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GENDER IDENTITIES AND THE DECISION TO RETURN: THE CASE OF RWANDAN REFUGEE MEN AND WOMEN IN NORTH KIVU, DRC.

By

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Ethical Clearance Protocol Number H15/07/51

A thesis submitted to the faculty of Humanities school of Social Sciences, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment for the degree of Masters in Migration &Displacement.

Johannesburg 2016

DECLARATION

I declare that this report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Masters in Migration & Displacement in the Faculty of Humanities, School of Social Sciences, at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other University.

_____

Karen Koraeny Taiwa

22nd July 2016

ABSTRACT

Repatriation like any other form of migration is highly gendered. The objective of this research study is to analyze the gendered determinants of repatriation. I will explore various motivations for return and the general literature surrounding repatriation. My interest in the research was inspired by my experience working with Rwandan returnees where I encountered more female returnees than men.

The other reason was the invocation of the cessation of Rwandan refugees on the 30th June 2013.The implication of the cessation meant to bring to closure to a close the refugee status of Rwandans who fled the country before 31st December 1998 and to find alternative status for those refugees still in need of international protection. An interesting observation is that despite this invocation by the end of 2013, the number of Rwandan refugees coming back did not increase as was expected.

At the time of the interviews, the invocation of the cessation status of Rwandan refugees was a not an issue in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). However, a meeting held on the 2nd of October 2015 came up with new deadlines for the implementation on the cessation clause.

This research follows a mini-research for my Honours degree that I conducted in 2014 with Rwandan refugees residing in Johannesburg. This work however differs from my previous pilot study in Johannesburg in two ways; in contrast to this research paper, my interviews in Johannesburg involved Rwandan refugees who had not taken the decision to return to Rwanda. Additionally, the refugee profile in South Africa comprised mostly political asylum-seekers while Rwandan refugees hosted in the DRC (my current research location) are mostly those who fled during the 1994 genocide.

Voluntary repatriation is a contested issue. In various instances, refugees feel obliged to return either through active promotion of repatriation, reduction of aid in refugee camps or appalling conditions in countries of asylum. What is also evident is the politics between the countries of asylum and origin and the uncomfortable position the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) finds itself as it seeks to ensure the voluntary character of repatriation as is stipulated by the 1969 OAU convention.

The gendered approach taken in migration studies reveals renegotiation of gender relations and roles as a result of displacement. Although the role of women changes considerably; social expectations puts more pressure on men to provide and as the limited livelihood opportunities during displacement curtails their primary role as breadwinners. Gender mainstreaming is one of the approaches employed

by the, UNHCR to ensure that women are not only involved in all aspects of planning and development but also in issues of peace and security. The literature on repatriation, suggests that women and men consider different factors in their decision to return; men's main concern is security while women dwell more on working structures like hospitals and schools for their children. During fieldwork, the household emerged as an important unit for repatriation decision making.

The research employed a qualitative design. The tools for data collection included semi-structured in-depth questions for Rwandan refugee participants in Goma and key informants from the UNHCR and their government counterpart in the repatriation exercise the *Commission Nationale pour les Réfugiés* (CNR). In addition, I engaged in an extensive secondary data search through journals, books, the internet, newspapers and policy documents. Thematic analysis was utilized to analyze the collected data.

Based on the findings, it was evident that Rwandan refugee men and women put into consideration different aspects in their decision to return to Rwandan. Men focused mostly on security issues both in the DRC and Rwanda while women considered working structures like schools, hospitals and the hope of reclaiming their spouses' land for the sake of the children. On the decision to return, single women took the decision on their own while in the case of married couples, the men came up with the idea and discussed it with their wives and children. A cross cutting theme between the interviewed Rwandan refugee men and women was the important function of social networks as a pull factor for return. Social networking was especially important in obtaining information about the specific areas in Rwanda and also acted as assurance for temporary accommodation upon return and therefore reducing the cost of return migration. Based on the findings, access to information for both men and women was not mentioned as a major challenge owing to advances in technology (radios, internet, and mobile phones) and the presence of social networks.

Keywords (Returnee, Cessation Clause, Repatriation, Reintegration, Decision-making process, Gender, Identity, Social networking)

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACMS: African Centre for Migration Studies

AFDL: *Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo-Zaïre*

AIDES: *Actions ET Interventions pour le Développement ET l'Encadrement Social*

BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation

CNR: *Commission Nationale pour les Réfugiés*

COA: Country of Asylum

COO: Country of Origin

DAAD: *DeutscherAkademischerAustauschDienst*

DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo

FDLR: *Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda*

MIDIMAR: Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs

MONUSCO: United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DR Congo

M23: *Mouvement du 23-Mars*

RPF: Rwandan Patriotic Front

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Map 1: Rwanda


RWANDA
National capital
Province capital
Town, village
Airport, airstrip
International boundary
Road
Track
UGANDA
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
BURUNDI
Kigali
Byumba
Ruhengeri
Gisenyi
Kibuye
Gitarama
Cyangugu
Nyanza (Nyabisindu)
Gikongoro
Butare
Kibungo
Rwamagana
Kigali
Kisoro
Rutshuru
Cyanika
Kabale
Lubirizi
Rwemhasha
Kafunzo
Kagitumba
Merama
Nyagatare
Muvumba
Katuna
Gatunda
Gabiro
Ngarama
Mulindi
Kirambo
Kidaho
Butaro
Cyamba
Kinihira
Kinyami
Muhura
Rukara
Rutare
Murambi
Mbogo
Shyorongi
Rushashi
Nemba
Busogo
Kora
Mutura
Kagali
Gonya
Nyundo
Kabaya
Ngaru
Ngororero
Kiyumba
Kinyinya
Gikoro
Bicumbi
Kayonza
Kicukiro
Runda
Bulinga
Butamwa
Mabanza
Birambo
Bwakira
Gishyita
Rwamatamu
Masango
Ruhango
Gatagara
Kaduha
Rwesero
Karaba
Rusatira
Karama
Kitabi
Rwumba
Gisakura
Kamembe
Cyimbogo
Bukavu
Karengera
Nyakabuye
Bugumya
Bugarama
Ruramba
Gisagara
Busoro
Munini
Runyombyi
Akanyaru
Bugesera
Rilima
Gashora
Sake
Bare
Nemba
Ngenda
Kigarama
Rukira
Rusumo
Kirehe
Lac Kivu
Ile Idjwi
Ile Bugarura
Ile Wahu
Ile Gombo
Lowa
Lac Muhazi
Lac Mugesera
Lac Cyohoha Sud
Lac Rweru
Lac Cyambwe
Lac Mpanga
Lake Bisongou
Lake Mujunju
Lac Ruhondo
Lac Burera
Lac Ruhondo
Lac Mihindi
Lac Hago
Lac Nyamusumbi
Lac Ihema
Lac Nasho
Lake Mutanda
Lake Bunyonyi
Kagera
Kagera
Kagera
Nyabarongo
Kagitumba
Kagera
BIRUNGA NAT'L PARK
KAGERA NATIONAL PARK
29°30'
30°00'
30°30'
31°00'
1°00'
1°30'
2°00'
2°30'
N
0 10 20 30 40 50 km
0 10 20 30 mi
© Nations Online Project

Map 2: Democratic Republic of Congo



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The UNHCR reported 51.2 million people forcefully uprooted by 2013. Some 16.7 million persons were refugees: 11.7 million under UNHCR's mandate and 5.0 million Palestinian refugees registered by United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). The other persons of concern highlighted in the global figure included 33.3 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and close to 1.2 million asylum-seekers. Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Colombia, Democratic of Congo, Myanmar, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, and Iraq, comprised the top 10 refugee producing countries; half of these countries are in sub-Saharan Africa[1].While I acknowledge the migration patterns in Africa have been caused by factors that are not conflict-related, my focus here is limited to those uprooted by conflicts who cross international borders for safety reasons.

The figures above not only highlight the conflicts in countries of origin but also the humanitarian crisis that accompanies such a scale of displacement. In response to the refugee issue, UNHCR has adopted three strategies: voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement to a third country. Resettlement overseas for African refugees has seldom been an option. This is reiterated by Rogge & Akol (1989), who state that refugee third country resettlement programs date back to 1980 when the United States of America (USA) resettled a quota of 3,000 refugees annually followed by Canada in 1981 with a quota of 500 which later increased to 1000 in 1983 and Australia a quota of 220 in 1984. Stein (1986) proceeds to add that resettlement to a third country is the least desirable and most costly option. Local integration on the other hand is also considered costly for host countries especially for those in Africa. Voluntary repatriation is often considered the preferred option by UNHCR. Voluntary repatriation was recommended at an international conference in Addis Ababa in 1967 as the best viable solution to the refugee dilemma; this was later confirmed at the Arusha conference in 1979. Additionally, the round table meeting held in San Remo, Italy between 16-19 July 1985 by UNHCR reaffirmed voluntary return as a basic human right connected to the need to belong. Critics argue that the shift from local integration and resettlement to voluntary repatriation is attributed to the changing refugee profile and the increased number of displaced persons. Feller (2001) illustrates that the profile of refugees has shifted from the once celebrated colonial heroes to persons fleeing civil strife and a possible threat to stability of their countries of origin. In addition, as the numbers increased considerably it placed an enormous burden on the hosting countries. In the same vein,

[1]UNHCR Mid-Year trends 2014

Matlou (1999) reiterates that because of the vast number of refugees vis-à-vis the available resources in asylum countries, unlike resettlement and local integration, voluntary repatriation appears to be the most viable long-term solution for many refugees.

Most African countries experienced an influx of returning refugees between the 1960s and 1980s after countries gained their Independence from colonial rule and due to the resolution of civil wars. According to Long (2013), this period saw the return of 200,000 Algerian refugees from Tunisia alone following French withdrawal from their former colonies. Between 1971 and 1973, some 137,000 South Sudanese refugees returned to their own country following the end of the first Sudanese civil war, the establishment of relative stability in Zaire[2] under President Mobutu Sese Seko from the early 1970s also triggered a mass return. Additionally, 300,000 refugees returned from Zaire to Angola in 1974 and 1975 and 174,000 from Senegal to Guinea Bissau between 1974 and 1976.The 1990s also saw mass repatriations of Rwandan refugees. According to UNHCR 3,177,523 refugees returned between 1993 and 2001. Rogge (in Allen & Turton, 1996) estimated about 3.5 million refugees in Africa who had repatriated between 1971 and 1990.

Repatriation generally takes two forms; it can either be voluntary whereby individuals take the decision to return without coercion or force whereby the choice to return is beyond the individual's control. The 1990s was declared by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees as the decade of voluntary repatriation. According to UNHCR, this kind of return should only be promoted once conditions that led to flight have ceased to exist. The nature of voluntary repatriation has been transformed since the post-colonial period. Stein notes, "increasingly, voluntary repatriation will have to take place without a decisive event such as independence, without any political settlement between the contending parties and without any change in the political regime that originally caused the flight" (Stein, 1989:266). UNHCR classifies voluntary repatriation into three categories namely: spontaneous return where the refugees decide to return with limited or no support from UNHCR; facilitated return whereby refugees receive limited support from UNHCR; and organized return whereby they are encouraged to return by UNHCR based on an informed decision. Some of the assistance given by UNHCR includes; logistics (transport), repatriation packages (food, hygienic kits, plastic sheeting etc.) and money in the form of grant. Literature suggests that most returns occur spontaneously. Rogge (1994) suggests this could be 10 times greater than the statistics indicate. This, however, is difficult to determine due to lack of data.

[2] Zaire was renamed the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Access to information is also mentioned by UNHCR as an important factor in the decision to return. Voluntary repatriation, for instance, is based on an informed decision made by refugees as a result of reliable and objective information. According to Koser (1997), the model of a repatriation information system has five components namely: home conditions about which information is transmitted; the agents who collect, mediate and pass on that information to a refugee; the refugee who receives the information; flows of information that connect these three components (home conditions, agents of information and the receiver); and a series of inputs that relate the model to the external environment and cause the components to change through time. It is my contention that gender imbalances feature prominently in the access to information.

The UNHCR handbook for the protection of women and girls (2006) also agrees that many women and girls are not given a real choice about the decision to return and are often excluded from peace processes, reconstruction and rehabilitation activities. Furthermore, displacements often result in changes in gender roles which impact on the general refugee experience. Despite gender mainstreaming efforts championed by the Beijing platform in 1995 to include women in development programmes, Ager (1999) laments that the discrepancy between the public relations statement 'women and children represent 80 per cent of the world's refugee population repeated *ad nauseam* and the 'voluntary' return of (at the barrel of a gun) demonstrates the gap between recommendations on gender mainstreaming and the actual application of these recommendations on the ground. It is my contention that despite the tremendous efforts to include gender issues in development activities and migration, like many brilliant policies, this is not reflected in the everyday life of a refugee.

There are various policies that support the voluntary repatriation of refugees; The UN General Assembly Resolution 428 (V) of 14 December 1950 for instance, adopting the UNHCR Statute, calls upon governments to cooperate with the High Commissioner in the performance of her functions inter alia by "assisting the High Commissioner in (her) efforts to promote the voluntary repatriation of refugees." Additionally, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) established in Article 13 (2) stipulates that "Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country" (UNHCR, 1996). Article V of the 1969 OAU convention outlines some guiding principles on repatriation which include the voluntary character of return, repatriation in safety and assistance in re-integrating the returnees. The Cessation Clause under Article 1 C (5) and 1 C (6) is another important policy in relation to repatriation and of relevance to this research. Built into the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1969 Organization of African Unity

Refugee Convention[3] the cessation clause essentially defines refugee status as temporary. When the Cessation Clause is invoked, the status of some refugees comes to a close, unless they can argue 'compelling reasons' as to why they are still in need of international protection. However, according to UNHCR's Handbook on Procedures and the Criteria for Determining Refugee Status, the Cessation Clause can only be invoked when fundamental, durable and positive changes in the country of origin have occurred, and which can be assumed to remove the basis for the fear of persecution. "The Executive Committee, in Conclusion 65 (XLII) of 1991, underlined the possibility of using the cessation clauses of the 1951 Convention in situations where a change of circumstances in a country is of such a profound and enduring nature that refugees from that country no longer require international protection, and can no longer continue to refuse to avail themselves of the protection of their country, provided that it is recognized that compelling reasons may, for certain individuals, support the continuation of refugee status. This statement reflects a more general humanitarian principle, recognizing that a person who - or whose family - has suffered atrocious forms of persecution should not be expected to repatriate. Even though there may have been a change of regime in the country of origin, this may not always produce a complete change in the attitude of the population, nor, in view of his or her past experiences, in the mind of the refugee" (Voluntary repatriation handbook, 1996:9).

To this end, a ministerial meeting to review the comprehensive durable solutions strategy for the Rwandan refugee situation regarding the cessation clause was held in Pretoria, South Africa, on 18th April 2013 (EXCOM, September 2013). The following recommendations were made on the Rwandan refugee caseload according to UNHCR (2011): Efforts to promote voluntary repatriation, opportunities for local integration and alternative status for those still in need of international protection after the cessation of refugee status. By July 2013, only four countries in Africa - Malawi, the Republic of Congo, Zambia and Zimbabwe - had followed UNHCR's recommendation to invoke the cessation clause (IRIN, 2013).This indicates the complexities associated with the application of the cessation clause as many countries indicated that they were not ready to implement the recommendations within the stipulated timeframe of 30th June 2013.

Following the Pretoria meeting in 2103, the main countries hosting Rwandan refugees (Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, the Republic of the Congo, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe), Rwanda, UNHCR and the

3 Currently the African union

African Union held another ministerial meeting in Geneva on the 2nd October 2015 to further discuss a comprehensive solution strategy for Rwandan refugees. In this meeting it was agreed that organized repatriation should end by 31st December, 2016 and to bring to a closure the Comprehensive Solution Strategy for Rwandan refugees not later than 31st December 2017.

Aim of Study

The main purpose of the proposed study is to explore and describe the gendered motivations for repatriation among Rwandan refugees. During the course of the study I examine how gender identities manifest in the household and more specifically in the repatriation decision-making process. There is ample evidence in migration studies that suggests the household as a basic unit of decision making; this justifies the household as my focus of analysis. To this end, the research will endeavour to answer the following questions.

Research Questions

Primary question:

- How does gender identity affect the decision-making process in refugee repatriation situations?

Secondary questions:

- What factors influence refugees' decision to return, do these factors differ between refugee men and women?
- To what extent are decisions made in the family (family dynamics), to what extent are women engaged in the decision to remain or return to their countries of origin?
- Do policies surrounding repatriation have an impact on the decision to return and what are the gendered responses to these policies?
- How is the concept of 'home' mobilized by the refugees and UNHCR?

Rationale

In October 2009, UNHCR announced a strategy for bringing to a close the situation of Rwandan refugees who fled their country before 31st December 1998. The strategy contained four components: voluntary repatriation, local integration, retention of refugee status for people still in

need of international protection and the invocation of the cessation clause. Despite this recommendation to invoke the cessation of Rwandan refugee status, some countries such as the DRC had raised concerns about meeting the 30th June 2013 deadline. Unlike many countries with an encampment policy, few Rwandan refugees in the DRC are hosted in camps; a majority of them are scattered in the vast forests in the North Kivu area thus impeding accessibility in terms of assistance and protection. It is also for this reason that UNHCR and the government of DRC are yet to establish the exact number of Rwandan refugees hosted in the DRC which would subsequently facilitate proper planning to implement the cessation recommendations. Despite the recommendation to bring to a close the situation of Rwandan refugees, only 38, 533 Rwandans returned between 2010 and 2014 (9,886 in 2010, 7,560 in 2011, 8,096 in 2012, 7,305 in 2013 and 5,686 by the end of 2014)[4].

In response, UNHCR held a Ministerial meeting on 18th April 2013 in Pretoria with the African countries hosting Rwandan refugees. According to a press briefing by the UNHCR spokesperson Adrian Edwards (28th June 2013), it was agreed that hosting countries would apply the cessation at different rates beyond the stipulated deadline. This was reaffirmed in a statement made by the UNHCR regional representative for Southern Africa, "some states underscored that, for various legal, logistical, practical or other considerations, they are not in a position to apply the cessation clauses by 30th June 2013". As a follow up to the discussions held in Pretoria, another high level meeting was held on 02nd October 2015 in Geneva to harmonise the timelines for the implementation of the cessation strategy and as stated earlier in this document the deadline for the organised repatriation of Rwandan refugees was set for 31st December 2016 while all other recommendations pertained to the cessation of Rwandan refugees should be implemented not later than 31st of December 2017.

In addition to this, the DRC especially the province of North Kivu is home to a large number of Rwandan refugees in comparison to other destination countries but despite the conflicts experienced in 2012 with the M23 *(Mouvement du 23-Mars)* mutineers that displaced hundreds, the number of returnees remained relatively the same as the previous year 7,560 in 2011 and 8,096 by the end of 2012[5]. Moreover, I also believe that the proximity of Goma to Rwanda may also show an interesting insight to other migration patterns, for instance the circular migration patterns mentioned by Adepoju (2006) that are associated with individuals movement back and forth across boundaries for

4 UNHCR statistics

5UNHCR statistics

employment or as is the case of refugees to enable individuals to maintain contact with family members or check on their property whether in DRC or Rwanda.

My interest in the above topic was influenced by my experience working with Rwandan returnees where I was assigned to monitor their integration after return; these refugees repatriated from different countries of asylum but mostly from the DRC. During these monitoring missions we encountered more female returnees than men and this invoked my interest to question why that was the case. Some of the responses by the men present indicated that it was a strategy for women to assess the security situation before their arrival. Conversely, the high number of female returnees could also be explained by there being more refugee women to begin with; it is my hope that the research will be able to answer these questions.

While there is a relatively large volume of literature on repatriation, there is limited information on gendered differences concerning the choice to return and the role gender identity plays in these decisions. It is my hope that the information collected to an extent will outline how these gender identities are manifested and negotiated especially in the context of repatriation.

Definition of terms

Gender for the purpose of this study will be used here as defined by Indra, "a key relational dimension of human activity and thought-activity and thought informed by cultural and individual notions of men and women-having consequences for their social or cultural positioning and the ways in which they experience and live their lives" (Indra, 1999:2).

Identity shall be understood based on Tajfel's definition of social identity as, "… the *part* of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of its membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel,1981:255). This applies to any category be it gender, nationality, ethnicity etc. Of paramount importance in this research is the aspect of gender and national identity.

Génocidaire shall be defined as a person who participated in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

Refugee; according to the 1951 UN Convention; "[A]ny person who: owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social

group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country".

A refugee shall also be defined based on the 1969 OAU convention; "apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality".

Returnee shall be defined as a former refugee who is back in his/her country of origin.

Repatriation/return will be used interchangeably to refer to the act of Rwandan refugees going back to their country of origin Rwanda. It includes also those born to refugee parents in exile.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section will look into the politics of repatriation, the concept of home, some theoretical arguments on migration and lastly, how gender identities among the refugees manifests itself in accessing information and their decision-making process on repatriation to Rwanda. Black & Koser (1999), Allen & Turton (1996), Allen& Morsink (1994), Warner (1994) and Bakewell (2000) will be my main discussants for their wealth of knowledge in the repatriation of refugees; Pessar & Mahler (2003), Pedraza (1991), Ager (1999) and Indra (1999) will inform my discussion on gender and repatriation while Massey et al (1993) and Haug (2008) form the basis of the theory section on social networking. Other discussants will include Chimni (2004), Crisp, (2003), and Long (1995) for their contribution in the analysis of UNHCR policies and practice on repatriation. In addition, to this I will draw upon the work of Tajfel (1981),Wetherell (1996) and Hall (1996) as the basis for my discussion on identity. Lastly, I will also look at the UNHCR policies and guiding principles that inform the refugee repatriation process.

My central argument is that a better understanding of gender identities and how they are transformed over time and space will yield a better understanding of repatriation decision-making processes in the household.

The politics of 'voluntary' repatriation

There is no clear definition of voluntary repatriation from the UNHCR other than that it should be promoted and facilitated once the situation which led to flight has ceased. Nonetheless, the UNHCR provides guidelines for repatriation activities to ensure that refugees return in safety (legal, physical and material) [6] and dignity.[7] Moreover, refugees should make this informed decision to return only after they have been furnished with sufficient information on the economic, social, political, security

[6]Return in safety
Return which takes place under conditions of legal safety -such as amnesties or public assurances of personal safety, integrity, non-discrimination and freedom from fear of persecution or punishment upon return; physical security- including protection from armed attacks, and mine-free routes and if not mine-free then at least demarcated settlement sites and material security- access to land or means of livelihood (UNHCR repatriation handbook, 1996).
[7]Return with dignity
In practice, elements must include that refugees are not manhandled; that they can return unconditionally and that if they are returning spontaneously they can do so at their own pace; that they are not arbitrarily separated from family members; and that they are treated with respect and full acceptance by their national authorities, including the full restoration of their rights (UNHCR repatriation handbook, 1996).

situation in their countries of origin and any other information they deem necessary to facilitate their decision-making process. The underlying principle is that the repatriation process should be voluntary.

Although voluntary repatriation is not addressed by the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, it follows directly from the principle of *non-refoulement*: the involuntary return of refugees would in practice amount to *refoulement* or expulsion. The 1969 OAU Convention is the only international refugee instrument to date that formally elaborates the principles of voluntary repatriation with an emphasis on an informed decision to return. Furthermore, the return has to be sustainable (UNHCR, 1996). Although this recognizes the human agency of refugees, voluntary return is often influenced by push and pull factors either in the host country, sending country or the UNHCR. In the same vein, "where 'protection' is increasingly tantamount to repatriation, UNHCR officials are disposed to the view that getting refugees home, even to highly unstable situations, is preferred and legitimate" (Barnett, 2001:34).

Black & Koser (1999) explain that it is difficult to understand the current repatriation discourse outside the changing political context affecting attitudes towards refugees. The current tendency to control migration has given weight to temporary protection and subsequent repatriation of refugees to their countries of origin. To support this claim, Aljazeera cited a case where Australia increased the repatriation grant for asylum seekers from Afghanistan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Nepal, Sudan, Myanmar from AU$3,300 to AU$10,000 to discourage them from applying for refugee status and in the process created a pull factor for repatriation. In addition to this, the Australian government also tightened its migration laws to discourage entry of refugees and encouraged the repatriation of asylum-seekers. In Uganda for instance, "Rwandan refugees told of how they have had their land re-allocated to Congolese refugees, have seen their rations reduced and are no longer allowed access to some social services available to other refugees. Many live in constant fear of being forcibly repatriated and some have resorted to hiding their belongings and sleeping in the bush" (International Refugee Rights Initiative et al, 2010:1). In a separate case Long (2013) notes that the repatriation agreement between the Bangladeshi and Burmese governments reached in July 1978 was followed by withdrawal of aid in order to force refugees to return. It was later reported that an estimated 10,000 refugees died from malnutrition and illness by the end of 1978 (Anonymous 2010; Barnett 2000). Crisp (in Chimni 2004) gives another example of Ugandan refugees who were obliged to repatriate owing to the poor quality of life experienced in South Sudan and Zaire. Similarly, China was recently implicated for its alleged role in the forced repatriation of North

Koreans exposing them to serious human rights abuses. According to Cohen (2014), they encountered torture, long-term imprisonment and executions upon their return. Chimni (2004) notes that Tanzania which was previously hospitable to refugees but has since employed restrictive border policies to control inflows thus violating the right to asylum. In the same vein, Tanzania and Uganda made headlines recently by forcefully repatriating Rwandan refugees in 2013 and 2014 respectively. This runs contrary to UNHCR guidelines that underscore return in conditions of safety and dignity and the importance of an informed consent by the refugees. More importantly, it translates into *refoulement* and exposes refugees to grave human rights violations. Additionally, rejection of asylum claims may also act as a push factor for some refugees to return to their countries; this is, however, not always the case as refugees have often demonstrated agency by finding informal ways of making their stay in countries of asylum viable.

Voluntary repatriation tends to offer a cheaper option for the hosting states and UNHCR in contrast to local integration and resettlement. Harrell-Bond (1989) confirms this by asserting that returnee programs organized by UNHCR are cheaper and more short-term compared to supporting countries hosting protracted refugees. Hathaway (1997) gives a similar scenario in relation to industrialized countries where the shift from the tradition of granting permanent residence has been detrimental to refugees. He argues that most developed countries see little reason to grant refugees status more than the bare minimum entailments required thus the shift to temporary protection with the assumption that the refugees will go back home.

The politics dynamics in countries of origin also play an important role in influencing repatriation which may expose the concerned refugees to grave protection concerns. In 2014, China was implicated in its alleged role in the forced repatriation of North Korean refugees exposing them to serious human rights abuses. According to Cohen (2014), the North Korean refugees encountered torture, long-term imprisonment and executions upon their return. The women were subjected to sexual abuse and forced abortion especially when Chinese men were responsible for the pregnancy. Furthermore, the fear of forced repatriation rendered North Korean refugee women vulnerable to sexual abuse, trafficking and forced marriages in China because they cannot report these crimes. Crisp (in Black &Koser 1999) cites an example of the Ethiopian government putting pressure on Djibouti to repatriate refugees as failure to do this damages the legitimacy of Ethiopia as a state. Similarly, the large number of Rwandan refugees after the 1994 genocide posed a potential military and public relations threat to the newly established RPF (Rwandan Patriotic Front) Government.

Moreover, the presence of these refugees in the DRC has exacerbated diplomatic relations between Rwanda and DRC. This turbulent relationship was captured by BBC as outlined below;

- April-June 1994: Genocide in Rwanda
- July 1994: Paul Kagame's Tutsi rebels take power in Rwanda; Hutus flee into Zaire (DR Congo). Rwanda's army enters eastern Zaire to pursue Hutu fighters
- 1997: Laurent Kabila's AFDL, backed by Rwanda, takes power in Kinshasa
- 1998: Rwanda accuses Kabila of not acting against Hutu rebels and tries to topple him, sparking five years of conflict
- 2003: War officially ends but Hutu and Tutsi militias continue to clash in eastern DR Congo
- 2013: UN helps defeat Tutsi-led M23 rebels, allegedly backed by Rwanda
- 2014 June: Congolese and Rwandan troops clash on the border of their two countries.
- 2015 February: DR Congo launches offensive against Hutu-led FDLR

Ambiguous policies have also acted as a push factor whereby refugees fell they have no choice but to repatriate. This is evident in the cessation clause which critics say fails to give explicit commitments for local integration. Omata (2013), for instance, illustrates a situation where the Ghanaian government failed to give clear procedures for local integration leaving the Liberian refugees with little choice but to repatriate. Similarly, Harrell-Bond and Cliche-Rivard (2012) contend that the cessation clause for Rwandan refugees lacks policies on local integration. This is true in the sense that although local integration is mentioned as one of the options in the cessation strategy, it has failed to provide clear guidelines on how to go about this thus placing an enormous burden on the countries of asylum to improvise. Few countries have initiated the process, in this regard; the republic of Benin and Zambia are among the few countries with clear modalities on local integration that seeks to facilitate the naturalization of Rwandan refugees. A study conducted by the International Refugee Rights Initiative et al in 2010 with Rwandan refugees in Uganda also highlighted the pressure felt by refugees to return from the hosting government, the country of origin and UNHCR after the announcement of deadlines for repatriation in the context of the cessation. This also emerged in the interviews conducted last year in Johannesburg with Rwandan refugees for my Honours paper.

It is also worth noting that although UNHCR is mandated to ensure refugees return in safety and dignity, the organization may not always be in control of the situation. “UNHCR is often under enormous state pressure to initiate, maximize and accelerate refugee returns, including repatriation to

countries which continue to be affected by persecution or armed conflict" (Long, 2013:5). The tripartite agreement between UNHCR, Kenya and Somalia on the repatriation of Somali refugees in spite of the appalling conditions in Somalia is one such example. Omata (2013) makes a similar observation where Liberian refugees in Ghana protested against local integration in 2008 which prompted the deportation of some refugees, it is for this reason that UNHCR enforced repatriation by; increasing the repatriation grant from 5 to 100 USD, emphasizing repatriation deadlines and intensifying information campaigns in favour for return.

The concept of 'home'

"Whether a returnee comes back to his or her birthplace or settles in an entirely new environment, he/she considers return to be more of a new beginning than a return to the past." (Black & Koser, 1999:229)

There is an implicit assumption about refugees' connection with home, which Chimni (1993) refers to as the 'nostalgia model'. This model tends to support the promotion of repatriation as the durable solution for refugees. Bakewell (2000) contests the assumption that refugees would automatically want to return to their countries from where they were previously forced to flee. Refugees may have a variety of reasons to decide against repatriation for instance, trauma caused by the events that led to flight, those born in a host society with no connection to their country of origin or those economically established in countries of asylum. Muggeridge and Dona (in Omata 2013) support this claim by asserting that the decision to return is a complex interplay of social, political, personal and economic factors. The connection to home is also an issue for second generation migrants. Rogge (in Chimni 1993) notes that home does not have to refer to the place of origin but where one feels they belong. Furthermore, it is also possible to claim more than one place as home as reiterated by Castles (2002). "Home, therefore, is the association of an individual within a homogeneous group and the association of that group with a particular physical space" (Warner, 1994:162). In the same vein, I argue that the time spent in exile, investment and attachment to the country of asylum can create a sense of 'home'. I agree with Turton (2003) that the assumption that refugees want to go back home ignores their agency as 'purposive actors' and it gives very little scope for their new values and visions fostered during exile and does not allow them independent rational decision-making about their future.

Another important aspect of repatriation is reintegration activities in the country of origin, without which the return will not be sustainable. Reintegration is defined by UNHCR as, "a process that should result in the disappearance of differences in legal rights and duties between returnees and their compatriots and the equal access of returnees to services, productive assets and opportunities" (UNHCR handbook for Repatriation and Reintegration activities, 2004:5).

This was well captured by Martin when she noted that, **"**for any repatriation to be successful, the refugees need to regain their economic means of survival which means regaining their land and reintegration into local economies. They will need economic aid to farm that land and assistance must be guaranteed until the refugees have achieved self-sufficiency" (Martin, 1992:66). Returnees upon their return encounter challenges which include accessing employment either due to limited opportunities or non-recognition of qualifications obtained from foreign countries, access to healthcare and food and difficulties with housing is also a major concern. Women returning without their husbands may also face difficulties in claiming their spouses' or family land. In addition, they are seldom included in reconstruction and reintegration activities as illustrated by Wattevill (2002). Existing literature points to reintegration activities as a major motivation for return; even after peace is restored and the circumstances that led to flight cease to exist, few refugees return. Refugees choose to remain in countries of asylum rather than be faced with the uncertainty of reclaiming their property and rebuilding their lives from scratch. Moreover, reintegration means different things to different individuals that go beyond reclaiming property and economic independence. Rebuilding ties with the community whether family member or neighbours left behind is another aspect of reintegration.

This discussion suggests that repatriation is not an end in itself but rather the beginning of focused efforts to reintegrate those coming back after years in exile. "Even where repatriation has occurred, there is a need to pay much closer attention to the relations after return, and to recognise that even if repatriation is the end of one cycle, it is also the beginning of a new cycle which can challenge and expose some returnees to vulnerability" (Black & Koser, 1999:3).

Repatriation and the question of identity

Gender identity forms the focus in this section; however, this does not exclude other forms of identity for instance national and ethnic identity that may manifest themselves in the decision to return.

For the purpose of this research, gender shall be as defined by Indra (1999:2), "a key relational dimension of human activity and thought-activity and thought informed by cultural and individual notions of men and women-having consequences for their social or cultural positioning and the ways in which they experience and live their lives". As illustrated in the definition above, gender is not merely being a woman as implied by some humanitarian gendered approach to services whereby women have simply been added to the equation as a variable. Pessar and Mahler (2003) refute gender as simply a variable for measurement but is a set of social relations that organize immigration patterns. They proceed to add that forced migration is gendered, but it will vary given that forced migrants come to the experience with different 'cultural and individual notions'. To this end, El Jack (2003) reiterates the importance of having a holistic approach to gender by focusing on both sides of the gender equation, for instance, more attention is needed to understand how men's roles, strategies, responsibilities and options are shaped by gender expectations during conflicts and emergencies.

Gender identity arises from roles that are socially ascribed to men and women. My definition of gender identify is based on the social identity theory where gender is understood as a form of social identity. According to Tajfel, "Social identity will be understood as the part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of one's membership in a social group (or groups)together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1981:255). Tajfel corroborates Indra's argument that gender is relational by stating "… the 'positive aspects of social identity' and the reinterpretation of the attributes and engagement in social action only acquire meaning in relation to, or in comparison with, other groups" (Tajfel, 1981:256). Simply put, this suggests that our identity is reinforced and manifest in interaction with others either through exclusion or inclusion. Similarly, Wetherell (1996) reiterates that what it means to be a man or a woman, a middle-manager or a senior citizen and to an extent I can add to be a refugee or non-refugee may dominate self-perceptions and influence how we should behave where these identities are relevant. Another important aspect to note is that identity is not static and we can assume more than one identity at once and which doesn't always have to be in sync and sometimes can be unresolved or contradictory as noted by Hall (1996). This implies that you can identify as a woman, a refugee, a Rwandan and probably identify with the Congolese culture all at the same time. Perhaps an interesting question here is to examine how individuals choose to display these identities in different situations and which one prevails. The concept of intersectionality is also relevant in making the decision on return, for instance, social categories like gender, economic level, and the refugee label. To elaborate this point further, refugees may feel inclined to return based on their poor

economic status in the host country coupled with the alienation they experience from the negative label associated with their refugee status.

Gender and Repatriation

Displacement is a major disruption for the household which Indra (1999) reaffirms leads to circumstances and demands "… lived most intensely within the context of the household and are frequently enacted along the lines of gender" (Indra, 1999:218). This implies that the household has to renegotiate and adapt to new roles as dictated by the experience of being displaced. Men and women are faced with the hard reality of putting aside their previously ascribed cultural roles and taking on new ones in order to survive as refugees. This transformation may have both negative and positive outcomes in the lives of the refugees. Ross-Sheriff (2006) for example found that the roles of women remain relatively the same after displacement especially in intact families. Men, however, are faced with the harsh reality of displacement which challenges their role as breadwinners or protectors of the family. She goes on to highlight some of the roles played by women in exile as family decision-makers and/or influencing family decisions, protectors of family members, facilitators of daily living activities of family members, providers of home schooling, protecting, hiding and securing family possessions. During conflicts, for instance, Byrne (1996) explains that men's masculinity' is called on to encourage them to take up arms in defence of their country, ethnic group, political cause and their women.

In host countries the ability for men to provide economically for their families is hindered by difficulties in securing employment or access to income generating activities in asylum countries. In most instances, refugee documentation is not accepted as a valid identification document by potential employers or institutions that give loans. Similarly, the organization of camp structures plays a role in how gender identities are transformed in host countries. Grabska (2011) demonstrates how the inclusion of young educated men and women in decision-making structures results in the emasculation and disempowerment of elderly refugee men which was further exacerbates the limited livelihood opportunities. These experiences have been used by other scholars like Martin (1992) to explain the elevated incidences of domestic violence, depression and/or alcoholism among the male refugee community.

Changes in the construction of gender identities does not stop in host countries but continues even after repatriation, "male ex-combatants, expecting to return to their role as breadwinner, are

confronted with the reality that women are managing on their own … meanwhile, women, having performed in a non-stereotypical roles as combatants, may expect to maintain the leadership or independence they gained during conflict, whereas men expect them to come home and continue to fulfil the stereotypical role of wife/nurturer/mother" (El Jack, 2003:28). Byrne (1996) agrees that the end of conflicts often represents a period of transition, where gender relations and identities are renegotiated. According to Byrne (1996), this period can offer opportunities for women to formalize their increased participation in public life but can also render them more vulnerable especially in the absence of international aid in home countries and the subsequent competition for power and resources.

The literature on repatriation suggests that refugee women and men have various motivations for return and that these decisions are not reached in isolation but through the family, social networks and the information available to them. For instance, the high mobility of men in comparison to women results in an expansion of social networks which may have a gender bias in relation to accessing information. In addition, Grasmuck & Pessar (1991) stress that social networks guided by normatively prescribed kinship and gender roles as well as by the hierarchy of power within the household play a major role in a household's decision to migrate.

Kaiser (2010) in her research with refugees in Kiryandongo settlement in Uganda notes that in spontaneous repatriation, young men who possessed assets, skills and contacts are often the first to leave for their home country in Sudan. Furthermore, Bakewell (2000) cites the case of Angolan refugees who wanted to repatriate from Zambia due to the wealth in natural resources back in their country of origin. Situations where men's decision to return is influenced by fear of arbitrary arrest once in the country of origin is common as cited by Edwards (2000) in her work in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Moreover, cases have been reported where refugees have received threats from family members warning them against returning to claim the family land. On the other hand, Angolan refugee women in Bakewell's (2000) study mentioned relatives as the reason for return; married women followed their husbands while single women went to join their parents or other members from the extended family especially men who would assist in house construction and other activities ascribed to men. The examples above may suggest that women's dependence on men influences their decision about repatriation. Luis Guarnizo's work with Dominican returnees as cited by Pessar & Mahler (2003) reaffirms the gendered approach to the decision to return. Guarnizo study revealed Dominican migrant women were more likely to remain in the United States because of their families. The men's decision on the other hand was more individual and linked to the family. Cultural

practices and policies also have an influence on women's repatriation decisions. However, in the case of widows, unmarried and divorced women customary norms supersede the law. Although the law in Rwanda allows women to inherit property, for instance, women still encounter problems from their male relatives when claiming their share of the family land. Ross-Sheriff (2006) adds that women are more interested in the functioning of structures like schools, health centres, pharmacies, safe neighbourhoods and whether they will recover their homes upon return.

In relation to policies on gender mainstreaming, the 1995 Beijing platform features as a major milestone. In this platform, gender equality was underscored as a paramount issue concerning all areas of economic and social development. Prior to this, the period 1975-85 was referred to as the UN decade for women following three conferences held in Mexico City in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980, and lastly Nairobi in 1985[8]. This led to the construction of gender mainstreaming as a tool for assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels in order to ensure gender equality.[9]

Similarly, in 2004, UNHCR implemented the age, gender and diversity mainstreaming (AGDM), to, "enhance the protection of women and girls who are displaced, returnee and stateless and to ensure that they are able to enjoy their rights on an equal basis with men and boys" (UNHCR, 2008). The AGDM seeks to ensure that the voice of refugee women and girls is included in the protection planning process. This would address the concerns raised by Shedlock (2009) on gender-blind policies by the United Nations that had rendered refugee women voiceless. Notwithstanding some shortfalls, the AGDM, for instance, has facilitated the inclusion of women in planning processes. Moreover, Grabska (2011) contends that decision-making especially in relation to repatriation has shifted from the 'communal' vested in the male head of household to the individual whereby each individual wanting to return to Sudan has to register in person. This is illustrated by a 16-year-old Sudanese refugee girl who wanted to continue her education in Kenya. "This finger is my power. They [family] cannot force me to go back if I do not want" (Grabska, 2011:91).

[8] http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/women
[9] www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/gender/newsite2002/.../defin.htm

The nexus between repatriation and migration theory

Return like any other form of migration can be explained using various theories. Although migration theories have been critiqued by various scholars for a bias on the economic reasons of migration I believe networking theory to be most useful in explaining the motivations for return migration especially where access to information on return areas is concerned. In essence, this contributes to the limited literature on the role of social networking in return migration. According to Massey et al (1993), "migrant networks are sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and non migrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin. They increase the likelihood of international movement because they lower the costs and risks of movement and increase the expected net returns to migration. Network connections constitute a form of social capital that people can draw upon to gain access to foreign employment" (Massey et al, 1993:448). "Social capital is usually defined as the capacity of individuals to gain access to scarce resources by virtue of their membership of social networks or institutions" (Nederveen Pieterse, 2003:31). He elaborates that social capital is not about 'what you know' but 'who you know.' Social capital in terms of friends and relatives in Rwanda and those who have recently returned becomes an essential aspect in facilitating the reintegration of refugees once they return back to their country especially for temporary accommodation, accessing employment and more importantly the necessary information on their areas of origin before they even take the decision to return. This promotes the strategy of risk diversification as mentioned by Massey et al (1993) and makes migration cheaper. Haug (2008) reiterates that migration increases social capital for new migration and therefore decreases the cost of migration. An example of this is given by Pilkington & Flynn (1999) whereby the return of Russians from the newly independent soviet states relied heavily on the presence of family and friends in Russia. Additionally, most of these networks which are often informal minimize the influence that host and origin countries and migration policies have on controlling migration; decisions are mostly centred on the individual or household. According to Haug (2008), these social networks can work both as push and push factors for migration; for instance, access to information on return areas, integration difficulties in host countries and family links in the destination country. Social capital also plays a vital role in determining the area of settlement, "the attractiveness of places of residence is determined by the location-specific social capital that is, by social affiliation or relations" (Haug, 2008:591).

Another point closely linked to the concept of social networks that merits further elaboration is the aspect of rational choice in the decision to return. Most explanations dwell on the choice of where to

go and who goes but in the repatriation context the destination country is often predetermined and what is crucial is whether or not to go and if the whole family should go or a few members to begin with. While individual agency in forced displacement is often limited, I believe agency is better demonstrated in situation where repatriation is voluntary especially in instances of spontaneous returns. This is reaffirmed by Stein & Cuny, "the refugees themselves are the main actors in contemporary forms of voluntary repatriation. They are the main decision-makers, and they determine how they will move and the condition of reception" (Stein & Cuny, 1994:174). This assertion implies that refugees exercise rational choice in their decision to return to the countries of origin. Haug (2008) notes that social networks compliments the rational choice theory demonstrated in family reunification and chain migration.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In order to answer my central question on how gender identities manifest in the decision to return. I carried out semi-structured interviews with 35 Rwandan refugees in Goma town, the capital of North Kivu a province located in the DRC. The fieldwork was carried out over a three week period in the month September 2014 and it took three weeks. The participants comprised those Rwandan refugees in the transit centre who had already taken the decision to repatriate to Rwanda. While it would have been interesting to interview those who were yet to decide on repatriation, this was not viable based on the limited scope of this research and the challenge of accessing these refugees who are mostly not in designated refugee camps but rather distributed in the vast forests of North Kivu in DRC.

The research is based on a case study of Rwandan refugees. As described by Flyvbjerg (2006) a case study is, "the detailed examination of a single example of a class of phenomena, a case study cannot provide reliable information about the broader class, but it may be useful in the preliminary stages of an investigation since it provides hypotheses, which may be tested systematically with a larger number of cases" (Abercrombie, Hill, & Turner, 1984:34). Although case studies are generally criticized for their lack of generalization, the primary focus of my research is not to make a general conclusion but rather to understand the experiences of this particular group of Rwandan refugees. My case study will follow an interpretivist paradigm which Maree (2007) briefly explains offers a perspective and analysis of a study in order to understand how a particular group of people make sense of their situation or the phenomena they encounter. This is congruent with my study in trying to understand the experiences of refugees in relation to repatriation and the decision-making process which influences their return to Rwanda.

The study also takes a qualitative approach. Qualitative methods unlike quantitative methods have the ability to capture details which lead to an in-depth understanding of a situation. Patton (1990) asserts that qualitative methods yield a wealth of detailed information from a much smaller number of people or groups. This approach therefore resonates with the choice of my research design. Maree (2007) notes that the emphasis in qualitative research is more on the quality and depth of information collected than its scope or breadth. This I witnessed first-hand in my interviews whereby

the refugees went beyond the questions I asked them and gave more information about their experiences as refugees what led them to take the decision to return to Rwanda at that particular point in time. This made it possible to understand other aspects that I had not anticipated, for instance, the very important role of social networks especially close family members and former refugees in the decision to repatriate. Moreover, it gave me a deeper understanding of the level of push and pull factors at play in the repatriation process.

Methodological triangulation attributed to Denzin (1978) was utilized to accumulate data. This included an intensive secondary literature search via the internet, books, academic journals, newspapers, UNHCR documents, UNHCR briefs, the Rwandan ministry website of Disaster Management and Refugees Affairs (MIDIMAR) and repatriation sensitization documents used by UNHCR and CNR; all of which gave useful information on policies, repatriation and decision making processes. I also looked at UNHCR policy documents and handbooks related to repatriation. I analysed the recommendations reached on cessation from both the April ministerial meeting held in Pretoria in 2013 and the meeting held in Geneva in October 2015 that outlined the new timelines to a bring to a closure the Comprehensive Solutions Strategy for Rwandan refugees. I also analysed literature and studies done by other scholars on repatriation and gender.

Additionally, the qualitative design of this study takes an interactive method which according (Macmillan & Schumacker, 2006:26) involves "…face to-face technique[s] of data collection from people in their natural setting". To achieve this, I engaged in face-to-face semi-structured in-depth interviews with key informants and the refugees. My questions were formulated around key themes in repatriation and gender as will be outlined below.

Location

North Kivu province is located in the eastern part of the DRC; Goma its capital borders with Gisenyi town in Rwanda. Owing to the conflict in the Eastern part of DRC, Goma town has also grown into a humanitarian space dominated by various international and national organizations rendering their services under different mandates either to internally displaced persons or refugees. According to UNHCR, the conflict in the eastern part of the country has resulted to approximately 430,000 Congolese refugees in neighbouring countries, particularly Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania.

It is estimated that a total of 117, 296 (52.1%) Rwandan refugees are still hosted in the DRC mainly in the Kivu area. Other refugees in the DRC include those from Central African Republic, Burundi,

Sudan, and Somalia among others. My choice of Goma was motivated by the fact that the Eastern part (Kivus) of the DRC is home to a majority of Rwandan refugees. Moreover UNHCR statistics from 2009 to 2014 indicate that most (88%) Rwandan refugees are returning from the DRC. By the end of 2014 a total of 2,636 Rwandan refugees had returned from DRC; 36% men and 64% women. My population of interest (the returning Rwandan refugees) were found in the central transit centre located in Goma. Before these refugees are transported to the central transit centre in Goma, they are firstly received by CNR in the nine assembly points located close to their areas of residence in North Kivu. It is here where the initial registration takes place. After a few days depending on the number of refugees they are then transported to the central transit centre in Goma. It is at the transit centre that proper screening is conducted to establish the intention to return and also to ascertain that the return is voluntary and not forced. Moreover, it is at this stage that potential fraudulent cases of Congolese nationals masquerading as returning Rwandan refugees in order to benefit from the repatriation assistance are screened out. Those with serious medical conditions are identified and transferred to the district hospital in the town while those in need of psychological support are referred to Actions et Interventions pour le *Développement et l'Encadrement Social* (AIDES), the NGO in charge of psychosocial support for refugees in the transit centre. They spend approximately three days at the central transit centre in the DRC before they are transferred to Rwanda where they are received by UNHCR and CNR at the Rwandan-DRC border.

Population

The choice of Rwandan refugees was deliberate owing to the call for the recommendations of the modalities to implement the cessation of Rwandan refugees.

My key informants encompassed the two service providers with specific knowledge on repatriation modalities the UNHCR and *the Commission Nationale pour les Réfugiés* (CNR). I had formal interviews with four key informants and informal discussions with four others. The expertise in their various capacities gave me an insight into issues of repatriation and decision-making processes especially in terms of policy and practice. By engaging more than one stakeholder, as anticipated I received a wealth of information from different points of view. The thematic questions in this group pertained to policies on cessation and voluntary repatriation and gendered information in their campaign strategies, the concept of home, the repatriation process and assistance among others. I had initially included the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DR Congo (MONUSCO) as a third key informant but after some pilot interviews I was informed that

MONUSCO only dealt with combatants who do not fall under the 1951 UN Convention definition of a refugee and who are therefore outside the scope of this research paper.

My initial plan was to conduct semi-structured in-depth interviews with Rwandan refugees above the age of 20 but there were three instances where I interviewed three unaccompanied minors; this I did by first obtaining consent from UNHCR and CNR who acted as their custodians during their stay at the transit centre in Goma. Although these unaccompanied children did not fall within the intended age bracket of the study, their views nonetheless added an interesting dimension in analysing the motivation for return for those born in DRC. It is worth noting that the unaccompanied minors were children to Rwandan refugee parents who have either died or separated during conflicts in DRC; these children were born in DRC. In total I managed to interview 35 refugees; 20 women and 15 men. The questions in this category included the different channels and access to information in relation to repatriation, their gender and its impact on repatriation, the use of social networks, their understanding of voluntary repatriation, the concept of home and the impact on their decision to return among others.

Sampling

To ensure varied rich opinions from different groups were obtained, a combination of sampling techniques was utilized in the research study.

Purposive sampling was used in identifying the key informants. This was a deliberate selection of persons with particular knowledge or expertise on my research topic. According to Maree (2007) purposive sampling is not only limited to the selection of participants but also the settings, incidents, events and activities to be included in the data collection. To this end, purposive sampling was not applied in the selection of the research participants but in the selection of the venue; the central transit centre in Goma that hosts only those Rwandan refugees who have shown intent to go back to Rwanda.

My qualitative research design also dictates non probability sampling since the primary objective does not involve generalization. This, however, does not imply this case study to be isolated or an expectation but rather a common phenomenon in repatriation. I used convenience samples with the refugees' interviews which Terre Blanche et al (1999) describes as those who volunteer to participate in the study. After the staff in charge of the transit centre introduced me and the purpose of my research to the refugees at the centre, I approached the refugees and asked if they were

interested in taking part in the research. After explaining the objectives of the research, their role as research participants and getting their consent I proceeded with the interviews. Getting their consent was not very difficult and I thought this was made easier by the introduction by the staff at the transit centre who were already familiar to them and whom they trusted. I acknowledge that there is a risk of the refugees associating the UNHCR staff with the expectation of return but on weighing my options, I considered this as the least risky approach. After about two weeks of interviews I realized I had reached informational redundancy which was highlighted by similar emerging themes and this prompted my decision to stop the interviews. Prior to taking this decision, I interviewed refugees who had arrived on different dates to rule out the possibility of refugees sharing details of the interview with each other. This is a scenario I experienced on my second day of interviews when I realised the refugee participants had already predetermined responses to some of the questions.

Data collection

My interviews were semi-structured with open ended questions. The choice of semi-structured in-depth interviews "are open response questions to obtain data of participant meanings-how individuals conceive of their world and how they explain or make sense of the important events in their lives" (Macmillan & Schumacker, 2006:350). This is congruent with my research focus to capture refugees' experiences in relation to repatriation. Additionally, semi-structured in-depth interviews enabled me as the researcher to probe more deeply in order to gain a deeper understanding of a phenomenon or seek clarification. This is confirmed by Barriball and While (1994) assertion that probing can be a useful tool to ensure reliability of data. With the consent of the participants note-taking and a tape recorder were utilized to capture information with the key informants. According to Barriball & While (1994), audio tapes facilitate the capture of accurate information for analysis. I tested this approach with the refugees but after three interviews during which I sensed their discomfort, I stopped using the audio recording. This is an aspect that I would have overlooked had I not engaged keenness and observational skills.

During the semi-structured interviews, I established rapport which Harris (2006) agrees will result in depth and intimacy with the participants. This was done through icebreaking exercise which began by greeting them in Kinyarwanda and Swahili followed by introductions. Consistent with this notion, I applied the same rapport building behaviours outlined by Gremler et al (2008). The first is attentive behaviour which involves listening with empathy, maintaining eye contact, physical proximity and nodding to show that I am following the discussion. Imitative behaviour is the second

approach which entails the interviewer copying the behaviour of the participant, for instance, voice tone, posture etc. Thirdly, courteous behaviour was illustrated by smiling and being polite. One disadvantage of semi-structured interviews is that some of the participants got carried away hence it was my role as the researcher to refocus their attention back to the pertinent issues of the study. I did this by drawing them back to the interview questions politely trying not to sound imposing.

To ensure trustworthiness, I asked the participants to choose a venue for the interviews; this was best applied with the key informants whom I met in the privacy of their respective offices. As for the refugee participants the choice was limited within the transit centre. In addition, I sent my transcribed interviews to the key informants for verification and in addition to this they were also accessible both on phone and email in case of clarification. To this end, I shared the transcribed interviews with the key informants who read through and gave their feedback. Unfortunately, the same approach was not possible with the refugee participants mainly for two reasons; the first being their limited stay at the transit centre and second being their level of education whereby many could not read. The initial interviews were therefore very important especially with the refugee participants to evaluate the data collected, the gaps and reflect on the way forward to enhance my interview skills for better interview results. Other than the individual interviews, I spent a few hours at the screening desk manned by CNR and listened to discussions. The purpose was not really to ask questions but to familiarize myself with the role of CNR in repatriation. During this I was able to benefit from some of the questions asked by CNR staff which gave me an overview on the reasons of return. Despite this, I acknowledge the challenge of getting accurate information because the refugees may be giving responses they assume the CNR officials want to hear which could also be the same with my interviews. Nonetheless it gave me an opportunity to get the responses from a different perspective. In this approach as implied by Guba and Lincoln (1989), the use of multiple sources of data collection which in my case included prior secondary data collection, face to face interviews and observing the screening interviews by CNR promoted trustworthiness in my research.

Data analysis

In line with the qualitative nature of my research, I employed thematic analysis which included careful coding of findings according to themes. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a flexible method that involves familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing and defining themes and finally producing a report from the analysis. Daly, Kellehear et al (in Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006) add that this is a search for

themes that emerge as being important to the description of a phenomenon; these emerging themes become categories for analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) continue by stating that themes capture important aspects of the data which relate to the research questions, and represent some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set.

My preliminary analysis entailed paraphrasing each transcribed data set text by text to capture the main points by a process loosely termed as 'vertical 'analysis. To this end I made a summary of each transcript highlighting the main issues emerging from each interview for instance, various motivations for return, year of flight from Rwanda, gender, age and interesting quotes. This process was followed by 'horizontal' analysis whereby I analysed all the summarized data to establish recurring themes. It is paramount to note that while themes identify dominant patterns in the findings, I was keen to highlight those aspects that do not conform. Patton (1999) summarises this well by stating that this will be an important pointer to critical information about certain phenomena.

My research employed both deductive and inductive approaches, while document analysis and past experience informed my guiding questions, the semi-structured in-depth interviews gave flexibility for new themes to emerge leading to new knowledge and theory. Maree (2007) reiterates that qualitative analysis tries to establish how participants make meanings out of specific phenomena by analysing their perceptions, attitudes, understanding, knowledge and values. These feelings and experiences attempt to approximate respondents' construction of the phenomena. She adds that this is best achieved through inductive analysis of the data.

Limitation

As anticipated, I faced difficulties during some interviews which I attributed to the sensitive nature of the research considering the geopolitics affecting Rwandan refugees in the DRC as noted in Chapter Two of the literature review.

The introduction by CNR staff contributed tremendously in making the refugees more at ease with my presence. During the actual interviews I reiterated the purpose of the interviews by assuring them that it was purely for academic reasons. I reiterated the voluntary nature of their participation and that they could withdraw at any point in the research. Furthermore, I assured them of the confidential nature of the interview.

Language barriers were another anticipated limitation in the study. This I addressed by using an interpreter well versed in Kinyarwanda the language spoken by most of the refugees. In order to ensure that there was some degree of trust between the participant and the interpreter, I introduced the interpreter to the participant and explained to them that the interpreter was aware of the ethical concerns of the researcher and that their confidentiality would be respected in this regard. The key informants were conversant with English which meant I did not need to use a translator. I also used Swahili with other refugees especially men who were comfortable with the language. In all instances I inquired from the participants which language they were most comfortable with.

The fact that I was only interviewing Rwandan refugees at the transit centre meant I only had access to those refugees who had shown the intention to return. The challenge with this approach was the limitation of information especially on the reasons why other refugees did not choose to return to Rwanda. Unfortunately, due to the inaccessibility of the other Rwandan refugees in the Democratic Republic of Congo who are not in a camp setting, I was unable to explore this option.

Ethics

As a researcher I have the obligation to protect the rights of those participating in my study. Prior to the interviews, I clearly outlined the objectives of the research and what was expected of them as participants. Their right to withdraw from the research was also stated from the beginning with the assurance that this will not be held against them. I refrained from raising any unrealistic expectations or false promises for instance promising remuneration reward for their participation or solutions to their problems. None of the participants was paid for their participation.

An informed consent form outlining the purpose, risks and benefits involved, voluntary participation and the freedom to leave as they please as reiterated by Mackenzie, McDowell and Pittaway (2007) was shared with participants prior to the interviews. I also explained the risks and benefits of participating in the study and subsequently obtained verbal consent for their participation. Some of the risks in the research entailed limited confidentiality through the use of an interpreter; however, I made sure the interpreter understood the importance of respecting the confidentiality of participants. One benefit of the research was to highlight existing gaps as expressed by the refugees in relation to the repatriation process. After the interviews I had a debriefing session with UNHCR and CNR to share an initial summary of the interview findings as was agreed during our initial meeting. They have requested a copy of the final thesis after completion.

The confidentiality of participants was assured by conducting the interviews in private spaces with limited external interruptions. Pseudonyms were also used in reference to the respondents as a means of ensuring anonymity in reporting. Furthermore, I refrained from using personal information that could be used to identify specific participants. To this end, I also discussed with the interpreter the importance of respecting the confidentiality of participants. After discussions with the key informants both UNHCR and CNR it was agreed that only the name of the organization and not the position of the participants would be mentioned in the report. Contrary to what was stipulated in the consent form, it was agreed that the audio recordings be destroyed immediately after transcribing to ensure confidentiality. In light to this, I had to adjust the information in the consent form to comply with their request.

In recognition of my social positioning as a researcher and a former UNHCR staff member, I observed cultural sensitivity by refraining from imposing my beliefs or opinions to the participants but instead gave them time to speak freely without interruptions. I tried to avoid leading questions or drawing conclusions from the interviews but instead engaged in active listening and observation in order to capture the experiences of the refugees as narrated by them. In recognition of the sensitive nature of ethnicity in Rwanda, I did not ask any of the participants their ethnicity unless they volunteered the information.

During the course of the research I encountered cases that warranted referral. The first case was that of an unaccompanied minor who raised concerns about how long his repatriation process to Rwanda was taking. This was clarified to him by the protection officer at the camp who explained that family tracing in Rwanda had to be done before his return was approved. The other was of a woman who claimed she had left her children at home and wanted them before she was repatriated. This was also referred to the protection staff at the transit centre.

Prior to the interviews, I familiarised myself with the rules and regulations on the handling of refugees. I was also briefed on this during interviews with the gate keepers (UNHCR and CNR). Additionally, I signed a form granting me access to the refugees at the central transit centre in Goma.

Data protection and storage

The audio recordings were deleted immediately after the transcription of the interviews. These transcripts are stored in folders both in my personal password protected laptop and external hard

drive in anonymised format to protect the identity of the research participants. These transcripts will be deleted in 2016 after the completion of the research report.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Various themes emerged from my analysis of the data. Some refugees expressed the desire to see their motherland Rwanda as motivation for return while others mentioned the need to leave the DRC due to hardship as the reason for return. A combination of push and pull factors emerged as the reason for return among the interviewed Rwandan refugee men and women. For others, however, it was not really a matter of push and pull factors or a combination of both but additional feelings of apprehension when it comes to the unknown for example, being unsure of what awaits them on the other side of the border, how they will be received and if they will recover their property. As a result, several refugees applied for repatriation as a delaying tactic while they awaited certain information or events that would aid their decision. Black & Koser (1999) refer to these as hold factors. Social networking came up as a major theme throughout the interviews and as well in the various articulations of home. Another theme that was silent but notable for this silence is the role of politics in repatriation. Additionally, despite the policies promoting voluntary repatriation, the efforts of UNHCR and its counterparts, the decision to return was mostly at the micro level of the individual or household. These themes will be discussed in detail below.

Home

An important question in this section is what constitutes a home from the lens of the refugees and UNHCR as policymakers. Based on my discussions with the refugees, their notion of home is construed around the family and belonging, that is, the place where their family lives gives them a sense of belonging. This is congruent with an argument forwarded by Warner (1994) that repatriation of refugees entails more than just a territorial place, for instance, the return to the country of origin Rwanda but implies returning to a home and a community. "Home, therefore, is the association of an individual within a homogeneous group and the association of that group with a particular physical place" (Warner, 1994:162).

In some instances, the interviewed refugees would refer to both the DRC and Rwanda as home which indicates that home is not a constant concept but rather a shifting one that depends on the participants' level of attachment to the two countries. It also invokes Hall's assertion of cultural hybridity that develops through globalization. This statement implies that it is possible for an

individual to claim more than one identity at the same time. He adds, "the subject assumes different identities at different times, identities which are not unified around a coherent "self." Within us are contradictory identities pulling in different directions, so that our identifications are continuously being shifted about" (Hall, 1996:598). The following quote from one Rwandan male refugee respondent eloquently illustrates this scenario whereby he refers to DRC as home:

> "They also talk of *mutuelle* [medical insurance] in Rwanda. Here at home in DRC we call it... (Not audible)".

When I asked the refugee participant whether he had any anxieties about his return back to Rwanda, this was his response:

> "Nothing, I am used to the Congolese you see they even gave me a wife. So before we all lived in peace but after the conflicts I thought I could easily lose my life".

In the same breathe he talks of Rwanda as home:

> "You see I bought a parcel of land here then you will hear your neighbour saying this land belongs to a Rwandan. So this makes you feel… (Sighs in sadness) it's because you feel that this is not our home. That is why I said let me go to my home and die in my home".

Here, the refugee participant clearly makes reference to Rwanda as home and in the same breathe he calls the DRC home because they gave him a wife. Despite his concerns about not being accepted in the DRC and being called a Rwandan he still makes reference to his host country the DRC as home probably because his experience in the country has not always been negative. Evidently from this scenario, the country of origin Rwanda is re-emphasized as home whenever the refugee feels alienated or experiences xenophobic attitudes from the host population. This is also illustrated by another female refugee participant:

> "But most people here don't say they are Rwandans because they live well with others and even have an electoral card and can even be buried here. If life was good I would have remained here".

Again, alienation as a push factor appears to create a sense of longing for the home they left behind or in the case of those born in the DRC to the place where their kinsmen came from. The other feature that surfaces is the negative labelling associated with being Rwandan and a refugee which

automatically sets them aside as 'the other', strangers in a foreign land. This was emphasized by one male refugee:

> "I also want to return because it is my country; it is my home. I will be among my people. Here they still referred to me us as refugees, that we bring war. That doesn't make me feel good".

It is important to point out that although the participant left Rwanda when he was only six years old and so he has spent most of his adult life in the DRC, he still refers to Rwanda as home because of family links. This was best captured by his statement in Swahili, *"Mimi hapa pekee ni kama mti uwanjani"* meaning that his being alone in the DRC is like a tree in the field insinuating loneliness, the feeling of not belonging and alienation. This human need to belong is consistent with a statement put forth by Roger Scruton a conservative philosopher (in Hall 1996) that, "the condition of man [sic] requires that the individual, while he exists and acts as an autonomous being, does so only because he can first identify himself as something greater - as a member of a society, group, class, state or nation, of some arrangement to which he may not attach a name, but which he recognizes instinctively as home" (Hall, 1996:612). The same sentiment was also echoed by a 16 year-old unaccompanied minor who was born in the DRC*, "Mtoto wa nyoka ni nyoka"* which is a Swahili phrase that infers that a child of a snake is a snake. This implies that although the boy was born and raised in DRC his parents are Rwandans and therefore he considers himself Rwandan. For this particular boy home is Rwanda, a place where his parents were born and once what is evident here is that the longing for home becomes even stronger when the refugee feels alienated by the host community. Based on the responses given by the refugee participants, home appears to be synonymous with family links in Rwanda. This is in contradiction with Rogge's (1994) argument that returning to the country of origin is not synonymous with 'going home' for second generation refugees. Of course, the circumstances that led to flight will also have an influence in the different conceptualization of home by the refugees.

Furthermore, alienation seems to incite the feeling of 'otherness 'which goes hand in hand with idealization of home as a pull factor for repatriation. The feeling of non-acceptance by Rwanda refugees in DRC makes them yearn for Rwanda a place where they hope to be accepted as part of the community. Consequently, it provokes feelings of nostalgia which Zarzosa (in Ghanem, 2003) notes that a, "nostalgic notion of home is only maintained as a strategy to survive in exile, particularly during the period of rejecting the host society" (Ghanem, 2003:30). Home is then

articulated as a safe haven which is embraced whenever conflicts targeting Kinyarwanda speakers erupt in the DRC. This is aptly demonstrated by a statement made by one of the refugees:

> "You see in Rwanda they have three ethnicities that are all referred to as Rwandans there is no distinction and that really makes me happy".

This quote also suggests an idealization of a unified community in Rwanda where all Rwandans are accepted without discrimination along the lines of ethnicity and which is the same narrative supported by the government of Rwanda, "a central goal of this government has been the establishment of a unified and reconciled nation, bound under a 'Rwandan' national civic citizenship that transcends Hutu and Tutsi ethnic categories" (O'Connor, 2013:8). The need to belong becomes very important to the interviewed Rwandan refugees, "the desire to belong to one's own structured community and land is one of the most fundamental principles of human rights. To be a refugee is to be uprooted from one's own socio-cultural anchorage" (Kibreab, 1996:103). A particularly telling case was that of one of the male refugees:

> "Although I have been living well with the Congolese here I still feel like a visitor. I've never felt like a Congolese, I don't have a Congolese nationality. I am a refugee, a Rwandan and it is why I need to go home".

This was corroborated by another statement from a female refugee when asked why she wants to return to Rwanda:

> "Cultivating for others, we have no property and xenophobic attitude by Congolese saying we are Rwandans, being paid in kind (food)".

This need to belong is well captured in the following text, "the human need to belong is more than one for protection or for the means of individual development: it is also a need to be among one's own" (Warner, 1994:163).

Family ties in Rwanda and the fact that they will be identified not as refugees but as citizens of Rwanda offers them the hope of acceptance and belonging. Repatriation therefore offers this opportunity of belonging. The sense of alienation in the DRC where the respondent mentions that he feels like a visitor raises the importance of citizenship. He goes further to add, "I would want to just step on our soil and to say I am Rwandan". The participant brings out the connection between soil

[place] and identity, soil then becomes an important symbol of identity and belonging to a certain territory. Malkki illustrates, "the powerful metaphoric practices that so commonly link people to place are also deployed to understand and act upon the categorically aberrant condition of people whose claims on, and ties to, national soils are regarded as tenuous, spurious, or non-existent" (Malkki,1992:27). Kibreab (1996) sums this by reaffirms that refugees' use repatriation as a way of reasserting their national identity which implies that to some refugees, the need to belong transcends family links and focuses on the macro issue of citizenship. However, on the basis of the interviews conducted, I am reluctant to draw conclusions on this as most of the interviewed refugee participants associated home to family relations.

The idealization of home as a pull factor for repatriation is not without apprehension. The participants interviewed raised their concerns about reception by family members in Rwanda. In as much as they [family members] have asked them to return and join them in Rwanda, they wonder will they be happy to see them, will they be supportive with their integration. Housing was a common concern for most of the participants who after two decades in exile were not sure if their homes were still there, destroyed or have new occupants. Beginning from scratch and food insecurity linked to lack of cultivation land were some of the other anxieties voiced by the participants. This was reiterated by Basok, "in trying to understand when and why repatriation occurs, it is important to examine both factors related to refugees' living conditions in the country of asylum as well as those which pertain to the improvement of conditions in the country of origin" (Basok, 1990:283). In retrospect, I acknowledge the limited scope of this research with a bias on the Rwandan refugees who have taken the decision to return. Based on discussions I had with some interviewees, I can only assume that some refugees decided against repatriation to Rwanda precisely for these reasons. These hold factors as described by Black & Koser (1999) were well demonstrated by one refugee participant:

> "You see in DRC there's food but once you go back Rwanda there's starvation. You have no space to farm but here you have a place to farm and food... now if you have five children… So mostly it's the fear of starvation in Rwanda that makes others scared to return. They also say that people are arrested a lot. Once you arrive in Rwanda they arrest you".

The UNHCR articulation of home follows the policies on repatriation which stipulates that refugees can only return to their country of origin if the circumstances that prompted their flight no longer exist. Place of origin, in this case Rwanda, refers to a place and not necessarily family links and

connections which the refugees would consider home. In practice, most refugees often return to areas they previously occupied before displacement for reasons such as reclaiming the property left behind while those who left as minors or were born in exile would join family members who are already residing in Rwanda. The policy is not very clear on what home is but a common reference is to country of origin which I would argue refers to a territorial space or political entity as implied by Warner (1994). He adds, "Refugees involved in voluntary repatriation are not returning home. They are, in fact, returning to their country of origin, but no more" (Warner, 1994:170). This further echoes his argument of country of origin as a space. Article 5 of the OAU 1969 Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, the policy document that elaborates the principle of voluntary repatriation mentions country of origin, home and homeland in reference to repatriation. This policy, however, fails to elaborate the meaning of home but based on my analysis I can assume that country of origin refers to the territorial space and also a political entity, this is illustrated in the third paragraph in article 5, "the country of origin, on receiving back refugees, shall facilitate their resettlement and grant them the full rights and privileges of nationals of the country, and subject them to the same obligations" (OAU 1969 convention). Homeland on the other hand although not explicitly elaborated in the policy can be associated with both the territorial space and an attachment to one's native land. This has the implication of being uprooted from ones homeland where the nature of being uprooted links to Malkki's (1992) theorization of being rooted. To this end, "the metaphorical concept of having roots involves intimate linkages between people and place-linkages that are increasingly recognized in anthropology as areas to be denatured and explored afresh" (Malkki, 1992:24). Although the return to the country of origin, in this case Rwanda, plays a restorative function to the once uprooted population Malkki (1992) argues that it is possible to have roots in more than one place. In order to better understand UNHCR conceptualization of home, I had a follow up interview with a key informant from UNHCR who revealed that during the repatriation process, the refugees themselves choose which place in Rwanda to which they would prefer to be repatriated. This commitment to permit returnees decide on locations of destination was reaffirmed at the forty-second session of the Executive Committee in 1991.[10] Instances where the gate keepers (UNHCR and CNR) have an influence in choosing the place of return in relation to unaccompanied minors for whom family tracing has to be conducted and relatives in Rwanda contacted with the purpose obtaining their consent before the reception of the returnee.

[10] http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae68cd314.html

Social networking

Another recurring theme closely linked to home is the notion of social networks established by the refugees mostly to access information pertaining to repatriation. Pilkington & Flynn (1999) summarize three levels of networking which include; survival by following a family member, information and scouting or go and see visits to return areas and social networking linked to social capital (family and friends). During the interviews I observed that social networking was an important pull factor for repatriation. Family members in Rwanda and especially former returnees offer an important source of information trusted by most refugees. Akol (1994) reiterates this in his observation of the repatriation of Sudanese refugees in Uganda: "that the first impression of the early returnees of the general situation in the country was very important because it influenced the return of the rest of the refugees from exile" (Akol, 1994:84). The interviews suggest that having a family member in Rwanda facilitates the decision to return with the knowledge that you have someone to help ease your integration upon return. The presence of family negates the fear of the unknown and makes it easier for the refugees to decide on whether or not to return. This is captured by statements made by participants who quoted family reunification as a pull factor for return. Omata (2013) concurs that close relations like family and kinship frequently act as the most dependable source of support. This was echoed by a refugee widow:

> "You see I was living with my husband here but he died. So now I have no one to depend on and that is why I have decided to return. I was suffering here and others told me it's not a problem to return".

One physically challenged woman who was reliant on her children and husband for survival had this to add:

> "My husband died the daughter who was helping me got married and with my disability I cannot take care of myself anymore so my son called and said I should go back".

Another interesting case is that of a female participant who claims to have lost her husband and children to the ongoing inter-ethnic conflicts in DRC. She is leaving DRC because of the conflicts and also since she has no family there. She adds that she has family members in Rwanda but they do not know that she is coming. She had a baby on her back who she claims to be a gift from the forest. This euphemism is used by women who have engaged in commercial sex for survival:

> *"Nilimuokota porini, nilikuwa na njaa* (It is my baby I got from the forest)… Life is not good here, *raia mtomboki* hunted us down where we lived and I saw there was no stability. My husband is dead, my children are dead".

Another stated:

> "If I am assisted to meet my relatives I will be grateful. It will be my first time there but I will be happy to be close to my relatives who will orient and assist my integration. I have no relatives here my husband is no longer here and since I don't have many children I want to see if my relatives will welcome me if they don't huh" (sigh).

The sigh, signifies her anxiety about her reception back in Rwanda. It is worth noting that single women with one child thought they would be received more readily than their counterparts with many children. This speaks directly to the gendered nature of return. Unlike men, single refugee women have to take into consideration how many children they have and if this will be a burden for their families back in Rwanda. It would be possible that some women with more children would find it easier to remain in DRC in their estranged relationships for fear of not being accepted or supported by family members once they arrive in Rwanda. This, however, I cannot confirm with facts owing to the fact that the profile of my research respondents included only those refugees who had taken the decision to repatriate to Rwanda. Based on the interviews conducted, I can safely assume that single women and men and those women with few children are more inclined to take the decision to return compared to those with large families especially in situations where they will have to rely on relatives and friends for support upon return.

Based on the interviews, access to information on return areas is not a major difficulty. One participant mentioned that he heard on radio his uncle urging him to return to Rwanda stating that it was peaceful while most communicate often by phone with their relatives in Rwanda. Others meet individuals who have visited Rwanda and discuss the situation there. This contact is facilitated by the close proximity between Goma the capital of North Kivu province in DRC and Rwanda. Refugees have already established their own system of triangulation when it comes to accessing and evaluating formal and informal information. This is reiterated by one key informant from CNR who notes that due to this networking, the need for organized "go and see missions" to Rwanda is no longer as important as it was in the beginning of the repatriation process:

> "And what you will witness is that there are people coming from Rwanda who come on their own to look for their relatives and they give them information. We used to have go-and-see missions a while back in 2000 it was very necessary then but now with telephones someone has a relative in Kigali who asks how did you return and they talk. When you go there to give them information they look at you thinking *'we unanidanganya, mi ndungu yangu yuko pale amenielezea mambo zote!*' (Translated from Swahili; you are lying to me, my brother is there and he has told me everything!) I'm telling you this phone! Let's say they have a relative who has already returned, so that's who they currently use".

Despite this, key informants from UNHCR and CNR mentioned disseminating of information pertaining to repatriation as a major problem especially due to their inaccessibility to refugees most of whom reside in remote areas. In addition, getting the exact information from the country of origin in as much detail as someone who resides there is impossible and this is why informal channels of communication play a vital role for refugees. Conversely, the key informants and refugees agreed that access to repatriation information is not a problem; only one interviewee mentioned lack of information as his reason for not returning earlier. The only challenge here pertained to determining reliable information from rumours by the refugees and ensuring the right information reaches the refugees as was mentioned by one key participant from UNHCR:

> "Because of them (refugees) living in remote areas where we cannot necessarily go, we may conduct these sensitization campaigns through some other people and we are not very sure what message they actually pass on".

The household as a unit of decision making

As suggested by the findings, the household remains the most important unit of decision making. Indeed not everyone who decides to return comes to that decision by themselves. There are various macro and micro factors at play which contribute to this decision. The host country DRC and the country of origin Rwanda combined with repatriation policies spearheaded by UNHCR influence the refugees' decision to return. Based on the findings, however, the final decision rests at the micro level of the individual or the household. Kabreab (1996) describes the decision-making process in repatriation as a highly gendered affair. As outlined above the idealization of home vs alienation and social networks play a role in the decision on whether or not to return, this is related to the household where the individual finds himself in. It is commonly accepted in migration studies that migration is

not an individual affair, in this case, the household dictates how and who migrates where. During the field work, I observed that households have improvised their own ways of diversifying risks by using a split family strategy. This they do by sending a few family members to Rwanda to assess the situation or set up home before the rest of the family joins them.

The older participants in particular demonstrated an emotive attachment to Rwanda, as a place where they would want to be buried. This was expressed by a 60 year old man who mentioned that he was tired of the difficult and labour intensive life in DRC. This was also reiterated by a 50 year old widow who was taking care of her orphaned grandchildren; her reason for going back was because she wanted these children to have a place to stay and be surrounded by family when she dies. Once again soil becomes an important symbol of connection between people and their homeland, "Likewise, the ashes or bodies of persons who have died on foreign soil are routinely transported back to their "homelands," to the land where the genealogical tree of their ancestors grows. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust: in death, too, native or national soils are important" (Malkki, 1992:26). For the younger respondent especially those who either came to the DRC when they were very young mostly below the age of 10 or those born in the DRC, the reason for return was linked mainly to their families back in DRC and also the yearning for a place they have heard so much about but were yet to see it. This is captured by one respondent who left Rwandan as a 6 year-old, "we are also mature now and we want to see our country and not just hearsay".

Based on the interviews conducted it emerged that most married men were accompanied by their wives. Only in three instances did married men leave their wives behind; two of the cases involved Rwandan refugee men married to Congolese women. These men experienced resistance from their wives' families. In one situation however, it was a situation of negotiation between the Rwandan husband and his Congolese spouse where they agreed that the husband and one child should travel first and pave the way for the rest of the family. Most of the women I interviewed stated that the men came up with the idea of repatriation and discussed it with the family who were often in agreement. The women returning alone most of whom were married unofficially to Congolese men took the decision by themselves. In most instances the spouses were not informed of their decision because of the estranged relationship. In one particular case, a respondent stated that she pretended to be going to her sister in-law's place to evade any resistance from the husband. Two women; one travelling alone and another travelling with two children and her ailing mother mentioned that they had taken the decision to repatriate and consulted with their husbands who were in agreement with their decision. Apart from the cases of the two married women mentioned above, most of the male headed

households stated that it is the men who made the decision and consulted with their wives. As suggested here, "many gendered family relationships are not characterized simply by force or domination but rather present many instances of cooperation, mutual respect, support, and friendship" (Indra, 1999:238). Also illustrated, is some degree of negotiation and deception in the process of deciding to return to Rwanda. The single female participants who decided on their own to return were either widowed or separated from their husbands. Kibreab (1996) notes the transformation of gender roles as a result of displacement and the weakening of community cohesion.

It is worth noting that during the course of the fieldwork, I did not encounter any cases where the family was in disagreement about their decision to repatriate. This is attributed to the fact that the refugees at the transit centre had already showed their intent to return to Rwanda by the mere fact of their presence in the centre. This was reaffirmed by discussions I had with some key informants working at the transit centre who also observed that they rarely encountered cases of families who were in disagreement about the decision to return. To most women, their decision on repatriation is centred on working structures, for instance, schools for their children, health facilities and also the hope of recovering their spouses' land. Men on the other hand mostly consider their security and exploitative labour as the main reasons for repatriation. This was reaffirmed by one respondent when I inquired about the reasons for repatriation:

> "Men's issue is about security for women it's about social items like school, shelter, medical assistance, property or news of relatives who are in Rwanda. But for men it's mainly the issue of security".

Therefore, the interviewed refugee men and women may have reached the same decision to return to Rwanda but their reasons are different based on their gender roles. One telling case is that of a female participant, "what makes me want to return is because I have no land here. That is why I want to return. When I die I want to leave my children with land, the one I left in Rwanda. I just want to return my children to their father's land because he died and I am getting old". Another male participant explained that his wife did not join him during repatriation to Rwanda because she was afraid of starvation. When I probed what he meant by this, he stated:

> "She said she wanted to remain because women love food, I also see you are a woman...so you get in the house and you see the child there crying so when I see this I decide to go out

> and hangout with my fellow men at 9pm I come and sleep … It's not for herself, it is for her children and her husband".

The example above also supports the claim that women's decision is more family oriented for instant their decision will be based not only on how their return to Rwanda would benefit them as individuals but also be of benefit to their children and husband. On the other hand, refugee men's decision on whether or not to return to Rwanda tends to be individual, for instance, personal security in Rwanda and DRC or hard labour in DRC.

In summary, Children follow their parents, women their spouses and the single women try to re-establish links with their relatives in Rwanda. Children may not have much choice in the decision to return.

Refugees as rational decision makers

Although refugees are often perceived as powerless, Stein & Cuny (1994) refute this by stating that the refugees' decision on whether to flee, remain in the country of origin or return is itself an action and a choice. It is also an indication of refugees' taking control of their lives. This was well demonstrated in a discussion with one refugee participant:

> "there have been rumours people asking why do you want to go to a small farm but in the radio people who have returned say they are ok and that there are projects so I asked myself if those people were farming and keeping livestock here can they be doing it where there is no land? They must be doing it there too".

Seemingly, Rwandan refugee men often send their wives first to Rwanda in order to assess the security situation owing to the more intense security profiling of men rather than women. This implies that returning refugee men are subjected to a more thorough security screening by immigration and other government officials to confirm that they did not take part in the 1994 genocide or are not members of militia groups trying to infiltrate Rwanda. This was cited by one male refugee as follows:

> "The women return but men are scared of being arrested. You see here when you get arrested, you give them 200 and they let you go but in Rwanda they arrest you and that's it. Now this is what we scared of".

What is also apparent in the interviews is that although married couples discuss whether they want to repatriate, in most instances it is the men who initiate the idea, the women and children are often in agreement with what the man (head of the household) has decided. Single women seem to be more have more control in making their own decisions especially those with marital conflicts; only one mentioned to her estranged spouse about her departure, the rest either pretended they were going someplace to visit or did not mention it to their spouse at all. To these women repatriation offers an opportunity to rethink family structures by leaving their oppressive husbands who are often Congolese men in polygamous relationships. Home becomes a safe haven. Based on the research findings, family links back in Rwanda are an important motivator for return to these single women.

The family will also consider their socio-economic situation in deciding on return. This socio-economic status can either act as a deterrent or motivation for return. Refugees who are well established in their host country may find it difficult to transfer their assets back home and would prefer to remain. Conversely, repatriation for those of low socio-economic status may work both ways; some may find it easier to move because they have not invested in their host country while others may decide against repatriation because their families back home may be expecting some money or gifts upon their return since they have spent some decades 'abroad'. I would argue that this depends with the country of asylum, for instance, refugees coming from South Africa experience higher expectation from their families in Rwanda compared to those returning from the DRC. This is supported by the work of Kibreab (1996) with Eritrean refugees; more was expected from those returning from 'the oil rich Gulf States or the industrialized countries in the North' in comparison to those from Khartoum in Sudan. In the interviews, one male refugee noted his poor socio-economic in DRC as his reason for repatriation, "I saw here I have no land and I said let me go and see. You see when they are fighting there's no work it is difficult I had to return". A similar situation was that of recyclers; those masquerading as returning Rwandan refugees who when they receive the resettlement grant cross back to the DRC. According to a key informant from UNHCR, most of these recyclers are Congolese nationals masquerading as returning Rwandan refugees in order to benefit from the repatriation package.

The 'wait and see' attitude which Black & Koser (1999) attribute to a lack of sufficient information is another example of refugees as rational decision makers. Although most refugee respondents had access to information, many applied delaying tactics as they took time to assess the information they were receiving from various sources. My analysis on the matter is that although the refugees had prior country of origin (Rwanda) information, they would wait for additional information from what

they considered to be a trusted source either a close relatives or former refugees who were already in Rwanda. Once they have this information they try to compare with what they received from formal sources like UNHCR, CNR and the radio before they make their final decision. Refugees have also delayed their repatriation either because of school, waiting for family reconciliation in the case of estranged couples or to harvest their crops in DRC before their return to Rwanda. These hold factors further exemplify refugees as rational decision makers.

Diversifying risks was also evident with some of the refugees I spoke to. One woman stated that her children requested her to go first and assess the situation and if everything is okay, she should communicate with them so that they join her. In another case, a male participant was travelling with his young son. When I inquired where the rest of the family was he stated that they would join him later and that he had discussed and reached an agreement with his wife that the young boy should be the one to accompany him because should anything happen he can run to safety. Additionally, he was not attending school and there was a possibility that he could enrol in Rwanda. Omata (2013) cited a similar case of Liberian refugees who improvised repatriation strategies to ensure their survival; some of these included family split whereby some family members would return while others remained in Ghana while others relocated to other regions in West Africa in search of better migration opportunities. This further demonstrates the agency exercised by refugees as rational decision makers.

A wife has no ethnicity of her own

Another implicit theme in the interviews is patrilineal systems for inheritance of identity as a cultural norm among Rwandans and Congolese. Most of the single women at the transit centre at the transit single women were married (although often not legally) to Congolese men and all except one gave marital conflicts as the reason for return. When I inquired if they would have stayed if their marriage was satisfactory, most responded that they would stay in DRC. This as mentioned above was demonstrated by delaying tactics used by some of these women who explained that they were waiting to see if they would resolve their domestic issues or if the 'husband' who had supposedly abandoned her would return. One woman stated in Swahili that, *"mwanamke hana kabila"* which means the wife has no ethnicity which essentially illustrates the patriarchal nature of African cultures where the wife and children identify with the ethnicity of the husband in patrilineal societies. This was also voiced by one of the key informants, *"…mwanamke hana kabila, kabila yake ni ya bwana"* which means a woman has no ethnicity of her own but that of her husband. The implication of this in

repatriation is that the women seem to feel safer attached to a male head of household irrespective of nationality. However, when this 'protection' ceases to exist, female refugees feel that they have no alternative but to join their family members in Rwanda who may be able to fill this gap. In a separate case a male Rwandan refugee returning alone mentioned that he was married to a Congolese woman and although the wife wanted to accompany him to Rwandan her Congolese family refused to let her go saying there is food insecurity in Rwanda. It was therefore agreed that the husband should go first and pave the way for his family to join him later once he is settled. Another case that supports this theme are the instances mentioned by key informants where refugee men have followed their Rwandan spouses to the transit centre asking for their children. These men claim that the children are Congolese and should therefore remain in the DRC with their fathers as is in line with patrilineal societies. In most instances, as mentioned by key informants, UNHCR and CNR have had to attempt mediation for an amicable resolution to these family disputes. It is worth noting that I personally did not encounter such cases during the interviews at the transit centre.

The unvoiced political aspect of repatriation

Although this theme was not explicit in the interviews, the political environment surrounding the repatriation of Rwandans cannot be ignored. Repatriation is a multifaceted process influenced by social, economic and political factors. The political relationship between Rwanda and DRC including the Rwandan refugee profile in DRC adds to the delicate nature of the repatriation process. Voluntary repatriation as the only practical solution for the Rwandan refugees in DRC was reaffirmed by the key informants from UNHCR and CNR. Resettlement is not a viable option for most Rwandan refugees based on the general assumption in third countries of resettlement that Rwanda is safe for the return of refugees. Additionally, the implementation of local integration was a problem for two main reasons. Firstly, the number of Rwandan refugees in the DRC had to be established before any concrete planning for their repatriation to Rwanda, integration or alternative status in DRC could be done. Secondly, the association of Kinyarwanda speakers with conflicts in the North Kivu Province of DRC suggests a decrease in the political will to implement the local integration of Rwandan refugees. Another situation that has been captured by the media is the association of Rwandan refugees with the 1994 genocide which adds to the political nature of repatriation. As mentioned earlier by Crisp (in Black & Koser 1999), the large number of Rwandan refugees after the 1994 genocide posed a potential military and public relations threat to the Rwandan government. This has been linked by critics to the alleged vested interest of Rwanda in repatriation and ultimately the cessation of the refugee status of Rwandan refugees. The

recommendations of the modalities to implement the cessation of Rwandan refugees imply that those refugees that do not want to go back to Rwanda will fall under the purview of the hosting country such as the DRC. This explains the initial reluctance by the Government of the DRC to implement the cessation of Rwandan refugee status because they did not have the exact number of refugees in their country hence the problem of planning purposes, for instance, how many are eligible for local integration or alternative status. This was well summarised by one key informant who explained the complexity in invoking the cessation clause:

> "The challenge is that when you invoke the cessation it means that refugees lose their status unless they apply for exemption. So now the Congolese government is afraid of having in its territory thousands of Rwandan refugees simply because the neighbouring country is not implementing a policy that would encourage them to go back home. They think Rwandan government is just trying to leave the bulk of refugees in Congo. You get it?"

Another important factor emerging from the illustration above is the complication that comes about with the invocation of the cessation in relation to voluntary repatriation. An expected outcome of the cessation if not comprehensively planned is that some refugees who imagine they don't have strong exemption cases or opportunities for local integration may feel they have no choice but to return as was underlined by Harrell-Bond and Cliche-Rivard (2012). The same key informant reiterated, "We can't talk about this cessation until we count them and then we go through those who would like to be exempted from the clause and we try to find solutions and the rest will have to go back". Another key informant agreed that with invocation of the cessation, "the country with the burden now is DRC not Rwanda". It is worth noting that the UNHCR handbook on voluntary repatriation published in 1996 clearly outlines the role of the country of asylum, the country of origin and UNHCR in repatriation. These recommendations were also underscored in high level meetings organized to invoke the cessation of Rwandan refugee status.

What next after return

The need for reintegration activities emerged from the interviews. When the participants were asked about their expectations once in Rwanda, few refugees were content with just meeting their family members. Most mentioned housing as a major concern; linked to this, one woman mentioned iron sheets as one of the items she would want to be assisted with upon return. Recovery of the property they left behind during flight was another concern raised by respondents. This was mainly land that

either belonged to them individually or family land left behind by parents or spouses. This was well captured by one male refugee participant:

> "I worry a lot about recovering my land. I have no other worry because I heard there is peace. My only worry is not to recover my land".

Food insecurity was also mentioned as another concern for the returning refugees. It emerged from the interviews that some refugees were scared of going back to Rwanda because they heard that land for cultivation was not sufficient. One refugee mentioned that his Congolese wife refused to join him during repatriation to Rwanda precisely for this reason:

> "You see in DRC there's food but once you go back Rwanda there's starvation/hunger. You have no space to farm but here you have a place to farm and food... now if you have five children…"

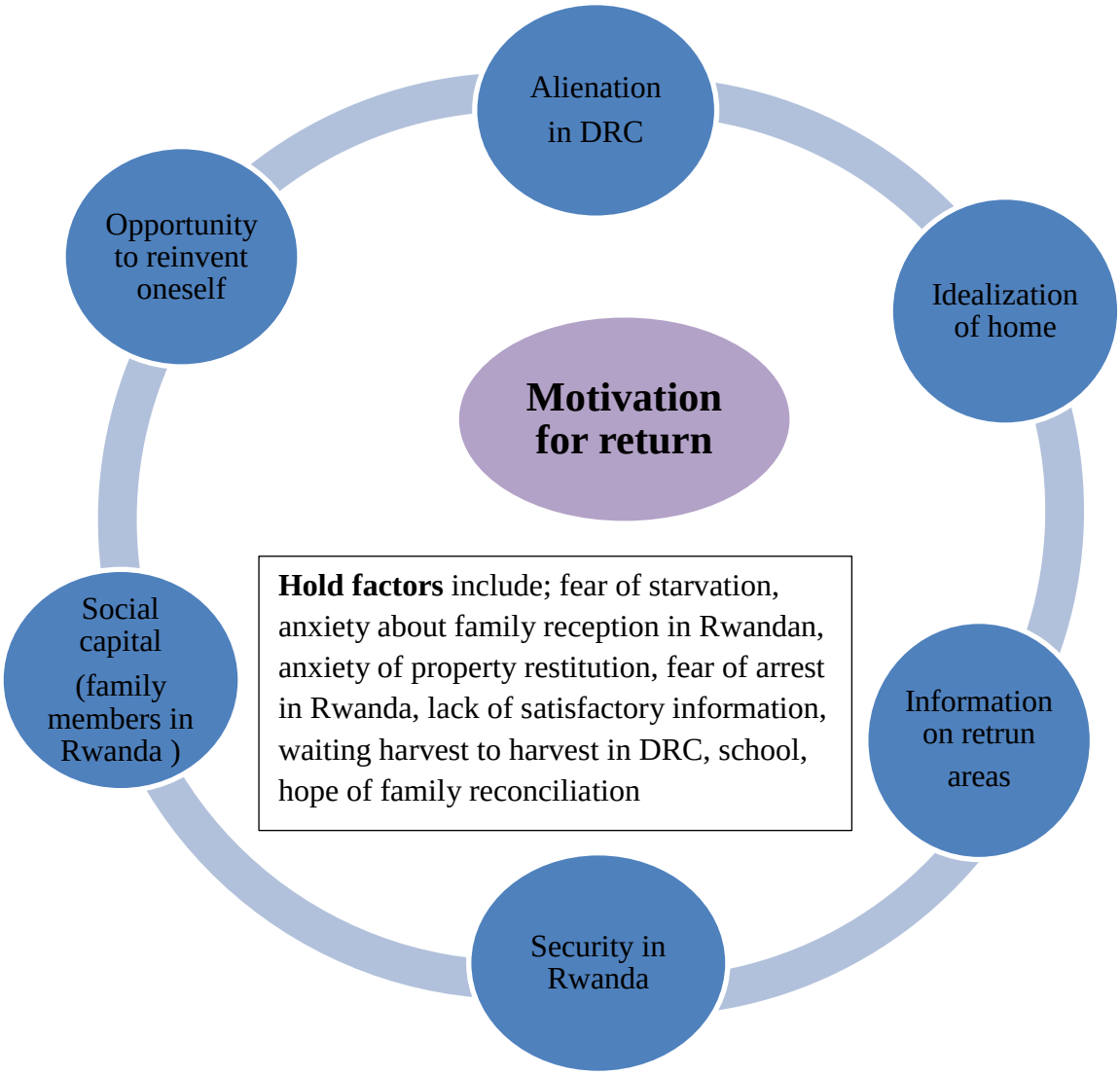
Reintegration activities included support with income generating activities e.g. business start-up grants, livestock such as cows and goats, employment opportunities and education for their children. The presence of these reintegration activities as articulated by Kibreab (1996), may limit refugees' choice of destination location in Rwanda to those areas targeted by reintegration programs, the refugees who choose to stay elsewhere will have to forfeit some of the opportunities such as health facilities, schools and water that are only available in these target areas. Integration back into the community is of paramount importance to the returnees, "After lengthy periods in exile, not only have refugees adopted coping strategies and social attitudes different from those that existed before leaving, their home areas may also have undergone very significant changes during their absence as a result of new government policies or due to other external influences. Thus repatriates may find the home society significantly changed on their return" (Rogge, 1994:39). The refugees decide to return with uncertainty about finding their relatives upon return or making friends; this was voiced by one female refugee participant when she noted that she was not sure if her parents were still alive and also by a 16 year old unaccompanied boy who was anxious about making new friends upon his return in Rwanda. This was also vividly elucidated by Warner, "refugees return, but they do not return. Refugees go back to their country of origin, but they are not the same, nor are the people in the country of origin" (Warner, 1994:172). Rogge (1994) adds that those who remain near the border adopt better coping mechanism during reintegration as they maintain constant contact with their

families; the same cannot be said for a protracted refugee caseload that are now coming back to their country of origin after some decades away in exile.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The diagram below outlines a summary of the reasons given by participants for wanting to return; they include both push and pull factors. Also illustrated in the diagram are some of the anxieties voiced by the refugees about their return, the reasons they mentioned as to why other Rwandan refugees have not taken the decision to return while others use delay strategies that similar to hold factors as defined by Allen & Morsink (1994).



Repatriation involves a multiplicity of interested actors for instance donor countries, the country of origin the country of asylum, UNHCR and others such as refugee leaders and those who act as gate keepers to the refugees. Despite this, the findings suggest that the actual decision on whether or not to return still falls to the household or individual.

Based on the findings above and the literature on repatriation, it is evident that the Cessation of Rwandan refugee status was not an issue in DRC at the time of the interviews. However, new timelines were proposed to implement the recommendation of the cessation of Rwandan refugee status. Registration of all Rwandan refugees should be completed by 31st January 2016; repatriation should be completed by 31st December 2016. Lastly, local integration and other aspects of exemptions should be finalized by 31st December 2017.

Access to information was not mentioned as an issue even in relation to distance or gender, most of the refugees interviewed had access to information on repatriation. Social networking, however, emerged as a cross cutting theme for both refugee men and women. A reliable source of information was mostly from close family members and former returnees to Rwanda. Most respondents mentioned family relations in their decision-making. Similarly the notion of home was closely intertwined with feelings of alienation in DRC which evoked the longing for Rwanda where they hoped to be accepted. Noteworthy, is the fact that home means something different to different people. The findings revealed that the refugees conceptualized home as the place where their family members are present. Interestingly, to most men, home was Rwanda; this is with the exception of one man who considers both DRC and Rwanda as home. Single women, only thought of Rwanda as home when they felt alienated by their spouses who were of Congolese origin. The same situation applied to widows who decided to repatriate to Rwanda for the purpose of reunification with their extended families.

Migration is highly gendered and evidently so is repatriation. As highlighted in the findings, it is clear that men and women put into consideration different factors when deciding on whether or not to return. Men's concern is usually individual, for instance, their personal security either in the country of asylum or once they return to their country of origin in Rwanda. Women's decision tends to be family centred whereby they will look at structures such as schools and hospitals for their children as noted by Ross-Sheriff (2006). Seemingly the decision to return involves an intersectionality of issues; gender, the negative stereotype attached to being a Rwandan refugee in DRC for example as a cause of conflicts in DRC and lastly, economic issues. A single woman, for

instance, either divorced or widowed and facing discrimination based on her refugee status in the DRC is more likely to use these push factors as a motivation for repatriation to Rwanda. In addition, a Rwandan refugee man in DRC who feels he is unable to provide for his family either because he can no longer get employment owing to his refugee or because conflicts in North Kivu have made it difficult to secure employment opportunities. These push factors may also compel the refugee take the decision to return to Rwanda. This speaks to my primary research question as to how gender identity affect the decision-making process in repatriation and highlights repatriation, just like any other form of migration as a highly gendered process.

Reintegration is also an important pull factor for the repatriation of Rwandan refugees to Rwanda. This was evident in the findings and also supported by literature; land recovery was especially a crucial expectation of return as was noted by Martin (1992). She goes on to add that economic assistance is essential for the self-sufficiency of returning refugees. This was also noted by Black & Koser (1999) who stressed that reintegration of returning refugees is necessary if their return is to be sustainable. This reintegration as discussed in chapter four goes beyond economic reliance to include re-integration and acceptance into the community. Rogge and Akol note that, "For many long-term refugees . . . repatriation does not necessarily mean 'going home'. Instead, they return to places or social environments that are different or appear to have changed, or, alternatively, where the resident population regard the returnees as strangers because of differing customs and beliefs that they have acquired" (Rogge and Akol 1989:193).

Based on the findings I can conclude that identity is not a constant and unified concept. It varies and individuals may have more than one identity at a time that do not always seem to agree as was illustrated by the refugee who articulated both Rwanda and DRC as home. This is reiterated by Malkki, "they suggest that identity is always mobile and processual, partly self-construction, partly categorization by others, partly a condition, a status, a label, a weapon, a shield, a fund of memories, et cetera. It is a creolized aggregate composed through bricolage" (Malkki, 1992:37).

Returning back to the research questions below;

- What factors influence refugees' decision to return, do these factors differ between refugee men and women?
- To what extent are decisions made in the family (family dynamics), to what extent are women engaged in the decision to remain or return to their countries of origin?

- Do policies surrounding repatriation have an impact on the decision of whether to return or not, what are the gendered responses to these policies?
- How is the concept of 'home' mobilized by the refugees and UNHCR?

The research was able to answer most of the questions above which I have tried to explain in the previous paragraphs in this chapter. The factors influencing the decision to return vary from one gender to the other although there are some common factors like social networks. Women for instance, consider working structures like schools and hospitals in the country of origin while men are more concerned with their individual security. Decisions on repatriation are mostly discussed in the household in the case of married couples. Men, however, seem to be making the initial decision before discussing it with their wives and children. Single women seem are freer to take decisions on their own. Policies are important in repatriation but evidence from the interviews suggest that if the refugees want to return, they will do so with or without any information on policies. What is of paramount importance to them is firstly the individual or family desire to return and secondly the role of social networks in giving them the information they need before taking that final decision on whether or not to go back to Rwanda. The findings revealed differing conceptualizations of home by UNHCR and the refugees. It was, however, difficult to extensively explore UNHCR's conceptualization of home based on the limited literature in the subject. This is an area that warrants more research.

One limitation of the research was an oversight to interview accompanying family members especially children to capture their views on how decisions were reached in the household. Another challenge was the limited stay of refugees at the transit centre which prevented follow up interviews. Nonetheless the interviews conducted were able to provide an insight into the refugees' repatriation process, their motivations for return, their expectations and anxieties about return.

Literature and the findings suggest that repatriation is multi-faceted and as reiterated by Muggeridge and Dona in Omata (2013) a complex interplay of social, political, personal and economic factors. It therefore, requires a holistic approach to ensure the principles of voluntary repatriation are adhered to in order to ensure a safe, dignified and sustainable voluntary return for refugees. My research study may not have made a new discovery in gender and repatriation but it has added to the limited literature in this topic. Additionally, it is timely and relevant given the current situation of Rwandan refugees and the recommendations to invoke their refugee status.

To this end, I suggest further research to focus on a longitudinal study of returnees' reintegration experiences and perceptions of home and identity after return. It will be interesting to analyse how the construction of identity and home is negotiated in relation to those who did not leave Rwanda and also in relation to changes that may have taken place in Rwanda after two decades in exile. This is corroborated by Warner, "that is, the notion of return cannot be studied only from the point of view of the refugee and her nostalgia for return; the return must also be examined from the point of view of the 'home' and those people who have remained" (Warner,1994:170).

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RESEARCH SCHEDULE

Research Plan	Timeline
Submission of the proposal	22nd June 2015
Submission of application for ethics clearance	26th June 2015
Literature review & methodology draft	July - August 2015
Data collection, transcribing and initial analysis	September 2015
Data analysis	October 2015
Data analysis and second literature review	November 2015
Report write up and editing	1st -14th December 2015
First draft submission	15th December 2015
2nd draft submission	30th February 2016
Final submission	15th March 2016

APPENDICES

Appendix I: WRITTEN INFORMED CONSENT- Key Informant

Title of research project: Gender Identities and the Decision to Return: The Case of Rwandan Refugee Men and Women in North Kivu, DRC.

Research Protocol number: H15/07/51

Student name: Taiwa Karen Koraeny

Student email: koraenyt@yahoo.com

Student contact number: +27 733576773

Supervisor name: Prof. Ingrid Palmary

Supervisor email: Ingrid.Palmary@wits.ac.za

Supervisor contact number: +27 11 717 4698

University of the Witwatersrand Research Ethics Committee (non-medical) contact:

Lucille.Mooragan@wits.ac.za

+27 11 717 1408

	Yes	No
I have read and understood the participant information		

sheet, and have had the opportunity to ask questions.		
I understand that I am free to withdraw from this study at any time with no negative consequences.		
I understand that all information will be confidential and my responses anonymised. However, I understand there are instances where absolute anonymity may not be guaranteed whereby the name of the organization may be mentioned in the report for purposes credibility.		
I give consent for my responses to be made available in an anonymised format for a variety of subsequent purposes, including for future teaching and research projects		
I give my consent to be audio taped during the interviews. I understand that after the report completion, the audio tapes will be deleted but transcribed interviews will kept for 2 years after publication, or for 6 years if no publication results. I also understand that I am free to withdraw this consent at any time.		
I consent to participate in this study.		

PARTICIPANT:

Printed Name of Participant Date

- **I herewith confirm that I have been fully informed about the study and have given consent to participate as indicated above.**

Printed Name Signature Date

Appendix II: VERBAL INFORMED CONSENT – Refugee Participants

Title of research project: Gender Identities and the Decision to Return: The Case of Rwandan Refugee Men and Women in North Kivu, DRC.

Research Protocol number: H15/07/51

Student name: Taiwa Karen Koraeny

Student email: koraenyt@yahoo.com

Student contact number: +27 733576773

Supervisor name: Prof. Ingrid Palmary

Supervisor email: Ingrid.Palmary@wits.ac.za

Supervisor contact number: +27 11 717 4698

University of the Witwatersrand Research Ethics Committee (non-medical) contact:

Email: Lucille.Mooragan@wits.ac.za

Contact number: +27 11 717 1408

Address: 1 Jan Smuts Avenue Braamfontein 2000 Johannesburg, South Africa

	Yes	No
I have read and understood the participant information sheet, and have had the opportunity to ask questions.		
I understand that I am free to withdraw from this study at any time with no negative consequences.		
I understand that all information will be confidential and my responses anonymised. It will not be possible to identify me in the final report.		
I give consent for my responses to be made available in an anonymised format for a variety of subsequent purposes, including for future teaching and research projects		
I give my consent to be audio taped during the interviews. I understand that after the tapes will be kept for 2 years after publication, or for 6 years if no publication results. I also understand that I am free to withdraw this consent at any time.		
I consent to participate in this study.		

PARTICIPANT:

Printed Name of Participant Date

Person who sought consent (research assistant)

- **I Karen Taiwa, herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the study and has given verbal consent to participate as indicated above.**

Printed Name Signature Date

Appendix III: Information Sheet – Key Informant

Title of research project: Gender Identities and the Decision to Return: The Case of Rwandan Refugee Men and Women in North Kivu, DRC.

Research Protocol number: H15/07/51

Student name: Taiwa Karen Koraeny

Student email: koraenyt@yahoo.com

Student contact number: +27 733576773

Supervisor name: Prof. Ingrid Palmary

Supervisor email: Ingrid.Palmary@wits.ac.za

Supervisor contact number: +27 11 717 4698

University of the Witwatersrand Research Ethics Committee (non-medical) contact:

Email: Lucille.Mooragan@wits.ac.za

Contact number: +27 11 717 1408

Address: 1 Jan Smuts Avenue Braamfontein 2000 Johannesburg, South Africa

Hello! My name is Karen Taiwa and I will be conducting the above mentioned research study as a requirement for the fulfilment of my Masters degree in Migration and Displacement. The aim of the study is to examine the existing gendered disparities or similarities (if any) in the decision-making process of Rwandan refugees and to explore the impact of repatriation policies and practices on return. My interest in this topic was motivated by my past experience working with returnees and the recently invoked cessation of Rwandan refugees.

I would like to invite you to take part in this study as it will help us to understand gender roles and identity, how this is negotiated by Rwandan refugee men and women in DRC and the role it plays in how the refugees make decisions on whether or not to return to their countries of origin (Rwanda). The study will also assist in explaining whether the repatriation related policies and practices have a major influence in the decision to return.

Your participation in this study will include approximately a one hour face to face interview on areas of gender and decision-making processes in relation to repatriation/return and also on policies that shape and inform the repatriation processes. For the purpose of clarity, the interview will be audio recorded but this will only be done once you grant me permission.

Please note at the present time, we do not see any risk of harm from your participation. The risks associated with participation in this study are no greater than those encountered in daily life. There are no immediate benefits to you from participating in this study. However, this study will be extremely helpful in understanding the aspect of gender in repatriation and more specifically the role gender plays (if any) in the decisions to return/repatriate.

There are no direct costs associated with this research project. However, it may take about an hour of your time from work.

The information that will be collected is purely for research purposes and to learn more on how the roles of Rwandan refugee men and women change after displacement and if this has any effect on

their decision-making processes in relation to returning back to their country Rwanda after years of asylum away in the DRC.

The information that you share with will be written up in research reports. I will NOT use any of your personal details and it will not be possible to identify you personally in any of the research reports. However, I cannot guarantee absolute anonymity whereby your position and the name of your organization may be mentioned in the final report purposes of credibility i.e. Protection Officer, UNHCR.

Your responses may be made available in an anonymised format for a variety of subsequent purposes, including for future teaching and research projects. The information will destroyed in 2016 after the completion of the research report.

Participation is completely voluntary; you are under no obligation to take part in this project. You are also under no obligation to respond to all the questions asked.

You may withdraw from this project at any stage; this will not affect you in any way.

- **Do you have any questions?**

- **Would you like to go ahead with being part of this research project?**

Appendix IV: Information Sheet – Refugee Participants (English)

Title of research project: Gender Identities and the Decision to Return: The Case of Rwandan Refugee Men and Women in North Kivu, DRC.

Research Protocol number: H15/07/51

Student name: Taiwa Karen Koraeny

Student email: koraenyt@yahoo.com

Student contact number: +27 733576773

Supervisor name: Prof. Ingrid Palmary

Supervisor email: Ingrid.Palmary@wits.ac.za

Supervisor contact number: +27 11 717 4698

University of the Witwatersrand Research Ethics Committee (non-medical) contact:

Lucille.Mooragan@wits.ac.za

Telephone contact: +27 11 717 1408

Address: 1 Jan Smuts Avenue Braamfontein 2000 Johannesburg, South Africa

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Hello! My name is Karen Taiwa and I will be conducting this research study as a requirement for the fulfilment of my Masters degree. The aim of the study is to examine the existing differences and similarities on Rwandan refugee men's and women's decision to return to Rwanda. The study will explore the impact of repatriation policies and practices on the return of Rwandan refugees to their country. My interest in this topic was motivated by my past experience working with returnees and the recently invoked cessation of Rwandan refugees.

I would like to invite you to take part in this study, your experiences will help to the role of men and women in making decisions both at home and in relation to the return back to Rwanda. Your experiences will also help me to what you consider as home and how this influences your choice on return.

Your participation in this study will include approximately a one hour face to face interview on areas of gender and decision-making processes in relation to repatriation and how your roles have transformed (if at all) when you were in Rwanda and now that you are in DRC and if these changes (if any) has an influence in how make decisions in the household. I will be taking notes as we discuss and my colleague (the interpreter) will assist to translate the interview.

As a researcher I am aware the study will involve asking sensitive questions on thoughts of home which may evoke emotions of past traumatic experiences suffered during flight, being away from Rwanda for so long and anxieties on what to expect when you return home. Questions or anxieties on repatriation will be referred to the UNHCR staff in charge of repatriation who will furnish them with the needed information. I will accompany those experiencing trauma to *Actions et Interventions pour le Développement et l'Encadrement Social* (AIDES), the NGO in charge of psychosocial support at the transit centre.

There are no immediate benefits to you from participating in this study. However, this study will be extremely helpful in understanding the aspect of gender in repatriation and more specifically the role gender plays (if any) in the decisions to return.

There are no direct costs associated with this research project. However, it may take about an hour of your time from your daily activities.

The information that will be collected is purely for research purposes and to learn more about the role of gender in the decision to repatriate and to also understand how the roles of refugee men and women change after displacement and if has any effect on their decision-making processes on returning back to Rwanda.

The information that you share with me will be written up in research reports. I will NOT use any of your personal details and it will not be possible to identify you personally in any of the research reports. Confidentiality and anonymity will be assured by the use of pseudonyms to protect your identity. Your names will not be indicated anywhere in the questionnaires or the final report. All identifying information will be stored electronically in a password protected computer only accessible by the researcher; this will be delated in February 2016 after the completion of the study.

Your responses may be made available in an anonymised format for a variety of subsequent purposes, including for future teaching and research projects.

Participation is completely voluntary; you are under no obligation to take part in this project. You are also under no obligation to respond to all the questions asked.

You may withdraw from this project at any stage; this will not affect you in any way.

- **Do you have any questions?**

- **Would you like to go ahead with being part of this research project?**

Appendix V: Refugee Participants (translated to Kinyarwanda)

Izinary'umunshingaw'ubushakashatsi:Irangamimerererishingiyekugitsinan'icyemezocyoGutaha: Urugerorwimpunziz'abanyarwandaabagabon'abagorebari muri kivuy'amajyaruguru,RepuburikaIharaniraDemokarasiya Congo.

Research Protocol number: H15/07/51

Student name: Taiwa Karen Koraeny

Student email: koraenyt@yahoo.com

Student contact number: +27 733576773

Supervisor name: Prof. Ingrid Palmary

Supervisor email: Ingrid.Palmary@wits.ac.za

Supervisor contact number: +27 11 717 4698

University of the Witwatersrand Research Ethics Committee (non-medical) contact:

Email: Lucille.Mooragan@wits.ac.za

Telephone contact: +27 11 717 1408

Address: 1 Jan Smuts Avenue Braamfontein 2000 Johannesburg, South Africa

Muraho, nitwa Karen Taiwa nteganyagukoraubushakashatsinkukombisabwa mu rwegorwogusozaicyicirocyakabiricyakaminuza.Integonukwigaitandukaniron'ihurirok'umpunziz'aba nyarwandaabagabon'abagore mu rwegorwogufataicyemezocyogutaha mu Rwanda. Icyigwakizigakungarukagahundandetseigikorwacyogutahakw'impunziz'abanyarwanda mu gihugucyabo. Nashishikajwen'ubunararibonyenagize mu bihebyahisenkoranan'abatahutsendetsen'icyemezogiherutsecyogusesa/gukurahoubuhunzikumpunziz 'abanyarwanda.

Nifuzagakubasabakomwaba muri ububushakashatsi,ubunararibonyebwanyuburadushashagusobanukirauruharen'umugabon'umugore mugufataibyemezo mu rugondetse no mubirebana no gutaha mu Rwanda.Ubunararibonyebwanyunanonebuzamfashagusobanukirwanezaahomwumvakoiwanyunubur yobishiboragukurirauruhare mu rwegorwoguhitamogutaha

Uruharerwanyu muri iyinyigobiratwaraigihekinganan'isahaimwetuganiraamasokumaso mu ibazwak'uburinganirendetse no mugufataibyemezokubijyanye no kwiteguragutaha,ukouruharerwanyurwarirumezemukire mu Rwanda ndetsenukoubumumeze muri RepiburikaIharaniraDemokarasiya Congo nibaizimpindukazabazarabafashijemugufataicyemezo mu rugorwanyu.Ndabanandikakandiuyumugenziwanjye araba amfashagusemura.

Nk'umushakashatsindabizinezakoibibazombazakubijyanyen'iwanyubishoborakubateraamaranagam utimacyangwaihungabanabitewen'ubuzimamutaribwizamwanyuzemomuhunga,kubamumazeigihekin inimutari mu Rwanda ndetsen'impungengemwabamuteganyaigihemugezeiwanyu. Ibibazon'impungengekubijyanye no gutahukabizashyikirizwaabakozib'Umuryangow'abibumbyewitakuMpunzibashinzwegucyuraImpunzi nabobakazabyitahobashingiyekubyasabwae.Ndabananamwembafashaigihemwagiraihungabanakuge rakuri AIDES umuryangoushinzweiby'imiberehomwizan'ihungabanahano mu nkambi.

Ntanyunguifatika aka kanyanyumay'ubububushakashatsi.Arikoibzafashagusobanukirwauruharerw'uburinganiren'akamarok abwo mu gufataibyemezo muri gahundayogutaha.Ntagihembogitangwa muri

ububushakashatsiarikobishoboragutwaraumwanyamutounganan'isaha muri gahundazanyuzaburimunsi.

Amakurutuzakusanyaazabaariy'ubushakashatsigusandetse no gusobanukirwauruharerw'uburinganire mu cyemezocyogutahandetse no gusobanukirauruharerw'impuziz'abagabon'abagorenyumayoguhungukandinibabyaragizeingaruka mu gufataicyemezocyogusubira mu Rwanda.

Amakurumumpayeazandikwa muri raporoy'ubushakashatsi.Ntabwozakoreshaimyirondorondetsentibizashobokakumenyaumuntu mu buryoubwoaribwobwosehifashishijweraporoy'ububushakashatsi.Ibanga no….bizateganijwekukohazakoreshaimvugoitaziguye muri raporoy'ubushakashatsi.Amakuruyarangaumuntuazabikwa mu buryobw'ikoranabuhangahakoreshapasuwadekurimudasobwaikabayafungurwan'umushakashatsiwe nyine, ibibikazasibwa mu kwezikwaGashyantare 2016 arukoamashuriasozwe. Ibisubizobyanyubikababatangwa mu buryobutaziguyeigihebyababikeneweyabaarimukwifashishwa mu nyigishoz'ejohazazacyangwa mu rurigahunday'ubundibushakashatsi.

Kuba muri ikigikorwanikubushakentabwouhatiwekuba muri uyumushinga.Ntabwokandiariitegekogusubizaibibazobyosebibajijwe.

Ushoborakurekauyumushingaigiheicyoaricyocyosentabwobizagiraingarukakuriwowe.

- **Wabaufiteikibazo?**
- **Wabawifuzakubaumwemubitabirauyumushingaw'ubushakashatsi?**

Appendix VI: Key Informant -Semi Structured In-depth Interview

Name of researcher: Karen Taiwa

Institution: University of Witwatersrand

Participant: UNHCR, CNR

Research Topic: **Gender identities and the decision to return: The case of Rwandan refugee men and women in North Kivu, DRC**

The discussions will start with brief introductions and going through the information sheet and the consent form.

1. What is the meaning of voluntary repatriation?
2. Are there any challenges in the implementation of the repatriation process?
3. What does the cessation of refugees entail? What does this mean for the Rwandan refugees?
4. How many Rwandan refugees have repatriated since the invocation of the cessation clause? Please tell me more
5. Is the return of refugees facilitated by your agency? Please explain how.
6. (If yes to Q. 5), Do you think this assistance has an influence in their decision to return?
7. What other important factors have to be considered before repatriation is facilitated?
8. In your professional opinion what are the main motivations for return?
9. Are these motivations different for Rwandan refugee men and women?
10. Are there instances where family members are in disagreement on return? If yes, how is this addressed?
11. How is the country of origin information obtained?
12. How is information on repatriation disseminated?
13. Are there any challenges experienced in information dissemination?
14. How is gender equality ensured in the access to this information?
15. What are the different policies supporting repatriation? Please explain
16. Are there any challenges in the implementation of these policies? Please explain
17. What is done in a situation where families are in disagreement on the decision to return?
18. Is there any other information you may like to add?
19. Do you have any questions/clarification?

Thank you very much for your participation.

Appendix VII: Refugee Participants- Semi Structured In-depth Interviews

Name of researcher: Karen Taiwa

Institution: University of Witwatersrand

Participants: Rwandan refugees

Research Topic: **Gender identities and the decision to return: The case of Rwandan refugee men and women in North Kivu, DRC.**

The discussions will start with brief introductions and going through the information sheet and the consent form. The participants will be given time to state any expectations of the interview which the researcher will respond to. Basic house rules will be agreed upon.

1. General repatriation perception by the refugees, what do they understand by voluntary repatriation?
2. Have you received any information on repatriation?
3. How and where did you access the information?
4. In your opinion, was it useful?
5. What are the challenges associated with accessing information on repatriation, what are the strengths?
6. What do you think should be done to make the information strategy more comprehensive and helpful?
7. What are your fears on repatriation?
8. What factors would you take into consideration in your decision to return?
9. Do you think the motivations for return are different for men and women? Please explain.
10. What else would you like to say about repatriation?
11. Do you know what they mean by cessation clause? Please tell me more?
12. Has any member of your family voluntary returned to Rwanda? What were their motivations?
13. When you think of home what comes to mind?
14. What kind of activities are you engaged in the household, what about your wife/father/ husband/mother?
15. Have these activities changed since you fled to DRC, how?

16. When you think of home what comes to mind?
17. What kind of activities are you engaged in the household, what about your wife/father/ husband/mother?
18. Have these activities changed since you fled to DRC, how?
19. Do you have any questions or clarifications?
20. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you very much for your participation.

Appendix VIII: Ethics Clearance Certificate

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Taiwa

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: H15/07/51**
PROJECT TITLE	Gender identities and the decision to return: The case of Rwandan refugee men and women in North Kivu, DRC
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Ms K Taiwa
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	Social Sciences/
DATE CONSIDERED	24 July 2015
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved unconditionally
EXPIRY DATE	15 September 2018

DATE 16 September 2015 **CHAIRPERSON** _____
(Professor J Knight)

cc: Supervisor : Professor I Palmary

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10005, 10th Floor, Senate House, University.

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to completion of a yearly progress report.**

_____ _____/_____/_____
Signature **Date**

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES