Finding home far away from home: place attachment, place-identity, belonging and resettlement among African-Australians in Hobart

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Environmental Management, School of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Tasmania

Hobart, March 2009

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any tertiary institution, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Signed

Date - 02 March 2009

Abstract

This thesis explores the resettlement experiences of former African refugees in Hobart. It provides insight into their lived experiences and conceptualises displacement, place attachment, identity, belonging, place making and resettlement in the life of a refugee. It argues that current discourse on refugees' resettlement in popular media, academia and among host communities lacks veracity, and offers an alternative view to enrich current knowledge and encourage further research and debate. In this study 26 people from five countries of origin (Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone and Sudan) shared their life experiences in focus group discussions and interviews. Refugee theories and literature in resettlement, place attachment, place identity, belonging and resettlement were also reviewed. To develop an account of the lived experiences of refugees and understanding of the ways in which they create places, negotiate identity and belonging in the resettlement process, phenomenology and discourse analysis are used.

The refugee status of African refugees is primarily caused by armed conflict. Singling out one cause is however problematic. The situation is far more complex and the interplay of socio-economic, political and environmental factors is evident. The thesis offers a framework to understand the various socio-economic, political and environmental situations that create refugee situations. The nature of forced displacement as an immediate outcome of the refugee situation is also complex; it is both multidirectional and multidimensional. Displacement as a phenomenon invokes emotional place attachment, and the creation and recreation of places and identities. Participants' responses and observations show that the nature of forced displacement among African refugees creates fluidity and multiplicity in identity and belonging for young people.

It can be argued that the outcome of resettlement is highly influenced by past and present social and emotional experiences. Settlers see the success of their settlement in relation to their social participation and interaction. The existence of a clear

connection of past and present social and emotional experiences to resettlement and belonging is an important insight. It unsettles established resettlement planning practices which are mainly based on practical resettlement, and calls for an inclusion of the settlers' perspectives, which in the case of African refugees in Hobart includes the central importance of social, cultural and emotional factors as key to resettlement and belonging. This study is significant in providing a platform for further research and debate by highlighting alternative arguments in relation to attitude towards refugees, identity, belonging and resettlement. It also provides insight to the lived experiences of African refugees in Hobart, which are important for social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists, and others working with the resettlement of refugees.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my supervisor, Associate Professor Elaine Stratford, whose suggestions and comments provided me with insights that shape the research and whose academic rigour and commitment enabled me to see the thesis through.

I wish to thank the School of Geography and Environmental studies who accommodated my needs as a student working full-time and studying full-time particularly during the first year of my study. I particularly thank Dr Michael Lockwood for his support and wise counsel. I also thank other staff in the school for their support and cooperation.

I am grateful to the Migrant Resource Centre (Southern Tasmania) Inc. in general and Cedric Manen in particular who supported me throughout the study. My appreciation and thanks also goes to Ann Hughes who generously invested time reading the chapters and gave valuable suggestions and editorial support.

This thesis could not have been written without the support of many fellow African Humanitarian entrants in Hobart. They have given their time and generously shared their life experiences. I value their support in my work at the Migrant Resource Centre in Hobart and the field work for this study.

Finally I thank my family – my beloved wife Tsige and Daughters Tsionawit, Yeabsira and Yididya and my brother Girmay for their support and understanding during the last two years. This thesis is a testament to their encouragement, love and forbearance.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

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List of Acronyms

AMEP   Adult Migrant English Programme

CIA   Central Intelligence Agency

CPA   Comprehensive Peace Plan

DIAC   Department of Immigration and Citizenship

DIMA   Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs

DR Congo   Democratic Republic of Congo

HREC   Human Research Ethics Committee

ICG   International Crisis Group

IDP   Internally Displaced People

IHHS   Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Scheme

IRC   International Rescue Committee

MRC   Migrant Resource Centre

SGP   Settlement Grant Program

SPLA   Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army

TCK   Three Culture Kids

UN   United Nations

UNHCR   United Nations High Commission for Refugees

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

I never thought that I would live outside my country, let alone in Hobart – a city located far away from my homeland. I grew up in northern Ethiopia and my extended family members still live there. I still feel connected and have strong attachment to my home place and its people. In fact, I never heard the name Hobart until few years ago, when I was asked to go there and escort a group of 24 Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees from a refugee camp in Sudan in December 2004. At the time, I spent few days in Hobart and returned to Nairobi, Kenya where my family and I were living as refugees'. Two years later my family and I arrived in Hobart as humanitarian entrants to start life all over again. Soon I found myself studying full-time and working full-time, not to mention becoming "dad's taxi" - driving my daughters to different sporting activities. My urge to study was driven by a strong desire to continue where I had been forced to leave off. In 1997 I wanted to work on a research PhD - a comparative study of the socio-economic benefits and environmental costs of rearing goats in the highlands of Tigray, northern Ethiopia. But delay in the release of funds and subsequent border conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia changed the whole situation. A few years later I ended up in the city of Nairobi, where I lived for three years; this led to immigration to Tasmania.

When I joined the School of Geography and Environmental Studies, my motivation was perhaps different from what one would expect. I was highly driven by the urge

to compensate for what I thought was delayed and even lost through my refugee experience. But I had seemingly conflicting priorities. On the one hand, I wanted the best for my family and thus had to work full time. On the other hand, I wanted to study. I decided to do both. My choice of study was environmental management, a choice influenced by my experience working in conservation projects in the degraded and rugged terrains of northern Ethiopia. There, the issue of environmental degradation is not rhetoric for debate; it is rather an observable fact that requires practical solutions. The area where I grew up is surrounded by beautiful chains of rugged mountains which are bare. It has been a while since much of their vegetation cover was lost. The mountains crave for the rains, hoping that with the help of rain they may be able to interweave a cover for themselves. Rainfall, however, comes at a heavy cost – the torrential rains mercilessly wash away much of the fertile soil cover of the mountains and erode their capacity to knit that green and strong fabric to save them from further attack. Once barren, the mountains are attacked again by wind and rain, and soon lose their ability to host rich fauna and flora and support the people who made these mountains their home for thousands of years.

Environmental degradation is a matter of life and death in these parts of Ethiopia. People are vulnerable to complex and recurrent drought which often leads to famine. The problem is often described as an outcome of both socio–economic factors and environmental degradation, and hence I wanted to learn more about environmental management and do something about this particular problem. Having gained some knowledge in environmental management through the four units I took, as part of the degree, however, I felt obliged to do something to capture the knowledge gained

through my own lived experience and that of those who shared their plight and journey with me. When I travel to refugee camps and cities in Kenya, Uganda and Sudan, people confide in me knowing that I am one of them. They share their life stories, the good, the bad and the ugly. These were some of the reasons I was interested in studying the correlation between place attachment and resettlement among African communities in Hobart.

Key terms, aims, objectives and methodological considerations

I have used several terms in the write-up which are defined in the chapters in which they are introduced or in the literature review. It is, however, beneficial to define two terms here: namely home and refugee. These terms – home and refugee – are used from the outset in this introductory chapter and will be used repeatedly in the body of the thesis. The term *home* could be defined differently in different disciplines. However, I refer to 'home' as a metaphor to capture both attachment and relationships to places, people and culture – to mean being in one's own world (Manzo 2003:67). The term *refugee* refers to people who are of concern to the United Nations Higher Commission for Refugees (UNHCR); that includes persons recognised under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, its 1967 Protocol, the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, those recognised in accordance with the UNHCR Statute, persons granted complementary forms of protection and persons granted temporary protection (UNHCR 2007). The core definition derives from Article 1, A (2) of the

1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which defined a refugee as a person who

> owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (UN 1951).

I chose to focus my research on African humanitarian entrants to Australia who are living in Hobart, and this *choice* is justified on three grounds. Firstly, as an African refugee I have the lived experience and know firsthand what it means to be categorised as such. Secondly, through my work both with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in Nairobi (2004-2006) and the Migrant Resource Centre in Hobart (2006-2008), I have worked with African refugees in refugee camps and cities in countries of asylum and in Australia. I have travelled to refugee camps in Kenya, Sudan and Uganda and trained over 2000 refugees in the camps and cities to prepare them for their lives in Australia, Canada and the USA. I have also supported several hundred humanitarian entrants in Hobart through the Settlement Grants Program. These and my own lived experience have given me an in-depth knowledge of both the institutions that work with refugees and the lived experiences of refugees. Over the years, I have heard stories of many African refugees (from ten countries of origin) and shared their concerns. Thirdly the majority of humanitarian entrants to Tasmania in the last 10 years have been Africans (DIAC 2008), but little has been done in terms of participatory research to understand their place-based

experiences. This thesis seeks to make a significant contribution to addressing that gap.

The first *objective* of the research is to explore the resettlement experiences of humanitarian entrants of African descent residing in Greater Hobart. I describe the pre-immigration and resettlement experiences of five refugee community groups (identified by countries of origin). That work highlights both the context in which these people were forced to leave their homes and the situation in which they found themselves in countries of asylum where they spent from two to 30 years of their lives as refugees. By providing a contextualised account of lived experiences "there" in the country of origin and "here" in the country of resettlement and "in between" in the country of asylum, I seek to enrich the current knowledge base and encourage further research and debate. As the study is limited in scope I intentionally steer away from giving generic policy recommendations that are characteristic of many of the studies conducted on refugees in Tasmania. Rather, I emphasize the particular, embodied and experiential; these are often neglected in policy to its detriment.

The second *objective* is to conceptualise the relationship between place attachment, identity and resettlement in order to better understand that relationship in broad terms and in relation to the specific cases with which I am concerned. Resettlement is a journey of displacement and emplacement; as such it brings the issues of place attachment, place making, identity and belonging in to play. Therefore, I conceptualise and contextualise the concepts of displacement, place making, place-identity, and belonging in light of place attachment and resettlement and provide an

alternative discourse to encourage further debate in academic circles, the media and the host community.

In light of these aims and objectives, I propose that refugees' attitudes are shaped by their interactions with the world around them, be it their attachment to their homeland, the situation that forced them out of their homeland, the institutions that work with them in the countries of asylum or resettlement, or the host communities and their institutions. Epistemologically I make the point that the "lived experiences" of refugees are knowable. Deploying phenomenology, discourse analysis and memory work I seek to analyse these lived experiences of emotional place attachment, forced displacement, shift in identity, place-making, resettlement, belonging and other key phenomena in the life of a refugee. To meet these goals, I employ qualitative methods of investigation.

To answer the main questions that are subsumed in the two objectives of the research, I asked several questions that include:

- What are the main causes of displacement of the African refugees?

- How do they (African refugees) perceive their displacement?

- Is it different from how members of the host community might have perceived?

- How do African refugees perceive their resettlement process?

- How do Africans in Hobart perceive their attachment to their country of origin?

- Are there differences between and among the different African communities in the way they perceive their place attachment and identity?

- Does staying in a country of asylum affect these perceptions? How?

- How does past emotional links to places and former home country and past identity affect the ability to make new places and develop a new identity and belonging?

- How does 'lived experience' in and attachment to a country of asylum affect this process differently?

- How does past place attachment and identity affect the place making process and development of current identity in the resettlement of Africans in Hobart?

- How does the notion of place attachment, identity and belonging change as refugees are displaced from place of origin to place of asylum and transit from place of asylum to their place of resettlement?

A review of the literature on migration and refugee theories, sociology, emotional geography, environmental psychology, social psychology and cultural and human geography was carried out to clarify contestations around the key concepts which inform the research, namely place attachment, place - identity, belonging and resettlement. This task was not, however, an easy one. For one thing, my training and background was in animal sciences and this meant that I needed to cover a substantial territory to grasp key concepts in social sciences to ground my work in the appropriate theories before I could start to form relevant questions. Further, the interdisciplinary nature of the thesis made the task quite difficult, knowing where and when to cease the search for materials being a key challenge in this regard.

Ultimately, the selection of literature was guided by certain key concepts including refugee theory, place attachment and identity, and resettlement and belonging. Much

of the data collection and analysis and the write-up is also structured around these key concepts to ensure synthesis of general and particular insights. For practical reasons also, given the scope of the research it is impossible to cover all theoretical work around migration and refugee resettlement in the last three decades in a study which comprises only part of a Masters Degree by course work.

In order to undertake the collection of primary data, I gained ethics approval from the University of Tasmania Human Research Ethics Committee and have adhered to ethical guidelines in research as outlined in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* and other instruments (Australian Government 2007) (Appendix 1). I followed a strict research protocol to obtain consent from participants, to ensure their privacy and confidentiality of the research data. This process was not, however, a smooth one. Firstly, the cross-cultural and multi-lingual characteristics of the participants in the study made the ethics approval process lengthy; it delayed the project by more than six weeks. Secondly, the whole process of seeking informed consent brought unexpected suspicion because of previous experiences of some of the participants. Members of the community groups I approached argued that even though they signed consent forms for other researchers and were told that they would be asked to comment on the written material generated as interview transcripts, for example, no one went back to them. There is a clear fatigue among the groups I interviewed. I suggest that the Ethics Committee follow-up whether feedback is given to participants after the study is complete.

Initially data were collected through both focus group discussions and individual in-depth interviews; concurrently the review of relevant literature on refugee theory, place attachment, identity, belonging and resettlement continued to inform both the field work and analysis of the data.

Given my professional work with refugees, it was already apparent to me that there are noticeable differences in the lived experiences of African humanitarian entrants in Hobart between communities (by country of origin) and even among individuals in families (Kunz 1981). Thus, both focus group discussions and in-depth individual interviews were employed to capture commonalities and differences in experiences. But given the limited time and resources, only five focus groups were identified from the Burundian, Congolese, Ethiopian, Sierra Leonean and Sudanese communities (Monk and Bedford 2005) (Figure 1.1).
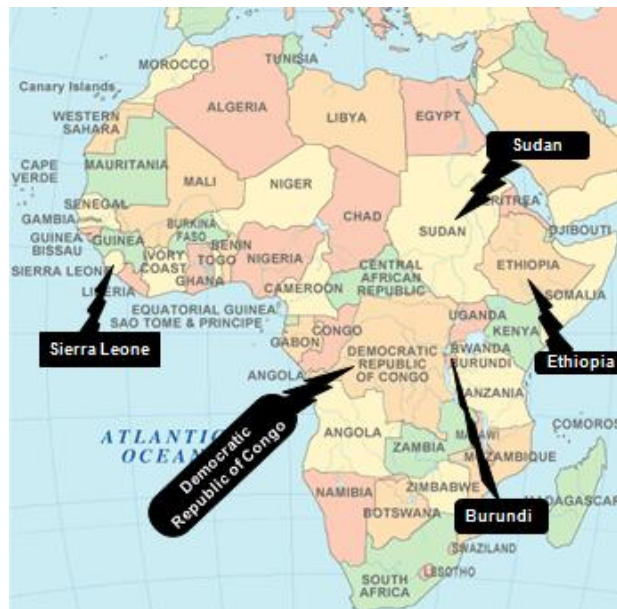
Figure 1.1 Five African nations represented in the thesis

Source: University of Texas (2008)

These communities were selected from among the possible nine communities because the rest of the communities, namely Eritrean, Liberian, Rwandan and Somali communities, are few in number (one or two families on average). Each focus group constituted four to seven members, and snowball sampling techniques were used to recruit individuals to the focus groups. Individuals were contacted and asked if they were interested to participate in the research. Once agreement was secured, they were asked if they could also nominate others who might join them for the focus group discussions (Ruane 2005). During the first focus group discussion, I noticed that the men turned up and that women did not attend. I noted other limitations of the method: in terms of ensuring representation and avoiding the exclusion of "loners" as Ruane (2005) calls them; thus individuals who might not have been asked to come along by those contacted initially were identified and invited separately. This process worked quite well, particularly with three community groups, namely the Congolese, Ethiopians and Sierra Leoneans.

In the initial design of the project, I proposed to select individuals for in-depth interviews from participants in the focus group discussions. In practice, this strategy worked only with one focus group. It did not work well with other community participants mainly due to the existence of other commitments. Some of those who were approached for interview were working while others were studying, thus committing to a one to two hour interview was difficult. Others did agree when asked first, but never turned up for the interview. For these reasons I had to arrange interview with others who did not participate in the focus group discussions.

Another challenge during the data collection was the difficulty to bring a focus group of one community together. Due to internal community problems and logistics, it became impractical to hold a focus group discussion with one community. Hence an alternative strategy to interview several individuals was designed and data were collected from individuals and included in the analysis.

Overall the study involved the participation of 26 individuals both in focus group discussions and individual interviews from the five countries of origin mentioned above. Three focus group discussions (Burundian, Sierra Leonean and Sudanese) were conducted in English as all the participants had a reasonable mastery of the language. One was conducted in Amharic (Ethiopian), while another one (Congolese) was conducted both in English and Swahili. To ensure the validity of my data, semi-structured interview and focus group discussion questions were designed in light of the project research aim and objectives (Mason 2002) (Appendix 2).

The semi-structured questions both for individual interviews and focus group discussions were designed to generate data on major themes including forced displacement, identity, place attachment, place making and resettlement. Care was taken to avoid jargon and uncommon constructs by using simple questions mirroring the logical flow of the phenomenon from displacement to life as a refugee and life now. This strategy allowed participants to share their experiences easily. Participants were asked to reflect on their lives as refugees and on how they felt at the time. They were asked to comment about how they feel about their countries of origin, asylum

and resettlement "now" to highlight attachment to places. In addition some questions were asked to find out the intentions of participants in the future. Focus group discussions were mainly focused on collective experiences while interviews were focused on individual experiences.

I recorded all the interviews and focus group discussions and transcribed the interviews in full, focusing on recording key points from the focus group discussions (Cameron 2005). The abridged transcriptions of the focus group discussions were read to group members who had asked for such feedback, and full transcriptions of interviews were read to individual interview participants. This exercise was valuable both in validating data collected and in the provision of additional information and insights, which were recorded separately and included in the overall analysis of the data.

Tools from phenomenology and discourse analysis were used to analyse the qualitative data collected. Phenomenology enables the analysis of various lived experiences ranging from perception, memory, emotion, desire and embodied action, to social activity, including linguistic activity. It also assists in developing a complex account of temporal awareness, spatial awareness, awareness of one's own experiences, self-awareness, purpose or intention in action, awareness of other persons, social interaction, and everyday activity in the molar environment as people negotiate identities and in the process of place making – resettlement (Campbell 2008).

Phenomenology enables me to describe my own and others' lived experiences. To use Merleau-Ponty's words, it

> offers an account of space, time and the world as we 'live' them. It tries to give a direct description of our experience as it is, without taking account of its psychological origin and causal explanations which the scientist, the historian or the sociologist may be able to provide (Merleau-Ponty 2002:xii).

As van Manen (1990:27) points out, phenomenology also offers both the "description of the ... quality of lived experience and the description of meaning of the expressions of lived experience … [and furthermore] a good phenomenological description is collected by lived experience and recollects lived experience, is validated by lived experience and it validates lived experience". This observation does not, however, mean that phenomenology is the only way to explore and give meaning to the lived experiences of refugees.

Discourse analysis was employed to analyse some embedded meaning in the focus group discussion, interview and the limited media and press reports cited, to combine the discursive analysis of meaning with the analysis of psycho-social and socio-political practices which emerge as social constructs (Hajer 2005, Leudar *et al.* 2008). It was also employed to investigate how different discourses which emanate from past and present emotional and physical experiences are formed and disseminated (Baker *et al.* 2008, Waitt 2005).

To ensure the rigour of the research, I presented both my research proposal and some of the findings on four occasions to audiences at the University of Tasmania and

outside the University to groups of students, academics and practitioners working with humanitarian entrants in Hobart. My regular fortnightly meetings with my supervisor were useful and instrumental in ongoing evaluation of the method and methodology, and in testing the line of thinking I followed. These processes were also instrumental in cultivating critical reflectivity during the study period, and in shaping the thesis.

Some explanation of my position or place as research is warranted here as well. As a researcher I disclaim the status of an outsider and external observer, as a person who has experienced the life of a refugee first hand, I recognise myself as an integral part of the research process. I accept that subjectivity and objectivity can mutually coexist as opposed to the positivist emphasis on objectivity, neutrality, measurement and validity.

Phenomenology is one research method chosen for this thesis because it provides a frame to give direct descriptions of lived experiences and allow the person to give meaning to the experiences and validate them by others' experiences (see Merleau-Ponty 1965, van Manen 1990). This way I can document, give meaning to, and validate my lived experiences and those of the members of the five communities who participated in the study. However, I recognise the potential of situational limitations on my part due to my lived experiences of the refugee situation. Nonetheless, the fact that I am aware provides opportunity to objectively 'remove' self from phenomena and others, and reflect on the learning as a researcher.

In the write-up I have decided to switch between the first person and the third person. The choice of this writing style is both strategic and logical: strategic because it allows the reader to differentiate self from the reflective self and my experiences from my interpretation of others' experiences informed both by my own experience and the literature; logical because it enables me to interject my own lived experiences in the flow to add value and reflect on others' experience to give meaning as a researcher through established theoretical frameworks.

Organisation of the thesis

Chapters in the thesis are built logically to reflect the journey of a refugee from displacement to resettlement. I have also tried to relate concepts that seem to link with each other or seem to have cause and effect relationships in some cases. The groupings of some of the key concepts in each chapter should not, however, be taken as an indication that these binary groups are the only interrelationship that can be established. There is a clear web of interrelation between all the concepts describes and it can be suggested that all the key concepts can be considered as part of an interlinked spiral.

In some of the chapters, I have started with a personal reflection, in others I have commenced with a formal introduction of the topic by providing background information. As stated above this tactic was intentional.

Chapter Two provides a review of the literature on refugee theories and resettlement, place attachment and identity. In the literature review theories of refugee and forced migration are presented, with the emphasis placed on the extent to which refugees have choice during their flight. In the resettlement discussion an emphasis has been placed on the impact of past experience on resettlement to reflect the life of a refugee and inform the later chapters.

Chapter Three provides a context for the refugee situation that created the influxes of refugees in the five countries of origin that are represented in the thesis. This chapter also presents a framework to understand the refugee situation as a complex phenomenon that is created by an array of factors that are interrelated to each other. Hakovirta's framework is given as an example to understand the different causes of the refugee situation and their interrelationship. A short description of the situation in the five countries is also provided to broaden the understanding of the reader and also ground the chapters to follow in this context.

Chapter Four documents the phenomenon of displacement experienced by the participants and makes the point that contrary to common discourse in the community, displacement is a complex process. It also discusses the link between displacement and place attachment. The chapter presents the argument that displacement is multidirectional. It points to the fact that due to the phenomenon of displacement, refugees are seen as a problem, uprooted, hence they do not settle.

Chapter Five documents the life experiences of refugees both in the camps and cities and gives meaning to these experiences. The focus of the discussion is in validating the experiences of refugees in the camps mainly on identity and how the shift in identities shapes the attitudes of the refugees themselves. The transitional nature of life as a refugee is discussed and analysed in light of the shift in identity and behaviour change.

Chapter Six describes both the resettlement process as an emotional journey and provides the analysis of the perceptions of refugees on settlement services in Hobart in general. The resettlement journey as an emotional process is divided into four phases; namely, the honeymoon, cultural shock, recovery and adjustment. Each phase is described with narratives of participants which correspond to the stages of their journey. This work is followed by an analysis of participants' perceptions on the resettlement services in Hobart.

Chapter Seven documents place making efforts of the humanitarian entrants in Hobart and relates this place making process to a sense of belonging.

Chapter Eight discusses some of the findings of the thesis and provides some suggestions for further study.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

Refugee Theory

One of the classic works on refugee theory is that by Kunz. As indicated by Stein (1981:322), Kunz's work focuses on push factors – referring to the idea that "the refugee is not pulled out; s/he is pushed out". Kunz (1973:131) uses a "modified push-pressure-pull semantic construct as a *motivational* and *kinetic model*" which is an important refinement and extension of the push-and-pull theory.

After reviewing early works by Petersen on a general typology of migration, Lee's 'intervening obstacles', and other early works on refugee movement, Kunz highlighted the different 'lived experiences' of refugees, experiences distinct from those of migrants. He stated that "it is the reluctance to uproot oneself, and the absence of positive original motivations to settle elsewhere, which characterises all refugee decisions and distinguishes the refugee from the voluntary migrants" (Kunz 1973:130). This separation sets a framework to understand the 'lived experiences' of refugees separate from migrants. Note the term "reluctance to uproot oneself"; it is forced dislocation and displacement that sets the experience of a refugee apart from that of a migrant.

Kunz also clarifies that a refugee's resettlement outcomes are determined by lived experiences preceding and succeeding flight. He points out that there are differences among individuals within any community both in their sense of identification with their surroundings and in the degree of intensity with which they share prevailing beliefs. He also asserts that problems in the resettlement are linked to the emotional attachments refugees have to their past, thus highlighting the importance of attachment and identification with a former home country (Kunz 1981).

From such work, Kunz developed his Kinetic Model which classifies refugees into three categories according to certain so-called 'flight-arrival patterns'.

1. **Anticipatory refugee**: The anticipatory refugee leaves his/her home country before the deterioration of a military or political situation and thus arrives in a second country of settlement prepared, usually with some language, finance and skills.
2. **Acute refugee**: The refugee categorised such usually flees his/her country or region either *en masse* or in bursts of individual or group escapes, and his/her primary purpose is to reach safety in a neighbouring or nearby country which will grant asylum. The emphasis is on escape and rarely is it informed by the fact that later and further migration will almost inevitably become a necessity.
3. **Intermediate type**: There are certain intermediate movements embodying characteristics of both the anticipatory and the acute refugee flight-arrival patterns.

In this light, the majority of African refugees in Hobart could be classified as acute refugees since the majority were forced out of their countries due to situations that included war (see Chapter 3).

Regardless of whether a refugee chooses to leave his/her country of birth in an anticipatory or acute situation, however, in relation to the population of the homeland, refugees fall into three identification categories (Kunz 1981:42). First are the *majority identified refugees*, who are forced to flee due to reactive national refugee situations either due to opposition to political situation or social events at home. Their opposition to the catalytic event causing flight is shared with the majority of their compatriots. Second are the *events alienated refugees*, who leave their homeland because of active or latent discrimination against the group to which they belong. These refugees may become unwanted aliens in their homeland and could be embittered in their attitude towards their compatriots because of a realisation that they have been rejected by the nation with which they (formerly) identified. Third are the *self-alienated refugees*, who feel estranged from their society not by any active policy of that society, but rather by some personal philosophy and may sometimes leave voluntarily. They may have no wish to identify with the nation.

From the data (see chapter 3), it can be suggested that the African refugees in Hobart are mainly *majority identified.* During interviews the majority indicated that they still retain a strong attachment to their homelands and to their people including relatives, friends and country men and women who still live in their former countries. But this *attachment* does not mean that they *identify* with the former or current governments

of their homelands. In fact the majority indicated both active and passive opposition to the current governments of their homelands. This reaction is consistent with Kunz's description that "these refugees identify themselves enthusiastically with the nation, though not with its government" (1981:43). Refugees from Burundi, the DR Congo and Sierra Leone spoke of strong disagreement with their current governments while the responses of those from Ethiopia and Sudan were mixed in nature.

From interviews, evidence of Kunz's other typologies did not emerge, but there are examples of African refugees that can be cited: for example the Eritrean Jehovah Witnesses and Christians who fled their homeland due to intense persecution and expulsion can be categorised as *events related* refugees. They were and still are subjected to discrimination, imprisonment and torture in the hands of government security forces in Eritrea and often feel that they are unwanted or unsafe in their own homelands (Amnesty International 2007).

Place attachment and identity

Hidalgo and Hernandez (2001) point out that current studies of place attachment are restricted in both spatial range and extent of connection, and that the term is ambiguous. They also note the lack of shared meaning about concepts such as community attachment, sense of community, place attachment, place identity, place dependence and sense of place. Knez (2005) reiterates the point for his own field, noting that there is no agreement among environmental psychologists on the

relationship of these constructs. Nonetheless, place attachment could be defined as an emotional bond that people develop in relation to a place where they prefer to remain, and where they feel comfortable and safe (Hernandez *et al.* 2007, Knez 2005).

Place identity is "a component of personal identity, a process by which, through interaction with places, people describe themselves in terms of belonging to a specific place" (Hernandez *et al.* 2007). Proshansky *et al.* (1983) call place identity the "physical world socialisation of the self" and argue that self-identity goes beyond oneself and significant others to include objects and things, and the spaces and places in which they are found. Furthermore, Korpela (1989, 1992) relates place identity to environmental self-regulation, explaining the role that a 'favourite' place might play in maintaining coherence in one's self. The forming of identity is a *situated* process, linked with our sense of belonging in a spatial setting.

On the other hand, drawing on the work of Schreyer *et al.* (1981) and Williams and Roggenbuck (1989), Kyle *et al.* (2004) conceptualize place identity and place dependence as two components of place attachment. Examining the attachment that residents from Rotherhithe in the London Docklands have to their residential environments, Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) suggest that place is related to identity in two ways: a person's identification with a place – what they call place identification and through place identity.

Attachment to a place is a common human emotion which is experienced individually or collectively across cultures (Dixon and Durrheim 2004, Knez 2005, Lewicka 2008, Tuan 1977). Additionally, emotional attachment functions to develop and maintain identity (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell 1996). This notion is further reinforced by Mazumdar and Mazumdar (2004) who argue that emotional experiences in sacred places foster place attachment and hence identity.

Such insights show the contestations among and in different disciplines in search of shared meanings for various concepts (Dixon and Durrheim, 2000). Thus it should be noted that

> the different ways in which people become 'bonded' to their 'own'
> places is a fascinating and still imperfectly understood riddle, but the fact
> that many people *do* have strong and special ties to their home (or
> sometimes other) places is indisputable, and that attachment - ranging
> from the jingoistic to the maudlin - can appear at any level from the
> national to the very local. Such feelings certainly affect behaviour, and
> relate strongly to our system of values, as well as being a significant
> component of identity (Smailes, 2006: 66).

Resettlement and belonging

The concepts of place attachment and identity are inherent in resettlement which, as a process, is expressed by constructing and exploring new ways of living – place making. In undertaking such tasks, migrants and refugees often define their current involvement in light of their attachment to their past home. The way of living in the place of resettlement is established by looking back to how life used to be in the

country of origin – with particular reference back to traditions, customs and social relations (Andersson, 2006).

Galbally (1978: 29) defines resettlement as a:

> complex process of adjusting to a new environment following migration. It is a long-term process affecting all immigrants and particularly those coming from cultures different from that dominant in Australia or without a well established ethnic group here. Its end point is the acceptance by and the feeling of belonging to the receiving society. It implies change both in the individual migrant and the host society.

However, Fletcher (1999:16) notes that "the concept of migrant [re]settlement is less straightforward, and more subject to change, than might at first be thought." He elaborates on this assertion by describing how the concept of resettlement has shifted from one merely defined by the perspectives of the receiving society to a focus on the socio-cultural, personal and economic processes involved as a multi-dimensional and multi-level phenomenon.

These shifts mirror other policy shifts from assimilation to multiculturalism. In Australia, the prevailing approach to resettlement after the Second World War was *assimilationism*, informed by the White Australia Policy. As Jupp (in Fletcher, 1999: 17) notes:

> The objects of settlement policy were to ease the assimilation process, to avoid the creation of ethnic enclaves, to minimise public costs, to reduce majority anxieties, to use migrant labour for projects of national importance, and to ensure that immigrants became permanent settlers who would not differ too markedly from the average either culturally or

socially. At this stage Australia saw itself as a homogeneous and egalitarian society, which was measurably true in many respects (though not, of course, in all).

In the assimilationist perspective, the concept of resettlement was defined through the achievement of cultural and linguistic invisibility by immigrants; the issue of physical visibility was, of course, out of question (DIAC 2007d). In general, then, the view of resettlement was imposed by the receiving society.

From the late 1960s, assimilation began to be questioned and new arguments started to surface. In a report entitled *The questioning years*, for example, Zubrzycki (1968) highlighted the concept of *cultural pluralism* in contrast to the prevailing ideas of assimilation and integration. In an argument for cultural pluralism the report established conceptual links between equity and cultural pluralism by identifying problematic areas of the migrant settlement experience and by discussing alternative approaches to migrant settlement. Again, in a 1973 report entitled *Inquiry into the departure of settlers from Australia* tabled in the Australian Parliament it was recommended that a range of settlement services be provided by government and community groups (Zubrzycki, 1973). A subsequent report entitled *Australia as a multicultural society* by the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council (Zubrzycki 1977) gave policy guidelines for *multiculturalism*.

Even though multiculturalism started to shape resettlement from the late 1960 and notably after the abolition of the White Australia Policy in 1973, it is still a project in progress, though it

has far-reaching implications for both how the settlement process is viewed and [for] the responses to it. Its central tenet is that everyone has the right to retain their culture and heritage without prejudice. By implication, the integration of new migrants is a two-way process, with the dominant receiving culture also adjusting to, and being modified by, new influences. Immigration and settlement become part of a process of social change (Fletcher 1999:18).

Another influential report that significantly shaped resettlement discourse and policy in Australia is the 1978 *Review of Post-Arrival Programs and Services for Migrants*, known as the Galbally Report. The report identifies multiculturalism as a key guiding principle in formulating Australian Government policies in relation to resettlement, and spells out four guiding principles: equality of opportunity and equal access to programs and services for all; the right of all Australians to maintain their culture without prejudice or disadvantage; the need for special services and programs for migrants to ensure equality of access and provision; and the principle of full consultation with clients with encouragement for migrants to become self-reliant as quickly as possible (Galbally 1978).

In policies and reports that shaped multiculturalism and hence resettlement, one central concept that permeates across them is the notion of a commitment to Australia by migrants. This notion is reflected in the 1988 Fitzgerald Report on Immigration (which was subtitled *A commitment to Australia*) (Fitzgerald 1988). In this document commitment is interpreted as integration, which is often considered as an indicator to assess whether resettlement has taken place or not. In other words the new entrant is considered to have integrated or resettled when they commit or belong

to Australia. Note that belonging in such a case is both political and cultural; this also influences the identity of the new settlers highly. As noted by Brettell (2006:96), "the way that individual immigrants balance these two ideas about belonging influences the way that they construct their identities as well as their attitudes toward naturalization and citizenship".

The issue of cultural identity is important for first generation immigrants and others. By maintaining their cultural belonging through their own networks migrants tend to shapes resettlement, identity and belonging (Hardwick & Meacham, 2005).

Summary

Kunz's refugee theory is central to the thesis. It highlights that 'lived experiences' of refugees are distinct from other migrants and that they are important in shaping the attitudes of refugees towards resettlement. This understanding and the typologies offered by Kunz provide a framework to explore the resettlement experience of African humanitarian entrants in Hobart and understand the link between past place attachment, identify and resettlement.

The review in place attachment and place identity shows the contestations around what place attachment might mean. For the purpose of the thesis I define place attachment as an emotional bond that people develop in relation to a place where they prefer to remain, and where they feel comfortable and safe. The emphasis on emotional bond is important as it lays the foundation from which the interrelation

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between place attachment, identity, belonging, place making and resettlement is considered in meeting both objectives of my thesis. It is also important to note that place attachment can be experienced individually or collectively and that it functions to develop and maintain identity. Understanding this functional link and the formation of identity as a *situated* process, linked with our sense of belonging in a spatial setting provides the opportunity to conceptualise the relationship between the two.

A review of the literature in Australian resettlement policy shows a shift from assimilation in the 1950s and 1960s to multiculturalism in the 1990s. This shift lays ground to the first objective - exploring settlement experiences of African humanitarian entrants. The adoption of multiculturalism, as a policy in Australia influences both the attitudes of the host community and the settlement services provided to the African humanitarian entrants.

I now present the background of African migration to Australia focusing on communities that resettle in Hobart.

CHAPTER THREE

African Migration to Australia and the Case of African Australians in Hobart

Since my arrival in Tasmania, I have been invited to several places to speak about 'refugees'. I often share my own lived experience and those of others that I was privileged to hear; I share our ordeal, endurance and adventure in a new country – theirs and mine. I anticipate that telling these stories of human triumph would create better understanding and harmony between the 'strangers' and members of the host community. However, these exchanges have also created a question in my mind. I am particularly perplexed by the question "where are you from?" – not because it is unexpected, but because it was the start of many of the conversations I have had.

The question "where are you from?" forces the person asked to define where s/he belongs by locating himself or herself in a country of origin. When someone asks such a question, it forces focus on a definition of belonging and identity and on locating and aligning oneself to the home country. This tendency seems to contradict Papastergiadis' (1998) argument that "where we belong can no longer be defined according to a purely geographic notion of place and historical sense of connection". Papastergiadis justifies his assertion by pointing out that globalisation and modernity are likely to disrupt or sever the sense of connection and unsettle the notion that place is referential to location.

The second common question asked differently in different situations is "why are you here?" I was recently speaking to students in a high school in Hobart. I spent a few minutes explaining different countries where Africans in Hobart originated from, talking about some of their cultural differences and the like, and then invited students to ask any questions they might have. One raised her hand and asked a typical question "why are they [Africans] here?" This question is perhaps one which many people in the community have in the back of their mind.

The third common question is "will you go back to your country?" It was a Wednesday morning and my colleague and I were speaking to a group of Disability Support Workers. I spoke about Africa, problems that produce influxes of refugees and refugee determination processes and resettlement, giving examples from countries that I personally visited and lived in, and my colleague gave his personal account. After our presentation we opened the floor for questions. The first question asked was "after getting education in Australia will you go back to your country?" One of the participants in my study explained the same phenomenon to me with a stern look on his face: "Why do people ask these questions all the time? I have been here for a long time but still they ask me 'do you like it here?' I live here and Tasmania is my home".

These three questions are commonly asked by members of a host community and deserve proper answers, some of which are contextual. Thus the purpose of this chapter is to address them by providing background information on the displacement

and resettlement of African Australians who have made Tasmania their home for the last 10 years or so.

The refugee situation in Africa

In 2003 the UNHCR (2003:15) noted the following:

> Since the end of the colonial era, Africa has been **the scene of some of the longest and worst global conflicts**. Sudan was wracked by civil war between the mainly Muslim north and Animist and Christian south virtually since independence in 1956. **An estimated two million people were killed**, four million people displaced internally and half a million people fled to neighbouring countries.

> Conflict in the DR Congo starting in 1998 was described as **Africa's first 'World War**.' It involved half a dozen armies, **reputedly killing between three and five million people** either as a direct result of war or because of disease and malnutrition. **Two million people fled** to nearby neighbourhoods and 300,000 civilians became refugees.

> The entire West African region was destabilized after civil war erupted once more in Liberia in 1989. Nearly 70 percent of that country's population, an estimated **2.4 million people, were displaced and 150,000 killed**. Neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire, once one of the continent's most stable nations, toppled into civil war in late 2002, **displacing up to 800,000 people and forcing 400,000 more to flee the country**.

> Burundi is one of the world's poorest and smallest countries, but a decade-long conflict there **killed more than 200,000 people and produced nearly one million uprooted persons**, or nearly 14 percent of the total population.

Wars and displacement have been fuelled by economic and social upheaval. The number of people **living in absolute poverty in sub-Saharan Africa is likely to rise from 315 to 404 million** in the next 15 years, making the continent the world's poorest region. Half the population survives on **less than one dollar a day**, more than 50 percent has no access to clean drinking water and more than **two million infants die annually** before reaching their first birthday.

An estimated 40 million Africans in Ethiopia, Eritrea, the Sahel and West Africa face starvation (emphasis added).

This article depicts the ordeals once faced by many African Australians in Hobart and provides a glimpse of the situation that continues to generate refugees in Africa. According to the UNHCR (2008), at the end of 2007 Africa was host to 2.27 million refugees (20% of the world's refugees). The UNHCR also point out the fact that armed conflict is *the* major factor creating the refugee situation; it is critical to note, however, that it is *not the only* factor. In fact, in most cases singling out only one cause might be an over-simplification of a rather complex situation and may lead to erroneous conclusions. In its *State of World's Refugees* report, the UNHCR (1993:ch.1) noted that there:

are as many reasons for moving as there are migrants. A particular set of reasons, involving persecution and the lack of national protection, distinguishes the refugee from other migrants. In practice, it is often difficult to pick out a specific cause for departure. People leave their homes as the result of a complicated mixture of fears, hopes, ambitions and other pressures which can be hard, if not impossible, to unravel.

Singling out the reason(s) for flight could be difficult even for refugees themselves (Hakovirta 1993, UNHCR 1993). The case of the African communities in Hobart is not different. There may not be a single answer for flight from home, but when asked why people left their countries of origin their answers were very short and often directed at one immediate cause – armed conflict. One Burundian community participant told me that "people feared to be killed as most of the Burundians were killing each other and when the war broke out, everyone had to find a way to save their lives; so people left Burundi just to save their lives". Members of the Sierra Leonean community shared the following with me: "War! It was war, war, yes it was war. It was a civil war between the government and rebels in our country." A member of the Sudanese community reiterated the same fact saying "when the soldiers started to burn villages I ran for my life and joined a group of people who were fleeing and ended up in a camp in Ethiopia".

An immediate and common catalyst for flight is clearly armed conflict, but I argue that behind these narratives lie deeper and often interrelated historic, socio-political, economic, ethnic, and environmental factors that created the refugee situation. As Hakovirta (1993:35) asserts, the refugee problem is basically:

> an individual problem but it manifests itself in various forms on the societal, governmental, and international levels. It is a humanitarian and moral issue, a security issue, a development issue and to a growing extent also an environmental and natural resource issue.

A model presented by Hakovirta (1993) sheds light on my argument by offering a framework to explain the context in which refugees in Hobart experienced their

circumstances (Figure 3.1). Hakovirta describes *development and environment* to

mean food shortage, soil erosion and deforestation, which all have relevance to the

refugee situation, while *conflict situation*s imply armed conflicts. *Organization and*

activities of refugees refer to the active role refugees may play in the conflict that

forced them to flee. *Management and solutions of refugee situations* refers to the

humanitarian effort by agencies to assist refugees. *Internalization of refugee*

situations refers to the process through which refugee situations attract local,

regional and international attention and dialogued and ultimately become part of the

international agenda.
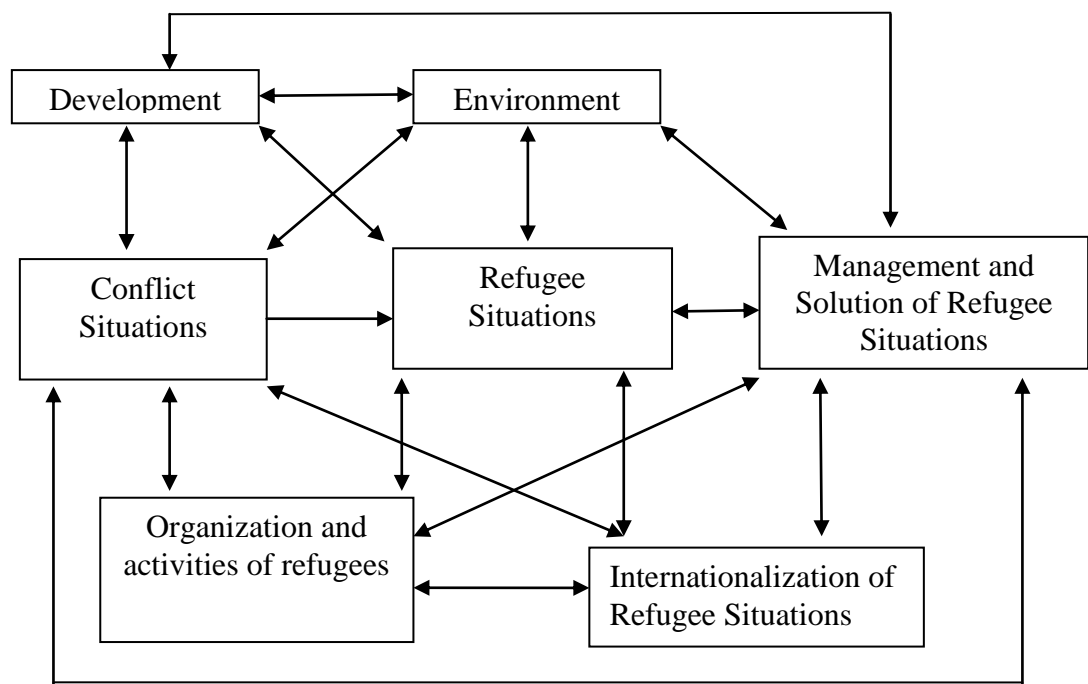
Figure: 3.1 A model for the study of refugee problem (Hakovirta 1993: 39)

According to this model refugee situations are created mainly by conflicts. It suggests that the internalization of the refugee situation may affect the conflict and the role of refugees in them on one hand and the effort to manage the refugee situation on the other hand; in turn this may influence the conflict and the active role of refugees in them. The model also suggests that drought and famine may contribute to conflicts that generate the refugee situation and these and other developmental and ecological factors may affect the effort to resolve the situation and hence aggravate the refugee situation.

In the model the arrow from conflict to the refugee situation is unidirectional and the author explains that this was left so because "it is theoretically important to ask through what factors or mechanisms the influence of refugee situations on conflicts is mediated" (39). In essence, he indicates that it is only through internalisation of the refugee situation, the management of the solution of refugee situation and organisation of refugee activities that a conflict situation is created. Refugee situations in Africa could, however, be represented by a bidirectional arrow as refugee situations do also create conflict situations regardless of the above mentioned causes. A case in point is the effect of the Burundi conflict and refugee situation in Rwanda (ICG 1999, Lemarchand 1970) and the aggravated conflicts in DR Congo after the arrival of Rwandan refugees in 2004 (Jean 1995).

To shed light on this context of migration to Hobart, I have used both responses from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions and drawn on a review of historical accounts of the conflict and other situations that created the refugee situation using

Hakovirta's model. This account is not, however, a complete one of the refugee situation in the five countries of origin and should not be considered so. The intention is to show the complexity of the situation and to point out both the idiosyncratic and communal nature of the refugee experience.

The refugee situation in Burundi

Burundi is a small land-locked country in Central Africa, bordering the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and Tanzania. The population of the country is 8.6 million (CIA 2008).

Even though the majority of humanitarian entrants to Australia of Burundian origin have been part of the 1993 conflict, the country has a long history of conflict between the Tutsis and Hutus which can be traced back to the colonial era. In pre-colonial times, the Tutsi and Hutu were occupationally defined groups. The Hutus cultivated the land and the Tutsis were pastoralists. The Tutsis were always the wealthiest and most dominant in Burundi society. In addition to the Tutsi and Hutu about less than one percent of the Burundian population consisted of the Twa. While all three groups share a common language and social background, the Tutsi have always been in power and hence control state and economic power. The two populations have competed for power virtually since national independence in 1962 and a peaceful transfer of power was unlikely.

Burundi has been convulsed by violent conflict for over 30 years since independence. But the majority of Burundians in Hobart fled their country due to the conflict in 1993. In October 1993 Burundi's first democratically elected president was assassinated after only 100 days in office. This event triggered widespread ethnic violence between Hutu and Tutsi factions. More than 200,000 Burundians were killed during the conflict that spanned almost a dozen years and 1.5 million were uprooted and hundreds of thousands became refugees in neighbouring countries (CIA 2008). To date, Burundians comprise the largest single refugee population in Africa. Some 570,000 civilians are officially recognized refugees, the great bulk of them living in neighbouring Tanzania, while there are several hundred thousand others who have lived abroad for several decades and are not officially counted as refugees (UNHCR 2007).

A participant of Burundian descent recounted the situation to me saying:

> It was a civil war between two ethnic groups [Tutsis and Hutus] and people were killing each other because the president at the time was killed and it seems like people who belong to the president's ethnic group wanted to revenge. So those who were not ready to fight had to flee the country.

Others agreed.

The refugee situation in the DR Congo

The DR Congo, sometimes called Congo-Kinshasa (after the capital city, Kinshasa) is located in the Central Africa region. The DR Congo has a small coastline on the

South Atlantic Ocean and shares borders with Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia (DIMA 2006b:3). The country is endowed with natural resources, mainly diamond, but is one of the poorest countries in the world due to conflict. The country has a population of over 66.5 million (CIA 2008).

The crisis in the DR Congo, as Jean (1995:48) reports, "has been brewing since the country's independence when, on 30 June 1960, its Belgian colonial rulers departed". Immediately after independence the DR Congo entered into civil unrest and the UN intervened with peace-keeping missions for over four years until Mabutu Sese Seko took power in 1965 through a *coup d'état*. His dictatorial rule and corruption for over 30 years left the country impoverished. In the early 1990s, the situation was aggravated by inflow of refugees from neighbouring countries (due to genocide in Rwanda) and the country plunged into civil conflicts which displaced over 700,000 people at the end of 1994 (Jean 1995, Kushner & Knox 1999).

In 1997, Mabutu Sese Seko was toppled by the Rwandan and Ugandan backed front of Laurent Kabila. Kabila became president but his reign found another challenger backed by the same governments which supported him. In August 1998, war broke out between Kabila's Government and the rebels and around 1.8 million Congolese were internally displaced and around 300,000 fled to neighbouring countries. Troops from Angola, Chad, Namibia, Sudan, and Zimbabwe intervened to support Kabila's regime, but two years later he was assassinated in January 2001 and his son, Joseph Kabila, was named head of state (CIA 2008, DIMA 2006b, Edgerton 2002).

Since Joseph Kabila took power in 2001 many accords have been signed, a transitional government was set up in July 2003, a successful constitutional referendum was held in December 2005 and, after elections in 2006, Kabila was inaugurated president in December 2006. Nonetheless, the DRC still suffers from extreme violence, massive population displacement, widespread rape, and the collapse of public health services. The war and its lingering effects have claimed an estimated 5.4 million people since 1998, and approximately 500,000 Congolese continue to die each year (IRC 2008). The International Rescue Committee calls the conflict "arguably the world's most deadly crisis since World War II … [claiming that] the death toll far exceeds those of other recent and more prominent crises, including those in Bosnia, Rwanda, Iraq, Afghanistan and Darfur" (IRC 2008:1).

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres (2008:100) confirms the same fact by sharing a firsthand account of his recent visit to the DR Congo.

> In December 2007, I visited the Nord-Kivu region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Over the last year, conflict, increasing militarization, and spiraling lawlessness had displaced some 400,000 people there - the worst displacement in the region since the end of the Congolese civil war in 2003. Four hundred thousand people had already been uprooted by the war, and the displaced people in this one part of the country now number around 800,000. In several squalid camps housing tens of thousands of displaced people, I listened to account after account of Congolese who had lost control over their lives.
>
> People talked about their suffering at the hands of the armed men who roam the countryside murdering, maiming, raping, and robbing with

impunity. A woman described how the armed men gouged out one of her eyes and raped her. Even when the victims have managed to reach refugee camps, safety is elusive. Armed men arrive there and harass them. "Where must we go to be safe?" an elderly man asked me in a shelter near the town of Goma. "Where is the end for us?" And there is not enough food or water or shelter in the camps. There are no schools, jobs, or maternity clinics either.

The story of members of the Congolese community in Hobart is no different. One of the women participating in the focus group said "my only son was kidnapped and later on brutally killed; I do not think I want to go back to Congo while the killers of my son are alive".

The Congolese community in Hobart is a small population of over 100 people.

The refugee situation in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is a land-locked country located in the horn of Africa. It borders Eritrea, Sudan, Kenya and Djibouti and Somalia. The population is over 82.5 million (CIA 2008).

The crisis in Ethiopia is different from that in the other four countries studied here in the sense that Ethiopia has never been colonised. But decades of feudal rule and subsequent drought and famine in 1972 in northern Ethiopia, and ongoing political discontent led to public revolt against the national government. University students were at the centre of this revolt but soon a socialist military *junta*, called the Derg

used this opportunity and in 1974 deposed Emperor Haile Selassie (who had ruled since 1930), and established a socialist state. Quickly the *junta* established a tyranny and continued its extra-judicial killings through 'red terror campaigns' in the 1970s, which caused the displacement of almost a million people. During that period most Ethiopians fled to neighbouring Somalia and Sudan: "The 1980s saw another prolonged drought with consequent famine that drove a further 100 000 refugees into Somalia, 300 000 into Sudan and 10 000 into Djibouti" (DIMA 2006c:1). Altogether Van Arsdale (2006: 46) notes that "some 1.4 million people died under duress or were killed in Ethiopia from the 1960s through 1990s".

Torn by bloody *coups*, uprisings, wide-scale drought and massive refugee problems, the Derg regime was finally toppled in 1991 by a coalition of rebel forces, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). Ethiopia adopted a new constitution in 1994, elections were held in 1995, and relative peace and stability were regained. On 12 May 1998, however, simmering tension between Eritrea and Ethiopia erupted in to a bloody border war that claimed the life of 100,000 people between 1998 and 2000 (CIA 2008, ICG 2003), and drove thousands to neighbouring countries.

The majority of Ethiopian community members in Hobart are refugees from the 1970s and 1980s and prior to resettlement there they have lived in refugee camps in Sudan for between 20 and 30 years.

The refugee situation in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone is located in western Africa, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean between Guinea and Liberia. The country has a population of around 6.3 million and is rich in raw diamonds. Historically, Sierra Leone was a source country for the trans-Atlantic slave trade as well as a site for the repatriation of former slaves during the Abolitionist period. It is a diverse society and home to numerous indigenous tribal groups as well as the Krio community (CIA 2008, DIAC 2007a, ICG 2008).

Since gaining independence from Britain in 1961, the population has experienced ongoing political instability. Numerous *coups* preceded a bloody civil war that began in 1991 and lasted for 11 years, leaving 75,000 dead and over 2 million displaced. The conflict was not based on ethnic or religious divisions, but rather was described as the outcome of a social breakdown caused by population pressure and environmental collapse (Richard 1996). DIAC (2007a:3) notes that "fighting for control of the country's diamond mines was the principal factor in sparking and fuelling the war".

The Sierra Leonean community in Hobart is small and most left their country due to the conflict of 1991. A participant recalls that "the war broke out in 1991 and in April we ran away from our home town and we walked for three good days and cross the border to Guinea".

The refugee situation in Sudan

The Republic of Sudan is Africa's largest country and is located in the northeast of the continent. It borders the Red Sea between Egypt and Eritrea, and shares a border with Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya and Uganda. It has a population of over 40.2 million.

Since independence from joint British-Egyptian administration in 1956 Sudan has been ravaged by drought, famine and war. Sudan has seen regular turnover of governments but most have been military Muslim regimes led by Arab northern Sudanese. Disputes with largely non-Muslim, black African southern Sudanese over access to power and resources have resulted in two extended periods of civil war. Sudan's first civil war began shortly after independence and ended in 1972. The second war started in 1983 when fighting broke out again. The estimated toll from the second war and associated famine included almost two million deaths and more than four million displaced people.

In January 2005, both sides signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which ended the fighting and granted the southern part of the country autonomy for six years. Under the terms of the CPA, a referendum on the south's political future is scheduled to be held in 2011 (CIA 2008, DIAC 2007b). The CPA did not, however, end internal conflict in Sudan. In 2003 fighting broke out in Darfur, in the country's west. To date this conflict has resulted in more than 200,000 deaths and the

displacement of nearly two million people. According to the CIA (2008), there were over half a million Sudanese refugees in the neighbouring countries at the end of 2006.

The majority of the Sudanese community members in Hobart fled their country during the course of the second war.

Summary

The refugee situation that forced the majority of African humanitarian entrants is complex. In such a complex situation it is often difficult to single out one cause. Nonetheless, armed conflict seems to be central in the forced displacement of African humanitarian entrants who were forced out of their homes to refugee camps and cities and to resettlement in Australia. This background has significant impact on the resettlement experiences of African humanitarian entrants in Hobart. Refugees are part of the situation that led them to be "refugees"; they actively configure and are reconfigured by the situation. This complexity influences their attachment to places, how they identify and how they might belong.

I now describe the very first outcome of the refugee situation – displacement.

CHAPTER FOUR

Displacement and Emotional Attachment

Antonio Guterres, the UN High Commissioner for refugees, has stated that "the twenty-first century will be characterized by the mass movement of people being pushed and pulled within and beyond their borders by conflict, calamity, or opportunity" (Guterres 2008:99). His statement emphasises the notion that displacement (forced migration) shapes and is being shaped by social and political changes in the world today (Castles 2003). Displacement applies to all migrant situations and all forms of forced migration; whether caused by environmental degradation, development, conflict or human trafficking. The focus of this study however is refugees and the situations that create and are created by them. According to the UNHCR (2008), 67 million people globally had been forcibly displaced at the end of 2007. This number includes 16 million refugees (including Palestinian refugees) and 51 million internally-displaced people (IDPs).

The movement of refugees and IDPs is coerced: people are forced to flee their homes and face uncertain destinies. This displacement is a complex phenomenon, and refers both to physical movement and a sense of being socially or culturally 'out of place'; a process that moves people away from their roots/home/place – their original position. This root, home or place is described as a place people feel emotionally attached to, through which they identify themselves, and to which they would want to return. Yet, analysis of the interviews and focus group discussions show that this

is not always true. Some people said that they would not want to return to and see their home place due to the negative emotional experiences they had in these places. For them, and contrary to arguments in literature, forced displacement seems to invoke a sense of place attachment, rather than detachment.

Thus in this chapter I will examine the process of displacement, communal discourse around displacement and its link with place attachment and resettlement. As a starting point I will argue that popular discourse on displacement is unidirectional and misleading, and that this shallow monologic discourse in society circumvents an opportunity for meaningful dialogue and better understanding. It also lends itself to a process that undermines the critical experience of refugees that has shaped their attitudes to survival and life, and informed their practices in life. Secondly, I will point out that displacement discourses, both in academic circles and the media, are tainted by mayhem and crisis, and suggest that this problematisation of the refugee situation influences the attitude of members of the host community towards humanitarian entrants, who are seen as a 'crisis' or 'problem' which jeopardise the chance of smooth patterns and processes of resettlement and integration. Thirdly, I discuss the correlation between displacement and place attachment. Finally through a metaphor (taken from kinematics) and a mapping exercise of the 'routes and roots' of five African humanitarian entrants in Hobart, I make the point that displacement is a complex, multidimensional and multidirectional process contrary to the simplistic version in popular discourse.

Displacement in common discourse

In chapter 3, I noted that the conversations between members of the host community and the new entrants often turns on the question of where the latter came from, and on responses and self-identifications that tend to focus on a single country of origin or root. Such conversation, I argue, is shallow and the underlying contexts through which it is conceptualised are simplistic. Firstly, this unidirectional conversation tells only a partial story and misleads those who initiated the conversation by forcing them to base their judgement on an assumption that the person of refugee background was in their country of origin and had come to Australia from there. In reality the personal journey of refugees and hence their self-identification is likely to be much more complex. Secondly, these monologic conversations also bypass critical information that could contribute to better understandings of the experience of refugees by members of the host community. Focus group discussions and interviews indicate that the majority of the Africans in Hobart have had multiple displacements and, as a result, have lived in two, three or four countries; some were born in a country other than their (parents') country of origin. As a result they have acquired the social mores and languages of each country they passed through, and speak at least two, three or more languages. For example one of the participants speaks more than 10 languages.

An excerpt from an interview with a former refugee of Sierra Leonean descent living in Hobart describes one such complex pattern of flight.

> The rebels burnt our house and I lost my first daughter. I fled from my
> home country to escape from the rebels. We fled to a small village where
> we stayed for a couple of months, then we run away to Liberia where we
> stayed for 8 years, and later we ran again to Ghana where we lived in a
> refugee camp for 4 years before resettling to Australia.

The family's initial displacement was internal, but when the conflict expanded to the new area of refuge and things seem unbearable, they crossed the border to run from further persecution; this was not, however, their final country of asylum. After living for eight years in Liberia, the family fled again to a third country – Ghana – driven by another conflict in Liberia. This story is the story of the majority of refugees in Africa. Thousands have had multiple displacements, often to places of uncertainty which lead to resettlement, sometimes after significant delay.

Another important observation made in the analysis is that refugees make decisions to flee (even about where to flee) when forced by a situation; this is opposed to a common (mis)understanding that they are here because they wanted a better life for themselves. Even though all those who participated in the study said they were forced to flee from the places they love, there seem to be differences about whether or not people made a conscious choice to flee to *a specific place*. Due to differences in the circumstances that create each refugee situation, there were differences among community groups and even between individuals within a group as to how decisions about where to run were made. Three trends emerged: (a) some made a conscious choice of where to flee, (b) some fled instantaneously without necessarily knowing where their destiny was, and (c) some fled instantaneously at the beginning of a

conflict but later decided consciously to move to yet another country or a place because of the original or other circumstances.

The number of people involved in this study and the depth of some of the questions asked may not warrant definitive conclusions to be made, but initial observations show that each refugee group is aligned to one or two of the groupings listed above. For instance at the beginning of the conflicts that forced their flights, the Congolese and Sierra Leoneans seem to have decided instantaneously where they needed to go but later chose to relocate to places where there was better presence of the UNHCR or other entities that supported refugees.

The majority of Ethiopians and Burundians seem to have made a conscious decision of where to flee – one driven both by distance from, and proximity to, where they were and where they could find refuge. As one of the Burundians said:

> you know if there is war you can't find a place in peace and people were leaving the country because of the civil war; you can't live in a war … I was in the capital city at the time and wanted to flee to Rwanda, but there was war in Rwanda and the next nearest country was the DR Congo, but there was also war in Congo, thus I decided to flee to Tanzania.

The Sudanese refugees, however, seem to have made their exit following the flow of the crowd without any reflection. Of course there were individuals who made conscious decisions.

Refugees as crisis or problem

Commenting on Arthur Helton's book *The Price of Indifference: Refugees and Humanitarian Action in the New Century*, Corcoran and Yakoob (2003:279) write:

> In the last decade, refugee crises have captured news headlines. Using graphic images of destroyed villages, orphaned children, and destitute refugee camps, the media has brought the plight of the forcibly displaced into our living rooms.

This observation paints the picture that has shaped the attitude and informs the knowledge of members of the host community about refugees. Refugees are often seen as by-products of a given humanitarian crisis. Furthermore, media reports and speeches made by politicians largely portray refugees as feeble and dependent, as a collective drain on public resources such as medical care, and thus they are discursively constructed as a problem for society. This victimisation of the refugee both as an outcome of the humanitarian crisis and part of the crisis first starts in the country of asylum where, in some cases, refugee flows do create a chain of crisis. But this thinking is also reflected in the country of settlement (see Nyers 2006). However, there is an alternative reality or discourse which is often ignored. For example, a report on the impact of the migration and humanitarian programs on State and Territory economies prepared by Econtech (2004:iii) for DIMA has estimated that, if current migration intake continues, in the longer term it will add between 1.3 and 2.4 per cent to annual living standards in each jurisdiction. The same report highlights that migrants boost labour force participation by 2.2 per cent.

The purpose of this line of argument is not, however, to rationalise the entry of refugees to Australia on economic grounds; it is, rather, to show that there are opposing discourses in society. Irrespective of these opposing perspectives, however it is important to note that humanitarian entrants leave their homelands and move ultimately to the country of resettlement mainly because they do not have any other choice (UNHCR 1995). As noted by Kunz (1973:130) "It is the reluctance to uproot oneself, and the absence of positive original motivations to settle elsewhere, which characterises all refugee decisions and distinguishes the refugee from the voluntary migrants".

In this regard it can be argued that resettlement to a third country as a process is an outcome of displacement. Hence, for humanitarian entrants resettlement is not a preferred solution to their plight but the only option to consider; a practical coping mechanism of survival and response to forced migration.

Displacement as a multidirectional and multidimensional process

Even though much of the discourse around displacement tends to be unidirectional when one looks into everyday conversations between refugees and members of the host community, I argue that forced displacement is multidirectional and multidimensional in nature. I am particularly emphasising the direction of movement and use multidimensional to mean that it is movement of the body and the mind – memories, social mores, cultural values and political beliefs.

The discourse around displacement as observed in Hobart could be explained through a metaphor that is rooted in two fields of physics that study motion of an object – kinematics and kinetics or dynamics. Kinematics (Greek κινειν, *kinein*, to move) is a branch of classical mechanics which describes the motion of objects without consideration of the circumstances leading to the motion. The other branch is dynamics, which studies the relationship between the motion of objects and its causes (see Ivanoff 1996:ch.13). In such a case, kinematics tells us that **displacement** is the vector that specifies the position of a point or a particle in reference to a previous position, or to the origin of the chosen coordinate system. So no matter the length of the route (path) and the time spent in between, kinematics shows only the shortest distance the particle moved from point A to point B. On the other hand dynamics tells us why and how the particle moves between A and B, hence considering the causes of movement and the time spent along the route.

As shown in Figure 4.1, displacement is usually conceived as a 'straight line' between the original position and current position without considering the cause of that movement and time spent in each stop *en route*. This conception is unidirectional and simplistic, and does not reflect the life of a refugee; however much it is created and recreated both by the host community and humanitarian entrants. This simplification of daily conversations revolve around 'here' - the country of resettlement and 'there' - the country of origin. In such simplistic modelling, no one dares to understand the path people travelled to reach the country of resettlement and the dynamics of their movements; misunderstanding and misrepresentation results.
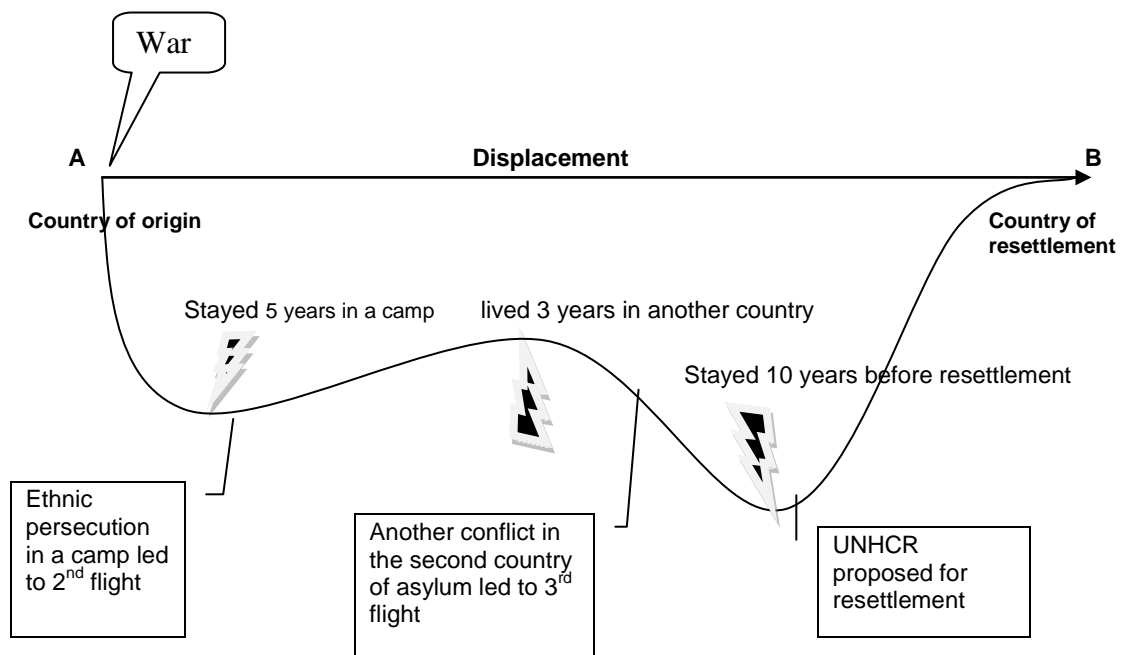
Figure 4.1: A model of displacement

Common discourse around displacement of refugees in Hobart dwells in kinematics of the refugee body and does not touch the dynamics of this movement. It is nonetheless of paramount importance to consider the dynamics of the refugee movement if better understanding is sought. The new entrants' lives and identities are shaped by the journeys between the two points and not by the distance between them. Understanding the dynamics of their journeys - the causes of movement and the time involved - is important. So, too, is consideration of those factors that contribute to their behaviours towards resettlement.

Resettlement is an outcome of complex, interwoven and incremental displacements and dislocations, which are usually both emotional and physical in nature. These incremental displacements ultimately impel or force various patterns of flight. The temporal, spatial and social dimensions of the movement from original position to

destination and the time spent in places in between - the country or countries of asylum or, for IDPs, the places of uncertainty in the country of origin, are all important. As Nyers (2006:x) points out, "the bodies [of refugees] are neither neutral nor passive but actively reconfigure, reinscribe and resist as they move through, across, and between political spaces". They play a key role in moving the political landscape of the sovereign state. To illustrate my point I have mapped the stories of five people representing the five countries of origin in figure 4.2 below. All of them had one thing in common – they live in Hobart, but their experiences as refugees and their patterns of displacement are quite different.

Key: (years are years of life as a refugee)
A: 5 years, 2 displacements
B: 14 years, 1 displacement
C: 14 years, 1 displacement
D: 29 years, 3 displacements
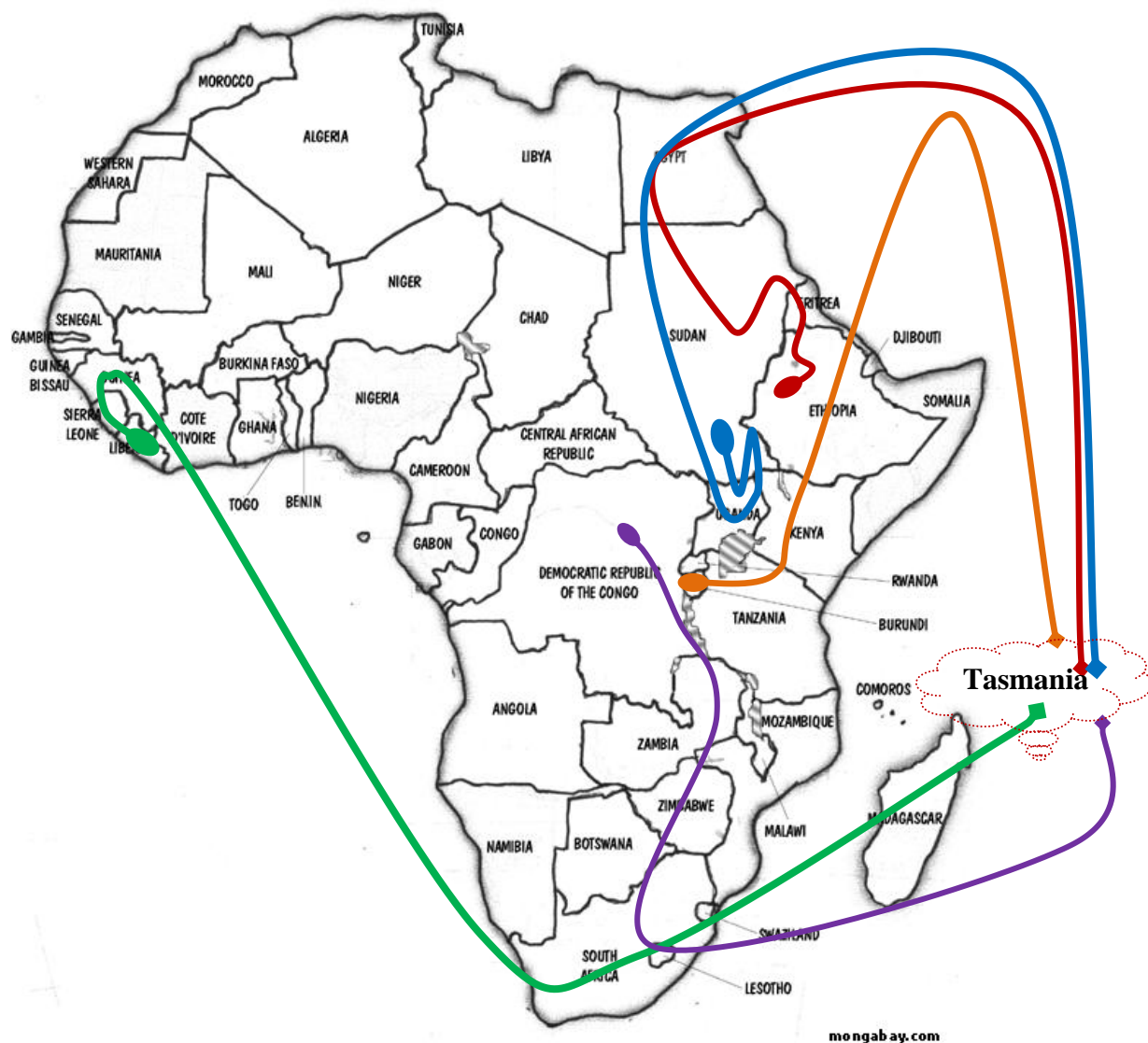E: 30 years, 3 displacements

Figure 4.2 A model of patterns of flight among five participants

Source map from Butler (2008), content from Author

Displacement and emotional attachment

Displacement and attachment to places are often seen as opposites (see review by Gustafson 2001), but I argue that they mutually coexist in the case of refugees' experiences. The phenomenon or process that impelled refugees to leave their homes – the process of displacement - triggers placement both in the country of asylum and in the country of resettlement. Even for people who are constantly moving, either as a matter of life style (for example, nomadic or transhumant life stylers or travellers) or because of causes beyond their control, they momentarily occupy a place, interact with and in the place, and retain - and in some cases cherish - memories of that place. We often say "I never forget the time I spent in this or that place". It might have been a brief moment and perhaps there might not have been any intention to be embedded in that particular place; the attachment could only be triggered by the displacement that preceded it, and yet we carry strong memories of that experience and may cherish them for the rest of our lives. At worst we have nightmares out of that experience. As Tuan (1975:30) puts it, attachment "to place would not have found expression but for the fact that of exile: home becomes vividly real only when juxtaposed against its contraries-foreign country and journey".

In places of refuge, refugees try to maintain their roots while *en route*. "Roots signify emotional bonds with the physical environment but often also contain notions of local community, shared culture, and so forth" (Gustafson 2001:670). Emotional attachment to place encompasses both negative and positive and conscious and unconscious experiences that exist within different situations that create the refugee

situation. I concur with Manzo's (2003:57) argument that "without recognition of the negative and ambivalent feelings related to places, we risk exploring only eulogised space". This insight is particularly aposite in relation to the forced displacement of refugees. The affective relationships of refugees to places in country of origin, asylum and resettlement encompass both negative and positive experiences which are dynamic and at times fluid.

A full account of these experiences is what separates the experience of the refugee from other migrants. Understanding the ever-changing, dynamic and fluid nature of these affective relationships to places requires special attention. The account of the participants in this study also indicates that both negative and positive emotional attachments coexist; there is duality in emotional expressions. For example, many expressed both negative and positive emotional attachments to places in countries of asylum. One Burundian community participant told me that "Tanzania was ok because we felt safe, but at the same time it was not as if it is ok because we were treated like prisoners". Another Ethiopian participant said "I do not like Eritrea because they abused us physically and psychologically; they insult us and called us names. But I have friends who have been good to me and I like to see them". A Congolese mother who lost her son during the war in Congo told me that she does not want to return to her country because she does not want to see people who killed her only son, yet she would love to visit and be reunited with surviving relatives who live in Congo.

These expressions indicate the dynamism and fluidity of emotional attachment to places. On one hand, people may not want to talk about and return to a place because they witnessed horrendous acts of violence and lost whatever they value most – parents, children, partner, relatives, friends or property. On the other hand, they may all the time talk about those old good times and long to return to their 'home' because whatever they value most is left behind. But it may not be only one or the other; it is possible that people have mixed feelings. Beyond this hybridity, the relationship between displacement and emotional attachment to places could also be expressed by efforts made to change the new environment and recreate the one we left behind. Brook (2003) suggests that one of the ways in which displaced people engage in these processes of change is by introducing familiar plants to their environment and creating and recreating familiar gardens in the alien environment. Because the new environment feels alien, you introduce features of the place where you feel at home. The strength of people's emotional attachment is expressed by their effort to change the new environment.

Summary

Forced displacement is a key phenomenon in the life of a refugee. It is shaped by social and political changes around refugees and often shapes these changes. Caught in such complexity of change some of the participants were displaced several times due to complex situations. Their displacement can be seen both as multidimensional and multidirectional. The common understanding among members of the host community is however simplistic and unidirectional. The attitude of and attributes of

humanitarian entrants and their interaction with the host community is defined by their attachment to the country of origin. This simplistic frame of understanding affects the settlement experience of the humanitarian entrants. It defines refugees as victims of displacement, as an outcome of humanitarian crisis and part of the crisis. The notion that refugees are uprooted hence will not settle affects their settlement experience. On the contrary a broader understanding of displacement as a multidimensional and multidirectional phenomenon greatly improves the understanding of both negative and positive attachment to places, identity, place making and belonging among African humanitarian entrants.

The multidirectional and multidimensional displacement shapes the identity of the person which I explore in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

Exile and Shifting Identity – Caught In-Between

I can hardly hear any sound other than my own footsteps; occasionally a roar of a motor vehicle driving past the Kenyan Presidential palace. Walking, reflecting, daydreaming; I was caught in my own past. Physically I was in Nairobi but my thoughts were there - back in Ethiopia. There, I was with my family; I can see children in the neighbourhood playing hide and seek, and parents standing highly engaged in their conversations. It felt as if I was in the middle of it all; I can see those common sceneries that are imprinted in my subconscious, I can hear the common melodies of the neighbourhood, I can smell the aroma of the spicy food. Then an interruption, I am in Nairobi – far from it all. It was one of the Ethiopian fellow refugees walking towards me. Interrupted from my daydream, I paused. She looked at me and said: "I know it is hard for you to get used to all the change but things will get easier and better as time goes by, here is some Injera [Ethiopian traditional food] that I made for you". I thanked her, received the Injera and continued my long walk to the single room I rented in Yaya.

Afterwards, I did not feel like going out of the room. It was a frightening week as the police were harassing and exploiting every refugee they came across in the streets. In the streets, they stop you and ask you for a UNHCR mandate. But if you fail to give money with your papers the consequences are harsh. Refugees are handcuffed or imprisoned. One may ask, is this because the refugees are illegal? For the police,

it is all the same - it does not really matter whether you are a UNHCR mandated

refugee or not. Reflecting, I started to write in my diary but getting the words out

was difficult. Instead I started to sketch an image of a person who is saddened and

looking back at a place beyond the mountains.

That week I spent much time going back and forth to the UNHCR compound in the

city. There, I was baffled by the number of people who queue every day for their

interviews of Refugee Status Determination (RSD) or social assistance. For the

UNHCR staff who have to interview hundreds of people every day, it is business as

usual, but for the refugee it is a traumatising exercise. You ask yourself, why do I

have to tell my story 20 times? But the answer is clear; it had to be done that way. In

the queues I noticed something different, the majority of youth refugees who claimed

Ethiopia as their origin spoke Swahili and act like Kenyan youth. This is an

interesting shift, I thought, but I realized that some of these young people were born

and raised in Kenya while others were brought by their parents at young age. At

home they may act like Ethiopians, outside like Kenyans and I wonder how they

would act in Australia? It is hard to tell, but from my observations in Hobart, I can

suggest that the youth are caught between three cultures and sometimes they create a

completely different youth culture and identity.

In this chapter, first I will explore life as a refugee both in camps and in the cities of

Africa. I will particularly focus on the life experiences and interactions that define

the experience of the refugee. Second, I will explore the shift in identity that occurs

due to the interactions and life experiences in the camps and cities where refugees

live and its implications to redefining identities in Australia. Finally, I shall argue that the in-between or transitory nature of life as a refugee contributes to the shift in identity and shapes the behaviour of the refugee in many ways.

Life in refugee camps and cities

Living in a country of asylum is initially considered by the refugee as the beginning of a new life in safety – safety from the threat that forced the person to flee. But it also signifies the beginning of the realisation of loss of a home and everything the sense of being in your own home country and amidst your own people brings. One of the participants recalls his life in the camps of Tanzania, saying "we felt safe because we escaped from the killing in Burundi, but we also found ourselves in another problem and became somehow like prisoner." He continued,

> We were not allowed to go few meters from the camp. If you go outside
> the camp then you have no protection; and the Tanzanian people do not
> care about you. Most of them say 'you came to our country to create
> problems like you did to your country' and they tell us that we are there
> to introduce stealing - we are accused for any evil action that happened in
> the society in Tanzania.

Reading such a reflection, one might ask prisoners in what sense? Prisoners in the sense that there was no right of movement; refugees in these camps are required to have special permits to travel within the country of refuge. And even then the police harass refugees and the host population views them with suspicion and in some cases call them names and ask them to leave the country. Commenting on Congolese refugee boys' and girls' perspectives on life in Dar es Selaam (the capital of

Tanzania), Mann (2002:119) has noted that people insulted the children making fun of them and calling them "*wakimbizi! wakimbizi!*" a derogatory Swahili word for refugee and asking them to go back to their home, though most of them were born in Tanzania. An Ethiopian in Hobart commenting on the reaction of the host community in the country of asylum said: "they always tell us to go home and they always say "*habesh*" [Arabic term for Abyssinia] go back to your country and they do not consider you as a full person". These exchanges create a negative attachment against the country of asylum and a strong resolve to long for the country of origin as the only home and place to be considered as equals. However, the hope to return to country of origin could be next to impossible; thus refugees are forced to adopt a survival strategy in the country of asylum and start to yearn for a country they have never been to - the country of resettlement.

Responses from participants from all focus group discussions I conducted showed that in both camps and cities refugees lived in sub-standard conditions. The food was insufficient and the treatment traumatic. Participants mentioned that they were harassed, abused and imprisoned by police and authorities in the countries of asylum. They were seen as trouble-makers and sources of problems by the host community, and became the scapegoats for all manner of political and social problems in those countries. Reflecting on life in Kakuma camp in Kenya, a member of the Ethiopian community told me that "we did not have enough food and we had to fetch firewood but this created conflict with the local pastoral community who were hunting us." A woman from the Sierra Leone community mentioned that "the camp in Guinea had wild animals, snakes and there was no enough food … the UNHCR gives you like

four cups of grain per month but this was not enough to feed all the children. It was horrible and we were struggling every day just to survive".

Such experiences force refugees to think differently and create an alternative imaginary reality, at least in their daydreams, in order to get away from these confronting realities. This dream journey to a third country of resettlement is often talked about, created and recreated in camps and at times it produces a psychological problem. In their study of the pre-migration dream of leaving among young Somali refugees, Rousseau *et al.* (1998:385) noted that "[the] substitution of "dream travel" for real travel during the transition period, especially if it is prolonged, may cause Somali youths to lose contact with reality and eventually to slide into madness. Secondly, such a long stay in camps and cities of asylum does push the refugee to a life of suspension as Kunz (1973:133) describes:

> At this stage the refugee still does not look forward, but already knows that the doors are closed behind him. His main preoccupation is therefore the redefinition of his relation towards his country of birth, family and friends. He is taking the first step that will change him from a temporary refugee into an exile. He has arrived at the spiritual, spatial, temporal and emotional equidistant no man's land of midway-to-nowhere and the longer he remains there, the longer he becomes subject to its demoralising effects.

These demoralising effects described by Kunz sometimes lead refugees to resort to violence and revolution to regain the dream of home life. In the Tanzanian refugee camps of Kigoma, ICG (1999) has reported that Burundian refugees reorganised themselves and joined the rebel movement to fight in the hope of regaining their

status back in Burundi. In Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya, Sudanese refugees were reported to have joined the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

Refugee camps are also full of internal conflict between and among different ethnic groups of the same countries of origin with different political affiliation and, at times, across different countries of origin. To minimise these conflicts, camp officials run peace education and conflict resolution courses, which do help but are never able to stop conflicts. In the camps people spend the whole day sitting in enclosures; the only way to dissipate energy seems to create some drama of their own, a drama of ethnic division and politicisation. Political and ethnic identities are constantly forged in light of current politics at times as currencies to trade for resettlement in a third country but in most cases as a response to the past, to avenge the very reason that caused refugees to be in those camps; this is particularly so with refugees who may be classified as events-alienated or majority-identified (Kunz 1981) .

Shifting identities

When I leave my country it is a sad exit but I never realise the loss until after few weeks. I constantly grieve the past whenever I confront a situation that seem to question my identity. For a few months I cannot come to terms with my own decision. It feels as if I do not know myself anymore. I start to ask questions of my own identity and this creates instability from within and a lower self esteem. I feel as if I am robbed of my pride in my country of origin and in who I am as a person.

Every day hundreds of refugees from different parts of Africa queue in front of the UNHCR office in Nairobi. They all have stories to tell and they all are outside their countries of origin but they are there queuing day after day hoping that the UNHCR will determine their status as refugees and provide them with a piece of paper that certifies the new identity "UNHCR mandated refugee." This is the only way that life as a refugee could be sustained and perhaps given hope; hope that one day there will be a chance to begin all over again.

Queuing along such lines in anticipation of 'your status determination' and for a daily ration does not engender good feelings. It does however shake one's identity, but you keep focus and faith that one day you will regain some stability. In this struggle of thought, you realise that you have started to call yourself "refugee." They tell you that you are a "refugee", they give you a paper that says so, and you fight to deny what they tell you, but finally you succumb to the new identity as "refugee." In such a situation, convincing is Tilley's (2006:9) proposition that "identity is transient, a reflection on where you are now, a fleeting moment in a biography of the self or the group, only partially connected to where you might have come from, and where you might be going".

The shifting and transient nature of identity is particularly evident in the refugee camps. In those I travelled to in Kenya, Sudan and Uganda, I noticed a high degree of emphasis on ethnocentric identity and reorganisation along ethnic and tribal lines. In the country of resettlement, these ethnocentric identities are constructed and reconstructed, politicised and played and, in some cases, become sources of

contention and conflict within or between refugee communities. In many of the community groups whose members I interviewed, I observed internal conflicts that tend to divide the small communities along these shifting ethnic identities. Groups are always reconfigured and reconfiguring themselves. Ethnic associations are created and divided and recreated continuously.

Yet, with time these ethnocentric identities seem to give way to broader layers of identities which are played in media and everyday living. For example, the term 'African Australian' is becoming a common expression of identity for many of the humanitarian entrants who originated from the African continent. In a meeting that was organised to discuss the impact of the negative comments about African refugees made by the then Minister of Immigration, Kevin Andrews on 4 October 2007, around 90 African Australian community members gathered at the Hobart Migrant Resource Centre on 4 November 2007. Although the main purpose of the meeting was not defining identity, it became apparent that those who participated in the community wanted to be called 'African Australians' and not Africans. During the meeting one participant questioned why the Minister and some community members would want to speak of African identity when something negative happens, and yet create another identity African Australian or 'fellow Australian of African origin' to express positive contributions. Kumsa (2002:478) notes a similar pattern among Oromo young women in Canada and explains that "this expression of new identities ... points to the new boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, new patterns of sorting and bonding in the new country". But one questions the stability and/or

fluidity of the new identity as the sorting and bonding process continues in the new country.

Understanding layers of identity and how they are negotiated and redefined in Australian society warrants an in-depth study and is beyond the scope of this thesis. But the following question can be raised: why is it easy to call a person with a dark skin African Australian, while we do not use European Australian in preference to Italian Australian, Greek Australian *etcetera*? I have not come across any literature that offers to answer these questions, but my proposition is that there are two main reasons for the creation of this identity. On the one hand, this new identity is highly influenced by the common idea of the 'African American', which seems logical as the majority of African Americans have been in the USA for many generations and many of them may not be attached to or clearly identify with a specific nation state as home country. But I am aware that some of the recent African migrants to the USA prefer to be identified as Ethiopian American, Burundian American, Sudanese American *etcetera*. On the other hand, I anticipate that it is because of 'the visibility factor' that people in Australia or in the USA for that matter find it easy and appealing to box people with darker skin in to one category of the African Australian or African American.

Caught between three cultures: Third Culture Kids (TCK)

My use of the term "third culture kids" is informed by my observation that young refugees constantly move between three cultures that belong to the country of origin,

country of asylum and country of resettlement. Fail *et al.* (2004) noted that global nomads and transculturals are also used in the literature interchangeably with TCK. For the purpose of this thesis however I shall use TCK consistently as it fits with my description of the three places. TCK is a well studied phenomenon around the circles of international students and children of voluntary migrants. In the refugee context it has an added layer of a pull and push factor that often leads to family conflicts or even community conflict in some cases.

A Third Culture Kid is defined as:

> an individual who, having spent a significant part of the developmental years in a culture other than the parents' culture, develops a sense of relationship to all of the cultures while not having full ownership in any. Elements from each culture are incorporated into the life experience, but the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar experience (Pollock cited in Fail *et al.*, 2004:320).

Young refugees do pick elements of the cultures of countries they lived in quickly and in many cases operate between those cultures. But this capacity often causes friction with their parents who want them to operate in the cultural space of their country of origin. In the focus group discussions I conducted these frictions were expressed in subtle ways by community members who considered the youth as "lost" and "out of touch" of their own culture. These concerns were also raised in different community forums (forums organised by service providers) that were held in Hobart. In the eyes of the parents the movement between cultures is considered as something negative. As one of the Sierra Leonean community participants put it:

Loss of culture is causing a huge problem in the community especially among the youth … most of the young people are ending in jail, hospital and they are spinning out of control and no one knows where they stand; they abuse the Australian culture of freedom … It is important to see how some parts of African culture could be retained at least to maintain their affairs.

A member of the Sudanese community also raised a similar issue:

The young generation, people who were born in the country of asylum are totally confused. They have never been to their country of origin and they speak different language and their parents do not understand them. Everything is getting confused and here we need to promote the culture so that it does not disappear completely.

Notions of being lost and out of touch are perhaps overstatements of the experience of young refugees in Australia and other resettlement countries. But the sentiments underlying them indicate the level of contention and cultural and intergenerational conflict between the first generation and the second, between those who were forced to leave their countries and the children who accompanied them or were born elsewhere. Parents' sense of an original culture for their children is highly informed by the culture they know best – the culture of their country of origin. Even in camps and countries of asylum, parents constantly tell their children about their roots and their culture (see Mann 2002), just in the hope that they will buy in. But studies show that identities forged in such a situation are never stable, fixed or predictable; rather they are mobile and constantly defined and redefined (Luke 2003). Nonetheless, I argue that, informed by their own experiences in the three cultures, racism and hostilities in both the country of asylum and resettlement, exclusion and inclusion,

interactions in their families and ethnic communities, and their own physical visibility, third culture kids will start to reengage with their original identity and forge a transnational identity (Kumsa 2002, Luke 2003, Ramji 2006, Tilley 2006).

The inbetweenness of life as a refugee

Both in regard to youth (TCK) and adults, one of the consistent features described by those who participated in the focus group discussions and individual interviews was the feeling of being suspended in the refugee camps and cities. Expressing her feelings a woman from the Sierra Leone community recalls her time in a refugee camp:

> If you speak English they know that you are a refugee, and even if you speak their language they know that you are not one of them. When you travel from village to village people pretend as if you are not there or a human being. You feel as if you are nowhere.

A participant from the Ethiopian community expressed having similar feeling in Kakuma: "refugee life was a life full of problems but also full of dreams, hoping that one day we will be somewhere".

This feeling of trepidation and perhaps frustration seems to create a sense of suspension and inbetweenness. The feeling of inbetweenness has implication for how people construct their own identity but also how they forge their attitudes towards settlement. People's interactions in and with place and their own culture and with those of others - including attitudes of the host community towards them - is what

influences how they construct both collective and individual identity. If the attitude of the host community towards the refugees is negative and the place feels hostile they will soon realise that they are in no-man's land – midway-to-nowhere, and construct their identity in reflection to their experience.

Thus considering the place in-between is an important part of the life of the refugee though it is usually ignored. As Rousseau *et al.* (1998:385) note:

> Migration is frequently – and with shorter travel times and greater focus
> on the individual, perhaps increasingly – perceived as a two-phase
> phenomenon with a before and an after, a departure and an arrival, so that
> the in-between stage, the passage, the crossing, tends to be ignored. Yet
> migration as an extended process is history that takes place in a
> transitional dimension, where specific survival strategies are developed
> for the trip.

Summary

The shift in identity in the life of refugees starts immediately after forced displacement from country of origin. In the countries of asylum the refugees finds that they are categorised as outsiders – "refugees". Forced by the refugee situation around camps and cities refugees often reorganise themselves around cultural or political identities. These identities tend to be fluid and constantly changing. For the young the idea of multiple identities and fluidity of identity becomes apparent – they move between the culture of country of asylum and the culture of their parents. When they move to a third country or country of resettlement they exhibit three cultures and move constantly between them. This shift in identity is also an

important part of the resettlement experience of refugees in Hobart. Identities are constantly created and recreated.

The focus of the next chapter is on the resettlement experience of refugees.

CHAPTER 6

Resettlement

Securing durable solutions for refugees is a core element of international protection and part of the UNHCR's mandate. These solutions can take three different forms: voluntary repatriation to the home country; resettlement in another country; or finding appropriate permanent integration mechanisms in the country of asylum. The UNHCR uses resettlement as a vital protection tool, a durable solution and an international responsibility sharing mechanism to provide protection to refugees whose life, liberty, safety, health or fundamental human rights are at risk in their country of asylum. It is normally only promoted by the UNHCR when the other durable solutions are not viable or feasible.

Currently, resettlement benefits only a small number of refugees. For example, according to the UNHCR (2008), in 2007 less than one per cent of the world's refugees directly benefited from resettlement. Over the period from 1998 to 2007, some 821,000 refugees were accepted by third asylum countries through resettlement programmes, compared to 11.4 million refugees who were able to repatriate. Thus, for every refugee who has been resettled since 1998, about 14 have repatriated.

The resettlement of African refugees in Tasmania is only a recent phenomenon. In the period from 2001to 2005 alone, Tasmania received over 1000 African refugees and the majority live in greater Hobart (DIMA 2006a, Flanagan 2007). To date,

Hobart is home to a number of new and emerging communities from Africa including the Burundian, Congolese, Ethiopian, Liberian, Rwandan, Sierra Leonean and Sudanese. These migrant groups are mainly humanitarian entrants and thus are supported to settle in Hobart through government-funded programs, among them the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Scheme (IHSS) and the Settlement Grant Programs (SGP).

Resettlement is a difficult process, often open to different interpretations. It is one thing for the host community, another for the government and yet another for the settlers themselves. There are differences both in defining the term literally and delineating the time frame at which resettlement is assumed to have occurred. Gray and Elliot (2001:19) argue that the use of "acculturation, biculturalism, multiculturalism, marginalisation, assimilation, integration, segregation and settlement" to refer both to the process and the outcome of resettlement confirms that there is no agreed definition of the term and the time frame for its realisation. However, they suggest that resettlement refers to the early stages of adaptation.

For the purpose of this chapter, I define resettlement as a psychological, social, and economic process of place making fashioned by relocation, movement and immigration of refugees who aspire to make a home far away from home. It is both an emotional and a physical journey.

A participant's reflection on his settlement experience depicts the highs and lows of this emotional and physical journey to make a place in a strange place.

When we come to this country we said ok ... we are going to be in a safe
and rich country; there is food, money and so on, but few days later
things changed. The first week we stayed in the house and we could not
see any person walking around. We thought may be no body is allowed
to walk in this country. Nobody could tell us what was happening. We
had to sit down, think and figure out what was happening. We started to
think back home; people really think to go back. No matter how safe you
are you find that it is a strange country. After a while you get friends, you
start to improve English and you start to make some friends in this new
country. But the problem is settlement is a very very slow process. It
takes a long time.

Another participant said:

When I arrived here I had basic education and I had a good support group
and that made life easier and helped me a lot. But when I see the support
services provided today, I will say it is not enough. People come from
different culture; they do not know the food and how to prepare it. They
do not speak the language and you can't expect them to adapt in one day.
What settlement services are doing is not right. They [settlement
services] leave you on your own, just like that.

Both reflections provide insight to the experiences of settlement and what
humanitarian entrants consider is desirable or missing in the settlement services in
Tasmania. The first comment reflects on emotional and practical changes that
humanitarian entrants go through. At the beginning a sense of relief and celebration
is exhibited, for the worst is left behind and a new beginning has dawned. But this
sense of celebration and excitement quickly fades away and gives way to uncertainty
and sense of loss. Navigating through the new and strange culture becomes difficult
and the new place feels alien to the settler. It is at this juncture that people long to go

back "home" even though they know that the doors are shut behind them. What is even strange is that at times people express that "they wished they were left in the camps". But sooner or later the realisation that they are far away from home and they are here to stay serves as a push factor to make connections and a place for themselves in the new home. This process of engagement reinstates some sense of stability. In the second comment practical settlement issues were highlighted. On one hand the role of prior education and the importance of community support in facilitating settlement are pointed out. On the other hand, the role of service providers in the settlement is questioned.

By analysing and synthesising the interview and group discussion material and literature on settlement issues, in this chapter I will first present a discussion about the settlement experience as an emotional process. This work will be followed by examination of the current settlement services in Hobart; this examination will be two-pronged. On one hand, the attitudes or reactions of humanitarian entrants towards these services will be discussed. On the other hand, the impact of these settlement services on the attitude of humanitarian entrants towards the new place and host community will be analysed. Finally, practical settlement issues and the attitude of the host community towards resettlement will be discussed.

Phases of settlement

The emotional journey of humanitarian entrants during the first few days, weeks, months or even years in the country of resettlement is often described as a

psychological, social and/or practical process of cultural adjustment. The adjustment

period includes some disorientation and confusion which is often described as

'cultural shock' – first coined by the anthropologist Kalervo Oberg in 1954. The

phenomenon of cultural shock and recovery has been the concern of anthropology,

psychology and sociology, among others, and is a phenomenon highly studied and

well documented (Thompson & Christofi 2006, Zapf 1991). Thus, a broad literature

review is not necessary for this thesis. Zapf 's (1991) work is important as it provides

a comprehensive literature review on the subject and presents a summary table of 19

publications that describe the four stages of cultural shock and recovery differently.

For the purpose of this thesis, however, I will describe the phenomenon through a

four stage process that includes the initial stage of excitement and optimism

commonly known as the honeymoon phase, the frustration and confusion phase or

cultural shock, the recovery phase and the adjustment phase. This categorisation is

influenced by the emotional and social focus of participants' description of their

settlement experience.

The honeymoon phase

The following reflections are excerpts from responses given during the focus group

discussion when participants were asked to describe their settlement experience:

> Because our major concern was to get out of Eritrea, we liked everything
> at the beginning, we were happy and overjoyed. We could not believe
> that we were in Australia (a humanitarian entrant after one year in
> Hobart).

> I like Hobart, they gave us house, and they supported us. There was
> nothing like that in the refugee camps in Africa (new arrival).

I thank God for the service, someone picks and shows you where to go for shopping and how to take care of some of the things; it is really great (new arrival).

Thanks God for the Australian government who resettled us (after two years in Hobart).

We thank God for this peaceful country (reflecting after four years in Hobart).

These were some of the reflections of participants of their early stage of resettlement. During this period the differences between the old and new culture are seen in a positive way. The old (life in the refugee camp) is often used as the bench mark and the new is described in reference to the old. Everything new is compared with the old and may feel better. An individual may love the new food, the peace and security of life, the support from the host community, the amenities in the accommodation, and the built environment around them, the transport system and so on. Expressions such as those noted above also show that immediately after arrival people were generally thankful and felt happy and accomplished although there were differences in the length of time it took to feel so. Some seem to have had months of honeymoon while the honeymoon of others was short-lived, but all gave expression to the first few days, weeks or months as happy times. They were relieved that finally there was an end to their ordeal and an opportunity for a fresh start in a peaceful country. But a few days, weeks or months later things start to change; people start to worry and confusion sets in.

The culture shock phase

At this stage, contrary to the first impression and expression, minor differences between the old and the new culture are magnified and talked about and start to occupy the mind. New arrivals grieve the past and hate the present; cursing the day they set their feet out of their country. These difficult feelings seem to invoke emotional attachment to the home country and a strong desire to return even to the camps. The emotional trigger could be as simple as food; one may crave for a food that is familiar to the palate but realise that it exists no more in this strange land. It could be the fact that every day the only people you can talk to are only your family members, no one else. In other cases it could be the complexity of the system, the number of letters to follow up and the number of bills to pay. Or one may easily be irritated by actions of misunderstanding on the part of members of the host community. No matter what the trigger is, confusion and frustration reign and the refugee thinks to go back. As described by one of the participants "you just think to go back, you feel homesick, angry, and all the happiness seems to have been swept away somehow".

The following excerpts express such feelings of confusion and nostalgia.

> I remember few days after our arrival every day I had to receive two or more letters. I have to pay bills and rent. I can understand a little bit of English but it was stressful. Imagine if you have no English and you are receiving letters that you can't read every day.

> The house that I was given was not good and I had to stay here for eight months alone.

> Sometimes I thinking of going back to Africa; I am able to work but I
> did not get the job.

Generally, symptoms that are given as indicators of entering the phase of cultural shock or this difficult time of disorientation in resettlement may include a sense of loss and isolation, confusion and disorientation, impatience and anger, the need to complain about everything, suspicion and a return to survival mode, among other things (Zapf 1991:111).

This time is one of the most difficult during the life of a refugee and often occurs when a person is trying to adapt to a new culture that is very different from the culture of origin. Transition from the old way of doing things to the new is a difficult process and each individual reacts differently. It may take longer for some to recover from the shock compared to others. Many factors contribute to the duration and effects of culture shock. For example, the individual's state of mental health, type of personality, previous experiences, socio-economic conditions, familiarity with the language, family and/or social support systems and level of education. During the transition there can be strong feelings of dissatisfaction.

The recovery phase
No matter how hard the feelings experienced during the culture shock phase stage, after a few days, weeks or months, one grows accustomed to a new culture and develops routines. At this point, one no longer reacts to the new culture positively or negatively, because it no longer feels like a new culture. One becomes concerned with basic living again, one participant expressing his concern about this by telling

me "every day I receive two or more letters I have to pay bills, rent, and respond to phone calls; it is really stressful".

One also starts to make sense of the whole situation and develop strategies to make the best out of life. Some do want to go to school and others look for jobs. These actions are outcomes of gaining some understanding of how things work in the new environment and what new opportunities are available. It is at this stage that the settlers start to forge some connections with the host community proactively. The sense of loss and disorientation experienced from before serves as a learning platform and the refugee starts to create a clear sense of direction. Plans and directions may change several times before someone identifies what to do, but it is the beginning of a long exploration.

At this point, settlers often also want to belong to their new environment and start to evaluate their own skills, ways of doing things and choose paths that would enable them to belong. It is also at this exploratory stage that some examine what the mainland offers and decide to relocate. In 2007, I wrote a personal note to DIAC expressing my concern after a community leader informed me that around 15 Sudanese families had left for the mainland. This year, as this chapter is written, over five Burundian families are preparing themselves to leave for the mainland. The reasons: better employment opportunities similar to the relocation of the Hmong the mainland, as reported by Eldridge (2008), who terms the process pragmatic relocation.

The adjustment phase

As the exploration of the country of resettlement continues and settlers start to set long term plans in the country of resettlement, the realisation that the new home and the new culture has a lot to offer forces the person to reconsider and make some choices of where to live, what to do and what to study. At this stage involvement in the social life of the new community grows and people start to have a stronger sense of identity in place and integrate with a better sense of belonging to place and community.

In some cases, however, people may feel different and give up on integration, and resort to defensively protecting and maintaining their cultural identity. On the contrary, others may be magnetised to the new culture and feel that they do not any more have the need to belong to their ethnic communities and alienate themselves permanently from their families. It is also in such cases that family and generational conflicts set in. Children often identify with the local culture and want to fit in, but parents often demand that they exhibit the social mores of the country of origin, even if they were born and raised in the country of asylum or in Australia. In the communities that I interviewed this conflict was expressed as a concern for the long term viability of community.

Settlement services and settlement challenges in Hobart

According to DIAC (2007c) humanitarian arrivals to Tasmania have support needs in life skills, access to health services including torture and trauma counselling, access

to interpreters and English lessons, access to legal education and support, access to accommodation and access to employment. DIAC (2007c) also notes that humanitarian entrants experience racism, discrimination, and family and relationship challenges. To respond to these needs and challenges DIAC funds the Settlement Grants Program (SGP), the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), and the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Scheme (IHSS) among others. These programs are contracted to service providers who work with humanitarian entrants on a daily basis for better settlement outcomes. Their ultimate purpose is to ease the integration of the new arrivals to the host community; a success of which is often measured by labour force participation, physical and psychological wellbeing and social connectedness (DIMA 2006a).

However, I argue that the outcome of resettlement is highly influenced both by the past and current experiences of new arrivals and attitudes prevailing among the host community (Kunz 1981). The past experience of the majority of humanitarian entrants is different from other classes of migrants: they have experienced war, torture, murder, rape, imprisonment and other forms of gross human rights abuses. Their story is a story of forced displacement from their countries of origin and their 'homes' - their culture, human interactions and places. To use Kunz's term, they are mainly acute refugees who were forced to leave their homes with very short notice and who reached their place of asylum not knowing what to expect (Stein 1981). Their resettlement is also a complex experience and involves dealing with the past and moving into the present to make a home, a place for the future - even in an unhomely environment: building a new 'community' in a new environment;

negotiating identities; and re-defining place/s, both 'here' in the new home and 'there' at the place of origin (Vaiou and Stratigaki 2006). Their journey is a struggle driven by the fundamental human desire for belonging which requires actual engagement of the individual with the environment to develop an identity (Smailes 2006). The construction of this new identity is a process in which interaction with the new environment is interpreted and a new reality is constructed (Tuan 1977). Nonetheless,

> however much newly arrived refugees are under the influence of memories of home and transit [their past experiences], they rarely remain fully captives of their past. Unless they are irrevocably broken by trials, they will soon begin to explore the surroundings, assess the attitudes of the hosts, and endeavour to find a niche for themselves in which they can feel consistent both with their background and with their gradually changing expectations (Kunz 1981:46).

In the focus group discussions, participants were asked to comment on their experiences with settlement services. The responses and discussions were quite mixed and at times contradictory. For example, recent arrivals expressed a reasonable satisfaction with the services, although there were some concerns particularly in regards to English classes, while those who had lived in Hobart for over two years expressed mainly their concerns. Much of the comment from recent arrivals focused on English learning, housing and employment. Those who stayed longer focused on employment and issues of social isolation including racism and discrimination.

The majority of recent arrivals commented that the way English lessons were provided was not suitable for them. One participant expressing his frustration said "they give you a piece of paper and they expect you to read it. This is not right - they should teach properly. This needs proper monitoring." Such a comment is quite common among humanitarian entrants who attend the 510 hours of English lessons and beyond but practical responses to this issue have been slow to come. Notice the comment "they should teach properly." The feeling is that while reasonable funding is allocated for English learning, there is less focus on results: that is, there is no "proper teaching" to enable someone to communicate and function better in the community. If better outcomes are to be achieved, a serious enquiry into the method and methodology used in class rooms is critical. I had the opportunity to participate in class room teachings and observe the English learning process and I noticed that the method and methodology of adult English learning was based on the idea that 'if you can read it, you will be able to understand it'. But I am not sure if this method works; at least it is not working for the majority of humanitarian entrants who come from oral societies.

It is imperative to consider teaching methodologies that take into consideration the way the members of oral societies learn. The majority of humanitarian entrants who participated in the focus group discussions and interviews speak at least two languages and some more than five languages. They were able to learn some of these languages *en route* in countries of asylum and yet after 510 hours of intensive class room learning of English, and over two years of stay in Hobart many are unable to speak or write English. This result cannot solely be due to learning inability; their

learning aptitude is confirmed through experience. I argue that the outcome is mainly because less attention was paid to changing the method and methodology used to suit their background and learning preferences as influenced by their culture. This matter warrants further research.

The provision, quality and affordability of housing was the centre of argument for some group discussions. It was raised and debated from several angles. Some felt that service providers let them fall into the hands of brutal landlords who increased their rent continuously without improving the services. They felt that service providers were pushing them to take houses which were sub-standard and secured only by a short-term lease in order fulfil their contractual obligations. One of the participants said "when the settlement services find you a house, they give you a bad house and because people do not have a choice and do not know their rights, they are forced in to a situation that they do not want to be". Others expressed their dissatisfaction in the start-up household packs provided on arrival; this was particularly discussed in relation to what others supposedly received on the mainland. As one of the participants put it, "I have been living in Sydney and I have seen friends and relatives who received new furniture. But in Hobart it is all old stuff". The sense of being provided with dilapidated furniture could be related to budgetary allocations, but the fact that there are differences between States and even individuals in one area creates a negative feeling of being considered less important in the community and creates lower self esteem. It also affects the attitudes that humanitarian entrants have in relation to service providers.

Working as a Community Project Officer with new entrant community members beyond the initial six months of settlement, before I could engage them in community development issues I often had first to deal with negative attitudes (including mistrust) created due to transactions at the initial stage. The increase in rental prices and intense competition in the market has also created a climate in which it appears acceptable for house owners to discriminate against humanitarian entrants – although clearly it is not. As one participant put it, "the local community stereotype us; they think that we do not know how to keep the houses clean". Another participant said "I have tried to find house by myself, but they tell you to bring someone or referral - you have to have connection, but who will support you?" In such a case the issue is also related to lack of social support, the existence of which was interjected now and then as discussions progressed. Many commented on the fact that they do not get enough social support (perhaps from volunteers). An elderly new arrival commented that he was left in a bad house alone for eight months with no support.

The other controversial issue is employment. One participant questions the trend of unemployment with disappointment: "employment – when you think about your future it is hard. Am I going to live the rest of my life on Centrelink income? [pause] "I am young for that". Another participant interjected:

> You know Centrelink pushes you to look for work, when you apply they tell you 'unfortunately you are unsuccessful'; why? We thought maybe they do not expect us to have enough knowledge, we went to school, spend our time and got certificates and diplomas and when we apply for jobs they say we are not satisfactory and no explanation.

Unemployment and under-employment among humanitarian entrants is undeniably higher than among other sub-populations, and this could be attributed to several factors. Reasoning why is contentious among humanitarian entrants. Several thoughts were flagged and implied in search of an answer. Some suggested that current job networks have failed them in assisting them finding sustainable employment. "These job networks, I can't say they are not helping, but not fully. They tell us to follow up our appointment – we do. But they never call employers and tell them our abilities, not only fruit picking – that comes only once a year". Others suggest that it is lack of social connection which denies them employment – in effect marginalisation leads to more disadvantages and even more marginalisation. "I was talking to a Tasmanian born and he said that if you do not have a friend in that industry you never get a job – you have to be connected. As Africans we do not have this connection". Others attribute unemployment to discrimination. "If you apply for a job and they see that you are black they discriminate against you and instead of giving you the job they bring their relatives and put someone else, this is the problem we have".

Conversations about employment among participants revolved around discrimination and the attitude of members of the host community towards humanitarian entrants. Colic-Piesker and Tilbury (2007) also reported a similar trend in Western Australia. No matter what the causes, however, unemployment and under-employment are the major factors that drive humanitarian entrants away from Tasmania.

Social interaction and resettlement

In chapter three, I highlighted the nature of discourse between the host community and humanitarian entrants, giving examples of my own interaction by reference to speaking engagements I have had over the last two years. The nature of the questions asked and the discourses around those questions show how the members of the host community have defined the African Australians effectively as 'the other' or as 'outsiders'. I argue that such social constructions significantly determine the level of engagement and social interaction that occur between populations, and hence affects the resettlement of the African Australian in a broader sense. In some cases the nature of some of the questions asked could be interpreted by the new members of the African Australian community as constant reminders of belonging-elsewhere. One participant put it this way:

> Sometimes they ask you, where are you from? Do you like it here? How long have you been here? I am fed up with these questions, no matter how hard we tried to integrate they [the host community] always see us as different, not as Australians.

These questions are often asked with good intent perhaps to learn more about others, but the lack of further interaction and the monologic nature of the conversation could possibly invoke the issue of belonging and leave refugees pondering whether they are asked such a question because people do not think they belong in the new community or if they can be considered as part of the community in its true sense. In some cases because of the cultural and physical difference (visibility) , no matter how long a person stays here or acquires citizenship by naturalisation, that person

will be considered as an outsider and has to answer such a question as long as this assumption exists. So the question is whether the assumption goes beyond the current generation forcing coming generations to raise the issue of belonging or not? This question cannot be answered without looking in to all the factors that affect the settlement outcomes of the new entrants.

> Theories in refugee studies that deal with flight and refugees have referred to several research fields and their interrelationship. Phenomena around migration and flight are a result of the interplay of the individual actor, her or his biography, the social environment, the population of the country of origin, the country of origin as a nation-state and, finally, the host country, its authorities and population (Binder & Tosic 2005:608).

The interaction of humanitarian entrants with the host country is defined both by the policies and current politics of the host country and by attitudes of members of the host community who interact with humanitarian entrants on a day-to-day basis. In chapter three, I noted that common discourse in politics and media paints a negative picture about refugees and hence affects the attitude of members of the host community towards humanitarian entrants. The experiences of refugees in Hobart indicate that this matter goes far beyond the influence of the media or speeches made by politicians. In some cases, it seems to stem from ignorance and lack of knowledge about new entrants. It is true that, as Australian citizens and permanent residents, former refugees are no longer subject to life-threatening experiences here, but it does not mean that they will not have difficulty in adapting to the new life. Khawaja *et al.* (2008) note that in resettlement former refugees face many difficulties including adaptation to the new place, isolation and lack of social support , racism and poor treatment.

Summary

Humanitarian entrants describe their resettlement experiences as an emotional journey and its outcomes through their social interactions. The change in the resettlement experience from the first happy times to confusion and adjustment expresses people's interaction to the new culture, their identity and belonging. A significant element valued by participants as key to success in their resettlement is the social support they get and the level of social interactions with the host community and their own community. This is an important finding. Even though the focus of current resettlement programs is on practical support, the social part tends to weigh more in the eyes of the settlers.

Comments from participants show that they had mixed feelings towards the services provided. This was highly influenced not by what was offered but how it was offered. This implies that considering the past lived experiences of refugees and designing resettlement programs that suit their experience and expertise is critical for better outcomes. Resettlement programs should also support the place making process of humanitarian entrants if interaction with the host community is to be enhanced and better outcomes are sought. Support in the area of place making requires a clear understanding of place attachment of humanitarian entrants including their culture and norms and supporting them in recreating their own place in the new country. My next chapter will explore the place making process.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Place making and sense of belonging

In early 2007, I visited the suburb of Footscray in Melbourne. The suburb hosts many of the African shops and restaurants that mushroomed in number and variety in recent times. In particular, I went to one of the restaurants with a family friend to eat "injera", traditional Ethiopian pancake-like bread made of teff flour. There, I noticed that the majority of the customers were people of Ethiopian and Sudanese origin with a small number of locals. The restaurant had a cultural feel to it. Ethiopian artefacts were hanging up on the wall, Ethiopian music played on the stereo, the waitresses dressed in Ethiopian cultural attire and some of the drinks served were exports from Ethiopia. After lunch we roamed around Footscray and visited a hair dressing salon and an Ethiopian store selling spices and other traditional goods. Everywhere you see Africans. I thought "this is marcato in Melbourne." Marcato is the biggest open market in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia.

Similar activities can be observed in New South Wales, Adelaide, Queensland and Western Australia. In Hobart the recent opening of the Axum Ethiopian Cultural centre in Liverpool Street and the annual African Cultural Festival organised by Hobart City Council alongside the "Taste of Tasmania" in the summer months show the beginning of such activity. A cover story of *The Age* newspaper Epicure section (Tuesday June 3, 2008) features this phenomenon in an article entitled *Arrival of the spice settlers: the exotic taste of Africa has added a new dimension to Melbourne*

dining. Rousseau (2008) tells the story of the proliferation of African small retail shops and restaurants in Melbourne and quotes Dershaye, an owner of one of the restaurants, who reportedly said "back home the restaurant is like this." Another restaurant owner, Tessema, expresses his motivation for running the restaurant by saying "I am proud I live to tell. I want you to know me, how I eat, how I live. It gives very good practical communication. I'm not just selling the food, I'm selling the culture".

What permeates through these stories is the effort and determination of the African settlers in recreating a place that is familiar to them both as an expression of identity "this is who I am and this is my culture" and an effort to belong. In Hobart the experience is not different. Humanitarian entrants are actively engaged in making a place in this new place through participation in cultural activities and other enterprises that communities recreate. The intent is clear; it is all about creating a familiar environment and making a positive statement. It is in the effort of bringing home to Hobart; to restart and relive surrounded by the sounds, the scenes, the smell … and the feel of home. Restaurants such as Axum in Liverpool Street could be taken as a case in point to enable better understanding of the process of place making by humanitarian entrants (particularly Africans) to Hobart. But there are also other ways in which people's ingenuity in creating a place in the new environment is exhibited.

In this chapter, activities that define the place making process will be discussed. As part of this discussion, the recreation of familiar landscapes and places, familiar

cuisines, the creation of community groups/association and the role of cultural

activities in the place making process will be analysed. This work will be followed

by an analysis of how the place making process might have impacted on sense of

belonging in the new community.

Place making

It can be argued that a common emotional response of humans to forced

displacement is to make where they are now like where home used to be. This

process, however, is achieved through several activities that are designed to change

and/or remove the strangeness of the new place, and create a sense of community to

maintain the collective memory through cultural activities including music, dance,

religious rituals and other related activities. When a new environment feels strange,

the loss of the old is felt deeply and this sense of loss triggers the desire for the

recreation of the old in the new environment via, for example, the introduction of

plants and animals that are common to the settler; building of religious places that

were a common part of life in the home country; opening new restaurants that

promote and sell cuisine from the country of origin, and establishing other businesses

and institutions that are instrumental in bring the home feel to the strange place and

establishing oneself in the new community.

The introduction of plants and animals has a long history in Australia. When the First

Fleet arrived in Australia, its members brought their own animals and introduced

plants to create a landscape common to them and to have food that they were used to.

This practice is now a thing of the past, as there are many regulations that protect the introduction of both plants and animals. The impulse, however, remains and people do change a place by introducing plants or forms of gardening that are drawn from their homeland. This impulse to change can possibly be explained by an emotional attachment to their homeland or a different place.

The construction of churches and mosques is an active expression of place making. In Kakuma refugee camp in Northern Kenya, I observed the Ethiopian refugees who are followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church building their own church and influencing the local tribe who live in the area. The Orthodox Church in Ethiopia has a distinctive building design which resembles the Jewish Synagogue. The recreation of worship places is an active expression of emotional attachment to a place and seems to continue far beyond the camps. In the cities in Australia, Canada and the USA, Ethiopians have actively established their own churches. In Melbourne, for example, in a bid to have their own worship place, as it used to be in Ethiopia, members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church followers have established their own church as other communities before them did so. The Greeks, Italians, Polish and Dutch all recreated their own religious places. So did the Jews and Muslims across Australia. In Hobart, no activity of such magnitude was observed; nonetheless with the increase in population of the Africans in Hobart, it is certain that they will continue to recreate new places.

The creation of religious places is not limited to buildings. In some cases communities or individuals may create places of ritual, which may be or may not be

acceptable by the host community and its laws. For example, Trudeau (2006) notes the discourse surrounding a controversial (and ultimately unsuccessful) proposal for a slaughterhouse by members of the Hmong community in Hugo, Minnesota (the USA) which raised tensions in the politics of belonging and the boundaries of such belonging. The Hmong in Hugo argued that the creation of a special place to continue the practise of Ua Dab (a Hmong tradition of ritual animal sacrifice) would serve a religious purpose by allowing their community as it used to be back home. The same holds true with the Hmong in Hobart (Julian 2004). It was an active place making on their part to ensure that their way of life is maintained in the new place. But their case failed to convince authorities as it contravened the orthodoxy – "the 'right' experience or way of doing things" established by the host community (Trudeau 2006:438). In Hobart, too, part of the Ethiopian community travels to farms to buy fresh lamb slaughtered according to their religious traditions.

The opening of ethnic restaurants is a common feature in multicultural Australia. As new migrants, including refugees, establish themselves they recreate their way of life and at times commercialise them. A colleague who is in the catering business once told me that "food is the most powerful instrument to bring people together". He continued "Australians like to test food from different parts of the world. They first test your food and then they show interest to know more about you and your culture". This tendency seems to be the case in Hobart and the flourishing of ethnic restaurants is testimony to that: Greek, Indian, Italian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Indonesian and Malaysian restaurants in Hobart are all active expressions of place making, driven both by a desire to bring home to Hobart and making a living.

Axum is new to the cultural landscape of Hobart. The walls of the restaurant are decorated with posters of places and people of Ethiopia, traditional musical instruments, portraits of kings and queens of the Ethiopian empire and an historic milestone inscribed on a sketch of the stele in Axum. The prime motive in opening the restaurant is not making money. All workers in the restaurant are volunteers and they all take pride in introducing their culture to the wider community. Profitability and financial viability are important if the business is to survive and thrive in Hobart's cultural scene, but to those who work there it has never been the prime purpose. This project seems to have boosted the self esteem and confidence of other community members. During the focus group discussions I asked participants to comment on the new development and here is what one of them had to say that the

> opening of the restaurant and the cultural dance groups are all good beginnings, and I am proud of that but we have to do more to let people know about us. For example we can open a coffee shop and let people know that Ethiopia is the origin of coffee.

The same holds true with the story of the growing number of Ethiopian and Eritrean restaurants in Melbourne. Tessema's message was clear - he was proud not because the amount of money he was making, but because he was able to show what Ethiopian cuisine looks like and what the culture looks like.

Community organisations and their cultural and other activities are also common elements of place making. During interview a member of the Congolese community said:

I think a community is like a popular embassy because in a community the best thing you can appreciate is the culture. And when you come together you will find out that you learn ways of doing things as they used to be. For example when someone dies you will see that your community will give some advice to proceed like it should be in your country. In a community you are not alone; you are together so you find yourself like in a town outside your country. I am feeling like I am in Congo, but I am here in Australia.

Community organisations have several purposes; however some of the most important functions in Hobart include maintaining social identity, fostering social support within the community and creating bargaining power in the host community. These are some of the important functions: culture could be considered a key denominator in all functions. As noted above by one of the participants, the community, like an 'embassy', tends to play a representational role for the country of origin here in Hobart. It organises cultural activities and participates in functions organised by the wider community. Members of the five communities who participated in this study have one or two cultural/dance groups that perform at different community functions. According to the community members these cultural activities are instrumental in keeping the community together and sharing cultural knowledge with the new generation.

We do have cultural activities and these help the community to stay together and stay connected and maybe raise our children by teaching them our tradition and our language.

Cultural activities also help us to share our culture with other communities and enjoy each other's company.

Community organisations and their cultural activities also help create social support networks that benefit members of the community. In nearly in all the communities that participated in this study, some members were helping others learn driving, while others were working as interpreters for their own community. The community leaders also told me that they visit each other on a regular basis and if one member gets sick or has some sort of problem, the whole community organises itself to support the person. This support could be both financial and non financial.

An equally important function of the community organisation and its cultural group is the ability to bargain in society collectively. In some cases it is difficult for politicians and government offices to deal with individuals with varied interests, but by coming together as a collective interest group communities have a better chance to be heard. This is particularly important at the early stages of settlement when the numbers of community members are significantly small.

Belonging

As place making is an emotional expression of place attachment, *actions* of place making are expressions of both willingness and determination to belong to the host community. Humanitarian entrants live in a constantly changing state, negotiating identity both collectively and individually, and creating places to enable them to establish in the new community. But belonging is not unidirectional. One's willingness to belong must receive a response of acceptance from the group to enable one to firmly belong.

To belong in this sense requires a sharing of characteristics and attributes essential to the identity of a polity. Belonging necessarily entails bounded classifications of characteristics associated with membership in a polity. Insofar as polities are associated with distinct territories, whether imagined, metaphorical or material, belonging is inherently spatial. Thus, to belong to a polity is also to belong to its associated places. Membership in a (territorialized) polity is often a political issue, since the opposite of belonging is exclusion (Trudeau 2006:423).

But how to ensure the existence of shared characteristics that will enable one to function in and belong to the group, neighbourhood or area in which one is located? Two critical points on this question were raised in group discussions in relation to belonging. On one hand, the concept of cultural difference was problematised and magnified to be seen as the major stumbling block. On the other hand, a 'willingness to accept' on the part of the host community was questioned. One participant problematised the relationship with his neighbours saying:

The culture and the social life I am used to are not here. Even though you have neighbours, you do not know them. If you die in your house here no one would know. Here I cannot function fully in my language and culture; singing, praying and worshiping.

The idea that you can not belong if you do not have the same culture had been the centre of conversation in many focus group discussions. Some reasoned that, irrespective of the possibilities, the differences in culture will limit one's ability to function fully in and thus belong to society. One participant also related this to language ability:

> The problem is for example English. Sometimes I speak twenty or more words correctly and I miss one word, automatically I reflect back and say "if I were in my country, I would not face this problem. I do still have my own language but it does not help me anymore.

But the expression of these limitations to belonging seems to have derived from the basic assumption that you can only belong to one group and that group is defined as the host community. On the contrary, practical place making processes seem to indicate that there are multiple belongings as there are multiple identities. For example, some were constantly referring to themselves as African and hence belonging to the African community; others took the identity of their country of origin and hence had a strong sense of belonging not only to that country of origin but to their ethnic community here in Australia. There was also a sense of identification with Australian norms, and with a sense of belonging to these. It is difficult to draw a conclusion, but as Fail *et al.* (2004: 326) suggest, "It is clear that a sense of belonging is a subjective, emotional response to a place or community of people". One of the participants struggling to figure out which was which said:

> I have got now Australian citizenship, which is good and it makes me feel at home in this country, but this cannot protect me from thinking and feeling Burundi, we grew up there and we have friends there. There is a real connection, I do sometimes keep in touch with people there and we even think to go back for a visit.

It is difficult for adult refugees forced out of their countries to have to leave communities in which all their childhood and youth have been spent. In some cases:

> no amount of reshaping, even under the most favourable conditions will make him exactly like a typical member of his host group. Though he

may become like his hosts in many ways, the new attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that he acquires will always be set within the context of a basically different personality structure. On the day that he arrives the typical immigrant shares none of the common stock of memories, social traditions and sensory experiences that bind together his contemporaries who were born in the host community. This fact alone must always set him apart to some extent, if not for others, then at least for himself (Richardson 1967:4).

Thus the following feelings and expressions shared with me by participants are not necessarily prohibitive of belonging to the host community but rather expressions of the shifting identities and the struggle from within to belong.

Home is always home even if we are out of our country, it is still our home. There, at home I have friends and relatives.

I still love my country; we grew up there, we were taught there; I have also my friends there, we have friends, relatives, and teachers. We still love our country even the English we speak here is English we learnt there.

I always remember my people when I do something and I always carry my friends and my people in my mind and I am mindful of the problems there. Everything I am proud of is back there.

When I see people here the first thing I would like to tell them is about my culture and my country. I was born and raised there and my brothers and sisters are still there, all my connections are there.

One question that has been posed and demands attention is this: "even if I try, is the host community willing to accept me as one of them?" This is perhaps among the

most difficult questions to answer. But experiences in other countries show that it takes a long time before definitions of who belongs where shifts. In particular the issue of cultural and racial visibility is relevant for this discussion. How does the host community define for example, a Tasmanian?

Summary

This process of place making change and/or remove the strangeness of the new place, and create a sense of community to maintain the collective identity and belonging through creation and recreation of places, cultural activities , religious activities and businesses. In the place making process community organisations play significant role in the maintenance of social identity, fostering social support within the community and creating bargaining power in the host community. This is a critical factor both in resettlement but also in understanding how past place attachment affects identity, belonging and attitudes towards the host community.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Conclusion

At the beginning of my study, I posed a series of questions that my thesis would seek to address. Firstly, I sought to understand the lived experiences of African refugees. Secondly, I wanted to conceptualise the interrelationship between displacement, place attachment, place identity, place making, belonging and resettlement in the life of African refugees.

To clarify these central questions, I further asked several questions which are subsumed in these general questions. I asked:

- How African refugees perceived their displacement, resettlement, place attachment, identity and belonging;
- If and whether there are differences among the different African communities in the way they perceive displacement, resettlement, place attachment, identity and belonging;
- Whether and how 'lived experiences' both in the country of asylum and country of origin affect these perceptions;
- What the major causes of displacement are and how displacement affects the notion of place attachment, identity, resettlement and belonging; and
- What the perceptions of the host communities on displacement and resettlement are.

In the course of study to answer these questions, I engaged 26 people from five African countries of origin (or communities) in Hobart in focus group discussions and interviews. I also consulted literature on migration and refugee theories, sociology, emotional geography, environmental psychology, social psychology and cultural and human geography to contextualise some of the key answers and concepts that are central to the thesis. I used phenomenology and discourse analysis to analyse the qualitative data collected to make sense of and give meaning to my own and other African refugees' lived experiences; and to appreciate the embedded meaning of some of social constructs that emerged from the analysis. I also investigated how different discourses which emanate from past and present emotional and physical experiences are formed and disseminated, particularly in policy formulation and implementation (Baker *et al.* 2008, Waitt 2005).

From the analysis of the data, review of literature and the research process, four major themes and one ethical/methodological implication have emerged, both as possible answers to my central questions and as scholarship generated in the process of engagement with the literature and the participants in the research. The four themes include: the complexity of the refugee situation in Africa that led to the displacement and ultimately resettlement of the participants; the multidimensional and multidirectional nature of forced displacement in the case of African refugees, the fluidity of and multiplicity of identity formation among African migrants and the focus in emotional and social activities in place making and resettlement among African humanitarian entrants. In additions to these, the finding of the thesis has overall implication in how ethical research should be done with African refugees.

These findings are closely interlinked in the context of the resettlement experience of African humanitarian entrants. While the majority of African refugees in refugee camps and cities ideally prefer to return home, the complexity of forced displacement and socio-political situations in many African countries force one in 14 of refugees to seek resettlement in a third country. The research underscores the situation that created the refugees, forces them to move places and ultimately resettle in a third country. It also shows that the shift in identity, the place making activities and efforts to belonging are all highly influenced by the past experience of refugees, which is mainly shaped by forced displacement.

The nature of the refugee situations that created African humanitarian entrants in Burundi, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone and Sudan are complex. I do not claim that the complexity of a refugee situation is exclusive to the case of African humanitarian entrants, but clearly show that it is by far the most complex situation in its enormity, its prolonged existence and the multiplicity of displacement refugees had to pass through. The refugee situations in Africa create 20% of the world refugees and claim millions of lives (UNHCR 2003, 2008).

The research also highlights the multiple displacements many African refugees had to go through. Perhaps the case in DR Congo is a case in point. Armed conflict and its lingering effects have claimed the death of an estimated 5.4 million people since 1998 (IRC 2008). The International Rescue Committee calls the conflict "arguably the world's most deadly crisis since World War II (IRC 2008:1).The complexity of the refugee situations in Africa has implications both on how policies are formulated and resettlement services are provided in resettlement countries including Australia,

but more importantly it calls for further study and better understanding by the host communities.

Forced displacement is the common denominator in all refugee situations. All refugees are uprooted from their "home" for fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of particular social group or political opinion. They are displaced to another country outside their country of origin or "home". This displacement is not, however, a one off and unidirectional phenomenon. In chapter four, I argued for a multidirectional and multidimensional perspective of displacement and provided evidence by mapping the displacement of five African humanitarian entrants to Hobart and citing theories in physics as metaphor. This position questions assumptions represented in day-to-day conversations and media coverage that present displacement as a unidirectional and simplistic phenomenon and at times use displacement negatively to portray refugees as a problem. This finding also matters because it affects the way we collect data, do research and design and implement policies related with African refugees.

Chapter five provided evidence that there is fluidity and multiplicity in the identity of African humanitarian entrants in Hobart mainly shaped by their experiences of displacement. It provides a possibility for an alternative framework to understand young Africans as Three Culture Kids. The notion of Three Culture Kids is not new but by using this framework, the thesis argues that young refugees are not significantly different from other young migrants, who due to their constant mobility between cultures show such behaviour. The constancy of shift in identities in African humanitarian entrants warrants further research.

Interviews and focus group discussions show that from the perspective of the African humanitarian entrants emotional and social factors are more important in the place making and resettlement process than economic factors. This finding is contrary to many of the main resettlement objectives of the Australian Government, which measures the outcomes of resettlement mainly in economic terms. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide definitive recommendations to the Australian Government on resettlement program; however, the differences in perspectives of resettlement objectives clearly show a need for further research. Research that investigates the differences in perspectives of refugees, the host community and government on resettlement objectives may provide clarity in some of the issues and point to better resettlement strategies for the future. This finding also points out to the importance of cultural, religious and other social activities as key players in the resettlement process.

Finally, the insights from this thesis and the key findings also matter because they have wider implications on how we do research and formulate policy. In the research process, basic assumptions that underpin some of the instruments used to insure ethical research were questioned. Asking participants to sign consent forms create suspicion. I was asked why I have to ask them to sign a paper while they are willing to participate in the research. There are two issues to consider in this regard; on the one hand the idea of informed consent creates some challenges to translate well to collective and oral societies such as African communities (see Ellis *et al.* 2007). In such cultures, established collective trust forms the basis for agreeing to participate in research or other activities. In such a case asking participants to sign a consent form could possibly be interpreted as not trusting them. Secondly in an event where

there is the possibility that a person is not literate, asking them to sign questions the validity of the consent and may create discomfort in participants. Signature is often associated with obligation. The second question asked by participants during my research was why researchers are not able to provide them with feedback at the end. This raises two ethical questions. On the one hand it questions the fact that much research on African refugees continues to be imposed by outsiders for their own purpose and benefits (Howitt and Stevens 2005). On the other hand, it points to the fact that many researchers extract information from the community and lack the commitment to go back and inform them of the outcomes of their work.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethics Application and forms

1.	Project Title

Finding a home far away from home: place attachment, identity and resettlement among African Australians in Hobart

2.	Expected commencement date:	Expected completion date of project
	March 2008	October 2008

3. Chief Investigator/ Supervisor: (A staff member with ultimate responsibility for the research)

Given Name	Surname
Elaine	**Stratford**

Staff Position: Head of School   **Qualifications:** PhD

Staff ID: 04097431

School & Division: School of Geography and Environmental Studies

Contact Address: UTAS
Private Bag 78, Hobart, TAS 7001

Telephone: +61 3 6226 2462   **Email:**   Elaine.stratford@utas.edu.au
(Required)

b) Co-Investigator(s):

i) Given Name	Surname

Staff Position: | | **Qualifications:**

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Staff ID: [ ]

Contact Address: [ ]

Telephone: [ ] **Email:** [ ]
(Required)

ii) Given Name   Surname

Staff Position: [ ] **Qualifications:** [ ]

Staff ID: [ ]

Contact Address: [ ]

Telephone: [ ] **Email:** [ ]
(Required)

c) Student Investigator(s):	
Given Name **Kiros**	**Surname** **Zegeye**

Gender: Male	**Date of Birth:** 26-10-1967	**Preferred Title:** **Mr** / Ms / Miss /Mrs /Dr

Student Number:	082747	**Level**: Undergraduate/Hons/**Masters** /Postgraduate Diploma/PhD

Contact Address: 12 Somers Way, Howrah, TAS 7018

Telephone: 0423 730 294 | Email: kgzegeye@utas.edu.au
(Required)

4. If this is a student project that requires School approval (e.g. program of study approval), has it been:

a) Submitted **Yes** *i)* Approved **Yes** *ii* Not yet approved [ ]
b) Not yet submitted [ ]

5. Is the investigation a follow-up of a previous study? NO

If 'Yes', what is the ethics reference number of earlier approval?

What was the title of that study?

6. Has this study been submitted or will it be submitted to any other Institution's Ethics Committee? Yes ☐ No ☒

If Yes, which one(s):

What was the outcome:

Please attach approval letter and conditions

7. Funding

Is this research being funded? Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, please detail amount and source of funds (NS 5.27)

8. The Project <u>Keywords</u>: Provide definitions of any technical terms and acronyms:

Term:	Lay Explanation:
Place attachment	Emotional bond towards a place
Place identity	A persons identification with place(s) or physical world socialisation of the self
Resettlement	Is a process of settling in a new place often by leaving current place of settlement (usually due to conditions that force displacement)

9. Rationale and Background for the Project:

Has the research proposal, including design and methodology undergone a peer review process? Yes ☒ No ☐

If yes, provide details:

I have given a seminar to peers on March 17, 2008

Please give a plain English description of the rationale for the study and its aims.

Tasmania has received a number of African humanitarian entrants over the last 10 years. The majority have resettled in Greater Hobart, which is currently home to a number of new and emerging communities from Africa including Burundian, Congolese, Ethiopian, Liberian, Rwandan, Sierra Leone and Sudanese communities.

The government supports the resettlement program through different funded programs, which are designed to facilitate the resettlement of the new arrivals in the state and their integration to the host community. The success of these programs is usually measured by labour force participation, physical and psychological wellbeing and social connectedness. But many leave to the main land for several reasons.

Resettlement outcomes are highly influenced both by the past and current experiences of the new arrivals and the attitude of the host community. Resettlement as a process involves dealing with the past and moving to dwell more in the present to make a home, a place for the future. It additionally involves embracing a new 'community' in a new environment; negotiating identities; and re-defining place/s.

Thus by exploring the notion of place attachment and identity among Africans in Hobart and investigating how their past emotional attachment to places – their 'lived experiences' might have affected ways in which they resettle by negotiate their identity to make a new place, this study intends to provide important information both to planers and policy makers and practitioners who are working with such communities.

10. Participants

How many participants do you intend to recruit? 25 - 35

Describe the expected demographics of participants:

Age	18-70	Sex	Male and female

Ethnic Origin	Africans from five countries of origin	Health	Not relevant

Additional demographic details:

The participants will be from five communities namely Burundian, Congolese, Ethiopian, Sierra Leone and Sudanese communities. The interviewees are expected to be both male and female with the ages 18-70.

Provide justification for the number of participants you intend to recruit. How will participants be recruited? From where will your participants be recruited? Give details.

As the 'lived experiences' of African-Australians in Hobart is expected to be different between and within communities, and even among individuals in a family, both focus group discussions and individual in-depth interviews are chosen as methods of data collection. These methods are designed to enable the capture of commonalities and differences in experiences and to investigate how communities and individuals interpret and make sense of their experiences. Purposive snowball sampling will be employed to recruit participants to the research. There are nine African community groups (classified by their countries of origin) in Hobart and interviewing all communities is beyond the scope of this study. Hence five community groups were identified as target communities mainly because they have the top five African Australian populations in Hobart and they have also greater variability in terms of refugee experience compared to the other four. The target community groups include the Burundian, Congolese, Ethiopian, Sierra Leone and Sudanese communities. The rest of the communities include Eritrean, Liberian, Rwandan and Somali communities which have few members (one or two families on average).

The number of focus group will be five, as the countries of origin identified are and each focus group is expected to have 4 – 6 members. There will also be an in-depth individual interview with one individual purposely selected from each community group to capture detailed emotional attachment to a place and its impact in settlement. The interview will also include questions related to life in countries of asylum and ways in which the individual left his/her country of origin. This brings the total number of people participating in the research to 25 – 35. The number in the focus groups is limited to 4-6, because the small size allows smooth discussion and high participation within the group and is optimal to handle in terms of amount of data generated given the scope of the research.

As mentioned above purposive snowball sampling will be employed to recruit individuals within each community. Initially, a minimum of 2 individuals who have experienced forced displacement from their country of origin or who fled their country of origin in anticipation of such displacement, who have experienced the life of a refugee in a country of asylum, and are able and willing to speak about their experience which cause their flight, their life in a country of asylum and their resettlement experience will be identified from each community. This will be done by contacting individuals and requesting them if they will voluntarily participate in the research. It is possible that some willing and able candidates may not be able to speak English, but the selection of candidates will be only from those who are able to communicate in English for there is no budget for interpretation. Once this is done detailed information of the research objectives, a list of some of the questions involved, processes that will be followed and the impact of participating and protocols put in place to mitigate will be thoroughly explained to each individual and their preference to participate either an individual or in-depth interview asked. If their agreement for one or the other is secured they will then be asked to sign a consent form to affirm their agreement. Once a consent form is signed, they will be asked to recommend others outside their immediate or extended family who they know who also meet the above criteria. The process is then repeated to recruit other participants.

One of the possible short comings in using this method is that the individuals who consent to participate in the research may not necessarily be representative samples. Nonetheless it is the best possible method given the fact that ensuring the participation of people who are in the settlement process could prove difficult if random or other methods of sampling are used. To ameliorate this possible limitation and perhaps ensure representation and avoid exclusion however concerted effort will be made to contact and invite several people.

Does the project seek participants who are:

			Yes	No	Possibly
(a)	Pregnant Women?	(NS 4.1)	☐	☒	☐
(b)	Minors, i.e. children under 18 years of age?	(NS 4.2)	☐	☒	☐
(c)	People highly dependent on medical care who may be unable to give consent?	(NS 4.4)	☐	☒	☐
(d)	People with a cognitive impairment, an intellectual disability, or mental illness?	(NS 4.5)	☐	☒	☐
(e)	People who may be involved in illegal activities?	(NS 4.6)	☐	☒	☐
(f)	People in other countries?	(NS 4.8)	☐	☒	☐
(g)	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?	(NS 4.7)	☐	☒	☐
(h)	Is the participant group likely to include a significant percentage of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander persons?		☐	☒	☐
(i)	Will participants be identifiable by their membership of a cultural, ethnic or minority group?		☒	☐	☐

*(If "Yes" to either (g) & (h), ensure you also attach a statement indicating in what ways Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sensitivities will be recognised. See the policy on **Ethics in Research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peopl**e for guidance)*

For each *"Yes"* or *"Possibly"*, show how your research complies with the relevant section in the National Statement

11. Databanks

Does the project involve information   (NS 3.2)   Yes ☐   **No** ☒
sourced from databanks?

> If yes, state which one/s, what permission for access is required?
> Are there any conditions of access? Attach any relevant approvals

Is the data collected about individual participants:

a) Non- identifiable?

Non-identifiable data is data which have never been labelled with
individual identifiers or from which identifiers have been ☒
permanently removed, and by means of which no specific individual
can be identified. A subset of non-identifiable data are those that can
be linked with other data so it can be know that they are about the
same data subject, also the person's identity remains unknown.

b) Re- identifiable?

Re-identifiable data is data from which identifiers have been ☐
removed and replaced by a code, but it remains possible to re-
identify a specific individual by, for example, using the code or
linking different data sets.

c) Individually Identifiable?

Individually identifiable data is data where the identity of an ☐
individual can reasonably be ascertained. Examples of identifiers
include the individuals name, image, date of birth or address.

12. Federal Privacy Legislation

The following questions are part the requirements concerning federal
privacy legislation.

(a)   Is this project medical research (including   ☐   **No** ☒
        epidemiological research?)

                                                             Go to (b)
        If yes, will you require the use or disclosure   Yes ☐   No ☐
        of information from a Commonwealth
        agency?

If yes, will the information to be disclosed be personal information, i.e. identifiable information?	Yes	☐	No	☐

If yes, will you be obtaining consent from the individuals to whom the information relates?   Yes ☐   No ☐

(b)   Is this Research relevant to public health or safety, or to the management, funding or monitoring of a health service?   ☐   **No** ☒

Go to (Qn 13.)

If yes, does the research involve the collection, use or disclosure of information from a private sector organisation?   Yes ☐   No ☐

If yes, will you be collecting, using or disclosing health information   Yes ☐   No ☐

If yes, will consent be obtained from the individuals to whom the health information relates?   Yes ☐   No ☐

13. Procedures

Describe the procedures to which participants will be subjected or the tasks they will be asked to carry out.

Initially participants will be informed about the objectives of the research to enable them to consent or not. Once they consent they will be involved either in a focus group or in-depth individual interview to discuss semi-structured questions that are designed to highlight :

- The perception of past attachment to the country of origin and country of asylum;
- The impact of past emotional links to places and former home country and past identity on the ability to make new places and develop a new identity;
- How the notion of place attachment and identity change as refugees are displaced from place of origin to place of asylum and transit from place of asylum to their place of resettlement.
  After transcribing the interview participants will be given the chance to comment on the information they provided.

14. Data

Explain the methods or approach that will be used to analyse the information or data you will be collecting, including any statistical tests or qualitative analyses. Explain how and where you will store your data, and for how long it will be retained.

Will photographs be taken?	Yes	☒	No	☐
Will video-recordings be made?	Yes	☐	**No**	☒
Will interviews or focus groups be tape-recorded?	**Yes**	☒	No	☐

If yes to any of the above, describe the information to be collected.

In order to answer the research questions that underlie this project, various qualitative investigation methods will be employed. Initially data will be collected through both focus group discussions and individual in-depth interviews, which will be taped. Phenomenologically sensitive analysis of the discourses by, on and about migrants will be carried out to enable insights into various lived experiences ranging from perception, memory, emotion, desire, embodied action, and social activity, including linguistic activity.

The data collected during the research will be stored confidentially in a locked cupboard at the School of Geography and Environmental studies for 5 years according to the rules of the school and destroyed afterwards.

15. Disclosure and consent:

Does the project collect information from which individual participants can be identified? (NS 2.2)	<u>Yes</u>	☒	No	☐
If yes, could the research be conducted using non-identifiable information?	<u>Yes</u>	☒	No	☐
Does this project use any form of implicit or passive consent? (NS 2.2.5, 2.3)	**Yes**	☒	No	☐
Will there be any deception of participations including concealment and covert observation? (NS 2.3.1, 2.3.2)	Yes	☐	**No**	☒

Describe how participants will <u>consent</u> to participate in this study and how they are informed of their rights (NS 2.2.1-2.2.7). Attach copies of your Information Sheet and Consent Form (where relevant) or give an explanation of the process by which you will obtain consent.

Details of the project including its benefits, risks , time required, methods used, reimbursement of some costs and their voluntary participation will be thoroughly explained verbally and an information sheet and a list of the semi-structured questions provided to each participant.

Once un understanding is established and the participants agreed to participate in the study, the consent form will be read and provided for their signature.

16. Reimbursement

Is any reimbursement, payment, inducement or other reward being offered to participants in the study? (NS 2.2.10)   Yes ☒   No ☐

If 'Yes', please state what will be offered, what amount will be offered and for what purpose (e.g. a voucher as a prize, reimbursement to cover expenses etc).

A voucher of $15 will be offered to each participant to reimburse transport cost and other opportunity costs.

17. Intrusiveness

Are there any aspects of the study that are intrusive in areas ordinarily considered personal and private, or that could create apprehension and anxiety for participants?   Yes ☐   No ☒

Are you collecting personal details or private information?   Yes ☐   No ☒

Is there any kind of dependency relationship between the researcher and any of the participants?   Yes ☐   No ☒

If 'Yes', please explain.

18. Potential benefits, risks and harms (NS 2.1)

(a)   What are the possible benefits of this research?

   (i)   To the participant:
        Better understanding of the emotional bonding of humanitarian entrants to places in the past and its impact on the resettlement can lead to improved settlement planning and equip service providers and practitioners working with these communities with vital knowledge and hence enhance settlement outcomes for the participants.

   (ii)   To the wider community
        Better knowledge of these communities may lead to improved settlement services which in turn contribute to harmony with and better integration to the wider community.
        Ultimately the settlement of these communities will also contribute to the economy through increased labour force participation and ease the demographic challenges posed by aging population.

Could your research evoke anxiety or lead to the recall of painful memories?	Yes ☒	No ☐
Will participants be asked to provide any information or commit any act, which might diminish self-respect or cause them to experience shame, embarrassment or regret? (NS 2.1)	Yes ☐	No ☒
Will any procedure be used which may have an unpleasant or harmful side effect? (NS 2.1)	Yes ☐	No ☒
Does the research use any stimuli, tasks, or procedures, which may be experienced by subjects as stressful, noxious, or unpleasant? (NS 2.1)	Yes ☐	No ☒
Will you induce or create physical pain beyond mild discomfort?	Yes ☐	No ☒

(b)   What are the possible risks or harms of this research to the participants? (NS 2.1.3) *If adverse consequences are possible, describe these and explain the risk management process that you will use (eg if interviews may cause distress provide details of support processes that will be put in place).*

It is possible that some discussion around emotional attachment to past places and 'lived experiences' could trigger Post Traumatic Stress. However, to ensure that participants are given the needful support, a referral mechanism to the Phoenix Centre and Centacare's torture and Trauma counselling service will be put in place. These services are the only specialist Torture and Trauma Counselling services for humanitarian entrants in Hobart.

19. Feedback

What feedback will be given to participants? How will feedback be given? (NS 1.5)

After transcribing each interview and focus group discussions, it is intended that the information will be communicated to participants both in writing and by reading in meetings. They will be given a chance to make corrections at that time.

20. Data Storage

Please state how and where your data will be stored, and address any issues of data security.

Written and taped data will be stored in a locked cabinet at the School of Geography and Environmental Studies. The data will only be accessed by the Supervisor and the Researcher during the study period. After the study period, the data will be stored for five years after which it will be destroyed.

21. Other Ethical Issues

Are there in your opinion any other ethical issues   Yes ☐   No ☒
involved in the research?

If yes please explain in more detail.

22. Declarations

a) The Head of School* is required the following statement of scientific merit:

This proposal has been considered and is sound with regard to its merit and methodology.

The Head of School's (or Head of Discipline's) signature on the application form indicates that he/she has read the application and confirms that it is sound with regard to:

(i) educational and/or scientific merit and

(ii) research design and methodology.

This does not preclude the HREC from questioning the research merit or methodology of any proposed project where if feels it has the expertise to do so.

*If the Head of School/Discipline is one of the investigators, this statement must be signed by an appropriate person. This will normally be the Head of School/Discipline in a related area or by the Dean.

* In some schools the signature of the Head of Discipline may be more appropriate.

* The certification of scientific merit may not be given by an investigator on the project.

Name

Position

Signature

Date

b) Conformity with the National Statement

The *Chief Investigator* is required to sign the following statement:

I have read and understood the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007.* I accept that I, as chief investigator, am responsible for ensuring that the investigation proposed in this form is conducted fully within the conditions laid down in the *National Statement* and any other conditions specified by the HREC (Tasmania) Network.

Name

Position

Signature

Date

c) Signatures of other investigators

The other investigators should sign to acknowledge their involvement in the project and to accept the role of the chief investigator.

Name: **Signature:**   **Date:**

Name: **Signature:**   **Date:**

Name: **Signature:**   **Date:**

CHECKLIST	
Please ensure that the following documents are included with your application:	
Information sheet/s (if not attached ensure you have explained why in Section 11)	☒
Consent form/s (if not attached ensure you have explained why in Section 12)	☒
Questionnaires (if applicable)	☒
Interview schedules (if applicable)	☐
A copy of any permissions obtained i.e. Department of Education, Other HREC, Other Institutions (if applicable)	☐
All documents relevant to the study, including all information provided to subjects.	☐
Telephone Preambles (if applicable)	☐
Recruitment Advertisements (if applicable)	☐
Email Contents (if applicable)	☐
Has the 'Statement of Scientific Merit' been signed?	☐
Have all investigators signed the form?	☐

STATEMENT OF CONSENT FORM

Finding home far away from home: place attachment. Identity and resettlement among African-Australians in Hobart

1. I have read and understood the 'Information Sheet' for this study.

2. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.

3. I understand that the study involves about one and half hours discussing my past emotional attachment to places and its impact to my settlement here in Australia. I further understand that with my agreement, the conversation will be taped.

4. I understand that participation involves the risk(s) that past trauma might be triggered and understand that Mr Kiros Zegeye will organise support through the Phoenix Centre or other counselling services should this happen.

5. I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania premises for a period of 5 years. The data will be destroyed at the end of 5 years.

6. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

7. I agree that research data gathered from me for the study may be published provided that I cannot be identified as a participant.

8. I understand that the researchers will maintain my identity confidential and that any information I supply to the researcher(s) will be used only for the purposes of the research.

9. I agree to participate in this investigation and understand that I may withdraw myself or my data at any time without any effect. I also understand that I will have an opportunity to review the transcript of my interview and if I so wish, may request that some or any of the data I have supplied to date be withdrawn from the research.

Name of Participant:
_____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Statement by Investigator

I have explained the project & the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation

Name of investigator _____

Signature of investigator _____ Date _____

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET – Focus group

Finding Home Far away from home: place attachment, identity and resettlement among African-Australians in Hobart

You are invited to participate in a research project that will study whether the way people left their countries of origin and their memories of their homes in their countries of origin and their lives as refugees affect their settlement in Hobart. The project will also study what can be done to support them to settle in Hobart better.

The study is being conducted by Associate Professor Elaine Stratford, Head of School, School of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Tasmania and Mr Kiros Zegeye, a Master of Environmental Management candidate in the School.

Your participation is completely voluntary. If you decide to take part in this research, you will be given a copy of this information sheet to keep and another form called the consent form. By signing the consent form and giving it back to Mr Zegeye, all you are doing is noting that you have said you agree to be involved and understand the risks.

However, if you feel uncomfortable, you may withdraw from the whole study at any time, and may also withdraw any information you tell us at any time up to the point just after Mr Kiros Zegeye shows you the written record of your conversation with him.

Purpose of the study
The study is being undertaken by Mr Kiros Zegeye in partial fulfillment of Masters in Environmental Management in the School of Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of Tasmania.

The main purpose of this study is to see how past emotional attachment to a country of origin affects settlement in Hobart. For example, we will ask you to think about and tell us about places you grew up in and how you identify yourselves and your past experiences.

The study will include 25-35 participants from five major African communities in Hobart namely the Burundian, Congolese, Ethiopian, Sierra Leone and Sudanese communities.

Procedures of the study
This part of our study involves focus group conversations for up to one and half hours. Mr Zegeye will either organise a convenient place to meet or will travel to a place of your convenience to hold the conversations, which will be based on some semi-structured questions that you will be able to see before the meeting. Each focus group is expected to have four to six members and they will be from your country of origin. The discussion will be taped with your permission.

It is important to understand that your involvement in this study is voluntary. While we would be pleased to have you participate, we respect your right to decline. There will be no consequences to you if you decide not to participate. If you decide to discontinue participation at any time, you may do so without providing an explanation. No information will be disclosed to anyone outside the focus group

setting, and you are asked to respect that too. Your name will not be used in any publication arising out of the research. All the records of information you provided for this research will be kept in a locked cabinet in the School of Geography and Environmental study at the University of Tasmania.

Possible benefits from participation in this study

We expect that the findings from this small study will provide valuable information to policy makers, planners and practitioners like doctors, social workers and others working with your community. This information may lead to improved settlement services and hence benefit your community and other humanitarian entrants. It may also provide the opportunity to share experiences with other community and learn from each other. We will also be interested to see if you experience any other benefits from this study.

Possible risks from participation in this study

There are no specific risks anticipated with participation in this study. However, if you find that you are becoming distressed or feel that past trauma is affecting you, talk to Mr Zegeye and he will be able to advise you and arrange support from the Phoenix Centre at the Migrant Resource Centre at no expense to you.

Confidentiality

The interview process will be confidential. To guarantee confidentiality,

- you will be given a false name to protect your anonymity;
- written and taped information of the study will be kept in a locked cabinet in a locked room at the University of Tasmania and be accessible only to the Co-Investigator and Researcher; and
- the information will be stored at the University of Tasmania for five years, after which it will be destroyed by deletion or shredding

Queries about this research

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study please feel free to contact either Associate Professor Elaine Stratford on ph 6226 2462 or Mr Kiros Zegeye on ph 6221 0914. Either of us would be happy to discuss any aspect of the research with you. Once the study is complete we will send or organise to read to you a summary of our findings. You are welcome to contact us at that time to discuss any issue relating to whole study.

This research has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. You will need to quote HREC Reference Number H9954.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this study.
If you wish to take part in this study, please let Mr Zegeye know. He will organise a focus group meeting and provide a copy of this information sheet for you to keep at that meeting.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET – Interview

Finding Home Far away from home: place attachment, identity and resettlement among African-Australians in Hobart

You are invited to participate in a research project that will study whether the way people left their countries of origin and their memories of their homes in their countries of origin and their lives as refugees affect their settlement in Hobart what can be done to support them to settle in Hobart better.

The study is being conducted by Associate Professor Elaine Stratford, Head of School, School of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Tasmania and Mr Kiros Zegeye, a Master of Environmental Management candidate in the School.

Your participation is completely voluntary. If you decide to take part in this research, you will be given a copy of this information sheet to keep and another form called the consent form. By signing the consent form and giving it back to Mr Zegeye, all you are doing is noting that you have said you agree to be involved and understand the risks.

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The main purpose of this study is to see how past emotional attachment to a country of origin affects settlement in Hobart. For example, we will ask you to think about and tell us about places you grew up in and how identify yourselves and past experiences.

The study will include 25-35 participants from five major African communities in Hobart namely the Burundian, Congolese, Ethiopian, Sierra Leone and Sudanese communities.

Procedures of the study
This part of our study involves a conversation between you and Mr Zegeye for up to one and half hours. Mr Zegeye will either organise a convenient place to meet or will travel to a place of your convenience to hold the conversation, which will be based on some semi-structured questions that you will be able to see before the meeting. Mr Zegeye will also ask to tape the interview so we have an accurate record of the conversation.

It is important to understand that your involvement in this study is voluntary. While we would be pleased to have you participate, we respect your right to decline. There will be no consequences to you if you decide not to participate. If you decide to discontinue participation at any time, you may do so without providing an explanation. No information will be disclosed to anyone outside the interview setting.

Your name will not be used in any publication arising out of the research. All the records of information you provided for this research will be kept in a locked cabinet in the School of Geography and Environmental study at the University of Tasmania.

Possible benefits from participation in this study
We expect that the findings from this small study will provide valuable information to policy makers, planners and practitioners like doctors, social workers and others working with your community. This information may lead to improved settlement services and hence benefit your community and other humanitarian entrants. It may also provide the opportunity to share experiences with other community and learn from each other. We will also be interested to see if you experience any other benefits from this study.

Possible risks from participation in this study
There are no specific risks anticipated with participation in this study. However, if you find that you are becoming distressed or feel that past trauma is affecting you, talk to Mr Zegeye and he will be able to advise you and arrange support from the Phoenix Centre at the Migrant Resource Centre at no expense to you.

Confidentiality
The interview process will be confidential. To guarantee confidentiality,
- you will be given a false name to protect your anonymity;
- written and taped information of the study will be kept in a locked cabinet in a locked room at the University of Tasmania and be accessible only to the Co-Investigator and Researcher; and
- the information will be stored at the University of Tasmania for five years, after which it will be destroyed by deletion or shredding

Queries about this research
If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study please feel free to contact either Associate Professor Elaine Stratford on ph 6226 2462 or Mr Kiros Zegeye on ph 6221 0914. Either of us would be happy to discuss any aspect of the research with you. Once the study is complete we will send or organise to read to you a summary of our findings. You are welcome to contact us at that time to discuss any issue relating to the whole study.

This research has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. You will need to quote HREC Reference Number **H9954**.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this study.
If you wish to take part in this study, please let Mr Zegeye know. He will organise a interview time and provide a copy of this information sheet for you to keep at that meeting.

Appendix 2: Interview questions used

1. Semi-structured interview questions (interview)

1. Can you tell me your name, country of origin and how you left your country?

2. How long did you stay as a refugee in a country of asylum and how did you feel at the beginning of that stay?

3. Can you describe to me life as a refugee and tell me how you managed during those times?

4. Looking back can you tell me how you feel about your country of asylum now?

5. Can you describe to me how you feel about your country of origin now and what you miss most (sounds, scenes, food, culture, people…)?

6. Tell me how important is it for you to keep in touch with people and/or places in your country of origin?

7. Is keeping your culture important for you? Tell me why? How do you keep your culture away from home?

8. How do you describe your settlement experience and the support you received in Hobart?

9. Do you think that anything else could be done to improve these services?

10. Do you feel at home here or you think something is missing? What seems to be missing and why do you think that is?

11. Some people from your country of origin who were resettled here have left for the mainland? What do you think is the main reason for their departure?

12. Do you think that you will stay here or leave? Why?

13. Will you ever go back to your country of origin or asylum? What do you expect to get there?

14. Is there anything you would like to add?

2. Semi-structured interview questions for focus group discussion

1. What are the major cause that forced you and members of your community in Hobart to leave your country of origin?

2. Where did you flee to at the time? Was it the same for many people that you knew?

3. How long did you stay in the country of asylum and how was life as a refugee compared to life in your country of origin? Please also comment about how you think life was for members of your community known to you in the country of asylum.

4. How would you describe your feeling toward your country of origin and country of asylum? Do you know if others think the same or are there differences in how people feel? Why?

5. Can you tell me about life in your country of origin, asylum and here in Hobart?

6. What do you miss most from your country of origin or country of asylum? Why is that?

7. Have you been to your country of origin or asylum or will you go back? What do you expect to get there?

8. Tell me about your settlement experience here in Hobart. How are you and your community members settling and what difficulties have you faced? What has been good about this experience?

9. How do you describe the settlement services that supported you at the initial stages of your settlement here in Hobart? Was it similar to the services you know other community members received?

10. In your community are there any cultural activities that you are doing at the moment? Are they important for you? Why? What do you think the community is trying to achieve through these cultural activities?

11. In your opinion what is the difference between settling here in Hobart and other parts of Australia?

12. Is there anything else you would like to add?