again highlights forced return as a kind of displacement. In 2008, at forty years old, he had only spent the first four years of his life in Burundi—a place he could not remember, where he did not know anyone (apart from other returnees), and to which he was forced "home." His quick move to DRC in 2008 suggests a more complicated conflict and displacement timeline than a "2015" shorthand suggests.

Leah

Like Jean-Marie, Leah spent many years in Rwanda, which is where her story begins. Leah introduced her narrative by sharing a broader reflection on the conditions of her life, and linking the difficulties she faced to her parents' exile in 1972: "Thank you for taking the occasion to visit and listen to me," she began, "Normally, during my whole life, really, I lived. But I lived in a way that was sometimes hard, and sometimes good. But in large, most of the time, it was a situation that was not good, because my parents sought refuge in Rwanda [in 1972]. I was born in Rwanda in 1973." Her family lived through farming, and moved freely to trade in nearby towns. She married another refugee, and they attempted to move to Burundi in 1993: 'when the president Ndadaye Melchior was elected by universal suffrage, we took the decision to (re)patriate believing that peace reigned in Burundi again.' At the same time, conditions in Rwanda were becoming worrisome due to the civil war. Their return was informal. Her husband wanted to show his extended family that he was married, and to settle in his portion of his family's land, but neither his extended family nor hers welcomed additional claims to their property. Their inability to access land, and the violence following the assassination of President Ndadaye, forced them to flee less than three months later.

At first Leah and her husband lived in a Tanzanian village in the border region for three years. Then they were forced to a camp. While they had already crossed the border to seek safety, for Leah this move was important in terms of their categorization and the aid they received: “we received a ration card. We became real refugees.” Leah’s first children were born in Lukole camp, and she began an incentive position as a community health worker—drawing on skills she learned with organizations in Rwanda. Before Lukole camp closed, Leah and her family were interviewed by UNHCR and considered to still need protection. They were moved from Lukole to Mtabila camp, where her youngest child was born.

In Mtabila camp things became more difficult for Leah. Her husband divorced her and married another woman within the camp. This later made re-establishing life in Burundi more difficult: “the problem continued from when they closed Mtabila camp by force and we went to Burundi like the others; we didn't have anything, everything was pillaged. Arriving in Burundi: no property—but my husband returned with two women who don't get along.”

Leah described herself and her children as “thrown away” by her (former) husband. It was difficult for her to be able to feed her children, or to send them to school, which required them to have proper clothes. As a divorced woman, she did not have rights to land, and the so-called Peace Villages, or Rural Integrated Villages (for landless returnees), were already full. Seeing she had nowhere to go, a local official gave her a small house. Her adolescent son dropped out of school to return to Tanzania and seek a life (Fr: *chercher la vie*; Kir: *kurondera ubuzima*). Leah framed this as seeking refuge: “It's why he took the decision to take flight—it's like taking refuge, from such parents, because they don't want to understand each other, because he didn't want to continue to leave near people who don't understand each other, so he went to live elsewhere.” He found work and sent money back to support her, using a Tanzanian mobile money transfer system because she lived near the border.

Not having land, she crossed into Tanzania regularly, going to nearby towns on market days, and seeking agricultural work. She spoke with Tanzanians about cultivating land there, and was given a valley to grow rice, making agreements to give part of the harvest in exchange. One Tanzanian farmer in particular became “like family,” and they visited one another’s homes across the border.

Leah decided to return to Tanzania as a refugee in 2015, when her former husband came to convince her that it would be safer for their children to flee again. She too worried the tense

political situation could worsen. When she arrived, she and her children spent two days with their Tanzanian “family.” Then they settled in one camp before being moved to another. Her son who was working in Tanzania tried to rejoin her in the camp, but arrived too late to receive refugee status: “they had already closed the camp [to new arrivals] and there is no welcome for refugees.” He lived with them clandestinely in the camp, and she tried to seek a way for him be registered and receive a ration card “but in vain.” Leah explains “the child decided to return [to seeking a life outside of the camps in Tanzania], and up until now I don't know how his life is. But he's not [recognized as] a refugee; he arranged a way to leave the limits [of the camp].”

Leah paused to bring out her past and current refugee cards. Her current card lists her birthplace in Rwanda, and the Tanzanian camps in which her children were born. She now has grandchildren, also born in camps:

Up until now, in this precarious life I live--I was born in Rwanda but I don't know Rwanda and I can't return to Rwanda; I was going to return to Burundi, I found the family didn't welcome me, there is no property. And now I have children. I took refuge again, and up until now, I see that I am in a very precarious situation. I don't see what to do--for the children and for myself I don't see what comes next. See how many years I've lived here in Tanzania; I had my first child here in Tanzania, and all my children are born in exile. Me, I can say that I am Tanzanian when I am not Tanzanian. My children, I can say that they could be Tanzanian, but me, I don't see well what to do or say.

Later she summarized her story again, “Normally, myself, I can say it is 40 years that I am a refugee, because even in Burundi, I only spent one year and some months [...] *en grosso modo*,<sup>165</sup> I am refuge of all the years.”

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Leah's story is one of repeated, extended displacement. Arriving to Tanzania in the 1990's, she and her husband were brought to a camp from the village where they had initially made lives, and were grouped with “1990's refugees.” Her statement that she is a “refugee of all the years” defies the categorization of 1990's refugees as “distinct from” those who sought refuge in the 1970's, and points to the ways those displacements weave together with her present.

Leah's displacement is also shaped by her divorce. Land is important to Burundian identity and belonging. After *refoulement* from Mtabila, she arrived within the borders of her

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<sup>165</sup> The Latin phrase was used in the French interpretation, and I have decided to also keep in my English translation

country of citizenship, but did not have any land or home--a common problem for divorced returnee women because of patriarchal inheritance law (Saiget, 2017; Weima, 2015). Her son's ongoing migration, as well as her own border-crossing between 2012 and 2015, reflect transnational labour ties, long common across the Burundi-Tanzania border (Daley, 1993). Ongoing labour migration was necessary for the survival of many returnees, reflecting the inadequacy of re-integration measures in truly addressing the livelihood needs of many, particularly landless returnees (Falisse & Niyonkuru, 2015; Purdeková, 2016; Weima, 2015).

It highlights the precariousness of (forced) return as a durable solution, even prior to the 2015 re-recognition of Burundian refugees. Many interlocutors had crossed the border for work, trade, or access to land after their return to Burundi. Some informally established residence in Tanzania, leaving Burundi completely. This ongoing border-crossing is part of longer trajectories of labour migration and forced displacement in the region (Brankamp & Daley, 2020; Cochet, 2003).

Further migration management campaigns in border regions of Tanzania in 2013 forced thousands of Burundians to return to Burundi, some of whom had just been returned with the closure of Mtabila in 2012. While Leah was not affected by these campaigns, other life history participants were displaced yet again. This state migration management strategy contributed to the precarity of many who live and work in the border region without permits.<sup>166</sup> One interlocutor who had been forced to return to Burundi from Mtabila in 2012, was then forcibly deported in 2013 during a campaign in which thousands of Burundian and Rwandan “undocumented migrants” were expelled (IOM, 2014). He nevertheless moved back to Tanzania “irregularly” again just months later because his life was threatened.

Labour migration is differentiated from forced migration in state migration regimes, and as such was not officially represented in the documents that Leah presented. Refugee cards and identity documents are meant to be surrendered upon return but many interlocutors kept their documents or copies. They were often brought out during interviews. I sensed these documents were disclosed in an evidentiary role—verifying the displacements recounted and adding authority to the story. Such documents testify to the endurance of encampment, and the

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<sup>166</sup> There is a special temporary visa category for Burundian agricultural workers in Kigoma, Tanzania. Many work without it because they may ‘pass’ as Tanzanian, due to the cost, or because of government interactions involved in the application. They risk incarceration and deportation.

importance of categorical legibility in spaces of humanitarian governance, which has shaped many years of interlocutors' lives. The idea of "a refugee of all the years" ties these stories and displacements together, in an enduring story of exile after exile—not resolved, but extended, through the displacements of encampment and return.

Conclusion: Spatial imaginaries beyond recurrent refuge and return

For Leah, Sikujua Saidi, and Jean-Marie Ndayishimiye, displacement has not been linear, singular, or episodic, but has shaped and reshaped their lives, crossing generations and borders. Their refuge has been enduring, even though at the time of this research their situation was not a formal PRS. The sedentarist logic that has sought to manage refugees around the world has extended their displacement—forcing those who had lived outside of camps into camps, and displacing people from established lives in camps, to a "home" country many did not know, in and from which they experienced further displacement. Land conflicts, landlessness, villagization, political persecution, and the inability to re-establish livelihoods after return all contributed to ongoing migration—as returnees sought new places to establish livelihoods and seek security.

Life histories trace broad sketches of multiple displacements and tactics of emplacement over time. Such stories unsettle the framing of "camp populations" as set in simple, shared trajectories. These stories cross borders, moving between diverse settings within and beyond humanitarian and state management of people on the move. They reach beyond the boundaries and sedentary geographical imaginaries of the camp, and situate encampment within a broader transnational field.

Little research addresses recurrent refuge and enduring displacement, and the 'ruptures and sutures' of refuge after refuge, return after return. The estimates that 60-90% of Burundians who have sought refuge in Tanzania since 2015 have already been refugees has not changed the sedentarist management strategies or solutions proffered. Ever stricter encampment, and a coercive promotion of return continue. These strategies did not resolve displacement in the past, but were experienced as further forced migration, and a precursor to renewed exile for many.

The diverse narratives contradict the belief that Burundians seek refuge again and again because they are "used to it," or aid dependent. Rather they show how past displacements have been compounded by sedentarist refugee management and "solutions," and how people have nevertheless acted to make and re-make their lives across borders and beyond camps.



## VII. Mtabila's closure: Sovereign Power, Displacement and Violence

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*"What makes a camp a camp? And what is the beginning of a camp if there is any? And do camps exist in order to die or exist forever?"*

*(Qamiyeh, 2020, p. 58, from the poem "Writing the Camp: vis-à-vis or a camp")*

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The life histories outlined in previous chapters include returns due to camp closures within trajectories of ongoing displacement. The focus of this chapter is the closure of Mtabila camp in Tanzania in December 2012, and the return to Burundi of 36,000 Burundians, as well as the coerced return of tens of thousands of others in the preceding years. Official discourse framed the returns as voluntary—or, at least, safe and orderly—and as a durable solution to displacement (McKinsey, 2012; UNHCR, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c). Refugees' narratives paint a different picture—one of yet another violent forced displacement.

While the diversity of camps makes them difficult to define, one common characteristic of camps is that they are intended to be temporary (Weima & Minca, 2021).<sup>167</sup> They are meant to close. Yet while some appear and are destroyed or disappear within days, others may last decades (Weima & Minca, 2021). In the context of institutional refugee camps in eastern Africa, substantial research has focused on their protracted nature and what this means for the people who live in them (Hyndman, 2011b; Hyndman & Giles, 2011, 2017b; Jansen, 2018; Msoka & Kweka, 2022; Pasquetti, 2015). However little research has addressed actual closures, and what

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<sup>167</sup> This chapter and the following chapter draw on the contextualization and conceptualization of camp closures outlined by Claudio Minca and myself in our paper "Closing Camps" in *Progress in Human Geography* (2021), written during my PhD process and thus contributing to this dissertation. Where I quote directly from the paper it is cited. I also draw on a paper I presented on memories of the closure of Mtabila at the American Association of Geographers (AAG) Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C., in 2018, which prompted the later published paper.

closures mean for camp governance and life in camps (Weima & Minca, 2021). While recently the state destruction of camps in Europe has received greater attention, such as the destruction of “the jungle” in Calais, little research analyses camp closures (Agier et al., 2018; de Hasque & Lecadet, 2019; I. Katz et al., 2018; Mould, 2017a, 2017b; Ramadan, 2009). Even fewer accounts have focused on closures and afterlives of camps in Africa (though see, de Hasque, 2019; Williams, 2015). Existing scholarship has examined what is happening in terms of sovereignty and the governance of displacement, biopolitics, and the contradictions of care and control, when “the camp is the space that is opened” (Agamben, 1998). Attention to closures allows for a broader perspective on sovereignty and biopower, displacement and place-making, temporalities and memory in (and after) camps (Weima & Minca, 2021).

Closures alone are not explanatory nor emancipatory (Brankamp, 2021a; Massey & Meegan, 1986; Weima & Minca, 2021). Nor are all closures necessarily violent. They must be studied in broader contexts of displacement and migration management (Weima & Minca, 2021). This chapter begins by highlighting closures as a process inherent to camp management from their beginnings, drawing on humanitarian grey literature. I then outline how the inherent contradictions of humanitarian camps are often accentuated in closures: camps violate rights and are a form of ongoing violence against people seeking livable lives. This carceral form of humanitarianism should be abolished (Brankamp, 2021a). Nevertheless, camps closures are often met with resistance by those living in them, particularly when closures do not offer opportunities for livable lives, secure emplacement, and social justice. Rather, closures withdraw minimal regimes of refuge and care, and often further dispossess and displace (although framed as a “solution”).

Empirically, this chapter focuses on the case study of Mtabila’s closure, and how it continues to shape refugee experiences, and ongoing closure in Tanzania at the time of my research. I begin by outlining refugees’ ignored (geo)political concerns around return, demonstrating how regional (geo)politics shapes return decisions. I outline how official discourse frames return as voluntary and orderly, and as a solution to (former) refugee’s displacement (following cessation). The chapter contributes diverging accounts of Burundian refugees’ perspectives on Mtabila’s closure. The violence of Mtabila’s closure has been effaced

and denied in official statements.<sup>168</sup> Refugees' narratives trace the spatial closures and hardening of encampment through time, as the closure process stretched for years, preceding the final camp closure in 2012. The penultimate section highlights excerpts from refugee narratives which demonstrate the ways in which the sovereign power enacted to close the camp created conditions akin to bare life, limiting (but not entirely stopping) possibilities for resisting forced return. The possibility of sovereign power to violently treat refugees as "bare life" always underlies encampment, but is obscured to varying degrees through care and "rights" regimes. Sovereign power and violence come to the fore in this closure.

#### Literature: Power, Camps, and Closures

The nature of the exercise of power in the creation and life of camps has been the subject of intense research in camp studies. While the precise genealogy of camps is debated, attention to camp histories highlight the racialized and colonial logics of encampment. Camps were created as a spatial, biopolitical technology to contain and discipline mobilities of racialized Others, originating in warfare against colonial subjects, and justified through a securitizing lens since their inception (Abushama, 2021; Benneyworth, 2019; Brankamp, 2021a; Davies & Isakjee, 2018; Isin & Rygiel, 2007; Lecadet & de Hasque, 2019; Rahola, 2010; Stoler, 2016)(Hyndman, 2000). Camps are biopolitical technologies, because they are concerned with the control, management, and biological life of populations (Foucault, 1991)—both the populations that they contain, and the populations which are permitted not to be contained (from which the encamped are kept apart). Many debates around the operation of power in camps hinge on the differentiation and theorization of sovereign power, and governmentality (Brankamp, 2019a; Fresia, Von Känel, & Perret-Clermont, 2021; Isin & Rygiel, 2007; Martin et al., 2020; Minca, 2015).

Sovereign power, in brief, is power "to exercise control over mortality and to define life as the deployment and manifestation of power" (Mbembe, 2003, p. 12). The definition of life, in many conceptualizations of sovereign power, is founded on a distinction between politically qualified human life, and mere biologically existing (human) life. The latter, by its definition as

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<sup>168</sup> A notable exception is the work of International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), and Rema Ministries (founded by Burundian former refugees). They published timely research documenting concerns throughout the many years of the process of closure, and recommending better practices (CITE). An anonymous source also shared that other international organizations collected data and created internal reports on the violent events of closure, but has kept their documentation confidential and internal.

“bare life” is not protected by the law, but may be killed without consequence (Agamben, 1998; Edkins, 2000). Put differently, sovereign power may define “humans who are not humans” (J. Butler, 2004, p. 70), often through concomitant racialization and animalization (Mbembe, 2003). A key component of sovereign power is thus not simply the power to make law, but the power to suspend or create exceptions to the law for certain subjects (bare life), as well as in particular spaces—such as camps. Camps are thus theorized as “spaces of exception”—created through sovereign power but outside of the law to contain “bare life.”

Camps may be rationalized as providing a “right to life” and necessary care in emergencies and can be connected to a national narrative of providing help even as they contain (Hyndman, 2018). In normative terms, camps are commonly created and permitted to function even though they violate international refugee law and the human rights of those they contain. Often, this suspension of the law by the sovereign is related, somewhat tautologically, to the protection of sovereignty—that is, “the task of any state to preserve and protect its own territoriality” (J. Butler, 2004, p. 56). The creation of camps to exclude those defined as Other than citizens, is thus a key space where the suspension of law supports “the ‘classic’ trilogy of modern politics: territory, population and nation” (Agamben, 1998; Minca, 2015, p. 79). This is the state rationale for the violence of encampment. While enacted through sovereign power, the creation of camps is thus shaped by (geo)political concerns of the sovereign, the dynamics of which may change overtime—and which also shape sovereign decisions to close camps.

Yet, the day-to-day, long-term functioning in camps involves many actors, in varying degrees of coordination and competition (Fresia et al., 2021; Martin et al., 2020; Oesch, 2017; Ramadan, 2009, 2013; Ramadan & Fregonese, 2017). Many state and humanitarian organizations aim to “foster life” within camps, or minimally to create “don’t die” regimes through aid and basic services (Hyndman & Giles, 2011). They seek to produce certain types of subjects, combatting perceived negative attributes such as aid dependency, rootlessness, or home-state oriented political activity, through programs encouraging education, participation, and entrepreneurship (Fresia et al., 2021; Hyndman, 1997; Simon Turner, 2010). The form of power which underlies such approaches can broadly be defined as “governmentality” (Foucault, 1991). Governmentality is more diffuse than sovereign power (J. Butler, 2004). It “gains its meaning and purpose from no single source, no unified sovereign subject. Rather, the tactics characteristic of governmentality operate diffusely, to dispose and order populations, and to

produce and reproduce subjects, their practices and beliefs, in relation to specific policy aims” (J. Butler, 2004, p. 52). Yet, the creation and existence of camps does not depend on governmentality alone to convince people to remain in a camp—the violent enforcement of refugee and migration policing at and beyond camp boundaries upholds the operation of these “caring” regimes which manage encamped populations.

The “care” enacted in camps overtime, largely through “don’t die” forms of biopower, is part of what makes their closures controversial. Despite the violence and displacement which underlies their creation and existence, camps can be places of world-making, home-making, imagined futures, and conviviality (Brun & Fábos, 2015; de Hasque, 2019; Msoka & Kweka, 2022; Singh, 2020; E. P. Smith, 2016). Closures can be a withdrawal of necessary assistance to biological life, and the destruction of sites of home (in exile), futures, and social life (de Hasque, 2019; Weima & Minca, 2021). It is thus that violent camp closures have been labelled as urbicide and domicide (Hagan, 2018; Mould, 2017a; Ramadan, 2009).

The withdrawal of humanitarian care is not always sudden. Indeed, camp closure manuals formally suggest “phasing out” of aid and services (P. Neto, 2014; NRC, 2008). Yet, the slow removal of aid can also be a decision by a state or a decision by donors to withdraw support, making life in a camp so unbearable that people must leave in order to survive (Crisp, 1986; da Costa, 2017; Hyndman, 2000; IRRI & Rema Ministries, 2011, 2012b). The removal of aid is much more necropolitical than biopolitical governmentality, and often enacted through sovereign power. I argue that the withdrawal of aid and services necessary to life may be a form of slow violence. It is a way of inducing violent “un-homing” which has been used to define displacement through gentrification in an urban context, and which I extend in this research (Elliott-Cooper et al., 2020). Prolonged processes of closure are thus slow forms of displacement which may precede more direct forms of violence and “faster” temporalities of displacement.

Refugee camps are diverse across time and space, so generalizations about one type of power or another, and one type of subjecthood or another, cannot be universalized. Nor, in any given camp, can power be defined by a single logic (Abourahme, 2020; Fresia et al., 2021, p. 56; Martin et al., 2020; Oesch, 2017). The presence of governmentality as a quotidian mode of management in many camps, and the political claims and acts of those detained, does preclude the simultaneous persistence of sovereign power and its categorization of bare life (Doty, 2011; Minca, 2015, p. 79). Judith Butler theorizes that “the emergence of governmentality does not

always coincide with the devitalization of sovereignty” (J. Butler, 2004, p. 53). Nor does governmentality preclude the categorization of certain people as something akin to “bare life,” as this too can be a category in the management of populations: “it seems important to recognize that one way of “managing” a population is to constitute them as the less than human without entitlement to rights, as the humanly unrecognizable” (J. Butler, 2004, p. 98). Camp closures are definitional moments in camp histories, in which sovereign power may be more palpable than in camp management in the long-durée. The co-existence of these forms of power can be seen in the history of Mtabila, where governmental forms of power operated over more than a decade of “don’t die” humanitarianism. Still, sovereign power was enacted in the hardening of camp boundaries, the cessation of refugee status, and forced return, described below.

Many scholars have demonstrated ways in which refugees claim political voice and successfully seek rights, in seeming defiance of the descriptor of “bare life” as not “politically qualified,” even in situations of strict encampment and detention (Fresia et al., 2021; Isin & Rygiel, 2007; Owens, 2010; Ramadan, 2013). Camps can become an important sites of visibility and political claims, including rights to aid, to live and exist in the territories they inhabit, to organize homeland oriented political organization, or even to make citizenship claims (Abreek-Zubiedat & Nitzan-Shiftan, 2018; Agier, 2011; Bock, 2018; de Geoffroy, 2015; Ramadan & Fregonese, 2017; Sanyal, 2014). Closing or transforming camps can thus be a way to invisibilize or curtail the political claims of residents, through dispersal or the removal of the legibility of their categorization as displaced people (Weima & Minca, 2021). When seeking to remove emergent political qualification of the lives of residents, camp closures may create conditions more akin to “bare life” than those experienced in the long durée of more protracted encampment. For example:

Although Ramadan finds Agamben’s theorizations of the camp insufficient in describing the social and political life of existing Palestinian camps in Lebanon, he nonetheless highlights that, in events of violent destruction, when the institutions that emerge and order a camp are destroyed, ‘something more like bare life’ and exceptionality is brought to the fore (Ramadan, 2013, p. 72) (Weima & Minca, 2021, p. 266)

In the case study of this chapter, as described below, the closure of Mtabila both dispersed a population perceived as a potential threat to Burundian regime, their collective voice protesting claims of peace and security in Burundi, and their demands for “liveable lives” (J. Butler, 2004) beyond return-centric humanitarian solutions.

Thus, even though camps are built on displacement and violence enacted through sovereign power, their closures may be met with resistance:

Even planned, ‘orderly’ closures seem rarely without conflict. The possibilities for resistance to closure may be limited. Overt protest can risk repression. Nevertheless, closures may birth new forms of refugee solidarities (Bock, 2018; Boochani, 2018; P. Neto, 2014; Perera, 2018). Resistance to their closures speaks to the ways camps provide shelter, protection, and places of belonging—although they do so within broader landscapes of exclusion and abandonment. Drawing on the work of Behrooz Boochani, Perera (2018) describes how the violent breakup of Australian migrant detention centres in Papua New Guinea catalyzed collective resistance. While the protests did not stop the closure, Boochani (2017) writes: ‘we did not compromise / our autonomy but instead made it possible’. The contradictions of camp life were prominent in these protests and their outcome was that: ‘the refugees are overpowered / the refugees have claimed power’ (Boochani, 2017; Perera, 2018)). (Weima & Minca, 2021, p. 267)

Forms of protest and resistance were extremely limited within the context of Mtabila’s closure, yet a number of forms of refusal emerged, both during and following Mtabila’s closure.

Context: (Geo-)Politics and the long closure

During the negotiation of the Arusha Accords in 2000, calls for refugee return were ongoing, however following their signing the calls for return increased (even when fighting hadn’t stopped). Formal voluntary repatriation to Burundi from Tanzania began with UNHCR assistance in 2002. Berahino was living in Lukole camp, which closed in 2008. He describes how the Arusha mediators and other authorities began to mobilize people to return:

Really, it's not to say that they repatriated voluntarily, but it was like force. Because, for example, Nyerere came, to try to mobilize people to repatriate. And also Mandela came to mobilize people to repatriate. And also the authorities from the government of Burundi came to mobilize the people to repatriate. So there was a sort of force that was hidden. (Berahino, Interview, 2018)

Patrice, who was in Mtabila, also recounts the process of return beginning in this period:

... So, with the Arusha Accords, and negotiations between the Government of Burundi and ... the rebels, who were in the negotiations in Tanzania... they arrived at something resembling... peace in Burundi. They started to mobilize people to return. So, some people hurried to return. Others refused because they didn’t feel comfortable to return, and I was among those who refused. (Patrice, Interview)

Some who returned at this time did not find the promised peace. Joseph’s house had been destroyed, and his brothers were living in displaced people sites:

I left before Mtabila was erased --When the people were beaten, I had already left. But arriving in Burundi, it was not easy. There were still gunshots. I arrived at home, but slept in the bush. After three months, the war stopped. (Joseph, Interview)

Refugees like Patrice remained in exile for diverse reasons, however mobilization particularly increased when CNDD-FDD joined the formal political process, and when they were elected to government in 2005. Many Burundians in exile had wanted change and supported the rebellion and thus wanted to return. The highest number of returns from Tanzania took place in 2004, with more than 82,000 people returning in a single year (UNHCR, 2007). Many chose to return both to vote in 2005 elections and to support the government following their election. However Burundian refugees in exile were not a homogenous group, and tens of thousands remained in exile.

International actors celebrated the Arusha accords and transitional government as an emblematic success of liberal peacebuilding. Even as armed conflict continued, and the nature of the conflict shifted, governments and humanitarian agencies seemed to largely overlook the political differences among refugees, and how these may shape return. In mobilizing return, the Burundian conflict was framed in very simplified terms the political mobilization of ethnicity. The ethnic integration of the army, and the election of a predominantly Hutu political party was framed as solving the problems which had caused the predominantly Hutu refugees to flee. Bukuru described these dynamics as experienced in Lukole:

[...] They tried to say: there are no problems, you have to repatriate. And when we tried to say Buyoya will kill us, they tried to say there is no problem. And then after the elections of 2005, when Pierre Nkurunziza came to the throne, they tried to continue to say: now there is no question of Buyoya, so you need to leave.

[...] Some were happy and accepted this, because many were in CNDD-FDD. But others who knew well the secret of CNDD-FDD, we already knew there isn't peace. We knew there is another bad thing that will happen. So, all of us, we had to repatriate because we didn't have other options when Tanzania is telling the refugees to return (Bukuru, Interview, 2018)

While formally political activity was not allowed in camps, political parties were nevertheless highly active in camps in this period (Interviews, 2017-8)(Simon Turner, 2005a). Although refugees had initially fled the same regime in Burundi, CNDD-FDD was not tolerant of dissent or political diversity among refugees, particularly as the political landscape in Burundi shifted. As with the previous regime, they framed any opposition, particularly in exile, as a

security threat. (Indeed, CNDD-FDD, as a former armed movement based in exile, had once themselves been that threat.)

Some (but not all) Burundians who remained in exile at this time had supported groups other than CNDD-FDD in exile, or simply had not supported CNDD-FDD even without allegiance to other groups. These fault-lines had been violently divisive in some camps. A few interlocutors noted that they had supported other parties, or had not supported any parties, for varying reasons. They had been threatened for this in camps, including threats relating to their return.

Armel described how his father and an uncle held different perspectives on participation in the rebellion: “In the 1990’s, this uncle was also a refugee in Nduta and he participated in the rebellion, but my father didn’t want to [participate in the rebellion] because he was a Christian who like to pray. Which is why there is a conflict in the family. [...]”

As he got older, Armel also refused recruitment: “[...] they searched for me to recruit me but I refused because I saw many things in Burundi in the war [(before fleeing as a child)], which is why even today I am seen badly because he didn’t want to participate in that group.”

Armel’s uncle left the camp for the war, and was later demobilized and integrated into the army, but threatened Paul and his father: “My paternal uncle said that because you didn’t participate in the rebellion, when you come we will hit you with a hoe at the river [...]—because we hadn’t helped the country in the rebellion.”

Others refugees did not allow their children to participate:

So then, with these rebels, when Peter’s [Nkurunziza’s] started, they asked for children to go to contribute to the armed groups, and I am among the people who refused to give them my children, and they said: Voila, when we will see [(return to)] the country we will block you so you won’t return. (Louis, Interview)

Some raconteurs noted they did not have the means to give monetary or in-kind contributions while supporting their families in the camps. Some were told that their names would not be on any list of supporters (of CNDD FDD), and this would be known when they returned. Many refugees who remained in exile after 2005 felt that the emphasis on return showed collusion of CNDD-FDD and the Tanzanian government, with UNHCR turning a blind eye to the alliance. They interpreted the prior recruitment activities and mobilization of material support for CNDD-FDD in refugee camps as evidence that they had been implicitly accepted and supported by the Tanzanian government. Further, CNDD-FDD had trained on Tanzanian

territory (Longman, 1998; Alfieri, 2016; Alfieri, 2021). (Indeed, the Buyoya government made similar accusations against the Tanzanian government.) Several participants, including Paul, noted the prevalence of political activity in past camps:

Y: There are people who say there was a lot of politics in Nduta...

P: Yes, it's true, [...] there were politicians at Nduta which made life difficult

Interpreter: How so?

P: The party CNDD FDD organized meetings in the camp and saw those who didn't participate in the meetings badly, which is why even today they know that we didn't work for the party, so we are seen badly. And furthermore, there were military training exercises. It was astonishing because the government of Tanzania was aware but didn't prevent it.

While the data for this dissertation does not include verification of details from life histories regarding Nkurunziza and other politicians shared in some interviews, such stories nevertheless highlight refugees' belief that CNDD-FDD and the Tanzanian government shared a close relationship or alliance, or at least, tacit acceptance:

[...] I see that even if there at Mtabila political parties were authorized--which means that there was understanding between the political parties found there and the Tanzanian Republic--because there they even trained people who go in the rebellion, but there weren't problems, contrary to here. [Now] when they hear a person is from a political party you are imprisoned and not allowed to continue to live here, and it wasn't the same when we lived at Mtabila.

Because I remember, even Peter Nkurunziza lived at Muyovosi, it was at Mtabila; and he left to go to Arusha from Mtabila (Normand, Interview)

Other factors shaping peoples' reluctance to return after extended and/or recurrent exile, and often traumatic experiences, were painted as psycho-social and/or socio-economic issues that could be simply solved through simply exhortations, villagization, and short-term aid and services for returnees. Many participants did not know where their families had land. Such people had been formally identified as "sans terres, sans references," (without land, without knowledge of where their land had been,) and were said to account for about 3000 of the people remaining in Mtabila in 2012.<sup>169</sup> Others, who might have known where their family land had been, nevertheless knew that their land had been occupied (and more found their land occupied after return). The desire of some refugees not to return to a country in which they had

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<sup>169</sup> This number seems low to me. It is possible that people with such issues are over represented in my sample, or conversely, they may have been under-recorded by UNHCR.

experienced genocidal violence, or to homes and hills at which they had witnessed atrocities was simply not considered a valid reason to not return.<sup>170</sup>

#### Long Closure: Withdrawing Care, Consolidating Camps

In 2007 the Tanzanian government shared “a comprehensive strategy to bring closure to the Burundian refugee situation in Tanzania” through the “durable solutions” recognized by UNHCR (UNHCR, 2013a, p. 1). UNHCR and their partners reduced many of their services in the camp at this time, including closing secondary schools, and reducing vocational trainings and income generating activities (ECHO, 2008; IRIN, 2007). Patrice shared his memories of this period:

Then, in 2007 the governments of Burundi, Tanzania, and UNHCR, in what was called “tripartite,” really [interrupted] the life of the folks who remained in the camp. They closed all activities including primary and secondary teaching. They paralysed activities like minor trading. That means, there was an internet centre: they closed it. Which means we remained like prisoners: no schools, no market, no internet research centre? Then what were we? We tried to explain ourselves, expressing that in our hearts there were des “ce ne vas pas” (“it’s not OK/good”) regarding return ... to Burundi. (Patrice, Interview, 2017)

Remaining refugees organized their own secondary classes. Teachers volunteered their time, often in turn for in-kind payment from parents such as soap or rations. These informal schools faced challenges such as educational material, as well as motivation of students knowing that their studies would not be formally recognized by the Burundian or Tanzanian government.

Several participants who were in secondary school, or who had school-aged children, “chose” to repatriate in the years following the school closures. For example, Solomani felt that he had seen that Tanzania was trying to close the camps from 2000 onwards. He repatriated with his parents, because he was still “at the school benches [... when] Tanzania closed schools and hospitals so I decided to go back [...] I repatriated in 2007. So the camp continued without food, without hospitals, and without the distribution of food, et cetera.”

In 2007 alone, 40,000 Burundian refugees returned from Tanzania, while 63,000 returned in 2008 (IRIN, 2007; Schlein, 2008). Camp closures accelerated. The “1990’s camps” for Burundian refugees had included Lukole (A and B), Muyovosi, Mtendeli, Karago, Kanemwa,

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<sup>170</sup> This to me seems a strong example of the dehumanization of poor, African refugees. It would seem unheard in “the West” of to insist that the family member of a murder victim, or someone who had experienced violence, to return to live at the site of the atrocity—particularly if the perpetrators had never been prosecuted and even remained in the same community.

Nduta, Mkugwa and Mtabila (Kweka, 2007). The initial plan was to close all post-1990 camps for Burundians by 2008 (IRIN, 2007). The false binary differentiation of “1972” and “1990’s refugees” is elaborated in the previous chapter. Burundians living at the older Ulyankulu, Mishamo, and Katumba settlements were exempt from the consolidations and closures, though mobilization for return included their settlements. (It is at this time that the naturalization option was offered to those in the old settlements, but not to those in the new camps). As more people returned the remaining refugees and those with recognized protection concerns were “consolidated” in fewer and fewer camps.<sup>171</sup>

In 2007 the number of “new” camps in the northwest was reduced to five (IRIN, 2007). By many accounts, Lukole’s closure in 2008 was a precursor to Mtabila’s—while some people were identified for protection and moved to other camps, the majority were forced to return. The protection process seems to have been haphazard; some people with similar problems were forced to return while others were moved to other camps. By the end of 2008, when Nduta was closed in December, only Mtabila remained for the less than 50,000 “new wave” Burundian refugees still in Tanzania (Schlein, 2008).<sup>172</sup>

Many people in this research thus experienced several camp closures between 2005-2008. As outlined in a chapter five, Leah had been born a refugee in Rwanda, to parents who had fled in 1972, and had been transferred to Mtabila from Lukole at its closure. When I asked about this move, she linked it with the closure of Mtabila, and the confusion surrounding the RSD procedure, protection screenings, and resettlement possibilities preceding camp closure:

...there were problems that caused us to move from Lukole to Mtabila. Because the camp commandant [of Lukole] wanted to repatriate us by force. Those of us who had files [recognized protection issues] with UNHCR had to stay there, but the others who didn't have dossiers had to repatriate by force. So, for that reason they brought us [to Mtabila], because we were known as families who had problems [(recognized protection issues)]. (Leah, Interview)

Uruwayesu was also moved from camp to camp as they closed—from Mtendeli to Nduta (where he was now a refugee again), and then to Mtabila, as the mobilization for return

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<sup>171</sup> This process is similar to the consolidation of camps for Somalis in Kenya in the late 1990’s. Two camps on the coast were closed, and the residents were “consolidated” to the remaining large camp (Hyndman, 2000).

<sup>172</sup> Nyarugusu also remained, hosting a primarily Congolese population.

continued: “After, people continued to repatriate, but when we were few remaining here [at Nduta], they displaced us from here to Mtabila.” Others respondents had similar trajectories.

Outside of camps round-ups and expulsions had increased from 2006 onwards, with approximately 15,000 Burundians and Rwandans deported from north-west border provinces from 2006-7 alone (ECHO, 2008; HRW, 2007). Those targeted and deported were not only newer arrivals, or recent refugees who had moved outside of camps, but included Burundians who had been living outside of camps since 1972—Malkki’s so-called “town refugees” (Malkki, 1995a). These “town refugees” were considered highly integrated into local communities. One participant explicitly mentioned hearing about the deportation of 1972 Burundians from villages as a factor which influenced his decision to return in 2007: “they said that there were people who were refugees in ’72—if they would be repatriated by force from Tanzania, for that reason I saw that we at Mtabila could also be repatriated by force” (Interview, Joseph, 2018). Such “campaigns” highlight the limits of arguments around de facto citizenship and integration without de jure rights, as the sovereign potential to enforce encampment or deport remains.<sup>173</sup> This change in policing outside of the camps also made seeking lives and livelihoods outside of the camps more difficult.

With only Mtabila remaining, in 2009 a UNHCR representative declared “the final year of repatriation” (IRRI & Rema Ministries, 2011; 2012b, pp. 2-3). Encampment became stricter and harder. Mtabila was declared closed in July 2009, and all remaining primary schools were closed, affecting more than 12,000 children (Hovil, 2010; IRRI & Rema Ministries, 2012b). At one point, according to an interlocutor, the Tanzanian government stopped registering Burundians’ marriages. At that time, at least one participant shared that he and his wife had an wedding in their church (which was not legally registered until their return to Burundi) (Notes, 2017). Then for a period church and other religious services and meetings were suspended on order of the commandant, and only resumed “under strict conditions” (Hovil, 2010)(Notes, 2017). These places of worship had been predominantly built and organized by refugees themselves. Many pastors who remained were accused of discouraging people from repatriating, and some were arrested and imprisoned and deported. One interlocutor felt that the targeting of

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<sup>173</sup> It further raises questions about de jure rights when people remain framed as “Other” because some of the Rwandans deported reportedly had formal citizenship (Rubagumya, 2017).

pastors and other community leaders had been intended to intimidate people to return (Notes, 2017).

Eventually dispensaries were closed, and clinics offered only minimal care (Hovil, 2010; IRRI & Rema Ministries, 2012b). Several refugees believed that the commandant himself went to clinics and told them not to treat people. While this is not a directly witnessed or verified “fact,” such stories about the process of camp closure speak to the discretionary power of the commandant in the camp space, as a space of exception, and his power to remove the “don’t die” infrastructure and abandon refugees to “bare life.” One woman shared that her toddler son had been extremely sick at this time, and was denied treatment until his fever was extremely high. He has been deaf since that illness. She directly blames the withdrawal of healthcare services for her son’s deafness (Notes, 2017).

A number of refugees spoke about the destruction of gardens, crops and harvests in the final years of the camp, which is confirmed in reports from the time (IRRI & Rema Ministries, 2011). Cultivating, and even kitchen gardens, were no longer permitted. Some recounted stories in which the Commandant mobilized the sungusungu (refugee community security incentive workers) to cut down people’s gardens and crops. One man recounted that this was a sign that repatriation was nearing: “the indicators of repatriation at Mtabila were that they accelerated measures like not allowing people to leave the camp; they cut down my field; and then one day when I put my peanut harvest to dry in the sun, the camp commandant came with his vehicle and drove his vehicle over the peanuts to destroy them, crush them” (Interview, 2017). As early as 2009, refugee homes were burned, and others were threatened with the same, to intimidate people into leaving the camp—all while the return program was framed as voluntary (Amnesty International, 2009).<sup>174</sup>

#### Cessation

The atrocious conditions described above seemed intended to make life so unlivable that refugees would choose to return, which was nevertheless termed “voluntary registration” for return (IRRI & Rema Ministries, 2012b). Yet, by 2011, 38,000 Burundian refugees remained in Mtabila, having resisted the increasingly difficult conditions in the camp. Formally, international refugee law protects against *refoulement* (sending refugees back to their countries

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<sup>174</sup> Some interviewees reported that home burnings often took place on Sunday mornings, when neighbourhoods would be emptier as many residents attended church (Field notes, 2017-8).

of origin while they would still be in danger). However, international refugee law does allow for the withdrawal of refugee status, in which case, the people who had been refugees, become reclassified in other migration categories. In the case of Tanzania, this would allow for their expulsion—like the tens of thousands of Burundians caught living outside of camps in the mid-2000's (ECHO, 2008; HRW, 2007).

From September 2011, to August 2012, the government of Tanzania and UNHCR conducted joint interviews to determine ongoing international protection needs. Many refugees expressed confusion about this process. For example, Leah shared,

After arriving at Mtabila, we continued to do interviews with UNHCR. It was about five times—doing interviews, and signing papers, and waiting... So, really, we continued to do interviews. And after we had to realize that maybe our file won't be successful, because they called us one day and asked us our problem. And after looking in papers in files that they had they said we are among the people who already gone to Australia. And they asked us questions but after we saw that had closed our file and had written something in English. We were still waiting [...]

But after, because the situation got worse [...] And then they started to mobilize people that they could return in their birth country because they said there was peace. But we continued to wait to see what would happen after. (Leah, Interview)

Leah did not understand why their case had not been accepted for resettlement, nor the different purposes of the different interviews they had done. Uruwayesu, like many other refugees, had initially been reassured by UNHCR that they would not be repatriated by force, but also, in the end, did not receive protection.

Arriving at Mtabila they gave us advice saying, "don't be afraid, there's no one who will make you repatriate by force." But after they changed their minds, and we heard it said that it was time to repatriate. At that time I tried to go inform the UN workers, and they welcomed me well and they told me that my (protection) problem is explicit and they asked me to remain calm. Tuzogufasha (we will help you) as we heard you have problems [and they told me also] to not register for return. But after really, they took the definitive decision, that whether it was someone who had problems, or who didn't have problems, all will repatriate at that time. Really, I was already convinced that I would have help. It means that after that time, we were repatriated by force.

During this period of interviews and uncertainty, on May 23, 2012, Tanzanian soldiers surrounded the camp. Even so, only 921 Burundians chose to return to Burundi from January to September 2012 (UNHCR, 2012d, p. 1). Soldiers camped in already closed zones (IRRI & Rema Ministries, 2012b)(Field notes, 2017-8). Encampment became stricter and stricter, as the soldiers

enforced “severe restrictions” on mobility to and from the camp (IRRI & Rema Ministries, 2012b)(Interviews, 2017-8). Everyday activities required for social reproduction, such as collecting firewood outside the camp, became incredibly difficult (Interviews, 2017-8)(IRRI & Rema Ministries, 2012b). Seeking work or cultivating outside the camp, which had long been a key livelihood practice, also became more risky. While nearly all “Income Generating Activities” had already been stopped, in July the commandant prohibited all commerce in Mtabila, destroying all markets and shops (IRIN, 2012). Although unconfirmed, one participant remembered the Tanzanian soldiers singing in local languages during the night, in the zones they had occupied, which he felt was intended as an intimidation. Fear and uncertainty had been widespread for years, and increased (Interviews, 2017-8)(IRRI & Rema Ministries, 2012b).

For a period, humanitarian aid was reduced and in some cases stopped. Some residents received less than half of what they had previously been allocated, while two zones stopped receiving food entirely. While this was later officially blamed on WFP “pipeline problems,” and a fluke that it occurred in this period, the nature of the pipeline problems was not elaborated (IRRI & Rema Ministries, 2012b)(and seems more than coincidental). Refugees believe that this was yet another way to push them to “voluntarily register” for return.<sup>175</sup>

On August 1, 2012, the Tanzanian government invoked the cessation of refugee status for all other Burundian refugees living in Mtabila—36,815 people. Only 2715 Burundian refugees were considered to merit continued protection (UNHCR, 2012d). They were transferred from Mtabila to Nyarugusu camp, to separate them from the remaining “1990’s” cohort of Burundians. Normative problems with the cessation procedures are outlined by McConnachie et al. (2013). Additionally, many of the refugee testimonies in this research outline confusion about the process, and the violation of normative rights. For example, the final decisions about the results of interviews to determine ongoing protection needs were sometimes posted on lists, with their authority being unclear. Several life history participants had received letters with negative resettlement decisions only in English, and even years later did not know the contents of the letters (Field notes 2014; 2017-8). Among those who did appeal the revocation of their refugee

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<sup>175</sup> Off-the-record discussions around a similar “pipeline problem” in 2017 suggests the possibility that refugees beliefs may be close to the truth, however I am not able to provide empirical “on-the-record” confirmation for either Mtabila’s closure or the “pipeline problem” of 2017.

status, about 10% were overturned (IRRI & Rema Ministries, 2012b). Many expressed that they were unaware when the decision had been made, what it was, why, or the timeline for appeal.

Mtabila thus became a “former refugee camp,” meaning both that it was formerly a refugee camp, and that it encamped people who were formerly refugees. UNHCR continued a presence in a “residual assistance and protection role” and to offer “voluntary repatriation [...] to the former refugees” (UNHCR, 2013a). Returns remained incredibly low.

The cessation process illustrates the power of “petty sovereigns” within the camp, as theorized by Butler (Butler, 2004), and has strong resonances with Arendt’s discussion of the violent possibilities created by bureaucratic rule in colonies (Arendt, 1966). The process was undertaken by through a “joint screening exercise” in which staff from both UNHCR and the Government of Tanzania formed fifteen “joint panels” (UNHCR, 2013a). Despite the fact that residents of the camp had resisted return through increasingly degrading and dehumanizing conditions over several years, the decision to force them to return by removing the status that granted their protection worked jointly through executive decrees and the decisions taken by staff appointed to panels acting as petty-sovereigns. Even though cessation was framed as resolving the problem of their protracted displacement, as “former refugees” in a “former refugee camp” they became more akin to “bare life” than as refugees, as demonstrated through refugee narratives, below.

In October, the Tanzanian government announced the definitive closure of the camp by December 31, 2012 (UNHCR, 2012d). Following the announcement, a “Special High-Level Meeting” convened representatives of “the Governments of Burundi and Tanzania, UNHCR, IOM, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), OHCHR, UNICEF and WFP, to discuss the modalities for an orderly return to and reintegration in Burundi of the former refugees remaining in Mtabila” (UNHCR, 2013a). Even after cessation, returns remained minimal, yet there were worries about how so many people could be returned in such a short time and a stated desire “to avoid a humanitarian crisis” (UNHCR, 2013a). Those remaining clearly did not want to go (or, in humanitarian doublespeak, remained hesitant and had not understood the necessity of their departure).



Figure 2: UNHCR report on the definitive closure of Mtabila

The official narrative surrounding the closure of Mtabila camp was diplomatically positive. A UNHCR newsletter following the final convoy announced that Mtabila camp is definitively closed. The headline read “Le pari est gagné” (Meaning the bet or wager is won or has paid off). A section entitled “Un accueil chaleureux au pays” (A warm welcome in the country) stated that:

Après avoir passé la grande partie de leur vie et quelques fois, toute la vie en exil, le rapatriement n’était pas chose facile pour les anciens réfugiés, qui ont finalement compris la nécessité de rentrer et commencer une nouvelle vie. (UNHCR, 2012a)<sup>176</sup>

<sup>176</sup> After having spent the majority of their life, and sometimes, their whole life in exile, repatriation was not an easy thing for the former refugees, who finally understood the necessity of returning and starting a new life.

They further announced that the return took place with “dignity” and “security,” without crossing the “red line” outlined for Tanzanian forces present (UNHCR, 2012a). The returns were celebrated as durable solutions in the annual global report on displacement (UNHCR, 2013b). This remains the formal position on the return by UNHCR and IOM in Tanzania (Field notes, 2018).

Refugee narratives of the Mtabila closure differ greatly. For years life in the camp became increasingly unlivable, forcing return through the slow violence of increasing restrictions within the camp and the increasing policing of mobility beyond it. As cessation was announced and definitive closure loomed, International Refugee Rights Initiative and Rema Ministries noted camp residents’ endurance: “Those who remain in Mtabila therefore have resisted years of consistent pressure from the authorities rather than return to Burundi.” (IRRI & Rema Ministries, 2012b, p. 3). This slow violence created equally slow displacement—reducing the possibilities for emplacement and making home in exile—a slow violence of un-homing.

In the final months of closure, violence became more direct, and displacement also accelerated. Far from dignity, order, and security, the dominant refugee narratives of the final months of Mtabila’s closure are of inhumanity, fear and chaos, and violence. Far from having “understood the necessity of returning” nearly all stated that they were forced to return. Research participants reported that they themselves were beaten to board busses; some witnessed and experienced sexual violence; many reported the destruction and theft of property, including the destruction of homes; several reported family separation. While difficult to verify, many refugees believe that people were killed in the events of the forced return.

#### Zone by Zone: Dispossession & domicile

Humanitarian documents created after the announcement of the definitive camp closure outlined a procedure for a gradual camp closure, echoing standard practice for consolidating camps during closures (P. Neto, 2014; UNHCR, 2013a):

Mtabila camp consists of six zones, ranging in size from 1,400 to 13,000 people. Under the orderly return operation, camp residents would return to Burundi zone by zone, with each zone closed once the former refugees residing there had departed. The focus of the return operation is on securing the cooperation of the former refugees to return of their own accord, on the understanding, clearly communicated to them, that the Government of Tanzania will enforce removals, if necessary, for those who do not otherwise depart. (UNHCR, 2013a, p. 2).

As the population of a camp decreases, some camp “zones” may close, consolidating the remaining residents in smaller and smaller areas (Neto, 2014): “Thus, as the temporal horizon of remaining time for an institutional camp diminishes, its designated and serviced space are gradually reduced as well” (Weima & Minca, 2021, p. 6).

The space of Mtabila camp for “former refugees” reduced in size on a piece-meal basis, based on the administrative divisions of the camp. First, there were mandatory formal movements of households from less inhabited zones to now empty plots in other zones, coordinated by camp management agencies, seeking to consolidate zones as households repatriated or left the camp, and the population declined. Basic services were shut down in “closed” zones, and shelters were “dismantled” (destroyed) to discourage return to “insecure” empty zones of the camp. As they moved within the camp refugees created hasty, informal blindés (huts), knowing that they may soon need to move again: “we were nomads. It wasn't possible to build because it a few months we could be displaced again” (Patrice, Interview, 2018) Soldiers camped in the “closed” zones to further encircle the remaining zones.



*Figure 3: Photo from a refugee report on the events of closure. Reproduced with permission. Anonymous*

Later, there were also informal movements, practiced by refugees themselves, particularly as mandatory return was organized zone by zone within the camp. This happened abruptly: “People weren't warned, they came suddenly, and then gave the news today we are going here and there [...] they came during the day, but brusquely, with batons. And the police said: leave this spot, go there!” (Paul, interview, 2018).

Refugee families not wishing to return, and able to escape from the police, moved themselves to zones that had not yet been repatriated. For example, Annonciata described returning to the camp after having spent the day collecting firewood, only to find that their neighbours had all been forced to leave. Her family then moved their goods, “to be close to others” (only to be forcibly returned a few days later). This practice was also noted in official reports. Many people lost their belongings as they moved from one zone to another, seeking to avoid forcibly boarding the busses:

At the time when they were closing the camp we had things, belongings. But in the process of closing the camp they closed zones and moved people, and then moved them again the next day. And the more they displaced people, the more we lost our belongings, until we left the camp empty-handed. [...]

Because I had cultivated a lot I had not a small amount of belongings. I had harvested more than twenty sacks of rice and twenty sacks of beans. But when we were displaced from one zone to another sometimes goods were stolen, sometimes the police came and loaded our harvests in their vehicles. (Paul, Interview, 2018)

As the camp closure “exercise” in “orderly return” neared completion, with only one zone remaining, a UNHCR Tanzania Situation Report (SitRep) on the Mtabila Camp Closure from December, 2012, notes:

A short survey revealed that a significant number of former refugees who previously resided in other zones of the camp had relocated themselves to Zone A as the operation progressed. These persons and their families were also permitted to join the convoys without any problems. (UNHCR, 2012, p. 1).

UNHCR further worried about people “shifting from one scheduled street in Zone A area to another” and thus rather than proceeding from street to street, “the whole zone was open for returns” (UNHCR, 2012, p. 2). They blamed resistance to return on “agitators.” (p.3). However it can be viewed as displacement within the camp, and due to increasing spatial closure within and around the camp. That those who had moved were “permitted” to mandatorily join the convoys is perverse doublespeak, given that they were surrounded by military and police, and in many cases testify that they were beaten to join the convoys.

Return by Force

This section relies on more substantial narrative excerpts, describing violence experienced during closure—voices and experiences effaced through the doublespeak of official reports on closure at the time (with the exception of reporting by IRRI and Rema Ministries). All consider their return to have been by force.

*Leah*

After really, it became a very difficult situation because the Makazi (Commandant) at Mtabila had brought the JKT and he authorized them to beat any refugee who was in Mtabila, so that they could be repatriated by force. And they made people enter the vehicles without wanting too, which means we entered the vehicles without bringing anything. And he authorized them to do harm/evil to women, taking them by force and raping them. There really, because there were many [notices (unclear)], because the JKT started to fire their guns. And after they continued to destroy houses. It means they chased

refugees and then destroyed their houses. And they fired tear gas, to assemble us in the place they wanted. And it's for that reason that we had to decide to return to Burundi, but it was by force.

This excerpt of Leah's narrative highlights the way in which (former) refugees experienced closure as akin to abandonment to bare life through decree of the (petty) sovereign—the camp commandant. She does not use the official category of “former refugees,” but it is in this period, when they had lost formal refugee status, that these events took place. In contrast to humanitarian rhetoric of “order” and “dignity” with humanitarian observation of security protocols, she remembers it as a time in which soldiers were authorized to harm refugees. Return was thus violent, destructive and un-homing.

*Paul*

In the opening vignette of the introduction of this dissertation, Paul described how it was like “peace returned” when he first arrived in Nduta as a child, even though he still remembered the violence he had witnessed in Burundi. But later, he stated, “the situation of the camp also changed”—describing the closures first of Nduta, and then Mtabila.

The police started to mistreat us, as if we were not humans (abantu). They categorically forbade us from going outside the camp. If they caught you outside the camp they beat you or tortured you, which caused people to repatriate. Ego, kandi (yes, and also), it wasn't that peace reigned in Burundi, it was just that we were mistreated in the camp, which caused the repatriation. It continued, then, until the number of refugees in Nduta had gone down.

So, the Tanzanian government took the decision to combine the camps of Nduta and Mtabila at Mtabila. At Mtabila there was respite, but only for a moment. But after disorder also started [there] in order to close Mtabila camp. If we went outside the camp, we were tortured [...] It disturbed/messed-up my life, and up until now, my life is going badly. After, the Tanzanian soldiers used force to close the camp, telling us: chez vous (at your home) there's peace. You have no option except to return home to Burundi. But, we knew that in Burundi what had chased us could also [still] hurt us.

One day I went outside the camp to look for work to earn money. I had problems: after two weeks [working outside the camp] I learned that there are soldiers who came to close the camp. We wanted to return and sneak ourselves back into the camp during the night, so as not to be caught by the soldiers. But unfortunately we fell into the hands of the soldiers during the night. We were tortured and they took everything we had, including our money. Those who didn't have money were imprisoned at Kasulu, but those who had money were let go.

So, I was able to arrive. We started then what seemed like a census, but which was aimed at repatriation. The census took a small number of people who benefited from the chance for resettlement in a third country, but the majority

were repatriated. We were made to board the busses like animals to be repatriated by force, and many returned because of this torture.

Paul's narrative describes closure as a process. First, the boundaries in Nduta hardened through violence and the threat of violence, pushing people to return to Burundi because of the increasingly difficult conditions of camp life. This process was followed by displacement of those who had endured to another camp with the closure of the first—the overall space for refuge shrank as the camp was consolidated. The process began again, with the tightening of restrictions in and surrounding Mtabila. Nevertheless, Paul persisted in seeking a livelihood for his family outside of the camp, but faced dispossession when he tried to return to rejoin his family when they faced forced return. Closure was thus a process of enduring (hardening of boundaries and the creation increasingly difficult conditions), an enduring process (as it both took place over an extended period, and was repeated), and a process that was endured (as he continued to seek to support his family and to avoid return insofar as he was able).

In contrast to humanitarian rhetoric of “dignity,” he describes the forced gathering of refugees to board busses in animalizing terms, echoed in several other interlocutors' narratives. On another occasion, he repeated the animalization metaphor, and elaborated further about the camp closure and his own separation from his wife during the chaos (of “orderly”) repatriation:

They brought a lot of busses, and then the Tanzanian soldiers took megaphones (amamikros); They announced it, some of the soldiers in the bus. They drove people, like we drive cattle. If, when night fell, they had made it this far, the following morning they began again. They continued and continued. And avenue by avenue, zone by zone. It's like that the passion of the repatriation took place.

I don't remember how many days it took, because I am too disturbed by what has happened in my life. But they drove people progressively, until towards the end they shot guns in the air, so that few people remaining the in the departure centre [would go].

Like that, for me then, repatriation was not organized. They drive while you are here, your wife is elsewhere, and you can't get together to organize your departure. I realized at a certain moment that I wasn't with my wife. [...] like that, we didn't have the right to return with our goods, because if they drive you with a baton you run to enter the vehicle, leaving your bags behind. After the repatriation from Mtabila, we were welcomed at the centre in Mabanda, and I met my wife there and saw that she was also repatriated. [...] (Paul, Interview, Tanzania)

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The difficulty of the memory of these experiences of fear and violence endured in the final weeks and days of closure is evidenced in his own reflection on his inability to recall certain details. Family separation was common.

*Mama Annonciata*

At first they said that repatriation was voluntary. A group of people repatriated and we remained. And after they said: even if you are staying here, it's not your home (iwanyu/chez vous). We are obliged to repatriate you. But we thought it's [just] mobilization [for return].

At a certain time, then, they brought Tanzanian soldiers. They beat people. There were people who were hospitalized for two weeks. And the father of my children, they beat him [until he was hospitalized] when he went outside the camp to get firewood. But we thought that one day it would end.

And then, they used force. They beat people. They started with one side of the camp, and zone by zone they beat. They put you in the bus, and your stuff was left like that. Sometimes parents were separated from children.

And then, with my two daughters, we were stopped by these police at Muyovosi (a village near Mtabila camp). Because women and children had been raped by them so many times, I was very afraid that day, because we were all female, me and my daughters. I spoke a lot to defend my children and was beaten more than the girls [slightly unclear].

Because it was a long journey, more than four hours, they were saying they were going to get a vehicle to send us back to Burundi. Because I had a baby on my back I continued to ask for mercy, saying that I couldn't take the journey with the child without clothing. We were pardoned, but I was beaten too much, and we returned [to the camp]. Arriving at the house we saw that all the neighbours had been repatriated by force, so we left that place to be near to others because it was empty. After two days soldiers came and made us board the bus by force, while beating us, and we were taken to Burundi. ... Those are the details of how we were repatriated by force.

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Mama Annonciata's narrative reveals that as they had resisted mobilization for repatriation for so long, there was a disbelief that they would truly be forced back. She even believed that the increased policing of mobility around camp boundaries would only be temporary, even when her husband was beaten outside of the camp. This hardening of boundaries around the camp, made necessary activities of daily life increasingly risky. Her fear for herself and her children when caught by police outside of the camp again describes a belief that they could be treated as bare life, and violently harmed without repercussions. She demonstrated resilience in avoiding forced return when first captured by police, and the common spatial strategy of moving to another zone when allowed to return to the camp.

At Mtabila we lived in Zone One, on the road number [X], house number [X]. And in repatriating the refugees by force they started with our zone. At that time, really, it was like war (Kir: intambara). There was hitting with batons. People were raped. People were chased, really a lot. And they tried to destroy the houses, which means they came with a vehicle in front of a house, and when they caught you they put you in the vehicle. We really cried. We encountered more difficult moments than we had ever lived before.

I was with this one [pointing to his daughter, who was present] with her younger brothers and sisters, who knew how to run. They ran. Only my wife and the young children who didn't know how to run remained at that time.

I was the caretaker at the church, and when I returned from work I found the children had already fled. And I found my wife and the small children crying. After having met them I encountered the police who were around my home and they captured me. And after I was captured they accused me that it was me giving people information not to repatriate. Because they changed my file to say that I am not a caretaker [but] that I am a pastor and that I was really telling others not to repatriate. Because they said that: there can't be somewhere that you can find a church caretaker and that it is the pastor who is the caretaker and you also, you are a pastor. They really mistreated me, with the word they tried to throw at me after I remained calm. Because they said: "accepting [the accusation] or not, you will ... repatriate. And concerning the children who fled, they will find you back in Burundi."

We took the road together with them to the departure centre and after arriving there, I continued to think a lot because I thought I was leaving my children behind. It's then I tried to escape the departure centre to go find where my children were. After arriving at the road, other police caught me and I told them that I am looking for my children and if we would still be together I would accept to repatriate. I tried to really look but the children, I couldn't find them. The camp was really big.

I tried to continue to circulate/go around and I found one after the other because they weren't in the same place. It means, if I back up a bit, it means that the children with my wife were already repatriated by force which means that we really encountered a difficult moment, that we had never lived before. Because I thought often what the life of my wife would be, who is already repatriated, and what the life of my children is like, when we were no longer together.

It means that time, really, I was like... I don't even know ... it's the truth really, there are no lies OK, so, when I was already with the children, it was in three months, which means that we were repatriated among the last. It was in 2012. And also, I have papers, that we received when we returned if you need to see them, I can show you this and also, I have the ration card I used at that time. I have it. There was no question of registering or showing the ration card, but we were repatriated by force. If you need, I can show you this [...]

When we already arrived in Burundi, really I found that my wife with the small children. They didn't have the means to arrive there where we lived before

because maybe, it's God who helped them, but if it wasn't like that, she would have been killed [had she gone back to their prior hill].

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I include this long excerpt from Uruwayesu as he vividly describes fears, violence, and resistance during the extended process of camp closure. Like many other interlocutors, he used the language of war (*intambara*) in describing the final period of camp closure. He, like other refugees, describes feeling abandoned to the indiscriminate violence of soldiers. His children were so afraid they ran when the soldiers came to begin repatriation from his zone. Unable to find them, he was immensely worried. Like Mama Annonciata, he negotiated intensely with police when caught. Similar to her experience, his narrative includes begging police for recognition of his humanity because of his concern for his children. Like Paul, he was separated from his wife—in this case for several months, as his wife and youngest children were among the first repatriated, while he and his older children were among the last. Even having been involuntarily immobile within Burundi for several years during the war before being able to flee, he describes this as one of the most difficult times of his life.

Resistance: Endurance, Reportage, and Marronage

While in the end opportunities for resistance were limited, as noted above refugees who remained in the camp until the final months of closure had already endured increasingly difficult conditions. Refugees sought to raise their concerns throughout this period. As early as 2009, refugees seeking to organize activism against (coerced) return were arrested (Amnesty International, 2009). Still, some wrote letters to UNHCR, the government of Tanzania, and others, contesting the cessation of their status and the threat of return (Research notes, 2017-8). They also created their own reports about the closures, seeking to document and share the conditions they were enduring and their fears about return with a broader audience. I was given a copy of one such report during my masters research in 2014, and copies of further letters during this dissertation research.

The movement of refugees within the camp from one zone to another was one form of resilience, seeking to maintain the possibility that other options than forced return would emerge. While most were forced to board busses to Burundi, some were indeed able to flee and avoid return. One woman's parents fled to surrounding villages, where they had extensive experience farming. Another woman described how she and her family escaped return by going separately

to Uganda (so as not to be caught travelling in a group) (Interview, 2018). Others stated that some refugees sought to head to Malawi, Kenya, and Mozambique, but that this depended on having the resources to do so (Interviews, 2017-8)(IRIN, 2012). Such movements were risky due to heavy policing in the border region at the time. If identified as Burundians (without other permits or status) outside of the camp they were subject to direct expulsion to Burundi (UNHCR, 2012c, p. 4).

Brankamp (2021a) argues that escape from camps is a form of contemporary “marronage.”<sup>177</sup> Refugees’ who create lives outside of camps are “not evidence for the camp’s less-than-carceral nature, but expressions of a strong autonomous will to circumvent its constraining geography” (p. 15). In the case of those fleeing Mtabila, they equally escaped from the violence of camp closure, and what was framed as “durable solution.” Brankamp continues that “It is through such temporary fugitivity or short-lived escape that encamped and incarcerated people are most able to define what it means to be free in their own terms” (p. 15). In the case of escape from closure it is not only the logic of encampment that was countered, but also, its withdrawal and thus abandonment to hegemonic imperatives to return, within the “national order of things” (Chimni, 2004; Malkki, 1992). Their escape from closure highlights that the closure of camps is not in itself liberatory (or a “solution” to displacement). Closure exists in a context of ongoing coloniality of migration law enforcement and ideas about who belongs where based in the enduring colonial divisions of Africa.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Mtabila’s closure endured for several years—both being drawn out in time, and through the hardening of rules and the boundaries of the camp. Ultimately, while framed by the humanitarian regime as a resolution of the problems of encampment and citizenship, the closure of Mtabila as a refugee camp was experienced by many of the people returned to Burundi at that time as forced displacement. The withdrawal of humanitarian care coincided with the increasing predominance of forms of sovereign power which abandoned refugees through the stripping of their status, reduction of food rations, and subjecting them to fear and violence to force their return. This abandonment continued in the dearth of support to “make-live” or ensure protection

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<sup>177</sup> Marronage describes the practices of escaped Black slaves in the Americas who created convivial communities and places to “practice freedom” from slavery’s racist dehumanization and violence (Bledsoe, 2017; Wright, 2020).

from persecution following return (Daley, 2013b; Purdeková, 2016; Weima, 2015, 2016)(Interviews, 2017-8). It was also experienced as abandonment to the Burundian state in which the exception had been generalized and which people continued to flee. Cessation and closure were shaped by regional (geo)political concerns (as well as the dominant trajectory-imaginaries outlined in the prior chapter).

Ultimately, the violence of camp closure and refoulement is not separate from both the slower violence of extended encampment, which is in turn dependent on the ongoing violence of the border, the colonial division of Africa, and subsequent territorialisation and exercise of sovereignty, and the classification of human subjects who can be separated from “the human” within the space (Mbembe, 2003: 25-26; Mbembe, 2018). Aware of the violence, liminality, and limitations of life encamped, resistance to leaving the camp is striking and speaks to the broader context in which possibilities for livable lives are foreclosed upon for many of those who have spent extended time in exile, for diverse reasons. This is not a defense of prolonged encampment, but rather emphasizes that closures alone not equivalent with abolition or liberation (Brankamp, 2021a, p. 3)—the broader context matters (Weima & Minca, 2021). Closures take place within the colonially created state system which continues to contain migration, and exclude political and racialized Others and people affected by displacement. Closures in such a context do not resolve displacement, but constitute further displacement.

## VIII. The presence and threat of Mtabila: Enduring closure after closure

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*“Is the memory of the camp not the camp?”*

*(Qamiyeh, 2020, p. 69, from the poem "The camp is the reject of the reject par excellence")*

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While Mtabila’s closure was ten years ago (at the time of writing), it remains present and continues to create fear and prolong displacement for many Burundian refugees in camps in Tanzania that are undergoing similar processes of closure again. In 2013, following the expulsion of the remaining “former refugees” from Mtabila camp in December, 2012, humanitarian organisations implemented a “camp clean up and environmental rehabilitation” for several month (UNHCR, 2013a, 2013c). The camp and its infrastructure was then “handed over” to the Tanzanian government. The site became a camp for the Jeshi la Kujenga Taifa (JKT; Force for Building the Nation) branch of the Tanzanian military. At the same time, the Tanzanian government began Operation Kimbunga (Cyclone), an immigration policing campaign in the region bordering Rwanda and Burundi, deporting tens of thousands of people (IOM, 2015; The Citizen, 2013)—hardening the borders, and closing the informal space for refuge which had remained beyond camps. Less than three years following Mtabila’s closure, hundreds of thousands of Burundians again sought refuge in Tanzania (UNHCR, 2015b, 2015d; UNHCR & GoT, 2015).

Uruwayesu (whose narrative of camp closure was the last shared in the previous chapter) shared that when he arrived in the re-opened camps, he met many people he thought he knew from Mtabila, and thought would never see again. I inquired what he said to these friends, and he explained:

We gave each other condolences because we were chased by force from Mtabila. So it means we had many conversations on what happened to us at Mtabila, [saying]: Eeee, are you still alive? Yes, and we exchanged a lot of

questions on what happened at Mtabila, and life in Burundi, and how it was. It means that when sometimes we encounter someone with whom we together at the moment of the forced repatriation at Mtabila, we are really close friends, because we talk a lot about what happened to us. (Interview, 2018)

I never visited the site of Mtabila camp, yet events at the former refugee camp were ubiquitous in my research and conversations in the camps. Many life history raconteurs spent years in Mtabila camp, and were forcibly repatriated from there. Mtabila seemed weightily present, as life histories wove between past and present. Even those who had not themselves been in Mtabila camp at the time of its final closure, its name was evoked in discussing the context. It is the presence of Mtabila in the current camps that I examine in this chapter. Like autobiography, life history “is not *only* about the past, but is busily about the present as well” (Bruner, 2001, p. 29, cited in Powles, 2004, p. 8, italics original).

This chapter focuses on the present (at the time of research), and how afterlives of camp closure shape contemporary camp governance and refugees’ experiences of encampment and displacement. By *camp afterlives*, I refer to the diverse ways in which past camps (and experiences in those places) continue to shape places and trajectories in diverse ways. In the mobilization for Burundian refugees to return, speeches by government officials in the camps explicitly evoked the closure of Mtabila. Mtabila’s violent closure was thus mobilized as a threat of future violence and camp closure. The closure reached across space and time from one camp to another. Mtabila’s closure remains present in current camps—in a slower register—as part of an extended necropower, intended to create fear as part of the ongoing process of closure. When the camps may close is uncertain, but the potential for their closure is a prerogative of the same sovereign power which created the camps.

It may seem contradictory to oppose encampment, and yet be critical of camp closures, and threats of closure. This is where context matters (Massey & Meegan, 1986), and where empirical attention to closures and their aftermaths situates camps in broader contexts of enduring displacement:

Attention to camp closures and particularly state-sanctioned camp destruction may provide a new perspective on the nature of such exceptionality and its relation not only to the spatiality of the camp and its existence, but also to its closure and afterlives—precisely because camps are not only spaces of exception, but also sites of care, home, survival and belonging, in broader landscapes of exclusion and abandonment (Agier, 2014; Brun & Fábos, 2015) (Feldman, 2015b; Grayson, 2015; Holzer, 2015; I. Katz et al., 2018; Singh, 2020; E. P. Smith, 2016). (Weima & Minca, 2021, p. 265).

Closures operate within broader systems of space closed to people categorized as refugees (or “illegal migrants”). The camp is thus a site of ontological insecurity (Hyndman & Giles, 2017b; C. Katz, 2007), and even fear, which increases when threats of closure intersect with memories of past violent closures, and the re-displacement which followed.

This chapter draws on my recently co-published paper (Weima & Minca, 2021) to review literature on the sovereign power and violence that may be enacted in the possibility of camp closure, and literature on camp afterlives. It further examines geographical and anthropological approaches to fear, and its relation to power and violence, including in the management of displacement. Experiences of fear are foundational to definitions of refugees, but fear is also central to the framing of refugees as Others to justify their securitization, exclusion, and expulsion. And fear is a tool through which the Tanzanian and Burundian governments seek to govern Burundian refugees—referencing past violence to threaten future violence, to shape experiences in the present. Attention to fear contributes to understanding experiences of camp temporalities, and, relatedly, temporalities of violence and displacement in and beyond encampment.

Living in fear is an experience of slow violence (O’Lear, 2021). Burundian refugees endure conditions reminiscent to what Das (2007) refers to as a “weave of violence” in their everyday lives, while working to meet their own basic needs in increasingly difficult conditions of closure and displacement. This slow violence limits possibilities for ontologically secure home-making in exile. Encampment is thus experienced as prolonged (slow) displacement, through the anticipation of further direct displacement from the camp.

#### Literature Review: Closure as threat

Camp closures are inherent to the temporary temporalities which define camps.

Camp closures are sometimes framed as a resolution to the problem of displacement, or to poor camp conditions (therefore ending a situation of ‘emergency’); however, other times they merely consist of an attempt to displace ‘the refugee problem’ due to political pressure, donor fatigue, geopolitical considerations, or supposed security concerns (Abreek-Zubiedat & Nitzan-Shiftan, 2018) (Gabiam, 2012) (Loescher, Milner, Newman, & Troeller, 2007) (Sanyal, 2017) (Williams, 2012). The prospect of camp closure may also be used as a tool to manage refugee behaviour (e.g. closure after riots or fire). The outcome for camp residents is often significant—whether a camp closure is due to a true resolution to the problems of their displacement, their transfer to (an)other camp(s), *refoulement*, or their dispersal and abandonment. (Weima & Minca, 2021, p. 262)

Camp closures can thus be times of violence and fear:

[...] even its anticipation may have important effects on camp residents, including their decision whether to leave before the final events of closure, or remain as long as possible. Relatedly, it may provoke a fear of being abandoned, losing the support and protection, however minimal, offered in the camp. (Weima & Minca, 2021, p. 262)

Yet, perhaps because of the sometimes decades-long lives of camps, camp literature has focused far more on the condition of long-term liminality than of the actuality of camp closures:

Often with a focus on formal/institutional camps, the literature on uncertainty and waiting has largely examined cases marked by the protracted nature of encampment's liminality, or 'permanent-temporariness' (Hyndman, 2011b; Hyndman & Giles, 2011; Miletzki, 2014; Picker & Pasquetti, 2015). Ramadan (2013) writes of the camp as 'permanently impermanent,' 'an enduring moment of rupture,' and 'a time of interruption, waiting, stasis' (72-3). (Weima & Minca, 2021, p. 270)

While the uncertainty of long term encampment is undoubtedly important to the emotional and affective geographies of many contexts of encampment,

... the uncertainty created is qualitatively different when camp closure is announced as imminent, particularly if accompanied by coercive threats, or violence (IRRI and Rema Ministries, 2011, 2012; Neto, 2014). For example, Minca and Ong (2018) recount how in the months prior to the planned closure of Galang Camp in Indonesia, the number of deaths due to suicide greatly increased, as the refugees living there were told they would be returned to their country of origin. (Weima & Minca, 2021, p. 270)

In the last months of my research in 2018 threats of violent camp closure became more harsh and frequent. There was a qualitatively palpable deepening of dread and anxiety in the narratives shared—beyond the “mere” ontological insecurity of long-term exile and uncertainty of encampment. Invocations of closure are thus not neutral. Often, they form part of the biopolitical “techniques for achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations” (Foucault, 1979, p. 140) in the current camps. Threats will often be combined with more material biopolitical techniques through which longer processes of closure seek to coerce return, described in the previous chapter. These may include reductions of food far below even minimal humanitarian recommendations, so that social reproduction becomes nearly impossible within a camp—a technique also linked with declining donor support for refugees (Crisp, 1986; Hyndman, 2000). Perhaps more precisely, closures highlight conditions of necropolitics (Mbembe, 2003; Wright, 2011, p. 709) as they reveal who can be exposed to death both in violent closure, and in the conditions to which they are forced to return. Return is, for some, a threat of death, or of

abandonment to death through the slow violence of non-livable conditions without the bare minimum of humanitarian or state provision. Recent experiences of return following the closure of Mtabila illustrate the abandonment to non-livable conditions and violence in Burundi as shared in excerpts from narratives, below. They equally serve as a spectre of future abandonment.

Sovereign power to define the exception has largely been theorized through the possibility of creating the camp space (Agamben, 2005). The power to close or not close a camp is equally a part of the workings of sovereign power in relation to encampment:

[W]e [...] suggest that the fact that camps can be *closed or not closed, but potentially always subjected to closure* is a constitutive element of the sovereign exception that rests at the foundations of all camp geographies. We thus consider this field of possibility – *of closing or not closing a camp* – as part of the inherent ‘violence of encampment’, something that becomes very visible in cases of sudden and forced closure of camps supposedly predicated on humanitarian care, but also in cases of indefinitely protracted encampment, as some of the literature discussed above has shown. (Weima & Minca, 2021, p. 271)

The potential of closure as part of “inherent ‘violence of encampment’” works in across varied temporalities—particularly when threats of closure and processes of closure make life less and less livable. Threats of closure are linked to future oriented temporalities, the anticipation of future violence and uncertainty. In the current Tanzanian context, the potential of closure also draws on memory, and invocation of the past camps and closures.

#### Camp Afterlives

When camps close their prior existence may continue to shape places and trajectories in diverse ways.

Through rhizomatic approaches to conceptualize the spatialities and temporalities of camps and their afterlives, both Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2019) and Hagan (2018) place closures in broader, relational networks. Although studying distinct contexts of protracted and formal Palestinian encampment, and fleeting informal encampments in Calais, a rhizomatic approach blurs the spatial and temporal boundaries of encampment and camp after-lives for both scholars. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2019) considers camp-closures, and their after-lives, as already present in any camp. After the closure of certain Palestinian camps, aspects of camp life were ‘re-membered’ through the (re)creation of social life and institutions. Sometimes, new camps emerged at the sites of closed camps, such as Al-Adwa camp at the Libya-Egypt border: ‘This re-eruption reconnected both the new camp and the *remains* of Al-Awda camp to an ever-evolving Palestinian rhizome that is constituted through a multiplication of (current, past, future) places and spaces (...)—a camp that *returned* (...) demonstrates that the

erasure or closure of a camp at a particular time does not mark the camp's end, as it remains as a trace, or, as this case-study suggests, as a camp *in potentia*' (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2019, p. 297). Hagan (2018) traces a different form of camp re-membling in Calais, which she terms the 'contingent camp.' After the state destruction of 'the Jungle,' a 'camp-like process' emerged as humanitarians and exiles came together to continue to provide services and meet needs. Their daily routines and practices renewed the camp in spite of efforts at its destruction. 'Only emerging in brief moments' this 'contingent camp' is 'a semblance of the camp-that-was' (Hagan, 2018, p. 74-75). It's rhizomatic nature means that it persists 'in a constant, resistant state of becoming' even as the small, hidden dwellings of exiles are continually razed by police (ibid.: 87). It also visibly asserts the non-resolution and ongoing nature of displacement and exclusion, after the urbicidal destruction of the former Calais camp. (Weima & Minca, 2021, p. 267)

The closures and re-openings of camps in Tanzania may operate through slower temporalities than the frequent openings and destructions of camps in Calais based on Maria Hagan's research, but still allows for a rhizomatic approach to encampment. As in the closures traced by Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2019), at times camps re-opened in the sites of former camps. Their re-openings draw not only on the camps of those specific former sites, but also many other places that the residents previously inhabited—both other camps and diverse sites beyond (as traced in chapters five and six).

Even when residents and other important camp characteristics change, there may be strong continuity and connection, beyond physical location, between camps at a single site (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2019). (Weima & Minca, 2021, p. 268)

In the case of the current camps, the sociality and relationships of prior lives in Mtabila shape lives in the current camps, but the connections between places are also material. This sociality and relationality also extends beyond the re-assembled current camps. For example, more than one Facebook group focuses on re-connecting former Mtabila residents, and remembering the camp. The closure of Mtabila is particularly present in the current camps—memories of the closure are invoked by both the Tanzanian state and refugees, tying past experiences to imagined, and fearful futures, as illustrated through the narratives highlighted in this chapter.

#### Temporalities of Fear and Violence

Fear was a pervasive emotion expressed in my research encounters. It notably increased in the last months of my research, following increased intensity and frequency of threats of closure, and as recognizable processes of closure hardened the boundaries of the camp. I

highlight the role of fear as tool of camp governance, and how enduring fear is experienced as slow violence, in relation to past and ongoing displacement for Burundian refugees.

Numerous studies of fear in relation to refuge and migration have critiqued the fears produced by media and political actors in so-called “host” or “receiving” societies. For example, in the West, White supremacist bordering casts certain migrants and refugees as dangerous Others in ways which elide the (neo)colonial violence creating displacement (Brankamp & Weima, 2021; Danewid, 2017; Davies & Isakjee, 2018; Fanon, 1963; 2007; Ibeanu, 1990; Isakjee, Davies, Obradović-Wochnik, & Augustová, 2020). Related fears, shaped by the colonial duress of borders and racialized migration categories, also shape migration politics in East Africa (Brankamp, 2021e; Brankamp & Daley, 2020). In Tanzania, fear of Burundians as involved in violence and insecurity has been part of state and media discourse, justifying strict encampment, border-region migration policing, and return. One Burundian interlocutor observed “they [Tanzanians] think we all know how to shoot guns,” and “they think we have all killed”—a sentiment re-iterated in countless informal interactions with Tanzanians in Kigoma region (Notes, 2017-8). In such situations, Pain (2010) argues that feminist geographical research which is attentive the fear of populations that are themselves feared can expose the conditions which produce fear. This chapter follows this feminist approach, by focusing primarily on the fears of Burundian refugees, rather than the fear of Burundian refugees—though the two are entwined, as Burundian refugees themselves expressed.

Fear is central to the 1951 definition of refugees, as people fleeing a “well-founded fear of persecution” (Sommers, 2001, ch. 7, “Cultural Fear,” para 1). The most prominent analysis of Burundian refugees and fear drew attention to the ways in which fears were not only related to past flight, but remained palpably present for undocumented urban Burundian men in Dar es Salaam (Sommers, 2001). Sommers’ (2001) interlocutors frequently and directly described feeling afraid. While Sommers drew on Swahili vocabulary, in this research participants expressed themselves with the Kirundi terms *kugira ubwoba* (to have fear) and *gutinya* (to be frightened or scared). Their fear was also palpable in myriad other expressions of anxiety, indecision, and uncertainty.

Sommers contended that fear separates and distinguishes refugees living in formal settlements and those who self-settled beyond settlements, with those beyond settlements as far more fearful (Sommers, 2001). Certainly fear created beyond settlements is part of enforcing

encampment, and thus part of the violence of encampment. Experiences of fear outside of camps does not preclude fear in camps, but it does make the decision to try to leave fearful situations in camps more risky and difficult. However, fear is not limited to the space beyond camp boundaries. Numerous scholars and journalists have contended that “palpable feelings of fear and dread” (Sommers, 2001, ch. 4, para. 4) are now present for Burundian refugees in life in camps in Tanzania (da Costa, 2017; Rudolf, 2019; P. Nduwimana, 2019). In the context of this research, fear is part of the governance of the “campscape”<sup>178</sup> more broadly—not limited by the boundaries of the camp, but part of closing the space for refuge both within and beyond the camp.

Sommers (2001) largely linked his interlocutors’ fears to their past. His analysis prevaricates between seeking to the basis understand young urban refugees fears, and framing them as strange and “potentially paranoid,” and explaining why they may be (what he considers) so exaggerated (ch. 4, “potentially paranoid,” para. 5). He theorized that young urban refugees’ fear was largely due to the “strange way, the genocide their parents had fled lived on within them” (ch. 1; “Gathering Information”; para. 15). He described the “only” way to explain their affectual experience as “cultural fear” combined with a sense of “urban danger” (ch. 4; para. 2). Sommers linked cultural fear not to the precarity of their daily lives outside of the camps, without a long-term assurance of home and secure status (which Sommers framed as somewhat unfounded as there had not been large immigration raids in Dar es Salaam at that time), but because of the ethnicized fear of Tutsi seeking to destroy them (ch. 1; “A New Burundi”; para 3).<sup>179</sup> In this way he links fear to a distant past, without attention to past experiences of unexpected and life changing immigration raids in Mpanda (which he traces, but does not centre in his analysis), nor the ongoing political violence and exclusion in Burundi at the time.

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<sup>178</sup> “Campscape” is a term coined by Diana Martin (2015) and described in Chapter V of this dissertation where I relate Martin’s concept to the context this research.

<sup>179</sup> Unabashedly polemically, I contend that it is not “strange” that what their parents fled lived with them, as their lives continued to be shape by the experience of exile triggered by the genocide, but extended in both displacement management policies in Tanzania, and ongoing exclusion in Burundi. In Tanzania, their lives remain curtailed decades after the genocide due to colonial duress in the categorization and containment of refugees, even in a period celebrated as welcoming of Tanzania’s history. He downplays the effects of immigration raids in other parts of the country as repeatedly dispossessing people. He misses the fact, too, that in 1991, a Burundian politician living in Tanzania had been arrested and died in prison. In Burundi ongoing discriminatory land policies and education and hiring practices continued, along with formal effacement of genocide in state discourse, and genocidal violence (including recent to Sommers’ research in 1988 and 1991).

Sommers statement that refugees “dramatize their undeniable difficulties” echoes state and humanitarian discourse in Tanzania and Burundi, seeking to minimize refugees’ fears and the struggles of the poor more broadly (semi-structured interviews and notes, 2017-8). While not as direct, it leans towards the lying refugee trope (Rousseau & Foxen, 2006; Vermynen, 2016, 2019). He partially excuses what he sees as exaggeration though the explanation of a “traumatized culture” linked back to 1972.

Dr. Samah Jabr, a Palestinian psychiatrist and psychotherapist notes that Palestinians are framed as “crying wolf” with calling attention to the violence they endure (Jabr, 2018). The expression of “crying wolf” is drawn from a fable in which a shepherd is constantly alert to inexistant dangers, implying that the person who “cries wolf” is not taken seriously in case of real danger (Jabr, 2018, p. 26). She highlights that while in her professional experience it can be true that injustices and violence alter spirits and produce individual and collective trauma, the fact of past trauma does not mean that current fears are not justified. Palestinians continue to live with ongoing political violence and extreme poverty. Jabr thus argues that even when people may be suffering in ways that can be diagnosed psychiatrically, their ongoing fears are not based on imaginary wolves. She is clear: “Tout ce que je veux, c’est témoigner et affirmer que les loups, en Palestine, ne relèvent pas de la fiction, mais d’une réalité terriblement dramatique de la vie des habitants de cetter terre sous occupation” (All that I want is to testify and affirm that in Palestine, wolves do not arise from fiction, but from the terrible and dramatic reality of the life of inhabitants under occupation)(Jabr, 2018, p. 29). Indeed, the minimization and denial of their ongoing situation of suffering itself causes further damage psychologically. Even so, the real mental health “solution,” she contends, is political, not psychiatric (Jabr, 2018, p. 33). While the situation of Burundian refugees in camps is distinct from that of Palestinians living under occupation, Jabr’s theorization provides an important counterpoint to Sommers’ painting of refugees fears as “potentially paranoid.”

Sommers’ emphasis on the far past in explaining fear and trauma seems to ignore the ways that exclusions and structural violence endure in refugees’ lives. It also downplays the complex temporalities of fear. The temporalities of experiences of fear may vary, from the momentary, to the cyclic or even permanent, as well as different relationships to the future and past (Boscoboinik, 2014, p. 9). It is true that fears are culturally and socially constructed, and linked to past experiences and shared narratives. But fear is also present and future-oriented,

through its entwinement with perceptions of risk, which can be both immediate and/or future-oriented, (Boscoboinik, 2014, p. 10). How risk is perceived is relatedly shaped by culture. However, the fact “that risks are socially constructed does not imply that the risks do not exist” (Boscoboinik, 2014, p. 12). Past experiences shape perceptions of what such possible future events may entail, based on present interpretations of the context and risks. And, as argued by Jabr, intense and extended experiences of trauma do not mean that those who remain fearful are “crying wolf.”

Fear and the governance of enduring displacement

The present experiences of future-oriented insecurity of people in camps has been described by numerous camp scholars (Hyndman & Giles, 2011; Ramadan, 2013; Subulwa, 2013). Feminist geographers link traumas of displacement not only to flight from direct violence, but also to the prolonged uncertainty in how displacement is governed and thus prolonged (Loyd, Ehrkamp, & Secor, 2018). Similarly, research with people with undocumented or uncertain migration statuses have highlighted the insecurity and fears that legal exclusions can create (Dennler, 2019; Mann, 2010; Pull et al., 2020; Randall, 1987). For example, Randall (1987) writes that “[l]iving with the threat of deportation is living with an unnamed fear” and that it “conjures up a constant state of low-level anxiety, a possible double meaning to every comment, the threat of having to leave where I am and therefore never really living where I am” (Randall, 1987, p. 479). For refugees in camps threatened with cessation and closure, the threat of deportation is also present.

Notably, feminist geographers have built on sociologist Giddens theory of “ontological security” which describes a “a sense of order and continuity in relation to one’s existence” (Daley et al., 2018; Hyndman & Giles, 2017b, p. 16; C. Katz, 2007). Hyndman and Giles (2017) propose the related term “ontological insecurity” to describe the extended experience “an acute sense of not knowing what comes next” (p. 16). Such insecurity may endure even after formal legal “solutions” to displacement such as resettlement and naturalization because of state policies and the ongoing racialized Othering of former refugees, particularly when the threat of revocation (and deportation) remains (Daley et al., 2018; Hodžić, 2017b).

Fear is thus bound up with the management of migration and displacement, in the broader campscape (Martin, 2015) encompassing the landscape and people both within and beyond camps. The relationship of fear and violence is linked with power (Boscoboinik, 2014, p. 14) and

is used to both control and displace populations. For example, in the context of landgrabs and displacement in Cambodia, Shoenberger and Baban (2018) trace how fear is “a tool of governance that facilitates state control” and capital accumulation (p. 2).

I build on the connections between fear, violence, and governance to contend that the production of fear in governance is not only related to violence through the threats (and memories) of direct violence that are invoked, but is itself a form of violence and displacement. The elicitation of fear is a slow violence that is deeply embodied and harmful, making lives less livable, as described in excerpts from narratives, below. Fear as violence is intimately linked to slowly enduring displacement. This dissertation contributes to research which has highlighted how experiences of displacement continue in refuge and through/following “durable solutions,” though often through slower temporalities of structural and cultural forms of violence/harm (Daley, 2013b; Hodžić, 2017a, 2017b; Ramsay, 2020a; Ramsay & Askland, 2020).

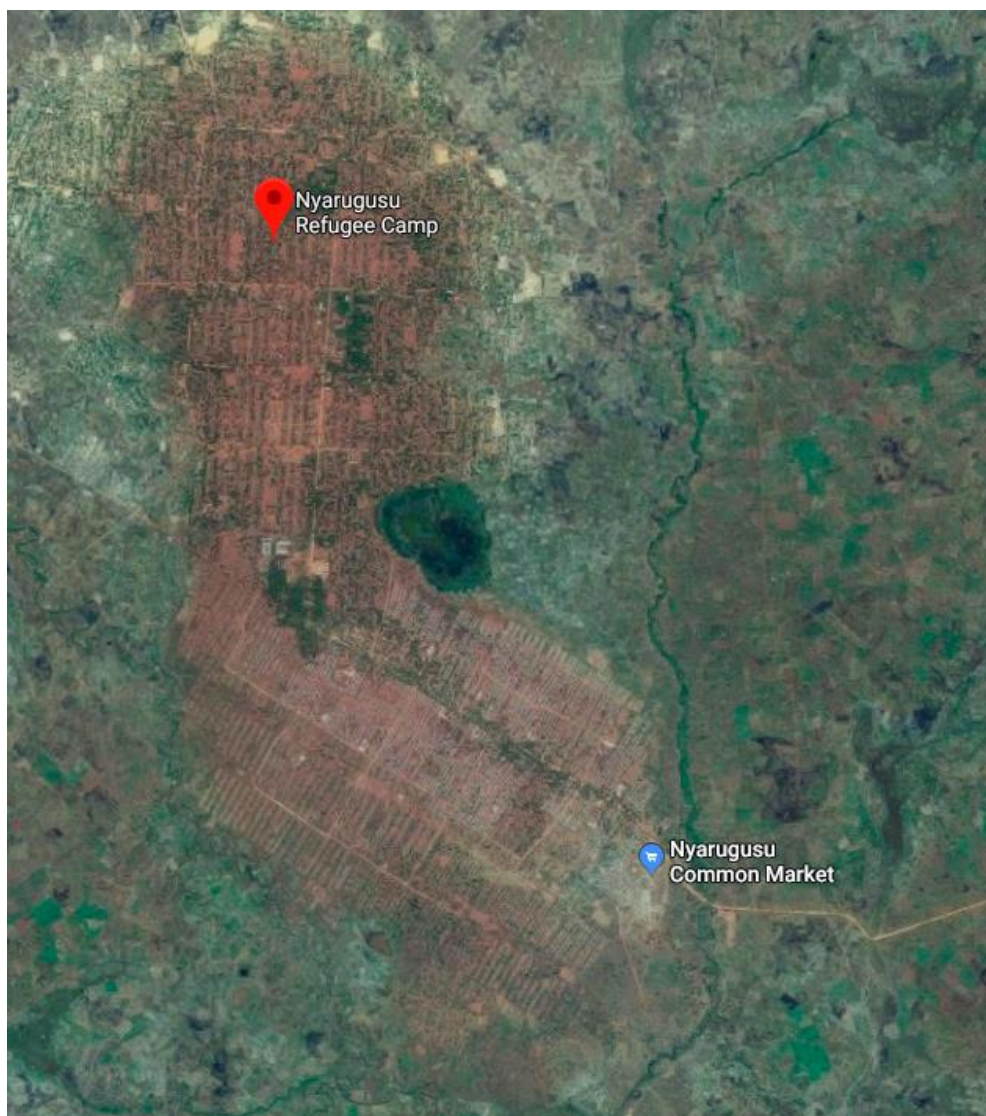
Displacement has been theorized as “violent un-homing,” which may be through direct or slow forms of violence (Elliott-Cooper et al.). The slow violence of governing encampment and return through threats of impending closure intentionally prevents people from feeling securely at home in exile, in ways that are harder and harsher than the “permanent temporariness” that may pervade other situations of long-term exile. The mobilization of fear as a form of slow violence is an enduring violent un-homing for people already in exile.

In *Landscapes of Fear*, Yi Fu Tuan (2013) cautions that academics seem drawn to the drama of landscapes defined by fear. However, he notes, even in the places where people experience terrible fear in an ongoing way, academics must be careful to recognize that much of daily life is still mundane: “Focusing as we do on fear, we inevitably give the impression that human beings dwell on the earth precariously and are almost constantly afraid. This is surely a distortion. Drowsy habitude and the ordinariness of the daily round rather than fright and despair are the common human lot” (Tuan, 2013, ch. 1., para. 23). Focusing on fear can itself be disempowering: “it can reinforce the association with victimhood and overlook agency, resistance and self-action.” (Pain, 2010, p. 231). In many situations of ongoing fear, “la resilience et le fait de faire face sont le norm” (resilience and facing up to it are the norm) (Jabr, 2018, p. 34). Even after horrific mass violence the tasks of everyday social reproduction must continue (Das, 2007). This chapter thus addresses the diverse ways Burundian refugees endure a context of ongoing fear and displacement, and of closure after closure.

## Rhizomatic re-openings

In 2015 the formerly closed Nduta and Mtendeli refugee camps re-opened. Nyarugusu (formerly housing primarily Congolese refugees) was also expanded, in order to accommodate the arrival of tens of thousands of Burundians seeking refuge in Tanzania again. In 2017 when I began research, well over 80% of the current Burundian refugees who arrived since 2015 were estimated to have been refugees before (Notes, 2017). Nduta and Mtendeli can both be read as palimpsests. Material traces of previous camps remain, including roads, bridges whose NGO sponsorship remains legible, water taps, buildings, and traces of buildings (Notes and interviews, 2017-8). They also have traces of the people who lived at the locations before and after they were camps, such as trees and plants, though distinguishing these from those planted by prior refugees is difficult (except for some trees, by age). As outlined in previous chapters, many of their current residents had experienced prior camp closures, including the closure of Mtabila in 2012. Prior displacements, including camp closures, shape their experience of the current camps.

Nyarugusu camp is only about 40 km by road from Mtabila. Both camps appear on publicly available maps and aerial photographs of the region. The grid of roads and plots and houses is well defined on the image (Figure 4, below) of Nyarugusu. It's heavy use is evident in the soil revealed, in comparison with the vegetation of the surrounding area.



*Figure 4 Aerial photo of Nyarugusu camp - the well-worn grid; Copyright GoogleMaps, 2019<sup>180</sup>*

The aerial photographs of Mtabila, now a military camp, still retain traces of the refugee camp it once was (see Figure 5, below). Muyovosi, also a former refugee camp adjacent to Mtabila, is also visible. Unlike Nyarugusu, both former camps now stand out as verdant in relation to the surrounding area. While banana groves and other crops were cut down in the long closure process of the camp, bananas are rhizomatic. They re-grow from their established roots—a legacy of the Burundian refugees forced to leave, even when their shelters and other traces have been destroyed. The JKT military branch activities include agriculture and other

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<sup>180</sup> GoogleMaps allows for reproduction of copywrite images for up to 5000 copies (which is certainly less than this dissertation!)

income generating activities, which is part of the current use of Mtabila camp. Many refugees noted that truckloads of bananas (ibitoke) from Mtabila were sold to Burundians at the Common Market in Nyarugusu camp.<sup>181</sup> As bananas are a staple food for many Burundians, not included in the unchanging staple foods distributed since the camp opened, they are a sought after commodity by refugees with the monetary means to vary their diet. While the JKT may have undertaken further propagation and cultivation, it seems possible and even likely that some of the former refugees' established groves were included (Notes, 2017). Refugees may be purchasing and eating the harvest of plants they had cultivated. While theories of rhizomatic analysis of the afterlives of camps are usually less literal (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2019; Hagan, 2018), Mtabila's bananas are a literal rhizomatic re-emergence and material connection of the past and present camps.

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<sup>181</sup> The Nyarugusu Common Market was a formally organized market open to both refugees and surrounding residents. On the Nyarugusu Common Market, see Kim, Jeong and Sung (2021)



*Figure 5 Aerial Photo of Mtabila camp: Regrowth of a verdant grid; Copyright GoogleMaps 2019*

### Calls for Closure, Hardening Enclosure

In July, 2017, the Burundian and Tanzanian presidents, Pierre Nkurunziza and John Magufuli, met in Ngara, Tanzania, a town near the Burundian border. In Nkurunziza's first international trip since the May 2015 coup attempt, the two addressed public crowds in Swahili, and called for Burundian refugees to return to Burundi. They both stated that Burundi is peaceful, that Burundians should return to build their own country, and that there was no more need for Burundians to seek refuge (Mulisa, 2017; Nkundikije, 2017; The Citizen, 2017b).<sup>182</sup> Magufuli critiqued international organizations of drawing Burundians to the camps with overly

<sup>182</sup> Magufuli also stated that the naturalization of Burundians, which had largely applied to "1972 refugees," would be stopped, as it "encourages them to settle in Tanzania" (Nkundikije, 2017). As many as 40,000 applications were pending at the time (Felleson, 2021, p. 2716).

generous aid (The Citizen, 2017b), and put a stop to cash programming in the camps (Boeyink, 2019).

Following the speeches, the Tanzanian government began to record those in camps registering their desire for return. At the end of August, the Burundian and Tanzanian governments, and UNHCR, held formal Tripartite Commission meetings, and agreed “to assist the voluntary repatriation” of nearly 13,000 Burundians who had indicated a desire to return (OCHA, 2017b). Return convoys began in September 2017, with almost 7000 Burundians returned in the first two months.

All of this coincided with a decrease in the per-capita food ration, to less than 65% of even minimal caloric recommendations. In September, 2017, refugees were receiving only 60% of recommended cereals (corn) and 40% of recommended super cereal; 60% of the recommended oil, 70% of the recommended salt, and 70% of the recommended pulses (dried peas); increasing to 70% of cereals, for 67% of the overall recommended minimum in October, 2017. This decrease was framed as a coincidence, due to problems in the “pipeline,” and due to the chronic underfunding of the response more broadly (Notes, 2017). Confidential informal conversations suggested that it may be less coincidental than framed. Food ration decreases have been explicitly used in other sites in Africa to “encourage” return (Crisp, 1986) (Hyndman, 2000). While I have no material evidence that this is the case, the decreased ration undoubtedly pushed people to consider return, particularly when further activities to supplement income and subsistence in the camps became increasingly risky or impossible.

Over the next year *prima facie* recognition of Burundians was halted. Nearly all refugee/asylum reception centres at the border were closed (Felleson, 2021). At times the border was formally closed (Semi-structured interview, 2017). Formal humanitarian border monitoring activities became increasingly difficult, however UNHCR nevertheless documented “at least 1,362 cases of *refoulement* of Burundian asylum seekers since *prima facie* was lifted in 2017” (Felleson, 2021, p. 2708)(Notes, 2018). Where asylum was granted, the wait for Refugee Status Determination interviews was estimated at around two years, and when hearings did take place nearly all asylum seekers were denied status (Notes; Semi-structured interviews, 2017-8) Space for refuge was hardening and closing.

From the time of the speeches onwards, rumours were common that the government planned that all Burundian refugees in the new camps would be returned within two years—

which was confirmed in a government speech the following year. In fall 2017 a humanitarian employee confided that he had several high placed government sources confirming to him that there would be no Burundian refugees left in Kigoma within two years (Notes, 2017). This rumour was repeated even in inter-agency humanitarian meetings (Notes, 2017-8). Staff and organizations were cautioned that while they could state that for now return is voluntary, they could not in good faith say that it would always be so (Notes, 2017-8). The projected return timeline gained authority with a speech to Parliament from the Minister of the Interior in May, in which he stated that the government's goal is to return all Burundian refugees in the Kigoma camps to their own countries by the end of 2019 (Waziri wa Mambo ya Ndani ya Nchi, 2018, p. 23). In 2019 Amnesty International reported a leaked document that forced returns could begin as early as the following week (Amnesty International, 2019a). Given the president's nickname of "bulldozer," for ploughing ahead to get things done despite opposition (Wilhelm, 2016), it seemed quite plausible to many that this could be the case (Notes, 2017-8). Some long-term observers and scholars remained skeptical, having observed in the past that several such deadlines would come and go before forced return was implemented (Notes, 2018).

My preliminary research in Kigoma began shortly after the speeches, in the same period as the first return convoys. Fear of return was a predominate emotion throughout this period. Many participants worried that the beginning of the repatriation program would lead, eventually, to return by force (Interviews, 2017). Indeed, the speeches had said that the only option was return, and they felt that eventual return by force was the "unsaid" in that statement. (As noted by Bigirimana (2021), speech in Burundi is often indirect, and may be differently understood by Burundians than outsiders to the culture).

Many interviewees emphasized that people in the camps had different reasons for fleeing, and that while some people could return, not all were able to do so (Interviews, 2017). Many still had much to fear, that they recognized was not obvious on the surface. They noted the particularities of their own choice to flee, which varied greatly, but which often included unresolved threats and injustices (This was also noted in journalistic and grey literature at the time (Amnesty International, 2019b; Hovil & Bueno, 2016; HRW, 2019; Peter, 2015; Van Laer, Hovil, Kigozi, & Lambe, 2017)). A number related the difficulties they faced after return to their framing as necessarily in the political opposition from the period of their former encampment, and especially those who had been forced to return from Mtabila. Those who had fled again, and

particularly those who fled in 2015, were framed as being in the protests or the opposition more broadly, and causing others to flee by spreading rumours of danger. They were threatened on the radio by Burundian ministers (Interviews & Notes, 2017). Even so, their fears were framed as false representations and “rumours” based in their own political motivations, rather than genuine fears of political violence or related persecution.

Several refugees noted that those returning to Burundi often did so because of the harsh difficulties of life in the camp—particularly the reduced food ration—rather than because they truly wanted to go back to Burundi (Interviews, 2017). Refugees, including those at the departure centre, noted that a number of people who returned planned to continue on to seek refuge in other countries, rather than remaining in Burundi where they still faced problems (Notes, Interviews, 2017). Researchers have recorded onward movement to Uganda and Kenya, either following brief formal return to Burundi, or bypassing return and making their own way from Tanzania (Van Laer et al., 2017)(Interviews, 2017-2018).

Several refugees shared uncertainty and anxiety about where they could go if forced to return to Burundi (Interviews, 2017-8). A young woman born in Tanzania shared, “In this camp we often think of where we can go to move ourselves, because we often think that we can be chased from this place, so where will we go to?” (Interview, 2018). Leah, who was born in a camp in Rwanda, and whose children were born in camps in Tanzania, worried about eventually being forced to return again due to the repatriation program:

Like this, then, seeing the situation we've lived, I'm afraid that up until now we could be returned by force, and it will be a problem. And because there are problems with security in Tanzania, so that Tanzania could decide to force us to return. And now I am afraid that from one time to another we could be returned by force. And I don't see what our life will be. Like I said [before], in Burundi there is no life. In Rwanda, I can't... and here, the children haven't received anything here until now ... it's a problem. (Interview, 2018)

Others directly mentioned the closure of Mtabila as on their minds—a fear that would become more overt when mobilized as a threat in speeches a year later.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Within six months, the government would also withdraw from the only newly launched Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework), contributing to a general sense of a closing space for refuge for many international observers (Felleson, 2021), though not commented on by refugees in this study as a top-down governance initiative that had not substantially changed the material conditions of their lives

## Fear and governance: Denying fears/evoking fears

...there was frightening news. We saw an authority who said that refugee camps must close: 'Whether you have problems or not, there's only return, because in Burundi there is peace.' But we know that there is no peace in Burundi. So like that, we are here, but we don't know what comes next. We have a lot of fear, because they said that people have to leave [now] because after "we will do it differently and it will be difficult." [...] They said it will be worse than Mtabila... (Niyonzima, Interview, 2018).

A year after the initial return speeches, and the negotiation of the tri-partite agreement the tone of return messaging hardened further. At the end of July, 2018, government officials were in the region for a by-election and planned meetings and public speeches in the camps on short notice. The Minister of the Interior was at initial meetings in Nduta, with elected zone leaders. Refugees reported that he said "This is a final warning for everyone to register on the voluntary repatriation list. We want order" (statement circulated on social media by refugee activists, cited in Rudolf, 2019, p. 215).

The following day refugees and international organizations were summoned to attend speeches. Around 4-5000 refugees were estimated to be present at the speeches in Nduta. Over the next two days similar gatherings took place in each of the other camps, even cancelling the large common market in Nyarugusu so that people would attend.

Many of the speeches sought to downplay Burundian refugees fears of return. In an inter-sector meeting in Kibondo the following day, a humanitarian staff person shared that the "message was from the president [of Tanzania] and the primary purpose was to encourage Burundians to repatriate voluntarily." He noted that the Regional Commissioner (RC) had reminded refugees that "it is not good to be a refugee," and that Burundi is peaceful. The peace in Burundi was evident to the RC because he could drive to Bujumbura without a security escort, and to the Zonal Coordinator (ZC) because he could dance the Rumba in Bujumbura in the evenings (Notes, 2018).

Digiri, an interlocutor who attended the meeting in Nyarugusu explained that the Regional Commissioner said that "in Burundi there are so many millions of people, and here there are hundreds of people. How then could there be killing, a small number of people here when there are millions there? Which shows that you should return. We will increase the number of vehicles, and even pregnant women will be transported." Digiri continued, "He said a lot really, and from these words, we became angry because we know that what we fled persists au

Burundi” (Interview, 2018). Minimizing refugees fears by claiming that their fears are illogical and unfounded is a key aspect of both Burundian and Tanzanian state discourse. This minimization is a form of what Davies et al. (2022) term “epistemological violence:” a too-common way of denying humanitarian and state violence as attested by refugee-migrants. Ignoring refugees’ fears validates the state emphasis on return, while questioning the basis for ongoing refugee protection, and is thus entwined with structural and direct forms of violence.

The RC further told Burundians that resettlement is not option for them, “their only option is to return home--if they stay they will be wasting their time.” The humanitarian staff member recounting the speeches in the inter-sector meeting repeated, “my sense is that they said voluntarily” (Notes, 2018). Refugees accounts did not interpret the speeches as emphasizing voluntary return. The contradictory wording of being told they *must* (Sw: lazima) register to *voluntarily* return is not subtle. *Voluntary* return is the doublespeak, while “*must*” is a command (Notes, 2018). Refugees present recorded the threatening tone of the Regional Commissioner in Nduta as similar to a military commander (Rudolf, 2019).<sup>184</sup>

In Nduta, both Regional Commissioner and Zonal Coordinator directly mentioned Mtabila in their speeches (Interagency meeting notes, 2018), which is similar to refugee accounts of the zonal coordinator meetings and general speeches at Nyarugusu. Recounting the speech a UNHCR employee added that according to their representative, the reference to Mtabila “was used a bit incorrectly,” as their position remained that the returns were orderly and with dignity.<sup>185</sup> How could orderly, dignified return be a threat? To refugees there was no question. The evocation of was likely meant as a threat, and was interpreted as such by refugees: “[...] It was to sow fear (lit: gutera ubwoba; the interpreter used fr: terroriser) for immediate return. He said that for the people from Mtabila they know how it was...” (Interview, 2018). It was meant to create fear, and it did, as will be explored in the following sections.

In the short term the speeches also increased registration for return. Digiri and many others linked the increase in registration to threats by the Regional Commissioner: “He said ‘if

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<sup>184</sup> “...Are you deaf? What are you [still] doing here? Are you ignorant up to this level? Are you not aware of a tripartite meeting between the Burundian government and UNHCR, held in Bujumbura and which has decided to have you repatriated? Whoever opposes this decision will be immediately put under arrest by our police! Nyamusivya Prison is ready for those ignorants!” (statement circulated on social media by refugee activists, Nduta, July 2018).” (Rudolf, 2019, pp. 215-216).

<sup>185</sup> The speeches were also directed at humanitarian agencies, who were accused of discouraging people from return, and told that this would not be tolerated. They too could be expelled, if not compliant.

you wait to be beaten, it will take place like it did at Mtabila.’ So many people registered. The information came like that.” The increase was more than 250 per day, initially, but only lasted for 1-2 weeks, before returning to previous levels.

### Collective Memories and Embodied Fears

Fears and uncertainty had been present throughout my research in the months following the presidents’ initial calls for return. Assertions of fear (Kirundi: *ubwoba*) increased following the speeches in the camps. One interlocuter phrased the threats as “an aggression against their hearts/spirits” (Kir: *imitima*)(Interview, 2018). The use of fear as a tool of governance elicited memories of Mtabila’s closure as a threat of what could happen in the future. Many research participants explicitly linked their memories with their current fears due to the renewed threats of camp closure. For example, Basabose repeated several times throughout an extended interview that he had witnessed sexual violence against a family member by soldiers in the events leading to Mtabila’s closure. He added that many people had been injured, and believed others had been killed.<sup>186</sup> Having recounted that history, his narrative jumped to the present. He stated that he feared similar violence when hearing the speeches mobilizing return from the current camps: “They are starting to say that they will soon repatriate us by force again; It’s scary. It’s scary again because we know the story of what happened at Mtabila” (Interview, 2018). His account circled between present fear of future violence and memories of the past, and from past to present and fears for the future.

Increased fear was not limited to those who had themselves experienced the violence of Mtabila’s final closure. One interlocuteur reported “[the regional commissioner] said “the people from Mtabila, raise your hands.” And he said, “You from Mtabila, you know. You can tell the others.” Already, the stories of forced return from Mtabila had been widely shared among refugees. Many had been present at the closure of the camp, and had shared their experiences. In this way, the experiences of violence became a collective memory and were mobilized by the state as a collective fear.

For example, Digiri, who had not been in the camps before, discussed how stories of Mtabila influenced his own fear:

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<sup>186</sup> While I could not find official or external accounts of deaths, it was a widespread belief that people had been killed during Mtabila’s closure (Interviews, 2018)

D: It's to say that, me, in the past I wasn't a refugee, but I heard that they beat people for repatriation, and they could repatriate people just meeting them in the road, without being able to go back and take their goods. or they burnt houses, including the belongings in them, and made the people board the busses, and return empty handed. That was in the past.

Y: Does it influence your thoughts now?

D: We remember what happened, knowing that he said that "if you want to be like the people of Mtabila, it will happen." Like that we are all troubled in our hearts/spirits [ku mitima]

He says that he remembers what happens, referring to a collective rather than individual memory of the events, and also states that the fear is collective, that “we are all troubled.”

Joseph associated other people's stories of forced return from Mtabila, with his own experience of direct violence and flight from Burundi in 2015. Though he did not stay until “the end” the social life of the prior camp continued in friendships renewed in the current camps, making other refugees' stories of violent return very close and personal.

J: ... There where I lived there were those who were repatriated who were separated from their children, and the children were found after ... And then it was easy to know this, because I am a health worker I was in the population. The work I did [with an NGO] means that in the community, I knew a lot of people, and I talked with a lot of people who were repatriated.

Y: does it influence your thoughts now?

J: For me... It reminds me of what happened when I was cut here [pointing to a scar from an attack that caused him to flee Burundi 2015], because these repatriates by force had problems the problems of Mtabila are like this situation of refuge today. There is some who lives not far, she's my neighbour—even at Mtabila we lived together. She had problems and in the chaos she was raped [...] Even here she is a neighbour which is why I could know this. Her children spend time here, and even this woman visits us here.

Y: So you still have friends from that time, from Mtabila?

J: Many, really. [Because of] the work that I did at Mtabila, I met many, many people from the community. So the people from Mtabila who are here. We know each other.

Joseph's account of Mtabila's closure testifies to the rhizomatic sociality of the camp, beyond its closure. As with many refugees' who had not been at Mtabila's closure, Joseph's understanding of the violence of Mtabila's closure is based in shared, collective memories of the events, but also related to his own experiences of direct violence elsewhere. The violence of Mtabila's closure seems close to him through his friend and neighbour who was directly affected by it. He equally sees the situation then as similar to “this situation of refuge today.” In this way, the past violence is present, not as a “ghostly presence” as critiqued by Das (2007), but more

materially, in everyday life and camp governance—in the enduring hardening and closure of camps, and calls for return.

Fear and ontological insecurity are embodied and material, even as everyday life continues with all its mundanities and necessities. For example, many participants confided that they did not sleep well after the speeches, whether or not they had been at Mtabila. Many feared not just the violence of closure, but also what would happen to them after return. While some noted this specifically in relation to the meeting and threat of return, others spoke about this more generally in relation to the uncertainty of their futures:

[W]hat I think often, is the question of returning to our home country... (...) which means I think, how will the future be? What will my future be? I try even to think, from morning to night, to look what I can do in his future or what his future will be, but I lack ... even the imagination ... Sometimes, it's not to say that I don't have enough to eat, but I can spend the night without sleeping, thinking always about how our life is, how our life will be? How will our life be? (Bizoza, Interview, 2017)

Bizoza's ruminations were preoccupying, and embodied. He attributes concerns about his future to interrupting his sleep, rather than hunger. The embodiment of memories of closure are included in scars and injuries, as well as from violence that was escaped in Burundi, are still felt—and both are recalled in the threats of return (Interviews, 2018).

Annonciata, who had also previously lived in Mtabila, had recounted in her life history how both she and her husband had been severely beaten on different occasions in the weeks leading up to their forced return. After the promotion of return began, she stated that the current threats of camp closure caused her to think more often of the violence she and her family had experienced: “it enters my thoughts, I remember how we were returned by force being beaten, and I think that probably it can come back and I feel afraid....” (Interview, 2018). She noted how her husband's experience of being beaten until he hospitalized also came back to him, as a “problem that remains in his memory” (Interview, 2018). Another interviewee, Mattias, shared that his injuries from that time still physically bothered him from time to time. through embodied injuries from former sites (and injuries received in Burundi after return, like Joseph), past “suffering is made present” at current site not in spite of past closures, but because of them (Asoni, 2022, p. 9).

Concerns around forced return and closure were not only linked to Mtabila in memories, but also to other camp closures and violence against Burundian refugees elsewhere. The closure

of Lukole was included in several testimonies. Some interlocutors evoked the killing of 39 Burundian asylum seekers in DRC in 2017, as a recent example of the violence to which refugees could be subjected (Kaburahe & Bukeyeneza, 2018; UNHCR, 2017h). Others mentioned the military attacks against camps in Zaire/DRC in 1996, during the Congo war, causing them to flee to Tanzania (Interviews, 2017-8). In this way, while Mtabila was the most directly evoked, and most commonly discussed closure, some interlocutors situated Mtabila's closure within a longer history of violence against refugees, not just in Tanzania, but in the region more broadly.

#### Closure as process: Hardening encampment

Months before the speeches explicitly evoked Mtabila, signs of the process of closure were present to some refugees. In Nduta, refugee-constructed kiosks were destroyed without warning in several zones. Walking through the camp, one interlocutor commented "this is how it started in Mtabila" (Notes, 2018). Such decrees hardened the boundaries of the camp, and emphasized the unpredictability and contingency (Hagan, 2018, 2021) of world-building (Singh, 2020) in the camp. New rules hardened camp boundaries and made it more difficult to leave. They also created more difference between life inside the camp boundaries and life outside. These decrees were thus "enduring" in the sense of making camp boundaries *harder*, as well as in the sense making life in the camp *more difficult*, and in the sense of *lasting long*.

The 2018 speeches include decrees of new restrictions, and the increasing closure of the space of the camp for livable lives in refuge. The new rules varied from camp to camp, illustrating the prerogatives of camp commandants as petty sovereigns. There was a lot of uncertainty about what the rules meant for many of the different livelihoods and income generating activities funded and implemented by various humanitarian agencies and NGOs (Meeting notes, 2018). Even NGO staff expressed "fear" in this context of uncertainty. One noted that different agencies in different camps all received different answers about what they could and could not do: "so we can say this, all livelihood agencies are afraid; what to do, what not to do..."

Livelihoods were a particular target because of the claim that refugees were seeking a comfortable life in camps rather than contributing to their own country (see also Boeyink, 2022). Bars, private pharmacies, "cinemas" (rooms showing old films), shops deemed "very big" such as those selling cloths in bulk, were all closed (Meeting notes, 2018). Bulk distributors were

stopped from entering camps, meaning that smaller vendors could not re-stock. A number of large mobile money agents were closed (used to send and receive money by phone, including from other countries), with the justification that they were targeted in violent robberies because of the amounts of money present (Meeting notes, 2018). In one camp barber shops were banned, meaning that haircuts became a hidden activity, affronting basic human dignity. Earning necessary additional income and accessing needed goods thus became more difficult at a time when rations had reduced. The restriction of livelihoods is part of the slow violence of encampment, intended to make lives less viable, and thus cause displacement from the camp.

Closure is thus a process of long-term, slow violence, through which space for refugee is gradually hardened and closed. Many of the restrictions sought to harden the boundary of the camp, and to increasingly cut camp residents off from the surrounding communities and landscape. Common Markets, which provided space for permitted interactions between “host communities” and refugees, had been widely celebrated as epitomizing market-led integration (Kim et al., 2021; Masabo et al., 2018). Initially, the Nduta and Mtendeli Common Markets were “closed until further notice” while the Nyarugusu Common Market was open one day per week for a period (and then later closed completely) (Meeting notes, 2018). More drastically, some bridges were removed or not accessible, making access to firewood collection more difficult. Policing around the camp and at the entrances increased. While of course the boundaries remained porous, there were many days where refugees were cautious about leaving due to the increased patrols. Fears about collecting firewood outside the camp with stricter controls on movement sometimes meant that there would be no fuel to cook, and so no food to eat, even when there was still food from the ration to cook.

Movement within the camps became more difficult—an internal closure and differentiation from life beyond the camp. Motorcycles were banned in most camps, though there was a justification that this was due to their non-registration, or because they were being used for illegal purposes such as moving people in and out of the camp at night. Bicycles were similarly banned in Nduta, making the transport of monthly food distributions particularly difficult. Such restrictions have tightened and loosened over the course of the years since, often without warning or predictability.

Digiri noted that the decrees brought a forceful dimension to the calls for return. The assembly for the speeches were not a camp “meeting” because there was no opportunity for refugee input, merely new imposed rules:

We don't know what will happen. Normally, it's not a meeting; it's an obligation that they imposed. It's an obligation because, which is seen because, those who brought merchandise for the [common] market were stopped. They said that the motorcycle drivers have only one week to stop this activity. It's an imposition, it's an obligation.

Notably, the destruction of refugee-built spaces has continued, leaving visual reminders of destruction within spaces of everyday life within the camp. The market in Nduta's zone five had been built by refugees and was thriving, without external support of agencies (Masabo et al., 2018) (Notes, 2017-8). It was destroyed in 2019, leaving a large visual testimony.



*Figure 6 Nduta Zone Five Market destroyed; Sent via WhatsApp, Anonymous*

For a period, the mud-brick constructed shelters of people who repatriated were bulldozed. The destroyed homes created literal gaps in neighbourhoods, and was meant to

prevent the refugee self-consolidation in neighbourhoods, or self-relocation of those who still lived in tents after years in the camp. Later, new construction and even repairs on existing shelters were banned. As shelters are only allowed to be constructed to be temporary in the first place, they require maintenance after years of use. Gardening within the camp—a key supplement to a non-varied, insufficient ration---was restricted, and banned for a period. Decrees were directed at particular crops at different times in different camps. Dramatically in Nduta, banana groves, key to many Burundians diets, income, as well as sense of home-making (such that a somewhat pejorative term for rural Burundians is banyabitoke, or people of the bananas), were cut down, destroying and preventing harvest of maturing crops.<sup>187</sup> By actively preventing or restricting possibilities for emplacement, or literal home-making within the camp, and through daily visual reminders of camp destruction, they are a form of ongoing displacement in everyday life.

Drawing on experience: Reading the signs, and enduring

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*In Swahili they say: Dalili ya mavua ni mawingu. Before the rain we will see... clouds. So, we've seen them. What's left is the rain. So as you see, we see the clouds (Deo, Interview, 2018)*

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The uncertainty and fear following threats of camp closure contribute to deepening the ontological insecurity of encamped refugees, making their lives in the camp uncertain (Hyndman & Giles, 2011). The uncertainty becomes more intense, and more fearful, as the threats pertain to a “soon” but indeterminate temporal threshold (rather than a distant, indeterminate threshold) (Weima & Minca, 2021). Past experiences shaped how Burundian refugees, while articulating fear, continued their lives (Tuan, 2013). While the slow violence of fear and memories of violence were present, the needs of social reproduction necessitated finding ways to negotiate and meet basic needs in an increasingly closed space-- a “descent into the ordinary” even as “the weave of violence” pervaded daily life (Das, 2007).

Uncertainty around the time frame of threatened forced return meant that many people were uncertain how to proceed with the many laborious activities that are necessary for liveable

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<sup>187</sup> Some of these restrictions were reportedly lifted with the 2022 visit of Filippo Grandi to the camps (Speeches circulated on social media, 2022.)

lives in the camps. As the mobilization for return came at the height of the dry season, throughout the camps mud bricks made through hard labour were left to slowly dissolve with the onset of the rains, as people felt uncertain whether to use their energy and resources build more durable structures, when being told the camp would soon close. Other structures were left half-built. One mason, who had sought work to supplement his family's ration, confided that since the mass-meetings, two clients had refused to pay him for completed building work, saying they would be leaving their newly constructed houses behind soon. In the markets in and around the camp, some animals and goods began to sell at lower prices due to speculation that the large refugee population would all wish to sell their goods at any price prior to leaving. Whether to plant crops weighed on the minds of those able to rent fields within or beyond the camp. One man decided not to plant further fields, but to still water what he had already planted. He was not sure whether he would be able to harvest some of his fields which were beyond the camp as others who had tried to tend to their fields had been caught by police and returned.

Several interlocutors noted that people with means in the camp would try to go elsewhere, such as to Kenya or Uganda, but that it was not a possibility for many (Interviews, 2018). They also feared spending all of their resources when those claiming to facilitate such journeys could be untrustworthy. Increased policing in the border region meant that some who did try to undertake such journeys were caught by police and returned to camps or deported (Notes, 2018).

Others in the camp did plant and build, differently interpreting the "signs of the times," even in the aftermath of the mobilization meetings and threats of camp closure. Many did so out of necessity, despite uncertainty. After explaining their fear following the meetings, Batwa interlocutors shared that "by luck" they had found clay in a nearby river. They were preparing pots, uncertain how they would find the fuelwood needed to fire them.

Umunezero based his analysis on the sequence of events prior to Mtabila's closure. At that time, he said, the schools had already been closed, and many other services as well. He shared that for now, the speeches are "... just to incite—when they close the schools and churches, it's then that there's no more refuge." He also noted that as closure neared, the cash-aid given to incentivize return increased to 180,000 FBU per person, with further in-kind aid, and felt that another sign of impending closure would be increased aid for return. Finally, he noted that there would be further and longer food shortages, all excused as problems with shipments,

but generally to push even more refugees to return. In re-iterating these steps in the previous closure, he felt “it could happen in the way it did before” (Interview, 2018). So, he thought, the camp would not close quite yet. He went ahead with his plan to repair the fence of the small garden in his yard to keep his chickens from wandering, and to sow some new greens to supplement his family’s meals.

In both camps, in the weeks following the speeches it was clear that many did continue to build and repair their shelters throughout the dry season. As the rains began, many did indeed sow their crops and small gardens (before new restrictions against this, after my research period ended (personal communication, 2019-21).

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At the time of my interviews nearly all participants stated they did not plan to register for return. Niyonzima described how people within the camp, suspected to be members of Burundi’s ruling party sought to mobilize others for return, but also spoke with disregard for their futures and lives. Niyonzima recounted “they said return: ‘those who don’t have a destination [land or property to which to return], you will live in the streets, or maybe you will die.’ It’s that which again was an aggression hurting our hearts. [So] I said i will wait to see the end.”

I asked, “What does it mean, the end?” Niyonzima explained, “I am waiting to see if they will beat us, because a large number of people are starting to register [to return]. So we have the plan that we will move to where there are other people [in the camp] who have not left, to wait for the day we will be beaten” (Interview, 2018). Here, Niyonzima refers to a practice many other research participants had also recounted practicing prior to the closure of Mtabila, as well as other camps that had closed prior to Mtabila (and from which the remaining populations had been moved to Mtabila).

For Niyonzima the plan of persevering is made with few other options. He does not have a home to which to safely return in Burundi, and has been told that families like his should sleep in the streets. He continued to explain that he can also no longer risk living in the Tanzanian villages “they say that the Burundians who are there have to return *chez eux*, knowing that living there is against the law.” He then made reference to the times he had previously lived in the villages, and specifically how the year following Mtabila’s closure, when he had tried to re-establish life in the villages, he had again been forced to return to Burundi in a large immigration sweep of the region (Swahili: *Misako*).

There is defiance and perseverance not involuntarily “voluntarily” registering for return, when being forcefully told to do so, and particularly when it is also waiting “for the day we will be beaten.” This reveals a strategy of endurance or perseverance, described through the Kirundi verb *Kwihangana*. This term pervaded my interactions with many Burundians in research both in the Rural Integrated Villages, and again in the new camps in Western Tanzania. *Kwihangana* refers to simply being patient, but also to persevering or enduring, especially in difficult situations. In some situations, the term has been used by authorities in Burundi (both civic and religious) to tell people to quietly bear difficult conditions and unfair rule—that they have no choice and no right to demand more. But in the context of persisting in camps, perhaps *Kwihangana* is a variation on what Veena Das termed a “descent into the ordinary,” a phrase she uses to describe a turn to the “everyday tasks of surviving” which are necessary to “making the everyday inhabitable” in the immediate aftermath of communal violence (Das, 2007, p. 215). In this case, it is a turn to the necessary social reproductive work of figuring out how to get by, and how to remain in the camp, as restrictions and pressure to return increases. As long as the camps have not closed, as long as it is not “the end” persistence remains; and as long as refugees remain in the camps, even when the conditions are extremely restrictive, it remains possible that conditions could change (Hughes, 2019). Even in the most closed spaces, the future is never closed (Massey, 2005).

Numerous refugees noted that their experience of prior encampment aided their endurance of increasingly difficult conditions now, even as they faced fearful futures. This may be reflected in the formal statistics on return, which noted that refugees and asylum seekers who arrived in 2016 or later, and who were more likely to be first-time refugees, were registering to return at proportionally higher rates (Meeting notes, 2018). While state actors and some humanitarians interviewed framed refugees’ persistence in refuge as aid dependence, and that they were “used to seeking refuge,” refugees framed their endurance not to an easy life as aid recipients, but as a hardening to difficult life conditions. They are able to endure (persist in difficult conditions), because they have been enduring (in the sense of toughening, as well as their long-lasting displacement). They can read the signs of the times, and face violence, because they have before and survived. They also had more reasons to persist in exile, as the dynamics of their ongoing displacement could often not be separated from their past exile and prior forced return.

Endurance is tiring. While the camps were described as having once been a place in which those who fled could find refuge and build lives, which is what refugees sought. “We took refuge, wanting to be in a place where we could have peace, nous installés (fr: settle in), and that our hearts could rest” (Paul, Interview, 2017). Yet several participants stated that since arriving in 2015 they had not yet been able to rest. Ndayikengurkiye shared he had not been able to be at home and rest when he had been returned to Burundi, without a place to live, nor did he find rest in refuge, because of how quickly they were told to return: “when I arrived in Nyarugusu I didn’t rest. They said, on va nous chaser” (we will chase/hunt you). Basabose and Patrice noted that they were constantly rebuilding shelters: within the camps, when new plans came or neighbourhoods or camps were consolidated; when they returned to Burundi; when they came back to the camp.

Basabose: ...and also, in their country [Tanzania] there is [no] peace for us. We have [been here] three years. [We were] repatriated [and were only] two-and-a-half years in Burundi. Without resting, we came back here also—without resting in Burundi. And it was not rest. And here also we didn’t rest. We are constantly tiring ourselves, building shelters—and after three years—again without resting—they make us run again, build this. It’s tiring. And also in Burundi, it’s tiring. It means we are troubled, we are tired ... therefore, we are disordered... they disordered us.

Interpreter (adding a comment): We are not like people.

Basabose’s quote is hard to follow, but that is also his point—not having had time to rest, constantly having to rebuild, is disordering. He and others theorized that making them tired was the intention. And that it was inhuman. Wearing them down. Others noted that their lives more generally had been tiring: “...Really, up until now, m’ubuzima yacu, turarushe” (Kir: in our lives, we are tired) (Bizoza, Interview, 2017). Threats of return and the fear it creates prevents people from resting—both physically, and in their hearts (kir: imitima), following accumulated displacements.

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In the months before I finished research, adolescent girls in a several villages of Nyarugusu, began a trend of planting small flower gardens. While many houses already had small gardens, the number of shelters with flower gardens greatly increased as the practice was taken up by other girls in nearby streets. In front of their tarpaulin or mud and wattle shelters, they propagated quick-growing and flowering ground-covering plants, watered them with left-over water from washing-up, and used broken bits of bricks to delineate the borders. The

daughters of several research participants used cuttings from friends to begin their own front gardens. Unsure how long they would remain in the camp, they passed the time of their school vacation and made their everyday places more pleasing. The incredible ordinariness of localized adolescent trends, and rhizomatic flower gardens beautified the streets in front of houses that were built to be temporary (and will someday be destroyed)—in the exceptional, uncertain, and everyday space of a camp.

## Conclusion

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*“Like an exception, a closure is both past and future because the memory of what has been closed is made present elsewhere.” (Asoni, 2022, p. 9)*

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This chapter traced social and material rhizomatic connections between past and current camps, tracing the ways camp afterlives shape current experiences of encampment. Memories of the closure of Mtabila and other past camps are present in current camps for Burundian refugees in Tanzania, who again are facing closure, and are threatened with the violence of past closures. Mtabila’s violent closure—though still denied in humanitarian epistemic violence—was intimately and testified to by experienced by many refugees. Refugees who were not there themselves believe the stories of their friends and neighbours, and thus share the memories of Mtabila’s closure collectively. They also share fear in the face that what happened at Mtabila will occur again if they do not “voluntarily” return. Fear is thus used as a tool of governance, and is a form of slow violence against refugees. It is inseparable from the direct violence experienced by many in past closures, and anticipated in future eventual closure. The slow violence of fear prevents substantial emplacement in exile, and thus prolongs experiences of displacement in exile. It closes space for liveable lives in refuge. Refugees also draw on their past experiences of closure to navigate the current ongoing process of closure, including varied restrictions hardening the boundaries of their encampment. While many Burundian refugees have returned in the past five years, many still feel they have no choice but to endure increasingly closed space. As long as they endure, the possibility remains that the stated trajectory of closure could change, as space, considered relationally, is always open. Nevertheless, after decades of displacement, endurance without possibilities for the rest of greater emplacement is exhausting.

## IX. Conclusion: Enduring Displacement, Enduring Violence

### Findings and contributions

In a context of calls for return after past forced and nondurable returns, and decades of exile, this dissertation asks several questions about displacement. The forced migration literature has increasingly moved to seeing displacement and emplacement on a continuum, rather than static, binary conditions (S. Jansen & Löfving, 2007; Ramsay, 2020b; Vigh & Bjarnesen, 2016). Learning from my own prior research with Burundian returnees (Weima, 2015), this research began with a broad consideration of displacement, encompassing not only recognized forced migration but also other periods in which an ontologically secure sense of place was not available to research participants, including forced return and camp closures.

Through life history research with Burundian refugees in Tanzania, many of whom had experienced multiple prior displacements, this dissertation asks: **(how) do past displacement shapes current refugees lives in camps, and their perspectives on enduring exile? Are past displacements present for refugees now, and if so, in what ways?** Drawing from this life history research with Burundian refugees, and building on the growing scholarship addressing displacement I ask: **how can we theorize displacement, including its temporalities, spatialities, and relation to violence?** These questions, and my tentative answers, are entangled with each other, and with the questions which follow in subsequent sections.

### Enduring colonial histories of violence and displacement

Although life histories are the centre of the dissertation, I trace a much longer background to displacement and violence in Burundi, than the displacements directly described in Burundian refugees' life histories. The contextual chapters of the dissertation introduce long durée of state violence and displacement. The post-independence genocidal violence against Burundi (Burundian people) was not itself a rupture with the past. Too often violence in Africa is "explained away" or normalized through racist and dehumanizing discourses of ancient tribal violence, and language such as "bloodbaths" (Daley, 2007b). The violence of colonial conquest

was direct (which describes more immediate violence such as military massacres, battles, torture of prisoners), structural (which encompasses slower forms of harm such as detrimental agricultural policies, excessive taxation, exclusions from education, etc.), and epistemic (such as racism and dehumanization, Eurocentrism, imperialism, but also taken-for-granted borders, nation-states, etc.). These forms of violence are entwined (Christian & Dowler, 2019).

The dissertation thus begins to trace the complex trajectories of displacement as related to violence, not limited to direct violence. Entwined forms of structural, epistemic, and direct violence made places less livable or curtailed possibilities for secure ontological experiences of emplacement and belonging. Consideration of the temporalities of displacement are truncated if they focus only on the most immediate events as causes of displacement. I use Stoler's (2016) terminology of "colonial durabilities" in discussing the ways in which colonial structures, epistemologies, and practices endure. The colonial period created new spatial closures, including through new forms of state accumulation by dispossession, new hierarchical socio-political categories of humanness and related categorization and management of migration, and new forms of state violence, with enduring effects. For example, while electoral violence is often thought of as a post-independence phenomena nevertheless tied to atavistic African tribalism, the earliest displacements shared in life history interviews were displacements due to violence surrounding elections preceding independence, as Belgium sought to maintain capitalist-colonialist power.

#### Enduring spatial imaginaries creating closure and prolonging displacement

Policies in the post-independence period continued to dispossess people who were cast as opposition to the state and who fled genocidal violence, even in a period often framed as relatively "peaceful". These included policies built on colonial changes to land tenure and judiciary system, and modernist ideas of development that re-organized rural landscapes. Fifty years later such changes remain inscribed in landscapes, and continue to prolong displacement through enduring land conflicts and state-extractivism that makes lives less livable and prevent secure emplacement, livelihoods, and belonging for many.

Dominant state-humanitarian responses to forced migration rely on durable colonial-capitalist categorizations and policies to manage African mobilities. They draw on spatial imaginaries that take borders, and autochthonous notions of citizenship and territorial belonging for granted. Such frameworks largely understand forced migration as a one-way, one-time

movement, best resolved by the one-way, one-time solution of return. They thus define displacement in relation to temporally limited understandings of the causes and categorization of displacement. This dissertation traces some of the ways in which Burundian refugees' life histories defy such narrow spatial and temporal categorizations of displacement. Rather, such imaginaries work to further close space to people who have experienced displacement, producing and prolonging displacement.

The dissertation argues for bridging methodological, ethical, and empirical conversations in research on displacement, and particularly research in camps. Research is not disembodied, and is always shaped by the sites in which it takes place. In approaching the study of displacement, the life history interviews for this research primarily took place within camps. Such a siting of research may risk reifying camp-centrism, and the related narrow study displacement through state-centric hegemonic policy categories (Bakewell, 2008). However, research beyond camps—which may challenge state-centric categorizations of displacement, and related imagined trajectories of refugees—also raises ethical questions, particularly when the presence of a researcher could increase the visibility of people seeking to remain clandestine. Therefore, a central limitation of this research is that I restricted research with Burundian border-crossers to those in camps with formal refugee status. Yet precisely because people's trajectories include "spatial disobedience" (Tazzioli, 2020), life stories told from within camps may defy camp-centric categories and narrow imaginaries of their trajectories.

In this context, I extend Diana Martin's (2015) concept of the "campscape," to consider the interrelation and inseparability of camps and their surrounding locales not only in places where camp boundaries are becoming increasingly porous, but also where they are hardening. Burundian refugees have long sought to make lives beyond the carceral constraints of encampment. Many make lives beyond borders and camp boundaries with or without (costly) formal permits, or categorization as refugees or labour migrants. The increasing policing of space beyond camps limits longstanding practices of boundary-crossing "spatial disobedience," closing space for livable lives in exile. Forced encampment is framed as the humanitarian management of displacement, and deportations are framed as migration management. Both produce and prolong displacement, as they violently interrupt lives and homemaking in exile beyond camps.

Post-independence displacement in and from Burundi thus includes more complex trajectories than the recognized 1972/1990's, and now 2015 short-hand labels suggest. Many of the trajectories of life histories in this research are indeed profoundly shaped by displacement and dispossession in the 1972 genocide in Burundi, and war in Burundi and the region more broadly in the 1990's. However they also include periods of emplacement in exile and experiences of displacements beyond these categorizations. In addition to emplacement in Tanzanian villages and displacement to camps, or deportation, life history interviewees trajectories include periods in Rwanda, Zaïre/DRC, and Uganda, with varied experiences of emplacement and displacement. Many experienced extended periods of emplacement in exile, and forced migration due to genocidal violence and warfare in countries of refuge, which does not fit the dominant imaginary of one-way trajectories of refuge.

Relatedly, the trajectories recorded in this research often do not fit the prior binary cohort categorizations of Burundian refugees in Tanzania. Refugees who arrived in 1972-3 were largely placed in settlements quite distant from the Burundian border, given land to farm, and expected to become self-sufficient. In the 1990's new camps were created, much closer to the Tanzanian border with Burundi and Rwanda, and without small plots to accommodate shelters, but not agriculture. People from Burundi who were classified as refugees at this time were grouped as "1990's refugees" (whether or not they had longer, prior histories of displacement) and expected to remain in the new, distinct sites. These cohort labels and associated distinct sites shaped their life possibilities and further trajectories of forced migration, as only people formally still residing in the "old settlements" were offered the possibility of naturalization, or to remain refugees and remain in the settlements. For the vast majority of people in the "1990's camps" return to Burundi was presented as the only trajectory formally available to them.

#### Return as enduring displacement

Imagined refugee trajectories are differently constructed across space and time, in relation to the geopolitics of refugee and migration management and "solutions" (Chimni, 2004). The refugee category as applied to encamped refugees in Eastern Africa implies a simple spatial and temporal trajectory: past (one-way, one-time, border-crossing) displacement; provisional containment (often through encampment); future return (or other sedentary settlement) as a "solution" to displacement. Yet, for many Burundian refugees return was experienced as further displacement. For many it was a place they did not know well, in which they had limited access

to reparations for prior displacements, and limited possibilities of rebuilding livelihoods. For a number of participants, politics in exile shaped their experiences of return. Those who were perceived as having not supported CNDD-FDD, the current ruling party in Burundi, reported exclusions and injustices. Many returnees continued their migration—to further refuge or as migrants to countries like Uganda or DRC; to other regions within Burundi due to land conflicts or to seek livelihoods; back to Tanzania to rent land or seek work. So rather than a solution, return, for them, was experienced as further displacement—stretching and prolonging their trajectories both locationally and in time.

From 2015-2017 nearly 400,000 Burundians again sought refuge. The vast majority of those arriving in Tanzania in 2015 had previously been refugees at least once before. These former refugees had also, largely, previously experienced return. Return clearly was not a durable solution for them. Their ongoing displacement was for many a direct continuation of prior displacement that had continued, rather than being resolved, in return. In crossing borders (or moving to register in camps from elsewhere within Tanzania) in 2015, they again became formerly recognized as refugees. Yet, refugee recognition and protection is based on temporally and causally limited understandings of forced migration. Notably, the formal categorization of Protracted Refugee Situations does not capture displacement which may extend decades beyond formal categorization. I build on Giles and Hyndman's theorization of *extended exile*, to propose consideration of *enduring displacement*—displacement which may include return and other prolonged trajectories of violent un-homing.

Within two years of renewed Burundian refugee recognition in Tanzania, calls for return began again. Knowing the past returns (including forced returns) had shaped the trajectories of many current refugees, this dissertation sought to learn: **(how) does the present emphasis on return shapes how refugees recount their life stories?** In discussing the calls for return, many interlocutors emphasized that they had not previously felt at home or been able to build secure, liveable lives in Burundi. They emphasized that what they had fled remains, so that in return, they would continue to be insecure in the places which were hegemonically framed as “home.” Return was thus a subject that was discussed with fear. Many interlocutors who had spent decades in exile, sometimes in more than one country, wondered where they could go, and where their children could find a durable home. In the context of this research, the attention to how past

returns shape current narratives and experiences cannot be separated from how return occurred for many previously, and specifically, the violent closure of Mtabila camp.

### Memories, presence, and fears of Mtabila

In addition to questions on displacement, broadly conceived, this dissertation brings attention to an often overlooked aspect of the temporalities of camps—their eventual closure. I ask, **what can attention to past and anticipated camp closures teach us about camps?** As this question is contextually bound up with the previous questions, this dissertation also asks what camp closures can teach us about displacement and return, and particularly their temporalities and relation to violence. While all camps are intended to close from their inception, little research has focused on camp closures. A key contribution of this research is drawing attention to this understudied aspect of camps, and how they may provide deeper insight into questions of sovereign and biopower, humanitarian violence, camp temporalities, and camp afterlives. While research participants had experienced varied camp closures, the closure of Mtabila camp in 2012 was particularly poignant in both individual and shared memories, and in shaping experiences of the current camps and perspectives on return.

Closures of formal humanitarian camps may be processes which last for years. This was the case in Mtabila, as services and aid were withdrawn, both through humanitarian plans and through sudden decrees of camp commandants, shaped by regional geopolitics and framings of peace in Burundi. Aid and service withdrawals decreased the possibilities for livable lives in exile, and thus a form a violent un-homing for many. As the temporal horizon of final closure neared, the space of the camp further enclosed, both through hardening boundaries, and through the consolidation of the remaining residents into a smaller area. Forms of sovereign power and governmentality often co-exist in camps, but as humanitarian “don’t die” support decreased, forms of sovereign power became more predominant. State and humanitarian petty-sovereigns invoked cessation, stripping Burundian refugees of their status. Thus, in the loss of refugee status in a “former refugee camp,” rather than as refugees in the same site, they became more akin to bare life. Former refugees were subject to dehumanizing violence in the final events of closure in 2012. Their return to Burundi, while framed by the humanitarian regime as safe, orderly, and with dignity, was none of those according to the testimonies in this research. The humanitarian narrative effaces the violent ways state-humanitarian management of displacement produces and

extends displacement (Davies et al., 2022). This epistemic violence is not separable from structural and direct violence.

The violent closure of Mtabila endures in camps today. Refugee narratives trace social and material rhizomatic connections between past and current camps. The closure haunts the current camps precisely because it did not resolve displacement, hence the continued refuge of tens of thousands who sought refuge again. All calls for mandatory “voluntary” return have brought memories of Mtabila to the fore for former refugees. The violent closure of Mtabila is also overtly mobilized as a spectre of future violence in speeches by the Tanzanian government (even as UNHCR continues to insist that this is not quite the right story). Fear is thus used as a tool of governance, and is a form of slow violence against refugees. It is inseparable from the direct violence experienced by many in past closures, and anticipated in future eventual closure. The slow violence of fear prevents substantial emplacement in exile, and thus prolongs experiences of displacement in exile. It closes space for liveable lives in refuge.

As debates on possibilities of agency and resistance in camps continue, this hardening context raises the question as to whether and how **resistance and agency can exist for refugees in camps faced with forced closure**. I ask, what is the relationship between endurance and resistance? As processes of closure harden, it seems that options become more limited for those who do not “choose” to return. The situation becomes more akin to bare life, as attested in refugees’ use of animalizing terms, and the sense that all prior semblance of protections or rights had been removed. Aware of the violence, liminality, and limitations of life encamped, resistance to leaving the camp is striking and speaks to the broader context in which possibilities for livable lives are foreclosed upon for many of those who have spent extended time in exile, for diverse reasons. Others defy closure and return by seeking lives elsewhere, a form of “spatial disobedience” that becomes increasingly difficult when military encircle a camp, and migration policing increases.

Both the closure of Mtabila, and the ongoing process of camp closure, are processes of enduring, in the sense of hardening boundaries and creating increasingly difficult conditions. Camp closures are also an enduring process, in that they takes place over an extended period, and are repeated again and again. Camp closures are bound up with the enduring conditions and closure in the broader campscape. The territorial and camp boundaries harden, as long practices of emplacement beyond camps are curtailed through increased migration policing and

deportation. The hegemonic emphasis on return endures, in that it persists after prior failure, through time and space, and in that it is hardening—fewer options are imagined or considered. All of these forms of enduring closure restrict possibilities for emplacement—both through slow forms of violence that create ontological insecurity in situ, and through direct forms of state violence. They displace in ways that endure—in that emplacement is curtailed for years upon years, and becomes more and more difficult. Displacement also endures as past displacements are both remembered, and experienced in the present in ways which are embodied. Yet people experiencing displacement also endure—they draw on experience to navigate increasingly difficult conditions, to persist, and, when possible, to clandestinely seek livable lives elsewhere. Enduring displacement is experienced as an inability to truly rest. It exhausts bodies and hearts.

Limitations and directions

The life histories created in the research for this dissertation are immensely rich, along with the semi-structured interviews conducted. This thesis does not do justice to the breadth and diversity of their content. In particular, as some of the stories in this dissertation begin to suggest, gender shapes experiences of enduring displacement in ways which may extend displacement for both men and women. While Burundian men's experiences of refuge have been highlighted in several important texts, women's perspectives have been less prominent (though see Lukunka, 2007). This has led to a common perception that it is Burundian men's politics which predominantly shapes forced migration, and the women are simply caught up in it all. Although this research intentionally aimed for parity in men's and women's participation, sex and gender were not central to the analysis included in the dissertation. Drawing on the stories generated in this research, a more intentional and intersectional analysis of women's and men's experiences could add depth to the discussion of how displacement is experienced. A similar critique can be made of the inclusion of Twa perspectives in research. While new research is examining Twa identity, including in relation to violence and peacebuilding in Burundi (Quétu, 2020, 2022), to my knowledge, no scholarship has specifically addressed Twa experiences of border-crossing and encampment. Such an analysis could challenge the stereotypical binary perspective on ethnicity, violence, and displacement in Burundi.

Additionally, while the majority of narratives included descriptions of life in Burundi after prior returns, these are not deeply engaged in the chapters of this dissertation. A growing body of research was addressing return from within Burundi (particularly prior to 2015)(Falisse

& Niyonkuru, 2015; Sonja Fransen & Bilgili, 2018; S. Fransen & Kuschminder, 2012; Lukunka, 2013; Schwartz, 2019; Tchatchoua-Djomo & van Dijk, 2022). However the experiences of people who have experienced displacement yet again may not be included, biasing consequent conclusions about return and reintegration. Further, this work largely focuses on the return of formally recognized refugees, and may not include experiences of people who experienced deportation without formal recognition (sometimes in addition to formal return). Indeed, to my knowledge, while there is growing attention to deportation elsewhere, particularly deportations from the “Global North” to Africa, there is very little research on deportation within Eastern Africa. Deportation is entwined with hardening borders in the management of displacement, and attention to deportation could perhaps lead to new perspectives on migration and return within East Africa.

One noted critique of this research is that the ways in which I have presented life histories paints a somewhat depressing picture of many Burundian refugees’ lives as consisting of displacement after displacement, and that this could be victimizing.<sup>188</sup> Undoubtedly peoples’ lives are more complex than can be recounted in a few interviews, including the lives of Burundian refugees. While people did recount periods of emplacement, and important moments in their lives not defined by displacement, the current incredibly difficult context of the camps undoubtedly shapes the ways they chose to recount their stories to me. Yet, I do not believe the difficulties recounted or the ways that I present them are a dramatization of their circumstances. The current situation in the camps is objectively terrible—with less than 70% of even minimum recommended food aid for years, extremely underfunded services, dehumanizing restrictions on activities and mobilities, and threats of violence creating an enduring atmosphere of fear for years. Several participants directly spoke to this in their interviews or our conversations, noting that the bad periods have outweighed the good in their lives, because of factors outside of their control. Humanization in research need not be romanticization of lives in exile, when (geo)politics, policies and decrees continuously make the circumstances Burundian refugees’ endure more and more difficult. As the opening image of the dissertation painted: Tabu Tupu. Sure, space-time is “always open” (Massey, 2005), refugees have agency and are resisting closure, and political possibilities remain. But I won’t romanticize the current situation by

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<sup>188</sup> This was noted in anonymous peer review of a paper that draws on the dissertation research, but which has not yet been published.

stretching the narrative arc to highlight “the good” in a way that the raconteurs who shared stories for this research did not.

Finally, in painting the difficult circumstances Burundian refugees face, this dissertation is perhaps too limited in the scope of analysis of the broader context of humanitarian aid for the past sixty years. The dissertation does not trace the international political economy of the ongoing capitalist underdevelopment of Burundi and Tanzania, and its “velvet glove” of humanitarianism and development. Yet this context undoubtedly shapes possibilities for emplacement in exile and return. As argued by Ibeanu (1990)

[...] until the dominant interests in the world become those that guarantee justice, equity and freedom, not only in legal and political life, but in the totality of human existence, resolving the crisis of refugees and other displaced populations will remain a fleeting illusion. (p. 6)

The violence of global capitalism (including Western humanitarianism) since independence is bound up with displacement in Burundi, but is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

## Epilogue

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*The present always holds a tremor of the past  
Give me a handful of future  
to rub against my lips.  
(Randall, 1987, p. 480, from the poem "immigration law")*

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Since my research period in Tanzania ended, the rules and decrees governing camp life have continued to fluctuate, but have largely made life in the camps harder through increasing restrictions (Personal communications 2018-present) (HRW, 2019). At the same time, food distributions have consistently been far below recommended minimum caloric needs (UNHCR, 2022b) and the distributed staples have not varied in seven years. Mobilization for return has continued.

Returns to Burundi have increased. More than 140,000 Burundian refugees have repatriated since 2017 (UNHCR, 2022b). Officially all of these returns are “voluntary repatriations” (UNHCR, 2019, 2021c). The terminology of voluntariness seems like semantic or epistemic violence for many of those returning given the increasingly difficult conditions in the

camps, the fear many refugees are experiencing,<sup>189</sup> and the statements by officials that in the end there will not be choice but to return.

As the population in the camps declined, the government of Tanzania and humanitarian agencies began a process of “camp consolidation.” From July to December 2021, almost 23,000 refugees remaining in Mtendeli camp were transported to Nduta camp. Mtendeli then closed in 2021 (UNHCR, 2022d). By August, 2022, 49,483 Burundian refugees remained in Nyarugusu camp, and 76,988 in Nduta camp (UNHCR, 2022c) (126,471 total).<sup>190</sup>

In late August, 2022, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, undertook an official visit to Tanzania, including a visit to Nyarugusu camp. By the following day, recordings of the formal, public speeches by elected refugee leaders and Grandi were circulating on social media. The concerns raised by the Burundian refugee leader who spoke reflected the fluctuating decrees, and difficult conditions in the camp. The refugee spokesperson thanked the government of Tanzania and UNHCR that the Burundian population are now again allowed to make repairs to their houses—a step back from a decree literally restricting Burundians home-making practices in the camp. He noted that Burundians can again participate in workshops after a period in which they were banned from doing so. That the re-allowance of these basic practices merits gratitude speaks to the dehumanizing conditions of a camp life in a context of increasing closure and enduring displacement.

Leaving beside gratitude, we have the following challenges. I am going to talk about more on voluntary repatriation and the durable solutions to the refugees. When we remember well it's that the Burundian refugees have been fleeing as much as forty years back and until now they are still living in problems. And voluntary repatriation was being conducted and people were repatriating. That is being used as a durable solution. But it has been conducted several times but it seems not to be a durable solution. The exercise for voluntary repatriation on the side of the Burundians, it seems as though it is not a durable solution anymore for some of the Burundians.

Those who want to repatriate are continuing to repatriate, and they are being emphasized on voluntary repatriation. But we are requesting that while creating awareness on voluntary repatriation human rights should be respected. Because there are some of the services we are not receiving and when we ask why we are

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<sup>189</sup> Forced disappearances from the camps also increased the fear experienced by many (HRW, 2020)

<sup>190</sup> Nearly 40,000 more “old caseload” refugees remain, without about half in villages, half in settlements (UNHCR, 2022c).

told that these services are being provided in Burundi. We are also requesting that constructing houses on the side of the Burundians should be permitted. Because we are told that it is you [UNHCR] that brought a little budget in order to facilitate voluntary repatriation.

Now the Burundian refugees are living in so much fear. Because the awareness raising that is being conducted, some of it is scary. That some of them decide to repatriate it is like they are being pushed. That's why many when they return [to Burundi] they don't stay—most of them go to other countries and there are those that come back to this country. Because when they reach there [Burundi] they [face discrimination]. They are asked: what did you flee from? They are not being assisted.

[..]

Because many Burundian refugees are living in fear and they would like to request for you to talk to the government of Tanzania that what happened in Mtabila in 2012 should not repeat itself. Because they say that it can be very dangerous. So we are requesting that if what happened in 2012 is in the government's plan, talk to the government so that it cannot repeat the same acts.

(Refugee spokesperson, August 2022, public speech shared on social media)

This public speech echoes many of the dominant themes in the life histories shared by Burundian refugees in the research for this thesis. The refugee spokesperson links the conditions of their exile to a long history of decades of displacement. Displacement endures. Five years after refugees spoke of fear of forced return in the interviews which make up this research, many remain afraid, according to this speech. Their fear endures. They have been living with fluctuating conditions of closure, that often make home-making and liveable lives in exile increasingly difficult. Closure endures. The spectre of Mtabila remains present, as do memories of the difficulties faced after prior returns. Memories of Mtabila endure, and make life in the present more difficult. And through these increasingly difficult conditions, the refugees remaining in camps endure.

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## Appendix A: Perspectives on pre-colonial ethnic relations

The first article of the first chapter of the *Arusha Accord for Peace and Stability in Burundi* (2000), which addresses the nature and historic causes of the conflict, begins by addressing the nature of ethnicity in the precolonial period:

Durant la période précoloniale, tous les groupes ethniques au Burundi faisaient allégeance au même monarque, Umwami, croyaient au même dieu, Imana, avaient la même culture et la même langue, le kirundi, et cohabitaient sur un même territoire. Indépendamment des mouvements migratoires qui ont accompagné le peuplement du Burundi, tous se reconnaissaient comme étant Barundi (Accord d'Arusha pour la Paix et la Réconciliation au Burundi, 2000, p. 15)<sup>191</sup>

The following two articles of the Accord note that respected Bashingintahé (Kir: mediators, arbitrators or judges, wise and respected men) were drawn from Ganwa, Hutu, and Tutsi, that no conflict existed between ethnic groups in that period. Nevertheless, the final article on the precolonial period mentions a list of “traditional practices” that were causes of injustice and frustration for Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa alike<sup>192</sup> (Accord d'Arusha pour la Paix et la Réconciliation au Burundi, 2000, p. 15). For example, ubugabire was a clientele system for the distribution of cattle and wealth, while ubugeregwa was a system of bonded labour.

While sometimes framed as the prime example of ethnic inequality and the oppression of Hutu in the pre-colonial period, the ethnic division of clientele relations was not always clear-cut, with wealthy Hutu in some area having clients of their own, while Hima entered patronage relations as well (Botte, 1974; Daley, 2007b, pp. 45-46). Prunier notes that the nature of these practices varied greatly between Rwanda and Burundi, with Burundian practices much less severe and impoverishing than those in Rwanda (Prunier, 2016b). Versions of such practices persisted until at least the 1980's, when they were banned by the Bagaza administration. They were mentioned in life histories as having enduring effects shaping landlessness and land conflicts for some current refugees. Some historical accounts do downplay the burden of labour

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<sup>191</sup> (In the precolonial period, all the ethnic groups in Burundi gave allegiance to the same monarch, *Umwami*, believed in the same god, *Imana*, had that same culture and the same language, Kirundi, and cohabited in the same territory. Independent of migratory movements that peopled Burundi, all were recognized as Barundi.)

<sup>192</sup> In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the Mwami/King Ntare Rugamba expanded his kingdom, and created a system of territorial governance through his sons, the Ganwa (Wagner, 2005c). Ganwa constituted a distinct aristocratic *ubwoko* [Kir: type, ethnic group]; while debates continue about the ethnicity of the original king, later kings were considered neither Hutu or Tutsi. Ntare Rugamba's son, Mwezi Gisabo ruled from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century onwards.

and tribute requirements on the predominantly Hutu peasantry in order paint a pre-colonial idyll (Botte, 1982). At the other extreme, Botte argues that accounts that compare this period to European medieval feudalism also exaggerate (1982).<sup>193 194</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> These requirements varied regionally. Botte (1982) summarizes the weight of tribute and labour requirements on peasants as “ni idylle, ni enfer” (not heaven nor hell) (p. 308).

<sup>194</sup> There is strong evidence that Twa in particular were subject to “excommunication sociale” (social excommunication) in the precolonial period. While they maintained trade relations with other Burundians, it was socially taboo for Burundians of other groups to eat or drink with them (Botte, 1982, p. 297). As a minority group, classified as “indigenous,” Twa are often simply “left out” of texts and discussions on ethnicity, political violence, displacement, and conflict resolution in Burundi, erasing their presence as seemingly “non important” to national politics, conflict, and peace, and reinforcing hierarchies of humanity and belonging that became further institutionalized in the colonial period. See Quéту (2020; 2022) for recent research on Twa identity, and questions of discrimination, ethnicity, and indigeneity.

## Appendix B: Regional Relations in Pre-Colonial Burundi

Throughout the 1850's-1890's Burundian warriors fought off attacks by Arab and Swahili traders seeking to expand their Lake Tanganyika-based commerce in slaves, ivory, and other goods (Mworoha & Mukuri, 2004; Wagner, 1993). Initial Catholic priests sought to establish a mission on the coast of Lake Tanganyika, but were defeated (Shantz, 1922; Wagner, 1993). Wagner (1993) argues that these events, along with ill-informed early colonial accounts and a historical focus on the royal courts, led to the characterization of Burundi as a sort-of stronghold, largely cut-off from the rest of the world prior to colonization. Contrarily, before the arrival of Arab or European commerce Burundians were actively engaged in exchanges of goods, ideas, and practices with links far beyond the territory of the kingdom (Wagner, 1993). David Newbury recounts,

historically these populations were fully part of the cultures and societies of a vast region astride the Congo-Nile watershed separating the two great African culture zones of the Congo River Basin and the Great Lakes region; the societies that came to be included in Rwanda and Burundi drew in important ways from both culture zones. (D. Newbury, 2001, p. 259)

The complexities and extent of these boundary-blurring relations is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Yet, even this elementary tracing of pre-colonial connections across the present-day border with Tanzania counters border-essentialisms. Such links challenge the colonial and post-independence construction of supposed homogenous autochthony in Burundi, and guarded citizenship based on colonial boundaries in Tanzania. Rather, trade between Buha and southern and western Burundi was common, including salt, cattle, and other goods (Wagner, 1993). Parts of the grasslands of eastern Burundi (adjacent to the present-day border with Tanzania), were “part of the northern Buha culture zone and retained strong economic and social ties with grazing areas still further east,” while southern Burundi had more connections with southern Buha than with the Burundian highlands. The Imbo plain, along the coast of lake Tanganyika, was involved in trans-littoral trade pre-dating the arrival Arab traders (Wagner, 1993) and while sparsely populated, remained distinct from “the culture of dynastic Burundi” (D. Newbury, 2001, p. 265). Newbury thus argues,

[...] the units we know as Burundi and Rwanda were each formed of internal interlocking cultures, related as much through their activities outside state control as through the internal state structures themselves. [...] When we think of these countries as homogeneous units, we compromise our understanding of their histories and their identities. (D. Newbury, 2001, p. 263)



## Appendix C: Colonial changes to chiefs, bashingintahe, and the introduction of prisons

In the new administrative system, colonially appointed chiefs and subchiefs were posted away from their regions of origins, decreasing the capacity of local populations to exert influence through the bonds and respect of family and friendship relationships (C. Newbury, 1983, p. 259). The very idea of a “chef” changed completely, from a protector of the people and distributor of gifts, to a “*homme à tout faire*” (factotum) for the Belgian administration (Gahama, 1983, p. 401). State involvement in everyday life increased, particularly the weight of taxation and labour requirements for peasants (discussed further in the following sections). Chiefs were required to enforce changes in agricultural policy, as well as to coercively recruit labour for “public” projects, as well as extractive colonial state industrial undertakings (Jefremovas, 1997; Laely, 1992). Mukasonga (2020) writes of the changes, “C’est alors que les chefs sont devenus sans pitié. C’étaient des chefs pour les Bazungu. [...] C’est comme ça que les chefs sont devenus méchants...” (It’s then that the chiefs became without pity. They were chiefs for the Bazungu (White people/Europeans). [...] It’s like this that the chiefs became evil.)(p. 12).

Under the Belgian administration the longstanding bushingintahe institution for mediation and conflict resolution within communities became increasingly mono-ethnic, and their purview diminished with several tasks re-allocated to a newly formed administration (Laely, 1992). The switch from oral to judicial law was difficult for bashingintahe (traditional mediators, wise men), who had always used “une jurisprudence purement orale” (only oral jurisprudence) in resolving and reconciling varied conflicts (Gahama, 1983, p. 274). Many of the traditions associated with investiture in the institution were suppressed, replaced, or standardized (Laely, 1992).

Belgian legal texts from neighbouring Belgian Congo were transposed to Ruanda-Urundi, entrenching racial difference and hierarchies in the judgment of infractions and punishments (Deslaurier, 2022). While imprisonment had been introduced during German military rule, the first central prison (which is still in use today) was built in Gitega in 1926, and further prisons were built throughout the country (Deslaurier, 2022). Belgian colonial administrators were granted judicial powers, including determining ill-defined “special” infractions, which led to the widespread and increasing use of imprisonment (and violent corporal punishment in prisons) throughout the colonial period (Deslaurier, 2022). Within prisons, further physical punishment

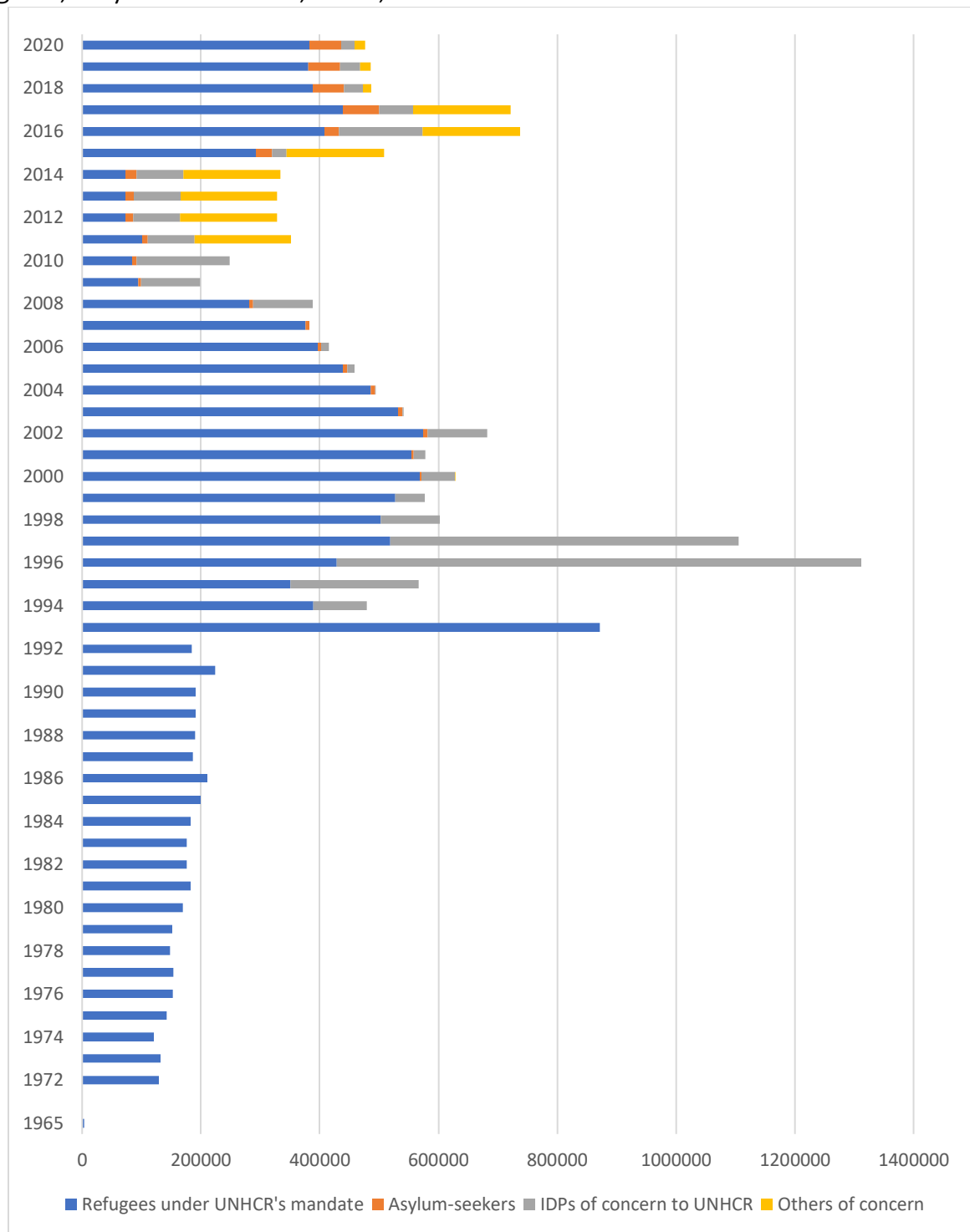
with enchainment or whipping was permitted for “les Noirs” except for “évoluées” (and not for white or Asian prisoners, who were kept in segregated, more comfortable parts of prisons) (Deslaurier, 2022)

## Appendix D: Early Divisions within Uprona

Several PDC leaders had been implicated in the assassination of Rwagasore, and with their arrests opposition parties “disappeared” from the political scene (L’Institut Royal des Relations Internationales, 1963b; Russell, 2016). Burundi thus gained independence with a “régime du parti unique” (single-party regime). Within Uprona debates about bringing to justice the accused killers created divisions. Independence occurred with the absence of the person whose “bridge-builder” and ethnically-unifying leadership the vast majority of the population had selected to lead the country (L’Institut Royal des Relations Internationales, 1963b; Poppe, 2015).

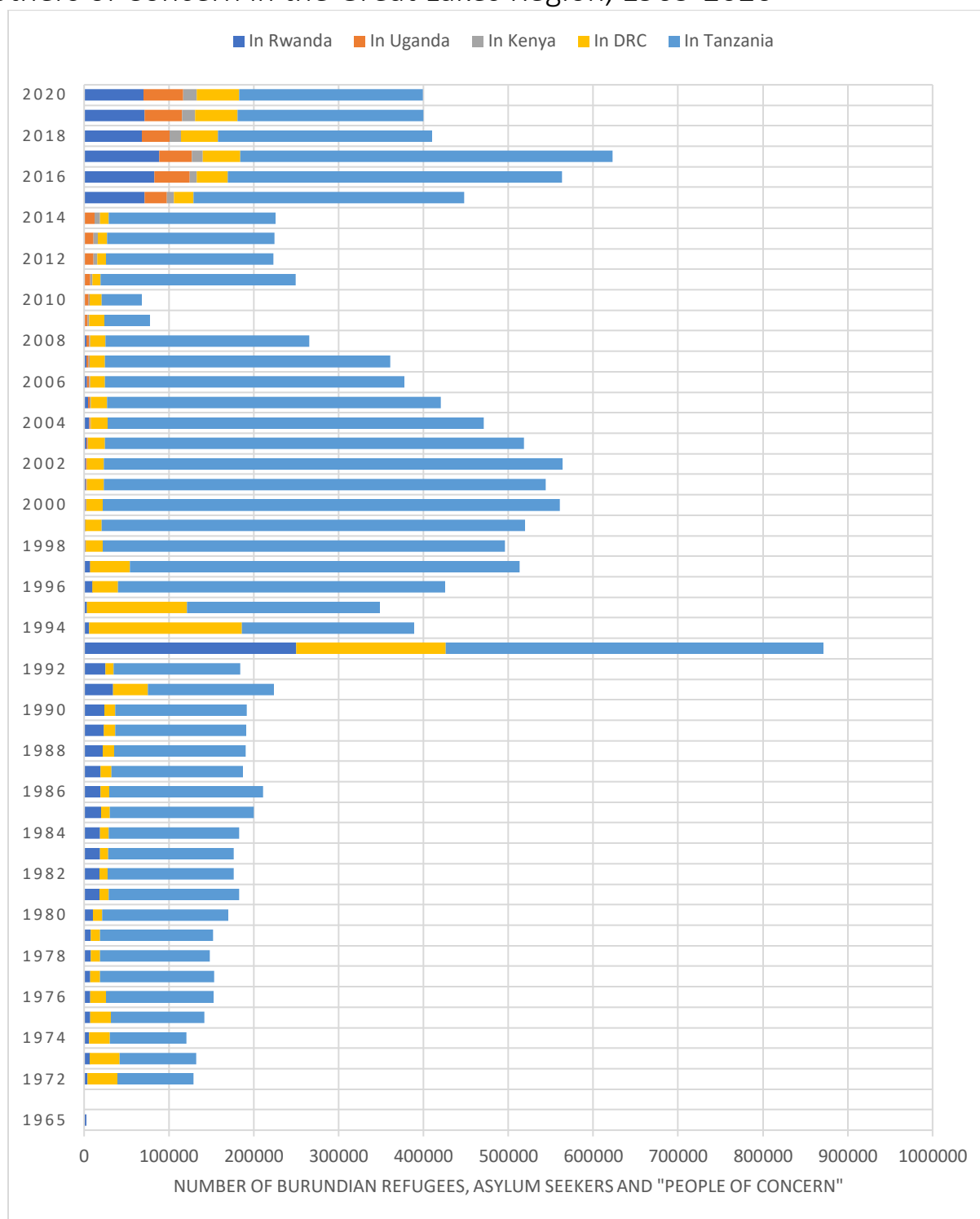
Several prime ministers succeeded one another in the first few years of independent rule, but the divisions in parliament (largely within Uprona) prevented much substantial work. The king had asked Ngendandumwe to form a new cabinet, and he was shot the day the new cabinet was announced (Prunier, 1995). Prunier (1995) writes that “[a]lthough the circumstances of the murder were never fully clarified, it now seems reasonably certain that the killers were Rwandese Tutsi refugees with a deep hatred of the Hutu” (as Ngendandumwe was Hutu). However Cold War politics may have also played a role. Ngendumwe’s left-leaning politics were feared by the mwami and western observers, and the killer was an employee of the US Embassy (Daley, 2007b).

Appendix E: Figure 7: UNHCR Worldwide number of Burundian Refugees, Asylum Seekers, IDPs, and “Persons of Concern”



Data source: UNHCR Refugee Data Finder (2021b)

Appendix F: Figure 8: Recognized Burundian Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and others of Concern in the Great Lakes Region, 1965-2020



Data Source: UNHCR Refugee Data Finder (2021b)

Appendix G: Figure 9. Nyerere wall painting at UNHCR field office



*Figure 2: Mural of President Nyerere at a UNHCR field office meeting room in Kigoma province, Tanzania*

## Appendix H: Rwandan, Mozambican, and Kenyan refuge in Tanzania, 1960's

At independence in 1961, Tanganyika hosted approximately 12,000 Rwandan refugees (UNHCR, 2021b), while as many as three thousand Kikuyu from Kenya had also sought refuge (Daley, 1989; Magoti, 2020). From 1959-1962, 200,000 Rwandan Tutsi fled to neighbouring countries. They were joined by further arrivals as massacres continued in 1963 and 1964 (in part in response to militia raids from Rwandan refugee camps in Burundi, and subsequent violent state reprisals)(Long, 2012b; Rosenthal, 2015). Initial Rwandan exiles in Tanganyika were hosted with extended family, on farms, at churches, or in villages, however soon the first post-independence refugee camp was created at Muyenzi, Ngara, in 1961 (Daley, 1989, p. 5; Magoti, 2020).

Kikuyu exiles from Kenya were similarly grouped in a settlement, at Katuma in Mpanda district (Magoti, 2020). There seems to be little research or writing on this early exiled group in Tanzania. Magoti's (2020) archival work and oral history does provide some information, including the debate on the recognition of these Kikuyu as refugees. Their displacement due to land clearance for White Settler farmers, or as jailed and then expelled dissidents, supports their categorization by TCRS as refugees (Magoti, 2020), and their settlement suggests that the independent Tanganyikan government supported them in this category, however Kenyans are not included in the early UNHCR statistics for Tanzania— perhaps reflecting the history of exclusion of colonial displacements from Eurocentric formal refugee status (Mayblin, 2014).

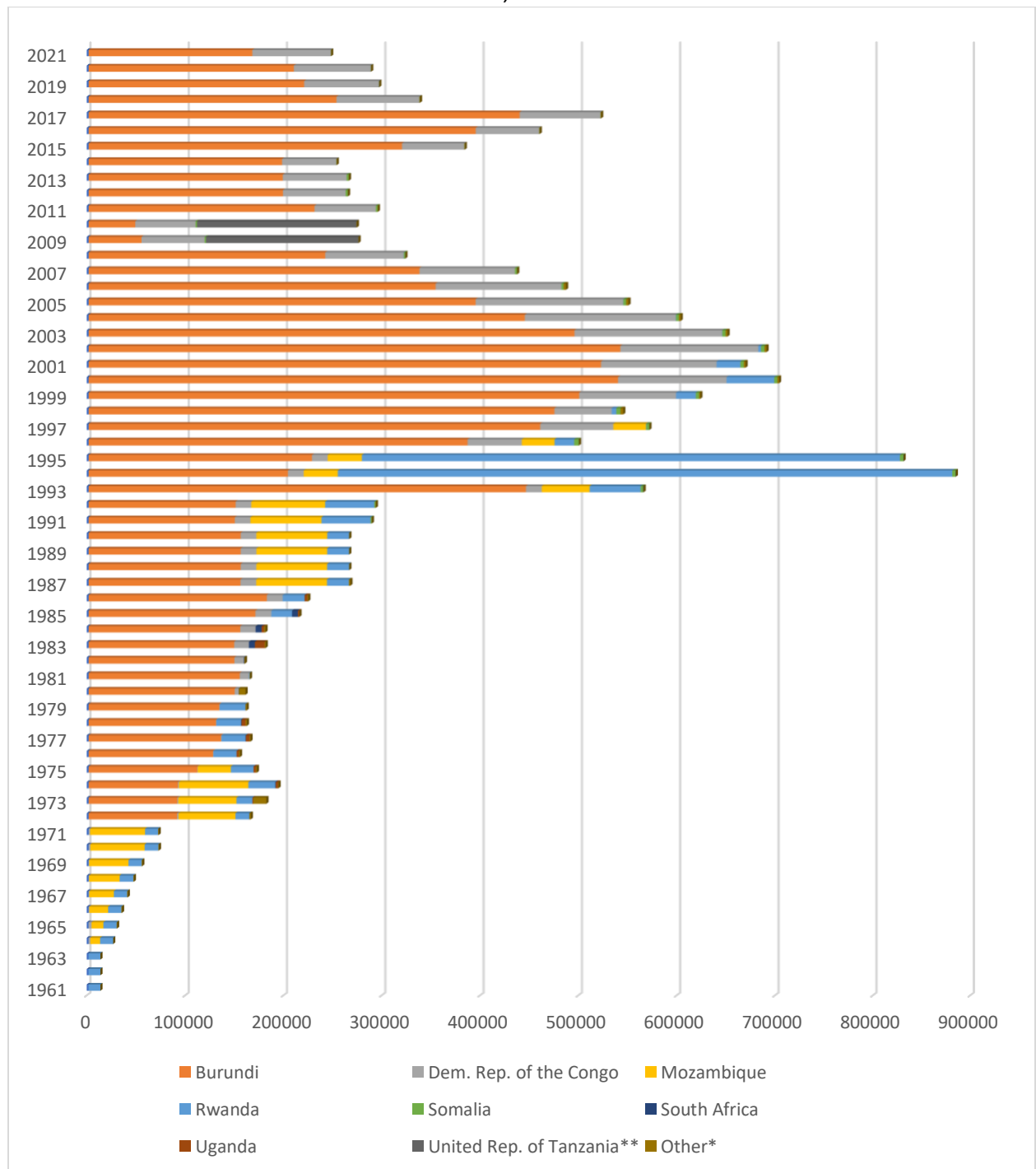
Recognizing possible benefits of humanitarian aid for infrastructure development in the region (not only for refugees), the government created a tri-partite agreement with UNHCR and the League of Red Cross Societies (LRCS), introducing international humanitarian aid and governance to the region (Rosenthal, 2015). The official discourse emphasized integration through farming and their contributions to the economy, and their eventual naturalization as Tanganyikans (though Rwandans themselves were largely reluctant to be integrated at this time due to the political nature and mobilization of their exile) (Long, 2012b; Rosenthal, 2015). By 1963, fifteen "settlement villages" for Rwandans had been demarcated, dispersing the growing population from the initial single site (Rosenthal, 2015, p. 275). As in Burundi, rumours about possibilities of cross-border attacks increased state surveillance and the securitization of refugees in the area (Rosenthal, 2015; Russell, 2019).

In 1964, the start of the Mozambican War of Independence and the violent oppression of the Portuguese colonial rule pushed many Mozambicans to seek refuge. Labour migrants in Tanzania and already exiled Mozambican students and activists were no longer able to return. Tanzania granted *prima facie* status to all Mozambicans until 1966, overlooking whether people had originally arrived as labour migrants, or if they were exiles supporting Mozambique's struggle for freedom, contrary to UNHCR's mandate which excluded support for political and armed anti-colonial struggles (Tague, 2017, p. 126).

Throughout this period (and up until the end of apartheid in South Africa), Tanzania hosted exiled freedom fighters from colonial and white-ruled regimes in Southern Africa (Pallotti, 2018; Williams, 2015). Exiled Freedom fighters were largely distinguished from refugees, and were hosted in distinct military training camps, though they also faced restrictions on their movement (Williams, 2015). Convivial relations with surrounding communities often emerged through quotidian interactions, though sometimes these were strained (Pallotti, 2018; Williams, 2015). Notably, Tanzania's support for freedom fighters was framed through a pan-Africanist lens, however national divisions and militarist patriarchy were reinforced by state-elites in the forcible removal of the children of freedom fighters from their Tanzanian mothers (Williams, 2015).

A "tri-partite" agreement between the government, UNHCR, and the Tanzanian Christian Refugee Service (TCRS) was formed to manage the refugee response, constructing five settlement-styled refugee camps (Tague, 2017). Rutamba settlement, initially selected as a refugee camp in 1964, soon reached capacity, and four subsequent camps were opened in southern Tanzania from 1966-69: Lundo, Muhukuru, Mputa, and Matekwe (Tague, 2017, p. 127).

Appendix I: Figure 10: Recognized Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and “Persons of Concern” hosted in Tanzania, 1961-2021



Data Source: UNHCR Data Finder (2021b)

\*"Other" includes Zimbabwe, Yemen, Unknown country of origin, Türkiye, Syrian Arab Republic, Sudan, South Sudan, Palestine, Namibia, Malawi, Lebanon, Kenya, Ethiopia, Congo (Brazzaville), and Angola

\*\*The "Tanzanians" enumerated here are Newly Naturalized Tanzanians (of Burundian heritage), considered as "persons of concern" to UNHCR in the years of "limbo" prior to formal naturalization. See Miletzki (Miletzki, 2014)

## Appendix J: Positive Memories of Nyerere's Welcome

For example, Sinarizi, a former Burundian refugee, summarized his memory of the self-reliance approach:

To stop giving us aid, the president Julius Nyerere came, and we had a competition for the demonstration of food from each village. We were asked to bring a banana cut in your own property so that they could see that we no longer lacked food. And manioc that are really good. And then they visited the corn fields to see how they are. Because we saw that one corn plant could have three ears of corn – with a length like this [points to half the length of his arm]. And then it was remarked that we don't have food problems, as we said it, we have food to eat, and they told us, now, no one will say that she/he is a refugee. We see that you have means, for now, anyone can build whatever house she/he wishes. And then people started to build good houses and they said [switches from Kirundi to Swahili]: you are not going anywhere, you are now long-term visitors. Those that have the means, you can buy yourselves motos, you can buy yourselves vehicles, you are not going anywhere, you are now like Tanzanians.” (Interview, Burundi, 2014)

Most significantly he said “there was no hunger” and that families could rent many more land parcels. He strongly tied this welcome and inclusion to Nyerere's regime: “It was possible. It continued until Julius Nyerere left power...” (Interview, Burundi, 2014).

## Appendix K: Counting Interviews

While documenting how many interviews were conducted, and with how many people, may seem one of the simplest tasks in describing research methods, the reality of bounding *what and who counts* as an interview and a research participant is less clear. The language of interviews and interviewees has been avoided and refused by some decolonial scholars as defining who is researched/subjects of research, and who is a researcher, reproducing racialized hierarchies of knowledge production (Murrey, 2015). Other researchers have avoided the language of “participants” when the meaningfulness of genuine participation is questionable (Clark-Kazak, 2009, 2011). Although aware of such debates, I enumerate interviews and interviewees to highlight the knowledge and expertise contributed through life histories. While similar consideration could equally be applied to the semi-structured interviews included in this research, I limit my discussion of interview and participant *enumeration* to life-history interviews. I use the language of interviewees, participants, raconteurs, and interlocutors interchangeably to designate people with whom I spoke during this research, whether in life history interviews in camps, or semi-structured interviews in government or UN offices. I also use the term interlocutor to describe people who did not participate in formal interviews, but shared knowledge with informed consent to contribute to my research (broadly encapsulated as ethnographic methods, see Chapter IV).

Enumerating the final numbers of interviews and participants includes creating categories as to what I chose to delimitate as a formal life history interview, and who I count as a life history raconteur within those interviews. It is a practice of “cleaning up” and *bounding* the inherent messiness of entangled research practices. The numbers, then, are malleable, as the categories could be differently defined. On one hand, the numbers matter little, as I am not trying to establish statistical generalizability. On the other hand, the numbers gesture to general characteristics of the research, and allow for a quick but imperfect picture of the breadth of this research. I define and include the number of interviews to increase the legibility of this research for academic audiences.

Broadly, I *count* an interview as a research encounter in which it was very clear to the participant and myself that we were conducting a formal interview, and directly recording their story (either through the recording device or by note-taking). Not all occasions on when I took notes about a participants’ story are included, particularly when participants shared stories while

walking through the camp, as note-taking while walking is much more limited. While I did elaborate on scarce notes from memory the quality of these accounts is not comparable to those recorded with an audio-recording device. While several such conversations could be described as life-stories, I do not enumerate them as formal interviews. For example, one young man preferred not to share recount his history through additional interviews, but wrote his story in a letter. While considered in this research in relation to his initial interview, it is not “counted” as an additional interview. As arbitrary as any categorization, all the interviews I enumerate were seated (though not all times I sat and listened to stories from peoples’ lives “count “as formal interviews). Enumerating interviews is a boundary-making practice in research, and relates in this case to the formality of the informed consent procedures (see Cuomo & Massaro, 2016 on boundary making and informed consent).

Such category-creation means that many very meaningful encounters, and “key-informants” from the research period, are not formally tallied in the numbers of life history interviews and participants. Counting certain encounters as interviews does not mean other conversations, interactions, and are excluded from contributing to this research, as discussed in the section on ethnographic methods in Chapter IV (unless there were clear ethical reasons not to consider the interactions in research).

In Nyarugusu, thirty-eight interviews were recorded, two were note-taken, for a total of forty formal interviews. In Nduta thirty interviews were recorded, and I took notes by hand for seven interviews. I ‘count’ an additional four interviews, all noted by hand at the departure centre, as formal life history interviews (even though I stopped conducting interviews at the departure centre after this preliminary research). One recorded interview from Nduta was lost due to my own human error in transferring and saving the recording, and is thus not included as a formal life history interview, as it has not been transcribed. In total, therefore, I enumerate **79 formal life history interviews**.

Counting the number of participants is not always straightforward because at times, married couples or friends preferred to be interviewed together, but did not always both contribute substantially within the interview. For example, in one such “set” of interviews in Nyarugusu, one man was a clear primary participant, while his wife contributed minimally, only offering minor additions. While she contributed to the shaping of the story, it was largely his voice and story that was recounted in the two interview encounters with this couple. In this case,

I count one primary life history raconteur in the interviews, rather than a “set.” Another couple in Nyarugusu both actively recounted their own stories, on both times occasions we formally recorded life histories. As there is a single recording each of the two times we met, I count two participants, but each of our two encounters as just one interview (so, one “set” of two participants in two interviews, rather than four interviews). In Nduta three sets of interviews were with couples, two of which had substantial participation of both people, while one set was with two friends who took turns sharing their life stories in a single interview. Delimiting inclusion in this way, in Nyarugusu this research comprised twenty people as life history interviewees, of whom eleven were men, and nine were women. In Nduta, thirteen women and eleven men are enumerated as life history raconteurs. This tallies to forty-four life history participants in the two camps (twenty-two men and twenty-two women). A further three men and one woman recounted their stories in the preliminary research at the departure centre, **for a total of forty-eight life history participants, in 44 sets of interviews (where a couple or pair of friends is counted as a “set” when substantially interviewed together).**

Life histories are often told over the course of several interviews. While this was the case for most interviewees (apart from those at the departure centre), not all interviewees were available for more than one interview. While reasons varied, this was particularly due to other demands on refugees’ time, such as incentive positions within the camp, waiting for hours in line at clinics or aid distributions, collecting firewood outside of the camp, and other work beyond camp boundaries. In Nyarugusu, one person interviewed was interviewed four times, one other person was interviewed on five occasions; three people were interviewed three times each; while seven “sets” or participants were interviewed twice, and another seven were interviewed only once. In Nduta (not including the singular departure centre interviews) eleven “sets” or participants were interviewed twice, two were interviewed three times, and eight were interviewed just once. Recordings varied in length between nineteen minutes (the shortest, and a clear outlier), and nearly two hours and thirty minutes (another outlier). The vast majority of interviews, whether recorded electronically or by hand, were between forty-five minutes, and an hour and fifteen minutes.

In a context where categories and counting are highly important and politicized,<sup>195</sup> the stakes of enumerating interviews is quite low. Whether a couple more or fewer participants are included in my description of methods is unlikely to affect the judgement of my work. Nevertheless, I have outlined my process to highlight the fact that counting interviews is a decision-making process in research, requiring the construction of a category, inclusion, and exclusions—often based on unquestioned assumptions about what an interview or participant *is*. Research, then, actively and necessarily creates categories even as it aims to challenge dominant and powerful categories and boundaries (Bakewell, 2021).

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<sup>195</sup> For the first few years following the large registration of Burundian refugees in 2015, (approximately until the Tri-Partite agreement on repatriation,) the Burundian government and its supporters claimed that there is a “guerre de chiffres” [war of numbers] as part of a geopolitical “guerre humanitaire,” [humanitarian war] (Burundi AG News, 2017; Xinhua, 2018)(n.b. “Burundi-Africa Generation News” is a pro-government media source), denying the number of people who have fled or been forced to flee, softening their position somewhat (though not immediately or entirely) after the tri-partite organization of “voluntary repatriation” (Infos Plus Gabon, 2018)(Meeting observation, 2017)

## Appendix L: Recording, notetaking, and questions of consent

Initially accepted invitations or requests to join research were never treated as final consent to inclusion in research, nor to how the research would be recorded. When meeting for a possible first formal interview, I repeated explanations of the research aims and process, pausing frequently ensure understanding, and allow for questions. Discussions of the recording device and whether participants would be comfortable with recording, or prefer that I handwrite notes, were often central. Whether to use a recording device, and how to explain its use, are important ethical questions, bound up with adequately describing the ultimate use of interview material in research (whether recording or notes).

Narrative researchers with refugees, returnees, or in other highly politicized settings in the Great Lakes Region, have made diverging decisions about recording interviews. For example, in research with refugees in Uganda, Clark-Kazak chose not to record interviews, to “ensure security of research subjects testimonies” (Clark-Kazak, 2011, p. 42). She used code names in notes, but felt that voice recordings could be identifying if they were confiscated by authorities, particularly in camps with seemingly pervasive surveillance. Clark-Kazak also worried that recording might inhibit subjects and thus did not lend itself to the informal conversation which characterizes ethnographic research. On the other hand, in research with refugees in Zambia, Powles (2004) did not feel that recording life histories impeded conversation. In politically-sensitive research on reconciliation in Rwanda Susan Thomson (2010, 2013) offered life history participants a choice between recording and notetaking in interviews. (Many of the participants in her research had previously experienced displacement, though this is not a primary framing of the research.) She received permission to record most interviews, but emphasizes the difficulties of truly informed consent when describing the recording process to people unfamiliar with such devices and how the recordings might be used in academic publications (Thomson, 2010).

Recorded interviews allow for more direct quotations, which is a particularly important consideration given that a strength of life histories is in how research subjects narrate their stories. While “voice” is always imperfect and illusive when transcribed and rewritten in research papers, excerpts from interviews may nevertheless elicit the unique articulations and perspectives of story raconteurs (McDowell, 2018). Recordings offer more possibility for in-

depth analysis of the specific vocabulary used by participants, as well as evaluation (and sometimes correction) of the quality of in-situ language interpretation. When recording it is easier to also take notes on body language, tone, and the surrounding environment, rather than primarily focusing on inscribing what is said. I find that when recording rather than notetaking, I am more able to listen and respond with culturally appropriate empathic vocalizations and subtle prompts, than when writing furiously to keep up with a conversation. An unhurried and attentive ambiance feels particularly important and poignant when participants share tragic, and possibly traumatic memories, and recount the ongoing difficulties of life in the camp. Weighing these advantages of recording with the discomfort some people may feel, I offered interlocutors a choice as to whether I would record or only take handwritten in their interviews.

Through experience conducting research in Burundi I was aware of the difficulties of describing recording devices and their use to diverse participants, most of whom had not previously participated in research, nor encountered such recorders. In my MA research, I worked with a returnee research assistant who had studied journalism and communication, and was a talented interpreter (of French, Kirundi, Kiha, and Swahili), to develop a script we used as a guide in explaining recording as clearly as we could. The script was then verified by another experienced interpreter and translator (Weima, 2015). I drew on my prior script and method in this research. We demonstrated the recorder's functions, showing each participant how they could see when it was recording, and explaining that it could be stopped and even deleted at any time. The increasingly widespread use of recording functions in mobile phones has made explaining interview recording easier. Although Burundi remains one of the countries with the lowest per capita mobile phone usage in the world, though the rates have increased significantly in the past ten years (Banyankiye, 2021; Izere, 2021; Republic of Burundi & IMF, 2012). The low rate of phone ownership is unevenly distributed, particularly effecting rural areas. It seems reflected in mobile phone ownership rates in the camps in Tanzania. Many research participants did not have access to a phone of their own, relying on neighbours, friends and family members to share devices rather than individual ownership (notes, 2017-8). Beyond technical explanations of recording, effectively explaining the ultimate use of our conversations in academic publications such as books and online articles was more difficult.

Like Clark-Kazak and Thomson I was concerned with the possibility that a recording device could be confiscated by police or camp authorities. Accordingly, I use a recording device

with real-time file encryption and device-password protection. It requires de-encryption software and an additional password access the files. The concept of encryption is hard to technically understand and explain to others, but we shared with participants that the device was password protected, and that I am the only one who knows the password. Insofar as it is within my power, I keep the device safe by using a travel-safe as an additional precaution.

## Appendix M: Language and Interpretation

The camps in which this research were highly multilingual places. Located in the borderlands, while exceptionally created and maintained, they also contain an “*ordinaire cosmopolite*” (Agier, 2013, cited in Galitzine-Loumpet & Saglio-Yatzimirsky, 2020) —and are highly multilingual sites (Galitzine-Loumpet & Saglio-Yatzimirsky, 2020). Like many borderland spaces (Mignolo, 2012; Paasi, 1998), the boundaries of these camps mark not only sites of division, but also dynamic meetings places of culture, sociality, and creativity. This is seen in language usage—however the ways in which languages are used and mixed, while cosmopolitan,<sup>196</sup> also reflects the power geometries that shape the region and the camp. Language is bound up with power relations, politics, and meaning in research relations (Baillie Smith & Jenkins; Drozdowski, 2018; Müller, 2007), and in the camp setting is shaped by colonial “topographies” of empire that continue to shape the uneven terrains of research (Mullings, 2005), including the ongoing coloniality of state and humanitarian regimes governing and “managing” displacement (Hyndman, 2000).

Acts of interpretation and translation thus pervade this research,<sup>197</sup> and perhaps could be considered as a central research methodology, bound up with issues of ethics and reflexivity in shaping the creation of this research. In discussing the use of testimony in a research and advocacy project with care workers from the Philippines in Canada, Pratt argues, “We are involved in multiple acts of translation,” not just from one language to another, but also the translation of “oral testimony to written document,” and from one audience to another (i.e. the “translation” of experiences from those with intimate knowledge of the programs and policies shaping care-workers lives, to those who know little of them) (Pratt, 2009, p. 6). Working across languages is both a practical necessity for research in many contexts (E. E. Watson, 2004), and foundational to the political aims of “witnessing” life narratives in order to critique and work to change the political conditions that create suffering (Pratt, 2009).

### Linguistic context

This research took place across French, Kirundi, English, and Swahili, which are the official languages of Burundi and Tanzania (Kazoviyo, 2020), and to a lesser extent, Kiha.

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<sup>196</sup> A creative and “border-crossing” mix of languages is also noted in many urban areas world-wide, including Bujumbura (Nassenstein, 2019).

<sup>197</sup> Sara Koopman is a strong advocate for the distinction of “interpretation” (oral, often in real time) and “translation” (between written texts) in Anglophone geography (Koopman, 2009)

All of these languages are part of the fabric and construction of everyday life in the Nyarugusu and Nduta camps. Burundi's official languages are Kirundi, French, and (since 2014,) English. Tanzania's official languages are Swahili and English, while there are over 157 recorded "Ethnic Community Languages" (ECLs) (Muzale & Rugemalire, 2008). Swahili and English were predominantly used by the camp administration and humanitarian staff. As with French in the Burundian context, English in the Tanzanian context was a colonial language, now largely associated with high levels of education, and formal contexts of administration and business (Kazoviyo, 2020)—including the offices of humanitarian organizations, given their international staff. Kirundi and French were formally used in the Burundian-curriculum education system within the camps to correspond with recognized Burundian state exams. While this was also the case in the camps established in Tanzania in the 1990's, it differs from the settlements established in the 1970's, where the Tanzanian curriculum was (and is) taught.<sup>198</sup> Kiha (or Ha) is the third largest ECL in Tanzania, with over a million speakers (Muzale & Rugemalire, 2008), and is the most-common first language in the Kigoma region where the camps are located, and widely spoken in the surrounding communities as well as in the camps. It shares commonalities with Kirundi, and is largely considered mutually comprehensible, particularly with the Kirundi spoken in the border region (Masabo et al., 2018).<sup>199</sup> (Kirundi itself is not a homogenous language, and accent and some vocabulary vary regionally.) Beyond Swahili, additional Congolese ECLs were also spoken, particularly in Nyarugusu camp.<sup>200</sup> Other Tanzanian ECLs were also represented by staff in the camp, and residents of surrounding communities. Notably, Kihangaza speakers were among those hired as official interpreters by UNHCR given the mutual comprehensibility of the languages (Research notes, 2018).

Swahili is not an official language of Burundi, but is recognized in Burundian law as a *langue de communication régionale*, [regional communication language] because of its status in the East African Community (EAC)(of which Burundi is a member) (Kazoviyo, 2020). Swahili taught in Burundian schools since 2005 (Nassenstein, 2019; A. Nduwimana, 2020), however it still has a minority status. Kazivyo writes that only 3% of the population speak Swahili fluently,

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<sup>198</sup> Zaïrian settlements in the 1970's followed their national curriculum with instruction in French.

<sup>199</sup> Kirundi itself is not a homogenous language—accents and differences in vocabulary mark regional difference within Burundi.

<sup>200</sup> Indeed some Burundians with whom I spoke were also fluent in an additional Congolese language—particularly those who had lived in Zaire in the 1970's and 1980's (Research notes, 2014; 2018).

primarily in urban settings (though the source and age of this statistic is not cited) (Kazoviyo, 2020). While many sources state that *all* Burundians speak Kirundi, particularly in more informal settings (CEFAN, 2017; A. Nduwimana, 2020), though there are certainly exceptions to this within Swahiliphone communities, and a smaller minority of families where French (CEFAN, 2017) or other languages may be spoken in the home. Indeed, the assumption that all Burundians speak Kirundi may be used to marginalize Swahiliphone Burundians in particular, a discursive, linguistic exclusion from the imagined nation (which began with Islamophobic colonial policies),<sup>201</sup> framing Swahiliphone residents as “foreigners” regardless of citizenship. Nassenstein (2019) notes that Burundian Swahiliphones marginalized status contributed to the coming together of a diverse community, so that Burundian Swahili is influenced both by Eastern Coastal Swahili (ECS) (the formal Swahili of Tanzania) and Congolese Swahili. Speakers adapt their language, and mix terms from other languages, to facilitate communication in a multi-linguistic context within Burundi. The status of Swahili in Burundi may have changed somewhat in recent years due to EAC integration, utility in regional commerce, the formalization of Swahili-language subject instruction in state schools, as well as the fact that both the late President Nkurunziza and the current President Ndayishimiye are fluent in Swahili (perhaps because both had spent time in exile in the rebel movement that preceded CNDD-FDD’s integration as a formal political party). Nevertheless, the legacies of linguistic marginalization and exclusion presented an obstacle to reintegration for some returnees. Fluency in not only in

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<sup>201</sup> The description of Burundi’s languages in a page created by the *Chaire pour le développement de la recherche sur la culture d’expression française en Amérique du Nord* at l’Université de Laval lists Swahili as a foreign language, and does recognize and minority linguistic groups in Burundi (CEFAN, 2017). Nduwimana also writes that all Burundians speak Kirundi, and that Swahili is currently more spoken in regions bordering neighbouring countries where Swahili is more widely spoken to Burundi’s East (Eastern DRC), South, and West (Tanzania), however Swahili has long been an urban and trade language as well. While Swahili was an official language in Usumbura (Bujumbura) under the short-lived German colonial administration, it was marginalized under the Belgian administration due to its ties with Islam in the region, and as they were seen as a “groupe subversif” (Deslaurier, 2013, pp. 17-18) pp.17-18 (Nassenstein, 2019). This marginalization was economic as Swahili speakers paid higher taxes, was spatialized in the new policies of segregation of neighbourhoods along religious lines, and was institutionalized in educational policy (Hunt, 1990; Nassenstein, 2019). Swahili was further stigmatized as “rude” and a language of the uneducated, and even criminals. Swahili speaking Islamic communities were recognized as part of the imagined nation in Prince Louis Rwagasore’s writings and speeches advocating the unity of Burundi during the independence struggle, and played an important role in supporting Rwagasore in creating connections with the struggles in neighbouring countries (Deslaurier, 2010). Burundi Swahili draws on both Eastern Coastal Swahili and Congolese Swahili, with unique variation so that “boundaries are not clear at all and constitute a fluid continuum used by speakers” (Nassenstein, 2019) p. 234.

French, but also Kirundi, was noted as a challenge for returnee children and youth, particularly the children of those who had been refugees since 1972, leading many to drop out of school (S. Fransen & Kuschminder, 2012; IRIN (TNH), 2011).<sup>202</sup> Within the camps, however, fluency in Swahili is considered advantageous, particularly to gaining “employment” as “volunteers” or “incentive workers” in NGOs (Research notes, 2017-8), for commercial trade (Masabo et al., 2018), or to represent refugees in leadership structures within the camp.<sup>203</sup>

In this multilingual context, language learning was common (and not just for those from outside of the region, like me). Just as not all Burundians speak Kirundi, not all Burundians in camps are fluent in Swahili, including some who have spent decades in exile. One woman who previously had spent decades in a camp, and who had also lived in the border region, explained to me that she did not previously speak Swahili but was now learning from her children, who were learning it as one of their Burundian-curriculum school subjects. A young man who had grown up in southern Burundi, noted that he had learned Swahili in the from his wife whom he had met and married in the camp. She had grown up in a town in Burundi where Swahili was widely spoken, while he had not. He now worked in a Swahili speaking workplace within the camp and considered himself fluent, but lamented that the Swahili he had learned had replaced the French he previously knew well as a secondary school student in Burundi. One farmer who often worked outside the camp over previous decades explained he did not speak Swahili well, but enough that the way he spoke was comparable to other rural Tanzanians in the area. On the other hand, he considered himself fluent in Kiha. Another man attested to the opposite process; having grown up in a Tanzanian village with his Burundian parents, he was sent to his grandmother in the camp to be able to attend a better primary school. It was in the context of camp life that he says really learned Kirundi, and later French—already fluent in Tanzanian Swahili and Kiha as a child. In this context, language learning was also incredibly important to my approach to research.

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<sup>202</sup> Some language re-integration programs were provided for returnee children and youth, funded by UNHCR, and were extended from 3-6 months, but were still considered insufficient by some reports (S. Fransen & Kuschminder, 2012; IRIN (TNH), 2011).

<sup>203</sup> In one life history interview, Leah shared: “I didn’t want to before be the head of the village but I was influenced by people because they heard that I know Swahili well and said that if I would be chef de village I could speak a lot about the problems that are found in this village; and they came a lot and said you must be elected because we have a lot to say as problems; which is why I put my name as a candidate for the elections for chef de village and I was chosen as the village chief”

Prior to beginning my doctoral studies, I was proficient in French, and had worked in French-speaking workplaces in Burundi from 2009-13. While living in Burundi I took Kirundi lessons on a weekly basis. I had further tutoring in Kirundi during my Master's research, and nearly two academic terms of weekly tutoring in Toronto before completing my comprehensive exams. During my Master's research with returnees I learned basic greetings in Kiha, which were also commonly used in the border region where the VRIs was located and by some returnees who preferred Kiha to Kirundi after decades in Tanzanian villages. I cannot always easily distinguish Kiha and Kirundi, beyond knowing the differences in their basic greetings, but found that I could often be understood by Kiha speakers when communicating in Kirundi outside of the camps in the Kigoma region. I spoke only very basic Swahili prior to beginning my doctoral research, but was able to attend the Swahili Dar Language School in Dar es Salaam several days a week during the months that I applied and waited for my needed permits. While several months of waiting may not have been my preference, it allowed time for language learning rarely available to students due to research funding and dissertation timeline limitations (E. E. Watson, 2004).

Despite this prior and ongoing language learning I feel extremely limited, and far less than proficient in both Kirundi and Swahili. Twyman et al note that in the past anthropologists often positioned themselves as having “mastered” a “native language” (Twyman, Morrison, & Sporton, 1999), yet additional language learning for research is more often imperfect (E. E. Watson, 2004). Like for Drozdowski “Learning a language as an adult has presented significant, ongoing and sometimes frustrating challenges” and is “a source of disappointment” precisely because of the partiality of being *almost* but *not-quite* ability to understand and contribute to conversations as one would wish (Drozdowski, 2018, p. 114). Language learning for me is a context of frequent and ongoing mistakes, resulting in humour, but also frustration and confusion, and necessitating humility.<sup>204</sup> I do not think I will ever reach complete fluency in

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<sup>204</sup> My mistakes in Kirundi are often a source of humour to others. In my second week of Kirundi lessons in 2009, I confused “to be” and “to have” when trying to translate “I have an ugly dog,” and my Kirundi tutor nearly fell out of her chair while laughing. More recently, a mistake in the agreement of a noun and adjective class went viral in the Burundi diaspora when a video (taken outside of the context of my research) was shared through social media without my knowledge. While perhaps quite funny, and certainly motivating further learning for me so that do not continue these errors, these quite elementary mistakes more seriously highlight the ongoing limits of my understanding and ability to communicate.

these languages, and thus appreciate Drozdowski's advocacy for "valuing 'less-than-fluent'" but ongoing language learning for research (Drozdowski, 2018, p. 113).

While recognizing the challenges of language learning within research timeframes, Watson notes many benefits to language learning.

Language learning brings direct and indirect advantages: these include the ability to converse, inside and outside of the interview or research setting; to speak and to listen and hear directly the expected and unexpected; to enrich the researcher's appreciation of the meanings that are attached to different words and expressions; to provide the opportunity for the fieldworker to learn about the area and the people, before imposing his/her own set of questions. It also helps to build personal relations, rapport and trust (E. E. Watson, 2004, p. 67)

I found all of these advantages to be true, not only for a single language, but in a multi-lingual research context as well. In both Kirundi and Swahili, or more often in the camp, mixing the two, I was able to introduce myself and my role as a researcher, discuss my background in the region, and arrange times for meetings. I have developed greater linguistic understanding and competency in common topics of discussion in my research. My prior formal study of Kirundi has particular advantages for evaluating and verifying interpretation, including awareness of syntax. Beginning to learn Swahili in addition to Kirundi gave me greater awareness of code switching within the camp context, including how participants used language depending on their past places of residence across the region—and how Swahili words are adapted in Kirundi. By also working between and across languages myself, I could expand my mutually understood vocabulary when communicating.

Language learning is cultural learning, as language and culture are intertwined (Drozdowski, 2018; E. E. Watson, 2004). This is certainly true for Kirundi (S. Bigirimana, 2021). The recent novel *Au Sommet du Nanzerwé il s'est assis et Pleuré*, (At the Summit of Nanzerwe he sat down and wept,) by Burundi-Canadian academic Melchior Mbonimpa (2020), while fictional (or perhaps because it is fictional) provides interesting insight on the limited understanding of foreign researchers, through the relationship of a well-educated Burundian refugee, Mupagassi, with Swedish researcher, Norma Larssen, who arrives in Ulyankulu camp.<sup>205</sup> Norma is introduced to Mupagassi and his brother while she is collecting information

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<sup>205</sup> While novels may not be a conventional source of research methods reflections, that this novel directly discusses a Western woman conducting research with Burundian camps in Tanzania, but from the perspective of Burundian man, written by a Burundian-Canadian author, makes it a unique source of reflection for reflexivity through fiction. Burundi and Tanzania are not specifically named in this book,

for her doctoral dissertation at an American university and working for UNHCR. She seeks the assistance of the brothers because “elle ne connaissait pas la langue maternelle des réfugiés et n’avait pas l’intention de l’apprendre” (She did not know the mother tongue of the refugees and did not have the intention to learn). Over time Mupagassi becomes close friends with Norma, who plays a role in helping him to leave the camp by advocating for him to receive a university scholarship abroad. Yet, despite their mutual assistance and friendship, Norma is sometimes oblivious to Burundian cultural norms. For example, Norma tries to fix Mupagassi’s gaze while they talk, which Mupagassi detests: “Dans sa culture, c’était totalement impoli. Norma ne le savait pas. Les réfugiés lui avaient appris que c’était mal vu pour une femme de siffler, mais on ne l’avait pas avertie que ça ne se faisait pas de regarder quelqu’un dans les yeux ” (In his culture, it was completely rude. Norma didn’t know this. The refugees had taught her that it was frowned upon for a woman to whistle, but they didn’t tell her that looking someone in the eyes wasn’t done) (M. Mbonimpa, 2020a, pp. 170-171). Conversely, looking in someone’s eyes while speaking is a sign of respect in most Western cultures, and not doing so can be interpreted as suspicious, or an indication that an interlocutor is being untruthful (M. Mbonimpa, 2020a).

While fictional, this novel points to the importance of language in research, beyond a simple transfer of ideas, including the importance of body language to communication. It seems that there is a connection between Norma’s limited linguistic fascination (that does not seek to learn either refugees’ or local residents’ own understanding of the terms, but which further exoticises their meaning)<sup>206</sup> and her missing of key cultural cues of respectful communication.

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much like Mbonimpa’s fictional oeuvre more broadly. In interviews, however, he discusses how the places are certainly recognizable to those with knowledge of the region (M. Mbonimpa, 2020b). He uses Burundian names, and actual place names from Burundi and Tanzania, including Nanzerwe mountain in Burundi, and Ulyankulu and Mishamo camps in Tanzania (M. Mbonimpa, 2020a). Other details are changed in a way that further raises questions and blurs the boundary between fact and fiction. For example the novel includes a political leader within the political and armed rebellion forming in exile named “Gatutu,” similar, but not quite the same as “Gahutu,” who was a founder of Palipehutu in Mishamo camp in the 1980’s (Alfieri, 2016). Another example of such “blurring” is when Norma’s mother writes a book called “*The Need to Help*,” (M. Mbonimpa, 2020a, pp. 150-151) (p. 150-1) the title of which is an actual academic book by Lisa Malkki (2015), a Scandinavian academic at an American University. The fictional book references humanitarians, as well as those who knit for charities, as does Malkki’s “*The Need to Help*.”

<sup>206</sup> The little interest Norma does have in language in the camps is contrasted with her fascination with the sound of the names of the camps, which she finds beautiful. She remains oblivious to the meaning the names hold for Mupagassi. While he also does not know their signification in local languages, in which he presumes they were toponyms like any others before the camps, they became the names of the camps have for him as places to which refugees were consigned and confined, simply for having being chased

While Mbonimpa does not go into many details about the fictional researcher's methods (apart from meeting and chatting with the young men in a tented bistrot), such cultural, embodied communication certainly influences the production of research, in which respect and trust are key elements of abstract "rapport."

Shesterinina (2018) argues that in contexts of research on violent conflict, both fear and empathy may influence both the co-creation of data and its interpretation through the types of questions asked, the atmosphere created within an interview, and in later interpretation of the data created in a given encounter. As Mbonimpa's (2020a) novel illustrates, in this cross-cultural context, body-language cues may be important to empathy and trust. Such "cues" may influence how a researcher is perceived (for example as rude, invasive, interrogating for making direct eye contact) perhaps thus influencing the information shared. They may further shape how a researcher perceives interlocutors including whether a researcher trusts and empathizes with them, as well as whether particular testimony or information is considered reliable, and how it is given weight in analysis.

Language learning can be important to deepening one's understanding of a context. For example, camp residents developed their own Kirundi neologisms to describe the context. One day when I greeted a man, asking "what's new?" (Amakuru?), he responded with a term I had never heard in response to a greeting in Burundi: "Ndibutse." An interpreter explained it means "I'm missing something (of myself)." He elaborated: "it's a term that we use a lot when the food is finished. When the food we received at the reception [sic - distribution], at the last reception, is finished, while waiting for the second reception, the second distribution, we like to say often "ndibutse" (Field notes, 2017). The conditions of hunger in the period after the food had run out, and before the next distribution had spurred a new greeting response in one of the camps that was not used in to the other camp, or in Burundi. This speaks to the ways in which language is both incredibly context-specific, and allows insight into the everyday life in unique places.

Additionally, speaking French was also often appreciated by Burundians in the camp when they did not want to be overheard by Tanzanians. In such contexts, for example, they might explain something about "ce pays" (this country), rather than saying "Tanzania," so as not to raise suspicions or draw attention (see (Brankamp, 2021d; Simon Turner, 2005b). While

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from their homeland: "Ulyankulu, Mishamo, des synonymes de désastre, de catastrophe!" (Ulyankulu, Mishamo, synoymes of disaster, of catastrophe!).

Kiswahili, and even sometimes Kirundi could be understood by many Tanzanians in the camp, French was considered somewhat of a secret language. (See also Galitzine-Loumpet, 2016, on language and surveillance in camp settings).

#### Interpreters

Interpreters and research assistants are not always included in ethics considerations (beyond ensuring their protection of confidential information), although their involvement can also place them at risk. Clark-Kazak chose not to use an interpreter in her research because of sensitive nature of research, “where political activity is officially illegal,” and because a research assistant could be at risk due to the critical nature of the project (Clark-Kazak, 2011, p. 41). This could be a concern in the Tanzanian camp context as well. One interpreter shared that he had previously worked as an interpreter for one of the international humanitarian organizations in the camp. After meetings had finished, he chatted with two of the white, foreign staff of the organization. Later, Tanzanian staff of the Ministry of Home Affairs questioned him about what he had been saying to them, and warned him: “if you don’t stop talking with the whites...” He then resigned his position, despite the needed income, “as I saw it might bring trouble,” he stated. He noted that another man who later worked as an interpreter for the organization faced more serious accusations by the authorities, and chose to leave the camp. When I inquired whether he might have problems in working with me, he said that because I was just a student it wouldn’t be a problem, and that he was able to judge this for himself.

The use of interpretation raises further ethical questions around inclusion and exclusion from research. Clark-Kazak notes that not using interpreters means the research favoured participants who could speak English or French (Clark-Kazak, 2011). In this case, the inclusion of those who only speak Kirundi was incredibly important to me, as they are the most marginalized in the camp, and are also excluded in research that employs Swahili translators only.

The positionality of interpreters is also an important consideration, but equally provides “insider” perspectives on diverse aspects of research (Twyman et al., 1999). Issues such as interpreters’ political positionality, gender, region of origin, and more, may all shape what interlocutors feel comfortable to share in interviews. Working with four interpreters, with different “starting points” and sites, I felt it would be less likely that one assistant could overly steer research to a single political narrative, for example. Reflexivity, then, is not a solo-activity,

but becomes shared, through “constant discussion about plans, decisions and meanings and interpretations of interviews” (Twyman et al., 1999, p. 319). Interpreters themselves are key interlocuteurs, with whom one can discuss ideas, and the research more broadly (E. E. Watson, 2004). Twyman argues that this can further displace the researcher and their “authority”, in the creation of “hybrid spaces” through the “agency of a translator” (Twyman et al., 1999, p. 321).

## Appendix N: Note-taking practice

The cornerstone of my “fieldnotes” practice began with typing-up any hand-written “jottings” from that day (though I did not have handwritten notes each day), typically in the evening, and then elaborating further observations from my memory of that day. I provided context for jottings, while also writing additional descriptive and reflective notes in a more narrative form. These notes were entered directly into a password protected, Nvivo project, on an encrypted, password protected computer. Notes for each day were saved a distinct “document” within the software. This allowed me later to code notes (A. Watson & Till, 2010) alongside interview transcriptions, and to link information to participant “cases” when relevant but from outside formal interviews. I was then able to destroy any handwritten notes from a given day.

My *in-situ* note taking practice was somewhat limited. I took “jottings” when visiting new sites within the camp, such as the departure centre, a food distribution location, or a market, jotting down quick observations about the space. I also took detailed notes when attending formal events, such as World Refugee Day activities. Sometimes my note-taking practice included pausing to note key phrases and ideas of an informal conversation within the camp. I would sometimes try to take notes while chatting with interpreters on our long walks through the camp, if we stopped for tea breaks. Such notetaking was often unplanned, and when possible I asked permission of interlocutors prior to beginning to take notes—though the notebook itself made visible the practice. Carrying a notebook made my role and the fact that I was recording observations more visible and clear to potential interlocutors, and was often noted appreciatively by interlocutors, which I recorded in my notes themselves:

I had my notebook out, and referred to it, saying that I was going to have it out, to be more open and honest about the fact that I am taking note of things (not just writing it later), and to remember things better.

[Déo] agreed this was a good idea: “les paroles s’en volent, mais les écrits restent.” [spoken words disappear, but writing remains.]

He also said that “ils voient la 325econt quand vous écrivez” [they see the value of when you write] and that they see that you are listening closely and taking what they say seriously, and that it is something that can help people, and that nothing can change without information.

(Notes, 27 March, Nduta Camp)

The notes above include direct quotations, differentiated through quotation-notations in my *in-situ* jottings, and then incorporated in my more narrative typed notes for that day. (When I

wrote fieldnotes about conversations from memory, rather than from jottings, I distinguished that they were paraphrased rather than directly quoted.)

Despite this appreciation of open notetaking by refugees, I did not take handwritten notes on every visit to the camp. Writing (even jottings) sometimes interrupted the flow of conversations and interactions. It particularly slowed me down when walking through the camp, as we often had to cover several kilometres to reach an arranged interview site. It also felt impractical to always be making notes while visiting humanitarian offices. I felt more that it created a barrier to easier communication and rapport, and so I relied more often on memory to note what stood out as relevant (outside of formal interviews) from such sites. I set the notebook aside, making mental “notes” to record later instead.

The practice of typing notes (almost) daily was also an opportunity for self-reflection on my own entwined emotional and physical states. In re-reading my notes, I was struck by how often I recorded that I was tired or exhausted, from the very beginning of my research. At times, arriving back from the camp in the evening, I would feel too exhausted to type notes, particularly when I also needed to take time in the evenings to prepare for subsequent interviews, to follow the news from Burundi and Tanzania (which I would also reflect on in notes, and often download into Nvivo as well), and of course time needed for basic social-reproduction. I would therefore sometimes write notes for a couple days together, or “catch up” on notes during the weekend. This “catching up” felt inadequate, particularly as I compared this inconsistency to my much more disciplined MA fieldnotes (without much self-compassion at the time in consideration of the differences in my relation to the context, the duration of the research, or my own health). I could tell my memory of conversations was much worse after two days than the same evening of an interaction. This shortcoming is one of my reasons for hesitancy in claiming “ethnographic methods.” “Fieldnotes” are perceived cornerstone of much ethnography; although they extensive and often relevant to my analysis and writing, my notes are undoubtedly imperfect. However any notetaking, and any research, is necessarily partial.

## Appendix O: Departure Centre Research and Boundaries

The formal boundaries of the camp further affected my own ethical research boundaries, through my understanding of the risk created by boundary-crossing both for people within the camp without formal recognition, and for those immanently formally departing the camp. Due to my research interest in return and “durable solutions,” I spent several days at the Departure Centre created at Nduta camp by UNHCR during my preliminary research. The Departure Centre is a fenced area within the camp, guarded by private security, and created as part of the humanitarian management of the return process after the tri-lateral agreement on return between the Tanzanian and Burundian governments, and UNHCR. It is both an additionally bounded area within the camp, but also, a designated space oriented towards the formal crossing of boundaries. As camp residents register for return, return convoys are planned taking into consideration the indicated destination locations of people who had registered to return, along with the capacity of transit centres and reception centres in those places, staff, and funding. The names of those who would be included in upcoming convoys would be publicly posted in the camp, along with when they should report to the Departure Centre with their luggage—two days before the scheduled departure. Given the size of the camp, Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and African Initiatives for Relief and Development (AIRD) would help to transport luggage to the Departure Centre. People who had registered in other camps and were included in convoys were brought to the Departure Centre at Nduta. The size of convoys varied, but could include up to one thousand returnees in the initial period of organized returns. At the centre, International Organization on Migration (IOM) staff check the “medical fitness to travel”<sup>207</sup> of each listed convoy member, delaying the departure of anyone deemed “unfit.” Luggage is tagged and placed in trucks. Those about to depart spend two nights sleeping in the large hangers at the centre, adult men in a separate hangar from women and children. World Food Program (WFP) provides food for the meals—the same peas and maize meal which has been their ration for their years in the camp—and it is cooked in large pots by DRC incentive workers. The site is kept clean by Oxfam “volunteers.” Private KK Security<sup>208</sup> Tanzanian guards watch the entrance gate of the further bounded and transitory site within the camp.

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<sup>207</sup> Medical screenings at the Departure Centre included temperature screening because of Ebola concerns in neighbouring countries, and now include COVID-19 screening

<sup>208</sup> “KK” is not an acronym, rather “KK Security Ltd” is the name of a large private security company, operating across East and Central Africa, and owned by GardaWorld, the world’s largest private security

Research sites shape the information collected (Dowling et al., 2016), and this was true of the boundaries of the departure centre in ways particular to that site within the camp. Departure days start early and are busy, and in the day prior to departure many people are at the centre. Between set meal times and the formal activities of preparing departure was unstructured time in which I could talk with people there. The centre was also an easy site to meet up with either of my interpreters at the time. I initially thought that interviews within this space could provide perspectives of those who registered to return—perspectives that were not included at that time in any of my preliminary research in Nyarugusu camp, where very few refugees had registered to return. I observed the workings of the centre, including the early morning departure of a return convoy. I approached groups of people sitting around, introduced myself and my research, and asked if anyone was interested in sharing their life history. In three days, I interviewed four people who had registered for return. I also interviewed three Burundians who were incentive workers/volunteers at the centre in different capacities, and one who was visiting someone at the centre.

As those temporarily residing at the Centre all had refugee status up to the point of de-registration at return, these interviews did not create further risk relating to refugee status. Other unique considerations, however, emerged in this transitory, return-oriented space, bounded/boundary-crossing space. One concern was where to do interviews, when those scheduled for departure were not permitted to leave the centre. I used a large tarpaulin-covered area with benches close to the entrance gate. It was usually empty, and we could sit in the shade while we talked, somewhat removed from the other hangars and activities. This site provided less privacy than interviews elsewhere in the camp, as the security guard posted at the gate could stroll by, and other people could wander through. While they likely could not hear much, we could still be observed. Other spaces were not available, and those registered for departure needed to remain within the centre (unless withdrawing from the convoy). Those who were registered to leave all preferred that I take handwritten notes on their interviews, rather than recording them, which was far less usual in other interviews—I do not know why this was the

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company. They are contracted private security for many International Non Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and United Nations (UN) agencies including UNHCR in Tanzania, and work at designated locations within the camps.

case, but perhaps they preferred how note-taking would look to others. (This was not the case for those working at the centre and not registered for return.)

The conditions of the departure centre, combined with the imminent departure of those who were scheduled to return created limits for my chosen methods, and raised ethical questions distinct from those in research elsewhere in the camp. Unlike in my more typical life-history process (described in the previous chapter), there would be no chance for additional follow-up in-person interviews. Rather than treating consent as a process over several visits, it was limited to the short time in which we spoke in the Centre. It would be much more difficult for those interviewed to be in touch if they later wished to withdraw their participation (a required option for research participants per research ethics guidelines), as it would mean a more expensive international call from Burundi, rather than a local call within Tanzania. I worried that others on the convoy may wonder why those participating in interviews were talking to me, and what they were saying—and that those speaking to me would have similar concerns. I wondered if their participation could be interpreted as suspicious, and reported to people in the political party in power in Burundi (CNDD-FDD) at a local level by those who were returning—and after the initial interviews my research assistants shared a similar concern. While unverifiable, there was a widespread *perception* in the camp that those registering to return included Imbonerakure, sent as spies and agitators sent by the Burundian government to observe those in the camps, and to “encourage” return. (The widespread nature of such accusations has been recorded by other refugee and human rights researchers (Van Laer et al., 2017)). An additional concern arose from an interpreter, who after the initial interviews thought further on the process and felt uncomfortable. He worried that information that people in the party in power might learn that he had been working with a foreign research interviewing people about return. They in turn might wonder if we were critiquing return, or seeking information on returnees. The ethical questions arising from the inclusion of this immanently border-crossing group thus concerned possible perceptions of both research subjects and assistants, as in many other research contexts shaped by violent conflict (Shesterinina, 2018).

While I had introduced myself and my role as a student research to the larger group that has been present, unlike with ongoing research, there would be few options to clarify my role further to those who might be suspicious towards those who did step forward to participate. As nearly all refugees at the centre were leaving, I would have almost no capacity to learn about and

respond to any suspicions, rumours, or confusion about my role and presence. This was vastly different than when I did when conducted “clustered” research in areas within the camp to which I returned frequently. These concerns may have been shaped by an atmosphere of suspicion in the camp (Brankamp, 2021c), however I was also cautious because of my inability to be present and observe the outcomes for those dispersed to diverse contexts. Further, even formal humanitarian return monitoring was thought to be quite limited at the time, and shaped by state surveillance (Research notes, 2017, 2018). Human rights organizations conducting research among Burundian refugees in Uganda recorded the arrival of Burundians who had returned from Tanzania to Burundi, but who had fled again when their return was met with intimidation and violence (HRW, 2019; Van Laer et al., 2017). While this was more connected to pre-existing political issues, I felt it would be unethical to risk any possible further suspicion towards returnees through research participation in a context where meaningful ongoing contact would not be possible.

