



The Barriers of Innocence



**- humanitarian intervention
and political imagination
in a refugee camp for
Burundians in Tanzania**

**Simon Turner
Ph.D. Dissertation
International Development Studies,
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Burundians in Tanzania

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Chapter One - Entering Lukole

Like most foreign visitors, researchers and relief workers, I first saw Lukole Refugee Camp in Ngara District, north western Tanzania, from the air, coming in on a small UN plane from Mwanza some 350 km away. After leaving the sprawling lakeside town, we flew over villages of round huts connected by myriad small footpaths, and finally over what looked like uninhabited bush, before coming to the camp. First, the trees stop and a web of paths emerges, dotted with people carrying firewood to the camp. Then – all of a sudden - the camp begins, defying the surrounding countryside with its straight rows of blue and white huts, its equally straight roads, and its evenly distributed water stands. The neat grid is broken only by a few larger structures. These turn out to be the food distribution centre, where WFP's white Volvo trucks are offloading hundreds of sacks of corn from ECHO and USAID into huge storehouses, and further along, square buildings surrounded by fences. These are hospitals and the offices of UNHCR, NGOs and the camp commandant.

Roughly one hundred thousand Hutu refugees who have fled Burundi since 1993 live on the 950 hectares that have been allotted them by the Tanzanian government. UNHCR is in charge of keeping these people alive, and has created an efficient bureaucratic machine to deal with this challenging task. Every refugee is registered and given a ration card and a clearly demarcated plot with a street, block and plot number. Here, they can build a *blindé* (hut) as long as it lives up to certain regulations. They are told to dig a pit latrine of certain dimensions and at a certain distance from the *blindé*, and they are encouraged to keep their plot clean. They must stay within a four-kilometer zone, and at the time of my research they were forbidden to dig fields within this zone. On the cans of USAID oil they receive, it is clearly marked that the content is not to be sold or bartered. They receive food rations, elementary household belongings such as pots, jerry cans, blankets and plastic sheeting, and they are given free health care as well as free primary school teaching. In other words, they are kept alive and expected to do as little as possible.

To walk around the other side of the camp, however, the impression is quite different. Only from certain angles does one get a feeling of the grid that has been settled over these people. Although one sees the fences, the impression is much like that of any other third world city. There is a hustle and a bustle of people walking, cycling, shouting, drinking, loading sacks of WFP corn onto pickups and bunches of green bananas off the pickups. Young men with shiny shoes and newly pressed trousers tiptoe round the puddles, trying to avoid the ever-present red mud, ostentatiously carrying a pen and a book in one hand. A Rastafarian hangs out with his friend, the cigarette vendor, near the row of hairdresser shops.

The more time one spends walking around, the more varied the picture becomes. One discovers the areas of the camp that are quiet during the day, because all the able-bodied men and women are out collecting firewood or trying to earn a little extra by working for Tanzanians. One discovers the areas where the houses are mere shelters made of grass and the areas where most of the houses are mud brick and big enough to stand upright in. Some people stay near their huts while others spend a lot of time around the market places. But even the market does not represent homogenous space. Some people can afford to sit and drink Pepsi and bottled beer (usually smuggled in from Burundi) and eat brochettes in *La Vedette* and *One One Love Bar*. Others drink *gua gua* (banana beer) from glasses in the less prestigious bars, while most people enjoy *mugorigori* (maize beer) from shared plastic cans in the open air or in improvised shelters of plastic sheeting.

In this thesis I will attempt to understand how two such different pictures of the refugee camp have emerged and how they interact. On the one hand, we have a place that is extremely bureaucratized and controlled by the UNHCR. On the other hand, we have a group of people who have been forced to leave their homes and have been put *en masse* into the tightly regulated and controlled space of the camp. How do these people react? How do they cope? What happens to them as individuals - as groups? These are some of the questions that immediately come to mind. What one does not see on one's first walk around

the camp is Burundi. But when talking to refugees, one discovers Burundi's presence in various ways; as the place of dreams of the future, as the nostalgic memories of a *Heimat* in an idyllic past or as the traumatic memory of ethnic conflict, violence and flight. How do these experiences and memories help shape life in the camp? Burundi also appears in the social structures, hierarchies, norms and habits that the refugees bring with them. What happens when they are no longer of any use, when the social order they have always known and taken for granted is turned upside-down?

As Stepputat (Stepputat 1994) points out, refugees are the victims of the spatial organising of modern nation states. Or in Malkki's words (Malkki 1995a) they are the leftovers - an anomaly - in the attempt to create nations; and they are a global anomaly, since the nation is what she terms a 'hegemonic topography'.¹ The refugee threatens 'the national order of things' through being 'matter out of place' (Malkki 1995b). By belonging neither here nor there, refugees become the residue that threatens to topple the established symbolic order. But the refugee figure is also, as Nevzat Soguk (Soguk 1999) convincingly argues, constructed by nation-states as the 'necessary other' - a kind of constitutive outside. Soguk illustrates how UNHCR's predecessor, the LNHCRC, managed in the interwar period to construct the refugee as someone who 'lacks'. Not only does the refugee lack a home, a nation and citizenship, she is also '*lacking proper agency, proper voice, proper face.*' (Soguk 1999: 243). By producing the refugee as someone marginal and lacking, the normalcy of the 'citizen/nation/state constellation' is also produced. In this way, citizens of nation-states get to have everything that the refugee lacks, and as much as refugees disturb the nation, they also help define it by being what the national citizen is not.

In Tanzanian newspapers and government reports, concern is expressed about security and the environmental situation in 'refugee affected areas'. Similarly, a

¹ This is in line with the main argument in Benedict Anderson's much quoted 'Imagined Communities' where he argues that nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time (Anderson 1991: 3) and '*in the modern world everyone can, should, will 'have' a nationality, as he or she 'has' a gender*' (Anderson 1991: 5).

number of precautions have been taken by the authorities to make sure that refugees do not saturate the labour market. International donors seem to follow this discourse to a great extent – establishing projects to ‘protect’ or ‘re-establish’ the environment or to ‘mediate’ the economic ‘impact’ of refugees. Behind these assessments and projects lies an assumption that the local environment, the local culture, the labour market and crime rates were in balance - at a ‘natural level’ - prior to refugee influx. The most efficient way to prevent refugees from disturbing this balance and natural order is to prohibit all movement outside a 4 km zone around the camp. Thus their seclusion from the nation is clearly marked in space, as we saw from the aeroplane.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is allotted the task of dealing with this ambiguous category by the nation-state members of the UN. Refugee camps can in this sense be seen as an attempt to confine refugees and eradicate ambivalence; a kind of *non-lieu*, not dissimilar to the “seclusion sites” of the potentially polluting *initiands* in *rites de passage*, as described by Victor Turner (Turner 1967). The primary concern of the UNHCR is the camp population, often termed caseloads, flows and other impersonal and bureaucratic names, and the main goal of the humanitarian intervention is to control and contain this “population” while at the same time keeping it alive and healthy. It is the spatial significance of this highly bureaucratised and rational attempt by the UN to confine and control refugees that can be observed when flying over Lukole. However, UNHCR and other agencies are not merely concerned with the physical well-being of the camp population. Women’s empowerment, community development and refugee participation are actively encouraged and promoted by the relief agencies who are keen to apply the newest state-of-the-art policies in humanitarian intervention. We will explore how these interventions can be perceived as a specific art of governing that links to what Mitchell Dean, drawing on Foucault, has termed *bio-politics* (Dean 1999). The aim of this thesis is to analyse how UNHCR governs the camp and, more importantly, how people in the camp try to “inhabit” - socially and imaginarily - this “grid” that has been laid down by the UNHCR.

As the image from the plane demonstrates, the grid is very dominant, forcing people to rework their sense of belonging inside it. On the other hand, we must not assume that the *bio-politics* of the camp regime automatically creates the kind of subjectivities that they are intended to. The conflicting understandings of hierarchy and governing of, on the one hand, the humanitarian agencies and on the other the refugees, come explicitly to the fore in questions of gender, age and social status in the camp. In Lukole, most men and many women complain that women no longer respect the men because ‘UNHCR (or: the white man) is a better husband’. It is UNHCR that feeds them and reduces men to the level of women and children, they claim. This study intends to explore the consequences that this has for social relations in general and for the actions of young men in the camp in particular.

Young male refugees have received very little attention in scholarly discourse and in humanitarian practice². This is partially due to them not being considered a “vulnerable group” and hence not fitting into any of the categories of the benevolent humanitarian agencies. Young men are perceived to be strong and in their prime. This means that the only times that UNHCR and the Tanzanian authorities concern themselves with them is when they break the law, get involved in politics or in other ways cause ‘trouble’ in the camp. Active participation in political struggle disturbs the picture of refugees as passive, helpless victims and it is perceived to disturb the community spirit that relief agencies try to establish. Just as young men are ‘produced’ as ‘troublemakers’ by the way the camp is governed, this space allotted to them is used strategically by the young men who in diverse ways carve out a space for themselves in this new and radically different setting. The structures introduced by the humanitarian agencies are not automatically accepted and reproduced in the camp. The challenges to the established order of Burundi society create certain ruptures and fault-lines in the social fabric of the camp. And as much as these fault-lines may be perceived as a threat by almost everyone in the camp, creating a sense of

² To my knowledge, only Marc Sommers (Sommers 1994) and Cathrine Brun (Brun 2000) have written on the issue.

social and moral disintegration, they may in fact provide new opportunities to certain groups, such as certain categories of young men. In other words, certain social groups - released from the shackles of norm and convention - see their chance to create new spaces for themselves in society. Or, to use the terms of Turner and van Gennep, both the stigmatising and the liberating aspects of *liminality* appear to be amplified for young men in the camp.

The main objective of this study is to explore and understand these complex changes going on in the camp. I wish to explore the social changes taking place and the attempts by various groups to redefine and appropriate the camp and make sense of their new lives. I wish to explore the constructions of friends and enemies, of insiders and outsiders, whereby refugees try to re-orient themselves and find a meaningful life in a camp.

This implies a detailed knowledge of camp life as I got to know it during more than a year's fieldwork. But people do not make sense only in the present. In a camp, where time seems to stand still, the past plays a big role in people's lives in a number of ways. They look back to the past to understand what went wrong, they look back at their traditions and customs for guidance in their new surroundings, and they look back to find explanations. In this way, narratives about the past will play a central role in this thesis. However, we must not assume the past to play certain roles or even to always be important. As we shall see, a large number of refugees in Lukole choose – for a variety of reasons - to forget the past and live in the present.

This leads to the following research questions:

How is the camp governed and how are the refugees classified and constructed in terms of gender in the process? How do refugees interpret the camp and the way it is governed, and how do questions of gender, age and class play into these interpretations? How is ethnic conflict in Burundi imagined in the attempts to make sense of the camp? How is the camp socially and politically reconfigured by these processes and which spaces do young men occupy? This should help us answer the main question: How do young men attempt to make sense of life in

Lukole Refugee Camp, and what sense do they make?

How can we preliminarily conceive the implications of this rather general question? Firstly, when we talk about making sense, we are assuming a fundamental human urge to make sense of one's life and one's surroundings. However, making sense is not based on some universal rationality or on some immanent structure of ordering. When young men in Lukole try to make sense, they draw on a register of discursive elements with which they can order and interpret. As we will see, there are a number of discourses available to them in the camp: from the discourse of community participation of humanitarian agencies to the nationalist ideologies of clandestine political parties operating in the camp. The young men inscribe themselves in one or several of these orders to make sense of their situation in the camp and find – at least temporary – ontological *sicherheit*³. It will be the task of this thesis to explore the ways in which they inscribe themselves into these discourses. We will, for instance, see how they are able, through rumours, to inscribe certain events in the camp into wider discursive formations and hence make sense of these events. Such rumours about singular events also help them make sense of broader issues such as why they have ended up in a refugee camp and why there still is no peace in Burundi. I also intend to show how other narrative forms, such as personal life histories and accounts of the history of Burundi or the nature of the ethnic conflict, are means by which young men in Lukole can explain their destiny while inscribing themselves into broader narratives. Here we see how what may appear to be an individual endeavour of creating meaning and finding a place in the world, is in fact heavily structured by available narratives. These narratives are not innocent, free-floating signifiers. They are imbued with violence and power; the violence of interpreting and the power to authorise certain interpretations and not others.

³ There is no English equivalent of this term that roughly covers the concepts safety, certainty and security.

A striking feature in any refugee camp is the sense that its inhabitants have experienced a radical change in their lives – what Kirsten Hastrup (Hastrup 1990) has termed a ‘catastrophic event’. The physical surroundings, livelihood opportunities, and modes of governing have all changed. One cannot help wondering how social relations and social imaginations must have changed as well. What is more, these changes have all occurred very abruptly, with the choice of packing a few possessions and leaving one’s home often being taken within only days or even hours.

Similarly obvious is the need among refugees to re-establish their lives after the catastrophic event that turned it upside down. When all that is known to them crumbles beneath them, when the myths and ideologies that they previously held in order to make sense of their world are invalidated, new stories and new theories are needed to explain what happened to them and what is still happening around them. In other words, as a counterweight to the disruption and breakdown of known order, new orders are needed. There is a general feeling that they are on the brink of moral and social chaos.⁴ A consequence of the logic of loss is the urge to put something in the place of what is perceived to be lost. A major part of the analysis is concerned with ‘what they put instead’ – i.e. how they attempt to fill the gap and try to make sense of their new situation. This does not imply that what they ‘put instead’ is necessarily meaningful to others than themselves, or that it is consensual. It is contested, and is often about power struggles. I will on the one hand try to understand how people make sense – through rumours, political activity, narratives of the past, etc. – and on the other hand explore what sense they make; that is to say the contents of their ‘sense’. On the one hand, I am interested in the genres of narratives in Lukole. In which ways do refugees create meaning in a meaningless place? How do they create coherence out of an incoherent experience? Do they construct cosmologies that explain everything in the world for them? Do they dig into their past and search for events and clues in ancient history that give them guidance in the

⁴ This is similar to a general feeling of loss of *Gemeinschaft* that has accompanied modernity elsewhere. I will attempt to draw the parallels and differences to broader processes of urbanisation and modernisation throughout the study.

present? Could it be that some refugees merely want to make sense of current, specific events without necessarily connecting them to larger worldviews or cosmologies? Perhaps some refugees are not concerned with narratives that make sense and give meaning, and simply try to get on with life in the camp? Such practical 'getting by' creates order and certainty in itself.

On the other hand, I am interested in what kind of sense they make; the contents of the narratives, ideologies, rumours and discourse that help make sense and provide explanations. Here, we will look at the various competing narratives that exist in Lukole. Most obvious is the dispute over when and why the conflict started in Burundi, as this is fundamental to their present predicament. According to some narratives, the conflict is age old and due to racial differences between Hutu and Tutsi. According to others, it is of much newer date, probably as recent as the 1960s, and due to colonial policies of divide and rule.⁵ In other words, the two narratives draw together different events, using different causal theories to push their point on the cause of ethnic conflict in Burundi and hence their fate in a refugee camp.

The two aspects – *how* to make sense and *what* sense to make – are obviously intermeshed. The narratives that locate the cause of the conflict in an ancient past take the form of standardised historical accounts. On the other hand those who believe the roots of the conflict to be more recent, rarely concern themselves with history and hence do not take on the same narrative form. Similarly, some may inscribe themselves into political ideologies in order to find meaningfulness and a sense of purpose while others may devote their time to becoming a successful businessman in the camp. Their means of making sense differ both in content and in form. Finally, these aspects are interwoven with a third factor: the way in which the struggles to define which version of the truth shall prevail – whose story is to dominate – themselves order the camp. Power struggles between various factions create differentiated space in the formerly homogeneous,

⁵ This dispute runs through most political discourse in Burundi, as we shall see in the course of the present thesis, forcing any political force to take sides in the debate.

meaningless camp, and thus help to make life more meaningful.

A central theme in identity creation would normally be place making. People attempt to find/create a sense of belonging in the place they live, whether that be the nation, the region or the township. For refugees, this relation is somewhat more complicated, and for that same reason, recent studies on migration have resulted in some of the more innovative insights into the relation between place and identity.⁶ In Lukole one does not belong to the place, partially because the camp is judicially and organizationally a temporary site. This means the refugees are put in a waiting position. Apart from that, many refugees do not wish to belong to this place either.⁷ This means that their relation to place is to the lost place of Burundi before flight and the utopia of a liberated Burundi of the future. In the chapters to come we must keep in mind this precarious position of being in *limbo* – a hellish place between life and death, between being and non-being - of being in a non-place (Augé 1995) between the Burundi of one's memory and the Burundi of one's dreams – and of being in a kind of non-time between the ever receding past and the uncertain future. In spite of this, social practices do create social place in the camp, making Lukole a meaningful place, whether the refugees like it or not.

Such constructions of identity, such re-constructions of the past and attempts to fill the gap, do not happen merely on an individual level, devoid of power relations and other social constraints. As livelihood opportunities and modes of governing change, so do the social structures in the camp. People who used to wield considerable influence in Burundi may have had the ground ripped out from under them while others grab the opportunity of the liberating effects of the camp to secure themselves a powerful position. Some have privileged access to livelihoods such as trading with food rations, and some have privileged access to

⁶ (See Anderson 1994; Appadurai 1996; Bowman 1994; Fuglerud 1999; Glick-Schiller forthcoming (2000); Guarnizo and Smith 1998; Gupta and Ferguson 1997a; Gupta and Ferguson 1997b; Olwig and Hastrup 1997)

⁷ Marc Sommers (Sommers 1993) and Liisa Malkki (Malkki 1995a) show that Burundian refugees in Tanzania in the late 1980s preferred not to become Tanzanian citizens when given the option. They opted to remain refugees awaiting the day they could return to a liberated Burundi.

the UNHCR and other agencies, for instance by being employed by them. These shifting relations of power in the camp are of paramount importance to the opportunities of the individual refugees and to the kind of identities they construct. I intend to scrutinise these connections theoretically and empirically.

When dealing with making sense in a refugee camp in Tanzania, Liisa Malkki's seminal work⁸ comes to mind, and it is certainly with humility that I tread this path. I am trying, however, to avoid writing the sequel as they rarely live up to their predecessors. Therefore my focus is slightly different. Apart from exploring the *mythico-histories* that are produced in the camp I wish to situate them in a social and political field. There is an empirical and a theoretical reason for this shift in focus. Empirically, it was my experience that the narratives that were told in Lukole differed significantly from those in Mishamo where Malkki did her fieldwork a decade earlier, both in content and in style. This caused me to ask different questions and to take another theoretical approach in which I emphasise the political nature of the narratives. This is not to say that I doubt the validity of her findings or that I disagree with her approach. Rather, I modestly hope that my different focus, different material and slightly different theoretical approach can shed new light on aspects of Burundian refugees in Tanzania and hence enter a constructive dialogue with Malkki's work that can help develop our understanding of identity formation in exile.

Before outlining my theoretical position and an analytical framework, I will briefly discuss Malkki's work and the points of difference. In the 1980s, Liisa Malkki collected what she has termed *mythico-histories* in Mishamo, a settlement for refugees that had fled Burundi following the 1972 massacres. In Mishamo, isolated in the Tanzanian bush, refugees were obsessed with the past.

In virtually all aspects of contemporary social life in the Mishamo camp, the Hutu refugees made reference to a shared body of knowledge about their past in Burundi. Everyday events, processes and relations in the camp were spontaneously and consistently interpreted and acted upon

⁸ In particular her brilliant book *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* (Malkki 1995a).

by evoking this collective past as a charter and blueprint. (Malkki 1995a: 53)

Due to the normative and moral character of the standardised histories that were constantly recounted in the settlement, Malkki termed them *mythico-histories*.

It [the Hutu history] represented, not only a description of the past, nor even merely an evaluation of the past, but a subversive recasting and reinterpretation of it in fundamentally moral terms. In this sense it cannot be accurately described as either history or myth. It was what can be called a *mythico-history*. (Malkki 1995a: 54. Original emphasis)

To what extent *mythico-histories* are fact or fiction, how much they tell the "true" history of Burundi, is irrelevant, Malkki argues.

But what made the refugees' narrative mythical, in the anthropological sense, was not its truth or falsity, but the fact that it was concerned with *order* in a fundamental, cosmological sense. (Malkki 1995a: 55)

In other words, the *mythico-histories* were intended to restructure a world-view that had crumbled due to immense violence, flight and exile. The old world order no longer gave any meaning so they were searching for a new one in exile.

When I started my fieldwork in Lukole, I was deeply inspired by Malkki's fascinating work and expected/hoped to find Lukole teeming with *mythico-histories* of various kinds. I was especially interested in questions concerning the general nature of the conflict in Burundi, its origins, its causes and the nature of ethnicity. However, narratives of the past were not beautiful and dangerous *mythico-histories* – coherent narratives that were 'spontaneously and consistently' brought up in conversation. There seemed at first sight to be a more pragmatic, non-essentialised view of history in Lukole. And more importantly, people appeared to be relatively uninterested in the past and to present incoherent and contradictory narratives – as opposed to Mishamo's obsessive and consistent narratives. Was this because I was asking the wrong questions, or perhaps asking them in the wrong way? Were the refugees simply not confident enough in me to start telling long narratives about Tutsi invaders from the North who tricked the

Hutu into bondage, about the somatic differences between Hutu and Tutsi, or about macabre acts of violence perpetuated by the Tutsi in 1972?

One day I met a young man who went into long elaborate tales about Tutsi kings that used Hutu testicles for their royal drums, and royal cattle walking on the backs of young Hutu men and women. He also displayed an impressive knowledge of Burundi history, the names of kings, etc. It turned out that this young man had lived in Mishamo and was active in Palipehutu.⁹ He explained how they had taught all the children in Mishamo about their history and their oppression, and he lamented that people in Lukole were too busy doing business and thinking of the present to care about the past. The following day, I interviewed a group of men from the rival political party, CNDD.¹⁰ They were all prominent members of the party and respected ‘big men’¹¹ in the camp, and, being educated and interested in the history of Burundi, they did answer most of my questions on the past. However, they did not spill over with elaborate mythical narratives on Tutsi oppression, but remained quite factual and located the beginning of the ethnic problems to the postcolonial period – probably commencing with the murder of Prince Louis Rwagasore in 1961 .

This episode leads me to believe that the narratives in the camp do not merely emerge from the past that the refugees have experienced, nor merely from the circumstances of life in exile (although this is certainly important). Malkki

⁹ Parti pour la Libération du Peuple Hutu. Founded in the refugee camps in Tanzania in the early 1980s. Was never legalised in Burundi, even with the introduction of a multiparty system in the early 1990s because it was allegedly too radical.

¹⁰ Conseil National pour la Défence de la Démocratie. Founded after the assassination of president Melchior Ndadaye by exiled members of the president’s party, Frodebu (Front des Démocrates du Burundi) who were dissatisfied with the party’s concessions to Tutsi extremists. CNDD and Palipehutu both have armed wings fighting in Burundi, and both are present in Lukole where it appears that CNDD is the largest party.

¹¹ ‘Big men’ was a term that I often heard in the camp to denote someone who had a position above average in terms of wealth or influence. It was opposed to ‘les paysans’ or ‘people in the streets/villages/*blindés*’. These were the ordinary people who had no business to do at the market place, in the schools, at the dispensary, or the NGO offices where the elite worked. According to Marc Sommers, the elite Hutu refugees in Dar-es-Salaam categorise the non-elite Hutu refugees as *watu wadogo* (Swahili for small people) or *watu wachinichini* (very low people). Some non-elite refugees also identified with these labels (Sommers 1995: 21-22)[Sommers, 1995 #63: 21-22]. Ethel Albert distinguishes between the Kirundi terms *abakuru*, the great ones, and *abatoyi*, the humble folk (Albert 1963: 181). To mark the flexibility of the term, I will stick to the expression ‘big men’.

demonstrates that *mythico-histories* were absent among self-settled refugees in Kigoma town. As opposed to the refugees in the settlement, the self-settled refugees were not bothered with ancient kings and Tutsi invasions and were more concerned with their personal life stories in Tanzania. This leads us to believe that the *objective life conditions* (Bourdieu 1984) of the narrator are central to the construction of *mythico-histories*. As *objective life conditions* also differ within the camp, I will explore the social structure and differentiation of the camp in order to link it to various strategies of making sense. So whereas Malkki treats the camp as a homogeneous mass, I intend scrutinising the social structures of the camp. Furthermore, whereas her focus is the mythico-histories in themselves, I will explore how they relate to processes of social change in the camp, both in the abovementioned sense of reflecting different social positions, and in terms of the ways in which such narratives are used in political struggles to gain hegemony in the camp.

This leads me to the second and most crucial difference between Malkki's work and my own. Whereas mythico-histories in Mishamo seem simply to 'emerge' in her account, I contend that they are closely linked to political ideologies in Lukole. This obviously complicates matters for us, as political ideologies are not only formed by conditions in the camp but equally by the political field in Burundi and even global discourses on good governance, socialism, liberation, self determination, genocide, etc. It is such discourses that the narratives in Lukole must draw on. When they talk of Tutsi invaders in Burundi, they are automatically relating to a whole number of political issues in Burundi (concerning the definition of national unity, anti-imperialism, liberal democracy, etc.), dating back to the colonial age. I intend to explore how these issues are tied together in various narratives in the camp and how they relate to these broader issues.

Available political ideologies provide the refugees with master narratives within which they can insert themselves and find temporary certainty. Could it be that Palipehutu's dominant position in Mishamo sanctioned certain truths about the conflict and the reasons for ending up as refugees in the Tanzanian bush? Could

it be that the CNDD's version of the truth is different, and that the lack of a clear winner in the political rivalry in Lukole leaves the field relatively open for interpretations? In order to answer these questions I will need to analyse the power relations between political factions in the camp and relate this to the shifts in the political field in Burundi. It appears that the difference in political dynamics between Mishamo and Lukole is due in part to shifts in the political field in Burundi and hence the position of the Hutu opposition. Given the democratic reforms in the early 1990s, the Hutu opposition had to reformulate their resistance around other issues – rendering the ethno-essentialist liberation discourse of Palipehutu anachronistic and obsolete, and opening the field for other, more pragmatic discourses. Furthermore, the position of the Hutu in international opinion has changed since the 1980s. From being innocent victims of Tutsi persecution, the involvement of the Hutu in killing thousands of Tutsi civilians in Burundi in 1993¹² and the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, has had a crucial impact on the image of the Hutu. All Hutu were now perceived as potential perpetrators of genocide. It is against such a powerful moral order that the refugees in Lukole must try to construct their narratives, and thus create a worldview that gives meaning and frees them from collective guilt. In other words, we must locate the construction of mythico-histories - or the lack of these – in a complex arena of social and political relations, some of which are generated within the camp while others extend beyond the camp.

¹² After the assassination of the first democratically elected Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye, by Tutsi officers on October 21st 1993, Hutu began killing Tutsi indiscriminately. The Tutsi-dominated army was ruthless in clamping down on them. Filip Reyntjens estimates that equal numbers of Hutu and Tutsi were killed following the assassination (as many as 50 000 in all) (Reyntjens 1995: 15). Whether the killing of the Tutsi was a genocide, carefully planned by Hutu leaders or spontaneous outbursts of anger, is heavily disputed (Lemarchand 1996a). This will be dealt with in later chapters.

Chapter Two – approaching Lukole: theory and method

The main topic of the present investigation being how people make sense of their lives, we may now ask ourselves how we make sense of how people make sense. Or to put it differently, although equally cryptically: how do we get to understand how the refugees in Lukole understand themselves and their surroundings? In other words, which concepts and categories are needed before we move into a direct dialogue with Lukole refugee camp? I do not intend to unfold a complete and conclusive theoretical argument at this point.

Rather I intend, in an open and questioning manner, to cast out some lines of thought that I found useful while exploring concrete *problematiques* in my later empirical analysis. In this way, the theoretical concepts introduced in this chapter will function more as a preliminary probing at this point, and some of the more substantial theoretical debates will be relegated to later chapters. Before proceeding to my analytical approach I will outline some of the underlying ontological assumptions in this thesis and reveal the eclectic foundations of the approach. The has no interest in theoretical debates, can choose at this point to go straight to ‘Approaching Lukole’ for an outline of my concrete approach.

Making sense – some theoretical assumptions

When trying to grasp the relationship between the strongly controlled regime of camp administration and the subjectivities that emerge from this, it seems obvious to start with Foucault, who has contributed so forcefully to our understanding of governing techniques and of the ways in which certain subjectivities are produced through these.¹³ However, I have some reservations about the Foucauldian understanding of the notion of the *subject*, which are based in his fundamental understanding of reality. I find that his insistence on staying at the level of discourse prevents him from seeing the driving forces in

¹³ His most remarkable contributions must be *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault 1979) and *The History of Sexuality* (Foucault 1978).

society. Hence, after introducing Foucault's innovative approach to power and governing, I will challenge his understanding of the *subject* from a psychoanalytical angle. This draws on the insights of the Ljubljana school around Slavoj Žižek and includes authors such as Mladen Dolar, Joan Copjec and Renata Salecl who manage to appropriate Lacanian theory for the social sciences. With Žižek I will argue that the subject always fails in its attempts to become a whole subject – just as society is fundamentally split – and that it is the constant attempt to overcome this void that drives the process of *subjectivation*. So whereas Foucault would provide the obvious approach to understanding the way in which the camp is governed, Žižek helps us understand the ways in which people make sense of the camp, or how subjects try to establish themselves.

After outlining the general points of contention, I will elaborate on the Žižekian understanding of the *subject* and relate it to the notion of ideology that is seen to be crucial to our understanding of the term.

As I argued in relation to Malkki, I propose that ideology helps us understand the dynamics of making sense in Lukole. The pros and cons of poststructuralism and psychoanalysis respectively will be discussed and I will plead for a combination of the two. Some words of caution on universality as well as on the question of structural determinism will be introduced by way of Judith Butler (Butler 1993) and Pierre Bourdieu, (Bourdieu 1977).

Governmentality

One of the innovations of Foucault's approach that has contributed to a number of interesting studies in recent years,¹⁴ forcing social science to reconsider power and governing, is his concept of *governmentality*. In 'The History of Sexuality' Volume 1,¹⁵ Foucault (1978) describes the shift from a mode of governing based on sovereignty to a mode (or rather: art) of governing based on *bio-power*.

¹⁴ See (Cruikshank 1999; Dean 1999; Foucault, Burchill, Gordon, and Miller 1991; Rose 1999).

¹⁵ In the final chapters that most scholars forget according to Ann Stoler (Stoler 1995: 20-21).

Whereas sovereign power was deductive, based on the right of the king to take time, money, land and ultimately life, *bio-power* is productive, its main objective being to maintain the wellbeing of the population as a whole.

One might say that the ancient right to *take* life or *let* live was replaced by a power to *foster* life or *disallow* it to the point of death. (Foucault 1978:138)

This is why power for Foucault – at least in modern times – is positive and productive. Mitchell Dean (1999) explains that this shift is due to a shift from sovereignty emanating from above – God and his representatives on earth, the king and the pope – to sovereignty resting in the population itself (Dean 1999:102).

Along with an increased focus on life and a shift away from deductive power to productive power, more and more mechanisms of control and regulation are shifted outside the sphere of the law.

Another consequence of this development of bio-power was the growing importance assumed by the action of the norm, at the expense of the juridical system of the law. (Foucault 1978:144)

This is where ‘the governmentality school’ is so valuable, as it studies these institutions that rule by the norm rather than the law. As Dean points out, the liberal art of government is a double movement of keeping the state lean and keen while expanding governmentality to other spheres; the social services, schools, health care, psychiatry, NGOs, etc. These are perceived by liberalism to be outside the rule of government and ruled by ‘natural processes’. *‘Liberalism might be used to denote those forms of rationality and techniques of government that, in recognizing the existence of these processes, sought to use them to limit the government of the state.’* (Dean 1999). This is where *bio-politics* enters the picture. As Foucault has so amply shown in his various analyses, such ‘natural processes’ become loci of power relations as they are studied, measured, classified and regulated by specialists (doctors, psychiatrists, demographers, town planners). In the process,

these specialists produce knowledge about – and hence create – criminals, delinquents, refugees, vulnerable groups and democratic citizens.

A central issue in Foucault's analysis of power relations is the fact that power is never absolute.

Lastly, they [power relations, ed.] are not univocal; they define innumerable points of confrontation, focuses of instability, each of which has its own risks of conflict, of struggles, and of an at least temporary inversion of power relations. (Foucault 1979: 27)

Multiplicity, complexity and fragmentation characterise discourse and power. This is why there will always be resistance and unexpected reversals in discourse.

...we must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies. (Foucault 1978:100)

Foucault does not (will not?), however, explain why discourse is never complete and power never absolute. Neither does he explain why closure is not possible. What is it that prevents this? As long as he insists on there being nothing beneath/behind/before the discursive or symbolic, he will not be able to overcome this dilemma. Thus nothing in Foucault's theory actually prevents discourse and power from becoming absolute and thus bringing about the end of history. By insisting on remaining at the level of discourse he can do no more than show the contingency of power relations; he cannot explain why they are - and always will be - *necessarily blocked*.

The point that I am trying to make is that as much as we must reject essentialism and any recourse to pre-discursive difference, we cannot grasp everything through analysing discourse alone. To remain at the level of discourse and merely claim that everything is constructed does not help us to understand why the social order is never complete. It does not help us in understanding the basic failure of discourses in becoming a complete symbolic order.

Furthermore, I will argue below that this failure of the system is essential for society to continue to exist. In other words, we are not only interested in why the system fails as a mere philosophical exercise. It is in this failure that we find the drive behind social identity and society as such.

‘The subject is dead’

Foucault argues that people are not equipped with some inner being¹⁶. Thus when the refugees are making sense, we must not allude to rationality but rather to historically produced rationalities (in plural).¹⁷ These rationalities are the product of discursive formations that are created in the interstices of power and knowledge at certain historical moments. In this manner, Foucault completely does away with the subject. Instead, he talks of *subject positions* or the *self*. In his later works, the care of the self became a central aspect, to the extent that the title of the third volume in his History of Sexuality is ‘Care of the Self’. Here he is concerned with, among other things, ‘*the manner in which the individual needed to form himself as an ethical subject*’ (Foucault 1988: 67). The Self is created through practical self-production rather than self-consciousness. ‘*The task of testing oneself, examining oneself, monitoring oneself in a series of clearly defined exercises makes the question of truth – the truth concerning what one is, what one does, and what one is capable of doing – central to the formation of the ethical subject.*’ (Foucault 1988: 68). This production and care of the self is the result of power relations and governmentality, whereby the self is woven into discursive networks.

In Chapter Three we will explore more thoroughly how modes of governmentality operate in the camp, and later we will see how the changing power relations in the camp create subject positions. This indicates that changes in the social-symbolic field in Lukole open up new spaces to be occupied – new subject positions. Such subject positions do not necessarily correspond to individuals. Thus, an individual can occupy several subject positions. In terms of

¹⁶ I am using Foucault as an example here – well aware that these concepts and ideas cannot be attributed to him alone.

¹⁷ In fact, a notion that originates from Max Weber (Weber 1978).

discursive formations, the same individual may even change subject positions according to context.

To posit oneself may have connotations of a free choice, where individuals put on masks for the occasion. This has led to many misinterpretations of Foucault, where the idea of 'multiple identities' and the dictum that 'where there is power there is resistance' (Foucault 1978:95) have led some readers of Foucault to see some kind of emancipatory project in which subalterns subvert power relations through a creative use of identity-masks. The problem with this voluntarist reading of Foucault, seen for instance in the actor-oriented approach of the researchers around Norman Long (Long and Long 1992), is that it reintroduces the idea of an inner being.¹⁸

This relates to another of Foucault's much quoted maxims: '*power is productive*' (Foucault 1978). Relations of power do not inhibit the self from developing its full potential as, for instance, Freudo-Marxists would have it. Power does not only restrict and negate – it produces the self and subject positions. Whereas a Freudo-Marxist double-ontology¹⁹ would posit the will of the subject as limited by the structures of society, Foucault argues that the structures of society go through the subject and produce it in the process.²⁰

To return to the question of people making sense, a Foucauldian approach would – very schematically put – claim that our cosmologies, our worldviews, are the product of the positions that we inhabit in the discursive field. Ideology as mis-recognition, and its inherent concept of there being something 'behind' or 'below' the level of discourse, is rejected (Eagleton 1991: 8) because, as pointed

¹⁸ See also Jeremy Gould's discussion of this position in what he terms the 'constructivist approach' (Gould 1997: ch. 2).

¹⁹ Meaning that the (sexual) drive of the individual is limited by the economic structures of society.

²⁰ Again, this is far from being Foucault's merit alone. It is at the fore of most structuralist thinking. It has also been central to the so-called structure-agency debate where especially Bourdieu and Giddens have been given credit for finding a third way out of the dilemma. I return to this discussion later.

out above, Foucauldian analysis insists on remaining at the level of discourse and practice.

The Foucauldian concept of subjectivation is further elaborated by Judith Butler in *Bodies that Matter* (Butler 1993) where she introduces the concept of *performativity*. This concept helps us understand the mechanisms of internalising norms and the way in which discursive constructions materialise.

Performativity is thus not a singular “act,” for it is always a reiteration of a norm or set of norms, and to the extent that it acquires an act-like status in the present, it conceals or dissimulates the conventions of which it is a repetition. (Butler 1993:12)

Thus when we assume a position as a subject – when performing our self - we do not do so in a voluntarist manner of performance, as if a free agency acts out his rôle. Rather, we are re-enacting norms. The point for Butler is that these norms do not exist outside of the act, and the subject does not exist prior to it. However, performativity ‘acquires an act-like status in the present’ which means that the symbolic/discursive order which we reproduce in the act is concealed; our acts appear as free. In other words, the act appears as theatrical while it hides its own historicity. So when men identify themselves as men, this is not due to some essential function. They are not biologically coded to be men.²¹ Neither are they, however, performing a certain identity of their own free will. Rather, they are compelled to reiterate society’s norms in performing certain identities because they ‘are’ only insofar as they perform these identities.²²

²¹ For this reason Butler does away with de Beauvoir’s classical differentiation between sex and gender. Such a distinction presupposes a pre-discursive, non-symbolised body upon which symbolisation can take place. She argues that sex itself is discursively constructed.

²² Another way to understand the manner in which norms are internalised and made part of people’s own preferences, is given by Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1977; Bourdieu 1984). Using the term ‘taste’, he shows how structures are not to be seen as limits to the room for manoeuvre of agency. Rather structures are enabling actions. In this respect he is very much in line with Butler’s theory of performativity. Bourdieu argues that taste – often assumed to be the epitome of our innermost self – is in fact structured by *objective life conditions*. In this manner, Bourdieu does not merely look at the dominant norms in society as determining people’s taste. Taste also depends on those people’s specific place in society; their class position, for instance.

To sum up, while finding Foucault's concept of governmentality highly innovative and useful for my analysis, I find that the limitations of his conceptualisation of the *subject* and *subjectivation* prevent me from discovering an explanation of what actually 'drives' societal processes such as political activity. Dismissing the concepts of subject, ideology and desire and replacing them with the self, discourse and pleasure, has constituted a necessary break with earlier structuralist understandings. However, in order to enrich our understanding of the important concept of *identity formation*, I will attempt to save the allegorical baby from sailing out with the bath water. This will be done by drawing on recent works in psychoanalysis that offer slightly different and in some cases more penetrating insights into the processes of identity formation. In the following I will attempt to outline some of the main lines of contention between these two theoretical positions and explore how both can help me grasp the issues that I want to explore in Lukole.

Supposing the loss²³

A central theme in psychoanalysis is the idea of an irrecoverable loss; a *foreclosure* (Copjec 1994c: viii). The logic of loss can help us to understand the lack in the symbolic order and the drive of subjectivation. To illustrate the difference between the two claims - on the one hand Foucault simply stating that there is nothing beneath the discursive and on the other hand, psychoanalysis, claiming that this nothing is constitutive of society - we may refer to Freud's example of the original parricide and the primal horde in *Totem and Taboo* (Freud 1953/13).²⁴ He proposes that the origin of '*the most primitive kind of organisation that we actually come across*' (Freud 1953/13: 141), consisting of bands of males with equal rights and a totemic system, lies in an original parricide. The common

²³ This idea of supposing is crucial to Lacanian analysis. Even though, for instance, a whole and knowing subject can be rejected on conceptual grounds, we must suppose a subject for us to understand the process of subjectivation. This will be elaborated in the course of this chapter.

²⁴ Basically Freud is, in an extremely ethnocentric manner, studying the origins of the taboo against incest and the use of totem animals. Taking a starting point in Darwin's theory of a 'primal horde' among 'primitive men' where the jealousy of the oldest and strongest male prevented sexual promiscuity, Freud seeks to find the link to today's 'primitive tribes' and their use of totems.

crime of killing the primal father ties the brothers together²⁵. The point that we can draw from Totem and Taboo is that although the primal father does not exist in the fraternity of brothers, his death was fundamental for this society to exist. His lack is constitutive, or in other words it is the lack of the father that binds the brothers together and compels them to create laws and prohibitions in ‘the name of the father’. Therefore we must ‘suppose’ the primal father. It does not matter whether the father actually existed or if the primal parricide has actually taken place in so-called ‘reality’. It is something that must be re-constructed retrospectively in order to account for the symbolic order of today. As Žizek comments on the primal parricide:

It would be senseless to search for its traces in prehistoric reality, but it must none the less be presupposed if we want to account for the present state of things. (Žizek 1989: 162)

Copjec (Copjec 1994a) explains that while a Foucauldian approach would merely analyse the power relations between the brothers in the primal horde, psychoanalysis proposes that we must split society between its appearance and its generative principle, in this case the fraternity of brothers and the absent primal father. The father is unthinkable for the present society, and he must remain unthinkable for the present society to function. That does not, however, imply that he does not exist. *“Because if we did not posit his existence, we would be incapable [...] of explaining how the brothers came together in this fashion”* (Copjec 1994a: 12). In other words, we must suppose a generative principle of society – a Hegelian antithesis – the underside that ensures the positivity of symbolic order through its negativity. This is where psychoanalysis differs from post-structuralism.²⁶

²⁵ *‘Society was now based on complicity in the common crime; religion was based on the sense of guilt and the remorse attaching to it; while morality was based partly on the exigencies of this society and partly on the penance demanded by the sense of guilt.’* (Freud 1953/13: 146).

²⁶ I am here referring to the term post-structuralism as it is used by Slavoj Žizek (1989) which I interpret to be roughly equivalent to Foucault’s position. Admittedly, this is a caricature and post-structuralism covers a wide range of diverse approaches. In many ways the Ljubljana school is post-structuralist itself as it is the result of rethinking Althusser and Lacan. The position of Ernesto Laclau certainly defies the dichotomy that Žizek tries to establish as Laclau straddles both psychoanalysis and Foucauldian post-structuralism.

In his polemic on post-structuralism, Slavoj Žižek (1989) shows how a re-reading of Lacan and Hegel can help us to understand the *subject* as more than mere *subject positions* while simultaneously rejecting any concept of a *cogito*. He argues that when we have rolled back all the layers of subjectivation, we arrive at an original void. But whereas for post-structuralism the consequences of there being nothing behind subjectivation are unimportant, Lacanian theory, on the contrary, insists that this ‘nothing’ is of utmost importance. The void that is left is constitutive; it is here that we find the *subject of the lack*.

The *subject* is therefore to be strictly opposed to the effect of *subjectivation*: what the subjectivation masks is not a pre- or trans-subjective process of writing but a lack in the structure, a lack which is the subject. (Žižek 1989: 175)

Lacan (Lacan 1994) explains how the fundamental sense of lack is installed in the child in the so-called *mirror stage*. The infant only discovers its ego, discovers that it is a separate being, through reflecting itself in the image of another person. But the image that looks back is a *Gestalt*. It is thus more than the child. This installs in the child at the same time its self-identity and its alienation. While discovering its difference from the mother it also discovers its own imperfections; its lack so to speak. All consequent processes of identification or subjectivation are attempts to fill in this lack and get back to the comfortable, conflict-free world of symbiosis with the mother.

Positioning the subject

Let us briefly explore the Lacanian/Žižekian view on the construction of meaning through difference and ultimately the *subject of lack's* attempts to fill in the void, or lack, and become a whole being.

In anthropology, Frederik Barth (Barth 1969) is generally believed to have introduced the concept of difference in identity formation by arguing that culture is created through boundaries and difference to others rather than through inherent properties in each ‘culture’. At a more general level, the idea of difference being constitutive of identity can be attributed to structuralism and is

carried through in the many forms of post-structuralism that we have encountered in social science recently. Saussure, often named the father of structuralism, showed how the signifier has no innate relation to the signified (*signifiée*). It can only be understood in relation to other signifiers that again can only be understood in relation to others, *ad infinitum*.

Zizek (in 'Che Vuoi?' (Zizek 1989: 87-131)) is in many ways in agreement with Saussure, as he also rejects the idea of meaning unfolding itself from some inner kernel (Zizek 1989: 102) and proposes that there is no necessary link between signifier and signified. However his argument is more explicitly in line with Laclau and Mouffe's (Laclau and Mouffe 1985) when he talks of the free floating of signifiers and how their meaning is fixed retroactively by certain *nodal points* (or what Zizek calls *points de capiton*, literally meaning buttoning points). As there is no inherent connection between signifier and signified, they gain meaning through their relation to one another. And whereas Saussure perceives this relation to be relatively stable, post-structuralism and Lacan alike claim that this relation is not given *a priori* and is always shifting, hence the concept of *floating signifiers*. It is the role of the *point de capiton* or the *master signifier* to connect them to one another. The *point de capiton* stops the metonymic sliding of signifiers and fixes their meaning; it totalises the field. Of the commonly known master signifiers we could mention democracy, feminism, freedom, communism. None of these have a fixed meaning in themselves, but by linking themselves to other signifiers (peace, prosperity, the nation) they retroactively give meaning to themselves and to the others. Such a *point de capiton* or master signifier is not – as one might expect – loaded with meaning. It is 'not a point of supreme density of Meaning' (Zizek 1989: 99). On the contrary, it is merely structural; it is pure difference. It is a signifier without signified. The question in ideological struggle is thus to define which signifier should act as *point de capiton*, fix the floating signifiers and totalise the ideological field.

What is at stake in the ideological struggle is which of the 'nodal points', *points de capiton*, will totalize, include in its series of equivalences, these free-floating elements. (Zizek 1989: 88)

What Žižek further argues – and where he supersedes post-structuralism - is that as the *point de capiton* fixes meaning, it also leaves out remnants. It cannot abolish the metonymic sliding of signifiers without leaving a residue. This is the residue that prevents the total closure of the symbolic order. It prevents an ideology from completely fixing and totalising the field. Hence, an ideology can never become hegemonic. It will always meet contradictions, subversions, cracks and resistance.

Let us try to see this idea of fixing meaning and the surplus that it produces from another angle – the angle of the individual being interpellated into a subject²⁷. To put it very simply, the subject is produced at the *point de capiton* where the subject of lack ‘quilts’, to use Žižek’s image, *the flow of signifiers into* the symbolic order. The symbolic order interpellates individuals²⁸ into subjects. It tells him/her what he/she is. This is where *the subject* identifies with a master signifier that creates meaning, both in relation to other signifiers and in relation to the subject that it produces.

So far, we have argued that the subject is integrated into a given socio-symbolic field through interpellation and that the lack – the feeling of loss - is (attempted to be) overcome by being fixed in the order of signifiers through identification with the big Other (or the Master signifier). Meanwhile Lacanian psychoanalysis takes it a step further, and allows us to supersede discourse analysis.

After every ‘quilting’ of the signifier’s chain which retroactively fixes its meaning, there always remains a certain gap, an opening which is rendered in the third form of the graph by the famous ‘*Che vuoi?*’ – ‘You’re telling me that, but what do you want with it, what are you aiming at?’ (Žižek 1989: 111)

This gap, the doubt that is created in the question ‘*Che vuoi?*’, opens up the symbolic order and prevents its closure. It is here we locate desire and it is here that ideology gets to play a role. But why pose the question in the first place?

²⁷ The term interpellation comes from Althusser. Cf. (Althusser 1994 (1984)).

²⁸ About the term “individual” Žižek comments: *this pre-symbolic, mythical entity [...] is simply a hypothetical X which must be presupposed.* (Žižek 1989: 101)

Here it is important to appreciate the centrality of the Hegelian concept of *recognition* in Žižek's work.²⁹ Our desire is not the desire for the Other³⁰ but the desire for the desire of the Other. Our identity relies on guessing what the Other wants from us. In the quote above, we see how the subject is aware of the interpellation by the Other, but is nonetheless looking for a deeper reason for this. There must be an underlying motive, we think. Therefore, we ask 'Che vuoi?'

Fantasy is an attempt to answer this question. It is an attempt to fill in the void, the gap in the symbolic order that occurs due to this doubt. It is "a screen concealing the gap, the abyss of the desire of the Other." (Žižek 1989: 118). Fantasy does not eliminate or fulfil our desire – on the contrary, it sharpens it and helps to direct it at certain objects. This object cause of desire (*l'objet petit a*) is what goes in and takes the place of the void. In other words, Lacanian thought is built on the idea of a disjuncture, on the fact that interpellation never quite works because the interpellated subject always doubts and never identifies completely. However, this disjuncture is quite horrifying and we try to cover it up. This is done by finding some 'thing' that becomes the object of our desire. We convince ourselves that we will be able to remove this horrifying feeling if only we obtain the object of our desire. Of course this is an illusion, as the object will never be able to close the void. Therefore, the object must be unobtainable (the classless society, national harmony) and/or perceived to be obstructed by some 'other' (the counter revolutionaries, immigrants).³¹

Fantasy conceals the fact that the Other, the symbolic order, is structured around some traumatic impossibility, around something that cannot be symbolized – i.e. the real of *jouissance*: through fantasy, *jouissance* is domesticated, 'gentrified'. (Žižek 1989: 123)

²⁹ See (Hegel 1996 (1977)).

³⁰ Recall that the Other is not an agent but a master signifier, the symbolic order.

³¹ In 'Eastern Europe's Republics of Gilead' Žižek comments on the issue of the other taking something from us: '*What we conceal by imputing to the Other the theft of enjoyment is the traumatic fact that we never possessed what was allegedly stolen from us: the lack ('castration') is original...*' (Žižek 1992: 197).

If we try to perceive this at the level of society, we can say with Laclau and Mouffe that ‘society does not exist’ – society is always split by a fundamental antagonism. What fantasies do – in the name of ideology – is provide a smokescreen, diverting our gaze from the split and promising us a whole, organic, conflict free society. In other words, ideological fantasies cannot remove the crack in the symbolic order – but they can try to conceal the gap. This is what Laclau terms the ‘illusion of closure’ (Laclau 1996).

Enter ideology

During the 1980s in particular, the word ‘ideology’ was almost abandoned in social sciences and replaced by other terms such as discourse. This was in part due to the success of the concept, claiming that everything was ideological (Eagleton 1991: 8; Laclau 1996: 218). In this way the concept lost any particular meaning. Furthermore, the idea of false consciousness, inherent in the Marxist conceptualisation of ideology, implied that one needed a non-ideological position from which to launch a critique of ideology. Althusser believed that this position was in science. With the death of grand theory, it became increasingly difficult to find such a position or metalanguage. However I will – with Laclau and Eagleton – argue that it is necessary to retain the concept of ideology as different to discourse. Laclau argues that:

There is ideology whenever a particular content shows itself as more than itself. Without this dimension of horizon we would have ideas or systems of ideas, but never ideologies. (Laclau 1996: 206)

Thus we may claim with Žižek that the fullness of community is impossible, and that ideology promises to fill the void. But how does it do so? Laclau claims that closure of society, being an impossible operation, cannot have a content of its own. Therefore it is incarnated in a particular object.³² *Incarnation* is when an object goes in and takes the place of the impossible closure. However, such an incarnation must also contain an aspect of *deformation*. The particular object will never be exactly the same as what it incarnates; it will always retain some of its particularity. In other words, ‘*the process of deformation inherent in a process of*

³² Similar to Žižek’s *objet petit a*.

ideological (mis)representation consists of making a certain content equivalent to a set of other contents' (Laclau 1996: 206). When being made equivalent, they are not made identical and hence there is always a slight distortion; the particular works in both directions on the chain of equivalence.

When, for instance, the refugees from one political faction in Lukole claim that the other faction is receiving funds from the Tutsi government, the utterance in itself is not ideological. It merely concerns financial transactions. But when it is – implicitly - linked to questions of the other party being corrupted by the Tutsi and of the Tutsi splitting the Hutu people, it becomes ideological. According to this ideology, the Tutsi are preventing peace and harmony in the camp and Hutu solidarity in general.

Eagleton reminds us that we cannot determine the ideological character of an utterance from its content alone, and that we have to see it in its context (Eagleton 1991). Who is making the utterance? To whom? In which context? Without the right audience and the right context, the utterance 'they get funds from Burundi' would have no ideological meaning. I understand ideology not as fully-fledged worldviews concerned with large issues of life and death. Ideologies are often expressed in fragments, often with reference to very concrete issues but with implicit reference to larger questions of making sense.

Ideological statements, then, would seem to be subjective but not private (...) On the one hand ideology is no mere set of abstract doctrines but the stuff which makes us uniquely what we are, constitutive of our very identities; on the other hand, it presents itself as an 'Everybody knows that', a kind of anonymous universal truth. (Eagleton 1991: 20)

When I emphasise ideology rather than discourse in my analysis it is due to this aspect of deformation, to the fact that ideologies are not merely power-knowledge constellations, fighting it out in a discursive field. Ideology is when there is more meaning attached to the particular signifier than the signified. It is when there is an underlying attempt to cover up the impossibility of becoming a full subject or a full community.

Summing up: historicism and/or universalism in a concrete analysis

Mladen Dolar neatly sums up the difference between Foucault and Lacan (and Althusser) in the following quote

‘...Foucault avoids the notion of Desire and proposes to replace it by an analysis based on ‘bodies and pleasures’. Desire, for Foucault, implies a ‘negative ontology’ of lack and of an Object supposedly detained by the Other, an object that would be able to fill the lack. Pleasure instead of desire, body in stead of castration, the positivity of event instead of the lack, the multiplicity of power relations instead of the Other.’ (Dolar 1998)

From the debate above, the reader may assume that Foucauldian analysis has been rejected once and for all, and the same reader may therefore be rather surprised to notice that parts of the present study draw heavily on Foucault’s concept of governmentality in an analysis of the ways in which UNHCR governs in the camp. However, Lacanian and Foucauldian approaches do not necessarily exclude one another in concrete analysis. As Žižek declares, discourse analysis is in fact a necessary part of our analysis, allowing us to explore the symbolic order of floating signifiers and how the subject is interwoven into this. One can thus see it as a necessary step in our analysis, before proceeding to an analysis of desire and ideology.

But Foucauldian analysis is not just the junior partner in this relationship. It is not just a question of Foucault only being able to see so far and no further, while Žižek’s reading of psychoanalysis offers a comprehensive package, enabling us to understand everything. One of the weak points in psychoanalysis is arguably its analysis of power relations. For this reason, I intend to supplement a general Lacanian approach with Foucault’s concept of power. The symbolic order, into which the subject is interpellated and in which certain signifiers are fixed, is imbued with power relations, and the subject of lack is interwoven into such power relations. Concretely, this means that it will be necessary to understand the power relations in the camp before exploring the ways in which young men in the camp attempt to make sense of it. Or to return to the metaphor of the grid: we must first analyse the grid itself and how it is being put down over the camp.

The Foucauldian concept of governmentality is helpful for exploring the power techniques of the humanitarian agencies in the camp. By not conceiving power as merely restrictive, it allows us to explore the ways in which caring for the refugees, including encouraging them to participate in their own affairs, is imbued with power relations and produces certain effects.

In short, there are three areas where I find that Žižek's interpretation of Lacanian psychoanalysis provides useful understandings of identity formation. The first is the concept of the subject not merely being a full and knowing being, nor a self that is created through performativity or discursive positioning. Rather the subject appears in the impossible attempts to cover up the lack and become what it thinks it should be, or what it thinks that the Master signifier is hailing it to be, thus giving it recognition. This concept of lack proves to be one of the prime movers in the subject's attempts to become whole. Second, psychoanalysis introduces the question of ideological fantasy. Again this is a concept that is more dynamic than those of discourse or power techniques, as it contains an element of desire and – like the subject of lack – is concerned with trying to patch up the symbolic order. Finally, this introduces a fairly nuanced picture of the other – not merely as a question of creating a 'constitutive outside' (as Butler would have it), but as an ambiguous relation to a personified big Other and to an 'other' which is imputed with having stolen from us what we never had.

A critique of psychoanalysis that is close at hand is its universalist tinge. Does Lacan not hold that the Oedipus complex exists in all places and at all times? Judith Butler takes on a constructive critique of and dialogue with psychoanalysis in 'Bodies that Matter' (Butler 1993). Here she points out that Žižek places the contingency of the social field, its inability to have closure, in the Lacanian 'real'. By doing so, she claims, Žižek puts the Law of the Father above and prior to all ideological formations. As long as the Law secures contingency it is not itself subject to contingency.

By linking this "contingency" with the real, and interpreting the real as the trauma induced through the threat of castration, the Law of the

Father, this “law” is posited as accountable for the contingency in all ideological determinations, but is never subject to the same logic of contingency that it secures. (Butler 1993: 196)

Butler holds that this ‘Law’ is itself a contingent ideological creation. The law of castration is a symbolisation like any other. A consequence of Žižek’s insistence that the lack is bound up with the Real and the Law, is that the trauma of the patriarchal family is put on a par with the trauma of the Holocaust or the Gulag. Thus he ignores the social specificity of these very different events. She claims that in Žižek’s understanding:

They are by virtue of this “same traumatic kernel” equivalent to one another as traumas, and what is historic and what is traumatic are made absolutely distinct; indeed, the historical becomes what is most indifferent to the question of trauma, and the political or historical effort to understand the institution of the family or the formation of the concentration camps or Gulags cannot account for the “traumatic” character of these formations; and, indeed, what is properly traumatic about them does not belong to their social formation. (Butler 1993: 202)

Butler pleads for an historical notion of trauma and lack. Following Laclau, she argues that the lack is a result of a disjuncture *in* the social, rather than originating in the Real; i.e. from a universal point beyond the social and historical.³³ For my concrete approach, I find that these ontological disputes have little relevance. Whether or not subjectivation is always-already failed due to a process within the symbolic order or not, is perhaps of minor importance for the outcome of my empirical analysis. However, Butler’s critique warns us against reducing specific, historical instances of loss and trauma to a universal oedipal loss. We are not dealing with modern man’s general nostalgia for a supposedly lost *Gemeinschaft* nor the loss of the mother in the mirror phase, but with a concrete loss experienced by a group of people now in Tanzania. They have lost their homes, their livelihoods and their nation and have been put into the *liminal* space of a refugee camp. This must be kept in mind, as we explore the ways in which people in Lukole try to plug the gap that is rendered open.

³³ For a counter critique see (Žižek 1999: 247-313) (Copjec 1994b).

Although the loss is specific and concrete, and not an abstracted model of a perennial human condition, I nevertheless assume that the logic of loss is important for the ways in which identity is created, and sense re-created, by people in Lukole. That is to say that I expect the logic of identity formation -- driven by the attempts to cover up the loss -- to exist in Lukole, and that this logic will be projected onto their concrete experiences of loss.³⁴ I therefore give the loss considerable attention in this study.

A fundamental analytical tool in neo-Lacanian theory is to 'suppose'. Although there is no subject, we may suppose the subject in order to understand subjectivation. Although there is no loss, we must suppose the loss in order to understand nostalgia and attempts to become whole again. In this sense, I see the new interpretations of psychoanalysis by scholars such as Žižek, Dolar and Copjec – and to a certain degree Laclau and Balibar – as attempting to avoid the universalism of Freud and the structuralism of Lacan. Through 'supposing' they manage to transcend post-structuralism while avoiding recourse to metalanguage.

Mladen Dolar's critique of Foucault's concept of power in 'Where Does Power Come From?' (Dolar 1998) illustrates this point and shows a way forward in our analysis. A central feature about modern governmentality is its ability to diffuse the centre of power. Subjects are meant to become self-governing and expected to create their selves. Law no longer finds its sovereignty in the king, the father or God. Biopower is the power that Foucault so aptly describes as without a centre, as diffuse, as relational, etc. But without a king, doesn't power then become even more dangerous? When there is no place where we can locate power, when God no longer exists, and power comes from everywhere and nowhere at once, the strength of the big Other becomes all the more encompassing, as Dolar argues. Commenting on Foucault's own rhetorical question about the striking similarity

³⁴ The perception that refugees experience massive loss by being 'up-rooted' presupposes that place is essential to human identity. This 'sedentarist metaphysics' (Malkki 1992) tries to universalise a historically specific perception of people, culture and place. In this way, refugees are assumed to have experienced loss *per se*.

between the prison, the schools, the hospitals, etc. in 'Discipline and Punish' (Foucault 1979), Dolar answers '*yes, it is surprising, even astonishing*' that all these dispersed micropowers somehow converge in the overwhelmingly standardised prisons, schools and so forth. He argues that Foucault actually unintentionally introduces an Other that is far mightier than the Other in psychoanalysis.

One could pose a naïve question: doesn't Foucault's strategy of dispersed micro-relations eventually converge in a much more massive presence of the Other than psychoanalysis would ever dream of? A pattern of power where the Master (the King, the Father) may well be absent, replaced by architecture and geometry, reduced to pure function and fiction, yet his empty place makes his presence all the more pervasive and intractable. (Dolar 1998: 88)

Bentham's panopticon is a fiction that is made up of myriad practices and has no Master. However, for it to function – for the subjects to become subject to surveillance – there has to be an element of fantasy '*that refracts all micro-relations and at the same time unifies them*' (Dolar 1998: 89). In other words, it may be that we can analyse power as micro-practices but for them to work, power has to be imagined as centralised and held by the Other.

Power works only if we assume the Other and pawn a part of our being to it (...) this is why one is never in a position to say that it would suffice to get rid of the Other as a deceptive entity... (Dolar 1998: 92)

Thus, when I enquire about the refugees' perceptions of power relations in the camp, it is not merely a vain attempt at getting their 'opinion'. The fact that they locate a centre of power, that they locate an authorial position exercising power, is not merely a curious *méconnaissance* of the fact that power is 'really' fragmented and decentred. This misconception of power, locating it in the hands of UNHCR, the Tutsi or the USA, is actually vital for power to function. If not, the refugees would *behave* as if there were *no* Master and would not subject themselves to power. In short, Foucauldian analysis helps us deconstruct³⁵ any notion of the subject and the Other as transcendental, while psychoanalysis helps

³⁵ I use 'deconstruction' in the commonsensical understanding of the notion, not in the strictly Derridean meaning of the term.

us understand them as powerful imaginary constructs among ‘ordinary people’, and these imaginary constructs have very ‘real’ effects in the camp.

Before approaching the field, I would like to add a short note of caution on the issue of structure and agency. The view of the subject as either being reduced to subject positions, performing its structurally given role, or as being interpellated by the symbolic order as Althusser prescribes, might give the impression of structural determinism. As a gut reaction, very few scholars would appreciate accusations of being excessive in any way, and hence most of us try to find the ‘third way’ in the debate on structure and agency. As I have mentioned earlier, this can give rise to rather vulgar concepts of ‘room for manoeuvre’ or ‘relative determinism’ and the like. Among the more refined solutions one finds Giddens’ celebrated concept of structuration³⁶ and Pierre Bourdieu’s idea of *habitus*.³⁷ Bourdieu’s theory, in particular, provides forceful insights into the issue of socialisation and a strong critique of structuralism. However, in this argument, I find it more fruitful to critique structuralism from the ontological standpoint that has just been outlined.

Whereas Bourdieu³⁸ provides an excellent understanding of continuity without falling into structural determinism, I find that Laclau and Zizek provide an understanding of radical change and of why structures never completely succeed in reproducing themselves. What undermines the determining capacity of structure is dislocation, the fact that certain events evade symbolisation thereby disrupting and blocking the final closure of the discursive structure³⁹. It is in this ‘gap’ that change occurs and it is this gap that drives the ‘subject of lack’ to constantly attempt to create him/herself. In my view, such an understanding of

³⁶ Most elaborated in ‘The Constitution of Society’ (Giddens 1984) but developed in earlier works also such as ‘New Rules of Sociological Method’ (Giddens 1976).

³⁷ As developed in ‘Outline of a Theory of Practice’ (Bourdieu 1977).

³⁸ I will leave Giddens for the time being, in part for practical reasons of not confusing the argument and the issues at stake. Secondly, I believe that he in practice does tend to re-introduce the whole and knowing subject.

³⁹ As mentioned earlier, Foucault’s concept of discourse also opens up for ‘unexpected reversals’, multiplicity of discursive elements, etc., thus preventing a determining structure. However, it is in psychoanalysis that I found the cause of this void in the discursive order.

the subject clearly does away with the idea of voluntarism and a whole and knowing subject, while yet providing an understanding of the centrality that subjectivation and identity formation must have in our analysis. The gap also opens room for politics.

Central to my approach is the concept of politics. Although I am not able to define politics in any conclusive manner, there are several points in the theoretical debate above that point towards an understanding of politics that might be useful for understanding Lukole. At its most basic level, politics may be defined as making decisions in an undefined terrain. Inspired by Carl Schmitt's concept of the exception and the decision (Schmitt 1985), we may argue that the political appears at the point of indeterminacy when norms, customs and habits no longer tell us what to do.

Unlike the normal situation, when the autonomous moment of the decision recedes to a minimum, the norm is destroyed in the exception. (...) The exception is what cannot be subsumed; it defies general codification, but it simultaneously reveals a specifically juristic element – the decision in absolute purity. (Schmitt 1985)

This is when a political decision must be taken. This is, I would argue, only an exceptional case, even an ideal-typical situation, as the political decision is usually already semi-structured by existing ideologies and power relations. In other words, the decisions that the subject takes in the moment of indeterminacy – the opening in the symbolic order – draw on a number of discourses that are already embedded in existing ideological struggles. As argued above, the symbolic order never completely closes, and there is always a degree of uncertainty and indeterminacy. It is in this room of indeterminacy that politics is born. As long as the gap never closes, political forces will try to close it by fixing the signifying process.

I would propose, however, that there are moments where the system is more unstructured than others. In these moments the political expands and any aspect of life can become politicised. A central post-structuralist critique of Saussurean structuralism has been to show that the signified can slide under the signifier. In

this manner, that relation between signifier and signified can change radically in certain situations. In situations of hegemony, a relatively stable relation is established. In crisis situations, what Laclau has termed organic crises (Laclau 1990), this connection is no longer guaranteed and the political field is relatively open for new interpretations.⁴⁰ It remains to be seen whether and to which degree the refugee camp constitutes such a situation.

According to Laclau and Zac, politics differs from other sedimented social forms and presupposes a competition between social forces (Laclau and Zac 1994: 37). This is grounded in the fundamental split in society that I mentioned earlier. Politics is premised on the split between the (impossible) fullness of the community and the ruling order that exists. Politics is the management of the incompleteness of society (Laclau and Zac 1994: 37). In practice this means that various political forces claim to ensure the fullness of the community through totally different means. They may all promise the 'unity of the people' or 'peace and progress' but have very different ways of wanting to achieve these empty terms. It is here that we find political competition and hence power struggles.

To sum up, then, politics can be conceived as the decision that is not pre-structured by habit or culture. It can also be conceived as political practices; that is, the practices of competing political forces, each promising the fulfilment of the community. This aspect will be elaborated on in Chapter Seven in relation to Bourdieu's concept of the political field. Finally, politics can be conceived from the angle of people in Lukole; refugees and relief workers alike. Although we as researchers may perceive politics very broadly, overflowing the confines of party politics, politics has certain associations – positive and negative and sometimes contradictory – in popular discourse. These perceptions of politics are important because they have consequences for the way political struggles are shaped in the camp. To claim that someone's opinions or actions are politically motivated can

⁴⁰ This draws on the work by the group of scholars around Ernesto Laclau. Jean and John Comaroff make a similar point in their reading of Gramsci where they propose a continuum between hegemony as the taken for granted and undisputed domain and ideology as the discursive and disputed moment (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991: ch. 1).

imply that they are based on self-interest, thirst for power and cynical manipulation. This constitutes a perception of politics as profane and sordid. However, we shall also see a perception of politics as clean and sublime expressed in the camp. In this perception, true politics is based on idealism and self-sacrifice. In this vein, political opponents are accused not of being too political but of lacking true political commitment; they are accused of living off politics rather than for politics.

To sum up, I intend in my concrete analysis to combine a Foucauldian and a psychoanalytical approach although they are profoundly at odds at the ontological level, as I hope to have demonstrated here. With their different ontologies and epistemologies they tend also to ask different questions about the world. The choice of theoretical approach depends on the kind of questions asked, and by posing a number of different questions to the material, it is hoped that the approaches will be challenged, stretched and even altered. In this manner, the answers will, hopefully, not be too predictable.

Approaching Lukole – an analytical strategy

From the ontological framework above and from my discussion of Malkki's work, we are now able to outline the central issues that need exploring in Lukole and how to approach them.

My point of entry to the camp will be the picture of Lukole from the air. That is to say that the first step in the analysis – and the aim of Chapter Three - is to explore the camp as 'grid' and try to grasp the bureaucratic logic of the camp. What kind of rationalities do the straight rows of huts express, if any? How do relief agencies and Tanzanian authorities conceive the 'refugee problem', and which solutions do they propose? These are some of the questions that we must ask in order to understand how Lukole got to look as it does.

Central to my enquiry is the question of how refugees manage in this space. But as Foucault teaches us, the refugees are not ready-made agents that react to the

power structures into which they are inserted. These power structures are also productive in the sense that we may expect that the governing of Lukole refugee camp produces certain categories and hence certain subjectivities. In order to operate efficiently and justly so as to manage the camp for the wellbeing of all refugees, relief agencies introduce concepts and categories such as vulnerable groups, unaccompanied minors, women's committees, etc. In this manner, refugees are classified, causing certain effects in the camp, although these effects are not always the ones intended by the agencies, as I will demonstrate in later chapters. As *biopolitics* is not merely based on rules but also norms, we must explore the ways in which relief agencies try to introduce certain norms. They are introduced through everyday practices such as feeding the refugees and organising waste disposal, and are intended to create self-governing *subjects* out of the refugees. Such practices – although believed by the relief agencies to be apolitical and outside the realm of government – create categories.

A forceful achievement of Foucault and 'the governmentality school' has been to dissolve the opposition between government and freedom, enabling us to see how individuals in liberal democracies are governed by governing themselves in accordance with certain norms and values. I will propose that the attempts by UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies to introduce refugee participation and community development in the camp can be perceived as a technique of government. However, I will try not to remain too stuck in my Foucauldian angle and will also look at the ways in which governmentality differs from the kind of liberal-democratic governing that Foucault describes. In other words, I am concerned to remain sensitive to the particular context. This is not to say that ideas of governmentality are ethnocentric and of no use in Africa. Rather, it is intriguing to explore how ideas of participation are enforced in a refugee camp where personal freedom and the right to political opinion are heavily circumscribed.⁴¹ This may be similar to colonial governmentality where colonial

⁴¹ This may even question assumptions about freedom and political opinion in so-called Western liberal democracies.

subjects were not perceived to be fit to enjoy the full rights of citizenship.⁴² Here again we must tread with care, and not allow ourselves to be seduced by the similarities. Despite the parallels, colonial administration worked under a very different aegis, and the language of rights and empowerment has changed a lot since.

Foucault provides great insights into the micro-relations of power and he tells us that power does not have a centre. There is no general staff pulling the strings and thinking up master plans. However, what he overlooks is the fact that people might just believe that power has a centre. And what is more, as Dolar argues, this misconception is necessary for power to work. So when, in Chapter Four, we explore the ways in which the refugees interpret the governing of the camp, it is not out of mere curiosity. Their (mis)conceptions of power relations are vital to the functioning of power, as it has consequences for their actions in the camp. We might claim that there are three different readings of power in the camp. First, relief agencies believe that they are delegating power to the refugees through various participatory approaches. Second, a Foucauldian approach tells us that this is an expression of governmentality. Finally, the refugees themselves perceive power to have a centre and an author, be it the UNHCR, the Tutsi government or the USA.

These interpretations of power constitute the first step in making sense of Lukole for the refugees. When the taken for granted world breaks down, it becomes open to scrutiny, new issues come within the field of discourse, forcing refugees to reflect on them. When I entered the camp, I was met by complaints that the women no longer respected the men, and my immediate reaction was to see it as

⁴² In a recent article, 'The Liberal Government of Unfreedom', Barry Hindess shows how colonial subjects were seen as lacking the capacities to govern themselves. Such capacities could only be fostered through periods of compulsion and discipline (Hindess 2001). For a convincing study of colonial administration in Africa and the distinction between urban citizens and rural subjects, see (Mamdani 1996). In 'Race and the education of desire: Foucault's History of sexuality and the colonial order of things' Ann Laura Stoler argues that it is necessary to understand the history of race and sexuality in relation to the colonial administration in order to understand fully the history of sexuality in Europe. In this way, she argues that it is not merely a question of applying Foucault's concepts to another part of the world but that this movement is necessary in order to understand the part of the world that Foucault claims to investigate (Stoler 1995).

a result of a clash, if not of civilisations then of cultures. In a cultural relativist fashion, one might perceive it as a clash between a hierarchic political culture where respect was based on age, gender and rank, on the one side, and a political culture, based on liberal democratic ideals of equality, on the other. Perceived in this manner, there is a mismatch between the *habitus* of the refugees and the rules and norms of the UNHCR, and this mismatch creates a certain disgruntlement among the refugees. However, such a reading of the situation would oversimplify a complex relation.

Firstly, we cannot assume that the approach of UNHCR is purely egalitarian. Inherent in the attempts by humanitarian agencies to introduce equality are a number of coercive measures. This will be elaborated on in Chapter Three. Secondly, we cannot assume Burundi culture to be purely hierarchic and static. Perhaps gender and age hierarchies were under pressure there as well. In other words, we must avoid opposing a static Burundi society built on sovereignty and hierarchy and a *governmentalised* camp that is governed purely through *biopower*. What we do find in the camp, however, are re-imaginings of Burundi as hierarchic and opposed to the present state of affairs in the camp. There is no doubt that there is a sense of dislocation, and this is interpreted by creating images of a nostalgic Burundi as an antidote to the perceived moral decay of the camp. It is to these images that we turn our attention in Chapter Four. Again, we see the difference between our conceptual framework and the conceptual categories 'out there'. Although we may dismiss the dichotomy between the camp and Burundi, such a dichotomous perception exists as a powerful imaginary construct in the camp.

In order to conceptualise the dislocation that is being experienced and to understand the stories about UNHCR being a better husband without reverting to a dichotomous 'clash' of values, I will draw on Bourdieu's thoughts on *doxa*, heterodoxy and orthodoxy (Bourdieu 1977: 159-171). *Doxa* refers to the world beyond discourse, the social order that is not questioned and not reflected on. It is what '*goes without saying because it comes without saying*' (Bourdieu 1977: 167).

Bourdieu argues that in *doxa*, social order is perceived not as arbitrary – which it is, objectively speaking – but as natural and self-evident, and every social order tends to reproduce the naturalisation of its arbitrariness. It is in crisis situations that the everyday order, *Alltäglichkeit*, is challenged and calls for an extraordinary discourse ‘capable of giving systematic expression to the gamut of extra-ordinary experiences...’ (Bourdieu 1977: 170). This discourse need not undermine *doxa*. ‘Crisis is a necessary condition for a questioning of *doxa* but it is not in itself a sufficient condition for the production of a critical discourse.’ (Bourdieu 1977: 169). This is where *orthodoxy* and *heterodoxy* enter the picture, where the former is an articulated defence of the given order that has now entered the discursive field of opinion while the latter questions this order and points at its arbitrary character. Orthodoxy – what Bourdieu terms ‘straight’ or ‘straightened’ opinion - aims, without ever completely succeeding, at restoring the primal state of innocence of *doxa*, while heterodoxy – heretical opinion – aims at ‘rolling back’ *doxa*. In Lukole, *doxa* has been seriously jolted by violence, flight and the very new objective conditions in which the Burundian refugees live. However much we must avoid constructing a dichotomy between Burundi and Lukole, there is no doubt that the objective life conditions of the refugees have changed radically. Their livelihood opportunities have changed, their physical surroundings have changed and the rules and authorities have changed, just to mention a few things. This disruption of the taken-for-granted order of things, causes what Bourdieu describes as a crisis. I will then explore how orthodox and heterodox opinions appear in the camp. Claiming that women no longer respect men may be an expression of orthodox attempts to return to the ‘good old days’ when gender hierarchies went unquestioned. In terms of the unquestioned authority of the old men in Burundi, however, we find heterodox attempts to role back *doxa* and claim that the privileged position of elders was arbitrary and unnatural. These struggles will be explored throughout the thesis, in particular in Chapter Five where I examine how certain young men manage to outmanoeuvre the gerontocracy and carve out new positions for themselves in the camp. In relation to our general strategy, we may claim that there are some situations that are more unstructured than others. In these situations, the symbolic order is fragile

and a moment of indeterminacy is apparent. This means that politics plays an important role in trying to re-establish order. This will be the subject of Chapter Seven.

A further step in our analysis is to explore the ways in which new senses of order and meaning are created. I have already claimed that Lukole was not teeming with mythico-histories and that the representations of the past that existed were diverse and contradictory. There was no single authorised narrative that dominated the camp. This indicates that the refugees are internally differentiated. This is particularly interesting in relation to the fact that the camp regime has a tendency to homogenise the refugees, treating all equally; irrespective of age, class or gender. Following Bourdieu, we may claim that opinions depend on *objective life conditions* (Bourdieu 1984). In other words, the production of narratives in Lukole depends on the social position of the narrators. Therefore, we must examine the social structures and hierarchies of the camp. This is not a straightforward endeavour, however. Firstly, refugees were socially stratified prior to arrival in the camp. Their position in society depended on gender, age and class amongst other things. In the camp, the material underpinnings are pulled out from underneath these structural positions, and new opportunities to gain positions of power and authority emerge. That means that we must examine how groups that are threatened by this state of affairs attempt to reassert their positions while other groups may take advantage of the structural vacuum to create a place for themselves. As argued above, the unravelling of *doxa* opens the field for heterodox and orthodox opinion. This will be the subject of Chapter Five.

There is an ongoing attempt to position oneself and others in the camp. So although attitudes are linked to objective life conditions, there is no deterministic causal link. That is due to the fact that social positions are created through 'distinctions' from other groups, making these positions relational rather than absolute. In this manner, it is the struggles in the camp to find new positions rather than the mere objective life conditions in the camp that define new groups

and positions. This is in line with my general ontological position, which asserts that economic structures are important but it is political discourse that determines the concrete shape of the social. Let us look at the issue in relation to my critique of Malkki. The fact that she only interviewed elite men in the camp might lead us to believe that she lost out on a number of alternative narratives from other actors in the camp. Her own findings in Kigoma town, where no mythico-histories occurred, confirm that the objective life conditions of refugees profoundly affect the production of narratives. On the other hand, the hegemony of a certain set of mythico-histories probably ruled out any alternative narratives in Mishamo camp. Palipehutu's dominant position as the only political party created a monopoly on political opinion and, I would suspect, on mythico-histories. This indicates, firstly, that we must explore the possibility of alternative narratives, depending on the objective life conditions of the narrator. Secondly, it points to the importance of political struggle within the camp, as it is this struggle that determines the shape of narratives in the last instance.

To introduce a new complexity, I will argue that social positioning itself produces meaning. Or to put it another way, as much as ideologies that are produced in Lukole differ according to the position of the narrator, social position itself is not absolute, and finding one's place in these relations is in itself a way of making sense. In Chapter Seven I will explore the struggles to define the social and political order of the camp. The theoretical issues involved will also be elaborated on, as I will use Bourdieu's concept of the political field to approach the ways in which politics is used to make sense of the impersonal space of the camp. Furthermore, I will show how rumours and violence become important means of creating a differentiated and meaningful space.

A main argument in this study is that politics matter in the camp. That is to say that when people in Lukole attempt to make sense of life in the camp, the stories that they tell do not just emerge from their present situation. Neither are they merely the result of previous experiences. As I have argued with Laclau and Zizek, they come to them in the shape of discursive formations, which are loaded

with meaning already, since they have a past and are closely tied up with existing positions and power relations in the political field. These positions are constantly being challenged and revised, occasionally changing the political landscape in Burundi radically. It is in relation to this landscape that the refugees must position themselves. As argued above, the political is disputed and is involved in power struggles. It is in the political field that the signifier is assigned a signified, or to put it more simply, that certain versions of 'the truth' are fought over.

Concretely, this means that we must leave the camp for a while and examine how Burundi has been imagined historically. This will be the subject of Chapter Six. In this way, we are able to see how the dominant political discourse in Burundi explains the ethnic conflict and the ideal Burundi nation. We will also explore the various positions taken by the Hutu opposition during the period under discussion. I will argue that these positions set the limit for the way the refugees can perceive Burundi, position themselves and make sense of their present situation in a refugee camp. When making sense in Lukole, the refugees may draw on a repertoire of imaginations of Burundi.⁴³

Politics can also be the internal political struggles of the camp where various groups fight for power and recognition. Although I conceive of politics as broader than party politics, we cannot ignore the rival political parties in the camp. It is my intention to interrogate the complexity and fluidity of the power struggles in the camp as they flow in and out of formal politics. Personal networks, rumours and access to resources all influence these processes. Party affiliation is used by groups and individuals in the struggle to gain access to power, recognition and turf, and is often linked to violence. But party affiliation is also about making sense of the camp and finding a purpose in life for many young men. Finally, it is my intention to explore the relations between these internally generated politics and national politics, as these are interrelated.

⁴³ The political field shapes their options but the relatively open nature of the political field and its appropriation in the camp setting preclude any structural determination.

Internal power struggles are linked to the two parties in the camp and hence by default to certain positions in relation to larger conceptualisations of ethnicity, the Burundi nation, etc.

I argue with Žižek and Laclau that ideologies provide solutions to the problems of the refugees, as they promise to plug the void and re-establish harmony and wholeness. It is therefore necessary that we search for the available ideologies in the camp. However, ideology is far from always ready-made and all-encompassing. The political parties – or at least Palipehutu – may provide such an ideological framework that gives an explanation to virtually everything. In Lukole, however, ideologies are far from fully-fledged. People may settle for less in the concrete situation; something that might explain a specific event only. I will therefore investigate such ideological fragments, which often appear in the shape of rumours and conspiracy theories. As mentioned, this is the main subject of Chapter Seven, although certain aspects will be taken up in Chapter Eight as well. I will, in other words, be looking for ideologies at different levels and seeing whether or not they feed on one another, or in other ways link up to each other. These ideologies are used in the internal power struggles in the camp, they are used to make sense of the camp and they are used to make sense of Burundi. In relation to the latter, they are also a part of the power struggles in Burundi.

Although focus is on making sense in and of the camp, Burundi still looms large, not only in the repertoire of discourses as mentioned above, but also as memories of the past. Through life stories, I will explore in Chapter Eight how Burundi is remembered and represented. Here issues of violence play a central role as the life stories must relate to issues of being victims or perpetrators of violence. Even if they have not experienced violence themselves, they must relate to it for several reasons. First, because it explains why they fled and hence helps them position themselves as true victims. Second, they must relate to the collective guilt of the Hutu who are implicitly accused of being *génocidaires*. Their own experiences might not make immediate sense, but by inserting themselves into master narratives they find coherence and a certain sense in their stories. This

relates to my general claim that individual experience is mediated by available ideology. Similarly, when people in Lukole find it hard to explain the fact that their Tutsi neighbours were friendly people, ideological formations give them the answers and fill the gap between their personal experience and the stereotypical picture of a Tutsi.

Through these various ways of approaching Lukole, as well as Burundi and the refugees' memories of conflict and flight, I hope to cover the complex picture of the exceptional place that Lukole constitutes and perhaps bring us closer to an understanding of how young men are affected by the camp, how they try to find a place in the camp and how they try to make sense of it.

Entering Lukole – a fieldwork experience

I lived in Ngara for two years from mid-1996 to mid-1998. Having initially planned to compare the Burundian and Rwandan refugees in the district (more than 500 000 Rwandans lived in Ngara District in 1996), I had to re-adjust my research project when the Rwandan refugees were forced to leave Tanzania in December, 1996. I decided instead to concentrate on the remaining 100 000 Burundians who, after the Rwandans left, were moved into one single camp: Lukole. Until then Lukole had held only 20 000 refugees.

Getting access to the camps was not straightforward. The camp was legally under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). So apart from a general research permit from the Tanzanian Commission for Science and Technology, I needed a special permit to enter the camps from the MHA, Director for the Refugee Department in Dar-es-Salaam. These permits were then presented to the local MHA representative, the camp commandant. Finally, approval from UNHCR was needed. Security was an issue that UNHCR and the Tanzanian authorities took very seriously in the camp. Therefore, I was advised to always carry a radio handset and I was not permitted in the camp after dark. (In practice, however, I usually switched off the radio and put it out of sight.) It is in other words not easy to enter a refugee camp in Tanzania as an individual

without being posited by a number of bureaucratic practices. Thus, when I entered Lukole, these instances had already marked and named me to a certain extent, although there was still room for ambiguity in the way the refugees' tried to interpret my position in the camp. This ambiguity worked to my disadvantage as well as to my advantage.

I entered Lukole on my own, a piece of paper in my hand with the name of someone who might be interested in employment as an assistant. The advantages were clear: My car did not have the stickers of any agency on its sides,⁴⁴ and I was free to some degree to create my own position. There were, however, certain drawbacks to not having a clearly defined status in the camp. Since I could not be categorised as either aid worker, consultant (they never stayed more than a few hours in the camp), or government representative, people in Lukole made their own theories about me. Some thought I might be a spy sent by the Tutsi who are smart enough to send a *muzungu* (white person) instead of a Tutsi (whom they would recognise at once). This kind of rumour was, of course, very disquieting for me as it seemed obvious that nobody would be interested in confiding in a Tutsi spy.

A more comfortable role ascribed to me by passers by in the camp was that of a White Father. 'Komera Padre!' the children would shout. 'Hello Father!' Fortunately, my interpreter and guide was a great help in trying to explain my intentions in the camp. Not only because he managed to translate and explain my purpose in a language that they could understand, but also because he could vouch for me. Being a respected person in the camp whose word carried a lot of weight, he vouched for my identity and initiated me into the camp.

My assistant was a thirty year old man who spoke four languages (Kiswahili, English, French and Kirundi), had finished secondary school and had worked as

⁴⁴ Johan Pottier discusses this issue (Pottier 1996: 404). He claims, however, that 'no one wanders around freely' and that the only access is through UNHCR or NGOs. I actually succeeded in transgressing these biases, perhaps because I took the time needed as opposed to consultants and other visitors.

an accountant in a school in Burundi. He was in no way an unbiased, neutral actor in the camp. On the contrary, it soon turned out that he knew a great deal about what was going on politically, something that initially bothered me. However I soon came to terms with this, and learned to use it as a resource rather than a hindrance. As virtually everyone in the camp is forced to support one of the two political parties, Palipehutu and CNDD, it is doubtful whether I could have found an English speaking person who was not involved. Of course, I could have used a local Tanzanian since Kihangaza (the language spoken in Ngara area) is very similar to Kirundi. But the chances of gaining trust and confidence would have been virtually nil in such a case. My assistant's authority, the respect he enjoyed and the number of people he knew from all layers of society⁴⁵, helped remove the refugees' suspicion towards me.

As might be clear from the above, suspicion was a relatively big problem when doing fieldwork. With the Burundian government implicitly accusing refugees of being *génocidaires*, they obviously were not interested in recounting anything about their own involvement in any kind of violence in Burundi. Political parties and military training in the camp were obviously sensitive issues, as all political activity in refugee camps was banned by the Tanzanian authorities. In order to counter such suspicion, I chose not to ask about politics for a long while. The question of politics was brought up bit by bit by my assistant who started explaining camp politics to me and organising meetings with leaders of both parties. His confidence in me opened an access route to Lukole that at first sight had appeared barred. However, although he gave me a visa to the camp, he did not issue a *Laissez Passer*. There are still areas on my map of Lukole that remain *terra incognita*. If, indeed, there were military activities in the camp, as it has been alleged several times by NGOs and human rights organisations,⁴⁶ I never saw any evidence of it, and no refugee ever told me openly about it. But unlike

⁴⁵ As opposed to many other members of the elite who treated uneducated refugees with a certain amount of contempt, he was open and friendly towards everyone. He would always show respect to the old women and joke with street kids.

⁴⁶ E.g. International Crisis Group 1999.

criminal investigators, it was not my task to uncover what really happened, but rather the refugees' representations of what happened.

When discussing politics with them, I soon discovered that it was most fruitful to discuss politics in general, either in Burundi or in Lukole. As soon as I started asking concrete questions about leadership structure, taxation, meetings and so on in the camp or about their own personal involvement, they would laugh and start talking about other issues. In fact, as long as the discussion remained at a general level, many young men were very eager to discuss the conflict, its causes and its possible solutions with a stranger like me. Often this kind of discussion occurred after I had finished interviewing them and had asked them (more out of politeness than anything else) whether they had any questions for me. I expected them to ask about Denmark, my family or perhaps to ask for funds, and I was rather taken aback when they asked what I thought could be the solution to the conflict in Burundi. This furthermore taught me not to underestimate poor, marginalised peasants' awareness of international issues. They were often more up-dated on world affairs than I, and would compare the situation in Burundi with South Africa, Sierra Leone or Congo and would wonder why USA was not helping them in Burundi.

In terms of the roles that I was assigned in the camp, they soon – after shedding the first suspicion – saw me as a resource; a kind of link to the 'big nations' and the 'important people'. Generally, in Lukole there is an acute sense of being isolated and left to oblivion in the Tanzanian bush. As it will appear in this study, there is a sense that the Tutsi are deceiving the international community; this fuels a strong urge to get 'the truth out' to the 'big nations'.

To sum up, the original suspicion towards me as a 'wild card' was gradually replaced by a certain amount of trust, thanks to my assistant. People began to find debating with me interesting and asked me to return. They saw my presence as a chance to gain access to the outside world, so that the 'big nations' might hear their side of the story. Sensitive issues such as the nature of the conflict and

its solutions and political opposition were often discussed after the formal interview. However, I am sure that there are aspects that I never got to know about the camp, and I am convinced that it is my duty to leave some stones unturned and let people represent themselves as they wish to represent themselves. This does not imply that I have to be loyal to their intentions when representing them in my own text.

Generating knowledge⁴⁷

Although fieldwork is of utmost importance to my research, knowledge is also produced using other sources. Statistics from UNHCR, various surveys and maps provided ample information on the camp to be used as a kind of baseline with which I could compare my own findings. UNHCR policy papers, evaluations and other reports will also be scrutinised in my analysis of bureaucratic procedures in the camp in Chapter Three. Finally, my analysis intends to go further than the camp. The information from the camp needs contextualising in order to have any value. Hence an analysis of Burundi's history will be based on academic literature as well as on government documents. An analysis of the political parties in Burundi will in part also lean on such literature as well as various government and opposition publications, homepages, etc. I will discuss the specific problems of using these kinds of sources concretely in relation to the actual analysis, where I also will show the dilemmas of writing Burundi history. History in Burundi is a very contested and politicised arena where one risks being dragged into what René Lemarchand calls the 'meta-conflict' (Lemarchand 1996a: ch. 2), namely the conflict over what the conflict is all about. Instead of merely trying to strike a balance, finding the 'third way', I will treat the past historiographically. That is, I will analyse the way the past in Burundi is produced, be it in political or scholarly discourse.

⁴⁷ The term 'generating knowledge' recognises the fact that knowledge is not there beforehand. It is generated in the encounter between researcher and researched. It is not objective and it is a product of power relations. But it is knowledge, nevertheless, and cannot be dismissed on the grounds of being subjective and biased.

Fieldwork did not only generate the central core of knowledge in the thesis. It also dictated the degree of methodological complexity. I have carried out around 100 formal interviews in Lukole in the course of roughly a year. Many of these were group interviews. Group interviews had the advantage of setting in motion discussions among the refugees. Gender issues triggered heated debates in these circumstances between men and women. Equally the respondents would use these sessions as an opportunity to discuss world politics, peace negotiations and prospects for the future of refugees with the *muzungu*. On the other hand, one does tend to lose sight of the individual with group interviews. There were also political reasons for not isolating individuals for interviews. If someone was known to have talked to me on their own, they risked being suspected by their neighbours of telling me about sensitive issues (Marc Sommers, pers. Comm. 1998).

After an extended period of exploratory fieldwork, ‘mapping’ the camp, I interviewed a selected number of young men individually. At this point in my fieldwork it was possible to select a suitable group of young men that would cover the different ‘types’ that I found relevant. I also knew enough about the camp to know which questions to ask and how to ask them. They were interviewed individually, often in a neutral place like a bar (although one explicitly wanted his cousin to be present during the interview), and the aim of the interviews was to collect their life histories. Life histories helped me understand how people try to make sense of their own lives. Through recounting their own past, they retroactively impute coherence and causality into a contingent past (Bourdieu 1988). Furthermore, they tend to fit their own biography into larger, national narratives that add authority to their past (Das 1995; Fuglerud 1999). This will be discussed more thoroughly in the context of concrete analysis in Chapter Eight.

As a final step in mapping the camp, I carried out several surveys. Thus I did a survey of all of the street and village leaders in order to get a profile of the leaders in Lukole. What is their average age? What is their educational

background? Are they really all men or are there a few women among them? Does language proficiency help? Similar surveys with similar objectives were carried out among substantial and representative sections of businessmen and NGO employees (school-teachers, community mobilisers, health assistants, and so on).⁴⁸ In order for such a profile to be of any relevance, however, one must have a baseline survey of the average population with which to compare.

In April 1998, I carried out a survey of 464 refugees above the age of 16.⁴⁹ The objectives of the survey were twofold. Firstly, I wanted to create a kind of baseline that could function as a means of comparison for my other surveys and for my qualitative analysis. In that sense, it is the ultimate expression of ‘mapping’ – although it is not ‘mapping’ in the explorative sense as surveys tend to be rather rigid, fixing all kinds of local variations and fitting them into their preconceived categories.

The second objective of the survey was to compare in a more systematic way objective life conditions with perceptions.⁵⁰ When discussing issues in the camp, refugees would often give their own explanations of a specific phenomenon. Such theories/generalisations/hypotheses could also be contrived by myself in the course of my many qualitative interviews and informal talks. I could get ‘an impression’ that most refugees – irrespective of their own background – were very concerned about education, for instance. This could (ideally) be substantiated or modified by the survey.

Finally, large amounts of knowledge have been generated through informal discussions in my car, on the way to a meeting; in bars, drinking beer; in the

⁴⁸ For the questionnaires and a discussion of the methods and the pros and cons of these surveys, see Appendix B.

⁴⁹ In Appendix A I reflect more on the technicalities of the survey, as well as its strengths and weaknesses.

⁵⁰ Inspired by Pierre Bourdieu’s *Distinction – a Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Bourdieu 1984). Very shortly, Bourdieu argues – on the background of an extensive qualitative research of French taste (from museum visits to choice of car) – that a person’s or a social group’s *objective life conditions* (which could be class, education or region) shape (not in a deterministic way) their *habitus* which in turn shape their perceptions. This is a rather simplistic picture of Bourdieu’s highly sophisticated theory. However, for our purpose this is sufficient.

queue at the clinic; going round the market, trying to find *samoosas* to take home to my children. It was often in these situations that I got a very different version of things than in formal interviews. It was in these situations that we would discuss the latest news from the radio where most of them listened to BBC, VOA, RFI and a number of other channels in order to keep up-dated on Burundi. We could also discuss 'news' about the camp management; food rations decreasing or a new NGO arriving. Other events in the camp were also discussed on an informal base; someone had been shot in the night, the security guards had caught a spy from Burundi, the camp chairman in Lukole B had received a death threat. It was while discussing such issues that rumours would arise. At first, I considered rumours to be a mere distortion of reality, something that got in the way and put funny ideas into people's heads, preventing them from listening to real information and acting accordingly. This is basically the approach of the humanitarian agencies in the area, who see rumours as a menace. I discovered, however, that rumours hold a wealth of insight into the way people make sense of their lives and their surroundings. Rumours express ideological fantasies in fragmented form when people attempt to make sense of their immediate surroundings and link them to larger ideological narratives. This will be scrutinised more carefully in the final chapters of this study.

The questions

A central theme in the interviews revolves around the changes that the refugees saw in society after arriving in the camp from Burundi. As mentioned in relation to my theoretical concepts, loss is a central theme in the constant attempt to construct identity and become a whole subject. Who or what do Hutu refugees blame for their loss? What are the symptoms of loss that they identify? And what is the cure, according to their narratives?

Another theme concerns the past. The past appeared in several contexts. It could provide answers as to why they had ended in a refugee camp. The past could also be painted as an ideal picture against which to contrast the hopeless situation of the camp. As mentioned above, when refugees 'construct' the past, it

is not a question of building whatever construction, they like. Ongoing local and national power struggles are involved, so that competing versions of the past exist in the camp, and individuals are constantly trying to adjust their personal life stories to larger narratives so as to find some kind of meaning in their past. In this way, questions about the past took on a number of forms, from personal life histories to asking about the ancient past in Burundi to nostalgic accounts of the way life used to be then and there, as opposed to here and now.

Questions were often concerned with very concrete events, as the interpretation of such events revealed the ways in which refugees made sense of their surroundings. Finally, sense was not just made through narratives, it was also made through action. Therefore it was important for me to enquire about livelihood strategies and other forms of action.

From Narrative to Text.

When discussing the problems of transcribing tapes, translating and quoting interviews, we implicitly refer to the problems of distorting the truth. Interpreters not only interpret the language but also interpret the meaning. Taping an interview reduces a rich conversation with facial expressions and gesticulations to a mere soundtrack (Buciek 1995). And transcribing the tape reduces tonality of voice – expressing enthusiasm, doubt, dislike, anger – to a mere string of words in a word processor. Some researchers attempt to catch the richness of an interview by recording their interviews on video. Others attempt to make up complex systems of incorporating pauses and changes in tonality in the written transcript. And among anthropologists it is often still considered a must to master the local language and avoid the filter of an interpreter.

Many of these approaches and debates are marked by attempts at finding technical solutions to the problem of ‘distortion’ in transcribing and editing text. In this sense, the editing process is exiled from the cultural context. As we know from hermeneutics, the interview is not a neutral situation where we are given access to the truth about someone or something; it will always be a result of an

interaction between interviewer and interviewed. Ethnographers broadly acknowledge this but somehow editing is not seen to be part of this process. It is reduced to technical problems outside the interview process. As Allen Feldman (1991) notes, the so-called “new ethnography” claims that editing (including transcribing from voice to writing) is a betrayal of the “dialogical” nature of the interview.

The so-called postmodern discourse of the "new ethnography" is decidedly *not* poststructuralist, Derridean, or Foucauldian [...] A good deal of the "new ethnography" discourse is concerned with the recuperation of presence as embodied by the fieldwork encounter (which is a naive reading of this encounter). This discourse reads the textualization process as an analogue of the Marxist theory of alienation, where the producer (the informant) is alienated from his product (discourse) by the ethnography. (Feldman 1991: 284)

He argues that this misunderstanding derives from believing that editing is separate from the encounter, merely because it takes place at a later point in time and in a different place. Feldman argues that editing is an integral part of the construction, reconstruction and simulation of context. *‘The dialogical relation does not require the physical presence of the other...’* (Feldman 1991: 12).

He further argues that if we talk about the distortions that take place in editing, we also assume an authenticity in the first place. And as Feldman says, referring to life-histories:

Yet if the self is the referential object of the life-history recitation, then it is interpellated by the discourse and cannot be prior to it. No discursive object exists outside of, or prior to, a discursive formation. The self is always the artifact of prior received and newly constructed narratives. (Feldman 1991: 13)

Thus, the problem with much of the ‘new ethnography’ is that it assumes a self behind the layers of discursive representation. It assumes that we can (if only we are open minded enough and give the people voice enough) excavate this original self from the debris of representation. Feldman’s argument is that there was no self before discourse. Fuglerud launches a similar critique of

'anthropologists within the relativist tradition' who tend '*to retain the concept of self as a pre-reflexive structure of agency but argue that both the constitution of this structure and the fact of human experience itself is radically variable*'. (Fuglerud 1999: 175). Instead, we should see the self as self-representation, he argues. In this way the self becomes one of the objects about which we speak, rather than a speaking subject. This is in line with the ontological assumptions outlined above; namely that the subject only exists through an act of (failed) interpellation.

If we endorse the arguments above, do we not end up in a kind of total relativism where anything goes? Where do we draw the line between fact and fiction? If we accept that there is no truth out there to be found, and that the text we produce will always be our own and loaded with subjective layers of interpretation, can we then do what we like with the speech we encounter in the field? Again Feldman provides some useful reflections.

[N]either the informants discourse nor the theoretical discourse of Western academe (Foucault, Nietzsche, Hegel, etc.) are reducible to each other. Neither sphere of discourse functions as a metalanguage; rather, they transform each other through a fictive interface. (Feldman 1991: 284)

So neither the discourse of the informant nor the discourse of academia can grasp reality in its totality, and neither is privileged. But they can dialogue, and both are transformed in the interface. In other words, my theoretical understanding is challenged and transformed in the meeting with other understandings. And hence fieldwork is worth the effort, in spite of us not attempting to reach an authentic, privileged source of knowledge.

It can be argued that a central aspect in testing the validity of qualitative research is to "convince". We cannot generalise our data, and we cannot prove them. But through a decent treatment of our data, showing a consistent use of terms and methods, through transparency and thoroughness, we can try to convince the reader of our argument. Unfortunately, this is not of much help to the social scientist, struggling with transforming a vast amount of fieldwork into words on a piece of paper. As Liisa Malkki comments:

Whenever the anthropologist wants to say that a collectivity holds X belief or Y value, it is necessary either to use statistical and survey methods (with their own well-known limitations) or to make ethnographic generalizations which *convince* by showing how particular or idiosyncratic observations exemplify wider patterns. The problem of representation is, at this point, tied to that of representativeness [...] But which particularity is to be privileged? Which specific statement will be quoted? (Malkki 1995a: 56, my emphasis)

She does not provide an answer to these questions and mentions that it must depend on the nature of the research in which one is engaged. The narratives that she encountered were unique in the sense that they displayed a great deal of recurrence and uniformity. The task for her was to find a way in which she could capture and represent a “feel” of the repetition and thematic unity of the narratives. This was done by presenting ‘narrative panels’ which were standardised versions of narratives that she had heard time and again in slightly different versions.

Similarly, the narratives that I came across in Lukole demand their own style, if I am to convey not only their content but also their tone and feel. I have chosen to represent the narratives that I heard in Lukole in a number of ways, depending on the argument that I am trying to put forward. When discussing the general feeling of loss in the camp in Chapter Four, narratives are represented in fragments of statements about issues that are relevant to my point. The narrator’s background is of less relevance than the prime subjects of analysis, namely the ‘tales of decay’.

But it would not be enough to represent the refugees as having one voice, or to remain at the level of representing them through fragments of statements. For instance, when exploring strategies for recapturing Lukole in Chapter Five, three young men are presented as examples. They are presented in all their complexity as individuals fitting more or less into various social groups, strategies and narratives in the camp. In this way, we get to see the complexity of relations between the different levels and also get a feel of how differentiated Lukole actually is. In the course of my analysis, I use a number of other ways of putting

refugee narratives into text as well, each time shedding light, hopefully, on new aspects of life in Lukole.

Contextualising

A final note on creating texts concerns the matter of context. What we feel that we need is a good, thick description of the camp as context, as the ‘background’, the ‘scene’, the ‘setting’ where action takes place. This is often perceived as factual and descriptive, and our main task therefore lies in giving as thorough and broad a picture as possible. This is, however, not always easily done in practice. We tend to forget that a certain “description” or “picture” of the camp can feed into a negative discourse on refugees as hapless victims, or of the camp as a place where people are so spoiled by UN food rations that they spend their time getting drunk and organising clandestine political parties. Giving a description of the camp that corresponds with my own truth but simultaneously does not have “unintended consequences” is no easy task.⁵¹ A glance at my field notes gives an impression of the complexity. One day I see only the mud, the scabies, the malaria, the dehumanising queues of people outside food distribution centres, the extreme control by UNHCR, the boredom, the waiting and the empty eyes. The next day I see the market place with all its diversity of colours and scents, reflecting the imagination and ingenuity of the individuals, the cleanliness of the huts, made of mud bricks and old USAID oil cans, the smiles, the singing. How do I put this into one text? How do I strike a balance and give an unbiased general view of the camp as context? The question is whether such a balance is possible or even desirable.

Is there “a context” to be related? In line with the discussion of Feldman, we must accept that there is not one context to be related, and the consequence of this must be that we describe the refugee camp as we interpret it. I would argue that in our description of a certain locality – as with all other representations –

⁵¹ Ann Schlyter (Schlyter 1999) reflects on the ethical dilemmas of representing Africa without feeding into one or the other hegemonic discourse on Africa as either dystopian or naively romantic.

we are guided by explicit or implicit ontological assumptions, and we must therefore be aware of them structuring our text, and must make them explicit to the reader. In my concrete case, I hope to be able to draw up several 'contexts', reflecting the different approaches to the camp. Most importantly, I hope on one hand to provide the feeling of an extremely organised and bureaucratised camp that gives the sense of homogeneity and monotony, while on the other, I hope to portray the complexity of the camp as it is lived by its inhabitants.

Chapter Three – Governing Lukole

Lukole is in many ways an exceptional space. Around 100 000 people with very different backgrounds have been crammed into this small area in the Tanzanian bush, where they are taken care of by high-profile international organisations and subjected to a number of extra-ordinary rules and regulations. They are not allowed to involve themselves in politics, leave the camp, work or (at least formally) barter their food rations. They are given food and water and healthcare free of charge irrespective of whether they used to be a minister, a peasant or a street kid in Burundi. In a sense the camp is like a super-compressed urbanisation process, if it were not for the free food and the restrictions on movement and political and economic initiative, and if it were not for the temporary character of the camp.

The whole point with refugee camps is that they are temporary – exceptional spaces that act as a parenthesis in time and space, where refugees are kept on ‘standby’, neither in one nation nor the other, until a ‘durable solution’ can be found and they can be reintegrated in the national order of things. But, as opposed to the *liminal* space of ritual seclusion sites, there is no time limit on the limbo that they find themselves in and neither is there any guarantee that they will eventually be aggregated into society again. This exceptional space is full of paradoxes. On the one hand, Lukole is chaotic and unstructured while on the other hand it is extremely ordered and bureaucratised. Seen from the perspective of many refugees, there is a sense of social and moral breakdown and chaos. Seen from the outside, Lukole is far from chaotic. It represents ordered space, governed by quite specific rationalities and bureaucratic practices. It is this governing of Lukole and the kind of space and subjectivities that it produces to which we now turn.

We will start our entry into Lukole from the air. From here, we see the straight lines, the food distribution centres and the UN and NGO offices. I will attempt to map this bureaucratic grid that one sees from a bird’s eye perspective, since it is this grid that the refugees must relate to and make sense of. In this manner, I introduce the camp and its construction by relief

agencies and Tanzanian authorities. We will also explore the bureaucratic practices of UNHCR and other agencies in their day to day 'care and maintenance' of the refugees and the consequences this has for the ways in which the refugees are 'framed'. At first glance, the governing techniques of relief agencies appear to be limiting the refugees' room for manoeuvre. However, framing need not be restrictive or negative, as new categories and subjectivities are produced in the process. Of particular interest here is the question of introducing participation, women's empowerment and community development in the camp. I will argue that the restrictive practices of governing refugees and the introduction of refugee participation are both means of governing. The strengths and limitations of perceiving participation as a kind of bio-politics will be discussed, as we explore the limits of the concept and identify the specificity of the camp. Finally, we will see what consequences it has for the way refugees are constructed, particularly in terms of gender.

The chapter will fall in three parts. In the first sections, I will illustrate how the UNHCR and other agencies were able to efficiently establish and maintain a camp with a population of 100 000, ensuring that basic needs were met. Against all odds (this poor part of Tanzania lacked basic infrastructure such as phone lines, roads, clean water, housing, offices and electricity) this incredibly efficient bureaucratic machinery manages to keep the refugees alive and healthy.

Secondly, we see how humanitarian agencies in recent years have become increasingly keen to do better than merely cover basic needs. They fear that their own efficient humanitarian assistance – coupled with an assumed breakdown of refugee community due to war and flight – has produced a 'dependency syndrome' amongst recipients. Inspired by debates in development aid, notions of participation, community development and women's empowerment have become central policy concerns in humanitarian relief work.

In order to grasp these trends, I will make a short excursion into Foucauldian conceptualisations of governmentality and Barbara Cruikshanks' concept of

the 'will to empower'. This will shed new light on the ways in which the UNHCR governs through participation.

Finally, we will explore the ways in which participation is implemented in Lukole and its consequences in relation to politics, security and gender. I will argue that introducing participation is a means of depoliticisation and that politics is construed as sordid and linked to insecurity while participation is linked to 'the community' in UNHCR discourse. This also genders the refugees, as women are perceived to incarnate the ideal community spirit while (young) men mean trouble in the guise of politics and insecurity.

Constructing Lukole



Map 1: Lukole A and B 1997 (Source UNHCR)⁵²

The map of Lukole Refugee Site, drawn by UNHCR's site planner, gives the impression of extremely well organised space. The plots are of equal size and square in shape. They are arranged along good, broad feeder roads and are a

⁵² What here is called Village A and B in Lukole A, I refer to as Lukole I and Lukole II elsewhere in order not to confuse it with Lukole A and B.

far cry from the chaotic 'lived' space of squatter camps and *bidonvilles* in this part of the world. The uniformity of the dwellings (at least from a bird's eye perspective; the picture on the ground changes considerably) gives the impression that people have very little say in planning their space. It also gives the impression that efficiency and bureaucratic rationality are the driving forces behind planning.

Zygmunt Bauman (Bauman 1989) evokes the picture of a gardener to portray bureaucratic rationality. The 'garden vision' of society is one in which planners seek to improve society through a scientific, rational plan. Quite akin to Foucault's idea of bio-power, the rationale behind the gardener's vision or 'the dream of legislative reason' (Bauman 1991: 20-26) is not to oppress the population but to optimise it⁵³. Commenting on scientists that lent support to the Holocaust, Bauman claims that:

The quoted scientists were guided solely by proper and uncontested understanding of the role and mission of science – and by the feeling of duty towards the vision of good society, a healthy society, an orderly society. (Bauman 1991: 29)

These scientists and planners believe in the 'supreme and unquestionable authority of Reason' (Bauman 1991: 20). This urge to improve the human condition through a rational, scientific plan results in social engineering of the kind, so characteristic of modern society, that underpins the design of Lukole. The site planner, the water and sanitation officer, the logistics officer, the environment co-ordinator and the security officer are all keen to make sure that the 'caseload'⁵⁴ is managed in the most optimal manner. Their models are based on scientific theories and past experiences of planning camps around the world for almost fifty years.

However, if we take a closer look at the camp, we see certain inconsistencies in the spatial planning. Thus space reflects social action (Harvey 1990) but is

⁵³ In his chapter on 'Authoritarian Governmentality' Mitchell Dean actually carries out a Foucauldian analysis of the Holocaust which is not dissimilar to Bauman's (Dean 1999: 131-149) – despite Bauman's heavy inspiration from the Frankfurt school.

⁵⁴ One of the bureaucratic terms used in UNHCR discourse. Others include 'relief operation, feeding figure and influx'. Bauman describes how the use of impersonal concepts makes it easier for the bureaucrats involved to make unpopular decisions (Bauman 1989). It is easier to cut down the food ration for a caseload than it is for women, men and children.

also has a dynamic of its own that affects the social (Massey 1992) (Pred 1986; Simonsen 1993). In this case, the spatial lay-out of the camp reflects previous planning practices and compromises between various social actors. Space represents a 'time-lag' reflecting social actions of the past. In later chapters, we will also see how the refugees attempt to appropriate the 'space' of the camp and make it into their own 'place'. The cracks in the planner's order can be seen in the differences between Lukole A and Lukole B in terms of lay-out and plot size. If we are to understand this, we must look at the negotiations and compromises that have been made during the history of Lukole's construction.

The criteria for planning camps change according to the theories that the planners work by. At times they believe that it is important for the refugees to live in streets and at other times in 'villages'. In this manner, Lukole B is partitioned into such villages while Lukole A is partitioned into streets and blocks because Lukole B was originally part of another camp – Lumasi – which was inhabited predominantly by Rwandan refugees prior to January 1997. The camps for Rwandans were organised according to village, *commune* and *prefecture* in Rwanda. As the leaders from Rwanda moved with their constituencies, they re-established themselves as leaders in the camps, making it convenient for UNHCR to administrate. UNHCR later abandoned this policy because of the ethical dilemma of supporting leaders who had helped plan the genocide and because these leaders' grip on the population was so strong that they could actively defy UNHCR activities.⁵⁵ Lukole, on the other hand, was planned according to a logic of mixing refugees and allocating them plots according to time of arrival. Thus, one can read the administrative past in the physical space of Lukole. Criteria, scientific managerial reasons for planning and practical compromises change over time, resulting in the present camp being constructed according to (at least) two principles. If we delve more into the history of the micro-politics involved in the set-up of the camp we will see that much of the appearance of rational

⁵⁵ UNHCR pursued a policy of encouraging Rwandans to repatriate but sensed that the leaders and other 'intimidators' were intimidating 'ordinary refugees' to remain in the camps so as to ensure a power base and a hiding place in exile. On one occasion, when the Tanzanian authorities tried to arrest a genocide suspect, a riot broke out and several humanitarian staff members were taken hostage.

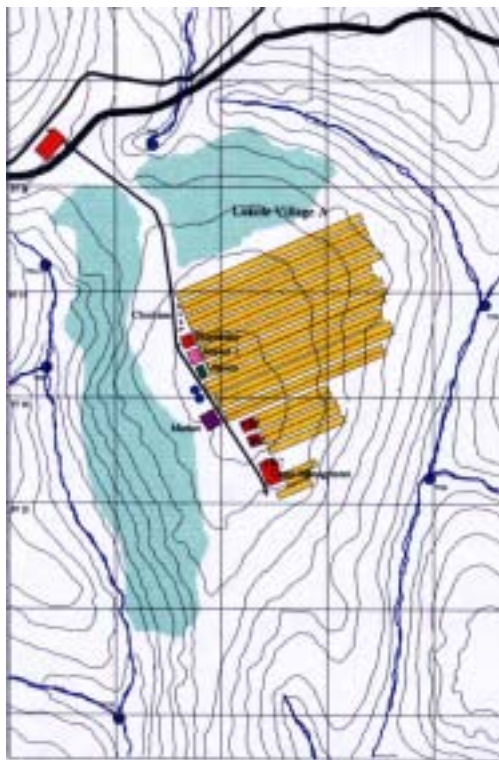
planning is created retrospectively in the reports and maps of NGOs and UN agencies.

Ideally (that is, according to the ideals of legislative reason), the location of the camp is chosen according to, among other things, accessibility by road, ground conditions, environmental considerations and concern for the host population. Specialists were employed by UNHCR to produce expert knowledge on each of these concerns. Thus, the water and sanitation officer would find it preferable for the camp to be in a location that does not flood in the rainy season, and where it is possible to dig latrines and graves. It is also the duty of UNHCR's environment unit to try to ensure that camps are not placed in close proximity to game reserves or virgin forest and other fragile ecosystems. In terms of logistics, however, it should preferably be located near a road that would withstand heavy traffic – even in the rainy season. Finally, refugee camps are perceived as causing problems of insecurity and competition for resources such as firewood if placed too close to local villages. In practice, however, many of these conditions were incompatible, and compromises between the various expert units within UNHCR needed to be made. For instance, game reserves are often far from human habitat, forcing UNHCR to choose between two principles or to compromise on both and put the camp halfway between the village and the reserve. It would be beyond the scope of this thesis to analyse in detail the power struggles and compromises that take place at the unofficial level. However in the following brief history of the camp I will attempt to illustrate some of them.

Apart from contradictions within the UNHCR system which led to compromises between various experts, local political agendas also interfered with the bureaucratic dream, as did unexpected refugee movements in and out of Tanzania, due to changing political situations in Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire (DRC). In interviews and private conversations,⁵⁶ UNHCR staff would often express their frustration with the Tanzanian authorities' interference,

⁵⁶ Much of the ethnographic material in this section is based on informal talks with Tanzanian and expatriate staff whom I encountered in my 'spare time' in Ngara town. At the time, I was not enquiring about governing techniques or looking for bio-power. We would merely discuss the issues that concerned them, such as obstructive Tanzanian authorities, problems with other agencies or with headquarters, refugees cheating, the dilemma of motivating refugees to participate and of promoting gender equality in a male dominated population.

which forced them to make decisions against their own intentions. When the Tanzanian authorities decided to more than double the caseload, the site planner expressed his fury and frustration to me, saying that it was not so much because it created disorder in his orderly maps, as because he worried about the wellbeing of the population. He was aware that it would make life tougher for the people living in Lukole, possibly resulting in higher morbidity rates. However, his choices were limited and he drew the last maps in 1997, recreating the straight lines and almost equal sized plots – only on a smaller scale. And the gardener’s vision lived on.



Map 2: Lukole A 1994 (Source: UNHCR).



Map 3: Lukole A, 1995 (Source: UNHCR)

The maps show how Lukole refugee site⁵⁷ has developed. It was established in January 1994 as a response to the refugees that had fled Burundi after the assassination of president Ndadaye in October 1993. Originally, the caseload was 8000 refugees. This number grew as a number of Burundian refugees in Rwanda also arrived in Tanzania in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Some of these were put into Lukole (as can be seen from map 3 from 1995), others in mixed Rwandan/ Burundian camps in the district. During the following two years, the figures fluctuated, but as the situation in Burundi worsened the number grew steadily. In 1995, Palipehutu launched attacks in Muyinga province, starting a genuine guerrilla war just across the border from the Ngara district. Tens of thousands of peasants from this province fled to Tanzania in 1995 and 1996, and were mostly placed in Kitali Hills and Keza camps some seventy kilometres away.

Earlier, Tanzania had hosted Burundian refugees in large self-sufficient settlements in sparsely populated parts of the country and had been

⁵⁷ Mostly, I call it a refugee camp rather than a site, as this was the term most commonly used by refugees and relief staff alike.

commended for its approach⁵⁸. However with the huge numbers of refugees arriving from Rwanda in 1994, the country adopted a stricter attitude, and the camps were oriented towards 'temporary care and maintenance' rather than self-sufficiency. Land was only made available for housing and not for agriculture, and the Tanzanian government and UNHCR encouraged repatriation rather than integration (Mendel 1997: 43). This meant that most of the camps in Ngara District housed close to 100 000 refugees. Lukole at first had a special status as semi-permanent (see map 2), with a smaller population and larger plot sizes than the other camps. In conversations with UNHCR and NGO staff in 1996, I found they would always portray Lukole as the ideal camp, wishing that all the camps could be like that. However, the picture changed radically in 1997.

In December 1996 and January 1997 the Rwandan refugees in Tanzania were forced to repatriate. Following their repatriation, all the Burundian refugees who had been staying in camps with Rwandan refugees were gathered into one camp: Lukole. The majority came from Kitali. In spite of complaints from humanitarian agencies that the population density in the camp was now causing a health hazard, the Tanzanian authorities pushed ahead with plans to place close to 100 000⁵⁹ refugees in a camp that in late 1996 had held less than 20 000.

Simultaneously, the Tanzanian authorities prohibited refugees from growing crops inside the 4-km zone around the camp. Previously, they were able to supplement a meagre diet of maize, beans and cooking oil with crops that they were more accustomed to. From January 1997, they were only permitted to grow vegetables on their allotted plots inside the camp where they were

⁵⁸Allen Armstrong, for instance, concludes in an article on the settlements that '*Refugee settlement schemes in Tanzania [...] in many respects, represent models of integrated rural development.*' And he goes on '*real progress has been made by the agencies concerned in evolving relevant approaches to planning, design and management of settlement projects.*' (Armstrong 1990: 204). Likewise, Charles Gasarasi concludes in a report on the tripartite agreement between UNHCR, the Tanzanian government and LWC (Lutheran World Council) that was the backbone of refugee settlements: '*The picture [...] is one of considerable success.*' (Gasarasi 1984: 49). See also (Christensen 1985), (Armstrong 1991) and (Anthony 1990).

⁵⁹ In March 1997 UNHCR carried out a registration of all refugees in Lukole (A and B). Here the total population was 98,371, as opposed to the planning figure of 107,985 before registration. The same report claims that the feeding figure as of April 30th, 1997, was 101,957 (UNHCR Sub-office Ngara 1997).

also expected to build houses. These measures were intended to increase the 'push factor' in refugee repatriation efforts; in other words the logic was that refugees might decide to remain if life in the camp became too comfortable. Thus, the camp turned from being a 'semi-permanent' refugee site in 1994 and 1995 to being a 'temporary' refugee site in 1997 (maps 1, 2 and 3).

The refugees from Kitali were relocated to Lumasi; a camp right next to Lukole that had been vacated by Rwandans in December 1996. Some of these were moved a second time to plots in between the existing plots in Lukole. For every original street in Lukole, two new streets were established in between the old ones. However, due to pressure from UNHCR, the remaining caseload was allowed to remain in Lumasi. In order to maintain the official policy of relocating all Burundians to Lukole, Lumasi was renamed Lukole B (UNHCR Sub-office Ngara 1997: 1).⁶⁰ In March 1997 there were roughly 57 000 refugees in Lukole A and 42 000 refugees in Lukole B. During the second half of 1997, the Tanzanian authorities carried out a massive operation to 'flush out' illegal immigrants and refugees staying in villages in the border region⁶¹. They were given the choice to repatriate or go to the camp. In the camp they were allotted plots in separate villages in Lukole B, along with new arrivals from Burundi.

This shows how humanitarian agencies' attempts to plan and govern the camps according to rational criteria of cost efficiency and helping the most people in the best possible way (reducing morbidity and other physical suffering, providing protection, assisting in education, respecting human dignity) were impeded by local political agendas as well as historical contingency. Planning refugee camps can be difficult when 'caseloads' fluctuate due to new 'influxes' and 'waves' of repatriation, as they have done in the Great Lakes Region over the past decade.

From this we may conclude that Lukole was constructed as a result of various, sometimes conflicting rationalities. The Tanzanian government was

⁶⁰ In the following I will use the official terms Lukole A and B.

⁶¹ The accounts that these people told me of the way that the authorities had acted were horrific, and the operation has been strongly criticised by Human Rights Watch (Human Rights Watch 1999).

worried about the destabilising effects of refugees as ‘matter out of place’ and tried to impede their movements, while the international agencies were concerned with a number of scientific-managerial aspects (health, nutrition, environment, logistics, security). This led to a number of compromises, but as the maps reveal, planners attempted to keep the managerial dream alive. That is their only option after all.

Counting, controlling, catering

The highest legal authority in the camp was the Tanzanian Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). That is to say that the camp was outside the authority of the regional and district commissioners and in principle completely separate from the local government structures. The camp commandant was the Ministry of Home Affairs’ representative, and he answered directly to the MHA in Dar-es-Salaam.

As the camp was in a secluded site, outside the legislation of the ‘normal’ national territory of Tanzania, movement in and out of the camp was controlled and restricted by the camp commandant. While Tanzanians could freely enter the camp (where they would go to the market, which was the largest in the district or to the clinic for treatment), refugees needed special permission to leave a four-kilometre zone around the camp. Foreigners – NGOs, missionaries and myself, the only researcher – had to obtain permits from the MHA to enter the camp. The Tanzanian authorities also had the right (which they occasionally used) to declare a person working for a humanitarian agency *persona non grata*.⁶²

In other words, the camp commandant had the right to exercise negative, deductive, legal power in the shape of bans, restrictions and sanctions. Imposing bans on tree felling and setting four kilometre zones were obviously means to prevent deforestation but equally signals to the outside world that the large numbers of refugees from Burundi, Rwanda and DRC were putting Tanzania under great strain. Thus the ‘environmental impact’ of refugees was

⁶² In 1996, when the Rwandan refugees were in the country and the authorities were desperate to have them repatriated, some international staff were forced to leave because they had become too friendly with the Rwandans and were ‘obstructing repatriation efforts’.

evoked again and again (Environmental coordinator, UNHCR, pers. comm.) to signal that the international community had a responsibility. Such signals were also directed to a Tanzanian audience that was being fed with articles in national newspapers on the negative impacts of refugees in 'refugee affected areas'.⁶³ Furthermore, such legislative power – based on the basic threat of deducting, as Foucault would say – is used as leverage in negotiations with UNHCR.

The picture given above may cast Tanzania's policies in a rather negative light, as if the Tanzanian authorities express, in Foucauldian terms, a negative, legalistic and deductive kind of power as opposed to the positive and productive bio-power of UNHCR. It is beyond the scope of this argument to give a detailed analysis of Tanzanian policies. However, one might expect that policies towards refugees are a result of the government's techniques of governing its own population and of stabilising the nation-state. Inspired by Victor Turner and Mary Douglas, Liisa Malkki describes how refugees are perceived to pollute the national fabric and therefore must be contained in *seclusion sites* (Malkki 1995a). Or as Nevzat Soguk claims, managing displacement is a means of 'making refugees' and hence also making their opposites; national citizens (Soguk 1999). In other words, secluding refugees is a means of stabilising the citizen-nation-state constellation. Taking my cue from these thoughts as well as Bauman's idea of 'controlling weeds in the garden' we may conceive the refugee as an anomaly, disturbing the 'national order of things' while simultaneously reaffirming the nation by being its 'abject other'. Thus by restricting the movement of refugees and limiting their rights, the Tanzanian government is actually reaffirming the rights that it provides its own nationals; it is confining and secluding a danger to the environmental balance, the labour market, general stability and prosperity, and even the national identity of Tanzania.

⁶³ In a randomly selected number of articles from the national dailies *The Guardian* and *Daily News* in November-December 1996, when Kigoma region experienced a high influx of refugees from Zaire and Burundi, the Regional Commissioner warned Tanzanians against hosting refugees privately and urged that they be resettled in camps. Among the effects and impacts of refugees that were mentioned in the papers were: epidemics/health risks, food shortages, hike in prices for consumer goods, crime/banditry, personal and national security, the environment, and power and water supplies. (Daily News 13.11.96, 14.11.96, 16.11.96, 21.11.96, The Guardian (Tanzania) 14.11.96, 16.11.96, 21.11.96, 26.11.96, 03.12.96).

The fact that UNHCR controls the funding (right down to lending vehicles to the Tanzanian police and donating fuel for them) and has the backing of international donors (upon whom Tanzania also greatly depends) indicates how important UNHCR and other relief agencies are for the governance of the camp. In fact the day to day business of living - organising registration, food distribution, health, education, building roads, etc. - is taken care of by relief agencies. And although the restrictions imposed on refugees by the MHA are very visible, the productive governing of the refugees by relief agencies has effects which are at least as strong. While the MHA is basically concerned with containing the refugees, the relief agencies are more directly involved with their lives, making their interventions more relevant for my study.

In general UNHCR and other relief agencies were there in order to help the refugees. However, in order to do this in a way which made sense and ensured that everyone was treated as fairly as possible, a bureaucratic machinery was unavoidable. Through private conversations with relief workers I sensed the frustration that they felt, on the one hand wanting to help victims of war and people in need while on the other hand feeling forced to spend most of their time controlling the refugees and making sure that every loophole in the system was covered to avoid cheating. Often, in the day to day practices of their work, they could not even see this paradox, as the bureaucratic system gained a life of its own, and they might get carried away with perfecting their mechanisms of control instead of reflecting on the fact that they were there to help. In the following I will briefly outline some of the bureaucratic practices that meet the ordinary refugee in Lukole.

The scale of the 'operation' is overwhelming. One cannot help but be impressed by the logistics of transporting a constant 'pipeline' of food for such a big population along roads that in places were almost non-existent. In one of the remotest and poorest districts in Tanzania, UNHCR managed to get an efficient system into place to distribute food, water, medicine, schooling, etc. equally to 100 000 people. In 1999 a *'minimum supply of 15 litres of water per day per person was sustained throughout the year in the camps in Tanzania...The average distance from any homestead to the nearest water source was*

maintained at 400metres' (UNHCR 2000: 92). These figures cover the 420,900 refugees of concern to UNHCR in Tanzania in 1999. In fact, problems arise when refugees have a higher standard of living than the local population (cf. Joyce-Jenkins in (Whitaker 1999)). The Ngara operation was generally commended for its efficiency by the thorough and path-breaking Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda (Millwood 1996). The mere scale of refugee crises and the rapidity within which they develop, makes humanitarian relief operations some of the most elaborate and efficient bureaucracies of our age.

At the time of fieldwork, 1997-1998, the UNHCR was in charge of co-ordinating all relief activities in the camp, including refugee protection. In practice, responsibility for various 'services' in the camp was delegated to different national and international NGOs.⁶⁴ CARE international was in charge of environmental programmes and logistics in collaboration with UNHCR's Environment Unit and the Logistics Officer. The environment programme provided educational material on how to save fuelwood, it planted seedlings, tried to encourage the use of fuel-efficient wood-stoves and employed guards to prevent the felling of live trees in and around the camp. At times, firewood was provided for 'vulnerable groups' such as the elderly. In spite of the environment awareness campaigns, supposedly making the refugees feel responsible for the environment, the CARE guards were usually perceived by the refugees as merely a hazard when collecting firewood, on a par with *wajambazi* (bandits) and *sungu sungu* (Tanzanian vigilantes).

The Tanzanian Red Cross Society (TRCS) was in charge of camp management and food distribution. African Education Foundation (AEF) was in charge of community services, health and education in the camp. They were replaced by Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) shortly before I left in May 1998. Oxfam was responsible for water and sanitation, while other agencies that played

⁶⁴ Generally, the Tanzanian authorities had a policy of promoting national NGOs in order to strengthen local capacities. UNHCR, on the other hand, wanted the most cost-efficient agencies, which usually meant big international 'supertanker NGOs' that had expertise and were partially self-funded. However, according to rumours among staff, too much expertise and economic independence made these NGOs too independent and hence unruly for UNHCR. Depending on conjunctures in donor fatigue and national policies, these factors had to be weighed up against each other and readjusted all the time. Hence, UNHCR changed implementing partners regularly.

minor roles included World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Ngara District Development Organisation (NDDO) and the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS).

Upon arrival in the camp, every refugee was registered by the UNHCR and each household was given a plot by the TRCS upon which to build a *blindé*. There were rules on where and how to build one's *blindé*. For example they were not allowed to build fences around their plot – allegedly due to fire and health hazards. Similarly, for health reasons every household was obliged to build a pit latrine of a minimum depth and at a certain distance from their *blindé*. Several of the meetings between relief agencies and refugee leaders that I attended were dominated by discussions on building latrines the right way. For instance, the leaders complained that OXFAM workers had pulled down latrines because they wanted refugees to build them with mud bricks. This resulted in long discussions on the pros and cons of mud brick latrines with agencies going to great lengths to explain the health hazards involved (Leaders meeting Lukole B, 19.07.97).

OXFAM employed roughly 100 refugees and 20 Tanzanians in their Sanitation Information Teams. Among them was a theatre troupe that performed edifying spectacles on cleanliness and sobriety. The issues were technical in the sense that they focused on sweeping outside one's *blindé*, washing often and boiling drinking water. But they were also moralising in the sense that they warned against the men who sold the family's food rations in order to buy beer. Laziness, selfishness and drinking were thus the cause of health hazards, according to the theatre.

Each household was also given a food ration card, according to household size. The ration card is considered a valuable document in Lukole, almost like passports elsewhere. It guarantees the holder access to the rights of a refugee and states which camp one belongs to. Lost ration cards and changing ration cards due to births, deaths, divorces, etc. caused a lot of problems for both refugees and UNHCR field staff. Of course, refugees would also try to cheat the system by having several ration cards or selling them when leaving the camp. This only confirms the importance placed on this piece of plastic by the

UNHCR and refugees alike. In a sense, the ration card epitomises the concept of being framed as a refugee, with all the positive and negative effects that go with it. One might go further to say that by using the ration card to demand certain rights, one posits oneself in the role of a victim. And the manipulation of ration cards epitomises the various strategies for avoiding being fully framed, while simultaneously remaining within the same 'frame-work', as nobody merely discards his ration card, however much he might try to misuse it.

At one stage there was one large market in Lukole A, near the food distribution centre, NGO offices and the main feeder road, and a further two smaller markets in Lukole B, a remnant from when Lukole B was Lumasi with more than 100 000 Rwandans and Burundians living there. In early 1998 the markets were fused into one central market. The TRCS had asked the refugee leadership to bring suggestions on where to place the new market, but as they could not agree, the camp manager felt compelled to make the decision himself.

The markets were regulated in several ways. Firstly, UNHCR and TRCS decided where to place them. Secondly, each vendor had to pay a daily tax to the camp commandant. Finally, market committees were established among the traders. They would regulate the placing of various kinds of activities; bars in one section, maize dealers in another, butchers far away from the others for hygienic reasons, etc. They would also organise night guards and take care of hygiene. The vice chairman would, for example, organise 'hygiene mobilising days' where they closed all the shops and bars and taught people how to keep the area clean and build latrines (Vice chairman, Lukole A market committee 28.08.97). The shops and market stalls had to close by six p.m. and the bars by nine, according to MHA orders. Trading outside the designated markets was not permitted.

World Food Programme (WFP) transported food – usually donated by USAID or ECHO – from Dar-es-Salaam by rail and then by truck to the rub-halls that CARE was in charge of. TRCS distributed the maize, beans, salt and oil in the two central food distribution centres once a fortnight. Instead of

measuring out rations to each household, block leaders would bring the ration cards of their constituents and then share it out afterwards. It was often in these situations that confrontations with Tanzanian staff occurred. At meetings refugees would complain that the Tanzanian distributors treated them with contempt and misused their power, often cheating the refugees of their fair share. This being one of the few direct points of contact between the governing institutions and the refugee population, it was here that their general sense of powerlessness surfaced. It was also typically the lower level Tanzanian staff that was the object of their discontent, rarely the international staff. Tanzanians incarnated the constraints of the refugees in the camp in a very tangible manner, since it was they who handed out the insufficient and uniform food although they had absolutely no say in the type or size of the rations. Similarly it would be Tanzanians pulling down the latrines, although the decision had probably been made in Oxford or Dar-es-Salaam. The international staff would sit in offices in Ngara town and occasionally drive through the camp in four-wheel drives attending workshops and meetings. They did not do the 'dirty work' and hence retained a certain aura of the benevolent relief worker in the perceptions of the refugees.

This categorisation of relief staff by the refugees also related to other issues. There was a general feeling of being superior to the Tanzanian population as such. Seeing fellow Africans having so much influence on their lives, and earning so much more for the same work, made them resentful towards African relief workers⁶⁵. It was therefore with great expectations that they welcomed AEF's replacement by Norwegian People's Aid. While the former employed mostly East Africans, the latter employed a number of Europeans. Their expectations could also have been due to the fact that many of them knew NPA from an earlier camp experience. However, NPA had operated at a time when funding was much more liberal because the Rwanda 'operation' still enjoyed a lot of publicity. AEF had been in charge while funding was slim and had probably been equated with poor service delivery.

⁶⁵ The local Tanzanian staff, speaking *Kihangaza* -- a language similar to Kirundi and Kinyarwanda -- were the object of many rumours about them being Burundian spies.

AEF ran a number of primary schools in the camp. In order to emphasise the temporary status of the camp, the Tanzanian authorities had not allowed the establishment of secondary schools. However, a group of refugees had established their own 'post primary school' with some support from church organisations but largely funded by the parents. The primary schools followed a Burundian syllabus supplemented with English and Swahili. The teachers and head teachers were refugees. AEF was also in charge of health and ran three hospitals in the camp, staffed by expatriate, Tanzanian and Burundian staff alike. These hospitals were open for Tanzanians from the surrounding villages. Finally, 'community services' was run by AEF and played a central role in catering for the refugees. As we shall see shortly, central issues of involving 'the community' were enacted in this institution that had previously been termed 'social services'. A large number of refugees were employed as 'community mobilisers' (previously social workers) with the task of helping 'vulnerable groups'.

In order better to govern the camp and deliver services, the camp population was divided into several sub-groups depending on 'vulnerability,' in other words how needy they were evaluated to be. In a preliminary registration and demography report based on a registration exercise conducted February 28 – March 5, 1997 (UNHCR Sub-office Ngara 1997) two pages are devoted to 'vulnerability'. Here twenty categories of vulnerability are identified from relatively common groups such as 'EA – Elderly Adult', 'SP – Single Parent' and 'UAM – Unaccompanied Minor' to more complex categories such as 'SP/MD – Single parent/mentally Disabled' and 'FF/UAM – Foster Family Unaccompanied Minor'. The latter categories are termed 'double vulnerables' in the report, and defined as '*individuals with more than one type of vulnerability*' (UNHCR Sub-office Ngara 1997: 9).⁶⁶ The UNHCR and implementing partners also operate with the term EVGs 'Extremely Vulnerable Groups' in their attempt to target those most in need of help.

⁶⁶ The report gives the following illustration to clarify. 'Example: "FF/SP, means foster family of single parent/ household head".' (UNHCR Sub-office Ngara 1997: 9). I assume it helps to know the right 'dev-speak' to grasp this 'clarifying' example.

Apart from achieving low mortality and morbidity rates, the effect of this is to categorise the population according to certain scientific criteria, effectively producing a population that can be subjected to governmental practices. In other words, in order to cater for the camp population, the agencies in charge need to count, categorise and control the refugees through various routine bureaucratic practices that have been developed to perfection. This bureaucratisation is a means of governing the camp, not through rules and restrictions – which was the main tool of the MHA – but through everyday practices of caring for the lives of the refugees.

It was my clear impression that most ground staff were generally committed to helping the refugees, but due to the bureaucratic imperative to count and control, a tug-of-war would often take place between relief staff and refugees. This may seem paradoxical and it certainly frustrated many on both sides. However, the logic for the staff was that they were helping the refugees in the best possible way under the circumstances, and they were committed to keeping the relief operation running smoothly. Any refugee who disrupted the operation was working against the good of all. When a refugee cheated with food rations, he was taking food from other deserving refugees. When the street leaders expressed a need for a blanket from UNHCR for their work, they were told that the extra blankets were for elderly refugees who needed them more. In other words, the relief agencies had found the winning formula that would ensure the optimal result for the population as a whole, and they merely needed to convince the refugees of the sense in this.

So far I have illustrated how the agencies cater for and control the camp, and how they act according to certain principles in order to optimise the physical wellbeing of the population. This involves counting, categorising and controlling the refugees into various groups such as vulnerables and EVGs. The categories are made in order to ensure that individual refugees do not cheat and hence not only spoil the UNHCR's plans but also spoil things for the refugee population as such. Behind these practices lies a will to help the victims of war and flight -- and hence an assumption that it is the agencies that know what is best for the refugees, who must be controlled for their own sake.

Combating dependency

Humanitarian relief agencies have over the past 15 years or so become increasingly intent on caring for more than the physical wellbeing of the refugees. Inspired by development discourse (where Robert Chambers' 'Rural Development: Putting the last first' (Chambers 1983) was paradigmatic)⁶⁷, relief agencies were concerned that their generous hand-outs and impressive planning would produce passive clients who suffered from a 'dependency syndrome'.

In private discussions, staff in Ngara would often express fear of the dependency syndrome and speculate how to 'make' the refugees take more responsibility for their own lives. Relief workers were troubled by the lack of initiative among the refugees. 'If you try to organise sports, the refugees will just ask for a new ball from the agency' (Youth coordinator, AEF, May 1997). This attitude annoyed the staff. Why were the refugees apparently not interested in helping themselves just a little? Why were they just waiting for handouts and not showing any initiative? Such frustration could result in stereotyping based on nationality. Thus, most expatriate staff held that the Rwandan refugees might be difficult, cunning and have criminal inclinations but they certainly had more initiative than the Burundians. Also Zairian/Congolese refugees were known to have more initiative than Burundians (Christian Outreach staff, Kasulu, 11.11.97). Burundians were generally known to be placid and lacking initiative and drive. A report from Kitali Hills camp by Cathy Lennox-Cook, from the Irish NGO, GOAL, states that Burundians not only had a lower level of health and hygiene than the Rwandans in the camp, but they also lacked a 'community spirit' (Lennox-Cook 1996).

Such stereotyping was not entirely racially based. It was generally held that it was the kind of help given that produced dependency and the differences between various nationalities were explained in social, historical terms. Thus, Rwandan Hutu allegedly have more pride and dignity than Hutu from

⁶⁷ For a discussion on the relief-development debate see (Frerks 1999; Macrae and Zwi 1994)

Burundi because they were 'on top' in Rwanda before 1994.⁶⁸ As we shall see in later chapters, similar stereotypes were held by the refugees themselves and had their roots in colonial classifications.

The dependency debate has a long tradition in refugee studies and elsewhere.⁶⁹ Much of the debate in 'refugee studies' asserts that refugees are not inherently lazy but have been made so by UNHCR's top-down approach and lack of involvement of the refugee community (Cf. Harrell-Bond 1986; Kibreab 1993). The solution to this problem, they claim, is to introduce self-management, community development and participation. In the cases where UNHCR has introduced such policies, the critics accuse the organisation of having double standards and using participation as window dressing (Cf. Hyndman 2000; Kaiser 2000). Thus the solution to a dependency mentality remains more and better participation and community involvement, according to these critics.

The concern about apathy and the focus on participation as the cure can be seen in virtually any policy paper of humanitarian relief agencies. In the 'Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response Programmes' – a cutting-edge document in humanitarian policy - it is stated that '*we shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities*' and '*Ways shall be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of relief aid*' (www.ifrc.org/publicat/conduct/code.asp). UNHCR states in 'A framework for people-oriented planning in refugee situations, taking account of women, men and children' that the views of all sections of society, regardless of age or gender, should be included in planning (Anderson, Howarth, and Overholt 1992). In its Mission Statement UNHCR claims that: '*UNHCR is committed to the principle of participation by consulting refugees on decisions that affect their*

⁶⁸ Such comparisons and pseudo-scientific explanations were also made between refugees and the host population. Curiously, Tanzanians were considered by international staff to be rather 'backward' in comparison with the enterprising refugees. But then again, anyone in the development business would claim, off the record, that generous (Scandinavian) aid has produced a nation of beggars in Tanzania.

⁶⁹ Barbara Cruikshank proposes that a fear of creating dependency dates back to philanthropic home visitors in Victorian times (Cruikshank 1999). And Hall-Matthews shows how the British colonial administration was worried about creating dependency through famine relief in India in the late nineteenth century (Hall-Matthews 1996).

lives.'(www.unhcr.ch/un&ref/missions/ms2.htm)And in the section on 'Main Objectives and Activities in the Great Lakes Operation' UNHCR's Global Report, 1999, states that it aims to '*maximise the participation of refugee women in community decision-making.*' (UNHCR 2000: 86). In other words, there is an increasing focus on participation among relief agencies.

Of the NGOs that I spoke to in Ngara, the British NGO, Christian Outreach,⁷⁰ appeared to be most concerned with involving 'the community' in its activities. As the country director in Tanzania in 1996, Richard Reynolds, writes:

[T]he approach adopted by Christian Outreach incorporates the idea of development. A development philosophy, as opposed to *relief mentality*, can ensure that the *communities* within the camp population can *develop themselves and their capacities...* (Reynolds 1996: 14. Emphasis added)

We see here that participation and community development are a means to combat a relief mentality and regain a sense of dignity that, it is assumed by Reynolds, have been destroyed by relief and by the traumatic experience of flight. Rather than wanting to change power relations or devolve responsibility, involving the community is about mentalities – it is psychologised. In similar vein, UNHCR's '*A Framework for People-Oriented Planning in Refugee Situations. Taking Account of Women, Men and Children*' claims that lack of refugee participation would lead to '*increasing lethargy on the part of refugees*' (Anderson, Howarth, and Overholt 1992: 2). Again, lack of participation is perceived to cause the dependency syndrome. Lack of involvement in decision-making decreases a sense of responsibility, which in turn causes lack of initiative in a vicious circle. Participation is meant to break this circle and give the refugees back a sense of dignity

The following quote from UNHCR's '*Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women*' illustrates how women's participation is perceived as being the most

⁷⁰ Christian Outreach was not actually working in Lukole when I did fieldwork in the camp. I did, however, talk to them and follow their work on several occasions. First, when they were in Ngara, prior to 1997, and second, in 1997, when they were in the Kigoma region.

effective way of dealing with protection issues. But this is not the only virtue of involving women:

Participation itself promotes protection. Internal protection problems are often due as much to people's *feelings of isolation, frustration, lack of belonging* to a structured society and *lack of control over their own future...* Refugee participation *helps build the values and sense of community* that contribute to reducing protection problems. (UNHCR 1991: 10. Emphasis added.)

As with participation in general, women's participation is not merely perceived as a means of efficiently dealing with practical problems in the camp. It has the main aim of redressing the perceived social disintegration in refugee society. It is a means of installing 'values and a sense of community'. In other words, participation is meant to give the individual back her dignity and, more importantly, to re-establish refugee society as a community.

The guidelines pre-empt the critique that women's participation is against the cultural norms of many refugee societies; that it would be 'tampering with the culture of the group'. The guidelines retort that such critique is based on limited knowledge of such cultures, and argue that '*p*rior to flight, women typically have opportunities to express their concerns and needs, sometimes through their husbands and other times through traditional support networks' (UNHCR 1991: 10). It is further argued that these traditional networks have broken down in refugee camps, and that alternative arrangements must therefore be provided. Refugee societies have *per definition* experienced a disintegration of values and a loss of community, both of which they are assumed to have had prior to flight. This is what they need given back through participation, according to UNHCR.

To sum up, the attempts at 'involving the community', encouraging development rather than relief and promoting participation are means of combating the perceived psychological side-effects of relief operations. They are about giving refugees a 'sense of community' and about combating 'lethargy', 'relief mentality' and 'feelings of lack of control over their own future'. In other words, UNHCR and other agencies have succeeded in caring for the bodies of the refugees. Now they must care for their minds.

Persuading refugees to participate

Why were relief agencies so concerned with the dependency syndrome? Why not just enforce the rules and regulations and make sure that the refugees were kept alive and healthy? Barbara Cruikshank's compelling book on 'The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and other Subjects' (1999), might help us understand this in relation to modern liberal governmentality. I will briefly outline her argument before turning to the concrete practices through which participation is imposed in the camp and investigating how this relates to governing.

Cruikshank explores the concern of philanthropists, activists and charity workers with marginalised and poor people's political apathy. She argues that ideas of 'help to self-help' and empowerment have been the driving force for many well intended projects, and are premised on the idea of creating free, democratic citizens out of subjugated subjects. She questions the underlying assumption that empowerment is a noble or radical political strategy and claims that the will to empower '*is neither clearly liberatory nor clearly repressive; rather, it is typical of the liberal arts of conduct...*' (Cruikshank 1999: 10). By 'liberal arts of conduct' she means the whole register of modes of governmentality that characterise modern liberal-democratic states.

Seen in this light, the idea of shifting power from the state to the population is in line with liberal governmentality, where rules from above are replaced by norms within the population (Foucault 1978: 144). In this way it appears that the state is lean and keen and has devolved power to a population which is being governmentalised.

Self-help serves here as an example of how the individual citizen is instrumentally linked to "society as a whole". Moreover, it is a philanthropic technique that is exemplary of modern government; it is both voluntary and coercive. (Cruikshank 1999: 48)

The strength of Cruikshank's argument is that she breaks down the (implicit) dichotomies between citizen and subject, between power and powerlessness, between coercion and freedom. In these dichotomies lies the assumption that subjects are powerless individuals who are not in control of their lives but are subjugated to others. Citizens, on the other hand, are invested with the power

to express their 'true will and desires'. The 'noble' cause of philanthropists is to make powerful citizens out of powerless subjects. Cruikshank's point is that there are no autonomous, free selves out there that are merely being suppressed by others (the state, capitalism, men) and that therefore need help to find themselves. She argues that such 'autonomous', 'free' citizens are formed in the process, and this forming is a means of governing them – through self-government. Liberal, democratic governance depends on citizens that are autonomous and self-governing, and this is what participatory schemes are about.

Interestingly, in the view of participatory approaches, powerlessness is not perceived to be a structural problem in society. Rather, poor people's 'sense of powerlessness' or 'lack of self-esteem' is perceived as a personality problem, Cruikshank argues. Therefore, the main objective of participation programmes is to interest these people in their own empowerment; to alter their subjectivities. Instead of changing structures in society, the aim of participatory approaches is to make the participants 'feel' involved and to take responsibility. This certainly seems to be the case in a refugee camp where refugees have very little influence on the important decisions in their lives.

Liberal governmentality needs – and hence makes⁷¹ – free democratic citizens; citizens that can govern themselves. Therefore, the 'will to empower' can be seen as a will to make such citizens, a will to do away with subjectivities that do not act as if they were free. Political apathy, not making use of democratic rights and voluntarily subjecting oneself to power thus become the worst enemies of bio-politics, and the ones that its proponents seek to eliminate through empowerment.

Ideally, being a democratic citizen, acting responsibly and governing oneself, leads to certain democratic, political rights and certain freedoms. But as Hindess (Hindess 2001) and Dean (Dean 1999) argue, not all populations in liberal government are as seen fit for liberal freedom. Certain groups, such as

⁷¹ Or rather: *attempts* to make, as we shall see in the following chapter where the reactions of the refugees to bio-politics will be explored.

welfare clients and colonial subjects, lack the required capacities for autonomous conduct. These capacities, Hindess argues, can be developed either '*through compulsion, through the imposition of more or less extended periods of discipline [or] by establishing a benign and supportive social environment*' (Hindess 2001: 101). Certainly, the kind of empowerment that was introduced in the camp was severely restricted and often took the shape of a 'spectacle' of democracy rather than genuine delegation of power. There seemed also to be a certain paternalism in the approach of the agencies, as if they knew what was best for the refugees because African refugees were not yet ripe for democracy.⁷² This has a strong semblance of colonial administration of subjects who were not seen as fit to rule. However, there are also differences between a refugee camp and colonial government. Colonial government was, for instance, underpinned by explicit theories of race⁷³. Furthermore, the fact that the camp is perceived to be temporary must influence the manner in which participation is imposed. We must rely on concrete analysis of the techniques used to impose participation in the camp in order to identify resemblances and differences, and to develop our understanding of the specific way governmentality is acted out. Perhaps an understanding of the peculiarities of the camp may even help shed light on the more obscure aspects of governmentality elsewhere.

In Lukole, relief agencies attempted to mobilise the community in several ways. Educational programmes and information campaigns sought to heighten the 'awareness' on technical issues such as environment, hygiene, sexually transmitted diseases and violence against women. As in the case with OXFAM's theatre group, it was not enough to tell the refugees what they were and were not allowed to do. They also had to be *convinced* of the value of these rules. They should incorporate them in such a manner that boiling water and sweeping the *blindé* would seem natural to them as a norm rather than a law. By learning to 'love the law' they would feel responsibility towards the rules of the camp, not only making camp management easier but also making the refugees more content. This was certainly the intention.

⁷² I am grateful to Barry Hindess for bringing this aspect to my attention.

⁷³ (See Stoler 1995)

In Lukole, agencies had the answers ready when promoting refugee participation. The refugees needed educating in the art of self-management and even then, their possibilities of making decisions of any significance to their lives in the camp were heavily circumscribed. They had no choice in what or how much to eat. They had no choice about not leaving the camp. They could not even choose to build their houses in clusters or circles if they so wished. Nevertheless, every block and street/village had a leader, elected by the refugees. These refugee leaders attended fortnightly meetings with the UNHCR field officer or field assistant, MHA representative, and representatives from relevant NGOs. Occasionally, the UNHCR's protection officer, security officer or another staff member with a special message for the refugee population would attend the meetings as well.

So what were the tasks of these leaders? Basically, they were meant to be intermediaries between the refugee population and the agencies in control. They would voice refugees' complaints that they had lost their ration cards, that nurses treated them disrespectfully, or that OXFAM was pulling down their latrines (Leaders meeting, Lukole B, 19.06.97). On the other hand, they were expected to disseminate information from the agencies to the population. This could be the security officer warning refugees to 'behave' (leaders meeting, Lukole A 19.08.97), or explaining to them why it is so important for OXFAM to make sure that they build mud brick latrines ('It is for your own good').

In 1997-1998 UNHCR was in the process of arranging elections for leaders, partly due to the fact that many had been elected prior to being moved to Lukole and had different constituencies now, partly because there had been problems between the leaders and the security guards due to political rivalry. This caused UNHCR to decide to employ new security guards and have new leaders elected. Finally, it was the intention of UNHCR to make sure these elections were 'free and fair' and not just a question of a few 'big men' appointing someone. As these leaders only held little power and as all politics was banned in the camp, reducing leaders to apolitical managerial positions, it is my contention that these elections were to be schoolbook demonstrations

in democratic practices. They were to teach the refugees the playing rules of the democratic game.

I attended several of these elections. The following excerpt from my diary at one of these elections illustrates the paternalistic attitude of the international agencies.

Elections for a village leader in Lukole B.

There were four male and two female candidates. UNHCR turned up late, so I had time to talk to the candidates beforehand. The women candidates had not turned up because they were sick, people explained. 'They are sick with fear' my assistant joked. At the last minute, when UNHCR was calling candidates forward, two women appeared. There was some doubt about one of them. The UNHCR field officer had not seen her before, and she was not on the original list. The Tanzanian field assistant (who speaks Kirundi) explained that she had been put forward in absentia during some meeting. The field officer asked whether she really wanted to stand, and she replied that in fact she did not. The other woman was extremely shy. She could hardly speak into the megaphone, when she was to present herself. She received two votes out of a total of 152! As far as I could estimate, roughly a third of the voters were women.

UNHCR created a lot of confusion when they finally turned up. They were clearly stressed and in a hurry. TRCS, formally in charge of camp management, turned up around four hours late. The approach of UNHCR staff was rather aggressive and patronising. They did not sit down and listen for one moment. The field officer pushed the woman's issue too far. After the election, she said that they should respect the woman who had the courage to stand for election and that the leader (a 21 year old man, who looked so young that the field officer accused him of cheating and being under 18) and his assistant should co-operate with this woman. She also promised the women sanitary materials. After the initial suspicion and patronising approach the atmosphere did improve. The Tanzanian field assistant was telling jokes in Kirundi and using Burundian proverbs over the megaphone. When the winner was identified, the crowd carried him over their heads, singing and dancing. Afterwards, one of the dancing/drumming troupes turned up in a TRCS bus and gave an astonishing performance (field notes 22.01.98).

It is not my intention to criticise the specific staff members nor UNHCR as an organisation for having double standards with regard to participation. There are several claims in the literature of 'refugee studies' that UNHCR is using participation as a smoke screen while really pursuing a top-down approach.⁷⁴ With Cruikshank one could argue to the contrary that refugee empowerment is not opposed to governing but is merely another art of governing. In this

⁷⁴ (Cf. Hyndman 2000; Kaiser 2000)

manner, the field officer was driven by a will to empower. Despite the seductiveness of Cruikshank's argument I find that the specificity of the refugee camp and its location in the Third World (in Africa in particular) exceeds the limits of her analysis. The paternalistic attitude reveals a sense of knowing what is good for the refugees. In line with Hindess' claim that there are certain populations that are unfit for liberal government, one might assume that African refugees – like African populations in general – are perceived to need training, even disciplining, into becoming liberal citizens. Is this not the case with donor conditions on aid, forcing African governments to comply with 'good governance'? In the camp there is a further twist, as there are no prospects of 'sustainable development' in a camp that is 100% dependent on food rations from humanitarian agencies. This absurdity gives us a strong indication of its therapeutic intentions.

Apart from the fact that refugees are perceived to need training, UNHCR also needs to operationalise and technocratise participation and community development in order to be able to control it and in order for it to work in the intended manner. If it is to avoid 'relief mentality', it is necessary to find a rational, bureaucratically manageable way of implementing self-help. Electing street/village leaders is such a means.

Good and bad participation – community versus politics

In spite of encouraging refugee participation, all political activity in the refugee camps was strictly banned by the Tanzanian government and the UNHCR. For refugees to act as genuine victims, they are expected – in humanitarian discourse – to be helpless and passive. In other words, apathy has to be combated, but not at any cost, since certain kinds of refugee activities and agency are perceived to be better than others. Political activity was believed to disturb 'the community' and was equivalent to 'trouble'. However, as we will see in later chapters, the camp was rife with political activity, mostly concerning internal competition for access to power and resources between two parties in the camp. It is to this trouble that we now turn in order to see how UNHCR constructs categories that are believed to disturb the refugee community, thereby, in the process, also constructing 'the community' as a category.

On May 2nd 1997 a population meeting was called by UNHCR with the participation of the camp commandant, UNHCR, implementing partners and refugees in Lukole A. This particular meeting had been called due to a deterioration in the security situation and to a petition submitted by the leaders, asking for the removal of the chief security guard for alleged misuse of authority. This accusation was based on the fact that the chief security guard belonged to a different party from the majority of street leaders in Lukole A.

It was decided by UNHCR and MHA before the meeting that the security guards should be phased out and new ones recruited. Similarly, elections for new leaders would be held. These decisions were to be conveyed to the population at the meeting. What is interesting for our purposes, is how the problem of political activity is construed in the discourse of camp commandant and the UNHCR field officer. The camp commandant addressed the issue of criminal and political activity, as both were perceived to affect security. According to a UNHCR memorandum,⁷⁵ he warned that the time for taking action on involvement in political activity was coming. UNHCR's field officer then relayed UNHCR's concern with security issues. She advised the refugees to refrain from activities that disrupt security and endanger 'harmonious social life' among the 'great majority of the refugee community' who fled their country 'in search of peace and security'.

She also advised the refugees to assess the political involvement of candidates so as to avoid election of individuals who would like to use the forum for furthering their political interest 'at the expense of innocent people.' (UNHCR May 1997). She perceives politics as sordid, and political activity as disrupting the harmonious community. Politicians are driven by selfish interests rather than the interests of the common good, and if they are given the chance, a few such selfish individuals will destroy the life of the great majority of refugees who are 'innocent people'. She went on to give advice to the leader candidates. They should be ready to serve the people who entrust them with the responsibility of representing them on any forum. They should be ready

⁷⁵ As these are internal 'Notes for the File', I cannot quote them directly.

to put aside their individual interest for providing service to the people they lead (UNHCR, May 1997).

Refugee participation in leadership is obviously supposed to be apolitical, with the leaders 'providing service to the people'. Street leaders are service providers who seek to comply with the common interests of the community as a whole rather than any particular interests of any specific group. Being void of politics, participation is also void of power relations and is merely a question of finding the optimal solution to the 'true interests' of the community. In order to grasp this conception of participation, we must take a closer look at the community as a concept.

The community is evoked as a counterweight to selfish political activity. To work for the community is to be self-sacrificing and disinterested, devoting oneself to the common good. Such perceptions of the community imply almost sublime qualities. It is assumed that empowering 'the community' will automatically serve the interests of the community as a whole. There is an almost organic texture to it. As Elizabeth Frazer comments; '*community is not straightforwardly anchored in social relations [...] communities 'rise above' or 'transcend' the muddle of relations*' (Frazer 1999: 85). In other words, any reference to the community is laden with positive connotations.

Charles Taylor (Taylor 1994) argues that the principle of the community is premised on the concept of being true to oneself and of 'authenticity'. Such an idea of finding a true self for each community dates back to the romanticist critique of enlightenment philosophy (as the flip-side of enlightenment itself) as expressed in Tönnies' search for *Gemeinschaft* or Herder's search for a *Volksgeist*. In the eighteenth century, Taylor argues, moral views no longer came from God but were to be found from within oneself – as an individual but also as a community (Taylor 1994: 28-29). Thus, finding a 'true community' is about finding a moral community where the individuals involved share common goals and interests. In this perspective, greed, scheming and self-interest do not guide the authentic, moral community. Neither do individuals or groups struggle over power and privilege. If the refugees are acting greedily and selfishly, they are not acting as a community,

since a true community will always decide what is best for the community as a whole.

This dichotomy between selfish, power-hungry politicians and devoted community workers also structured UNHCR perceptions as we saw in the quote from the population meeting. Nikolas Rose points out that the community is not merely something to be governed, it is also a means of government. Therefore, it needs to be '*celebrated, encouraged, nurtured, shaped and instrumentalised*' (Rose 1996: 335). However, for community to become functional as a governmental practice, it needs technocratising.

The term community of course has long been salient in political thought; it becomes governmental, however, when it is made technical. (Rose 1996: 332)

This means that we must distinguish between the moral and the technical community. The former is something that is assumed to exist latently out there, although it might presently be suppressed. It only needs to find itself or to be encouraged to find itself. The technical community is the concrete shape of women's groups, village committees etc. It is through these technical communities that the moral community can be encouraged and governmentalised.

UNHCR had several practices through which it could nurture the community and formalise it into certain institutions. One was the street leaders, as we have seen. The problem with these street leaders – seen from the point of view of promoting the community spirit – was that they tended to be too engaged in political competition. Furthermore, they were often young, able bodied, semi-educated men, and UNHCR was worried that they would not promote the interests of the most needy refugees. As UNHCR did not appear to have much luck in promoting the election of women leaders, other means were used to try to reach the 'true community'. Among these were community mobilisers, the establishment of women's committees and community development projects.

What used to be called 'social services' is now 'community services'. It changed name in the early 1990s and was in late 2000 in the process of

becoming 'community development' (personal communication Community Services Officer, 27.10.00). UNHCR's community services officer was very adamant that one used the term 'community services' rather than slipping into the old mode of 'social services'. In early 1998, AEF employed 86 community mobilisers in Lukole A (of whom 29 were women) and 36 in Lukole B (6 women). In their own words, they would take care of the elderly, UAMs (unaccompanied minors) and widows, 'morally and materially' (Interview with community mobilisers. 25.06.97). They would also disseminate information from NGOs to the population. This would typically be information on how to prevent, malaria, scabies, diarrhoea or how women could avoid rape. They were also supposed to arrange sports and culture groups. The idea of calling them community mobilisers rather than social workers and of going from being social services to community services was to enhance the self-help perspective. In the words of the community services officer:

Our reason was that social services or social work was seen as more individual case management but community services was more what we were hoping to actually be doing i.e. involving the communities in whatever was needed including individual support. (Community Services Officer, 27.10.00)

For her, the community is linked closely to the idea of participation and empowerment, and is also meant to combat dependency and passiveness among refugees.

What must be seen as the most successful programme, from the perspective of promoting a sense of community and combating a relief mentality, was the use of foster families in the camps. When I was in Lukole, there was no orphanage in the camp, and the handful of street children that existed had been given *blindés* and put together in 'families'. All other unaccompanied minors had been placed in foster families. When hundreds of thousands of Rwandans arrived in the area within a short time in 1994 and thousands of children had lost their parents, a policy of supporting foster families rather than orphanages was actively pursued. Staff in community services in UNHCR and the implementing agencies at the time would pride themselves on the good results they had achieved in this innovative approach (NPA staff

member November 1996). Orphanages were perceived to be alienating, destroying the social and moral fabric of children through the loss of their cultural moorings. It was therefore culturally sustainable to have children in foster families.

But this system did not only ensure the children a culturally proper environment, it also benefited the whole community. By taking responsibility for the children, rather than leaving it to the NGOs, the refugees avoided the dependency syndrome, strengthening the social and moral fabric of the refugee community as a whole, it was assumed. The relief agencies' attitude to fostering is a good illustration of the prevailing sense that one has to sacrifice one's own interests for the community. The reward cannot be measured in individual wealth. It is the reward of dignity and community spirit. It must be noted that these families did not accept children of their own initiative. It was all organised and systematised by UNHCR and implementing partners. In other words, the community needed 'pushing' a little in order to come off the ground.

However, this enforced solidarity is not merely a question of the refugees learning the art of governing; learning to become like 'us'. It is doubtful whether such unselfish acts of solidarity would be expected of citizens in other societies. Would British or French families be expected to sacrifice that much – except in times of war? It is as if, because the refugees are poor and have been through so much in terms of war and disruption, they cannot afford to be demanding. In such situations of extreme human distress, one is expected to be able to sacrifice oneself for one's fellow suffering human beings. And if the refugees do not volunteer of their own accord, they can be induced to volunteer (through campaigns and various material support for foster families) for the sake of the community spirit.

Obviously, the sense of community is opposed to and posited as a cure against apathy and relief mentality. It is, ironically, also opposed to the kinds of behaviour in the camp that are farthest from being apathetic and passive. One such type of behaviour that is perceived to subvert the community is politics. The other is cheating and misusing development projects. Both kinds

of behaviour express agency and refugees taking initiative, but they do so the 'wrong way'.

Christian Outreach ran various community based development projects where refugees, basically, could apply for funding of micro-projects if they were based on community initiatives and if they were to the benefit of 'vulnerables'. This gave some practical problems, as refugees appeared to work out how to 'use' the system. Thus, Christian Outreach would receive applications for loans where the objectives of the project were formulated in a language that was strikingly similar to NGO language. And if Christian Outreach had decided that, say, 60% of the profit should go to vulnerables, in order to ensure that the projects were actually benefiting 'the community' and not just some powerful individuals, they would be sure to receive a number of applications that proposed to give exactly 60% of profits to vulnerables (Christian Outreach staff November 1996).

Christian Outreach staff explained to me that they were frustrated by individuals misusing projects that were intended for the community as such. They could also see the paradox of wanting to help the refugees while spending most of their effort setting up measures to avoid such misuse, giving them the sense that they were controlling the refugees rather than catering for them. NGO staff reconciled the ideal of being a benevolent, humanitarian organisation with the practice of having to control the refugees by perceiving the 'problem' in the manner of a few individuals that cheat and hence ruin it all for the majority of law-abiding and needy people. They are the ones who fiddle with the ration cards. They are the ones who sell blankets that were intended for vulnerables. They are the ones who register twice or more (re-cyclers). This was the essence of the statement by the UNHCR field officer at the population meeting quoted earlier, when she claimed that individual interests of politicians were at the expense of innocent people. The irony here is that the individuals who are supposedly destroying the community, are the ones who are showing initiative and taking things into their own hands.

A consequence of this dichotomisation between the community and a few individuals is that the agencies are able to maintain a belief in the sublime qualities of 'the community' as an antidote to the dependency syndrome and ultimately a means of catering for the mental well-being of the camp population. By creating a category that is preventing the fulfilment of the community – the politicians and the misusers – they can retain the illusion of the community. Simultaneously, by conferring 'trouble' on this group, it is possible to maintain a strongly controlled government 'from above' while yet promoting participation. If the UNHCR did not control the process so tightly, troublemakers would misuse the system and promote self-interested politics.

Gendering refugees

UNHCR has a number of programmes targeting various specific vulnerable groups. There are programmes for women, the elderly, children and the youth. When I introduced myself and my research and said that I was interested in young men, refugees and relief workers alike seemed puzzled. When my assistant translated it to 'the youth' they looked relieved, being able to categorise me along with the other consultants. Adult (young) men were not an issue in these benevolent programmes except when they made trouble. They were summoned for meetings on camp security where they were warned not to take part in military training or political activity (security meeting, Lukole A, June 1997), and they were the objects of many reports, policies and strategies concerning domestic and sexual violence against women.⁷⁶ In all these cases, young men are defined as 'trouble'. In this sense, we may say that men disturb the community and prevent it from developing into fullness, while women incarnate the community.⁷⁷ For the true community spirit to unfold, it is argued, it is necessary to involve the women.

A quick glance through UNHCR policy papers confirms the picture that women's issues have become central to UNHCR, and that the key to solving women's problems is believed to be through women's participation.

⁷⁶ Human Rights Watch has for instance recently published an elaborate report on sexual and domestic violence in the refugee camps in Tanzania (Human Rights Watch 2000).

⁷⁷ Ironically, as will be illustrated in the following chapter, it was young, politically active men with whom UNHCR and NGOs chiefly collaborated as they constituted the vast majority of street/village leaders and the bulk of NGO employees.

To understand fully and address the protection concerns of refugee women, they themselves must participate in planning, protection and assistance activities... Since a large proportion of refugees are women, many solely responsible for their dependent children, it is essential that they be involved in planning and delivery of assistance activities if these are to be properly focused on their needs. (UNHCR 1991: 10)

Women refugees should participate in the formulation and implementation of such programmes. (UNHCR 1985: Executive Committee Conclusions)

[R]ecognition of the refugee women as a vital economic force and of the need to promote their participation as agents as well as beneficiaries in the planning of protection and assistance programmes. (UNHCR 1988: Executive Committee Conclusions)

Promote energetically the full and active participation of refugee women in the planning, implementation and evaluation/monitoring of all sectors of refugee programmes. (UNHCR 1990: Executive Committee Conclusions)

Involving women is part of a larger discourse on gender equality. But I would argue that the way refugee women are perceived -- and the way they are perceived to participate -- have other effects than merely introducing equality. Rather, refugees are gendered in the sense that they are ascribed different positions due to their sex. This construction has very real effects on the way UNHCR, MHA and NGOs act in the camp vis-à-vis men and women respectively, which again affects the ways in which refugees act in relation to these gendered positions that are provided by the agencies. By encouraging refugee women to be street leaders and security guards, UNHCR was appealing to women as less troublesome and less politicised. This relates to larger perceptions of men and women refugees.

Refugee women are commonly perceived to make up the bulk of refugee populations.⁷⁸ Often lumped together with children in statistics, they are perceived as vulnerable victims in situations of conflict and war.

Among the people hit hardest by the violence and uncertainty of displacement are girls, elderly widows, single mothers – women. As a rule of thumb, some 75 per cent of these destitute displaced people are women and their dependent children. (UNHCR Fundraising: The

⁷⁸ This has been proven statistically wrong on several occasions. (Cf. Daley 1991) (US Committee for Refugees 2000).

General Programmes – UNHCR's Core Activities
(www.unhcr.ch/fdrs/gpapp): 4)

Collapsing women and children into one category reduces women to the level of infants. Women – like children – are to be felt sorry for and to be helped. They occupy the victim position and as Liisa Malkki has aptly shown, images of women and children conjure up a sense of 'bare humanity'.

Perhaps it is that women and children embody a special kind of powerlessness; perhaps they do not tend to look as if they could be "dangerous aliens"; perhaps their images are more effective in fund-raising efforts than those of men (Malkki 1995a: 11).

Malkki goes on to suggest that children express better than adults 'bare humanity' with no specific culture or history. Men on the other hand represent the other side of popular images of refugees. Men represent the 'dangerous alien' who brings dissident politics and foreign cultures with him. Thus, one might say that women epitomise the refugee figure as someone who lacks what national citizens have (culture, history, citizenship). In this manner, women are not only stripped of history and culture in humanitarian discourse; they are also stripped of any agency.⁷⁹

Such stereotypes of men and women refugees affect the governing of the camp and perceptions of politics, the community and dependency. While women are perceived to lack agency and epitomise the refugee-as-victim, they are also void of sordid, self-interested politics. When they are activated and empowered, it is assumed that they will work for the good of the community as a whole, while men are assumed to (mis-)use such power for their own political advantages. So while UNHCR and NGOs are attempting to introduce gender equality in the camp, they are also gendering the refugees in specific ways. This has (often quite unintended) consequences for the ways in which refugees interpreted the camp, and ultimately for their strategies.

In conclusion

In this chapter, we have seen how the camp is constructed and governed by the humanitarian regime. We saw how the camp made up a bureaucratic

⁷⁹ Feminist scholars have tried to do away with this image by proving that refugee women show initiative and strength. See for instance (Daley 1991) and (Indra 1999).

dream of efficiency and straight lines, and how the population was counted, measured, fed, nursed and generally kept in good health. The main aim of humanitarian intervention is to keep the population – the ‘caseload’ in humanitarian lingo – alive and well.

However, it appears that the relief agencies were also keen on introducing participation to the refugees. This may seem absurd in a refugee camp, where people’s lives were heavily circumscribed by rules and regulations and their livelihoods strongly dependent on hand-outs. I have argued that empowering refugees was more directed towards the souls of the refugees than towards changing power relations in the camp. The idea is that the refugees should ‘feel’ empowered so as to avoid feeling apathetic. The question of empowerment is thus psychologised and pathologised and has little to do with societal power.

In this way, there is no contradiction between the paternalistic approaches of UNHCR and the idea of promoting participation, as opposed to what has been claimed by many critical appraisals of UNHCR in ‘refugee studies’. The relief workers assume that they ‘know better’ what is good for the refugees. In this way, participation is forced upon the refugees, whether they like it or not. It is not enough that they obey the law, they must also be convinced that it is the best thing to do. They must love the law and internalise it. This is done best by empowering them.

Finally, I have argued that the introduction of participation in the camp is linked to ideas of the community and of refugees-as-victims and that these ideas are gendered. In this way, participation is about strengthening the community rather than following self interests. It is assumed that a ‘real refugee’ is a victim who does not think of herself but sacrifices herself for the community as a whole. Needless to say, this image is linked to the image of the female refugee. However, in the camp this ideal is constantly threatened by the refugee who does not act as a real victim and who has his own agenda. He engages in politics and uses NGOs in order to reach his goals. This refugee is incarnated in the young man.

Chapter Four – Lukole as social and moral decay

Until now in the thesis, we have dwelt on a particular way of seeing Lukole, namely, from the air and with the aid of UNHCR maps. In this chapter, we make a shift from the aerial view of the planner and the bureaucrat to the pedestrian view of the refugee. We examine the ways in which the refugees interpret being homogenised and treated as an undifferentiated mass by the Tanzanian authorities and international relief agencies; how they interpret their new environment and their new rulers, and how they contrast this with life in Burundi. We explore their representations of the camp as a place of social and moral decay, and how they conjure up a picture of an idyllic harmonious past in Burundi.

In the camp I heard a number of tales about the social and moral decay that was allegedly taking place. Husbands and wives fight and there are a great many divorces. Men take many wives in the camp - something they would never do in Burundi - and women become prostitutes. Young girls speak too much and too loudly and they wear short dresses and hang around at the market instead of working in the *blindé* while men spend all their time and money on beer and beat their wives for not having enough respect. Young men marry old women and old men marry young women, and they forget their Burundi customs in the camp where nobody knows his neighbour and solidarity is lost. In the camp, so they claim, the rich become poor and the poor become rich and the small people show no respect for the 'big men' but treat them as equals. Because everyone receives the same insufficient food rations from 'food distribution' the children no longer respect their teachers and the peasants treat the educated elite as equals and men can no longer provide for their wives who therefore leave them. They assure me that this would never have happened in Burundi where everyone knew his or her place in society and behaved according to 'Burundi customs'.

I would be told these 'tales of decay' when I asked about changes in their lives after coming to a refugee camp. I call them tales in order to emphasise that they are representations. They are tales that were told to a particular audience

– myself the *muzungu* who did not bring money but who was bound to know people in high places who could help the refugees if only I conveyed the message that life was miserable in the camp. But they were also tales for themselves, helping them make sense of their vague feelings of loss. Through telling these tales - to me or to each other – they could put words to the experience of being put into a new environment and being subjected to new and foreign governing techniques.

I do not intend to cloak the refugees in Lukole with a Lacanian universal loss, diminishing their very real experiences of violence and flight to the level of the ‘mirror stage’. Their experience of loss is, in an important sense, very specific and concrete. They have been brutally forced to leave the places that they knew so well and put in a setting that is miles apart from the hilltop where they used to live in almost every way. They no longer grow the bananas and other crops that they used to. They live next door to people whose background they do not know. And they are subjected to strange rules and regulations that are imposed on them by new and unknown authorities and agencies. On the other hand, an attempt to explore the real and concrete aspects of such a traumatic event, runs the risk of another kind of essentialism – that of assuming that all refugees have experienced the same loss. The people that lived in Lukole had very diverse experiences of conflict and flight trajectories, and obviously their memories from Burundi are highly divergent as well. Some came as families while others came alone and brought their families later. Others came with friends or with groups of people that they met on the way. Some fled due to escape personal persecution while others fled general violence in their part of the country. Some had fled to Rwanda first and had to flee again after RPF’s⁸⁰ military victory that put an end to the genocide there in 1994. Others had fled Burundi in 1972 and had spent most of their lives in Rwanda or elsewhere. Some had lived in refugee camps or camps for internally displaced people prior to coming to Lukole. A great number of the younger refugees in Lukole had never been in Burundi at all. Whatever their different experiences, they had all ended up in Lukole, and all

⁸⁰ Rwandan Patriotic Front. Established by Tutsi exiles in Uganda, it fought a guerrilla war against the Hutu dominated government in Rwanda from 1990 to 1994 and took power following the genocide of 800 000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu in April-July 1994.

they had in common was being Burundian and Hutu, whatever that entailed. I will argue in this chapter that the loss that they experience has very specific, historical roots and is not grounded in some universal, pre-symbolic Oedipal loss; rather, it is diffuse and impossible to pinpoint. This brings about a diffuse sense of insecurity which is articulated in the tales of decay.

With Žižek and Laclau we might claim that identities are always unstable and ambiguous, and that it takes a lot of constant 'identity work' to keep these fragile constructions relatively stable. As we shall see in later chapters, a number of latent identity conflicts existed in Burundi due, for instance, to colonisation and modernity. With flight and exile, the efforts to conceal these conflicts and contradictions came undone, and the fault-lines that had been suppressed in Burundian society were exposed in the camp.

The general feeling of loss that refugees encountered in the camp was usually told in the form of three main 'tales'. What is perceived to be lost is the old social order, and this can be seen in women's lack of respect for men, in children's lack of respect for adults and in small people's lack of respect for 'big men'. These three tales make up the three main sections of the analysis. The tales of decay are built up as a narrative of loss. Although many of the refugees have never lived in Burundi, and although gender, age and class relations are changing inside Burundi, Burundi is conjured up in the tales as the stable, harmonious opposite of the chaotic, immoral space of the camp.

In the refugees' interpretation of the social disarray that they find themselves in, they also pinpointed certain causes, as the obscure feeling of loss needs explaining. Amongst the causes that the refugees identified were UNHCR's policy of (gender) equality, the influence of foreign cultures and the urban nature of the camp. Often, all these perceived causes coalesced in each of the three symptoms. So, for instance, women's lack of respect was due both to UNHCR policy, cultural mixing and the urban nature of the camp, they claimed. However, I have chosen to let each section emphasise the different 'causes' differently, depending on the emphasis they were given in the empirical material. That is to say that I will let the refugees' connections between causes and symptoms guide the analysis, rather than forcing them

into a readymade matrix. Hopefully, this will also make the material more digestible for the reader.

Finding tales of decay

This chapter is based on a large number of interviews with a broad spectrum of refugees. It is supplemented with data from the survey of 464 randomly sampled adult refugees that I conducted in April 1998. The tales will be approached thematically, searching for the logic in the tales that seem to circulate the camp as available discourses that individual refugees can relate to. Although they function as common narrative structures or interpretative schemes through which life in the camp is interpreted and pitched against an idyllic past in Burundi, they do not mean the same to everybody in Lukole. While both men and women must relate to the tales of promiscuity, polygamy and prostitution, they do so differently, as the following example from my fieldwork illustrates. The setting is Lukole A II, a part of the camp that was established in 1994 for Burundians who fled after the genocide in Rwanda. For an outsider, this is a pleasant place to come to. The houses are all well established and made of mud and wattle or mud bricks, rather than the makeshift shelters that one sees elsewhere. Many people here have small businesses, making wooden bikes, collecting firewood for selling at the market to the elite refugees, or buying bananas from Tanzanians and selling them at the market. One young man whom I got to know well baked *mandazi* (doughnut-like bread rolls) that he sold to the restaurants. When I arrive somewhere like this in the camp, someone gives me a small wooden bench to sit on, a few of those living closest by sit down with me and a crowd of curious neighbours gather around. Some issues are discussed only with a few people while others listen. People come and go, as they get bored with the conversation or they hear the rumour that I am around. Today we are discussing changes in the camp, and a great many people are joining in. They seem to agree that everything has changed for the worse. And when the subject turns to gender relations everyone joins in, men and women alike.

Men: Yes, some women say that the UNHCR gives them food, so they do not respect the men. So there are many divorces.

Old woman: No. That's only the young women.

Young woman: That is not true.

Man: Some women just wash themselves and put on nice clothes and go to the market, instead of working.
The women seem to protest. (Lukole A II, 20.08.97)

We see here how women contest the man's statement about women losing respect due to UNHCR. Furthermore, the older woman puts the blame on the young women, provoking a young woman to disagree with the old woman. However, they all agree that women ought to respect and obey their husbands. In other words, in spite of taking different positions *vis-à-vis* the narrative, they all relate to it as a fact. That is to say that there are certain narratives circulating the camp as standard interpretations of loss, as responses to the new setting and the new governing bodies. Individuals and groups respond differently to them; rejecting them, embracing them or contesting certain aspects within them, as we saw in the quote above. In later chapters, I will explore how the combined effects of governing Lukole and the tales of decay feed into the strategies of individuals and groups and how the tales are incorporated into political struggles to recapture the camp. Here, the intention is to discuss the tales themselves as generic narratives – more or less without a sender.⁸¹

This short excerpt also illustrates how useful group interviews can be for this kind of issue. Whenever I brought the issue of gender relations up in interviews with refugees in Lukole, the discussion became animated and heated. Women, who usually see a virtue in being shy and reluctant to express themselves in public, often joined in the debate and entered heated discussions with the men on the extent to which women actually were 'losing respect.'

The drawback of group interviews is that it is close to impossible to situate the narrator in terms of social background, life story, etc. For certain kinds of issues and types of analysis, group interviews are therefore of little value. In later chapters I will be using life story interviews and other techniques. However, in this chapter, where focus is on the more general level of generating narratives of decay, group interviews are extremely useful. I am,

⁸¹ As the narratives are never totally generic – they only live through specific expressions – I will locate the social position of the narrator in each case as far as possible.

for instance, able to monitor which issues the refugees are preoccupied with, by registering the intensity of the debates that my questions provoke. Questions on gender and sexual relations certainly caused more tales of decay than question on respect for the elders. So the tales might be addressed to me - provoked by my presence and my questions - but they certainly appear to be for home consumption as well.

Finally, I will add that tales of decay are not just negative. They express a lot of ambivalence about life in the camp where the undoing of traditions also gives room for growth and new opportunities. Different groups within the camp may interpret decay differently, but ambiguity is also held within a single tale, as is ambivalence within the individual refugee. This perplexity is a general theme in the lives of refugees in Lukole.

'UNHCR is a better husband'

I would hear the statement that 'UNHCR (or the white man) is a better husband' again and again in the camp when men explained how women had stopped respecting their husbands because the husbands could no longer provide for them. In fact, 60 respondents in my survey of 464 refugees gave this exact response to the open question 'Do you see any changes in the relations between men and women, after coming to the camp? (State which changes)'⁸². Other responses with much the same effect would be: 'Men and women no longer respect each other' (93), 'disagreement' (85) and 'divorce' (55). In most interviews, a similar line of reasoning would emerge: In the camp, men do not provide their women with food and clothes. As it is the *muzungu* or the UN that provides, women no longer respect the men. They only respect the UN/*muzungu*.

In February 1998 I interviewed Pierre, a 24-year-old man who lived in village F2, known to be a rough part of the camp, allegedly dominated by uneducated young men who sympathised with Palipehutu, and who caused a lot of trouble in other camps. His parents fled to Rwanda in 1972 and he only lived in Burundi for a few months in 1993. He had no schooling, was not

⁸² Cf. Questionnaire, question no. 31.

married and he had no occupation in the camp. This was my third conversation/interview with him and we were discussing life in the camp. He described how humiliating it is to have to beg for food from the white man.

We are begging from the *muzungu* to get something to eat. But when we were in our home country we didn't. We just had our own food from our *shambas* (fields)[...] It makes someone to lose their pride. Because you are a man. And in Burundi customs, men don't go every time to beg for something. He has to go on his own in order to get something. But when he is begging, he loses his pride. Even in your country when there is somebody who is begging - for example disabled people who are begging for something in the markets - they are losing their pride. Refugees are compared with these people who are disabled in your country or somewhere else. Everyone don't respect him because every time he is forced to get food from the food distribution. Even these Tanzanians don't respect. We can't be respected because they know that we are fed by 'Food distribution'. (Pierre, 17.02.98)

'Food distribution' is where TRCS distributes rations of oil, maize and beans that are the same for all refugees, irrespective of gender, age or social status. This is particularly humiliating for men who are meant to provide for their families, he explains. Being forced to beg, means that he feels he cannot look a Tanzanian in the eye. Tanzanian men look down on him. As we shall see later, Tanzanians are usually looked upon with contempt by the Burundians, so not being respected by them is particularly humiliating.

He goes on to explain how this unfortunate situation causes problems between men and women.

A few months ago some women got *kangas* (cloth) from *bazungu*⁸³ - from international... from UNHCR. And when they went back to their *blindés* they were saying that now they get clothes from *bazungu* "you are not our husbands because you don't give us clothes." There are some women who say that "we are fed by *bazungu*, and I will respect you when we will be back in our home country. Because in our home country you are going to give what you have to give me. But here you didn't." (Pascal, 17.02.98)

This quote illustrates the sense among men in the camp that UNHCR is taking the role of the provider from them. In Lukole, UNHCR would not only share rations out equally to all, they would also occasionally have 'special

⁸³ Kirundi plural of muzungu. In the following quotes they interchange between the Kirundi prefix 'ba-' and the Swahili 'wa-' for plural. They also use the Anglicised plural; Muzungus.

distributions' of specific non-food items to 'vulnerable groups' such as women, the elderly or children. This resulted not so much in narratives of unfair treatment of men but rather in tales of having their maleness taken from them. *Kangas* were attributed a lot of symbolic value in the camp. When asked about their business, a shopkeeper or a hairdresser would reply that he now could afford to buy some nice clothes for his wife. At parties and ceremonies in the camp, wealthy men would flaunt their wives' *kangas*, and the audience knew exactly how much each item of clothing had cost. I recall being very astonished by the clapping and whistling that some couples received at a round of presentation at such a party. Being an outsider, I could not see why some should attract so much more attention than others, until it was explained that people were applauding the expensive material in the wives' dresses. So when Pierre refers to *kangas*, he is referring to quite an important symbol of social status. In short, when UNHCR provides *kangas* to the women they are taking respect from the men, as he says, but they are also homogenising men, as the difference between rich and poor is flattened.

Others echo Pierre's concerns. Here a Twa⁸⁴ man bemoans the life in the camp.

Life is much worse in the camp. We have no blankets or other materials. We have to beg. In Burundi we had *shambas*. We have no money to buy things for our wives. Our wives say: You are not feeding me. I'm fed by *wazungu*. (Twa man, 27.08.97).

This tale could be interpreted as follows: The problem with women getting food from UNHCR is that they no longer depend on their husbands. The men no longer have a role as breadwinners. When they lose respect, it is no longer the man who decides what is right and what is wrong in the family, and women do whatever they want. An older man who is a village leader with the nickname Savimbi, due to an impressive beard like UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi, explains:

In the Bible men and women are equal and also with UNHCR laws. But it is not good. A man has to give some orders in his house - and when a woman is equal to a man that means the woman also has to

⁸⁴ The third ethnic group in Burundi, comprising roughly one percent of the population and usually treated as outcast by Hutu and Tutsi alike. In the camp, they still made pots as they had traditionally done in Burundi.

give orders in the house; some orders to the man. In Burundi it is forbidden women to give orders to men.
Is that Burundi law of the government or..?
 It's Burundi customs.
 (Savimbi, 02.02.98).

As we see from this quote, equality is not desirable. It is perceived not only to threaten male domination, as one may expect, but also Burundi customs. Once women start deciding things on their own, they may be adhering to UNHCR law but they are actually undermining a far more fundamental law; the Burundian way of life. Savimbi is generally worried about the behaviour in the camp. People are drinking too much, he says, being a non-drinking Muslim himself.⁸⁵ He often has to stop fights between people in his village who have drunk too much. He also explains that the women wear short dresses here. They never used to do that in Burundi, he explains, although he has only lived in Burundi for a few years since 1972.⁸⁶ Other symptoms of the bad behaviour in the camp are young men who keep their hats on in front of elders. 'You wouldn't see that in Burundi' he explains.

The image of a state of lawlessness or social and moral decay came through in the survey as well as in many of the interviews. In the survey, 39 respondents mention polygamy as a problem. Other issues mentioned are wife beating (10), prostitution (39)⁸⁷ and young marriage/sex (27)⁸⁸; all in all a picture of a society where social and moral norms are dissolving. Sexual relations are in the forefront and appear to be important indicators of such decay. When the *mandazi* baker, quoted earlier, mentions that 'women put on nice clothes and go to the market', he is referring to the commonly held view that prostitution is rampant in the camp. He explains about the changes experienced with coming to the camp.

⁸⁵ This attitude was relatively rare in the camp. In fact, I was surprised to notice how rarely drinking was mentioned as a sign of social and moral decay.

⁸⁶ Like so many other refugees in Lukole, his flight trajectory is rather complex. He fled to Rwanda following the massacres in 1972, and after a few years went to Tanzania. When the Hutu President Ndadaye was elected in 1993, he returned to Burundi. He fled again to Tanzania in 1995 when fighting between Palipehutu and the government soldiers broke out in his commune, Giteranyi.

⁸⁷ Interestingly, it appears that women's extramarital affairs are dubbed 'prostitution' while men's are called 'polygamy'.

⁸⁸ In broader terms they mention dishonesty (36), theft (40), selfishness (45), drinking (25) and laziness (25).

Everything has changed. It is like a big city, like Dar (Dar-es-Salaam) or Bujumbura. You can go to the market, meet a girl and joke (chat) with her. Then you can give her money and take her home. (Mandazi baker, 20.08.97)

Whether prostitution, polygamy, divorces and young marriages really have increased in the camp would be virtually impossible to estimate. The point here is the ways in which people perceive and explain change. Such tales of social and moral decay undoubtedly flourish in Burundi as well, just as they always have done around the world. In the camp, however, Burundi is conveniently remembered as static and harmonious and opposed to the camp.

Because sex – like race – is inscribed in the body, it is always given significance. And in situations of change, as the refugee situation undeniably is, people use sex and sexual relations to ‘monitor’ the level of disarray. Change is interpreted through sex. In a critique of what he calls the semiotic interpretation of gender, Connell argues that the materiality of the body matters. Semiotics, he argues, tends to see the body as a canvas or a landscape whereupon symbols are drawn. He is not arguing for a return to socio-biology. Nor is he pleading for the usual compromise; our genes determine the fundamentals and culture modifies it. Instead he is arguing for what he calls ‘body-reflexive practices’ where bodies are both objects and agents of practice (Connell 1995: 60).

Body-reflexive practices, as we have seen in all these instances, are not internal to the individual. They involve social relations and symbolism; they may well involve large-scale social institutions. Particular versions of masculinity are constituted in their circuits as meaningful bodies and embodied meanings. Through body-reflexive practices, more than individual lives are formed: a social world is formed. (Connell 1995: 64)

So, however much masculinity and femininity may be historically constructed and inscribed on the body, the body always matters and so do questions of gender relations.

When confronted with the allegations that they no longer respect their husbands, women often retorted that it is not always so, as we saw in the introductory quote from Lukole A II. However, rather than denying the tale,

they would qualify it. A group of women's representatives that I interviewed reiterated the tale by claiming that '*A man cannot give to his wife. Therefore she begins to behave badly*' (Women's representatives, 25.08.97). Another group of women modify this opinion by saying that if a man does not buy clothes for his wife because he has no money, then she will be understanding and there will be no problem (Women's sewing group, 12.08.97). In other words, if he genuinely cannot provide for her and is not drinking up the money, then she will show him respect. Spending money on beer is one of the most common accusations against men, not so much because beer drinking is perceived as immoral, as because he is wasting the family's money. Men tend to spend all their money on *mugorigori* (maize beer) and on other women while women spend it on the family, they say. In other words, women are responsible while men tend to be selfish and irresponsible.

A special case is when women work for one of the NGOs in the camp as a teacher, a medical assistant, a community worker or the like and the husband does not work. I discussed this in a group interview in Village E, Lukole B where two young women working in OXFAM's Sanitation Information Team joined the conversation. A man explained how it can cause problems when a woman is employed with an NGO and the husband has no income.

When she comes with her money, the wife becomes a husband. She has to decide everything. She has to buy clothes for her husband. That's why the wife will never respect the husband. (Man, Village E, 25.06.97)

In other words, the breadwinner – in this case the wife – makes the decisions. In response, the one who is being kept – in this case the husband – has to pay respect to the breadwinner. Note how buying clothes for the inferior part in the relationship is brought up as a symbol of this unequal relationship.⁸⁹ One of the young women working for OXFAM, replies that it need not be so in all cases, as it depends on the woman:

Maybe that may happen. But it depends on the behaviour of the wife. The woman who does that, she is the one who doesn't know the power of the husband – who doesn't know how to treat a husband.

⁸⁹ As we shall see in Chapter Six, this perception of the patron as the giver of gifts was central to traditional concepts of hierarchy in Burundi.

The wife who knows how to treat her husband can take half of her money and give it to her husband. (Woman, Village E, 25.06.97)

In this way she agrees that it can cause problems. But if the woman is sensible – as not all women are, it appears – she tries not to antagonise him, by giving him half her wages. It is not an inevitable problem but a question of the individual woman's choices, according to this young woman.

Although women may dispute the men's sweeping statements about lack of respect, they only actually dispute the prevalence of the phenomenon. They may contend that it is not all women that act that way, keeping their own path clean while not disputing the phenomenon as such. Secondly, they do not dispute the fact that women ought to respect their husbands, thus accepting the dominant gender ideology. In other words, men and women agree that a Burundian (Hutu) woman should respect her husband. And they agree – to varying degrees – that this ideal relationship is under threat in the camp.

From these tales of women lacking respect in Lukole, as well as from other informal discussions in the camp, we can see that the ideal Burundian Hutu woman obeys and respects her husband. She is shy and quiet in public, and she works hard and dresses decently, whereas women who are loud mouthed are considered prostitutes and will find it difficult to get a husband, I was told.⁹⁰ The same seems to go for lazy and dressed-up young women. It is the father or the husband who should make the decisions and give orders in the home. It is these ideals that the refugees relate to and it is in relation to them that they interpret their surroundings and, in turn, act upon these interpretations.

Gender ideals influence practice, although this is not to say that there is perfect parity between ideal and practice. Rather, the constant feeling that the ideal gender roles are threatened in the camp leads individual refugees to act in certain ways. In other words, the sense that there is a gap between ideal and practice provides the drive to fill the gap. Because there is a sense that

⁹⁰ As in many cultures, older women appear to be more or less exempted from these norms.

gender ideals are being threatened, women share half of their wages with men, or men spend their first earnings on buying *kangas* for their wives. Practice is created in this movement from perceived failure to ideal. Practice is when refugees do what they can to avoid the moral and social decay. Similarly, the ideal is created and recreated as a counterweight to this threat, as the desired goal of gender practices. In this way, the inevitable gap perpetuates both ideology and practice.

The ideal gender relations are created and recreated by the constant fear that they are being undermined by life in the camp and by UNHCR's policy of equality. Every time someone complains about polygamy, divorces, young marriages or lack of respect, they are reproducing the supposed opposite. They are supposing an ideal; an ideal without divorces, prostitution, disrespect, etc. This ideal is produced in the camp and reflects the feelings of anxiety and uncertainty that are produced in and by the camp. The vague feeling that things are no longer as they used to be is translated into tales of immoral sexual relations and women's bad behaviour. Simultaneously, the picture of ideal gender relations 'back home' is constructed in exile. Such idealised pictures of home are typically constructed in exile, as has so convincingly been illustrated in the literature on migration and transnationalism⁹¹. Both the idea that gender ideals are on the decline as well as the idea of the ideals themselves – the perfect harmony of Burundian customs – are constructed in the camp as a response to an uneasy feeling of loss.

The social and moral decay is like a disease that has hit a healthy society, and women's 'misbehaving' becomes a central symptom of the disease that has struck Burundi customs in the camp. It is therefore of paramount importance that the refugee community tries to control and contain the disease by controlling women's behaviour and the female body.⁹² Hence the preoccupation with women's behaviour in the tales. Does this, then, render the male body irrelevant? I would argue not. It is exactly masculinity that is at

⁹¹ (Cf. Anderson 1994; Bowman 1994; Fuglerud 1999; Olwig and Hastrup 1997) (Glick-Schiller forthcoming (2000)).

⁹² Central to identity politics is the idea of controlling the female body and making sure that it is not corrupted by others. In times of war, for instance, the female body is like the national soil that needs protecting from foreign invaders (Salecl 1994). In this manner, women are depicted as passive and men as active.

stake in the camp, being threatened by equal food rations, women's committees, clothes distribution to vulnerable groups, etc. The phrase 'UNHCR is a better husband' illustrates very aptly this feeling that masculinity is being taken from them and given to UNHCR. We may recall Pierre explaining that begging from food distribution was a humiliating experience. *'It makes someone to lose their pride. Because you are a man.'*

So although women are often to blame – or at least seen as the symptom – it is male pride that is at stake. He explains how they lack respect – not only from women but also from Tanzanians. It is the respect and recognition from other men that is important to them.⁹³ Later, we shall see how these men attempt to rehabilitate their masculinity through various internal power struggles to gain control over the camp and make it a liveable space. In this struggle to 'perform' one's masculinity, women are mere auxiliaries. It is perceived as a fight between men and recognition is sought from other men.

This tale is not unchallenged, however. It is not only men who have responsibility for defending the order of things. Women in Lukole see that they have a certain responsibility in not antagonising their husbands by behaving kindly towards them or perhaps by giving them half their wages, for instance, so that they may not feel so threatened by the camp after all.

What is interesting about this tale of social and moral decay in gender relations is that it not only alludes to disintegration and centrifugal forces but also to a single causal factor, an agent that causes all this misery; namely UNHCR or the *muzungu*. The everyday governmental practices of UNHCR, such as the distribution of food and clothes are seen as a direct threat to social and moral order, as men become like women and women like men. So when the men fight back, they are not just fighting micro-powers and bureaucratic practices of bio-political ordering, they are fighting what they perceive to be an agent – the UNHCR.

⁹³ This is one of Gilmore's claims in his study of masculinity in a number settings around the world. He points out that masculinity is not something to be taken for granted. It is fragile and a man always has to prove his maleness in order not to be deemed an effeminate sissy (Gilmore 1990). And he has to prove himself to other men for recognition. The problem with Gilmore is his tendency to universalise such findings.

The children teach themselves many games

In the general picture of social and moral decay, one might expect tales of the youth no longer paying their elders and betters enough respect. And although people in Lukole would often complain that the children did not show enough respect, the theme did not appear to be as prevalent as the gender theme. Neither did I encounter many tales of the youth no longer respecting the elders as they had done in the good old days back home.

David is 26 years old and belongs to the young elite in the camp, employed by an NGO in 'community services'. He almost finished secondary school in Burundi before being forced to flee and he speaks very good English. He married a woman in the camp and has a child. I am interviewing him about his life, about the conflict in Burundi and about the changes that he experiences in the camp compared to Burundi. After rather hesitant and inconsistent responses to questions on leadership here as opposed to in Burundi, he is not in doubt when asked directly what has changed in people's behaviour.

Some things have changed because you know when Burundese refugees they came to Tanzania they mixed with Rwandese people. Then they had some changes in their culture. And also the children – the very young children – their respect to their parents it has decreased. Because here we live as a town but in Burundi it was in village. And now here the children are together. They are together in the night, during the day, and they are teaching themselves many kinds of games. (David, 16.02.98)

The urban nature of the camp causes the children to run wild and lose respect for their parents. However, when asked whether the 'games' that they make up are bad, he replies that they can be bad or good. Such ambivalence in relation to the camp and the new behaviour was pervasive.

Often these tales would relate to the perception of Lukole as a town/city. Some friends of mine explained that children in the villages in Burundi would not run up to a European and beg. They may want to practice their French or English, that is all. Only in Bujumbura would you find begging children – like here in Lukole (Rama and Ndege, 20.04.98). So what are the problems of a

city? Later in the interview, David explains how adults used to keep an eye on each other's children in villages. Here in the camp this does not happen because you do not know your neighbour⁹⁴. Like the city, the camp represents to David an alienating, anonymous space where individuals do not feel any obligations or responsibility towards each other.

The urban nature of the camp was often epitomised in the market. The market is where the action is and was often contrasted with the *blindés*. When asked how they spend their time, many refugees would answer that they 'stay in the *blindés*'. Staying in the *blindé* means to do nothing. It means that one is not involved in 'business', scout's clubs, employment or dance troupes. The elite in the camp would always talk about people 'in the *blindes*' or 'in the streets' as mere uneducated peasants. They are not important people or 'big men'. The market, on the other hand, contains all the attractions and temptations of a city. Here, one can get drunk and forget one's troubles. For 100 shillings⁹⁵ one can go to the video hall and watch a Vietnam film with Chuck Norris, an action packed Bruce Lee film or Bob Marley music videos. In the better bars there are tiny rooms that can be rented by the hour. One can be more or less anonymous, free of all the bonds and norms that constrain people in the villages. In the market place you can try your fortune. If you cannot start your own business, you can try to find some casual work offloading pickup vans with bananas or you can resort to petty theft.

This is where children go to think up 'new games'. In the tales of prostitution and promiscuity, the market and the urban nature of the camp also played a central role. And as we shall see in the discussion of class relations, the market constitutes a place where new fortunes can be made. It is dangerous, threatening morality and Burundi customs, but it is also tempting. In short, the market represents the virtues and vices of the city and of modernity. These perceptions of the market (as the epitome of the urban/modern/alienating nature of the camp as such) vary according to social position. Thus, the elite would perceive of the market area as the most

⁹⁴ Many people would, however, claim that you could approach your neighbour here in ways that were completely unheard of in Burundi – borrowing salt etc. 'In the camp you learn to live together and to cooperate' was the message.

⁹⁵ 1 dollar = ca 600 shillings.

dynamic space, providing economic opportunities, leisure opportunities and contact with international agencies. Some poor young men explained to me that they enjoyed being near the market but mostly chose to stay away, as the temptations were too many and they were afraid that they would end up as thieves (04.11.97). But they also vary for the individual who is ambivalent. The Mandazi baker says that it is fine to go to listen to music at the market, but women should not go there. On the other hand, he likes going to chat up a young lady there himself.

Likewise, the temptations of the market were perceived to be more harmful to some groups than others. Women who went to the market to enjoy themselves were considered prostitutes while it was not a problem for men to go there to listen to music or drink beer. And similarly the temptations are perceived to be too strong for children. Women, the poor and children are subjected groups that need controlling as they are too weak to handle the freedom and temptations of the market place. Curiously, the market can also be a threat to the elite. The *mandazi* baker says in relation to the decay of the social, that one can see someone with a degree hanging around the market listening to music or visiting people. In other words, this is okay to do if you are an ordinary person but if you are a 'big man' with a degree, you should not be wasting your time like that.

I am proposing that children's disrespect is seen as a symptom of something gone wrong in the Burundian culture, and quasi-urban conditions are perceived to be the cause of these symptoms. When discussing women's behaviour, this also came through as a cause, although the cause that was put forward more often was UNHCR and food distribution. In relation to children's behaviour, UNHCR and equal rations was also mentioned. A group of young men involved in petty trading at the market, explain.

They think that everyone is equal to another, they don't respect. The non-respect is caused by bad life. It may happen that you meet a child saying that everybody is equal in the camp because they are getting food from the same area. (Traders, Lukole A, 04.11.97)

Getting food from food distribution, the children allegedly saw themselves as equals with adults. Equality was not desirable in this aspect of life either, as

Burundi customs prescribe that society is hierarchic, not only between men and women but between old and young, according to the tales of decay. Finally, mixing with other cultures is identified by David as a cause for children's bad behaviour. I will return to the issue of mixing shortly, as it has broader implications for understandings of Hutuness and the ambiguous effects on Hutu identity of being exposed to Tanzanian and Rwandan culture in the camp. First, we will look at another aspect of age relations, namely between the youth and the elders.

In spite of the tales of children's disrespect, it was my clear impression that disrespect of elders was far less of an issue. It would be absurd to attempt to quantify such issues. The way I ask the questions, the people I talked to, etc. all influence the answers, making it difficult to compare quantitatively. However, I was struck by the absence of complaints about young adults not paying respect to their elders. In the questionnaire that I used for my survey question 32 goes: *Are there any other changes⁹⁶ in the way people behave after coming to the camp? (state which changes)*. Among the answers, only 23 out of 464 respondents mention that the youth no longer show respect. I had expected this kind of response to be more prominent, and my surprise led me to inquire into the issue. In other words, it is not because I was not looking for tales of youth lacking respect for elders that I did not find them.⁹⁷

David was one of the people with whom I discussed the issue of age and respect. We were discussing leadership in Burundi and the camp when I brought up the issue of elders. He claims that it was mostly the old people in the villages who made the decisions and from whom people sought advice. They were more respected than the others, he says. He gets confused when I

⁹⁶ It follows the question on changes in gender relations.

⁹⁷ A note on the dangers of quantifying with quantitative data methods. I did not list a number of categories for the respondents to tick where appropriate. I could have had a box called 'youth show no respect', one called 'too much drinking', etc. The problem then would have been that I would have manipulated the respondents by giving the answers beforehand, and they would easily have ticked off the whole list of possible answers (and not have thought of anything to write in the compulsory 'other changes...' at the end). As it is, however, I have almost the opposite problem. Only 6 respondents mention that the camp is like a town. However, in my interviews with people, this subject would be taken up more frequently. This is because the in-depth qualitative interview gives the opportunity to ask the respondent to elaborate and explain a certain point. It would often be in these explanations (of prostitution, theft or children's behaviour) that, for example, the urban nature of the camp would be brought out into the light.

ask about leaders in Lukole. Yes, they are young, he says, because they speak English and Swahili and have been to school.⁹⁸ But if there is a problem between neighbours, they go to the old men to have it solved.

The village leader in B3, himself a thirty-year old, explains how elders are respected but cannot be elected, due to lack of speed and adaptability. But it was the same in Burundi, he claims. Others claim that there are fewer old people in the camp than in Burundi because they either died in the camp or preferred to remain in Burundi. Yet none of them complain about lack of respect. Either they claim that nothing has changed or that the youth have become the leaders – as a matter of fact. Even in interviews with old men, the issue was surprisingly absent.⁹⁹ Savimbi, a man in his forties or fifties, complains that the youth no longer take their hats off in the presence of elders. But apart from that, they do not comment on it.

So what does this tell us about the way that people interpret change? Firstly, we must not assume that all new changes are interpreted in terms of the norms and conventions that the refugees brought with them. When interpreting women's and children's behaviour, they tend to see it in the light of a notion of hierarchy; any change being a threat to *status quo*. However, when interpreting the crumbling power base of the elders, the blessings of a hierarchic social order are somehow absent. Such changes are merely acknowledged and even explained but rarely bemoaned, perhaps due to the fact that the young men actually are running the camp and setting the agenda, perhaps because these relations were changing in Burundi as well.

Once again, we see that objective changes in social structures in the camp do not determine the tales of decay and loss. Despite there being little evidence to show that women are becoming more powerful in the camp, tales still flourish in the camp about women becoming equal with men and not showing respect. And conversely it appears – as will be argued in chapter five

⁹⁸ In following chapters I will explore how a group of young, semi-educated men have emerged as the official and unofficial leaders in the camp.

⁹⁹ This could be due to the fact that I was a relatively young man and my assistant was equally relatively young. Why should the old men complain about the youth to us? On the other hand, as noted above, the women did not feel restrained in venting their opinions in front of me in group interviews.

– that young men have gained powerful positions in the camp without this resulting in a proliferation of tales about the youth no longer respecting the elders. The symptoms that are found in the tales of decay are not to be confused with real effects in the social structure, just like the ‘causes’ of social and moral decay that the refugees pinpoint (UNHCR, urban nature of camp, cultural mixing) are not to be confused with the ‘real’ causes of their feeling of loss. If anything, there is an inverse relationship. That is to say that women’s behaviour is identified as a symptom due to their inferior position, while the elders’ marginalisation – either in the camp or before – has meant that tales of lack of respect for elders have been muted.

We may also explain this in terms of Bourdieu’s concepts of *doxa*, *orthodoxy* and *heterodoxy*. What is lost in the camp is the self-evidence of the legitimacy of the patriarchy. It is no longer obvious that age or sex defines your place in society. In this way, *doxa* is rolled back and issues of age and gender come within the field of opinion and discourse. As we might recall, the objective of *orthodox* opinion is to maintain *status quo* while *heterodox* opinion attempts to roll back *doxa* further and reveal its arbitrary nature. In this case, *heterodox* opinion shows the arbitrariness of the rule of the elders or of the men. On the other side, tales of decay would represent orthodox opinion, bemoaning the changes and struggling to keep things as they were. Which opinion prevails depends on this struggle and the power relations between various groups in the camp. It appears that women are hardly in a position to formulate a heretic, heterodox opinion on gender because the orthodox discourse on gender ideals has been so successful, while in terms of age the heterodox opinion of young men has been able to roll back *doxa* to a degree where orthodox tales of lost respect for elders are virtually absent. In this sense there is almost an inverse relation between the power relations between the two groups and the tales that they tell.

This is in no way an attempt to appraise the power relations in Lukole. I will attempt something to that effect later. Here I have merely reflected on the fact that there does not need to be any factual evidence of women gaining more power for men to complain about women becoming more powerful. Tales of

decay do not tell the truth about social relations in the camp, but they show how taken-for-granted social orders are questioned and need defending.

Finally, age hierarchies have been questioned in Burundi as well, as will be shown in Chapter Six. Although the respect for elders remained strong in Burundi, colonial reforms and reforms by the post-colonial one-party state increasingly challenged the power base of the elders. Only in the camp did this power base definitely crumble, however.

‘The children can see that I eat the same food as they do’

The final symptom of social malfunctioning is the crumbling class relations in the camp. The young men in the market that we saw above in relation to the youth and in relation to their own temptations in the market explain how class differences are flattened and respect for ‘big men’ is lacking – in spite of being neither wealthy nor educated themselves.

When a man who in Burundi was respected - such as an educated one or a trader or someone who had a great job in Burundi in the government - when he meets with others, they suppose that they are equal. They have the same level because they are all in the camp. (Traders, Lukole A, 04.11.97).

In this tale it is assumed that there used to be respect for the people who were more than mere peasants in Burundi while here in the camp it is impossible to maintain that respect because they are all equal. They are at the same level because of the camp, they say, referring to its homogenising effects. This homogenising also makes one anonymous; those who were ‘somebody’ in Burundi are just ‘anybody’ now. Curiously some of these young men were doing relatively well in the camp, occupying social positions that they would not have held in Burundi. One had a bicycle that he used for transporting people and goods to and from the junction at the main road, where refugees trade with Tanzanians. Another sold oil from rations illegally, always fearing the authorities. They were not, as mentioned above, the kind of respected men in Burundi that they refer to in the quote, but among those who had gained from the breakdown of social hierarchies in the camp.

The mandazi baker, also a self-made man in the camp with moderate success, touches on the same issue.

Those who had things in Burundi may lose them, while those who had nothing may become rich in the camp. (Mandazi baker 20.08.97)

The rich have become poor and the poor have become rich. As with the other tales, the main theme is lack of respect for those who ought to be respected due to their naturally superior position in society. Equality in the camp – the fact that they all receive the same food rations, whether they once were peasants or ministers – breaks down respect of ‘big men’. The main cause is, according to the tales of decay, obviously located in the food rations. But proximity of neighbours – the urban lay-out of the camp – is also partly to blame, as this young school teacher testifies.

In Burundi teachers lived in their home and children came little to visit that area. Here we live together and maybe children are my neighbours. And then they don’t respect me well. I can give an example, when we go to get food, I go there and I meet my pupils and they say, this is my teacher. (Schoolteacher, 18.06.97)

The schoolteacher – a man who is educated and ought to be respected as a ‘big man’ – is forced to live close to his pupils. In this manner, they can see that he is also forced to eat maize and soybeans.¹⁰⁰ The young traders explain ‘*someone has passed all day without eating and just his neighbours noticed that*’ (Traders, Lukole A, 04.11.97). To be a ‘big man’ it is important to be able to give the impression that one is qualitatively better than others. If the teacher lives apart from the others in the village with a big fence around his compound,¹⁰¹ he can maintain the illusion that he is different and better, and the school children need never know that he eats the same food as they. To be powerful and important is to have something that others do not have access to – to have a secret.

This links up to the widely held belief in the camp that the Tutsi have a secret that they zealously guard. It is the secret to governing the country and

¹⁰⁰ Curiously, the wealthy Tutsi in Burundi used not to eat in public, giving the impression that they did not eat solid food at all but lived exclusively off milk and beer (Albert 1963: 186).

¹⁰¹ People do not actually live in villages in Burundi but in hamlets spread out on the hilltops.

remaining in power and the reason why they try by all means to prevent the Hutu from getting an education. If only the Hutu got the right education (in economics, law, political science or the like) they would soon reveal the secret and Tutsi power would fall. For this reason, the Hutu are only allowed education in technical fields such as agriculture and engineering, according to people in Lukole. This concept of secrecy and having access to certain kinds of knowledge that others do not have seems to be applicable to inter-Hutu relations as well. Living so close in the camp, these big men risk revealing that they are just mortals like everybody else. The teacher's problem was, in other words, not only that he was equal with his pupils, but also that they *knew* this. In short, his secret was that there was no secret; his power lay in concealing this.

When lamenting that there is no respect for big men, they refer to the presumed hierarchic order of Burundi being threatened by the centrifugal forces of the refugee camp. But don't we also sense ambivalence in these tales? Is there not an element of optimism in them as well? When they say that the rich become poor, they immediately add that the poor become rich. I have argued elsewhere (Turner, 1999) that life in the camp in many ways resembles the liminal phase in *rites de passage* in Victor Turner's understanding.¹⁰² One of the characteristics of being 'betwixt and between' is that along with the negative effects of old social structures being suspended, are certain positive opportunities for new social forms to appear.

Undoing, dissolution, decomposition are accompanied by growth, transformation, and the reformulation of old elements in new patterns. (Turner 1967: 99)

As Stepputat points out, liminality creates '*room for alternative interpretations and potentially dangerous freedom from the convention of society*' (Stepputat 1992: 35). So, people in Lukole may regret that the old world no longer stands; that the rich and powerful no longer enjoy the same respect as they used to. But they – or some of them at least - also see the liberating effects and possibilities

¹⁰² There are, however, significant differences. The *rite de passage* is a strictly controlled process where instructors make sure that the *initiands* are aggregated into society again. No such guarantee exists in Lukole where the refugees wait indefinitely. Victor Turner distinguished between ritual liminality and crisis liminality in later works (Stepputat 1992).

in the camp. Young men from peasant families, like the young traders above, can try their luck in the camp where they have all to gain and nothing to lose – and sometimes they are successful. The camp, like the *juggernaut of modernity* (Giddens 1991) is at once a horrifying and a liberating experience.

A central theme in finding the causes for the success of businessmen in the camp is their contact with Rwandans in exile. The Burundian businessmen would claim that the Rwandans were really good at doing business in the camps and would be proud to have learned from them.

Mixing as loss and as resource

In the tales of decay, mixing often emerges as a cause of decay. David explains that the problems with children's behaviour have been caused by mixing with other cultures. There was also an implicit notion of cultural pollution in the anxiety about women's behaviour. In the survey, respondents would simply state 'mixing', 'mixing with other cultures' or 'loss of own values' as a problem in the camp.¹⁰³ In order to grasp the issue of cultural mixing, I will briefly present some of the perceptions on Rwandans and Tanzanians in Lukole and relate these to widely held perceptions of Hutu and Tutsi. I will argue that perceptions of Rwandans and Tanzanians are framed in the logic of Hutu-Tutsi dichotomies and that this logic is ambiguous. I will also argue that the refugees in Lukole had ambivalent relations to their own Hutuness and that this was expressed in their perceptions of mixing with Rwandans and Tanzanians.

There was a large presence of Rwandan refugees in camps close to Lukole until December 1996, and large numbers of Lukole's present inhabitants had lived in camps with mixed Burundian and Rwandan populations until the Rwandans were sent back. Furthermore, a number of Burundians in Lukole had lived in Rwanda for some period of time.¹⁰⁴ This meant that they had been very exposed to Rwandans and that a number of stories about Rwandans existed in Lukole. The Rwandans were generally believed to be more industrious and assertive than the Burundians. The Hutu refugees in

¹⁰³ Question no. 32.

¹⁰⁴ According to my survey, 27% had lived in Rwanda at some point in time.

Lukole had a rather ambivalent attitude towards the Rwandan Hutu. On the one hand, they despised their brutal character and their rude behaviour. *'Burundese and Rwandese were different in customs because Rwandese if they don't have permission they do what they want. But Burundese can't do so.'* (Village F2, January 1998). The Rwandans would not be afraid to break the law, while the Burundians prided themselves on being good law-abiding citizens. This image of the Burundians as following the law of UNHCR and Tanzanian authorities would be evoked time and again. Burundian Hutu are also shyer than Rwandans, according to these narratives, and Rwandan Hutu are like Burundian Tutsi in their behaviour (Post-primary school, 15.05.98).

However, the Burundian refugees could also see the advantages of such behaviour and would envy and admire the Rwandans their strength and their courage. And after spending some time with Rwandans in the camps or as refugees in Rwanda, they claimed that they were learning to be assertive like the Rwandans. *'Because Burundese used to live with Rwandese some have adopted their behaviour. Because Rwandese are not shy. So some Burundese now are digging outside the camp. They began to act as Rwandese.'* (Village F2 January 1998). By 'digging outside the camp' he is referring to refugees farming outside the camp, in spite of a ban by the Tanzanian authorities. The naïve Burundian would follow the law and starve in the camp, while the Rwandan and the new kind of Burundian would ignore the rules and have plenty of food. So generally, businessmen in particular would be glad to say that they had learned from the Rwandans.¹⁰⁵ Cultural mixing with them certainly had its benefits in terms of business opportunities. The question is whether it had its price in terms of moral degradation of Burundian culture. This dilemma reflects their ambivalent relationship to their own 'Hutuness'.

Hutu are generally perceived in the camp to be shy, polite and honest as opposed to the lazy, cunning and scheming Tutsi. These are widely held beliefs in Burundi society that have roots back to colonial labelling.¹⁰⁶ Many

¹⁰⁵ As we saw in the previous chapter, these stereotypes of Rwandan and Burundian refugees were shared by relief workers who had an ambivalent relation to them as well.

¹⁰⁶ Liisa Malkki has some brilliant observations of these Hutu and Tutsi stereotypes in a refugee camp in the 1980s (Malkki 1995a). Other descriptions that tend to see them as ethnic

refugees in Lukole would claim that there are no somatic differences between Hutu and Tutsi¹⁰⁷ but you could tell the difference in their behaviour. The main difference, they would assure me, is that a Hutu will show his feelings straight away. He will get angry and then he will forget and forgive. Tutsi, on the other hand, 'hide' their emotions, and they can carry a grudge for a long time. As much as they are proud of their Hutu virtues, they also sense that these virtues have become a vice in their relations to the Tutsi. For as well as being honest and open, they are also slightly naïve, and will believe anything that the more intelligent – and less honest – Tutsi tell them. According to their own understanding, they had been the victims of Tutsi trickery and deceit for centuries and would often mention the need to be smarter themselves in the future. In other words, they needed to shed aspects of their Hutuness and become more assertive and cunning, if they were to manage the harsh realities in a camp or in a future Burundi. This assertiveness could come from the Rwandan Hutu who had been 'on top' from 1959 to 1994¹⁰⁸, as they explained.

The Rwandan Hutu is constructed as 'the modern man' who - free of bonds and obligations – can pursue his own fortune and happiness as he likes. On the other hand, he lacks the comfort of customs, family bonds and mutual obligations, and he is morally corrupted (as can be seen from his rude behaviour and lack of respect for the law). The classical *Gesellschaft-Gemeinschaft* dilemma is imputed onto ethnic stereotypes.

Tanzanians were usually looked down upon in Lukole. They were perceived to be poor, dirty, uneducated and badly dressed, in short: uncivilised peasants. This negative view of Tanzanians usually surfaced in complaints about Tanzanian staff, whom the refugees found it hard to accept as superiors, as the quote from Pierre illustrates. Not being respected by

characteristics rather than constructions include (Albert 1963; Maquet 1961; Trouwborst 1962).

¹⁰⁷ As opposed to the refugees that Malkki talked to in the 1980s, who clearly charted body maps of ethnic difference.

¹⁰⁸ The 'twin nations' Rwanda and Burundi, having been subjected to similar colonial practices by first the Germans and then the Belgians, followed very different paths at independence. Rwanda experienced a 'Hutu revolution' where a quota system was introduced to ensure the Hutu proportional representation in education, public service and government. In Burundi ethnicity was officially banned while a Tutsi elite remained in power. See Chapter Six for a closer analysis.

Tanzanians was terribly humiliating for him. On the other hand, I talked to a friend in the camp one day about some Burundian refugees who had been living in Tanzanian villages for years and had just arrived in the camp. He explained that they behaved like Tanzanians. When I asked him to explain, he said that they wore dirty clothes and their children were polite.¹⁰⁹ Tanzanians represent the opposite of Rwandans by being ‘more Hutu than the Hutu’. They are supposedly more ignorant and rurally backward than even the Burundian Hutu, as illustrated in the comment about dirty clothes. At the same time they incarnate the positive aspects of Hutuness by being more peaceful and polite, indicating that they hold a sense of community and *Gemeinschaft* even stronger than the Burundian Hutu.

Following the logic of Mary Douglas, one could claim that mixing with either Rwandans or Tanzanians causes impurity and hence danger (Douglas 1966). However, what is interesting about these ethnic stereotypes is, firstly, the refugees’ ambivalent relations towards them. Secondly, they both – in opposing ways – are constructed as representing aspects of Hutu identity. They represent the ambiguous identity of the Burundian refugees in Lukole. In other words, Rwandan Hutu represent what they might end up like if they do not take care to protect their customs and values, while the Tanzanians show to them how they will end up if they continue to live a rural, uneducated life, turning their backs on ‘progress’ and (political) power. So mixing is not just perceived as impurity and danger. Mixing – taking the best from both worlds – can be seen as a source of strength – a strategy to learn the ways of the world and manoeuvre in this new setting where you will not get very far with old stagnant values and customs.

Finally, mixing can be mixing with people from other parts of Burundi. This leads to bad behaviour (as villagers in C5 explain (C5, 08.09.97)). However, this kind of mixing, living close to people that you did not know before, can also be positive, they say.

¹⁰⁹ This was in fact the first time a child in Lukole had greeted me with *shikamoo* – a Swahili greeting that expresses respect for seniors.

Everything has changed. For example: In Burundi there were many difficulties between neighbours. But here, if you consider in the camp, it is few - few people who make troubles with others. If here people don't have something to eat, he can go to ask his neighbour for maize grain, and just he gets it. But in Burundi if you went to ask for that, it was ridiculous - it was not good. (Village leader, B2, 20.02.98)

In other words, being forced together is not perceived only to have negative consequences. Due to the interview situation, people would obviously tend to emphasise the negative aspects of life in the camp, hoping that I would convey the message to important people in my country. However, occasionally they would tell about positive changes, as did the village leader above. I sometimes also asked them directly to mention what they had learned from living in a camp. Thus question 34 in my survey concerns what the respondent feels he/she has learned in the camp. A substantial number answer that they have learned to cooperate. We see again how the camp is not pitched unequivocally as decay against a harmonious Burundian past. They are in an ambiguous position between a loss of the *Gemeinschaft* of the 'good old days' and being given the opportunity in the camp to open their eyes, learn new tricks and develop new relations. Through the course of this study, we shall see how this relates to a general Hutu narrative about losing innocence.

On understanding tales of decay.

From time immemorial, people have complained that the world is no longer as it used to be. So in that sense, the tales told by refugees in Lukole are not so surprising. Wouldn't they also be complaining about lack of respect had they remained in Burundi instead? This leads us to the questions of how far we can generalise the refugee experience and to what degree we can compare it with the disturbing, unsettling and liberating experience of modernity or the liminal experience of neophytes in *rites de passage*. And there certainly are similarities. However, the specific tales that they tell relate to specific circumstances in their lives; in Burundi, during flight and in the camp. In other words, we must not reduce their opinions to mere esoteric narratives - the result of a universal human feeling of loss.

When refugees complain about increased prostitution, lack of respect and forgotten customs, they are putting into discourse certain concrete historical experiences that have had more or less traumatising effects on them. These experiences have forced people in Lukole to try to reinterpret their surroundings. But their experiences are not identical, as every refugee has followed his or her own trajectory before ending up in Lukole. Hence the need for narratives or 'tales' that retrospectively 'fix' the loss, define what was lost and define what went wrong. Perhaps the changes that they claim to have taken place in exile were already taking place in Burundi. Perhaps relations between men and women and between the youth and the elders had been challenged in Burundi over the years. However, the camp brought them to the surface and made them visible. Furthermore, the fact that they were in the camp, allowed them to interpret these changes as results of the camp. In this way the changes are seen as the result of flight and exile and the ideal picture of Burundi is drawn as the opposite of the camp; as solid and static. The last section of this thesis is about the ways in which the refugees try to make sense of their new surroundings and stabilise their life-worlds. This chapter, on the other hand, has attempted to explore the ways in which the catastrophic event itself was interpreted, and especially represented, by the refugees. One could say that they are inventing the symptom and its cause before finding the cure.

The 'symptoms' were often represented in terms of collapse in gender relations, to a lesser degree in terms of eroded generational relations and sometimes in terms of loss of class hierarchies. Although gender relations have not necessarily changed dramatically and although women have not become equal with men, gender appears to be the interpretative scheme through which they are able to express their feeling of loss. So although sex is constructed and performed as Butler would have it, it is always of significance, because sex – like race – is inscribed in the body.

In spite of the heterogeneous composition of the refugee population, the bureaucratic space of the camp is homogeneous and homogenising, and the governing techniques of the relief agencies tend to 'flatten' the population. Tales of decay are articulated reactions to these homogenising and flattening effects of camp life. I identified three 'causes' of social and moral decay in the

tales of decay; equal rations from UNHCR, the alienating urban nature of the camp and cultural contamination by Tanzanians and Rwandans. The role of UNHCR in the tales is of particular interest in relation to the analysis of governing practices that were scrutinised in the previous chapter. The policies and practices of UNHCR are reinterpreted in unexpected manners. Instead of equal food rations setting men and women free to govern themselves on an equal setting, these food rations are perceived in terms of hierarchy and rank. Not only – as obviously may be predicted – do they threaten the patriarchy, they are perceived to be the expression of a new patriarchy. In this sense, women are not ‘liberated’ but men are reduced to the level of women and children, while UNHCR takes their rightful place as household heads. Hence, the cause of all the misery, the agent that prevents the harmonious community and Burundian ‘way of life’, is located in the UNHCR. Rather than being an obscure feeling of uncertainty, a cause (the UNHCR) and a symptom (women no longer respect their husbands) are located. This is epitomised in the phrase ‘UNHCR is a better husband’.

Chapter Five – Recapturing Lukole

Let us briefly recall the image of Lukole from the air in a UNHCR six-seater. We saw the gardener’s dream of red macadam roads making a neat grid, straight lines of blue and white *blindés*, and the fenced compounds of the humanitarian agencies. We saw how the camp made up not only a tightly organised but also a tightly confined space. However, even from the air one could spot the cracks in the gardener’s dream. Footpaths, made by the movement of thousands of pairs of usually bare feet, wind their way through the camp, breaking the strict geometry of UN roads and creating lived space. But it is not only within the camp that rules are defied. The footpaths also sprout into the bush in all directions, marking in space the fact that refugees do not remain in the seclusion site, waiting to be fed and waiting for the day they may eventually return. They fetch firewood, running the risk of being caught by CARE-environment guards or, worse still, by local *sungu sungu*, Tanzanian vigilante groups. They go to dig fields that they have rented from Tanzanians or they sell their labour to Tanzanian farmers. These paths fade

out and become invisible to the spectator in the plane. We can no longer follow the routes of the refugees who have decided to live in Tanzanian villages, or of those who cross the Ruvubu River into Burundi to visit relatives, to check the security situation, to smuggle coffee or to join the rebels. Neither can we see when they board minibuses, pretending to be Tanzanians and putting on their best Swahili, and go to Mwanza to buy goods for reselling in the camp or to Ngara where they phone party headquarters in Nairobi and Brussels.

In order to see this, one must move beyond the bird's eye perspective of the UNHCR. One must also move beyond the nostalgic perspective of the tales of decay. Lukole is neither merely the tightly organised space of the bureaucrat nor the fragmented space of the tales of decay. The space is recaptured – or at least sought to be recaptured – by its inhabitants. I intend to explore the processes whereby the space of Lukole is recaptured and transformed into lived space. We have already seen how the refugees interpret their surroundings and relate them to a past. In the present chapter I want to explore how refugees in Lukole try to cope with the decay that they see around them, and how they apply strategies to avoid it by trying to create new order.

Strategies of recapturing Lukole may be directed against the centrifugal forces of the camp, towards gaining cultural coherence and reconstituting Burundi customs as they ideally used to be. But then again a great many refugees have no interest in reverting to a glorious past which is based on the patriarchy and on gerontocratic rule. They recapture the camp by making use of the liberating forces of *liminality* and become '*liminal* experts'. In this chapter we will follow a group of young men that have managed to make use of the *liminal* space of the camp and carve out a space for themselves. Three of the strategies that they employ, play important roles in defining the camp.

When I say recapturing Lukole, I do not imply some heroic figure fighting against the constraints of 'power'. Although most scholars would distance themselves in principle from such an idea of innate agency, it is easy in practice to slip into such imagery, especially in the study of refugees and

migration. Due in part to the humanitarian implications and in part to the idea of transnationalism, there is a tendency to perceive refugees as either victims or heroes. In order to avoid this dichotomous view, I will put forward an understanding of the refugee as strategic. This relates to the question of agency that I touched upon in the theoretical prelude. Agency does not emerge from some inner kernel of 'being' because the subject only exists as lack prior to identification. But there is always a 'gap' in the system¹¹⁰, and this leaves room for indeterminacy and for decision-making. We saw in the last chapter how the taken-for-granted social order had been questioned in the camp, leaving open new modes of interpretation. This rolling back of *doxa* is bound to widen the terrain of indeterminacy and hence of situations where the answer is not given beforehand. On the other hand, the terrain is never completely unstructured and undecided. People bring with them experiences, memories and habits that structure their strategies. It is in this terrain that the young men that I intend to follow, operate.

Steven – being where the action is

Steven is a polite, soft spoken young man. He chooses his words carefully and does his best to answer all my questions as best he can. He is 25 years old and unmarried. He does not want to marry in exile, as he says the responsibility of a family will hinder the possibilities of continuing his studies. A great many young men with hopes of continuing the studies that they were forced to discontinue in Burundi, share his hopes for further education. And a great many also choose to be single for this same reason. Others choose not to marry because they fear what the future could bring. *'It's not good to move like that with a family, if we will be forced to move'*, they explain.

Steven was a few months short of finishing secondary school when president Ndadaye was assassinated and he fled to Tanzania. He dreams of studying economics. Steven's background is atypical in the sense that his father migrated to Tanzania long before Steven was born, and Steven's mother is Tanzanian. This probably explains why his English and Swahili are so good.

¹¹⁰ See Laclau and Zac (Laclau and Zac 1994) for a discussion of the concept of a gap from four different angles and of how it produces space for politics and agency (of a sort).

He moved to Burundi with his father at the age of nine, and all his schooling took place there. However, he is typical of a number of other young men born in Burundi, who speak these languages and hold good positions in the camp, working for humanitarian agencies.

When I first met him, he was working as a primary school teacher and had done so since arriving in the camp in 1994. We met him in the previous chapter, complaining about the school children's lack of respect. A few months later, he was chief security guard for Lukole A. The security guards are employed by UNHCR and are responsible for security in the camp in collaboration with the Tanzanian police, who established a 24-hour police post in the camp in 1997. The security guards protect public places like the food distribution centre, the market and the graveyards, and they patrol the rest of the camp night and day. They are unarmed and may arrest people for petty offences and keep them locked up for up to three days. More serious crimes are transferred to the police. In Lukole A, with a population of roughly 70 000, there are ca. 60 security guards. In other words, Steven has been given a large responsibility for someone his age.

He was given the position after the UNHCR had sacked all the previous guards and 'screened' all new and old applicants to clean out the political activists among them. As may be recalled from Chapter Three, this was due to a conflict between the camp chairman and the previous chief security guard, who, according to one version of the story, had accused the chairman of being active in CNDD and had managed to have him imprisoned for a few days (Steven 24.2.98). On the other hand, the camp chairman had complained that the security guards were Palipehutu supporters and that their arrests were biased. These accusations and counter-accusations led UNHCR to try to depoliticise the security guards. This is when Steven was employed.

Ironically, Steven was deeply involved in politics – only he was pro-CNDD rather than Palipehutu and hence more in line with the camp chairman. Due to political activity being strictly banned in the camp it was not easy to determine who belonged to which party and what the parties were actually doing in the camp. However, after being in the camp for some months and

learning not to ask too directly or push the issue too hard, I gained the confidence of quite a few refugees and learned something, if not all, about their political sympathies and activities. This had a certain ‘snowball’ effect, since those who had confidence in me would vouch for me. There is no doubt that Steven is a CNDD supporter and, judging from the network of ‘big men’ in the camp that he knows, is an influential member.

Steven’s father and brother live in the camp but he usually stays with a friend close to the market and the NGO offices – as opposed to ‘down the hill’ where his father’s plot is.

I was fortunate to be able to follow Steven for a while in the camp and have since corresponded sporadically with him. Apart from his job as chief security guard he began teaching French courses for UNHCR staff in Ngara town. He later went to Nairobi to try to study. He failed to find any sponsorship for his studies, but managed to learn some basic computer skills. He returned to Lukole and applied for resettlement in Canada. For some reason, he failed to turn up for the interview and he has now moved to a camp in Kigoma region. He is married ‘*after a long despair of soon regaining school,*’ as he writes in a letter in March 2001. Both he and his wife work for international NGOs in the camp. He still hopes to go to the West and continue his studies.¹¹¹

Steven exemplifies a phenomenon that I was struck by in the camp, namely a number of very young men who held extremely influential positions. When I started my research, I decided to focus on young men because they had not received much attention from either scholars or practitioners. I had an expectation that these young men may well be strong and able, and were probably healthier than women and children but might have problems in finding an identity in the camp. I expected them to be at a crossroads in their lives where they were supposed to establish a family and provide for it in order to join the ranks of adult men; a normal life transition disturbed by the camp where they could not even afford the bride price let alone provide for a

¹¹¹ This account is based on numerous talks with Steven. Of more formal character, I can mention taped interview 18.06.97, Life story interview (taped) 24.02.98, Interviews 26.08.97, 27.03.98 and 28.04.98, and letters January 1999 and March 2001.

family. In this sense, I expected to find them in a state of *liminality* as neither boys nor men. With this in mind, I was all the more surprised to find a number of very young men like Steven in influential positions in the camp, as street leaders, NGO employees or as businessmen.

Apart from the formal street and village leaders who enjoy a great deal of respect and are important people in the camp, I got the impression that there were other categories of 'big men' who were to be found in other places that allowed them to position themselves strategically. This could be as businessmen or through employment with an NGO. Steven is a typical example of the latter. They may even combine a job with an NGO with a small business on the side¹¹². These three kinds of 'big men' have different roles and are different in social composition, although they also often overlap and cooperate. In the following I will attempt to characterise the NGO employees in terms of social composition to see how they differ from the camp population as a whole. In later sections, I will compare NGO workers, street/village leaders and businessmen.

Humanitarian agencies employed refugees in a number of positions. UNHCR employed security guards. AEF (African Education Foundation) employed more than 200 primary school teachers, around 100 social workers/community mobilisers and a handful of supervisors and coordinators. They employed more than 200 refugees in the clinics (medical assistants, nurses, laboratory technicians, guards, cooks, etc.). OXFAM, in charge of water and sanitation in the camp, employed close to 200 refugees, mostly as guards to watch the boreholes and water tanks. They also employed large Sanitation Information Teams (ca 75 refugees) to spread information on how to boil water, wash hands and build latrines the right way. Finally, TRCS (Tanzanian Red Cross Society), in charge of camp management, had almost 200 refugees employed as loaders in food distribution, guards, plotters and construction workers. NGO employees do not receive wages but so-called 'incentives', as they are in theory already fed by WFP. A school teacher would receive 14000

¹¹² In fact, the business often gives a higher income, while the job gives the contacts and the influence.

shillings (= ca. 20 USD) a month while the maximum monthly incentive allowed¹¹³, for a supervisor or a doctor, for instance, was 22000 shillings.

It is especially the people employed as community mobilisers, teachers, medical assistants and in the Sanitation Information Teams that are of interest here, as they make up the educated elite in the camp. I carried out a survey of 123 NGO employees¹¹⁴ from Lukole A and B, working with various NGOs. In the following I will compare the results with my baseline survey of the adult population in the camp.¹¹⁵ According to the survey results, the people employed by NGOs generally have a higher level of education than the average population. Whereas 17% of the population above the age of 16 have more than primary school education, at least 85% of the NGO employees in my survey had more than primary school education. 31% of the population in general claimed to have no formal schooling at all, while this was not the case for any of the NGO employees.

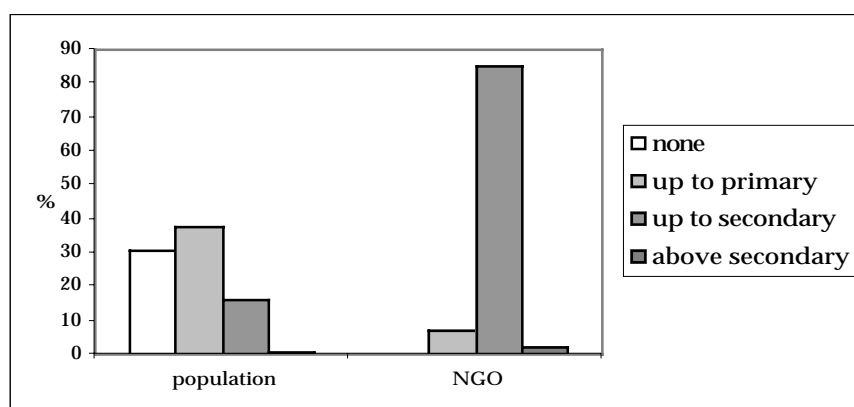


Figure 1. Educational level of NGO employees and population.¹¹⁶

The NGO employees were generally better at languages than the average population, with 86% claiming to speak French against 27% for the population in general¹¹⁷ and the number of English speaking NGO employees

¹¹³ UNHCR regulated the maximum wages that NGOs were allowed to pay Tanzanian and Burundian staff.

¹¹⁴ See Appendix B.

¹¹⁵ For a discussion of the method and problems involved see Appendix A.

¹¹⁶ Church schools have been added to the category 'Primary or less'. A number of answers were difficult to classify, as the schooling system in Burundi has undergone several large reforms.

¹¹⁷ Figures on language competence are very unreliable. See Appendix B. However, one might assume that this is a bias that goes for both surveys. In fact, if anything, the bias should minimise the difference between NGOs and the population in general. With me present, as an

being roughly four times the number of English-speakers to be found in the general population.

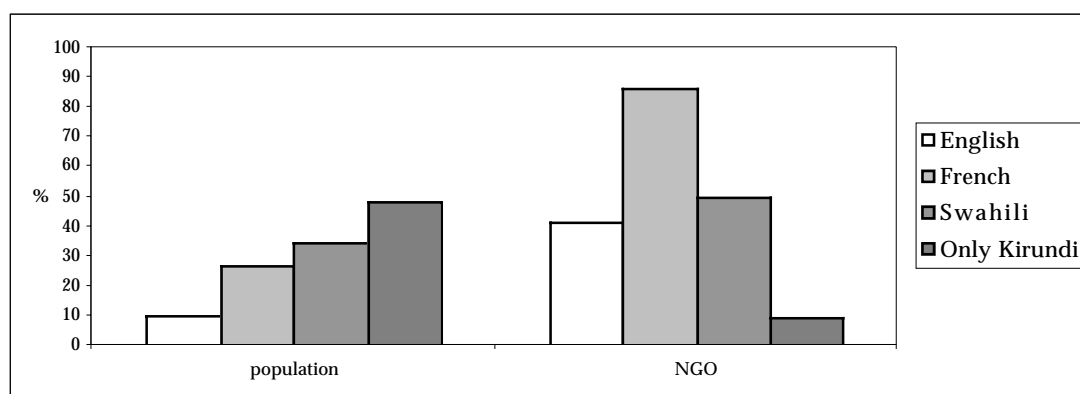


Figure 2. Language skills, NGO employees and Population.¹¹⁸

Swahili seems to follow another logic. NGO workers do not speak significantly more Swahili than other refugees. If, however, we look at the amount of women and men respectively who speak Swahili, we notice that it is a man's language. In the population as a whole, only 16% of the women speak Swahili as opposed to 43% of the men. Similarly, only 12% of female NGO employees claim to speak Swahili while 57% of male NGO employees do¹¹⁹. By comparison, women speak almost as much French as men – both in the population as such and among NGO employees.

English speaker, one might expect it more difficult for the NGO employees to claim to speak English (or French) than for the population in general, where the interviews were done by local assistants. In any case, the figures function as indicators for comparing the two groups, and not as absolute figures.

¹¹⁸ The category 'Only Kirundi' covers in some cases knowledge of other local languages such as Kinyarwanda, as they are of no significance for the argument that I am trying to make here. They are neither a marker of formal education nor of practical use in the camp.

¹¹⁹ The statistics on female NGO workers are very unreliable as the absolute figure in the survey is very low (17 individuals).

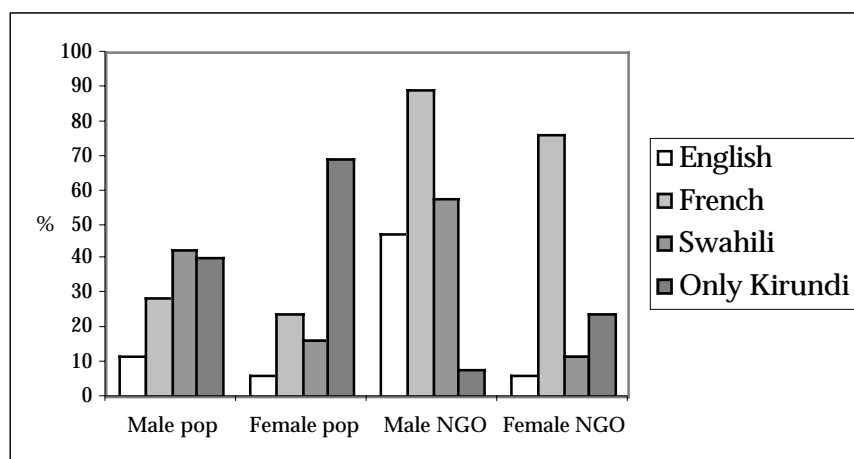


Figure 3. Language skills and gender for NGO employees and population.

This could indicate that French is a language that is linked to formal schooling in Burundi, and hence mastered by the educated elite of both sexes, while Swahili is learned in the public space of the camp where mostly men move. English is a mixture of the two, since the better educated have in theory been taught English in secondary school but it is only in the camp that they actually learn to speak it. This is tentatively reflected in Table 3 where the combination of being male and an NGO employee gives a far higher ratio of English speakers than in any of the other groups. I knew people who had learned English working for NGOs like NPA and GOAL. Others had actually taken lessons from the few refugees who spoke the language reasonably. Yet others would follow literacy classes with the American and Irish *padres* in the camp. English is the language of the future, they say, referring to *la francophonie* losing its hold in central Africa.

Both English and Swahili were seen to be the best languages to know in the camp as they allow you to ‘express yourself’ to the NGOs, UNHCR and the Tanzanian authorities. In terms of status, English was considered more prestigious than Swahili, just as European or North American agencies and staff were considered more prestigious and more honest than Tanzanian or Kenyan staff. Being able to approach the *Wazungu* or the Tanzanians was clearly seen as an asset, and people who mastered these skills were often used informally or formally (if they were street leaders, for instance) as brokers by their friends, relatives and neighbours. Language skills also allowed for upward mobility, as knowing English could give access to a job as

coordinator or supervisor with an NGO. Here, French was not of much use, and was rather a social marker left over from Burundi. It was prestigious in the sense that it marked a certain level of education and social position, but it was perceived to be rather anachronistic and of little use for social mobility in the present or future.

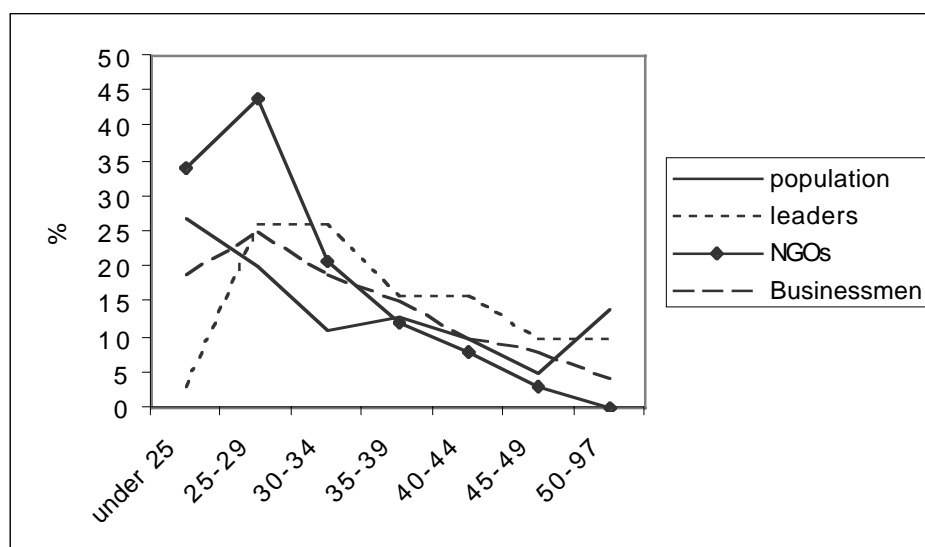


Figure 4. Age distribution of NGO employees, population, leaders and businessmen.¹²⁰

Finally, the surveys show that the NGO employees were very young. Table 4 indicates that they were younger than the village and street leaders. The average age of NGO workers was 29 years while the average age of leaders was 35 years (although I did, as we shall see shortly, find leaders as young as 22 years old).

One should hesitate to draw too strong conclusions from such figures, as they seem to take on a life of their own once they have been fed into databases and come out in neat tables. Thus there is nothing surprising in the fact that relief organisations in the camp employ the best educated refugees with the best language skills. Neither should it be much of a surprise that very few NGO employees were farmers in Burundi (6% as opposed to 61% of the average population). What we can see is that through the jobs created by NGOs, a

¹²⁰ I also did two surveys of businessmen and street/village leaders respectively. I will analyse these shortly. See also Appendix B.

group of young, semi-educated, mainly male refugees is created and given a pivotal position in the camp.

They get to function as intermediaries between the refugees and the agencies. In this sense they resemble the leaders. But whereas the leaders are the official representatives and intermediaries in charge of governing the refugees, the NGO employees carry out the everyday practices of governing. They inform about hygiene, they help the 'vulnerables', they teach the children, they mobilise the youth and they take care of security. This is where biopower is exercised. But they are not merely the instruments of bio-politics, and they manoeuvre strategically according to very different agendas than the NGOs.

The employees make use of their strategic positions as intermediaries between donor funds and the beneficiaries. The camp population's access to essential resources - such as medical help, education and security against theft and robbery - goes through these intermediaries. Thus it becomes important to be on good terms with an NGO employee who can ask favours in return, thus creating the basis for patron-client relationships. In this area of 'hustling', the line between windfalls and corruption is fine. To work in the feeding centre for malnourished children is, for instance, considered very attractive, as much of the meat, fish and milk allegedly ends up in the stomachs of staff. Others have been involved in selling blankets that were supposed to be distributed to the elderly.

The jobs with NGOs are so attractive that people would pay to be allowed to work for an NGO. If you as an employee get someone a job, you can ask for half of his or her wages. When asking people in the poorer part of the camp, Lukole B, where new arrivals are housed, if they had any employment, they would reply: 'No we haven't got enough money'. This really surprised me - assuming that the objective of employment was to earn money and not vice versa - until they explained about the bribes involved¹²¹.

¹²¹ That this may not be exactly true will be explored in later chapters where we see how slander and defamation is used against this elite by discontented refugees.

These people who came recently don't know where to find the job. **They don't know the mechanisms of the camp.** These people who have already got jobs here in Lukole, charge them some taxes in order to get a job. And these people are very poor. They don't have shillings to pay. That's why they don't have jobs.

You should complain to Tanzanian staff that the Burundians tax them shillings.

Where can we go to complain? And those Tanzanians, sometimes they tax us shillings. Ha ha ha. (Village leader, B3)

This quote illustrates the attractiveness of being employed by an NGO. It also reveals a perception that the NGO employees make up a close-knit and impenetrable network.

Steven fits the profile of an NGO employee that attained a pivotal role in the camp. From being a secondary school student in Burundi, he became chief security guard, responsible for keeping a check on crime in a camp with a population the size of a fair sized town and with a murder rate somewhat higher. According to their own explanations, the reasons why he and a number of other young men gained such prominent positions was in part due to their formal education and in part due to a number of personal abilities; to cope in the camp and become a 'big man' one had to be open, not afraid to approach a *Muzungu* and have a certain nerve to assert oneself, they claimed.

These personal abilities link up to the vague idea of being 'shy' or not. In a sense, not being shy epitomises the other abilities. Not being shy crystallises the meaning of education, language and mobility in the refugees' understanding of the changes that they feel are taking place in Lukole. Those who master these abilities and who adapt to the changes are in the forefront of recapturing Lukole. To not be shy means to dare voice one's opinion in public in front of a number of foreign and 'superior' people. It means knowing the new rules of the refugee game and knowing how to bend them to one's advantage, rather than being taken advantage of by the new rulers.

As I have hinted at earlier, shyness is seen as a Hutu virtue. To be shy is to show good manners. An inferior is meant to be shy towards a superior, whether that is in terms of age, gender, class or ethnicity. However, as has also been mentioned, the refugees expressed an ambiguous relation to

shyness. *As much as it was still praised as a virtue, it was also considered a vice. This was most clearly expressed in relation to Rwandan Hutu refugees who allegedly were not shy but 'proud'.* In Lukole, people would take pride in having learned some of these 'tricks' from the Rwandans. When discussing UNHCR's verification exercise in October 1997,¹²² many people expected very high figures. I argued that the figure had decreased by 25% in the Kigoma camps after a similar verification a few months earlier, because it had allowed UNHCR to weed out all the refugees with more than one ration card. *'But people here are cleverer'* they said. *'We also cheat the verification. We have defeated Nasir.'*¹²³ They explained that it is because Burundians in Lukole have lived with Rwandans, as opposed to the Burundians in Kigoma who are quite green in the refugee game. *'The Rwandans were very clever. They knew what medicine to use to remove ink.'*¹²⁴ (Diary 27.10.97). In this sense, it is 'clever' to cheat UNHCR. The longer you have lived in the camp and the more you have learned to shed your shyness, the better you would cope, they believed. There is a name for all the ways that they try to trick the authorities; *Makanaka*, named after a Cameroonian football player who was famous for his tricks with the ball.

NGO employees like Steven take advantage of the fact that the old hierarchies of Burundi are no longer valid, and carve out a place for themselves by shedding their Hutu naivety and their position as inferiors.¹²⁵ Through linking up with the international agencies in the camp, they make themselves indispensable as brokers. They know the language of the humanitarian workers, not only literally Swahili and English, but also in terms of knowing about food rations, community development projects, hygiene sensitisation programmes, and all the other codes that need deciphering in order to handle and please the new masters in the camp.

¹²² All the refugees were counted to verify whether the present feeding figure was correct.

¹²³ UNHCR field officer. There were many rumours about him and it is interesting to note how he was imputed to have omnipotent powers. It was believed that he had personally planned the verification exercise and was planning to send all the refugees back to Burundi just as he allegedly had done – single handedly – with the Rwandans in 1996.

¹²⁴ For the verification, each person dipped their fingers into ink that was impossible to remove to avoid recycling.

¹²⁵ A central aspect of the concept of being modern is to be able to create oneself and exhibit a degree of plasticity. Instead of being made by norms and conventions, modern man has the ability and the courage to shed the bonds of culture and define his own destiny.

James - between mobility and sedentary knowledge

James is the village leader in B2 in Lukole B. It is a village of people who have lived in Tanzanian villages for years and who were rounded up by the Tanzanian authorities in late 1997. He had fled Burundi in 1993, and was among the first to arrive in Lukole when it was established in 1994. However, in 1996 he decided to try to earn some money and left the camp to work for a rich refugee smuggling coffee out of Burundi¹²⁶. After a while, he moved to a Tanzanian village and worked as a builder until he, too, was rounded up and put into Lukole B. Perhaps his longer experience of camp life makes him a natural leader in a part of the camp where most of the inhabitants have only just arrived and still do not know 'the mechanisms of the camp'; how to make the food rations last 2 weeks or what a 'community mobiliser' or a 'vulnerable' is.

James is 25 years old. I introduced him in Chapter Three during his election. He looks so young that the UNHCR field officer thought he was too young to vote. His ration card says 22 years. He is unmarried because he fears being forcefully repatriated, and having a family would be too much of a responsibility in such a situation.

During the election, he kept rather quiet. However, he won over the previous incumbent, who was also young but better educated. People were fed up with him because he drank too much and was too loud mouthed. James converted to the Seventh Day Adventist Church after a close shave with death while visiting Burundi in 1995, so he does not drink at all. He also won over the jolly old man who made people laugh when he presented himself for elections, and who had worked for UNICEF years before. At the elections, James seemed to have a group of young lads hanging around him most of the time. When he won, everybody rejoiced and the crowd carried him over their heads.

¹²⁶ Burundi was subject to an embargo by neighbouring countries after Buyoya's *coup d'état* in July 1996.

I interviewed him later on his own in AEF's offices, where he did not seem too comfortable.¹²⁷ He has no job and no business in the camp. He almost finished primary school but was interrupted during his studies, in part by 'the troubles' in 1991¹²⁸ and in part because his father had left for Uganda and James had to help his mother in the fields. He went back to school in 1993, hoping to do secondary school and get a job in the administration or the army, but had to flee shortly after.

He reckons that he was elected for his personality. In the intimacy of camp life, it only takes a few days to learn about somebody's personality. When asked if it was possible to express oneself to a leader in Burundi, he answers:

It depends of the leader. Because there were leaders who were not good leaders. When they used their leadership in order to get something, these people were not respected. But there were leaders who were respected such as these ones who gave good advice or who had tried to solve problems in a good way. Or it was these people who were not shy – or more proud. Because these people who were more proud, these people were not respected.

He goes on to explain that it is important for a leader to be humble and kind. Being too 'proud' is associated with Tutsi arrogance and opposed to being shy. Although shyness can be a hindrance in the camp, it still is perceived by some to be a virtue to be kind and humble. If you also know how to solve disputes and give advice (and punish when necessary), you will be respected. And there is always the risk of being dethroned if you do not act as a good leader.

There are some people in the village who are clever or intelligent. When they see someone who is leading badly, they go to give the report to the UNHCR office. And also in Burundi. In Burundi, when the leader was leading badly, they had to go to report to the *bourgmestre* or to the governor. And if the governor sees twice the report, or three times, he considers that that leader is not good. He is not well leading the site. Just he has to choose another one. Here and Burundi are quite similar.

He draws similarities with the ideology of the good patron in Burundi. If the serf is unhappy with his present lord, he can appeal to the overlord to dismiss

¹²⁷ Village leader, B2, 19.02.98.

¹²⁸ In November 1991 an abortive Hutu uprising (during which scores of civilian Tutsi were killed) resulted in thousands of Hutu being arrested and killed by the army (Lemarchand 1996a: 152-159).

him. In Burundi the overlord was the *bourgmestre*. In Lukole it is UNHCR. Other refugees mention that you can complain to the camp chairman who has the power to dismiss a leader that he finds unsuitable (street leader, 18.06.97). This is democracy, they say.

James voted (FRODEBU) in 1993 but he assures me that he is not interested in politics. *'Politics is dealt with by these people who have been in school – who are educated,'* he explains.

James represents quite a different 'type' than Steven. He is not as educated, he is not so keen on politics, and he does not appear to be in the limelight of international organisations. There are, however, some similarities in terms of age and in terms of the role that he plays as an intermediary between the population and the international agencies and Tanzanian authorities. Generally, James is in a more ambiguous position in terms of recapturing the camp. He is not exclusively an expression of the new forces of liminality, nor of the attempts to bring back the old days to limit the disruptive effects of liminality. In fact, I had difficulties in choosing a person that could epitomise the street and village leaders. I could equally have chosen 'Savimbi', the uneducated forty-fifty year old who first fled Burundi in 1972 and has been a farmer in Tanzanian villages, or the 30 year old leader in B3 who constantly walks around with a pen and pad and keeps his clothes clean as if to mark his rank, in spite of having only seven years schooling, or the 22 year old from Lukole A who also works as a social worker in AEF and speaks fluent English.

In other words, the leaders make up a more complex group than the NGO workers in terms of age and class, as can also be seen from the results of a survey that I did of 62 street and village leaders.¹²⁹ It was, however, the youthfulness of the street leaders that surprised me when first coming to Lukole. I had expected to see only men over forty at the leaders' meetings, but

¹²⁹ Unfortunately, for practical reasons, only 5 of the leaders in the survey are from Lukole B where roughly one third of the population live. Lukole B has quite a different history to Lukole A, resulting in a very different socio-economic and political profile.

as can be seen from Table 4, 29% were in their twenties, 47% were in their thirties, and only 24% were forty or above.

Why were there so many young street/village leaders in the camp? To answer this we can look at some of the explanations that the leaders themselves give as to why people in the camp would choose someone with so little experience. They mention similar virtues to those for NGOs; namely mobility, language and education. This is summarised in the more abstract 'not being shy'. The village leader from village B3, mentioned above, expressed these opinions quite clearly and will therefore be quoted at some length in the following to illustrate an understanding that was widespread in the camp. First, you have to be mobile, he says. You have to be able to reach the UN office, the food distribution centre or the MHA office within short notice. This takes a young leader:

Yesterday we got information that today we will have a meeting with the representative of *Wilaya*¹³⁰. Today at four o'clock. And because I am quite young, I took a megaphone and went around villages – all villages – thirteen villages – and told them that you will have a representative of *commune* who will come here to hold meeting...

So yesterday you were told by whom?

Camp Manager

So you were very quick. Immediately you took a megaphone and went...

Yeah, yeah. And because I am quite young I have to deal with many activities in a short time. But if it is an old one, he can't. That's why they have to elect someone who is very quick: someone who is very quick and who is intelligent. (Village leader B3)

Here, liaising with camp authorities and those who are in charge of resources in the camp is seen as an important role of the leader. He has to be able to react fast to any new situation. This is impossible for older men. He continues that the leader has to be able to 'explain the problem fluently'.

According to Burundi customs, we usually respect elders. But (...) if there is a problem, he is not fast – to go to explain the problem. It may happen that when they are going to food distribution, it may happen that some people don't have food. And the leader has to go to explain the problem – and he has to explain fluently the problem. Because when he doesn't explain the problem fluently, the people who miss

¹³⁰ Tanzanian town council.

the food, they don't have. They don't have it. (Village leader, B3, no date)

Although expressing oneself fluently is not necessarily exclusively an ability of the youth, it is linked in his discourse. It goes with the idea of not being shy and being able to express oneself openly that I found with the NGO employees. It also links with being able to speak foreign languages, especially Swahili and English. In principle, the meetings between the leaders, the relief agencies and Tanzanian authorities took place in Kirundi with an interpreter. However, Tanzanians would often speak Swahili and it would often go untranslated. Also, in more informal situations, like the one the leader mentions above where he is called to help at food distribution, Swahili and English can be an asset. Knowledge of languages was pointed out by the refugees themselves as an important asset for leaders – especially the young, extrovert ones.

When they are going to deal with problems with Tanzanians they have to speak Swahili. When you don't know to speak Swahili you can't express yourself. Because most of those workers - those people who are working with NGOs, different NGOs - are Tanzanians. And Tanzanians don't know how to speak French. They know how to speak Swahili and English. It is good to know Swahili language. (Village leader B3)

According to my surveys there does not seem to be a significant difference between the language skills of the leaders and the population in general. Whereas 55% of the leaders in my survey claim to speak Swahili, 34% of the population speak Swahili. Since all but one of the leaders in the survey were men, it makes more sense to compare within the male population in general. Here the gap is smaller still, as 43% of the men in the camp claim to speak Swahili.

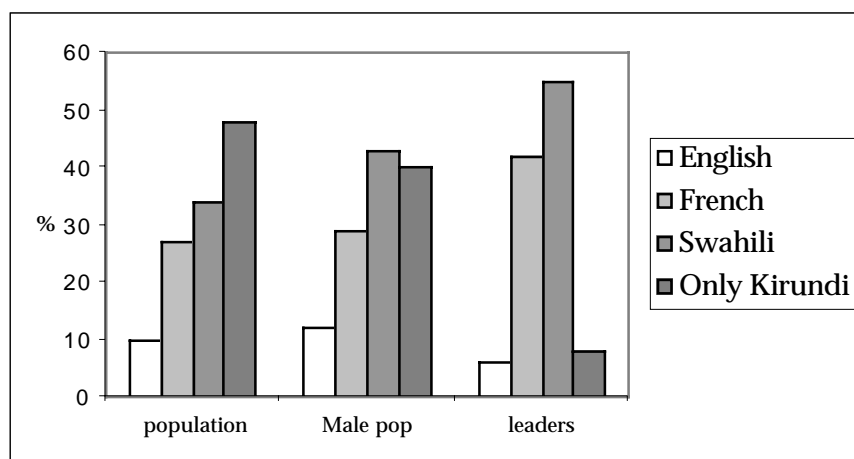


Figure 5. Language skills. Leaders and population.

We may conclude that in spite of the ideal leader speaking Swahili (and perhaps English) the fact is that only about half of them do. This affirms our picture of the leaders as a mixed group.¹³¹ But it also shows that people play on a register of elements when defining an ideal leader in the camp. In trying to come to terms with the traumatic event of flight and the disruptive effects of life in a camp, they do not only worry about the crumbling positions of ‘big men’. They try to find new ways to evaluate a big man. In the camp, they reckon, mobility and language must be virtues that are useful. To communicate with the all-powerful UNHCR is vital. But they also evaluate the concrete leader according to other criteria; criteria that draw on the ideal leader in Burundi and help preserve some kind of continuity. So when electing a leader for their particular street or village, they measure the candidate partly according to how good at communicating with NGOs they are, and partly according to Burundi values and ideas of respect and hierarchy. People’s strategies when electing a leader are socially embedded but unpredictable. This unpredictability is particularly prevalent in situations of rupture like the refugee camp, where old habits and norms are being questioned.

Another criterion for becoming a leader in the camp, it is claimed, is to be able to read and write. It is an advantage to be able to take notes at meetings and to be able to write reports for UNHCR.

¹³¹ The leaders differ from the male population by comparatively few leaders claiming to not to speak Swahili, French or English.

UNHCR told them that they had to elect someone who will know to make a report, or to represent others. Or when there is a problem, to know to explain the problem fluently. (Village leader, B3)

Although the leaders are not as well educated as the NGO workers, they differ sharply from the average population in this regard: virtually all (98%) have some kind of formal education while almost a third (29%) of all men in Lukole have no formal education.

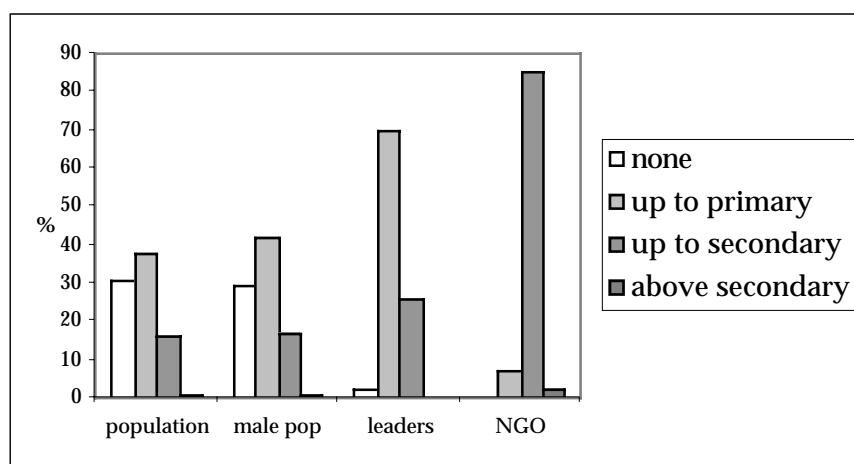


Figure 6. Level of education. Street/village leaders, population, male population and NGO employees.

The kind of knowledge (or 'intelligence' as they would often say in the camp) obtained from formal education is placed in opposition to the knowledge of the old men. According to this discourse, the old men's knowledge is based on experience. It is rooted in history, in a knowledge of people's lineages and their past, and it is rooted in locality; a knowledge of the land. An old man in a village knows who has occupied which land for generations and he knows how a certain person treated his first wife thirty years ago, and that so-and-so had a bad childhood. This kind of knowledge is useless in the camp where nobody knows his neighbour, localities are new and the past is irrelevant.

I am not arguing that old men cannot have a formal education. Neither do I assume that the old men in Burundi actually held the kind of traditional power evoked here. But this is how people in the camp imagine Burundi, and

they imagine that the camp is a radical break. So there is a general feeling that things are changing and that new blood is needed.

Success in Lukole is about mobility, language skills, education and openness. There is an emphasis on youth and change and the old hierarchies are seen as archaic and useless. But this process is neither complete nor one-way. It is not a question of all the old men and all the old traditions being rejected. As we have seen, people are generally ambiguous about change and the status of 'big men'. They also long for the good old days. They also despise the Rwandans for their rude behaviour and take pride in their distinctly Burundian behaviour as law-abiding citizens. And they believe that women should respect their husbands. In other words, there is a constant struggle between orthodox and heterodox opinion.

The statistics on refugee leaders do not support such a drastic break as we are made to believe from the interviews with the young leaders. And when I asked people what were the most important features of a good leader, the answers most certainly were more complex. As James says, it depends on your personality. A good leader is humble and kind and knows how to give advice. He says that it only takes a few days to get to know someone's personality in the camp because they live so close. Being able to mediate in conflicts, being able to find 'the truth' and being kind were abilities that were mentioned again and again in Lukole. To have these qualities, one obviously does not need a higher education. Neither does one need to know a lot of languages. In fact, education, language skills and not being shy may play against you – although this is never explicitly mentioned. We may recall that shyness, honesty and naivety are good old Hutu virtues. And although the refugees operate with ethnic stereotypes, the character traits of the different ethnic groups are not completely innate and unchangeable. Hence, the Rwandan Hutu were acting like Tutsi due to Rwanda's postcolonial history, and the Burundian refugees were beginning to act like Rwandans due to contact in the camps. There are a number of other examples of the idea that Hutu begin to behave like Tutsi if they are in Tutsi positions or the

environment is in other ways conducive to it¹³². In other words, there is a risk that these well-educated, young parvenus might forget their background – their humble Hutuness - and become ‘too proud’.

So while an educated young leader has the advantage of being able to express himself to camp authorities and make sure that the refugees are not tricked too much by corrupt Tanzanian staff, an older, more ‘humble’ man of the people may be more respected when it comes to solving problems between neighbours.¹³³

In my survey of 464 refugees I asked whom they would go to for help in different situations. It is difficult to draw a clear picture from the responses, and we must be very cautious about drawing too strong conclusions. For one thing, whom one thinks one might go to when responding to a number of pre-given categories in a questionnaire, is often quite different than whom one does actually go to when it happens. Obviously, the more intimate the problem, the more intimate the choice of problem solver. Problems between husband and wife would typically be taken to family members. Problems of theft and robbery were taken usually to the security guards and to a lesser extent to the police. As one of the possible categories, I have put the *abashingantahe* (A council of elders).¹³⁴ According to the survey, they are among the favourite institutions to go to in cases of problems with friends and problems with the street leader (in the latter case, the *abashingantahe* hold a fourth position, after the Camp Commandant, the camp chairman and the security guards).

The *abashingantahe* lead a shadowy existence in Lukole, and they are not part of the official organisational set-up in the camp. It took some time before I learned about their existence at all, and even then it was rather unclear how

¹³² Rémy Gahutu, founder of Palipehutu - warns about the Hutu turncoats who get a good education, a position in the administration and perhaps a Tutsi wife and who begin to act like Tutsi (Gahutu no date). Friends in the camp would explain how their hero, Nyangoma, founder of CNDD, behaved like a Tutsi because he was from Bururi Province, the home province of the majority of Tutsi leaders (including three presidents), and went to the same school as Buyoya (the current president).

¹³³ Often the older leaders in the camp had held similar positions in Burundi, as *chef du zone* or similar, both before and after the democratic reforms in 1993.

¹³⁴ This Burundian institution will be dealt with more in depth in the next chapter.

formalised the institution was and which role they actually played. One street leader explained to me that there was not a fixed group of elders in his street. However, when a small problem occurred between neighbours, for instance, they would take the problem to the block leader (who is elected and part of the official, UNHCR-instigated leadership) who would then gather five or six elders to help find a solution to the concrete problem. It was rather an *ad hoc* advisory council, appointed from case to case by the block leader (Street leader, 40 years, Street 4, 18.06.97). The *abashingantahe* did not seem to be involved in the power struggles between various factions in the camp – as opposed to the NGO elite and the street leaders who were deeply involved in political rivalry. As we shall see in the next chapter, there appeared to be parallel systems of leadership in Burundi and a certain competition between the old *abashingantahe* and the new party cadres in the villages. Something similar may have been happening in Lukole, where NGO leaders take care of some issues, the street leaders of others and informal groups of elders take care of yet others. In this situation, it appears that the street/village leaders are in an intermediary position and that this position is reflected in the social composition of the leaders.

To sum up, the refugees are struggling between different concepts of being a ‘big man’ and different perceptions of how to deal with rupture. Should they opt for the *Makanakiste* as the best option for achieving results in the new setting of the camp, or do they opt for the old man who symbolises some sort of continuity and surety? In practice a leader is often a compromise between the two, like James who is young and mobile but is not well educated and not part of the NGO ‘in-crowd’. He tries to live up to ideals of being a kind and humble leader, but he also knows the ‘mechanisms of the camp’ as they say, better than most others in his particular village, due to being an experienced refugee.

Furthermore, the street leader is not the only ‘big man’ around. People go to their neighbours, to the Block leader, the security guards or a group of elders, depending on the nature of the problem and the kind of personal relations involved. In later chapters, we will see how ‘big men’ compete to gain the respect of the refugees.

Patrick – minding my own business

I first met Patrick in one of the forty medium-range bars in Lukole A, where you get to sit inside a building made of mud bricks and UNHCR plastic sheeting, sometimes cut in decorative strips. There are homemade tables and benches, and often a radio playing Zairian pop music or Bob Marley highlights. Here they mainly sell *gua-gua*, banana wine that is more expensive and much more preferred than *mugorigori*. It is served in glasses that are almost clean rather than in communal plastic containers. The Tanzanians freight it from Karagwe by the truckload and sell it at the junction outside the camp to the bar owners in Lukole.

Patrick is hanging out with some friends. They are the ones whom I referred to as ‘young traders’ in the previous chapter. One is unemployed. He explains that he almost finished secondary school in Burundi and wants to continue at the post-primary school in Lukole although he cannot afford the fees. He occasionally comes to the camp to look for casual jobs, loading pickups with maize that Burundian middlemen sell to Tanzanians or offloading bananas from the Tanzanian trucks. He says that he rarely stays around the market if he is not shopping or working. If you have nothing to do here and no money, that is how theft begins, he explains.

His brother buys oil from the refugees and sells it to Tanzanians. Although it is clearly written on the oil tins from USAID that they are not for selling or bartering, it is common knowledge among UN and NGO staff that refugees sell part of their food rations in order to buy food that they prefer, such as bananas. It is also tolerated because it ensures a varied diet and combats inactivity, although there is a worry among social workers and health staff that men use the money on beer. This young man says that they do occasionally get caught by TRCS and have the oil confiscated. As far as I can gather, it is because they are allowed to sell oil in bowls, and when they are caught selling it in tins, they are accused of having stolen it. For the same reason, they do not trade in the market but down the other end of 10th street.

The last of Patrick's friends has a little shop in the market. He has almost finished secondary school and used to work for AEF. He constantly assures me that he does not earn any more now than he did then.¹³⁵ However it is nice to be paid every day rather than once a month, he says.

Patrick is quite an established businessman¹³⁶. In spite of being only 22 years old, he has had his own bicycle taxi business for three years, transporting people and goods on the back of his bicycle for a fee. Typically, he would transport goods to and from the junction about two kilometres outside the camp for 200 shillings. He earned enough money to buy the bicycle, working for an NGO as a watchman when he first arrived in the camp.

Patrick's parents were farmers and he only finished primary school before getting a job cleaning and cooking for a white *padre* in Burundi. He liked his job there, although he had dreamed of becoming a soldier¹³⁷. His parents had fled Burundi in 1972 and he was born in Rwanda where the family stayed until 1982. He talks openly about being like a Rwandan, and agrees that the Rwandans are better businessmen than Burundeians.

The reason is because Rwandese have been in government, have been in power. And they had chance not to be afraid of anyone. But these ones of Burundi have been ruled by Tutsi many years ago. That's why they are always afraid of some people. [...]

But this happened before. Because now Burundese are experienced by Rwandese. Nowadays they are equal. They act at the same level. Nowadays, Burundese became more businessmen, like the Rwandese.

Contact with Rwandans has changed the Burundians – but only for the better. There is an interesting twist to Patrick's account of this well-known theme. In

¹³⁵ I found that people liked to underplay their business activities and incomes and play the poor helpless refugees for the important *muzungu*. A friend of mine who joined me filling in questionnaires of 79 businessmen, warned me that they would not be pleased to tell how much they actually earned.

¹³⁶ Business is the term used in English (d'affaires in French) for any kind of income generating activity that is not wage labour. In Swahili, the term *za shughuli*, which literally means 'of the things', nicely covers this informal wheeling and dealing. 'Habari za shughuli' is a greeting that means how are things (your various business projects) going? One of the wealthier refugees in the camp was nicknamed *Za Shughuli* because he worked as a school teacher, owned one of the biggest bars in the camp, worked as a photographer at weddings and the like and generally had a lot of projects going.

¹³⁷ I found that a surprising number of the young men whom I did life story interviews with had these childhood ambitions – especially those from poorer families and those from Busoni commune on the Rwandan border. It is said that the Tutsi from Busoni often follow a career in the army.

his account, it was not the Rwandans who had been Tutsified or the Burundians who were the true and pure Hutu. The Burundian mentality was not natural; it was the product of many years of oppression. Only in the camp could they stop being so afraid all the time and become who they really were.

He feels that he has had an advantage over other Burundians because he grew up in Rwanda and therefore has their mentality. In fact he claims to have had the best of both worlds when the Rwandans were still in the neighbouring camps. He used to transport people and goods on the back of his bicycle from Lukole to Benaco, Musuhura and Lumasi.¹³⁸ When in Benaco or one of the other Rwandan camps he would speak Kinyarwanda to attract customers, and when in Lukole he would speak Kirundi. For Patrick, mixing and hybridity is clearly a resource. When asked whether he would have an advantage over those who remained in Burundi if he went back there, Patrick replies: *'Of course we will be more intelligent than those who stayed in Burundi.'*

In terms of recapturing Lukole, businessmen are the ones who most visibly mark the ways in which the bureaucratic space of aid agencies is inhabited by people and transformed into lived space. People in Lukole do not sit around with their hands in their laps and wait to return. Among the most visible signs of this are the various livelihood strategies that they apply in order to improve their material conditions. These strategies range from chopping extra firewood and selling it to the more wealthy refugees, to the big businessmen that own hammer mills, trade maize and run restaurants. In terms of income they range from 200 shillings a day to 20 000¹³⁹. The big businessmen in the camp earn far more than any of the NGO employees, and some even have scooters and cars.

In the market in Lukole A alone, there were 48 restaurants, 32 bars, 95 shops selling shoes, clothes, batteries, salt, rice, etc., 94 *mugorigori* outlets and 116 market stalls selling fresh fruit, vegetables and maize. Apart from this, there

¹³⁸ These were enormous camps within a radius of ca 8 km. In late 1996, more than half a million Rwandans lived in these camps.

¹³⁹ The latter was the figure I heard for a hammer mill and was probably gross income before paying diesel and wages to workers. Still, hammer mill owners were among the wealthiest in the camp. In fact the Tanzanian Camp Commandant owned a hammer mill in Lukole.

were hammer mills, hairdressers, radio repairers and a row of other small businesses. Lukole B was still very new and was undergoing various transformations while I was there. At first, there were two small, run-down markets. In spring 1998 a new, large market was established in the middle of Lukole B. However, in the time that I was in the camp, it never really competed with the market in Lukole A in size or variety.

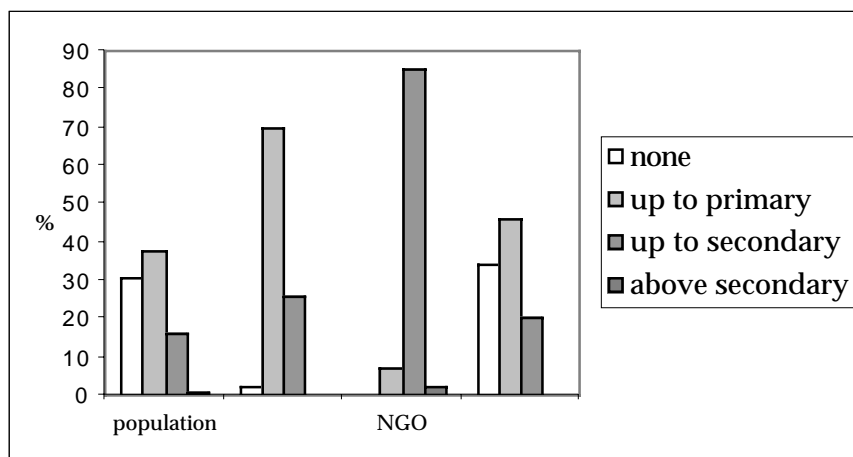


Figure 7. Level of education for businessmen, population, street/village leaders and NGO employees.

A look at the results of a survey that I did of 79 businessmen in Lukole A and B (47 and 32 respectively) reveals that they are not part of the educated elite. Their level of education is not much different to that of the population in general and they seem to speak less French and English.

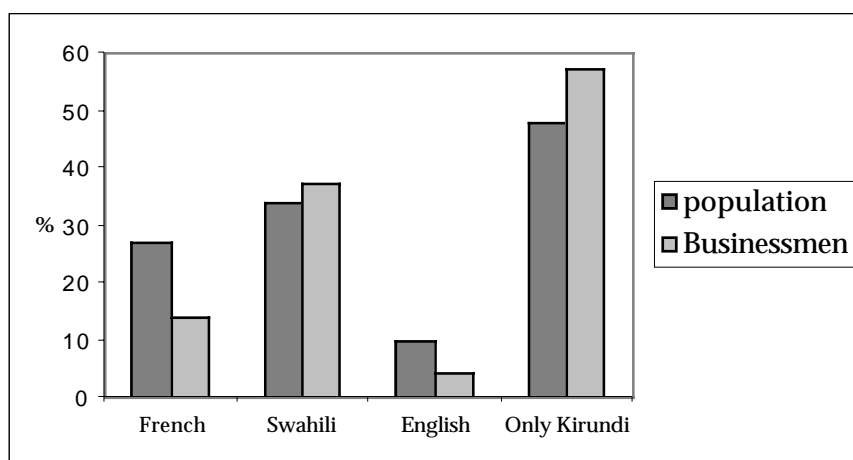


Figure 8. Language skills, population and businessmen.

Surprisingly, they do not seem to speak much more Swahili than average. We might have expected this as it is in relation to business that they are in contact with local Tanzanians. It could in part be explained by the very diverse nature of businesses in the camp. Some businessmen trade only with other refugees, while others travel as far as Mwanza (a day's journey) to buy goods. Secondly, the local language, *Kihangaza*, is so similar to Kirundi that they understand each other, rendering Swahili superfluous for interaction with Tanzanians from neighbouring villages. It is only when communicating with NGO staff, police officers, government staff and Tanzanians from other parts of the country that Swahili becomes necessary.

It is difficult to say anything conclusive from the survey about the group of businessmen as the group is so differentiated. However, many of the businessmen have significantly higher incomes than the NGO employees, and the wealthier among them would often be referred to as 'big men'. They are respected for their success.

Even the poor businessmen represent another way of coping with Lukole and of trying to recapture the camp. The businessmen show that they are not dependent on UNHCR rations, and that they do not just sit around the *blindé*, waiting to be fed but take responsibility for their own lives and make a living of their own. What is more, they take a responsibility for their families¹⁴⁰.

The owner of a *patisserie* explains that he can now afford to buy some decent food for his wife to prepare for the whole family (Diary, 01.09.97). A young radio repairer links business directly to access to women:

If you give money to your wife, you are considered a husband. So this one who is rich can go with the wife.

The wife of other men?

Yes the wife of other men.

So can you take the wives of many other men?

That is easy, if they know that you are rich, they come. (Radio repairer, 20.04.98)

¹⁴⁰ Most of the businessmen that I interviewed were men (64 out of 79), and with a few marked exceptions, the female respondents either had small businesses selling vegetables and/or worked with their husbands.

This is not just about access to women. It is part of the idea of 'UNHCR being a better husband' and hence of a fundamental fear of having one's identity taken by the new ruler. As the white man takes women from us because we are not able to provide for her and he can, the best cure is of course to prove that we can afford to feed and clothe our women ourselves. That this is the case, can be seen by the fact that many businessmen stress exactly the fact of being able to provide food and clothing for their wives, as important reasons for doing business. In this way, they prove their masculinity and they are attempting to stabilise things as they ought to be and ideally were in Burundi. Thus, being able to feed one's wife and children is about rehabilitating the masculinity that UNHCR allegedly stole and about spiting UNHCR laws and the decay of Burundian social customs. It is about taking things into one's own hands and re-establishing some sense of order.

There is a sense among the businessmen, especially the young men, that they have taken the opportunity to start a business that they would never had dreamed of in Burundi. No longer constrained by the expectations of older generations, sons no longer are compelled to become farmers like their fathers and grandfathers before them. They are free to try their fortune as entrepreneurs. In the marketplace the playing field is levelled as all are equal when they arrive. As Patrick states above, he has become much more intelligent than those who stayed in Burundi. This intelligence, they claim, comes from contact with Rwandans. But it is also the product of the hard life in the camp. In the words of a young bar owner:

And when I go back to Burundi, I think that I will be more powerful than these ones who stayed in Burundi. Because here I have to use knowledge. All knowledge I have got - to have something to eat. But in Burundi they are just joking, because they get food from the fields. But here I have to use my head to get something. (Bar owner, 15.04.98)

In Burundi life is too easy, they say. You get plenty of food from the fields, whereas in the camp you need to use your 'intelligence' in order to eat.

This is certainly the ideological construction around being a businessman. In fact, a great deal of the businessmen have had small informal businesses in

Burundi as well; selling bananas at the market, repairing radios at the roadside, or running a small bar.

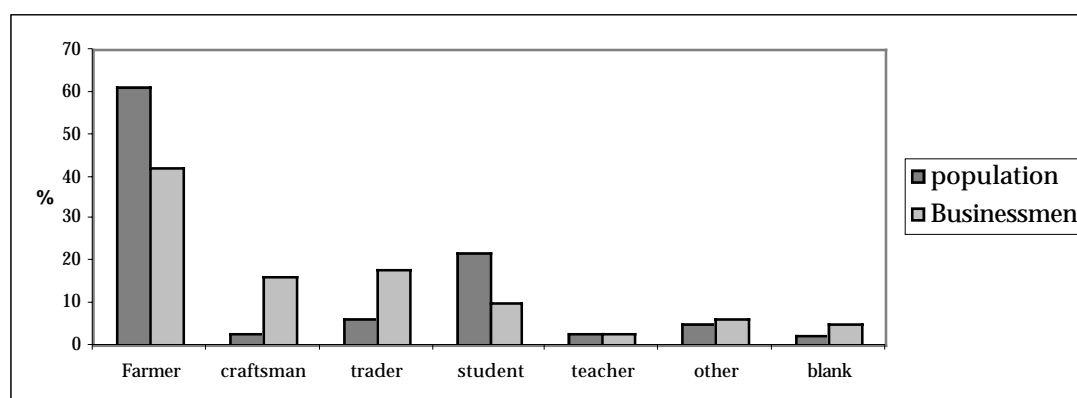


Figure 9. Previous occupation in Burundi (or Rwanda for those who have lived there since 1972).¹⁴¹

As we see from the table above, more businessmen were either traders or craftsmen (which includes bicycle repairs, tailoring, masonry, etc.) than average in the camp. This confirms my observation that the idea of coming from nothing and making it in the camp, is an ideological construction. We must still recall, however, that more than 40 percent of the businessmen were farmers in Burundi and hence actually have ‘made it’ in the camp.

This relates to another issue that we touched upon in the previous chapter, namely the question of the rich becoming poor and the poor becoming rich. My data are far from solid enough to prove or falsify this statement. As we saw, it is more a way for people in Lukole to express a sense of despair and of old orders disappearing. It might well be that this feeling of an open playing field actually has the effect of a number of young men asserting themselves through business enterprise. Parallel to this narrative, however, are other narratives in the camp about certain groups having advantages upon arrival. In this sense, they dismiss the idea of a level field, and assert that some refugees were stronger than others when they arrived, and that they made use of this advantage. Thus, it was often claimed that the refugees from

¹⁴¹ As the questions were open and it was not a multiple-choice answer, people have answered very differently. The category ‘craftsman’, created by me afterwards in order to sort the information, covers masons, tailors, cobblers, etc. The term ‘trader’ covers everything from bar owners to banana sellers.

Lukole A II, who had arrived later than others in Lukole A in 1994, were wealthier than others. Allegedly they had had time to sell some of their belongings and bring others with them, giving them enough capital to start a business. Again, it is difficult to confirm or falsify this theory¹⁴² and it must rather be treated as a means by which people in Lukole try to make sense of their surroundings.

Along similar lines, most refugees in Lukole B would claim that those who ran businesses in Lukole B lived in Lukole A. Being too poor to start a business themselves, they had to see the wealthy businessmen from Lukole A start new businesses in Lukole B. According to my survey, however, only two out of 79 lived in Lukole A while having a business in Lukole B,¹⁴³ while one even lived in Lukole B and had a business in Lukole A. This is part of the way that people differentiate Lukole spatially and socially, as we shall see in the following section, and is part of the underdog ideology of people in Lukole B.

Patrick and his friends assured me that they were not interested in ‘politics’. Because they work so hard, they do not have time to listen to the radio and involve themselves in such matters. And they add *‘it is not good to speak about something you don’t know’*. Later, they admit that *‘We don’t know politics but we sometimes have opinions about politics.’*

The radio repairer echoes their attitude. The hardworking businessmen cannot afford the luxury of discussing politics, neither here nor in Burundi, he claims.

Myself, I don’t know how that problem happened in Burundi. I don’t know because in morning I wake up, I go to work, and evening I came back – and just it was time for eating so I didn’t have time to go and discuss with others about Burundi problems.

So businessmen stay away from politics? Who are the ones who are involved in discussing these things?

¹⁴² It sounds unlikely as most people in Lukole A II fled to Rwanda first in 1993-4 and later fled the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. It is therefore very unlikely that these people had more time to plan their departure.

¹⁴³ This figure may be biased by the fact that many of the wealthy refugees who had moved from Lukole B to Lukole A were still officially registered as living in Lukole B and may have given this official address in their answers to the questionnaire.

These people who know more about Burundi, they are these people who are not dealing with business. These villagers who are always staying with Tutsi. These people who are always staying in blindés.. houses... farmers and others who do not do business or go to work. They are always in villages with Tutsi and Hutu.

So they start discussing these things?

Yeah

Even if they are uneducated?

Yeah (Radio repairer, 20.04.98)

In other words, there is a self-image of a hardworking man who earns his honest living and can take care of himself. But he also minds his own business and is not interested in getting involved in politics, which is both a waste of time and potentially dangerous. This is in stark contrast to the educated elite, who work for NGOs and who constantly feel that they have to measure their personal strategies in relation to the 'common cause' of the Burundian people.

When discussing the possibilities of getting a passport in Dar-es-Salaam in order to be able to travel to Kenya for further studies, an educated refugee explained that the very rich traders often travel to Dar-es-Salaam, '*but they are not interested in politics*' he said with contempt (Albert, 01.10.97). He clearly links politics and education, and interprets the reluctance of the businessmen to get involved as a reluctance towards 'politics'. So where there is a certain pride in minding one's own business and staying out of politics among the businessmen, this attitude is perceived very differently by the politically active, educated elite. They see the businessmen's attitude as selfish and short-sighted as opposed to their own self-sacrificing long term strategies.

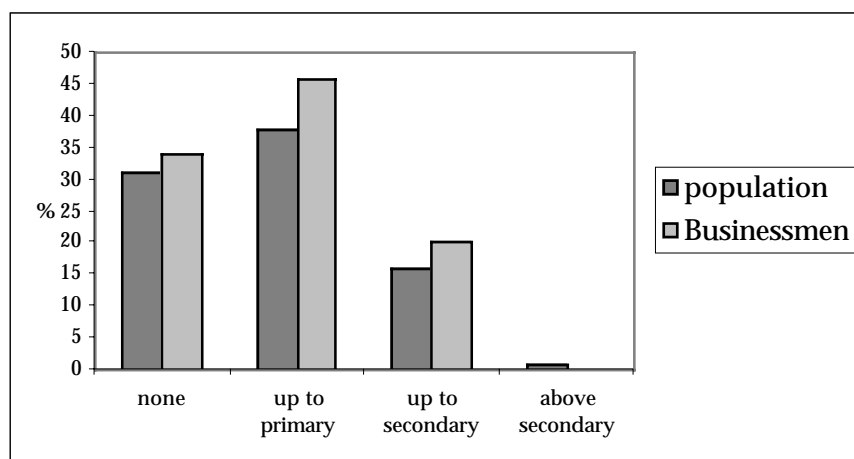


Figure 10. Level of education. Businessmen and population.

This conflict in strategies between businessmen and the NGO elite is reflected in their attitude towards education. My survey shows that most refugees value education very highly¹⁴⁴. But although this is a general statement that is difficult to oppose, I did hear conflicting perceptions of education in more profound discussions with people in Lukole. For people like Steven it was their main mission in life to become educated. Others expressed fear that getting an education might be potentially dangerous, as it is common knowledge in the camp that the educated Hutu were always the first to be massacred by the Tutsi in Burundi. I cannot judge whether this attitude was particularly widespread among businessmen, but the educated, NGO-based elite would often accuse the businessmen of being short sighted, selfish and of not appreciating the virtues of education sufficiently.

To sum up, businessmen are an important component in recapturing Lukole and the more successful among them have most certainly become 'big men'. However, it appears that they represent a strategy that differs from both the NGO employees and the street leaders. Respect is won neither through formal education and language skills nor through age, experience and knowledge of Burundi customs. Their knowledge is a third type that is very much bound up with the camp context and neither learned in school nor on the Burundian hills. Hence their strategy is very concrete and based in the present context of the camp rather than in a nostalgic past or a utopian future.

¹⁴⁴ 410 out of 464 find education 'very important', 18 find it 'quite important', 7 find it 'not very important', while only one woman states that education is 'unimportant'.

Steven, James and Patrick – three ways of recapturing Lukole

In Lukole the fact that an older order seems to have disappeared, gives room for new orders to form. It is these new orders that young men like Steven, James and Patrick seek to exploit. In the de-structured space of the camp, they have been able to exploit the liberating potential of *liminality* and become *liminal experts*. They have managed to carve out a space for themselves in the camp and have, to varying degrees and along different paths, managed to out-manoeuvre the old patriarchy and become the new 'big men' in the camp. This process does not take place in a total power vacuum and old structures are not completely put aside. In fact the questionnaires show a certain amount of continuity of the 'big men' from Burundi to Lukole. But there is a sense that there are new possibilities and this perception in itself has effects, just as the outcome is not certain at all, as the playing field is certainly different to the one that they left in Burundi.

No longer inhibited by Tutsi peers taking the best positions, young semi-educated men (and some women) are given important positions with agencies in the camp. No longer inhibited by norms and social expectations, young entrepreneurial men start up businesses of all sorts with the motto that they have nothing to lose – and some succeed and become 'big men' in the camp. And finally with knowledge of locality and history being more or less irrelevant in the camp, old men appear to be losing their grip on leadership while a number of young men are taking up the challenge of being street and village leaders.

However, this shift is not a complete break with the old order of things. The emerging young elite is not uncontested, neither is the ideology of rejecting shyness and politeness and asserting oneself more powerfully *vis-à-vis* the international organisations. In Lukole there are ambiguous feelings towards good old Hutu virtues on the one hand and the brave new NGO world of the young educated elite on the other. These competing ideologies are not to be found in their pure, opposing forms, supported exclusively by one or another specific group in the camp. Rather, almost everyone in Lukole has doubts and everyone hesitates. So, when choosing a street leader they hesitate between

the old man with no education but good negotiating skills and a high degree of respect due to his age and his 'good behaviour' – thereby guaranteeing some kind of stabilising force against the social and moral decay of the camp – and on the other hand the young man who appears to understand these foreign languages and strange new laws and institutions. He may not be perceived as able to guarantee the status quo or function as a bulwark against the forces of change, but he may be seen as the best man to promote our interests with the UNHCR.

In spite of breaking with ideals of hierarchy and respect to get where they are, these young men continue to draw on an ideology of inequality. A leader continues to be perceived as a patron. A big man -- whether due to his wealth, as goes for the big traders, or due to his education, as goes for the NGO employees -- is to be respected by the common people in the camp. So by breaking the norms and ideals of Burundi customs, the new *liminal* experts are not doing away with structures of inequality. They are merely building new ones. Their strategies can be conceived as strategies of coping with the 'flattening' homogenisation of society through UNHCR's principles of equality.

Their strategies can also be seen as attempts to reclaim the masculinity that they perceive UNHCR to have taken from them. In order to avoid being reduced to cuckolds, these young men fight back and try to recapture their masculinity by feeding their own wives. An obvious example is the businessman who earns extra money to be able to give some clothes and food to his wife and thus be able to fulfil his role as the superior 'giver of gifts'. Once he has fulfilled his obligations as a superior, he expects his wife to fulfil hers by showing respect and obeying her husband. While creating a new space for themselves in an attempt at recapturing Lukole, these young men break with old ideologies and old hierarchies in terms of age and class. However, as they are fighting for their masculinity, gender ideals are reinforced rather than transformed. Women are still meant to be the obedient and shy inferiors. By proving themselves as real men, they also reproduce the ideal of real women.

NGO employees and street leaders are reclaiming their masculinity at another level. Of course an NGO employee is able to supplement a meagre diet and buy some clothes for his wife and children with the incentives that he receives. But being an NGO employee is about much more than that. As we saw in the case of Steven, NGO employees are usually deeply involved in informal and clandestine political networks in the camp. These networks are about showing strength and determination. These young men are taking their future into their own hands and acting accordingly, rather than passively waiting in the camp to see what the future might bring. Whereas the businessmen take care of themselves and their nearest family in the present, the political elite is thinking of the future and of their country. In the camp, politicians are respected – even feared – and they have the courage to defy UNHCR laws and play by their own rules. In this way, they have managed to reclaim their position as men – as those who set the agenda and must be obeyed. Ironically, they use their employment with UNHCR and other agencies to achieve their goals. In this manner, they manage to fight what they see as the destructive forces of UNHCR policies in a nonconfrontational manner. Recapturing is not necessarily a heroic struggle against the powerful but rather a question of strategies, and for these young men it is strategic to be employed by an NGO.

In short, this chapter has argued that a certain group of young men have attempted to overcome the sense of loss and to recapture Lukole by making the best out of their positions as young and mobile, and by adapting to the new setting, the new rules and the new Master. To adapt to the new master does not mean always to obey him but rather to know how to please him and how to make the best of him. This may involve cheating him but it does not involve confronting him.

This transformation of a new elite and a new ideology of ‘big men’ is not a one-way process, nor is it complete. People also seek to overcome the disruptive effects of the camp by reverting to idealised images of Burundi customs. These ideas and ideologies cohabit in the camp, sometimes peacefully and sometimes not. We saw this in the different strategies of Steven, James and Patrick. We also saw that none of their strategies was ideal

or unambiguous. In the Chapter Seven we shall explore further how individuals manage to bridge several strategies and how unholy alliances are created in the struggle to define a hegemonic interpretation of the camp.

Finally we may ask why we should concentrate so much on this relatively small group of individuals. Is it not more relevant to know what the 'small people' think and do, to know how they come to terms with Lukole? Indeed, it is a numerically small group of young men who 'succeed' as Steven, James and Patrick have done. The majority of young men sit around the *blindés* all day, playing cards or *urubugu*.¹⁴⁵ But it is the 'big men' who set the agenda in the camp. It is to a large degree their conflicts that define the ideological fault-lines and the spatial differentiation in the camp. And they do this in relation to one another and in relation to the 'small people' in the camp.

¹⁴⁵ A board game. In Lukole it is played with stones in small hollows made in the ground.

Chapter six – Imagining Burundi

Rupture appears to be a defining character of life in exile. Whether in terms of loss or in terms of new opportunities, camp life implies a break with a past that was radically different. In the tales of decay, the past in Burundi is painted as a glossy picture of harmony where every woman and man knew his or her place in society. Although they were not equal, they were happy because they followed the natural order of things as proscribed in 'Burundi customs'. In Mishamo refugee camp the past was also evoked in order to provide explanations and establish clarification and cosmological order. The various ways of imagining Burundi that are reflected in these narratives do not tell us much about what 'actually happened' in Burundi, and rather reflect present concerns in the camp. The refugees' sense of being acted upon by UNHCR practices, and their sense of radical change and uncertainty, play important roles in forming these narratives. However as we have already noted, the narratives do not crystallise out of thin air, but draw on a repertoire of discourses on the nature of Burundi society. This repertoire is constructed through historically located power struggles. It is the aim of this chapter to uncover the historical emergence of the repertoire of images and imaginations of Burundi's past.

The objective is twofold. The first is to explore how the image of nostalgic 'traditional' Burundi society as hierarchical and harmonious evolved from precolonial time till today. This has not been a uni-linear development; rather it has been subject to contestations and reversals which have caused it to change meaning several times. Burundi 'customs and traditions' have been evoked and reified as both parochial leftovers that need eradicating, and as guarantors of authentic harmony that needs protecting at different periods and by different groups. They are thus the products of (and instruments in) political power struggles. Ethnographers and historians have played a large part in producing this narrative, as have colonial administrators and Burundian politicians. In this chapter we will see how they interacted through legitimisation and contestation. In this way we will see how the picture of

Burundi as patriarchal and hierarchical has become a powerful authoritative narrative in the camp.

The second objective of the chapter relates to my dispute with Liisa Malkki in which I contend that the production of the past in Burundi is closely linked to narratives and counter-narratives in the political field in Burundi. It is therefore essential to our understanding of these *mythico-histories*, to place them in relation to a broader political field. I will show that the question of ethnicity has been central to various attempts at defining the 'true nature' of the Burundian nation – either through asserting ethnicity as essential difference or denying its existence and claiming national unity. Due to its central position in political struggle, the meaning of ethnicity is constantly contested by different groups and has become the principle around which most antagonisms have come to revolve, making it essential for all political projects in Burundi to relate to ethnicity in one way or another. I will argue that the location of ethnicity in the political field in Burundi, and in particular the ways in which ethnicity is articulated by the dominant discourse, delimits the range of possible articulations of ethnicity in the camp.

Finally, I hope through this chapter to acquaint the reader with Burundi's past. Dismissing the idea that there should be 'a true history' and emphasising the constructedness of the multiple histories in Burundi, the task of introducing 'what really happened' is not straightforward. Working from the abovementioned premise that history builds on a number of existing repertoires that in turn build on events, I will try to uncover some of these repertoires and events.

A note on sources and artefacts

Historiography in Burundi is incredibly powerful. As Lemarchand (1996) points out, in Burundi there is a conflict and then there is a 'metaconflict'. This is the conflict over what the conflict is actually about. Central to the metaconflict is the question of ethnic origins. Very crudely put, it is the question of whether ethnic groups and ethnic tensions are primordial and go back to the successive waves of immigration to the interlacustrine kingdoms of central Africa, or whether they are newer constructs - the invention of

colonial and neo-colonial powers in their objective to divide and rule in Africa. This conflict is played out among political factions both in Burundi and in exile, and is also carried over into academia.¹⁴⁶ In fact, it is a debate that is difficult to avoid, because even if one chooses not to mention ethnicity, one is actually reproducing the policy of the Tutsi-dominated government that until the mid 1990s denied the existence of ethnic groups in Burundi. We must therefore tread with care when we engage with Burundi's history.

History has gained a significant place in this metaconflict, where every political actor is busy writing history books, trying to convince the world about 'the reality'.¹⁴⁷ There is an abundance of pamphlets and homepages created by political parties or Burundians in exile that devote large sections to Burundi history¹⁴⁸, as if they are very eager to 'put things right' and prove to the outside world that their version of history is the true one. I will explore how these political mythologies interact with scholarly discourse, so that we may see how they influence popular beliefs in the camp. In short, I will try to write a historiography of Burundi and use my sources as artefacts. But I will also attempt to place the production of such artefacts historically, hopefully striking a balance between source and artefact, history and historiography. One might say that I will explore the historical production of politics in order to understand the political production of history.

¹⁴⁶ See (Chrétien 1990a; Lemarchand 1989) and (Lemarchand 1990b) for the dispute between René Lemarchand and Jean-Pierre Chrétien. See also Filip Reyntjens' critique of the 'École historique burundo-française', closely linked to Chrétien, (Reyntjens 1990), and Chrétien's response in (Chrétien 1990b). For further critique of the 'École historique burundo-française', see (Lemarchand 1990a).

¹⁴⁷ See for instance the founder of Palipehutu, Remy Gahutu's book: 'Persecution of the Hutus of Burundi' (Gahutu no date), and another Palipehutu member Melchior Mbonimpa's 'Hutu, Tutsi, Twa: pour une société sans castes au Burundi.' (Mbonimpa 1993). For the CNDD view, see Léonce Ndarubagiye's 'Burundi: The origins of the Hutu-Tutsi conflict' (Ndarubagiye 1996), and Déo Hakazimana's 'Burundi: le non-dit' (Hakazimana 1992).

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Commission Permanente d'Etudes Politiques, CNDD-FDD 'La nature du conflit burundais: cocktail politique d'intolérance et d'hypocrisie' www.cndd-fdd.org. On the same internet site: 'Le conflit burundais: sa nature, son escalade et rôle potentiel du CNDD-FDD dans sa résolution'. For the 'Tutsi' version see the homepage of AC Genocide Cirimoso, Association burundaise de lutte contre le génocide, www.acgenocide.net. See, for instance, 'Historique du génocide des Batutsi au Burundi' www.acgenocide.net/Documents/historique.htm. The Burundi government's homepage also has several sections devoted to history, cf. www.Burundi.gov.bi.

Early explorers and ‘the premise of inequality’

Mamdani (Mamdani 1996) has pointed out that colonial administrators at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century increasingly resorted to a policy of indirect rule in Africa. It was believed in the colonial administration that Africans would be better ruled according to their own traditions, customs and norms. It is no good making second class Europeans out of Africans, was the argument. What the colonising powers needed then were traditional leaders in whom they could invest power to govern the rural subjects according to customary law. And looking for hierarchy and patriarchy in so-called traditional society, they found hierarchy and patriarchy, Mamdani argues.

The kind of system that they found in Rwanda and Burundi was apparently built up around a ‘premise of inequality’ between any two persons in society. This intricate hierarchy of unequal relations went from *Imana* (the supreme being) via the *mwami* (the king) to the chiefs, the sub-chiefs and so forth. Jaques Maquet’s study of precolonial social and political relations in Rwanda illustrates this idea very well. He concludes that social and political relations in Rwanda were marked by a ‘premise of inequality’. *‘Underlying the political and feudal structures there was a general assumption about human relations.’* (Maquet 1961: 161). The main locus of this sense of inequality revolves around the three castes: Hutu, Tutsi and Twa.

As with other caste societies, a man’s -- or woman’s -- qualities were thought to be innate and unchangeable. The qualities that Maquet found in stories about the various castes were both physical and moral, and not dissimilar to the stereotypes that I found in Lukole.

Tutsi were said to be intelligent (in the sense of astute in political intrigues), capable of command, refined, courageous, and cruel; Hutu, hardworking, not very clever, extrovert, irascible, unmannerly, obedient, physically strong; Twa, gluttonous, loyal to their Tutsi masters, lazy, courageous when hunting, without any restraint. (Maquet 1961: 164)

The highly complex and hierarchic social and political organisation of these small kingdoms in the heart of Africa were explained by the ‘Hamitic

thesis',¹⁴⁹ which claims that Hamitic pastoralists - naturally more intelligent than the local Bantu people- had immigrated from the North: Ethiopia, Abyssinia, even as far away as India and Tibet (Prunier 1995a: 8). Thus, inequality was racialised in early twentieth century colonial thinking. The understanding of Rwandan and Burundian society proposed by the Hamitic thesis informed much of the colonial administration in their policy of supporting traditional leaders through indirect rule, and still plays a role in the metaconflict today.

Maquet claims that this premise of unequal rights and positions spreads to other aspects of life as well; the relation between a mother and her child, a father and his son, an old man and a youth, a craftsman and his apprentice (Maquet 1961: 165). As the anthropologist Trouwborst, who did his fieldwork in the late fifties and studied the 'original Burundi society' comments on the father's role in the family:

L'homme marié, en sa qualité de chef de famille, est chargé des responsabilités économique fondamentales. Il dirige la production dans les ménages de ses femmes...¹⁵⁰ (Trouwborst 1962: 129)

Trouwborst thus echoes the narratives of the refugees and the general perception that men are sovereign leaders in their homes, reproducing the premise of inequality. The father is the protector in the family and hence claims total loyalty and obedience from other family members.

To give is to rule

In this section I will briefly explore this premise of inequality in precolonial Burundi in order to soften the rather rigid picture given above by early ethnographers. Two old men in Lukole emphasise the centrality of the feudal institution called *ubugabire* in determining Hutu-Tutsi relations. *Ubugabire*

¹⁴⁹ Originally a theological term, claiming that Africans were descendants of Noah's son Ham, the Hamitic myth changed character during the Enlightenment from an idea of monogenesis to polygenesis. In the 19th century the Hamitic thesis was used to prove that the Egyptian civilisation was related to the Christian one, while Bantu had completely different origins. (See also Sanders 1969).

¹⁵⁰ The married man by virtue of being head of the family is in charge of fundamental economic responsibilities. He controls production in his wives' households...

was built up around cows. The Tutsi lords gave the serfs the right to usufruct of a cow. In return he expected loyalty and favours such as work.

Some Tutsi had fields from the Hutu, and Tutsi in exchange gave cows. [...] If a cow had a lot of calves, the Tutsi looked among them [for] a thin and small one and gave it to the cow's keeper (a Hutu). But he would keep all the cows, plus the mother of these small cows. (Old men, Lukole A, 18.05.98)

Early ethnographers also saw this institution as central to the premise of inequality in Rwanda and Burundi. The relations were not based on a contract and not limited to certain aspects of life, such as labour or land. In this way, the inferior was inferior in all aspects of life, and it was up to the superior to decide which favours he wanted and when. By looking at the semantics of the term *ubugabire*, we may gain more understanding of the subtleties of domination. The verb *kuguba* means both 'to rule' and 'to give' (Lemarchand 1996a:12-13). Ethel Albert explains that '*To ask for a gift, say the Rundi, is to honour; to give is to like. It is the superior who gives, the inferior who asks. In order to receive it is necessary to obey, but everything depends on the will and the affection of the superior.*' (Albert 1963: 189). This ambiguity surrounds the institution as such.

Formalized through the institution of *bugabire*, the patron-client relationship stands as a metaphor for the ambiguities inherent in the traditional social order. A multiplicity of meanings enters into the patron-client nexus: differentiation and cohesion, protection and oppression, deference and resentment. (Lemarchand 1996a: 11-12)

This ambiguous and complex relationship was disrupted by colonial indirect rule, as the complexities in the system of unequal relations were ignored by the colonial administration.

Rwanda and Burundi have often been seen as twins because at first glance they are so similar in political and social organisation. This led colonisers to apply a system that was deduced from the hierarchic and centralised kingdom of Rwanda to the loosely organised neighbouring kingdom of Burundi (Lemarchand 1977). Let us briefly explore the differences between the two kingdoms. It was only in the mid-nineteenth century that the Rwandan kingdom became as centralised and hierarchic as we find it in the

ethnographic accounts of the country (Jefremovas 1991: 380).¹⁵¹ However, at the point of European penetration, when much of the foundations for early anthropological studies were laid, most of present-day Rwanda was controlled by a highly efficient, expansive and centralised state. Furthermore, there was a strong tendency for hierarchic relations to coincide with ethnicity, with Tutsi mostly being the superior and Hutu the inferior in the relation.

In Burundi things were quite different. Far from being a streamlined institution of domination, royal power in Burundi was never absolute and always full of intrigues and conflicts. Ideally, the *mwami* had absolute and divine powers. Apart from being a political leader, the king was also a religious figure and the country's supreme judge (Trouwborst 1962: 143). In practice, however, the Burundian *mwami* was far from omnipotent, due to factionalism between the various branches of princely lineages, the *ganwa* (Lemarchand 1970: 27).¹⁵² This factionalism is understood to have originated around 1860 with the enlargement of the kingdom's territories (Lemarchand 1977: 100). Where the king in Rwanda had replaced the chiefs in the territories that he conquered with appointed Tutsi chiefs, the kingdom in Burundi – which had also experienced a period of expansion in the 19th century – was made up of a number of more or less autonomous chiefdoms, ruled by *ganwa* (Louis 1963: 112). Lemarchand claims that this rivalry between the *ganwa* reduced ethnic tensions in Burundi as all contestants, including the *mwami*, had to seek support from below, among both Hutu and Tutsi (Lemarchand 1970: 24). In Rwanda, on the other hand, monarchical absolutism and a military that was loyal to the Tutsi made it unnecessary for leaders to appeal to 'the masses'.

This analysis helps soften and modify the picture of absolute power in Burundi. In both Rwanda and Burundi, serfs could manoeuvre and seek protection from other lords. Lords had to treat their subjects well, just as men

¹⁵¹ In fact, the last pockets of resistance by independent chiefs in the Northwest were only subdued and put under the control of the central state after German occupation (Louis 1963: 200).

¹⁵² The *ganwa*, also known as *baganwa* and *abaganwa*, are generally believed to be neither Hutu nor Tutsi, although this, of course, is disputed. As with other Kirundi, Kinyarwanda and Swahili terms, I do not use the prefixes and have stuck to the European versions of the term.

had to treat their wives and children well. In Burundi in particular there was a lot of ambiguity in the relations of power, leaving a number of loopholes open for individuals and families. An example is the practice of *kwiature*, where a wealthy and powerful Hutu becomes Tutsified. Another is to choose another patron.¹⁵³ Power was far from absolute and leaders always had to make concessions to their subjects in order to gain their support. This support was vital in their competition with other leaders.

Although ethnicity was known and even manipulated¹⁵⁴ in pre-colonial Burundi, it remained rather ambiguous. Thus being a 'big man' in Burundi did not imply belonging to any specific ethnic group (although there was a greater probability for a Tutsi to be 'big' than a Hutu). Rather, it was linked to a number of factors that meant that one was in the position to be a patron for others. The picture that I have sketched here is an attempt to modify the image of a strictly hierarchic and ethnically divided traditional society that was provided by the early explorers. However, by doing so I have also provided the image that would later be used in postcolonial ideology to prove the harmonious state of precolonial Burundi.

Colonial administration – eliminating ambiguity.

In 1899 Germany established a Militärstation in Usumbura (Bujumbura). In Rwanda, the German administration consolidated political unity around the king, and it attempted to do the same in Burundi. It was assumed that the present fragmentation of the kingdom was temporary and that the *mwami* merely needed some support to bring things back to their right order.¹⁵⁵ Resident Captain von Grawert commented in 1905 that German policy was to re-establish the authority of the 'sultans'. *'This ideal will probably be realised more easily and earlier in Ruanda, which is more tightly organised, than in Urundi, where we must first re-establish the old authority of the sultan, which has generally been weakened by wars with Europeans and other circumstances.'* (von

¹⁵³ Of other modifying factors, one could mention the *abashingantahe* – advisors to the royal court and/or local village councillors - who would be Hutu and Tutsi (Laely 1992). Although exclusively male at the village level (Laely 1992), a prince may appoint a woman *mushingantahe* (Albert 1963:212).

¹⁵⁴ (See Adekanye 1996; Laely 1997)

¹⁵⁵ Chrétien claims that colonial policy was to unify the two countries and use Rwanda as the model (Chrétien 1985: 142).

Grawert in Lemarchand 1970: 49. My emphasis). The German resident was aware of the differences between Rwanda and Burundi but attributed them to a temporary exception in the normal state of affairs in Burundi. German policy was thus not to change Burundi but to bring it back to 'normal'. We see here the strength of the perception of 'traditional' institutions as basically hierarchic.

Through a policy of indirect rule, intervening as little as possible in native affairs (in practice resorting to the punitive expedition as the most favoured mode of intervention (Louis 1963: 127,204)), the German authorities presumed that the natural balance of power and the king's authority would be regained. In spite of wanting to strengthen the king's authority, the policies of non-intervention and the actual practices of various residents – who enjoyed wide discretionary powers¹⁵⁶ - resulted in further fragmentation of the political power and *ganwa* rivalry in Burundi (Lemarchand 1970: 62). In other words, if German rule had any impact at all it was to reinforce tendencies at work already in both kingdoms since the second half of the 19th century; namely strengthening absolutist monarchy in Rwanda on the one hand and factionalism and a softening of ethnic distinctions in Burundi on the other.

When Belgium was granted the territory of Ruanda-Urundi in 1919 as a League of Nations Mandate, it inherited a small and inefficient administrative machinery. By 1914, after 16 years of German *Oberhoheit*, there were only 6 Europeans employed in the administration in Burundi (Louis 1963: 204). The First Resident in Burundi, Pierre Ryckmans, favoured a policy of indirect rule, where chiefs and the king were to provide legitimacy for colonial rule. As Ryckmans himself put it, the kings would act '*as the familiar décor which permits us to act in the wings without alarming the masses.*' (Ryckmans, 'Le problème politique au Ruanda-Urundi', 1925, quoted from Lemarchand 1970: 66).¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ In spite of an official policy of strengthening the *mwami*, individual Residents took a personal dislike to the obstinate king and instead supported the semi-independent *ganwa* princes (See Lemarchand 1970; Louis 1963; Luwel 1962; Ryckmans 1953).

¹⁵⁷ Joseph Gahama asks in a critical tone whether this actually is indirect rule. He sees it more as paternalistic direct rule in spite of the 'décor' (Gahama 1983: 62-63). I agree that the attitude of the colonisers was paternalistic and that they did not support the *mwami* out of

Colonial influence was diverse, complex and even contradictory and it would be beyond the scope of this study to give a comprehensive picture of all aspects¹⁵⁸. I will concentrate on the administrative reforms of the *chefferies* and *sous-chefferies* from ca. 1929 to 1933. As much as the Hamitic thesis provided a spectacular ideological prop for the colonial policy of promoting Tutsi in government administration while keeping Hutu in manual labour, it was the far less spectacular administrative reforms of colonial rule that radically transformed Burundi society. In the words of Vice-Governor Voisin, the aim was *'to regroup chiefdoms in such a way as to suppress the dispersion of fiefs and make the administration easier and more efficient'* (quoted from Lemarchand 1977: 104. Emphasis added). These reforms, while supposedly non-ideological and introduced in the name of rationality and efficiency, nonetheless had a profoundly detrimental effect on post-colonial politics.

In the following, I rely heavily on Joseph Gahama's 'Le Burundi sous administration belge' (Gahama 1983). He argues that the administrative reorganisation had serious repercussions for the political evolution in Burundi.

[L]es autorités traditionnelles, en moins de vingt ans, se retrouvent vidées de leur pouvoir réel, lequel est passé en totalité à l'administration coloniale.¹⁵⁹ (Gahama 1983: 61)

On the whole, Gahama concludes in a very indignant tone and tends to see Belgian conspiracies under the 'manteau idéologique' of indirect rule, resulting in *'une perte de l'identité burundaise.'* (Gahama 1983: 407). He is connected to 'L'école burundo-francaise' which is linked to Jean-Pierre Chrétien, a respected French historian. This 'school' has been accused of favouring the Tutsi-dominated regime in Bujumbura (Reyntjens 1990).

pure respect for tradition. But this in itself does not disqualify it as indirect rule. Indirect rule is by definition paternalistic – the objective being to rule – not to share power.

¹⁵⁸ For a detailed analysis of the impact on the educational system see (Greenland 1980). Greenland also has some interesting observations concerning conflicts between various factions in the Belgian colonial administration as well as between Belgium and the League of Nations. For the German period see (Louis 1963; Ryckmans 1953). Alison des Forges studies the role of the white fathers in Rwanda (des Forges 1969), something that Louis also deals with for both countries (Louis 1963: ch. 16). Lemarchand focuses more on the political system and the *ganwa* conflict in his seminal 'Rwanda and Burundi' (Lemarchand 1970).

¹⁵⁹ In a space of less than twenty years, the traditional authorities were drained of any real power, all of which was transferred to the colonial administration.

Among its members are Emile Mworoha, editor of 'Histoire du Burundi' (Mworoha 1987) (with contributions by Gahama and Chrétien). Mworoha is also chief ideologue of UPRONA in Bagaza's second republic (1976-1987). In other words, Gahama has a tendency to see the colonial power as the root of all evil in Burundi, in line with the official policy of the one-party state. While remaining aware of these biases, I still find his analysis of the administrative reforms illuminating and constructive for my argument.

Collaborators and customary chiefs.

The administrative reform saw a drastic reduction and 'rationalisation' of the customary leaders and therefore needed to sort good leaders from bad ones. Gahama lists a number of qualities and faults that were used in judging the usefulness of a leader. Frankness, intelligence, obedience, justice, firmness, docility, authority, and sincerity were mentioned as qualities of a good leader. Among the faults, Gahama mentions egoism, superstition, ruse, brutality, authoritarianism, gullibility, old age, timidity and apathy. These were the traits that the Belgians tried to avoid in their choice of traditional leaders.

Interestingly, these virtues and vices are not uniquely bound to the stereotypes of one or another of the ethnic groups.¹⁶⁰ Although the colonial administrators and the missionaries generally agreed that the Tutsi (and the *ganwa*) were more suited to rule than the Hutu, who should remain cultivators, there has also always been an ambiguous relation towards the Tutsi. As well as being seen as intelligent and proud, they were also seen as conniving and arrogant. The fact that they did not want to convert to Christianity or even attend school, annoyed the missionaries and the colonial administration alike.¹⁶¹ Likewise, the Europeans wanted leaders who had authority – again a Tutsi trait according to the European racial labelling – but they disliked an authoritarian leader – authoritarianism being the flip-side of Tutsi virtues. Among the virtues of a good leader we find several Hutu stereotypes such as obedience, frankness and docility. This is not to say, however, that the Belgians were looking for leaders of a Hutu nature.

¹⁶⁰ Something that Gahama fails to comment on.

¹⁶¹ See also Roger Louis for an analysis of this relation during German rule (Louis 1963), and Alison des Forges for the opinion of the White Fathers on the Tutsi in Rwanda (des Forges 1969).

Gullibility, apathy and timidity are among the Hutu traits that certainly were not wanted from a leader.

This ambiguous list reveals a general dilemma that the Belgian administration faced in their quest for indirect rule. On the one hand, they needed collaborators, the so-called 'Ndiyo bwana' (Yes sir), to make sure Belgian rule and civilisation was spread to the farthest corners of the colony. On the other hand, these leaders needed to be respected by the population and have a certain degree of authority. *Vieillesse* (old age) is among the faults of a leader, as the administration was interested in privileging young chiefs who would be open towards 'civilisation' (Gahama 1983: 70). However, the leaders were respected among their subjects according to age, prestige and wealth in cows and experience. '*c'est "un chef très écouté et très respecté de ses indigènes", observation.*' (Gahama 1983: 69)¹⁶². So as well as wanting to privilege young, progressive leaders, the Belgian authorities also reproduce the concept of traditional authority and hierarchy based on 'the premise of inequality'. In this sense, the image of traditional Burundi is kept alive and recreated in the colonial mould.

So what were the consequences of these reforms? As hinted above, the administrative reforms allowed the possibility of getting rid of 'incapable' chiefs. This had consequences for the composition of the leadership in terms of ethnicity and class (even gender). Generally there was a tendency to 'streamline' the choice of chiefs so that Hutu gradually disappeared, as did female leaders.¹⁶³ Stressing the traditional values of leadership (authority, respect, etc.), coupled with stereotypical views on the 'races' of Burundi, the colonial administration tended to favour the *ganwa*, and to a lesser degree Tutsi, chiefs.¹⁶⁴ A number of the old institutions such as witch doctors, local

¹⁶² 'It was observed that "it is a chief whom the natives listen to and respect".'

¹⁶³ According to Lemarchand *ganwa* rivalry between the *bezi* and the *batare* lineages was also effected by the administrative reforms. Seeing local politics as more pro-active than Gahama does, Lemarchand shows how the Bezi were able to manipulate the Crown and the Belgian administration to their advantage and make sure that a number of non-Bezi semi-independent chiefs were dismissed while Bezi holdings were consolidated into large blocs of territory. This was due, according to Lemarchand, to the Europeans' ignorance of local politics (again a very different understanding to Gahama's picture of the all-knowing European)(Lemarchand 1977).

¹⁶⁴ The total number of chiefs fell from 133 in 1929 to 35 in 1945. The number of *ganwa* chiefs fell from 76 (41 *Batare* and 35 *Bezi*) in 1929 to 25 (8 *Batare* and 17 *Bezi*) in 1945. That is a

councillors and traditional courts disappeared or lost their importance due to the reforms, and in terms of ethnicity, it was especially in these functions that Hutu and non-*ganwa* Tutsi played a role. These institutions had been vital in softening the absolute and sovereign power of the *mwami* and had functioned as a counterweight to hierarchical tendencies in Burundian society.

From the giver of beer and cows to the administrator of law and order.

The administrative reforms also affected the chiefs who remained. Their roles changed and so did their way of governing. The chiefs were now supposed to function as the intermediaries between the administration and the Burundian population, situated between civil law and customary law. They helped collect taxes and organise communal work, reporting back to the administration on a weekly or monthly basis, thus making them much less a sacred, benevolent leader and more a 'fonctionnaire' of the Belgian administration. They were punished severely if they were found to be misusing their power, allegedly because they were to function as examples for the population in general. Flogging was a common punishment. However, these punishments had the unintended effect of making the chiefs lose prestige among the population. A good chief is a strong chief who can function as a protector. But how then were the subjects expected to respect a chief who could be humiliated in such a way?¹⁶⁵ Ryckmans' idea that they should act as the décor that legitimises Belgian rule – that they should appeal to traditional ideals of leadership while conveying Belgium's civilising mission – turned out to be rather contradictory.

As they became less respected as men of sacred power, the chiefs used the whip to punish their subjects and enforce their authority, consequently becoming despised and feared by the population.

proportional increase from 57% to 71% of the chiefs. Meanwhile, the number of Tutsi chiefs fell from 30 to 10, a slight increase, relatively speaking, from 23% to 29%. In the same period, the number of Hutu chiefs fell from 27 to 0 (Gahama 1983: 104).

¹⁶⁵ Ryckmans was aware of this dilemma when he asks how we can demand from these chiefs to be respected while we weaken them ourselves (Ryckmans in Gahama 1983: 127). Mamdani mentions that there was an impugnancy clause to the powers of traditional leaders that in the name of Christian civilisation and humanity put a limit to the barbaric methods that the traditional leaders were allowed to use against their subjects. The reforms were supposedly instigated in the name of 'd'intérêt public'. (Chrétien 1985: 143). Here again, we have the contradictory function of traditional leaders in colonial administration.

Avec l'usage du fouet, on passe du chef charismatique "distributeur" de bières et... de vaches au "gestionnaire" responsable de "l'ordre public". [...] Haï, ou tout au moins craint de ses gens, il doit honorer des charges de plus en plus multiples et combien incommodes.¹⁶⁶
(Gahama 1983: 128)

In summary, the chiefs went from being political and religious leaders with a large portion of personal charisma to being bureaucrats who managed and administrated on behalf of the Belgian administration. Not being able to give (as we recall, the meaning of the verb to rule also means to give), robbed the leaders of their dual role as rulers and protectors, and hence the contract between lord and subject changed. Now the subject no longer obeyed the lord because he was mighty or generous or even because he was despotic. Inequality remained in Burundi but the character of inequality changed. Here two aspects of governing are central. One is the shift in the composition of traditional leaders. The other is the shift in the nature of the relationship between ruler and ruled.

First, as has been documented by several scholars, the number of Hutu chiefs diminished drastically, as did the number of female chiefs. One may retort that the number of Hutu chiefs was always rather insignificant and that the *ganwa* had always had the lion's share of power in Burundi. Likewise, the number of Hutu who could *kwihuture* and become Tutsi had always been insignificant. However these cases were exceptions rather than the rule. In this sense, the Belgian administration did not intend to radically change the ethnic composition of customary leadership, but rather to rationalise it and make it equally applicable everywhere. However, knowledge of the exceptional case influences relations in the 'normal' case. To know that some Hutu can become Tutsified has an impact on all the poor Hutu who never had a chance of doing so. To know that the chief on the next *colline* is Hutu, makes the *ganwa* chief relate differently to his Hutu and Tutsi subjects, than if no Hutu chiefs existed at all. So when the exceptions were removed, the relations in the 'normal' cases also changed.

¹⁶⁶ With the use of the whip the chief is transformed from being the charismatic 'distributor' of beer and cows to being an 'administrator' in charge of public order. Hating or at least fearing his people, he has to honour an increasing number of increasingly incompatible duties.

The second aspect of governing that changed during Belgian rule had to do with the nature of the relation between ruler and ruled. With parts of the mutual relations missing – such as the role of gifts – and with possibilities for upward mobility and multiple interpretations of hierarchical positions disappearing, authority became exacting and despotic. Mamdani concludes that the ruthless behaviour of these new traditional leaders meant that they had unlimited powers to do what they wanted. I would contend that evidence in Burundi appears to point in a slightly different direction. Certainly the colonial administration presumed traditional power to be despotic and patriarchal, and it consequently created traditional power in this image. But this does not imply that the powers of the chiefs increased correspondingly. On the contrary, it appears that they lost legitimacy among the population. No longer being the givers of beer and protection, they no longer kept their part of the agreement.

Earlier, I mentioned that it is impossible to remain outside the metaconflict in Burundi. Thus the argument put forward here -- that hierarchic relations changed from 'soft' to 'hard' -- is reproduced and used by various actors in Burundi. It is part of a discourse on Burundi as originally hierarchic but harmonious. It has not been my intention to give a picture of an unadulterated harmonious past in precolonial Burundi. It can be argued that many of the processes that took place in the first half of the 20th century had already been set in motion around the middle of the 19th century, and that colonialism only accelerated them.

To understand how this reading of shifts in the nature of authority and inequality during colonialism became part of the refugees' narrative we must scrutinise the ways in which the question of inequality was tackled in post-independence Burundi. The role of Belgian colonisation became a very contested issue in this period, with different political factions reading the question of inequality and the role of Belgian colonisation differently.

In the name of development – independent Burundi.

At the eve of independence in 1962 the terms 'Hutu' and 'Tutsi' were not particularly politicised. It was only after the assassination of Prince

Rwagasore in 1961 and the 'Hutu revolution' in Rwanda in 1959 that these ethnic markers gained political significance. During the next decades, the Tutsi Hima,¹⁶⁷ especially from Bururi province in the south, got to dominate the higher echelons of Burundi society,¹⁶⁸ and as the tragic events of 1972¹⁶⁹ show, the Tutsi-Hutu conflict moved centre-stage.

In this section we will see how the question of authority and ethnicity changed. It will become clear that the roles of tradition and of colonial impact respectively were heavily disputed and became the object of ideological struggles. The metaconflict on the nature of ethnicity in Burundi had begun. I will explore the new dominant discourse's 'double-speak' on ethnicity. Is it really just a smoke screen when the Tutsi dominated government denies ethnicity? Or is it part of a larger discourse that is an attempt to break with colonial legacy? I will also show how this '*technico-pragmatique*' developmentalist ideology (Laely 1992: 88) in some instances reproduced the idea of a united, harmonious past, while simultaneously wanting to 'cut out dead wood' and fight parochialism. In its drive to modernise state institutions, it paradoxically strengthened the tendencies that had been started by the Belgian administration to centralise and rationalise local government.

From *ganwa* rivalry to ethnic strife

The two largest parties that emerged in Burundi during the UN-imposed reforms towards gradual independence in the late 1950s were linked to strong *ganwa* personalities. Basically, UPRONA (Union Pour le Progrès National) -

¹⁶⁷ There are many explanations to the definitions of the Hima, just as there are many theories around Hutu and Tutsi. Generally the Tutsi are believed to comprise two sub-groups: the *banyaruguru* (meaning those 'from above'. It is disputed whether this means from the hills or from higher status) and the (*ba-*)*hima*. The latter were allegedly the lower class Tutsi who had enjoyed only little influence prior to independence.

¹⁶⁸ In 1964 UPRONA held a conference to investigate the origins of ethnic tensions in Burundi. Figures from the conference reveal that 83 out of 133 high ranking civil service posts were held by Tutsi, 43 by Hutu, and only 3 by *ganwa* (4 were 'other') (Lemarchand 1996a: 65-66).

¹⁶⁹ In the name of quelling a Hutu rebellion, the army massacred an estimated 80 000 to 150 000 Hutu (Kay 1987: 5; Lemarchand 1989: 22), and as many as 2000 Tutsi were killed by Hutu (Kay 1987: 5). Hundreds of thousands of Hutu fled the country to neighbouring countries (Lemarchand 1996a: 104). For comprehensive accounts of the 1972 massacres that Lemarchand and Martin have termed 'selective genocide' see (Lemarchand and Martin 1974) and (Kay 1987).

the party that would later dominate the one-party system in Burundi and be associated with Tutsi domination - was associated with the Bezi and the king's son Louis Rwagasore. PDC (Parti Démocrate Chrétien), on the other hand, was dominated by another princely lineage, the Batare, and led by Birori. To a large extent party politics started out as *ganwa* rivalry in new clothing (Lemarchand 1970: 324-325).¹⁷⁰

In the first legislative elections of September 1961, UPRONA won a landslide victory. A reason for this can be found in the extremely broad appeal of UPRONA, a broadness that could have split the party had it not been for Rwagasore. On the one hand the party appealed to the upwardly mobile new elite who had been through western education and who felt frustrated by both the colonial administration and the traditional leaders. They had been blocked by indirect rule, which simultaneously stopped them from entering the structures of modern administration as well as those of traditional rule. For these young men UPRONA offered the possibility of independence and modernisation (Lemarchand 1970: 332-333). On the other hand, the fact that Rwagasore was not only a *ganwa* but also the eldest son of the *mwami*, gave the party a large amount of support among more reactionary royalists, as well as among the Hutu masses that had strong affections for the *mwami* – much stronger than for the *ganwa*. Finally, UPRONA was associated with the Bezi, which had voiced a more anti-colonial discourse than the Batare, notorious for their close ties with the Belgian administration (Lemarchand 1970: 337). In other words, UPRONA's discourse was made up of a host of contradictory discursive elements, enabling it to gain support from large segments of the population. Rwagasore acted as the 'glue' that kept these elements together. His person was able to create the illusion that the many, very diverse factions and interests could be satisfied. He was the point that promised to *suture* the community and fulfil the interests of all these different people.

¹⁷⁰ However, as Lemarchand argues, the fact that this rivalry had to take place within a new institutional frame and a different political playing field, meant that they also transformed (Lemarchand 1970).

With the assassination of Rwagasore, this unifying object disappeared, and a number of conflicts surfaced within the party¹⁷¹. There were conflicts between young and old chiefs. There was tension between the crown and the national assembly. Finally there was conflict between the so-called Monrovia and Casablanca factions of the national assembly. These factions did not follow party affiliation but were synonyms for Hutu and Tutsi factions, thus crystallising ethnic identities in national politics (Lemarchand 1996a: 65). One may, along with Laclau and Mouffe, (Laclau and Mouffe 1985) say that the country was faced with an 'organic crisis' in which the field was opened and the antagonisms around which society defined itself had to be redefined. It was no longer given that *ganwa* rivalry was essential. Burundi society could be split along other lines and a new hegemonic order had yet to arise.

This new hegemonic order took shape in the late 1960s after Colonel Micombero came to power by a *coup d'état*. In terms of ethnicity, the most striking change was that the new regime was dominated by Tutsi Hima rather than *ganwa*, and that the Tutsi-Hutu antagonism got to be the central antagonism around which other conflicts were ordered.

But the new dominant discourse was more than just ethnic. In fact, Micombero was adamant about trying to conceal ethnicity, claiming that the terms Hutu and Tutsi were figments of colonial imagination and that it was not in the interest of the nation to mention ethnicity. Reference to ethnic groups was officially banned during the second republic of Bagaza (1976-1987) (Kay 1987: 3). Anyone who mentioned the two groups (*ganwa* completely slipped out of the picture on both sides¹⁷²), was accused of destroying the natural unity of the Burundian people and helping neo-imperialist powers to weaken the country. The government's 'White Paper on the Real Causes and Consequences of the Attempted genocide against the Tutsi Ethny [sic.] in Burundi' (Embassy of the Republic of Burundi in Washington, 1972), written shortly after the massacres in 1972 as a defence of government policies, argues that ethnicity is an invention of colonialism and

¹⁷¹ For a comprehensive account of this very complex part of Burundi politics I can recommend Lemarchand's 'Rwanda and Burundi' (1970), especially chapters 12-13.

¹⁷² Lemarchand states that the *ganwa* disappeared as an ethnic category, and were assimilated into the Tutsi frame of reference by 1972 (Lemarchand 1996b: 15).

that any ethnic resurgence in the country must be attributed to neo-colonial conspiracies.

Do not forget that genocide is unknown to our history and culture, and even the word is inexistant [sic] in our language. How can it be differently? Tribalism was unknown before the arrival of whites. Before colonisation [sic.], our society had reached a degree of cohesion and national unity that many European countries lacked. If you have any doubts, question your ethnologists and historians. (White Paper 1972: 10. Original emphasis)

The paper claims that unity was the defining character of Burundi prior to colonisation, when tribe was an unknown concept to Burundians. As with many other political documents, this one refers to science (ethnologists and historians) for legitimacy and a claim to truth.

In the circumstances, it seems improper to speak of tribes in a nation where, since centuries, all the inhabitants speak the same language and worship the same God (Imana), and are subject to the same laws and authorities. (White Paper 1972: 11. Original emphasis)

In a scientific manner tribe is defined by religion, language and laws. As all Burundians share these, they must therefore belong to the same nation/people, it is argued. Those who say otherwise are distorting the truth.

If tribalism is to be mentioned think of the one you dissipated into our society. You craftily took advantage of the naivety or the cupidity [sic.] of certain of our citizens. In a few years you destroyed the secular product of our ancestors. You distinguished between the Burundese citizens libelling [sic.] them as Hutu and Tutsi. You did not stop there. You convinced Hutu of the necessity of massacring Tutsi. (White Paper 1972: 11. Original emphasis)

It is the colonialists that brought tribalism to Burundi and they did so by taking advantage of the naivety of the Burundian people. In short, they purposefully split a united people.

If we are to comprehend the fact that a regime is explicitly anti-ethnic while at the same time obviously favouring one ethnic group over another in any other way than the famous ideological smoke-screen, where a powerful group

in society consciously lies to the masses in order to stay in power,¹⁷³ I propose that we need to explore other aspects of the dominant postcolonial ideology.

Apart from the ethnic dimension, Micombero's ideology was very modernist, developmentalist and anti-imperialist. Micombero was only 26 years old when he seized power in 1966. He was by no means an exception and represented a number of young bureaucrats and officers who were dissatisfied with the rule of the old elite and royal clans (Lemarchand 1970: 404-411). Lemarchand takes note of these new elites as they began to take shape in the mid-1960s:

Their extreme youthfulness reinforced their sense of belonging to an 'out-group' while at the same time making them all the more vulnerable to the appeals of radicalism. And for some at least, these predispositions were further strengthened by their socially and politically marginal position in their own society. Their ideological leanings, in any event, differed sharply from those of the elder generations of traditional elites, animated as they were by a strong reformist zeal and a concern for secularism, social progress and technical innovation. (Lemarchand 1970: 404)

There was a certain sense that merit – especially western education – should precede birthright and experience, in a sense giving Tutsi Hima the opportunities that had been withheld from them by the *banyaruguru* and the *ganwa*.

With its nationalist, anti-colonial ideology the government in Burundi under Micombero fed strongly on a Third-Worldist (Fanonist) postcolonial discourse. The cornerstone of the dominant discourse was national unity and a break with colonial divide and rule. To be a member of UPRONA, one had to swear loyalty to the cause of national independence and opposition to divisive and bourgeois influences (Kay 1987: 7). In order for the nation to progress, it was not enough to become formally independent. One had to break with the 'colonial mentality' which meant first and foremost breaking with the idea of ethnicity by reiterating that the Burundian people are united *per definition*. A document by JNR (Jeunesses Nationalistes Rwagasore, the

¹⁷³ Prunier falls into this track when paraphrasing Ndayahoze as saying: 'it is the elite, the bourgeoisie, which carries the virus of tribalism. The disease comes from the top... Greedy politicians use ethnic divisiveness as a political strategy. (Prunier 1995b: 3).

radical youth wing of UPRONA) states that '*we are witness to the decolonisation of an entire nation, and we want this decolonisation to penetrate the innermost recesses of our souls, not merely the surface*' (quoted in Lemarchand 1970: 407). The revolution was depicted as an on-going battle against neo-imperialist powers that seek to divide and rule the country once again. The above-mentioned white paper argues strongly along these lines.

Nobody is deceived, because we know that these same circles who try to execute their diabolic [sic] plans, confectionned [sic] since 1959 to make Burundi a game preserve [sic], a stronghold of neocolonialism and wolverine imperialism. (White Paper 1972: 7)

If Africans continue fighting one another due to ethnic labels given them by Europeans, they will remain underdeveloped, it is argued. Hence, national unity was perceived as essential for 'progress' and 'development'.

The experience of the so-called Hutu revolution¹⁷⁴ in Rwanda in 1959 and the following persecution of Tutsi in Rwanda made the Tutsi elite in Burundi very vigilant about any ethnically based social movements. Consequently, it was feared that pluralism and liberal democracy would divide the Burundi population along ethnic lines and introduce majority rule, threatening the Tutsi's minority rights.

Any critique of the government from the Hutu elite - whether ethnically motivated or not - would be interpreted in these terms. Thus, the country's leadership was in a kind of ethnic paranoia where only a close circle of trustworthy peers were accepted into the higher levels of the administration and military. These were mostly Tutsi-*Hima* from Bururi Province.¹⁷⁵ They were not only threatened by what they perceived to be a Hutu peril. These young men in the bureaucracy and the army were - at least originally - up against the old Tutsi, high caste elite, the *Banyuruguru*, and the *ganwa* as well (Prunier 1995b: 2-3). Prunier argues that the government needed the Hutu peril in order to unite the Tutsi and cover the internal struggles. With the anti-

¹⁷⁴ I say 'so-called' because it is doubtful whether it can be called a revolution. For a discussion on this issue, see (Prunier 1995a).

¹⁷⁵ Both Burundi scholars and refugees in Lukole are not slow to remark that all three presidents from 1966 to 1993 (Micombero, Bagaza and Buyoya) were Tutsi-*Hima* from the same commune in Bururi.

colonial and anti-feudal discourse it was difficult for the old elite to reassert its position without being categorised as feudal and neo-colonial, and being accused of wanting to reintroduce Tutsi supremacy. The latter can seem bizarre considering the ethnic composition of the dominant group in the country. Nevertheless, together with the idea of the Hutu peril, the battle against reactionary groups succeeded in removing ethnicity from public discourse while keeping a small group of Tutsi in power and securing the backing of all Tutsi.¹⁷⁶

This explains how an explicitly anti-ethnic ideology paradoxically supported a government in the hands of a small ethnic elite. The Hutu were constructed as inherently ethnic, always wanting to destroy national unity and introduce majority rule. However, this ethnicised 'other' was not ethnic by birth. He had been made to believe so, first by colonialists as the White Paper claims and later by a Hutu elite that merely wanted to manipulate ethnicity for its own sake - often helped by foreign infiltrators. This was the message in later government discourse, as we shall see shortly. It was therefore the obligation of any progressive leadership to guide and educate the population and protect it from such divisive agitation. Hutu leaders and conservative Tutsi were therefore systematically kept out of office because the government perceived them as a threat to this project.

According to this ideology, Hutu are not ethnicist *per se*. They are made to be so by certain influential individuals. The 'Commission Nationale Chargée d'Etudier la Question de l'Unité Nationale', a commission that was appointed by the government to explore the ethnic problems in Burundi following the 1988 massacres in Ntega and Marangara,¹⁷⁷ states in relation to the massacres of Tutsi by Hutu in 1972: '*l'immense majorité de la population a refusé de prendre part aux massacres. Nombre de Bahutu ont préféré mourir plutôt que de massacrer leurs frères Batutsi*'¹⁷⁸ (1989: 18). This document, authored by 12 Hutu and 12

¹⁷⁶ Lemarchand argues that 'we should view the violence [in 1972] as the unanticipated outcome of persistent competition among Tutsi elites for control of the state.' (Lemarchand 1996a: 76).

¹⁷⁷ In 1988 ethnic violence broke out in two small *communes* in Northern Burundi in which as many as 20 000 people were killed either by Hutu mobs or by the army in an operation aimed at 'restoring order' (Reyntjens 1993). (See also Lemarchand 1996a: chapter 7).

¹⁷⁸ 'The vast majority of the population refused to take part in the massacres. A number of Hutu preferred to die rather than massacre their Tutsi brothers.'

Tutsi, assumes that it was Tutsi that were massacred by Hutu in 1972 and not vice versa.¹⁷⁹ But the Hutu masses were not interested in ethnicity unless they were incited by divisive and selfish leaders, it claims. The objective was to abandon colonial labels and control these leaders through co-option or extermination, so that the Hutu masses could be taught through education and 'sensibilisation' to forget ethnicity.

What we see here is a patronising state that does not believe that the masses are mature enough to see right from wrong and therefore must be protected from bad influence. The masses are easily deceived into believing in ethnicity and other anachronistic relics of colonialism. According to the dominant discourse, the UPRONA leadership knows the 'true nature of the Burundi nation' as it was before colonialism and as it will be in the future, and it is the burden of the enlightened leadership to spread this message and to make sure that it is not misunderstood. Obviously, in a situation where the masses have no idea what is best for themselves, liberal democracy is not advisable, according to UPRONA. The one-party state was built up in an Eastern European style in which youth, women and workers' organisations were organised under the party and played an important role in 'educating' the masses (Kay 1987: 7).

In the 1960s several alleged coup attempts by Hutu officers were put down, gradually cleansing the armed forces of Hutu officers. An army clampdown on a Hutu uprising in the south of the country in 1972 developed into the systematic killing of Hutu. In the south in particular, the army killed Hutu indiscriminately while elsewhere the main target was apparently educated Hutu right down to secondary school level (Lemarchand and Martin 1974). This was in line with the perception that it was the intellectuals who were sowing the seed of ethnicity among the peasants who were cast as innocent through ignorance or naivety.

¹⁷⁹This document, written in a more sober note than the White Paper from 1972, admits that there were different ethnic groups in Burundi but still defines their unity and solidarity as fundamental aspects of precolonial Burundi. It admits that there was exploitation and inequality but claims that this was due to the *mwami* and the *ganwa* who oppressed both Hutu and Tutsi. In this way, Hutu and Tutsi are unified in their suffering while the root of oppression is located in the royal family. Hence the need for a progressive people's party to fight feudalism and monarchy.

In 1976, Bagaza seized power through a palace coup and declared the 2nd republic. By lumping together the first republic and the colonial era ‘as *one long age of darkness*’ (Kay 1987: 9) Bagaza was able to maintain the notion that the 1972 massacres and all other misery in society was due to colonialism and neo-colonialism.¹⁸⁰ Therefore, it was all the more important to be vigilant, he argued, institutionalising the revolutionary spirit and struggle against a reactionary bourgeoisie in the only legal party, UPRONA. Ethnic terms were banned and various projects such as villagisation were instigated in order to promote national unity.

Walking the tightrope between traditionalism and developmentalism

In this section we will explore how UPRONA tried to institutionalise the idea of national unity and mass mobilisation while keeping power in the hands of a small elite and increasing control over the population. We will explore how this was done by appealing to tradition as well as modernity. The dominant ideology of the post-colonial government had an ambivalent relation to pre-colonial institutions. On the one hand, it was explicitly anti-colonial and by the same token evoked a picture of precolonial Burundi as the perfect harmonious society. This has been illustrated in the excerpts from the White paper. On the other hand, the revolutionary rhetoric was obviously aimed at breaking with the power of the ‘old guard’. Youth, modernity and progress were to replace gerontocracy, tradition and stagnation in what Thomas Laely terms the new ‘technocratico-pragmatic’ development ideology (Laely 1992: 88).

Bagaza’s regime is probably best known for its fight against the church. In the words of UPRONA’s chief ideologue, Emile Mworoha, it was ‘*to fight the last vestiges of colonialism.*’ (quoted from Lemarchand 1996a: 112). It is interesting to note, however, the way efficiency and national development are evoked as a reason for limiting church activities rather than ideological arguments. In a

¹⁸⁰ For a fuller account of the differences between the first and the second republics see (Kay 1987; Lemarchand 1996a; Prunier 1995b).

government circular it was stated that religious activities were limited to Saturdays and Sundays. *'The official explanation for these measures is that regulations covering the hours of work (and therefore of prayer) for the population are essential if a poor country, such as Burundi, is to maximize its production.'* (Kay 1987: 9).

This leads to another important aspect of postcolonial ideology, namely the focus on efficiency, development and technical innovation. Villagisation programmes were introduced in the name of agricultural efficiency (Kay 1987: 9), in line with forced cultivation of certain cash crops. Through a system of *nyumbakumi*, ten house cell leaders, the state could penetrate even the smallest neighbourhood (Laely 1997: 709), and the party cadres managed to control every movement of the population (Laely 1992: 87).¹⁸¹ Supposedly the *nyumbakumi* were meant to be the bridgehead (*tête de pont*) of the state closest to the neighbourhood. However, as Laely points out, these new party functionaries that were meant to take over from the old *bashingantahe* (village elders) did not function as a bridgehead that went both ways. They were only accountable to their superiors and were more in charge of policing the population than promoting its interests.

Also at the village level the *technocratico*-pragmatic discourse of UPRONA favoured young functionaries (Laely 1992: 88-90) and police (Kay 1987: 9). The *bashingantahe* of the old stock proved themselves to be of little use to the new development objectives. Instead of banning *bushingantahe*, the regime found it more opportune to occupy the institution. Young cadres were officially named *bashingantahe* and the ceremony of *kwâtirwa*, which earlier had been a long and gradual process of becoming an elder, now was taken over by the party and held in the party headquarters.

[L]'Etat se cramponne davantage aux formes extérieurs du *Bushingantahe* traditionnel. De la même façon, la République, au

¹⁸¹ The system appears to be heavily inspired by Tanzania's grand social engineering project; *Ujamaa*. *Nyumbakumi* is the same Swahili term used there, meaning 'ten homes'.

niveau national, a cherché son inspiration dans le système monarchique après s'en être suffisamment distance.¹⁸² (Laely 1992: 89)

Laely argues that the rural population continued to trust their own elders more than these young parvenus who were perceived as representatives of the state and hence treated with suspicion. They still used the old, now defunct, *bushingantahe* to solve disputes but they could no longer reckon on them to mediate with the really 'big men', the bourgmestre and the governor. Whereas the young cadres had the written 'parole'¹⁸³ and formal and institutional backing, people still interpreted authority in terms of the personal, charismatic authority of the elders.

This modernising, rationalistic ideology was attempting to achieve the revolution by breaking with the 'feudal' and colonial past. However, being anti-colonial, it also went against 'importing foreign solutions' to Africa (cf. Commission nationale chargée d'étudier la question de l'unité nationale 1989). Therefore, it sought solutions in an idealised precolonial past of national unity and equality. Africanisation policies were introduced, such as villagisation, the use of *bushingantahe* and the introduction of Kirundi as the only language of instruction in primary and secondary schools in the mid 1970s (Lemarchand 1996a: 108-109). This was done in the name of finding an authentic, African way to progress. African culture was supposed to produce unity and progress, and to secure the involvement of the community.

Using African indigenous institutions such as the *bushingantahe* would allegedly secure the active popular support for the revolutionary state (Commission nationale chargée d'étudier la question de l'unité nationale 1989: 34). Among the institutions that the one party state attempted to revitalise was the system of communal work (Guichaoua 1991). This drew on two historical references. The first was the Burundian 'custom' of helping one's neighbour in times of distress. The second point of reference was the Belgian

¹⁸² 'The state held onto the outer forms of the traditional *bushingantahe* institution. Similarly, at the national level, the republic found inspiration in the monarchy, having distanced itself sufficiently from the latter.'

¹⁸³ *Intahe* is the stick that one holds when having the word at meetings, similar to Homer's skeptron. To hold the *intahe* is to hold the 'parole'. *Mushingantahe* means he who holds the *intahe*. The new cadres had to write regular reports to their superiors, giving them access to a new 'parole'.

system of forced labour for communal works in the common interest of the community. This again drew on an image of peasants providing labour to the chiefs and the court.

Communal development work was given practical, even scientific, reasons. Roads had to be built to help trade and economic progress. Terraces had to be maintained in order to prevent erosion and environmental degradation while keeping agricultural output high. It also had an explicit educational aspect to it, in other words it was put forward as a school where moral values about the virtues of hard manual labour were taught. The idea was to rehabilitate manual labour against the '*survalorisation du "travail intellectuel" et du "travail du bureau"*'¹⁸⁴ (Guichaoua 1991: 554). In fact, the term re-education was used to signify that it was a question of 'mobilising' and 'sensitising' the population at a point in time when it was feared that national unity was threatened and the population had been filled with propaganda on ethnicity.

Through trying to 'mobilise the masses' in this way, the communal labour scheme can be interpreted as a means of nation-building. Through unselfish hard work for the community, the population contributes to national progress and helps prevent national economic dependency. By helping to build the nation through unselfish labour, each peasant is attached to the nation through sacrifice.

It is worth noting how communal development work draws on a register of discursive elements ranging from traditional Burundi to Belgian practices to nationalism and socialism. As with the policy of usurping the *bushingantahe*, it is a very centralised, top-down approach, controlled by UPRONA. And as with the *bushingantahe* the idea never really gained the full support of the population (Guichaoua 1991). But whereas most people in Burundi dismissed the new *bashingantahe* as mere replicas of the authentic institution, communal work was disliked exactly because of its connotations with past practices.

¹⁸⁴ 'The over-estimation of intellectual work and office work'.

So, although hierarchic elements were supposedly foreign to authentic African culture, allegedly grounded on solidarity and community spirit – with greed and divisiveness being foreign imports – the political system in Burundi was becoming more hierarchic and more centralised than ever. This was due to the patronising approach of the young UPRONA leadership. It was also due to the institutional carry-over from Belgian administration. And finally, it was due to the ways in which the rural population interpreted the new ‘big men’. Here the fact that ethnicity and social status/political rank had become so intertwined (however much the government tried to deny it any discursive existence) had an impact on the way leadership was interpreted. These interpretations by the peasants were due to their politicisation after 1972 and especially from the late 1980s, when Palipehutu started campaigns inside the country.

As the government began to lose legitimacy in growing sections of society its means of control became ever harsher, with party cadres and the secret service infiltrating every part of society¹⁸⁵. This state of increased tension soon proved untenable. Old supporters of the regime were losing their sympathy and allegations of mismanagement and corruption added to the problems of legitimacy (Lemarchand 1996: 114-116). In 1987 Major Pierre Buyoya seized power in a bloodless coup, promising to normalise relations with the church, clean out corruption and generally invigorate and rejuvenate the administration. He also signalled hope for democratic reforms and solving the ‘ethnic problem.’

In the following, we will see how the reform related to earlier discourses on tradition, hierarchy and the question of ethnicity. Multipartyism was only introduced at the higher levels of government. The new constitution (1991) stipulated that local politics should be non-partisan and be given to the institution of the *bushingantaha*. Again a precolonial institution was brought up as being more appropriate for African society. According to the

¹⁸⁵ I was told in the camp that one had to register with the ‘chef du zone’ if one had visitors from another commune staying the night. This they recounted as a matter of fact without even finding it oppressive. They saw it as a security issue rather than a means of control (Field notes 27.03.97). According to Kay (1987) any movement had to be registered at the local authorities.

commission in charge of making a new democratic constitution, partisan politics constituted a threat against the customary conviviality, everyday harmony and understanding, and even democratic values such as national unity and social peace. In other words, it threatened Burundian values and the Burundian nation.

En introduisant l'esprit partisan qui est contraire à la convivialité coutumière, il y a risqué que le voisin qui appartient à un parti concurrent soit perçu et traité comme un ennemi au lieu de le considérer comme un simple adversaire politique avec lequel il faut mener une compétition loyale. L'omniprésence des parties risque de compromettre un certain nombre de valeurs que devrait fonder la démocratie, notamment la paix sociale et l'unité nationale (...) (Constitutional commission, quoted from Laely 1992: 76)¹⁸⁶

It is intriguing to see how political parties are allegedly a threat to democracy in this rhetorical argument, which extends to the point that party politics distracts people from their 'real' problems.¹⁸⁷ Here we see a picture of politics as sordid, as something that brings out the worst in innocent people. Once people get involved in politics, they begin to treat their neighbours as enemies and forget the real problems of daily life. Hence, if ordinary people lose their head to politics, they lose themselves, forgetting important things like work and economic progress. These issues need solving rationally, outside the realm of politics, according to the commission. This reflects an idea that politics taints decisions that ought to be rational and optimal for all.

Les réalités sociales et la tradition du Burundi nous commandent de choisir à la fois un système de représentation inspiré de l'âme et de la culture burundaises et compatible avec l'exigence d'institutions modernes. (Constitutional commission, quoted from (Laely 1992: 76)¹⁸⁸

The solution to this problem, as proposed by the constitutional committee, was to reintroduce the *bushingantahe*. The *bushingantahe* is true to the

¹⁸⁶ 'Introducing a partisan spirit that is opposed to customary conviviality, there is a risk that a neighbour, supporting a competing party, will be perceived and treated as an enemy rather than a mere political adversary with whom one must compete loyally. The omnipresence of political parties risks jeopardising a number of fundamental democratic values, notably social peace and national unity.'

¹⁸⁷ 'L'omniprésence des parties peut exercer un rôle de diversion sur la population en la détournant de ses véritables problèmes' (Constitutional commission, quoted from (Laely 1992: 76).

¹⁸⁸ 'The social realities and the Burundian traditions force us to choose a system of representation that is inspired by the Burundian soul and culture and compatible with the demands of modern institutions.'

Burundian soul and culture. It is an institution – so the constitutional committee claims – that for centuries was the pillar in peace, justice and harmony in Burundi *sur nos collines* (in the hills). The commission once again resorts to an image of a harmonious precolonial Burundi and a unique African mode of representation. Foreign ideas and institutions such as multiparty democracy are new to Burundi and will only pollute the culture.

Interestingly, party politics were accepted at the national level while found unfit at the local level. To understand this we must recall who ‘the people’ are in the quote above. They are the ‘simple people’ living ‘on the hilltops’. There is a certain patronising attitude towards ‘les gens sur les collines’ who are obviously not mature enough to deal with real politics. Only people at a certain level of development can handle the noble art of a political duel. In this there is nothing inherently wrong with politics. It is merely misconceived by the ordinary people on the hilltops. Likewise, there is nothing inherently wrong with the peasant. He merely has not understood how to handle party politics yet. And how should he? He is made to worry about other ‘real’ problems in life. He has been ruled by traditional institutions for centuries. It is with these institutions that he feels comfortable. Thus the logic of the colonial state is reproduced so many years after independence.

To sum up, Buyoya’s regime ushered in changes and new hopes. However, there were limits to the extent of reforms. The people were still construed as needing good leaders rather than direct influence. In order to ensure popular participation without risking ethnic hatred, a model of traditional administration was envisaged. In spite of the anti-colonial rhetoric, and in spite of the new attempts in the 1990s to break with the first and second republics, there were certain continuities and similarities.

Re-imagining Burundi from exile

As argued above, 1972 became an eye-opener for many Hutu. However, it took some time for this traumatic event to translate into political ideology and a politicised ethnic identity. This process arguably took place in refugee camps in Rwanda and Tanzania. The *mythico-histories* that Liisa Malkki

collected in Mishamo in the 1980s were examples of such constructions of histories and a search for explanations in the past by a group of refugees whose life-worlds had been jolted by the massacres in 1972 and subsequent isolation in a settlement.

Apart from trying to establish ontological *sicherheit* for the refugees in the camp, these mythico-histories were re-imagining Burundi's past in radically new ways. In Malkki's words, they were 'a *subversive recasting and reinterpretation*' (Malkki 1995a: 54) of the past. But, as I have shown above, Burundi's past was not terra incognita, it had already been recast and reinterpreted several times by various powerful discourses – from the early European explorers' Hamitic thesis to UPRONA's anti-imperialist ideology. It is in relation to these discourses on the true nature of Burundi's past that the mythico-histories try to recast the past. The main point of contention where refugees in Mishamo opposed the dominant discourse in Burundi was the question of the ethnic groups and their origin. On the other hand the official discourse of UPRONA was that ethnic groups were the invention of colonialists, and their mythico-histories were intent on systematically 'proving' the age-old origins of the ethnic groups and their racial differences. Interestingly, the Hamitic thesis was brought back on stage in an attempt to prove, not the Tutsi's inherent right to rule due to higher intelligence, but the Hutu's right to the Burundi nation due to autochthony. And whereas the colonialists were blamed by the post-independence government for destroying the national fabric, the mythico-histories of the Hutu refugees depicted the Belgians as protectors and moderators (Malkki 1995a: 74).

In Lukole, Palipehutu supporters who had lived in Mishamo told me that the founding father of the party, Rémy Gahutu, chose Mishamo to start making the masses 'aware' because it was placed in virgin forest and people there were not distracted by other things. In Ulyankulu, another big refugee settlement close to the railway line, the refugees were far too busy doing business to care about their history (Jeremiah 24.09.97). I do not intend to portray political ideologies as completely malleable, to be used in an intentional and instrumental manner by individuals. There is no doubt that Gahutu had to draw on the disgruntlement of the refugees in the camp, just as

his own views and ideas were not his free choice. However, the ideology of Gahutu and Palipehutu has to relate not only to the refugees' sense of despair but also to the political field in Burundi. With the lack of other explanations in the camp, Palipehutu's imagining of Burundi's past soon became hegemonic and the only authorised version in Mishamo.

After 'educating the people' in refugee camps in Tanzania and Rwanda, Palipehutu started running campaigns inside the country in the late 1980s, 'awakening' the peasants, and making them 'aware' of their oppression. (Interview with Etienne Karatasi, Chairman of Palipehutu, July 1997). In 1991, Palipehutu launched a series of armed attacks, including one on Bujumbura airport. Palipehutu was therefore instrumental in forming the political identity of the Hutu in Burundi and in pushing the government to take the issue of ethnicity seriously, eventually leading to democratic reforms in the early 1990s. In order to understand the discourse of Palipehutu, I will briefly discuss the book by Rémy Gahutu *'Persecution of the Hutus of Burundi'* (Gahutu no date).¹⁸⁹ The book is meant to provide the 'true' history of Burundi:

We urgently demand that the Hutus of Burundi who read this book teach their children the exact truth about their subjugation. The goal of this document is to remove the misunderstandings and falsifications of Burundian history that have been encouraged by certain corrupt members of the blood-soaked Tutsi regime... (Gahutu no date: 1)

The book claims to provide a sober, scientific version of Burundi history as opposed to what the author sees as the biased propaganda that the regime is feeding international opinion. He starts by outlining the three ethnic groups:

All historians agree that the Twa were the first inhabitants of Burundi. Of pygmy stock, the Twa had a rudimentary technology and did not use iron(...) (Gahutu no date: 2)

The Hutu people arrived in Burundi around 3000 B.C. They presently make up 85% of the country's population, and are of Bantu stock. (...) They were a sedentary, peace-loving people and remain so today. (Gahutu no date: 3-4)

¹⁸⁹ The book has no date or place of publication.

Around 1500 A.D., a third ethnic group gradually began to enter Burundi: the Tutsi. This group, of Nilotic stock, was originally one of the Hamitic peoples of North Africa and Somalia. (Gahutu no date: 4)

Gahutu is challenging the perception that ethnicity was invented by the colonialists by referring to 'historians' and 'theories'. He is clearly leaning on the Hamitic thesis of the old ethnographers. He claims that the Tutsi were peaceful at first and did not impinge on agricultural land, as they were pastoralists. However, he asks how 14% of the population was able to take power in the country. And he wonders why the Tutsi learned the language and culture of the Hutu and not *vice versa*. He suggests that the Tutsi '*consciously learned the language and the customs of the Hutu in order to subjugate them more thoroughly.*' (Gahutu no date: 5). Apart from that, the Tutsi subjugated the Hutu through the system of *ubugabire* where they gave the Hutu cattle as gifts that effectively put the Hutu beneficiary into bondage. The reason why this could happen, he explains, is that the Hutu were not united.

The king, the *ganwa*, the chiefs and the nobles (*abashingantahe*) were all Tutsi and the peasant masses were basically Hutu. '*It follows that all of the hardest work was left to the Hutu, while the Tutsi governed or spent their time with their flocks.*' (Gahutu no date: 7). As opposed to the mythico-histories in Mishamo, however, Gahutu claims that colonisation reinforced Tutsi dominance in the country. In spite of adhering to the Hamitic thesis, he disapproves of the '*false theories about the differing characteristics of the three ethnic groups.*' (Gahutu no date: 11).

In his analysis of the political parties around independence, Gahutu sees the apparent non-ethnic ideology of UPRONA as Tutsi trickery, deceiving the naïve Hutu electorate into believing that this was also a party for them. This theme of the Tutsi having secret plans long before the Hutu are aware of it is a persistent stereotype that also exists in Lukole. This links to another theme that Gahutu refers to, namely that the Hutu '*bore no ill will toward the Tutsi*' while the Tutsi did not hesitate to thwart the Hutu. This has been the case right back from when the first Tutsi arrived and the Hutu welcomed them with open arms, he claims (Gahutu no date: 45).

Throughout his analysis of the post-colonial regimes, he focuses on the use of secrets and lies. These lies, covering up the Tutsi's 'customary cruelty' (Gahutu no date: 46) and hiding the true intentions of the regime, have two audiences, the naïve Hutu and the international community. In this way, the government is able to deceive international public opinion into believing that it is the Hutu who are dangerous. Gahutu is writing his argument up against the 'Tutsi regime' but for an international audience from which he wants recognition. Interestingly, in this connection he is very concerned with the ways in which Bagaza attempts to deceive socialist countries like Tanzania. Among the seven lies that Gahutu identifies as used by Bagaza to maintain power, two are about feigning socialism, one about organizing anti-democratic elections and one about hypocritical solidarity with Black South Africans. In other words, Gahutu is worried about the good image that Bagaza is trying to establish vis-à-vis certain international audiences. Although he disagrees fundamentally with the government on the question of ethnicity, Gahutu also adheres to a pan-African, socialist and Fanonist discourse. It is therefore important for him to show that Bagaza is not truly socialist, democratic or pan-African.

The main problem for the Hutu now, he claims, is that they are not united and that they are not all aware of their suffering. The Hutu must avoid ideological quarrelling, he advises, and unite themselves under the 'dynamic leadership' of a 'combative party'. One problem is the Hutu who are tempted to become like the Tutsi. These 'turncoats' are betraying their true Hutu identity and hence not only the Hutu cause but also themselves. They will never be happy as long as they deny their authentic identity. This *Blut un Boden* ideology of a true authentic identity and a people that belongs to the soil due to being the first to arrive, permeates his text.

A close examination of the situation in Burundi show [sic.] that the Hutu have lost a country which was rightfully theirs. [...] For a people to struggle, retake their country, and emerge victorious, their primary concern must be to strengthen their own identity [...] Some Hutu [...] have changed their ethnic identity in order to try to improve their social status by rejecting their own people. These turn-coats are only fooling themselves, because the Tutsi have never truly accepted them into their ranks. (Gahutu no date: 49)

Gahutu clearly sees the struggle as a nationalist one. The Hutu have a country which is rightfully theirs, only it has been stolen from them by someone else; the late comers and colonisers; the Tutsi.

Reforms and openings

The gradual 'awakening' of the Hutu, coupled with pressure from international donors who were mostly dissatisfied with maladministration and corruption, led Buyoya to introduce reforms.

These gradual reforms would lead to legalising political parties (1992) and to multiparty elections for the National Assembly and the Presidency in 1993. Palipehutu was never legalised and a number of its supporters chose to support FRODEBU, a moderate, Hutu dominated party (Karatasi July 1997). FRODEBU won a landslide victory for the Assembly as did its presidential candidate, Melchior Ndadaye.¹⁹⁰

What then were the consequences for the different ways of imagining Burundi? Basically, the government of Buyoya shifted from denying the existence of ethnicity to accepting the existence of ethnic groups to some degree. In the new Constitution of 1992, national unity is mentioned again and again. However, the constitution does also refer to ethnic groups by taking account of the 'diverse component parts of the Burundian population' (Reyntjens 1995: 9). As socialism and Fanonism were on the retreat in Africa in general, and new demands for 'good governance' emerging, the general rhetoric also shifted more in the direction of liberal democracy.

This shift in the country's dominant discourse also had consequences for the establishment of oppositional discourse. It was no longer enough to claim that ethnicity existed, as this was part of the government discourse. Neither were references to socialism of much value any longer, in part because of the change in international opinion, in part because one could no longer accuse the government of only feigning socialism. The government was not even trying. The only way to establish a successful discourse of opposition was to

¹⁹⁰ Filip Reyntjens has written extensively on this period. (See Reyntjens 1993), (Reyntjens 1995; Reyntjens 1996).

play the same game. This game was made more difficult by the fact that, although ethnicity was now acknowledged, parties were not allowed to appeal to ethnic loyalties, as this would be inciting tribalism and going against the rules of 'good governance'. This is where FRODEBU came into the picture. FRODEBU managed to balance finely between being the party that appealed to the Hutu while not mentioning liberation of the Hutu people or the Hutu nation.

As we shall see in the final chapter, this shift in the political field in Burundi and the presence of large numbers of 'Frodebistes' in Lukole affect the way that refugees in Lukole perceive Burundi's past, ethnicity and the conflict. We shall see how they have a contradictory and pragmatic image of Burundi's past, not knowing quite whether to put the start of the conflict to the 16th century or to 1965 or somewhere in between. This is in part due, I will argue, to the fact that the ideological landscape has shifted in the 1990s, rendering the strong and standardised narratives of Rémy Gahutu and the mythico-histories in Mishamo anachronistic.

In conclusion

In Lukole a young man complains about his treatment in the Tanzanian villages where he used to live. 'You are not heard in the villages' he explains. In Burundi you used to be heard. You could express your opinion. (village leader, 18.02.98)

Somewhere else in the camp a group of refugees are discussing why women no longer respect the men. Men and women agree that things were better in Burundi where the man could afford to buy clothes for his wife and the wife would obey his orders.

An old man tells a story of the days when the *mwami* loved the Hutu and there were no problems between ethnic groups. (Old men, Lukole A, 18.05.98)

In Burundi in the early 1990s a commission in charge of the new constitution praises the indigenous institution of the *bushingantaha* and calls it the pillar of peace, justice and harmony in Burundi for centuries.

And almost eighty years earlier Pierre Ryckmans, First Resident in Urundi, talks of the need to preserve Burundi customs in a practice of indirect rule.

Palipehutu imagines Burundi as essentially Hutu soil, taken by the Tutsi invaders and CNDD imagines Burundi as democratic and multiethnic, but presently in the hands of a power thirsty 'mono-ethnic army'.

All the abovementioned actors imagine Burundi. They imagine a true, untouched Burundi at peace with itself – the Burundi of yesteryear, before colonisation and/or greedy politicians spoiled it. But they all imagine it differently and they all envisage different solutions for restoring this blissful state of affairs. These imaginations are the products of contests to define the truth about Burundi. Through the past there have been claims and counter claims and these have affected practices in the country, thus having very tangible outcomes – sometimes of an immensely tragic scale.

Central to these disputes and central to the imaginations of Burundi in the 'tales of decay' in Lukole is the question of hierarchy and respect. I have shown that Burundi was built up around unequal relations in the 19th century. These relations were personal and ambiguous and fulfilled a number of functions. Although there was a tendency for rank to coincide with ethnicity, age and gender, this was not always the case. Through indirect rule, Belgium sought to strengthen a presumed traditional system of hierarchy and make it more efficient throughout the territory. In doing so, ambiguity was removed (at least almost) from these unequal relations. The effect was to fix inequality to ethnicity. Ambiguity in the character of the relationships between chiefs and others was reduced, as the chiefs established themselves through force and alignment with their European superiors more than through a mixture of giving gifts and providing protection.

With independence, Burundi was radically re-imagined by the post-colonial state. Colonial indirect rule was blamed for introducing divisions to a united people. For the sake of re-establishing the original and natural unity of all Burundians, all 'colonial vestiges' had to be fought and eliminated. It was

seen as the duty of the revolutionary independent government to do away with 'colonial mentality'. The question of hierarchy in pre-colonial society was not alluded to. In the more vulgar discourse – as we saw in the government's White Paper – it was assumed not to have existed, just as ethnicity had not existed prior to colonisation. The more refined version – as can be found in the work of Emile Mworoha (Mworoha 1987) and to a degree in the report by the 'Commission Nationale' – admits to the existence of ethnic groups and hierarchic relationships, but these were assumed to have been unproblematic. Consequently, the postcolonial regimes attempted to reconcile traditional Burundi institutions with a technocratic, modernist discourse. Liberal democracy was dismissed as being a Eurocentric concept that would introduce divisions and hatred among Africans. Authentic Burundian mobilisation of the masses was attempted through a mixture of socialist one-party sensitisation programmes and what were imagined to be democratic and just traditional institutions such as communal work and the *bushingantahe*.

Ironically, several aspects of this system were not dissimilar to those of the colonial policies that were so vehemently opposed in postcolonial discourse, as both were patronising and bureaucratising. The people on the hills were construed as naïve peasants, unable to handle sophisticated issues such as politics by both systems; both tried to formalise traditional institutions and remove ambiguity. And finally both were perceived by the majority as oppressive and to be treated with suspicion.

The government's double-speak, denying the existence of ethnic groups while favouring a small Tutsi minority, resulted in very harsh punishment of anything that might resemble a Hutu uprising. This excessive use of force has arguably made it difficult to maintain the idea that ethnicity does not matter in Burundi. A growing Hutu awareness emerged, in particular in the refugee camps in Tanzania and Rwanda in the 1970s and 1980s. They saw that they were oppressed and persecuted due to their ethnic origins and articulated an oppositional discourse – a new way of imagining Burundi – based on the idea of ethnic difference. The discourse of Hutu opposition – as exemplified in the writing of Rémy Gahutu and the *mythico-histories* in Mishamo – ironically

drew on the Hamitic thesis. But rather than legitimise Tutsi rule due to their alleged racial superiority, as the Hamitic thesis originally did when introduced by colonialists, it was now used to legitimise the Hutu's right to Burundian soil, portraying the Tutsi as invaders. Almost a century after the Hamitic thesis was thought up, it was not possible to claim any rights or recognition on the basis of racial superiority, whereas one could claim the right to the national territory and to self-determination. By portraying the Tutsi as invaders, Palipehutu's struggle was portrayed as, essentially, a liberation struggle.

Finally, I have shown that the political field in Burundi moved once more in the early 1990s, in part due to the 'success' of Palipehutu, forcing the government to relate to ethnicity and to share power with the Hutu. Again history took an ironic twist as the success of Palipehutu also became its downfall. With the democratic reforms, the ethno-nationalist discourse of Palipehutu lost terrain to the more moderate FRODEBU that envisaged a democratic, pluralistic (non-ethnic) Burundi.

This repertoire of imaginations of Burundi is what the refugees in Lukole can draw on. The various stories can be appropriated, dismantled and reassembled in new ways. But they relate to the political field in Burundi (and the region), and hence cannot be used in any manner without consequences in Burundi. As we shall see in the following chapters, they slip back and forth between the political field in Burundi and the region on the one hand, and local politics in the camp on the other.

Chapter Seven – rumours, violence and politics in Lukole

In this chapter we will explore how political rivalry, violence and rumours interact in the camp. In this way, the camp is differentiated and ordered into hot spots and cool places, into spaces of action and mobility and spaces of waiting and docility. And the people in Lukole are ordered into us and them, the educated and the peasants, the moderates and the extremists, the honest and hardworking and the lazy parasites, the criminals and the law abiding, the modern and the retrograde. Of course these dichotomies themselves are contested, so the struggle is not merely to dominate the field but equally to define it.

Vital in this process is the role of the rival political parties in the camp, which link up with a number of other networks in their attempts to dominate and define the camp. Beginning with some concrete cases, I will illustrate how politics, crime, access to NGO resources and power and private feuds all are intermeshed in the conflicts in the camp.

It is not enough, however, to state that it is all about money or power. In the struggle to denounce their opponent, rumours and defamation of character are used to prove that the opponent is merely a criminal, a selfish populist. On the other hand 'we' are shown to be idealists, legitimised by our popular support, our serious (responsible as opposed to extremist) devotion to 'the cause' and our scientific adherence to rationality.

What comes out of the above are various ideological fragments that help fulfil local purposes such as positioning actors and ordering the camp. This in turn helps to combat the sense of being homogenised by the governing techniques of UNHCR. However, these ideological fragments draw on political imaginations that were created in Burundi, converting local power struggles into national political issues and vice versa.

In order to grasp the issues of concern, some theoretical discussion will be taken in the course of the chapter. Firstly, after a short case story that illustrates the nature of political rivalry in the camp, I will briefly introduce Bourdieu's concept of the political field. Then, after a short analysis of the political elite in the camp, I will attempt to conceptualise rumour mongering not only as a tool in political competition but also in broader terms, since rumours turn out to be important means of making sense in the camp. The remainder of the chapter will be empirical, exploring the significance of rumour as a political weapon and the role of rumours in relation to violent events in the camp. I will argue that rumours of violence affect people's actions and have the effect of ordering the camp spatially, with the fear of violence forcing people belonging to one political faction to move to other parts of the camp.

Joseph's story

Joseph wanted to talk to me today, so we met at the usual bar. I guessed that he wanted something from me in terms of access to funds. I had met him once before, when he had introduced an organisation that he had created in the camp with the 'modest' aim of promoting peace and reconciliation in the Great Lakes region. At a more practical level, it aimed at running first aid courses in the camp. I had given him the address of an organisation in Denmark that might want to help.

Today, however, he is not intent on talking about his organisation. Instead he complains about CNDD hijacking the NGOs. He complains that virtually all the NGO staff are members of CNDD and that they make sure that nobody else gets a job. They tell lies to the Tanzanian staff about Palipehutu, so the Tanzanians believe that Palipehutistes are extremists and the ones causing the security problems in the camp. Because of this, Tanzanian staff is very reluctant to employ anyone who is not a CNDD sympathiser, he explains. It is very difficult to be apolitical when the NGOs are so biased and politicised. Joseph claims to be apolitical and only interested in the welfare of refugees,

although it becomes apparent during our discussions that he expresses Palipehutu views and sympathies.¹⁹¹

He complains that the medical assistants at the clinic openly wear Ndadaye badges. These badges with a picture of the assassinated president, although strictly speaking not connected to a political party and hence difficult for authorities to clamp down on, are political statements that signify CNDD support. Caps in CNDD colours, white, red and green,¹⁹² also express political loyalties in the camp. Joseph complains that if the Burundian hospital staff recognise a patient as CNDD, they give them good treatment. If they think that you are Palipehutu, they just tell you to leave. '*Go and get treatment from Kosani*¹⁹³' they would say.¹⁹⁴

Whereas Palipehutu receives press releases from the internet, downloaded in Nairobi and sent to the camp, CNDD members fabricate them on AEF typewriters in Lukole and claim that they are sent from headquarters in Brussels, according to Joseph. Furthermore, the CNDD members working as pharmacists steal drugs from the hospital and send them to their soldiers in Burundi or, even worse, sell them at the market in Lukole. Joseph asks me if I have seen these medicines for sale, and I must confess that I have, although I have also heard other rumours as to how they got there.

When asked about the security guards, he says that they have become more balanced politically since the reshuffle in 1997. However, this does not mean that they are apolitical. He knows exactly which party the security guards in charge of various zones belong to. The chiefs of Zone A and B in Lukole A are CNDD, he explains, matter-of-factly, while Zone C and the whole of Lukole B

¹⁹¹ This was a general problem with researching clandestine politics. Most refugees would deny knowing anything about politics. However, political views and views on 'politics' as such could be expressed in rumour. In this way someone like Joseph – a great rumour monger – would express his dislike for politics in general when asked directly while expressing a dislike for certain kinds of politics – namely CNDD's – through rumour.

¹⁹² Allegedly, the 'politicians' would wear white at the front, while 'soldiers' would wear red at the front, symbolising blood.

¹⁹³ Kosani is the military leader of Palipehutu's armed wing, FNL. In the camp he is perceived to be the *de facto* leader of Palipehutu since he broke with Etienne Karatase, who is based in Denmark.

¹⁹⁴ UNHCR staff told me that Palipehutu supporters were boycotting the schools and clinics because they believed them to be CNDD strongholds (Field Officer A, 11.06.97).

are Palipehutu. Steven, the chief security guard for Lukole A, is a known CNDD soldier, says Joseph, while the rank and file guards are mixed.

Joseph is very upset with the refugees employed in community service. They are all political leaders and thieves, he says. At the moment, CNDD members are busy forging certificates that claim that the holder used to work for NPA (Norwegian People's Aid) in Kitali, and selling them for 5000 shillings each. At the time of this conversation, community service and a number of other functions (health and education) are in the process of going from one NGO (AEF) to another (NPA). Therefore, there is a lot of manoeuvring going on in order to secure a new job with the new NGO. This is probably also why Joseph approaches me at this point in time.

It is not the refugee staff alone that is corrupt, he claims. The Tanzanian youth coordinator and a central figure in community services, is running his own show in the camp, selling blankets, jobs, etc. in co-operation with the CNDD leadership (Field notes 04.05.98).¹⁹⁵

Joseph's account gives the impression that there is another elite than the official street/village leaders and that it is running the camp. It is the elite that works for NGOs in the camp. But not only do they work for NGOs and therefore receive a salary, they misuse their position for political and criminal purposes. By indoctrinating the Tanzanian staff, they manage to keep political rivals away. Meanwhile, Joseph manages to reject the idea that their politics might be truly political or idealistic, by claiming that they are actually using the political party as a cover for self-enrichment. That is why they make up the press releases -- to make it look as if CNDD is active. He later explains that they dress up in full combat gear and go and take pictures of themselves in the neighbouring bush. Then they claim that these are pictures of CNDD on

¹⁹⁵ Although I treat this as a rumour and a conspiracy theory, I am not dismissing the fact that it might be true. Two Tanzanian AEF staff had been sacked a few months earlier for selling blankets that were meant for distribution to the elderly.

the way to attack Bujumbura airport. It was, of course, Palipehutu that attacked the airport on New Year's Day in 1998, according to Joseph.¹⁹⁶

Joseph's story is a prime example of the kind of rumour mongering and defamation of character of political rivals that was so common in Lukole. He later went on to explain that CNDD was actually an invention and an instrument of Buyoya. Buyoya sent CNDD accomplices into the camp to create trouble in order, firstly, to weaken Palipehutu and split the Hutu opposition and, secondly, to have the refugees sent back by the Tanzanian authorities for making trouble.¹⁹⁷ Joseph's story illustrates that political rivalry and rumours about political opponents are important structuring principles in the camp. Before I examine these issues more closely, I will briefly outline some conceptual thoughts on the political field.

Political representation – some theoretical considerations

In 'Political Representation – Elements for a Theory of the Political Field' (Bourdieu and Thompson 1991) Bourdieu examines the way political representatives act in the political field, how political products are made and how they relate to the represented. The political field is like a game, he argues, where politicians gain a 'practical sense' of the game and learn how to comply with the unwritten rules of the political field. By becoming competent players of the game, they also reproduce it.

The positions that political representatives take are less determined by the interests that they claim to be promoting and more by the structure of the field, where they must position themselves *vis-à-vis* other players in a field that is constructed around polarities (Bourdieu and Thompson 1991: 185). Bourdieu adds that the political field actually defines what is politically thinkable. He argues that the representatives in the political field offer a number of political products and that these products become instruments for perceiving and expressing the social world. In this way, political products

¹⁹⁶ This attack was one of the strongly contested events around which much rumour mongering occurred. The secrecy of the Burundi government no doubt helped foment these rumours.

¹⁹⁷ These rumours use certain events as 'evidence'. Tanzania had forced the Rwandans home in late 1996. This caused a constant uncertainty and fear - and a lot of rumours - that it could happen to the Burundians as well.

help shape people's understanding of their surroundings. If the political field sets the boundaries of the politically thinkable, it therefore makes little sense to talk of political interests outside the political field.

This means that the political field in fact produces an effect of censorship by limiting the universe of political discourse, and thereby the universe of what is politically thinkable, to the finite space of discourse capable of being produced and reproduced within the limits of the political *problematic*, understood as a space of stances within the field – i.e. stances that are socio-logically possible given the laws that determine entry into the field. (Bourdieu and Thompson 1991: 172)

In broad terms, Bourdieu's approach fits with the general theoretical stance of this study, namely that there is no subject prior to discourse. Bourdieu adds something to our general theory by sociologically examining how ideologies are produced in the game called politics. In this way, he adds a dimension of power relations and shows how political discourse is not merely free-floating but is bound up in a relational field.

[I]n order to understand a political stance, programme, intervention, electioneering speech etc., it is at least as important to know the universe of stances currently offered by the field as it is to know the demands made by non-professionals of whom the leaders, in adopting these stances, are the declared representatives (the 'base'): adopting a stance, a *prise de position*, is, as the phrase clearly suggests, an act which has meaning only relationally, in and through difference, the *distinctive deviation*. (Bourdieu and Thompson 1991: 177)

A good politician knows how to master the practical skill of positioning himself in this field. It is this positioning that we must explore when trying to understand the dynamics of politics in Lukole. Interestingly, for the political field to function, the representatives must conceal the above-mentioned fact that they are playing this game of *prise de position*, and instead express devotion to the masses. Bourdieu reformulates Weber's distinction between those who live 'for' politics and those who live 'off' politics to state that '*one can live 'off' politics only by living for politics*' (Bourdieu and Thompson 1991: 183). In other words, it is important to show one's devotion to the cause and to the group that one is supposedly representing. And, as we shall see in the case of the camp, it becomes equally important to dismiss an opponent as a mere speculative manipulator who only lives off politics and not for it. What they are competing for is basically the right to represent 'the people'.

The political field is thus the site of a competition for power which is carried out by means of a competition for control of non-professionals or, more precisely, for the monopoly of the right to speak and act in the name of some or all of the non-professionals. (Bourdieu and Thompson 1991: 190)

This creates a tautological double movement by which the group is firstly constructed through a political programme. Secondly, the power of this group is evoked to legitimise the political programme.

Bourdieu argues that it is essential that a representative appears credible in order that a group should invest their belief in him and confer upon him the power to represent them. If they are to have belief in him, they must also believe him; i.e. he must show sincerity and disinterestedness to convey an image of credibility. And in this precarious situation, where belief plays a central role, the politician is vulnerable to rumour mongering and defamation of character by opponents in the political field who are trying to undermine his credibility and hence his right to represent the group (Bourdieu and Thompson 1991: 192-193). In the following analysis we will see how important these means of delegitimising opponents are in the camp.

The political entrepreneurs cannot, however, get away with anything, just as the political field is not hermetically closed. Protest movements in particular are dependent on a certain disgruntlement among the population. It is then the task of a virtuous politician to appeal to this disgruntlement while at the same time being able to insert himself in the political field and make his position understandable in this field.

Networking and brokering: The political elite in Lukole

It was generally held that CNDD was the most influential party in Lukole and had by far the biggest backing among the refugees. This was the message that I was given even before entering the camp by a UNHCR field officer (11.06.97) and an AEF co-ordinator (May 1997). It was obviously impossible for me at first to evaluate these statements, as no refugees would openly confide in me about the political situation in the camp. And when at last some of them did, they would usually exaggerate the importance of their own party

while belittling the opponent as we saw with Joseph's account. After a while, however, a picture began to take shape where it became apparent that Palipehutu was active in Lukole B and CNDD in Lukole A, and that CNDD was the dominant force in the camp. I cannot estimate the proportions, but as we will see in the next section, certain areas of the camp were declared either CNDD or Palipehutu, linking space with politics and framing the inhabitants of these spaces.

The image that I got of camp politics is rather impressionistic and has been assembled as a *bricolage* of fragmentary statements, rumours and observations. As was mentioned in Chapter Five, there appeared to be a group of young, semi-educated men that occupied a central position in the camp. They were centred around the market place, NGOs and UNHCR, and had privileged access to and control over flows of resources and information in and out of the camp. However, they were not bound together by their positions as NGO employees or as street leaders or businessmen. Networks of individuals appeared to transgress these categories and make up large networks of 'big men'.

Mousa is an example of one of these influential young men. He had worked for an NGO as a co-ordinator for community mobilisers but stopped that and did some business for a while until he took up another job with an NGO. Meanwhile, he has a plot of land that he employs another refugee to till for him. He is 30 years old and married, with two small children. His wife works as a schoolteacher. He has passed his *humanité* exams from secondary school and used to work as an accountant in Burundi. He was a member of FRODEBU in Burundi and was even *bourgmestre* for a short while from 1993, when the prior FRODEBU *bourgmestre* fled the country, to 1994 when he was compelled to flee himself. In spite of having no official position in the camp -- neither street nor block leader, security guard nor social worker -- it is to him that neighbours go if they have problems with a ration card. He will go with them to the UNHCR office and explain their problem (in English, French or Swahili) and make sure things are sorted out. He is also awakened at three in the morning to help sort out a robbery in his street, negotiating with the security guards and the Tanzanian police. He knows the right people in the

right places and can get special treatment at the hospital. With the right handshakes and smiles, he can wander into any NGO office and borrow a typewriter or just have a chat. What ties Mousa and the other influential men he knows together is their involvement in politics.

There is a logic that 'if you are not on our side, you are probably on the other side' thus making it difficult to remain non-partisan, especially among the young, male elite. Although this was usually a slander rumour about political opponents ('They' intimidate innocent people to be members and harass those who want to remain neutral, while 'we' let people join of their own free will) it had the effect in practice of forcing any male inhabitant in Lukole to make a choice - if he wanted to avoid trouble. The mere rumour that he would be in trouble otherwise, was enough to persuade him. Thus, I met a number of young men who were working for NGOs in Lukole B, but who had been forced to move to Lukole A. I cannot judge whether or not they were already politically active, but due to the fact that so many of their colleagues were associated with CNDD, Palipehutu supporters in Lukole B assumed that they also were CNDD supporters, and moving to Lukole A confirmed this for them. Salvador, a young man working at the hospital, told me how difficult it was to be neutral. CNDD members would not believe his declared neutrality and accused him of supporting Palipehutu and *vice versa* (Salvador, 22-09-97). Likewise, it was said that every street leader candidate had to take sides, and that this was known to the electorate.

There is no doubt that these young men are 'in it for the money'. The windfalls of being part of the 'in crowd' are, as Joseph shows, not negligible. In this way claiming allegiance to a party is about establishing alliances, finding protection and establishing patron-client relations. In Lukole A it made sense to ally oneself with a 'big man' from CNDD, in Lukole B with a 'big man' from Palipehutu. In this sense, it appears at first sight that the ideological content of the parties plays a minor role. However, being active in politics - at least to the extent that one is active rather than just placing one's bets with the strongest candidate - is about more than material gains.

As with the educated elite as such, the politicians are attempting to combat the sense of loss of social stability that they experience in the camp. They claim that they are fighting for the future of the nation and for the common future of the Hutu people rather than just sitting around doing nothing or merely thinking of themselves, as the businessmen allegedly do. In this manner, they achieve a sense of purpose and direction in a crumbling social and moral space. Although they defy the rules of UNHCR and the MHA by organising clandestinely, they obey far more powerful laws; the rightful struggle of the Hutu people.

In a sense, these young, male politicians are living out their assigned position as troublemakers, epitomising the stereotypes ascribed by the relief agencies. This gives them the respect that they fear losing in the liminal space of the camp. Ironically, however, they also use the humanitarian agencies as an avenue for achieving this position of respect in the camp, many of them being NGO employees, security guards or street leaders. National and international relief staff appeared to have ambiguous relations to these people. While in principle being against politics as such, they might sympathise in private with refugees wanting to engage in politics, given the experiences that they have been through in Burundi. Similarly, the only refugees that Tanzanian and international staff had daily contact with were these young men. Joseph claims that the CNDD elite manages to convince the NGOs of their political position due to their near-monopoly on jobs within these organisations. To some degree, Joseph is right when he claims that they were pro-CNDD for while they dismissed both parties, they usually claimed that Palipehutu was the most extremist and started the problems (cf. Field officer A 11.06.97). A few relief workers claimed, however, that the original Lukole caseload – known to be pro-CNDD – were always troublesome, even before the refugees from Kitali arrived (Cf. Field officer D 30.04.97).

The camp commandant was apparently aware of this informal elite. When he called a meeting in June 1997 with the chief of police to discuss the deteriorating 'security situation', he did not just invite the official leaders. He invited those whom he perceived to be the *de facto* leaders, the 'big men' or

the trouble makers, irrespective of their *de jure* position. Mousa was among them.

What we have then is a number of young men who use their positions in the camp to create extensive networks that are about gaining power and privilege but also about regaining a sense of dignity and purpose in life. They are concerned with the future of the Burundi nation in general and the Hutu refugees in particular. In this way they inhabit the position of troublemakers in the camp but in a fashion that is *de facto* accepted by relief agencies.

It would be beside the point to attempt to estimate to what degree these political networks are about personal gains or about 'true political ideologies' since the two are inseparable, as Bourdieu argues. Politics is a mixture of both, with the political field in any given situation defining the positions that the parties may occupy. In Lukole, political rivalry – leading to people being killed or forced back to Burundi – was the irritation of relief agencies, Tanzanian authorities and refugees alike. Especially the latter would have preferred a unified front against the common enemy rather than this internal strife among Hutu, and numerous rumours circulated about the Burundi government purposefully splitting the refugees. There were also rumours that the Tanzanian authorities had started the trouble in the camp so as to have an excuse to send the refugees back to Burundi. However, this political rivalry or competition is an important element of defining the political field and hence of defining the political parties. Through this competition and mutual positioning they manage to present themselves as the true political idealists and representatives of the people's interests as opposed to their opponents who are mere selfish troublemakers – not dissimilar to the troublemakers in UNHCR's perceptions. Rumours about rivals are about finding a position in the political field and about defining the field itself – defining the limits between 'good' and 'bad' politics - in the fragmented reality of the camp.

Conceptualising rumours and conspiracy theories

Rumours about political opponents were contested and (self-) contradictory but they functioned as important tools in the political field in Lukole. Rumours also served broader purposes in the camp. At first, I saw the

astonishing amount of rumours that circulated in the camp as confusing and annoying, distorting reality, and only later did I realise that they provide unique access to processes of making sense of and in the camp. Rumour mongering was a way by which people in Lukole could relate to events that disturbed 'taken for granted' order and attempt to re-establish this order.

Allport and Postman¹⁹⁸ define rumours as follows: '*A rumor, as we shall use the term, is a specific (or topical) proposition for belief, passed along from person to person, usually by word of mouth, without secure standards of evidence being presented.*' (Allport and Postman 1965/47: ix). As this definition shows, there is a tendency in their work to emphasise 'secure standards of evidence' and the fact that rumour distorts objective, factual knowledge. This distinction between 'information' and rumour is usually made in our common-sense understanding of the concept, and it was certainly the attitude of UNHCR. The 'cure' against rumour mongering, according to UNHCR, was to provide more reliable information to the refugees.

If, on the other hand, we do not dismiss rumours as lies and manipulation, and instead see them as a kind of discourse, a way of constructing meaning, we get a richer and more productive understanding of them. In spite of their original emphasis on evidence, Allport and Postman do show how these distortions (through levelling, sharpening and assimilation) fit into preconceived ideas and '*confirm existing attitudes rather than create new ones*' (Allport and Postman 1965/47: 181-182). Rumours do not occur as mere misunderstandings of facts. They depend on the needs and anxieties of those who circulate them. '*Levelling and sharpening, of course, do not occur haphazardly but take place in essential conformity with the past experience and present attitudes of the rumour spreaders.*' (Allport and Postman 1965/47: 136).

According to Allport and Postman, rumours serve intellectual and emotional ends for the teller and receiver as they '*alleviate their intellectual uncertainty and personal anxiety*' (Allport and Postman 1965/47: viii). People start rumour

¹⁹⁸ They broke the ground with their 'The Psychology of Rumour' in 1947, inspired by, amongst other things, the rumour clinics during WW II. Otherwise rumour and urban legend appear to be the domain of folklorists. See, for example, (Brunvand 1981) (Fine 1986; Fine 1992; Rosnow and Fine 1976; Turner 1993).

mongering when something strange occurs outside the normal and people 'search after meaning' in pursuit of a 'good closure'. Allport and Postman state that rumour flourishes in times of war and other crisis situations when reliable information is scarce. On the whole, I would agree that violence and natural disasters such as earthquakes provoke more rumours than normal. But rather than perceiving it as merely a question of lack of reliable information, I propose that we should perceive violence and similar crises as destabilising the 'natural order of things', and rumours as ways in which the people subjected to these shocks, try to cover up the cracks in the symbolic order. Rumours can be conceived as fantasies that try to re-establish the taken-for-granted order of things as they used to be.

In order to elaborate on this in theoretical terms I take my cues from Allen Feldman's illuminating reflections on violence and rumour (Feldman 1995; Feldman 2000). In Lukole, rumours were not always related to violent events, as even seemingly harmless events could be interpreted in rumours about larger issues. An example of this was the rumours that appeared concerning some seedlings that CARE had planted in the camp. Their unexpected appearance in the camp caused rumours that they had been planted because CARE was planning to turn the camp into forest again, once the camp had been emptied of refugees. 'It's because 'they' will soon move us to somewhere else. Perhaps we will be repatriated' they told me, when I inquired about the seedlings. However, it is not only the seedlings that disturb their symbolic order, although their unexpected appearance needed explaining. Violence, flight and exile have jolted the taken-for-granted life world of these people, and rumours flourish in this as yet unstable environment. The rumours themselves may be about banal everyday events but often they relate to larger issues, expressing the narrators' desires and anxieties. The camp is the product of people being forced to leave their homes due to massive violence in Burundi. In the camp anything can happen. Now that all that was known and solid has dissolved into the air, now that the known rules of the game hardly count any longer, and after what happened in Burundi, people are ready to believe anything. Therefore we must see how rumour is related to instability arising from violence.

Since the 1980s it has become common knowledge among social scientists that violence is part of the social and that it should not be treated as something apart from society – a temporary breakdown of social relations or a result (symptom) of something else. Violence, like all social action, is imbued with meaning¹⁹⁹. However, I would contend that violence is qualitatively different to other forms of social discourse and practice, inasmuch as we always react to violence as if it were outside the social. We try to avoid violence, to contain it and control it. In this sense violence appears to us as something outside the symbolic order of society.

Etienne Balibar explains this aspect of violence by the fact that violence always ‘overflows’ its own symbolisation (Balibar 1998). With violence there is always an element of (what he terms) *cruelty*. The economy of violence which is linked to power and counter-power, accounts for the kind of violence that we can accept and that does not jolt our taken-for-granted world. This is the institutional violence of the family, the school, the police, and the economy.

However, Balibar argues, violence and counter-violence always produce a remainder. This excess, this third level after the power-violence nexus, he chooses to call cruelty.

[T]he phenomenology of power includes a dialectics of power and counter-power, [...] yet it also includes, not beyond or apart from this dialectics, but permanently intertwined with it a manifestation of cruelty, a glimpse of another world, another reality. (Balibar 1998: 12)

There is a remainder in every process of symbolising the material forces of history, and in the case of violence the remainder returns in the shape of cruelty and stains the dialectics of violence and counter-violence. This is why violence is always ‘too much’. This is not to say that the Real – cruelty – is a given universal entity that inevitably returns. Rather, new acts of symbolisation attempt retrospectively to delimit the borders of cruelty in relation to legitimate, understandable violence. Rumours are important tools

¹⁹⁹ For some of the contributions to this debate see (Appadurai 1999; Das 1990; Feldman 1991; Fuglerud 2000; Malkki 1995b; Nordstrom and Robben 1995; Taylor 1999).

in this attempt to re-establish order and exorcise the confrontation with the Real by domesticating cruelty and making it comprehensible and bearable.

Feldman argues along much the same lines that violence always contains an excess, and that it effaces social memory and questions taken-for-granted meaning.

I suggest that it is only in anticipation of violence, or during and after violence and terror, that a sensibility of concerted and at-risk social reproduction comes to haunt everyday life, which is precisely the moment when replication, getting-on-with-it, becomes impossible. In turn, a public culture of rumours reveals the extent to which the sense of control over reality is finite, and the extent to which control has to be reasserted through exaggeration and imaginative supplementation. (Feldman 1995: 231)

In the aftermath of violence, rumours try to (re-)establish order. Rumour is a kind of 'wide-awake dreaming' that intermingles fact and fiction and not only tries to make sense of the past but also tries to be prognostic about possible outcomes in the future. Neither do rumours necessarily attack what was once taken for granted. Rather, by its nature of 'wide-awake dreaming', rumour tries to prop up the social-symbolic order while simultaneously revealing the constructedness of this order.

In emphasizing the constructed, assembled nature of social narrative, rumor draws attention to the fabricated character of all other social narratives whose seams and welding once did not show so clearly. (Feldman 1995: 11)

It reveals that the narratives upon which the symbolic order rested prior to violence are just that - mere narratives. In other words, rumours are openly constructed as opposed to other narratives that try to conceal their own constructedness. And although a rumour may be trying to prop up the social order as it used to be, it does so in an openly constructed manner, revealing the constructedness of social order. Furthermore, Feldman argues, rumour has a tendency to impute too much meaning into events, in the sense that causes are found (created) even in situations where there is no cause or meaning to be found, as is the case with violent events.

Another aspect that distinguishes rumour from other discourse, is an element of being (half) aware that it is merely a rumour. Here, Žižek's thoughts on the

concept of cynicism (Zizek 1994) may help us understand the fact that people *know* that a certain rumour is only a rumour but still act as *if* it were true. Zizek argues that the illusion of ideology is elsewhere than where we first assume; namely in doing rather than knowing. In order to believe, Zizek argues, following Kierkegaard, there must be an element of submission to ideological command (Zizek 1994: 319). That is to say that there is always something beyond reason when the subject is interpellated. There is always a senseless irrationality – a residue – that we just have to ‘swallow’.²⁰⁰ So however much we know that ideology – or in this case a rumour – is distorting the truth, we act as if it were true. And because we act as if it were true, our acts make it become true, like a self-fulfilling prophecy.

In Lukole, rumours that the refugees would be repatriated circulated regularly, and although people by now knew that they were only rumours, they still had to act as if it were true. Thus, several young men did not want to get married, in case they were repatriated and they had to take care of a family. They never knew for sure whether perhaps this time the rumour was true. Furthermore, this rumour made sense to them. It fitted in with their picture of an omnipotent UNHCR that had hidden agendas for the refugees. In this way the illusion lies in the doing and not in the knowing. One might know a rumour is wrong but still believe it in one’s actions. Hence knowing the objective truth about CNDD or UNHCR’s plans for repatriation is not sufficient to dispel an ideological construction or a rumour about their ‘true character’.

This does not imply that proof, evidence and reason are completely irrelevant in rumour mongering. People will not believe anything they hear in Lukole. In fact, a great deal of attention was paid to ‘proving’ a rumour, either through its narrative consistency, its cohesion with other rumours (thus rumours can reinforce one another) or a concrete event in the camp. Thus, for instance, the fact that Tanzanian staff members were taking French courses, was taken as ‘proof’ of a rumour that the refugees would be repatriated and

²⁰⁰ Zizek is clearly inspired by Althusser’s thoughts on the materiality and practical rituals of ideology, for instance both refer to Pascal’s ‘Kneel down, move your lips in prayer, and you will believe.’ (Althusser 1994 (1984): 127)

the Tanzanian staff would go to Burundi in search of employment. Other proof could be the seedlings that CARE had planted as proof of plans to move the refugees. The French courses and the seedlings, innocent events that have no 'causal power' in themselves, are given a lot of symbolic importance in relation to other powers. But instead of rumours merely being discursive formations that give explanations based on so-called evidence in the camp, there is a certain sense of 'wanting to believe' or 'acting as if one believes' a rumour.

Rumours act as a commentary on official discourse – a kind of subtext. This commentary is neither more true than other discourse nor is it necessarily subversive – at least not in the sense of being emancipatory²⁰¹. A concrete example of a rumour as subtext could be the way Tutsi are portrayed in the camp. Whenever I asked directly how to tell the difference between a Hutu and a Tutsi, the answer would be that there were no differences. Hutu and Tutsi look alike. However, through rumours refugees would express other, more essentialist attitudes about the Tutsi as cunning and evil. In this way, it was possible for refugees to express fantasies about the Tutsi through rumour. This leads to the final point that I want to make about rumours, the fact that they are often about powerful others.

Feldman (Feldman 2000) argues that people in the omnipresence surveillance systems in Belfast cannot bear the thought that there is no author behind the cameras, and rumours emerge, giving the state surveillance systems an authorial position.

Such rumors, true or false, are a necessary complement to the secret knowledge systems that accompany the counterinsurgency campaign; they ascribe to the half-hidden state apparatus an authorial center, a visible place from which its aggressive activity emanates. As such this ascription is a reaction to the actual, diffuse, capillary threading of state surveillance and power through the warp of everyday life (Feldman 2000: 48).

In line with Dolar's point on the panopticon, we may claim that although there is no centre of power, refugees construct the big Other. Although they

²⁰¹ Rumour can be subversive in the sense of revealing the constructedness of official discourse.

are subjected to a number of contingent micro-politics, they see the camp as part of a large scheme, where UNHCR, the United Nations or even the United States are pulling the strings and planning everything to the last detail. More than being rumours, the narratives that appear in this relation take the shape of conspiracy theories about a handful of powerful actors masterminding grand plans. Gary Fine (Fine 1986) and Patricia Turner (Turner 1993) show how rumours and urban legend flourish about big corporations masterminding secret plans against ordinary people. Conspiracies are by default surrounded by secrecy. So obviously, when refugees feel that they have very little control over their lives and they experience being up against strong and incomprehensible powers, they assume that there must be an authorial position making conspiracies against them. Conspiracy theories are therefore typically about the powerful and emerge among the underdogs. When people are in a situation where taken-for-granted knowledge and the known symbolic order have broken down, they look for answers and explanations, not in everyday practices but in big conspiracies among powerful others. They try to find order. And while these conspiracy theories may not alleviate the suffering of the refugees, they at least give people some certainty in their misery by pinpointing a cause and an authorial position. As Patricia Turner points out, the vague feeling of uncertainty (in her case the diffuse sense of being underprivileged due to race) is replaced by a concrete fear of a certain definable and omnipotent power.

So rumours respond on the one hand to disorder and disintegration but produce on the other hand, an order that is 'over-structured'. There is a tendency to want to find causal links and ulterior motives in every event in the camp. The imaginary capacities of rumours as 'wide-awake dreaming', the fact that they have not yet been reined in by official discourse (as this is no longer hegemonic in the camp), lets them 'run wild'. They manage to express the anxieties and hopes and ideological fantasies of the people in Lukole.

I tried to record rumours whenever I came across them. Normally, this was merely a question of being aware of them in daily conversations about anything from CARE's reforestation programme to Bill Clinton's affair with

Monica Lewinsky.²⁰² However, I also attempted to be particularly aware of rumours around particular ‘events’ that I assumed would provoke rumour mongering, such as CARE’s seedling programme, a robbery, food shortage, news on the radio, etc. Concretely, this meant that I would enquire about these events shortly after they had happened.

Sometimes a number of rumours occurred after such an event, sometimes not. Sometimes it took a while for the rumours to ‘ripen’. When, for instance, I interviewed people in Lukole B who had been forced by the Tanzanian army to leave the Tanzanian villages – where they had lived and worked for years and perhaps bought land and married a Tanzanian -- they had no explanations. They were merely very confused and kept repeating that they had had no problems with their Tanzanian neighbours prior to the eviction. When I returned to the same people some weeks later they had constructed a narrative about the ulterior motives behind the Tanzanians’ actions. They claimed that the Tanzanians had been hospitable to them and let them settle because the Burundians are better agriculturalists, and the Tanzanian farmers wanted to learn the secrets of successful farming from them. Once they had learned the art of cultivating and they no longer needed the Burundians, they had them rounded up and sent to the camps. In other words, it appears that the initial shock of the military operation – breaking down all taken-for-granted knowledge about the world and about their relations to Tanzanians – left the evicted Burundians paralysed. Only after a while did they attempt to recreate some sense of order through rumours.

In the following analysis I will represent rumours in a cumulative sense, as this was the effect they had in the camp. Rumours are without specific authors and always fluctuating and adjusting details of context around a kernel (what Fine, drawing on Von Sydow, terms the ecotypification of rumour (Fine 1992)). They are characterised by being unfixed and, as opposed to myths and legends, they have a ‘sell by’ date. Therefore, I find it appropriate to represent them in the same spirit. However, in the cases where

²⁰² This conversation led to rumours about the Burundi embassy in Washington sending beautiful Tutsi women to seduce the American president so that he would believe the Tutsi lies.

I have recorded a very clear narrative, I will quote this rumour directly as it was told. This has the advantage of emphasising another aspect of rumour mongering; namely the fact that rumours are meant to entertain their listeners and lend prestige to the narrator for being 'in the know' (Rosnow and Fine 1976). They are built around narrative effects such as suspense and surprise.

Rumour as political weapon

One of the most common ways to delegitimise a political opponent in the camp was through spreading rumours about the rival party. Often CNDD supporters would explain that Palipehutu did not actually exist at all any more and was certainly not fighting inside Burundi. The latter had allegedly been attested by CNDD leaders from Burundi who had secretly visited the camp. Those who claimed to be Palipehutu politicians in the camp – especially in Lukole B – were actually just criminals, according to this rumour. And the taxes that they collected from the refugees, supposedly for the rebels, were actually just for their own greedy consumption. Palipehutu supporters, on the other hand, would contend that CNDD was actually created by (or at least supported financially by) the Burundi government in order to divide and rule the Hutu people. CNDD leaders had been corrupted – financially and morally – by Tutsi money and Tutsi women and were thus not the true representatives of the suffering Hutu masses.

These accusations and rumours went both ways with both political parties claiming that the other party had lied to the Tanzanian authorities, UNHCR or NGOs about their opponent. Thus, a rumour had it that CNDD had bribed the Tanzanian police to put a woman in prison. She had come from Burundi to tell the refugees about Palipehutu's attack on the airport in Bujumbura. However, according to the rumour, recounted by a Palipehutu supporter, CNDD in the camp had spread the rumour that it was CNDD that had attacked the airport²⁰³. When their attempts to bribe her to keep quiet failed, they convinced the police to jail her (Palipehutu supporter, 17.04.98).

²⁰³ Here we see an example of a rumour about rumours. It attests to the fact that people are aware that the truth is fragile and fluctuating in the camp. Simons (Simons 1995) and Feldman (Feldman 1995) refer to this fact in relation to violence. When the taken-for-granted order breaks down, people become aware that truths are constructed and used. There were also rumours in the camp that the government was spreading rumours about repatriation in

Similarly, when there was trouble between the chief security guard (Palipehutu) and the camp chairman (CNDD) in 1997, rumour had it that the chief security guard told the authorities that the chairman was politically active, resulting in him being sent to prison for ten days (CNDD supporter, 24.02.98). These rumours reveal an attempt to prove that the opponent is using dirty tricks to gain power and position in the camp. In an internal note, UNHCR claims to have received a petition submitted by refugee leaders, proposing the removal of the chief security guard for alleged misuse of authority (UNHCR, May 1997). Evidently, it is not only the chief security guard that has been reporting his opponent to the authorities.

A large number of rumours were about the other party being corrupted by outsiders or corrupting outsiders itself in order to further own interests. In this way one's own – the party of the rumourmonger – shows up as representing an idealist, unselfish position, serving the interests of the people.

In the following, I will outline some of the rumours on politics that circulated in Lukole during my stay there. The most common accusation against Palipehutu was that they were merely criminals, collecting taxes from poor refugees for their own consumption rather than the struggle, or that they were simply robbing people.²⁰⁴ A more nuanced version of this rumour goes that Palipehutu used to be better when Remy Gahutu, founding father of the party, was alive. He also allowed Tutsi membership, and the party enjoyed considerable support in the camps in Tanzania (Steven and Jean, 20.05.98). Refugees used to gladly pay taxes to Palipehutu. However, after Gahutu died – rumour has it that he was poisoned by Tutsi while in prison in Tanzania²⁰⁵ – the party lost its popularity. Several reasons are given in the various rumours as to why this stopped. One goes that the Hutu began supporting FRODEBU and later CNDD. Some say it was because Palipehutu became increasingly

order stop people from engaging in farming and business and thus give them an even harder life in the camps (Village F2, 17.02.98). There is a sense that one had better play along with the game and manipulate the truth as much as possible.

²⁰⁴ E.g. Diary, 20.06.97, 23.06.97, 25.06.97, 20.08.97, 05.05.98.

²⁰⁵ See also (Malkki 1995a: 272-274) for the circumstances and the rumours around his death.

'extremist'.²⁰⁶ Another had it that the refugees began to realise that the party leadership was misappropriating funds for themselves, and that the 'taxes' were not going to the cause but into the pockets of the leadership in the camp (SDA pastor, 20.08.97).

The boundary between local theories or analyses on the one hand and rumour on the other, is fine here. However, many of these theories came to me in the shape of rumours about specific events or persons rather than full-blown theories or explanations. For instance, Jean-Claude may ask rhetorically how 'certain Palipehutu leaders' can afford a car, several wives and cattle when they have no job and no shop (Jean-Claude 19.05.98). Obviously, he is referring to the camp chairman in Lukole B - a renowned Palipehutiste whom we had been talking about earlier in the interview. However, he has the prudence not to mention names. And although 'evidence' is important in giving credibility to a rumour, it is a standard narrative device to conceal the identity of the 'subject' of the rumour (in this case the camp chairman in Lukole B) and of one's sources. He goes on to explain that Palipehutu has found it increasingly difficult to levy taxes and has therefore gone into theft and robbery. In this way it is clear that Palipehutu politicians, in his opinion, are construed as not living *for* politics but merely living *off* politics. They cynically misuse the uneducated refugees' naivety to promote self-interests. Evidently, Jean-Claude is an important figure in CNDD.

The issue of Palipehutu members supposedly being uneducated was common knowledge in Lukole. Implied in this knowledge is the assumption that educated refugees would not let themselves be deceived into supporting the party. CNDD also enjoys strong support among the non-educated, the CNDD leadership would be eager to add. If not, its popular backing would, indeed, be meagre in a camp where only a fraction has attended secondary school. But whereas the uneducated masses are harassed into joining Palipehutu, they follow CNDD because of its ideology and its commitment to 'the cause'. With these rumours, CNDD manages to explain why so many refugees still

²⁰⁶ In Lukole the term vaguely implies that an extremist is excessive in his use of violence and is not willing to compromise. However, it also has a number of other negative connotations and has become an empty signifier that is used to delegitimise political opponents.

support Palipehutu and how Palipehutu dominates a part of the camp in spite of CNDD's political superiority. Palipehutu is dismissed as an unworthy political rival – as it consists of a bunch of criminals – and the 'small people' who support them are exonerated of any guilt or blame as they have merely been lured and coerced into supporting the wrong party. By claiming that things were different during the reign of Gahutu, CNDD supporters also manage to create a split in Palipehutu and explain why it was once so evidently popular.

Rumours the other way – about CNDD -- are of a slightly different character, presumably due to the fact that CNDD is actually dominant in Lukole. These rumours go more along the lines of CNDD being elitist without any connection to the masses. As we saw in Joseph's account, CNDD members are seen to promote their own interests through deceiving the outside world. This underdog ideology of Palipehutu tries to explain away the success of CNDD through a number of conspiracy theories. When Palipehutu members experience that CNDD is everywhere and expanding its power – as Joseph expresses – conspiracy theories emerge to give an explanation. One persistent conspiracy theory holds that CNDD was actually the brainchild of Buyoya, and was created in order to split the Hutu. As Etienne Karatase explains, Buyoya gave Nyangoma (leader of CNDD at the time) weapons and money. In this way, it was possible for Nyangoma to buy good officers from Palipehutu (Karatase, July 1997)²⁰⁷. So although Nyangoma may have a lot of firepower and soldiers, he has been corrupted by Tutsi money and has sold his soul to the Tutsi, according to this rumour. Palipehutu, on the other hand, may have fewer weapons and fewer soldiers but the soldiers that are left have resisted the temptations of money and have managed to remain morally 'clean'. 'Nyangoma has no ideology' says Karatase. Ironically, it was rumoured in the camp that Karatase had sided with Nyangoma. First, some CNDD supporters used this rumour as 'evidence' that Palipehutu no longer existed (18.06.97). Later a Palipehutu supporter used it to prove that Kosani was the true leader who knew the harsh realities on the ground and who had managed to remain 'clean' while Karatase had been bought by CNDD (03.04.98).

²⁰⁷ He even mentions Kosani as one of them.

This theme of CNDD being morally corrupted by Tutsi power exists in other rumours as well. While CNDD members would pride themselves on being tolerant by having Tutsi members (usually Ganwa), Palipehutu supporters saw this as a big mistake, as these Tutsi infiltrated the party and sabotaged it from within. The same goes for the Hutu in the CNDD leadership who marry Tutsi women. This rumour plays on the stereotypes of beautiful Tutsi women, using their beauty to seduce Hutu into bondage.²⁰⁸ Again Palipehutu remains ethnically pure. By remaining pure, they may not have so much power at the moment but what they have is genuine. We see here a certain repetition of the ethnic stereotypes mentioned in earlier chapters. Palipehutu is conceived as the honest, salt-of-the-earth, people's party – the true Hutu. They may be losing out because of their honesty and simple manners. But they retain their Hutu values and remain true to their Hutu identity – rendering them pure. CNDD members on the other hand are cunning and speculative – apart from being educated and wealthy. All these traits are associated with the Tutsi.

There is a sense in their rumours that CNDD is using its domination to inflate its own importance further. Hence the rumour about the woman not being allowed to tell the refugees who had really attacked the airport and the rumours that CNDD was lying to the NGOs. Interestingly, this kind of rumour is similar to the rumours about the Tutsi lying to the outside world, thus causing the 'big nations' to support the Tutsi regime.

Common to rumours about both parties is the idea that someone is pulling the strings and making the Hutu refugees fight among themselves instead uniting against the common enemy. In other words, there is a sense of a master plan, a conspiracy against the Hutu in general and the refugees in particular. This perception of an authorial position is a means of making sense out of a senseless situation. Being the pawns in a grand master plan is better than merely being left to oblivion in the Tanzanian bush. At a more concrete level, rumours about opponents are means of delegitimising the other and of

²⁰⁸ Images of Tutsi women seducing Belgian UNAMIR soldiers appeared in the Rwandan media propaganda leading up to the genocide in 1994 (See Chrétien, Reporters sans frontières (Association), and Unesco. 1995: 366). This is also in line with the rumour that the Tutsi sent beautiful women to seduce president Clinton in the White House.

manoeuvring in the political field, as both parties claim to represent the refugees. The effect of this manoeuvring was twofold: firstly it produced a political field, and secondly it helped to differentiate political space in the camp. This political space was closely interwoven with struggles about access to power and resources in the camp.

Rumours of violence and violent rumours

On March 26th I attended a meeting with street leaders, NGOs and HCR in Lukole A, in which the issue of security was being taken up by UNHCR's protection officer. He was telling them that important people; leaders; 'some of you sitting here' were hosting Burundians from Kigoma and from Burundi who were not officially registered in the camp. 'Please tell these people to go to Mbuba²⁰⁹ to be scanned and registered. Some of these people that you are hosting have been caught for making an illegal training facility, abduction and torture'. He was clearly hinting at political activities in the camp and at the rumour that camps in Tanzania were being used as bases for the rebels in Burundi. But he also linked it to a general deterioration of security in the camp. Crime levels during the past three weeks had been as high as they had in April the previous year.

The night between the 24th and the 25th a man was shot dead in his blindé and robbed of 375 000 shillings. The same night the wealthy refugee was killed, another shooting had taken place a few hours earlier in the same area of the camp. Burundians from the camp must have been involved, the protection officer said. They knew that this man had money (field notes 26.03.98).

The murder happened close to where my assistant lived, and he had been up half the night trying to help. We discussed what it was all about. The facts were that he was shot dead at two o'clock in the morning of the 25th of March. He was a farmer, not a businessman, and was known to be very wealthy. He left two widows. Apart from these basic facts, things got very blurred and it became very difficult to understand why he was actually killed. The event was frightening for neighbours and others in the camp. They asked themselves what it meant, whether it could happen to them next and how to

²⁰⁹ Registration site for new arrivals.

avoid it. In order to find some kind of certainty, in order to determine the risk of being the next target and apply strategies to reduce it, people in the camp tried to fill in the gaps wherever the facts stopped short of providing answers. This was done through rumours.

This is not just a question of inadequate factual knowledge about the event. Rumour mongering cannot be prevented by providing sufficient objective knowledge, as UNHCR seems to presume. In rumour mongering, meaning is given to an event that perhaps never had a meaning. The rumours try to uncover patterns of violence, even if these patterns may not exist. In this way the meaninglessness and the arbitrary nature of violence is made sense of, harnessed and made manageable.

The UNHCR protection officer made the first connection – hence laying the ground for local theories or rumours - by mentioning another shooting earlier the same night. Secondly, by mentioning political activity, he opened up the possibility that it might be a politically motivated murder. This was further accentuated by mentioning the crime levels of April 1997, when violence was largely believed to have been politically motivated.

Rumours began to circulate that it was a politically motivated murder that had been disguised to look like a simple robbery. UNHCR's security officer claimed at an interagency meeting that the recent violence was due to Palipehutu killing and robbing CNDD members (Field notes, 08.05.98). This conviction was shared by many CNDD sympathisers in the camp (e.g. Jean-Claude 19.05.98). Others claimed that it was Rwandans hiding in the bush who were stealing and robbing (Field notes 21.05.98). A third theory held that the farmer was the victim of a jealous husband.

His second wife is Rwandan and had been married to a Rwandan soldier. When the Rwandans were told to leave, the soldiers hid in the bush. They did not want to return. So this rich Burundian "married" the soldier's wife. Now the soldier has been sending messages that he wants his wife back. Perhaps it was him that killed the rich Burundian farmer. (Steven and Mousa 27.03.98)

Discussing the security situation almost two months later with two CNDD supporters who lived in the same area as the killing, I realised the complexity of the issue.

Someone has been robbed in street 7. They heard gunshots. Fifteen goats were stolen off an old man. They agree that streets 1-9 in Lukole A are the worst hit by the recent violence. Apart from the police and the security guards, they have also begun to do *urundo* (night watches). One of them has moved his massive ghetto blaster to another part of the camp. Other wealthy refugees have chosen to leave the area, and stay with friends elsewhere, they say.

I ask whether it is somehow linked to politics. Oh yes, they say. It is only CNDD members that are targeted.²¹⁰ These Palipehutu members are never robbed, not even the rich ones, they have not left the area and they do not take part in *urundo*. They just stay in bed at night. Have you noticed, they ask rhetorically, how certain Palipehutu leaders in Lukole B are very wealthy, in spite of not having a shop or a job (referring to the Chairman, as we already saw in the last section). Recently, a bar owner in Lukole B was robbed. He was also CNDD, they say. (Diary 19.05.98)

As with the earlier murder of the wealthy farmer, these events triggered intense speculation and rumours. They were linked to the first murder and interpreted in terms of space, politics and crime.

The rumours about the murder in Street 9 were attempts to explain what had happened but they were also prognostic, as Feldman claims is a characteristic of rumour. They try to predict whether it could happen again and to whom it could happen. The rumour was that Streets 1-9 were insecure, so people living there took their precautions and did night watches. Rumour also had it that the man had been murdered by thieves, so the wealthy left the area or moved their valuables. Yet other rumours held that he was shot for political reasons by Palipehutu, so CNDD sympathisers would take extra care. Finally, a rumour circulated claiming that he was shot by a jealous husband and that the killer was a Rwandan hiding in the bush. This rumour relegates the event to the realm of the personal, the unique and the exceptional. In this way, it is of little concern for other refugees and is unlikely to happen again. In each of these cases, the rumours are prognostic and prescribe certain kinds of

²¹⁰ Note how at this stage in my fieldwork they openly talk about being members of a party. For the first many months, they would argue that it was the non-political refugees that were being accused of being CNDD by Palipehutu.

preventative action. Hence rumours influence practice and have a tendency to become self-fulfilling prophecies.

The rumours that emerged in relation to this event attempted to stabilise the world for the refugees, and to cover the gap that the murder had created. But they were not just 'wide awake dreaming'. The phantasmic attempts to cover the traumatic event were mediated by the structuring principles of the symbolic order; in other words the rumours fit into larger interpretative schemes concerning the role of politics, the position of Rwandans and ideas of safe spaces in the camp. In short, the murder of a wealthy refugee temporarily destabilised the taken-for-granted order of things – which was precarious in the first place due to the nature of the camp – and the subsequent rumours, which were attempts to stabilise it again, drew on a number of already known understandings of society. But they did so in new and unexpected ways.

Often the three dimensions – politics, crime and space – would intermingle in people's understandings of the event. For instance the CNDD sympathiser who saw it as Palipehutu's deed, also disclaimed Palipehutu as a political party and called them a bunch of gangsters. So, although CNDD members were allegedly targeted, the motive of the killers was more about personal enrichment than political disagreement, according to this CNDD rumour. Similarly, they reflect on the spatial distribution of violence and safety in the camp, claiming some areas to be safer than others and linking this to the area's exposure to Palipehutu elements. Thus the political, social and spatial structures of the camp are actually reified through these rumours about a specific event. However, the event also causes them to readjust the symbolic order, the taken-for-granted structures in society. Lukole A used to be considered safe in this order of things. Previously, violence was associated with Lukole B. However, the robberies and murders in Streets 1-9 in March and April 1998 disturbed this pattern and made it necessary to come up with new explanations about violence. It is to this spatial differentiation that we now turn. Through this I will show how violent events do not just cause rumours; equally, rumours cause violence – which in turn help differentiate the space.

Spatialising Lukole

When asked directly, very few refugees would claim that some areas of the camp were better than others. The laconic answer would often be something to the effect that: 'We are all refugees. We all live off UNHCR's food rations.' This expresses the fear of the homogenising effects of camp life that we also see expressed in the tales of decay. A leitmotif in these tales was the feeling that social hierarchies and differentiation were disappearing and, as the strategies of Patrick, Steven and James illustrate, this tendency must be fought at all costs. However, there appeared also to be a strategy of embracing this position, a kind of fatalistic *prise de position* as the victim. In this position lies the strength of being united as refugees and the strength of being a true refugee – i.e. someone who is suffering for a common cause.²¹¹

In many ways, this was the discourse used in relation to outsiders like myself. The refugees encouraged a picture of themselves as people to take pity on, to sympathise with and to support. After a while, however, other pictures emerged. As the rumours around the event of the wealthy farmer's death illustrate, the event was interpreted according to certain spatial hierarchies. Very soon the whole security issue became a question of where it was safe to be and where the troublemakers came from. Being linked to Palipehutu, violence was also linked to Lukole B, as this was widely perceived to be Palipehutu territory. Consequently, there were numerous accounts of witnesses claiming to have seen or heard the bandits going in the direction of Lukole B.

However, theft and robbery also occurred in Lukole B at the time, as when, for instance, someone attempted to rob the owner of my favourite bar. He managed to escape, but the owner of the bar next door was robbed in his blindé the same night. They took all his money and a crate of beer, which they drank along the way.²¹² Allegedly, the same gang went to Lukole A and robbed some blindés near the swamp that divides the two parts of the camp.

²¹¹ I have discussed elsewhere how refugee status can sometimes be more attractive than national citizenship as it gives access to the international community and hope of a new ideal-nation rather than the tainted citizenship of any actually existing nation (Turner 2001 (forthcoming)).

²¹² Unfortunately, they did not find any culprits at the end of the trail of empty bottles.

The chairman in Lukole B explained how the robbers and thieves come from Lukole A at night. He cooperates with the Tanzanian authorities, the security guards, the street leaders and the night watches in fighting crime, he says, and laments that the chairman in Lukole A is not keen on catching criminals or on cooperating with Lukole B. He claims to have banned all political activity in Lukole B, and that Palipehutu and CNDD help each other in combating crime instead of quarrelling. In other words, it is the others – those from Lukole A - who want to divide the people by introducing politics. He just wants the refugees to be safe, to cooperate and to combat troublemakers.

He explains the reason why the thieves are in Lukole A (apart from the accusations of arrogance and incompetence among the leaders) as follows: When Lukole B was settled in early 1997, all the thieves came here from Kitali camp, from the bush and from Lukole A. However, the police intervened and many thieves fled. People with weapons went to Lukole A but kept their ration cards for Lukole B. Perhaps these people are causing the trouble, he suggests (Camp Chairman, Lukole B, 10.05.98). The concept of trouble and danger is interpreted spatially and there is a constant struggle to define which part of the camp is the most violent and/or what the cause of the violence is. Before exploring further how this interacts with political rivalry, it is necessary to briefly consider the making of the two parts of the camp.

Lukole A was established in January 1994 in response to the first wave of refugees that fled after the assassination of president Ndabaye in October, 1993. It is told in the camp that this first wave came from all parts of the country and consisted of people who had reason to fear persecution due to their positions in society and in political life. This, they say, is why CNDD is strong in Lukole A. A strong kernel of active FRODEBU members managed to more or less monopolise the camp, and when a more radical faction of FRODEBU in exile, led by Leonard Nyangoma, broke away and created CNDD, they followed suit.

A second wave of refugees arrived following the genocide in Rwanda in April-July 1994, and were settled in the newly established Lukole II. It is

difficult to establish any reliable socio-economic profile of the various parts of the camp due to these movements. However, in people's minds, Lukole II was perceived to be wealthy, with a large number of businessmen living there.

Lukole A has also expanded in terms of the length of its streets. These new areas - far from the main road, the NGO offices, the police outpost and the market and close to the swamp - are generally perceived to be marginal. Malaria was said to be rife due to the swamp and bandits were believed to be hiding in the bush close by. Moreover, Streets 50-70 were established later than the rest of Lukole A, and housed a number of Rwandans masquerading as Burundians and Burundians who had lived in Rwanda since 1972. This area appeared to be poor and was rather 'rough'.

Finally, there was Lukole B. My first impression of Lukole B was rural tranquillity and peace. Perhaps this was due to the layout of the camp, with its villages instead of streets and the abundance of trees providing shade and camouflaging the blindés, as opposed to Lukole A's endless rows of blue and white plastic sheeting. Perhaps it was because I had come from the noise of cars and trucks and the overcrowded market place of Lukole A to the empty roads and open spaces of Lukole B. However, I was very quickly told that this peace and tranquillity was only a surface phenomenon, an optical illusion. Under the surface, the Burundian employees at AEF in Lukole B assured me, Lukole B was far more violent than Lukole A.

Most of the refugees in Lukole B had come from Kitali Hills camp in January 1997, and a great number had lived in Keza camp prior to that. These refugees had typically fled Burundi later than those in Lukole A had. They had fled when civil war broke out in their commune, Giteranyi, close to the Tanzanian border. According to my survey, 37.5% of those who left in 1995 or later were from Giteranyi while only 20% of older refugees (who fled before 1995) came from Giteranyi. Again, only 12% of Lukole A's population was from Giteranyi commune while 47% of Lukole B's population came from that commune.²¹³

²¹³ In a breakdown of Lukole B it appears that 72% of the population in villages C and E were from Giteranyi. They consisted of refugees who had stayed in Kitali before. In the villages B1-B6, where new arrivals mainly from Tanzanian villages lived, only 19% originated from Giteranyi.

Correspondingly, UNHCR census figures show 37% of the population in Lukole A to come from Muyinga province while 66% of the population in Lukole B originated from there (UNHCR Sub-office Ngara 1997). Giteranyi is in Muyinga province.

As opposed to the first 'influx' of refugees, these had not been politically active; neither did they hold any prominent positions in the administration. They were mostly peasants fleeing *en masse* from a general state of violence and insecurity. There are a number of theories in the camp as to why they should be especially prone to support Palipehutu, among others that they were less educated. The table below, based on my survey, illustrates the difference in educational level between Lukole A and Lukole B. The data support the theory that education was higher in Lukole A than in Lukole B.

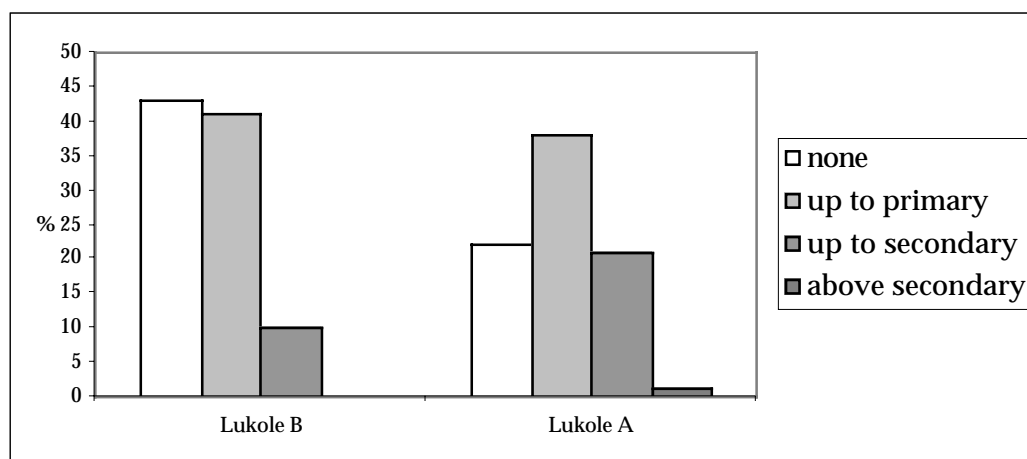


Figure 11. Level of education, Lukole A and B.²¹⁴

It seems quite plausible, however, that the FRODEBU leadership in Lukole A was quick to establish something like a hegemonic position in the camp, with its interpretation of events becoming the only official one. In Keza and Kitali the organised FRODEBU elite was less conspicuous, leaving the field more open for alternative interpretations and discourses. Furthermore, Palipehutu had been operating in Giteranyi commune – some say because it was close to the border with Tanzania, from where Palipehutu originated – and might have influenced them prior to flight. Finally, the conflict in Burundi had

²¹⁴ It is worth remarking that the category 'blank' is substantial (for Lukole A: 17.7%, for Lukole B 5.2%), and I guess that it mostly covers 'No education', as other indicators, such as language abilities of the respondents, support this hypothesis. In this case the difference between A and B is presumably less

escalated significantly from 1993 to 1995/6, radicalising and polarising politics, thus making the tolerant views of Melchior Ndadaye and FRODEBU rather out-dated and Palipehutu's hardline approach more appealing.

In any case, political infighting between Palipehutu and CNDD broke out in Kitali as both parties attempted to become 'the' party in the camp, representing the refugees and defining the truth about the conflict in Burundi. This culminated in late December 1996 when around 10 people were killed²¹⁵ and another 10 went missing. Almost 400 refugees were detained and 126 were sent back to Burundi by the Tanzanian authorities, where all but two were shot by the Burundian army at the border crossing on January 10th, 1997 (Human Rights Watch 1999).

In an internal note for the file, UNHCR quickly identified Palipehutu as 'the violent group' and recommended the arrest of all the 'ring leaders of the PALIPEHUTU group'. It appears that UNHCR swallowed the CNDD version of the event hook, float and sinker, just as Joseph feared. The reason why the violence should erupt at that specific point in time was, according to UNHCR, that the Palipehutu leadership feared losing its grip on the population if they were transferred to Lukole. According to internal notes within the UNHCR at the time, the Palipehutu leadership feared that it would no longer be able to conduct its 'coercive activities' in Lukole and hence was trying to eliminate rivals from CNDD.

Once moved to Lukole B, the violence continued at a lower intensity and caused a kind of small scale 'ethnic cleansing' as individuals moved from one part of the camp to another, thus homogenising the different spaces in terms of political affiliation. Large-scale violence was no longer needed. The fear and anticipation of violence, kept alive by rumours about violence, was enough to cause people to act accordingly and move from Lukole B to Lukole A of their own accord. Thus violence achieves its goal, which is not merely to kill certain individuals but to spread terror and expectations of violence. This includes an aspect of cruelty and unpredictability. And although rumours try

²¹⁵ There is some confusion about the number of dead bodies found in pit latrines and elsewhere. In various Notes for the File, UNHCR field officers change their figures.

to tame cruelty and make it comprehensible, they also spread like wildfire, bringing fear and anxiety with them. This anxiety is due to expectations of new violence, something that rumours try to find a pattern in. And as people act according to these patterns, violence achieves its goal, even without being executed.

It was generally held that CNDD supporters were moving from Lukole B to A in order to avoid threats of violence and being compelled to pay contributions to Palipehutu. As with the murder case in Street 9, there were a number of divergent interpretations of this movement as well. Many NGO employees would claim that they were not political but had been threatened by bandits from Palipehutu – men with long coats (hiding knives) – to pay taxes. The camp chairman of Lukole B, on the other hand, claimed that it was the bandits who were leaving Lukole B because the people, the leadership, the security guards and the police all cooperated in Lukole B to combat crime, thus making life too hot for the criminals there. It was certainly held by both parties that most of the NGO employees lived in Lukole A. My survey data do not unequivocally support this statement, as around half (53%) of the NGO employees in Lukole B also claim to live in Lukole B. However, there are a number of refugees who officially reside in Lukole B while in practice live in Lukole A. Furthermore, my data show that very few NGO employees live in Lukole B and work in Lukole A (out of 123 employees there was one cleaner who claimed to live in Lukole B and work in Lukole A) while the opposite is quite common (22% of all employees). That is to say that there appears to be a tendency towards relatively more NGO employees living in Lukole A than in Lukole B.²¹⁶

By June 1997, the security situation had stabilised, with fewer refugees moving from Lukole B to A and fewer repatriating to Burundi. This relative peace lasted until late March 1998, the time when the wealthy farmer was shot in Street 9 and new rumours of violence emerged. In the meantime, a new group of refugees had entered the camp. They had been rounded up by

²¹⁶ We must keep in mind that, although there is a tendency for NGO staff to sympathise with CNDD, there are still some who sympathise with Palipehutu while others manage to manoeuvre in Lukole B through a number of personal relations, in spite of political disagreement.

the Tanzanian authorities from September 1997 onwards and were placed in new villages in Lukole B. They were generally perceived to be rather harmless and apolitical. In fact, some CNDD members expressed satisfaction with the round-up operation because they now had an opportunity to 'make them aware'.

Just as trouble was attributed to Lukole B by CNDD members, people in Lukole B claimed that certain villages in Lukole B were worse than others. In this manner the inhabitants in other parts of Lukole B would claim that F2 and C2 were full of young men who had been 'causing trouble' in Keza and later in Kitali, and had been forced into hiding in the bush after the conflict with CNDD and the following police intervention in December 1996. They had been allowed into the camp again and had settled in F2 and C2. Thus, the trouble that was located in Lukole B was pinpointed further to two villages. In this way, violence is circumscribed and ascribed to a certain group of young men.

Space, politics, violence and rumour

This brief account of the shaping of Lukole A and B as two separate spaces, shows a picture of relatively high levels of conflict and violence and of struggles to define what the violence is about. Furthermore, these rumours of violence were conceived in spatial terms, accusing this or that part of the camp for being behind all the trouble.

Politics was seen at one level to be the source of evil, since it caused so much trouble, preventing ordinary people from getting on with life. At another level, it was the politics of the opponent that was seen to be the problem, paradoxically because it was not political enough. The politics of one's own party was about unselfish loyalty to 'the cause' and to the people. Thus politics is split between the sordid politics of the opponent and the benign politics of one's own party.

Along similar lines, the camp chairman of Lukole B claimed that he had banned all political activity in Lukole B, expressing a desire to 'get on with things' without all this partisan bickering. A CNDD supporter commented

that it was true that the chairman had stopped political rivalry, but only by banning CNDD activity. NGO employees living in Lukole A and working in Lukole B, would take off their Ndadaye badges and their red, white and green caps when they crossed the river that divides the two camps. Palipehutu supporters, however, would freely wear *kofias* in Lukole B, they said.²¹⁷

Similar constructions of politics existed in Lukole A where CNDD dominated. Here, the term 'extremist' was used about opponents. There was a sense that the politics of CNDD was more moderate, reasonable and more in line with international conventions. Thus it was perceived to be more justified and less problematic than the violent, extremist and marginalized politics of Palipehutu. Often, CNDD members would admit that there was a quiet agreement with the Camp Commandant who let them carry out their activities. So although both parties share a perception that the other party is the troublemaker, they do so in slightly different ways, where ideas of modernity and tradition, urbanity and rurality, isolation and globality play roles in positioning the other. Here the image of the international community also plays a role.

Generally speaking, people in Lukole A perceived those from Lukole B with a certain amount of disdain. The refugees in Lukole B were seen as uneducated peasants supporting what at best could be termed an extremist and racist party, run by a handful of criminals with guns. In spite of its violent reputation, Lukole B was perceived to be rather rural and stagnant. Most refugees preferred Lukole to Kitali, when I asked, because Kitali was 'in the bush', and it appeared that the refugees from Kitali and Keza had brought 'the bush' with them. The fact that they came from Giteranyi, a poor, underdeveloped commune on the frontier, probably only added to these stereotypes.

Along with this understanding, the refugees in Lukole A saw themselves as more in touch with modern life. Because Lukole A was closer to the road and

²¹⁷Although commonly worn by Muslims in East Africa without any political significance, these hats allegedly signify Palipehutu allegiance in the camp.

Tanzanian villages, it had become the main centre for trade; also, most of the offices of international agencies were there. CNDD made use of this privileged access to the international agencies and its proximity to 'the action'. In terms of ideological self-perceptions, CNDD saw itself as being more in line with the international community and was very preoccupied with gaining recognition from 'the big nations'. It was eager to distance itself from Hutu chauvinism and the *génocidaires* from Rwanda by emphasising democracy and reconciliation in official discourse.

Again, this is reflected in the hierarchy of spaces in Lukole A, with the 'old streets' closest to the offices and the market being the most prestigious. The strategies of Mousa, whom I mentioned earlier, are illustrative of this hierarchy. He was moved from Kitali to Lukole B in January 1997. Within a short while, he had managed to acquire a simple house at the far end of Lukole A, and by May he had a plot in Street 10 with two mud brick buildings on it. The house had been vacated by someone who left the camp. I never managed to find out how many ration cards he possessed, but some of the members of his household still went to Lukole B to collect food a year later. In this way, Mousa had managed to manoeuvre up the spatial hierarchy to a place that reflected his social and political position.

This spatial hierarchy was not unambiguous, however, and would leave room for contentious readings of space. In Lukole B the stereotypical portrait of Lukole A and B was not directly dismissed but rather turned upside down. The refugees in Lukole A were seen to be wealthy – 'they live like *wazungu*' – and arrogant – 'how do they know our problems when they only speak English and French?' The sweet and easy life in Lukole A, having access to jobs and business, had spoiled them and made them oblivious to the suffering of the masses, it was said in Lukole B. They were forgetting their Hutu-ness and their commitment due to wealth. This is very much in line with the underdog mentality of Palipehutu that I have mentioned before, and it was also Palipehutu's claim to popular support in Lukole B.

This ideology appealed to a certain sense of disgruntlement in a population that felt it was losing out in relation to the more established Lukole A

population. In Lukole B people often complained that they were very poor and attributed this to the number of times they had been forced to move. Many had been in Keza, then Kitali and now Lukole B. Their plastic sheeting was worn down, they had never had time to establish a business, start farming or find jobs with Tanzanian farmers or international agencies. Palipehutu clearly played on this sense of being underprivileged. In fact, a number of refugees from Kitali managed to get good jobs with NGOs in Lukole. But due to the prevalence of this ideology in Lukole B, they mostly moved to Lukole A. In this way, the underdog ideology became a self-fulfilling prophecy - ideology creates reality.

In the perception of Lukole A as arrogant and wealthy lies also an idea that refugees in Lukole A have lost their true Hutu identity (the theme of purity is a leitmotif in much of Palipehutu's political ideology). Being rural and backward, people in Lukole B also have a sense of community, it is argued. The camp chairman in Lukole B describes how everyone here cooperates against crime, insinuating that the elite in Lukole A is too busy accumulating wealth and power and ingratiating itself with the international NGOs to bother with ordinary people. 'They' – the elite in Lukole A - clearly lack *Gemeinschaft*, in spite of (or because of) a successful *Gesellschaft*.

Here, the dichotomies from the tales of decay are again at play in a highly ambiguous manner. On the one hand, the market and the NGO offices are spaces of action, mobility and change, challenging the stigmatising and immobilising space of the camp. On the other hand, these spaces represent danger, a threat towards tradition, Burundi customs and the natural order of things. It is in line with this latter understanding that Palipehutu ideology positions itself and Lukole B as protectors of Hutuness. However, we cannot assume that CNDD/Lukole A interpret the dichotomies one way and Palipehutu/Lukole B another. Both have ambiguous relations to these classifications. This is also expressed spatially, for instance when the majority of people from Lukole A claim that those from Lukole A II are wealthy and live a comfortable life because they brought start-up capital with them. Likewise, political activists from CNDD say that the businessmen are too busy earning money to be bothered with the struggle. In Lukole B, on the

other hand, most refugees are busy claiming that their particular village is not as bad as the others, and that the real troublemakers are to be found elsewhere. So refugees in Lukole A can play the *Gemeinschaft* card against other refugees in Lukole A, while refugees from Lukole B can play the respectability card against F2 and C2.

UNHCR, NGOs and the Tanzanian authorities apparently also use these spatial stereotypes of the camp. In a meeting called by the Camp Commandant for influential refugees from Lukole A, UNHCR, MHA and the police in August 1997, the head of police was reprimanding them for continuing to fight with Lukole B. He told them that they should stop having these differences with Lukole B. '*You think you are in the town while Lukole B is in the bush,*' he says. '*But in Lukole B they know how to co-operate and help with catching thieves. You could learn from them.*' (Field notes 13.08.97).

By using Lukole B as a threat, he is trying to get the refugee leadership to forget their selfishness and individualism and sacrifice some of their pride for 'the community'. Lukole B is conceived as being less urban and civilised while having what they lack in Lukole A; namely a sense of 'community'.

The humanitarian agencies have a similar view of the community and of politics. Not only is politics seen as disrupting the community, it is also necessary to 'mobilise the community' in order to combat political rivalry and violence. More police alone cannot do it, they argue, the help must come from within. According to an internal UNHCR note (May 1997) neighbourhood watches are the solution. And so is the introduction of female security guards as they are assumed to be less biased and more in favour of the community as such.

Concluding remarks

In the fragmented, liminal space of Lukole, all refugees are assumed to be equal, constituting a homogeneous mass. However, historical circumstances around their time of flight and their itinerary, their social background and political developments shaped these people very differently. This is reflected in the various spaces of the camp where levels of wealth, health, education

and safety vary dramatically from place to place. Other mechanisms of differentiation are, however, also at play.

In the political field, two parties claim to represent the true interests of the refugees, using rumours and defamation of character to delegitimise the opponent's claims. In practice, political networks coalesce with and are indistinguishable from other personal networks that give access to power and resources. This does not imply that politics in the camp is exclusively about access to resources. Political ideologies propose themselves as the answer to people's troubles and tribulations. They offer meaning in a meaningless world. Not all refugees in Lukole are involved in party politics. But as this chapter has shown, political rivalry dominates and structures the camp, and everyone has to relate to it in one way or another.

In Lukole, the struggle between CNDD on the one hand, which had been in Lukole A since the beginning and Palipehutu on the other, which was introduced mainly by the refugees from Kitali, took the shape of a mixture of political struggles, criminal networks and personal feuds. These confrontations were violent at times. Violence was interpreted through rumours as being political, thus reinserting it in the established order of things while simultaneously delegitimising the opponent. Other rumours tried to make sense of the violence and to contain it by linking it to space, while still others referred to it as simple banditry. Often, all three levels were linked in the rumours, so that violence was caused by desperate criminals calling themselves Palipehutistes and living in Lukole B, or by thieves hiding in Lukole A under the protection of CNDD.

In this way expectations of violence, as created by rumours, structure the camp into more or less safe zones. Rumours also structure the camp into zones of wealth and poverty, selfishness and community spirit, urbanity and rurality. Such rumours and the expectations of violence that they create are prognostic. People act accordingly, avoiding certain areas of the camp, for instance. In this way, rumours of violence influence action and hence shape the reality that they claim to be about, and indeed become self-fulfilling

prophecies. As long as people in Lukole act 'as if' violence has a certain pattern, 'as if' the rumour were true, then rumours become true.

We saw in this chapter how rumours, politics, violence and space interfaced to create a differentiated and hierarchical order in the camp, thus enabling its inhabitants to start making sense of it. This sense was made in part through rumour mongering. However, it is a precarious order that exists in Lukole. The initial shock of war and flight, dislocated the taken-for-granted order of things and revealed its constructedness and inherent contradictions, as we saw in earlier chapters. The fact that even banal everyday events in the camp give rise to the most fantastic rumours and conspiracy theories, testifies to the fact that this initial shock still renders Lukole a fragile place that constantly needs re-ordering, re-stabilising and re-imagining.

Chapter Eight – Coping with the past

In spite of refugees in Lukole trying to inhabit the space that they have been allocated and turn Lukole into a lived place, they never completely embrace the camp. It will always remain an in-between experience, a *non-lieu* between an idyllic past and a glorious future. This past and future take place somewhere else than here, namely in Burundi. Lukole is neither completely the bureaucratic dream of UNHCR nor totally recaptured by the refugees, neither does it ever quite make sense to either part. It evades total symbolisation and remains precariously balancing in between. In order to fully grasp how young men deal with their present predicaments in the camp, we must explore how they cope with their past in Burundi, as there appears to be a dialectic to-and-fro movement between their memories and their present strategies of managing.

The past is used actively to make sense of the present situation, particularly in ideological battles with other actors in the political field in the camp. By resorting to the past, they can claim to know the ‘truth’ behind the present conflict and therefore also the solutions to it. In this chapter we will explore how certain young men try to make sense of why they ended up in the camp. I argue that they make sense of their own incoherent life stories by inserting themselves into broader narratives. We will see how these narratives are related to the repertoire of possible ways of imagining Burundi, as political developments in Burundi and the Great Lakes region set the agenda for what to remember and what to forget. In other words, the production of history in Lukole depends on power struggles in the camp as well as in the region. In this chapter I will not only establish the fact that individual narratives are inserted into larger political narratives. The main aim is to explore *how* they do so.

By analysing four life stories, we will see that their narratives are built up around an idea of loss -- not only the loss of peace and harmony, but also the loss of Hutu innocence. As opposed to those who fled the massacres in 1972, the Hutu can no longer claim to be pure victims. Due to memories of 1972 and

a growing awareness of their oppression, the Hutu participated in large-scale violence in 1993. This loss of the victim position has consequences for to the general narrative in the camp, especially with regard to the theme of the Hutu becoming more aware and open.

Finally, we will reflect on how this question of being a victim relates to the issue of being a truly deserving refugee in the eyes of the international community. The international community sees male Hutu refugees as potential perpetrators of genocide, but in order to help them, relief agencies need to treat them as needy victims of war. This entails sanitising and marginalising their political past and forcing it underground by governmentalising and domesticising Burundian culture as artefact.

The narrative form

In February-May 1998 I conducted 15 life story interviews with young men from different parts of the camp and with different backgrounds in terms of education, occupation, province of origin and time of flight. Most of them I knew beforehand through earlier interviews and conversations, enabling me to select a broad spectrum of 'types'. What struck me about these interviews was the way in which concrete, personal accounts tended to slide into generalised, impersonal narratives. Although I controlled the interview relatively tightly and kept returning to concrete questions about personal experiences of conflict and flight, answers remained at an aggregate and impersonal level. Often they would just say 'there was killing' or 'then there was war and we fled'. Øivind Fuglerud observes the same tendency when asking Tamils in Norway about their background:

When asked about their background, Tamil refugees tend to slip from the story of their own lives into the field of collective history. The individual and the collective fuse into one standardised discourse explaining '*why I am here now*'. (Fuglerud 1999: 180)

And Veena Das shows how militant Sikhs in the Punjab tend to refer to violence in the impersonal, passive tense – 'there were some killings' – leaving out agency (Das 1995: 130-134). She deals specifically with violence perpetrated by the narrators, and asks how the Sikh community can erase the memories of Sikh participation in riots, abduction and rape, and relates this

'to the issue of how individual biography becomes social text' (Das 1995: 131). In order to understand this we must re-examine the relationship between the self and society.

Arguing with Heidegger and Ricoeur, Fuglerud claims that we must see the self as self-representation rather than as an autonomous being in itself.

[This is self] as a result of a semiotic process organising experiential fragments into illusory wholes. In this perspective the person is one of the "things" about which we speak rather than itself a speaking subject... (Fuglerud 1999: 175)

In line with my Lacanian discussion on the subject of the lack, the self is not a pre-existing entity; rather it is something that one tries to make into such an entity through the biographic narrative. Individuals' narratives seek to create wholeness and purpose from a fragmented, contingent life path by inferring meaning and causality.²¹⁸

When I interview a young man in Lukole about his life, he seeks to make sense of it. The thought that his life is a more or less contingent string of events without any cause and effect and no underlying driving force, and that there is no clear reason why he should end up in a refugee camp, is quite unbearable to him. So he looks for causality, for a direction and a connection between past and present.

This process, which philosophers have termed "repetition" (Heidegger 1972, Ricoeur 1981) rests upon the plot as an act of configuration; *the reading of the end into the beginning*, the recapitulation of initial conditions of action in its projected final consequences. (Fuglerud 1999: 175. Emphasis added)

This is not an individual process; the patterns that he seeks and around which he constructs his biography are socially constructed. He is attempting to insert his narrative into a larger authorised narrative, a master narrative or what Das calls a 'social text', that lends authority and meaning to his own muddled, doubtful experiences. As Das comments, individuals who have experienced violence - either as perpetrators or victims - attempt to make cultural sense of horrifying events, in this way relieving the individual of responsibility and suffering (Das 1990: 361). The refugees in Lukole were

²¹⁸ (See also Bourdieu 1988)

perpetrators and victims of violence, if not in person then by proxy. It is therefore relevant to explore how their narratives relate to violence.

Violence is often arbitrary and diffuse, and the individual's experience may be solely a vague feeling of insecurity and fear. Collective memories of past events are evoked and parallels drawn in order that individuals can navigate the war zone. As was argued in the previous chapter, violence has a tendency to overflow symbolisation, or at least violence is perceived as outside the social, thus distinguishing it from other forms of discursive practice. That is to say that violent events, like the one that hit Burundi in October 1993, tend to create a sense of social melt-down, dismantling the known symbolic order of things. It is this vague sense of suspension of normality that the narratives attempt to overcome. As Feldman (Feldman 1991; Feldman 1995; Feldman 2000) and Das (Das 1990; Das 1995) point out, violence is reinserted into some meaningful order through various narratives. What is interesting to explore here, is *how* violence is narrated.

In the following we will see how four young men explain their experience of war and flight and their experience of ethnic tensions in Burundi.

Chadrack

Chadrack is a soft-spoken young man with mild eyes who does his best to get his English right, quite contrary to his heavily built body that earns him a reputation as a good football player. He is 27 years old, is not married, works for OXFAM and has lived in Lukole A since early 1994. He was in his final year of secondary school when he was forced to flee. If he had had the opportunity, he would have liked to become a doctor or a soldier. His father died when he was born and his mother brought up her three children and cultivated the land on her own.

I tried in the interviews to pinpoint his and others' own experiences of ethnicity. So instead of asking generally about the differences between Hutu and Tutsi, I asked about the relations that Chadrack had had with Tutsi children when he was a child.

At that time it was... for Hutu children they were not well taught. That's why Hutu have had no problem. But if I try to analyse it now, I see that at that time we had a problem even [if] it was not easy to see. (...) Now I can see we had a problem because... for example it was not easy to share for example the same glass with a Tutsi if you are a Hutu child. That's why if I try to analyse nowadays I can see that at that time it was a problem.

Do you think that the Tutsi children themselves they were aware? Their parents told them: "This one is a Hutu. Don't share!"

While Hutu were – what can I say – like blind at that time, the Tutsi themselves were well taught about the system about the Tutsi and not to co-operate... to co-operate but to have a certain – what can I call it – not to approach them.

When he was a child, he had no problems with the Tutsi children and could hardly tell the difference while the Tutsi children knew all along. This is what he refers to by saying 'if I analyse it now'. With hindsight, he can see many problems between Hutu and Tutsi that he did not see then because he was 'like blind at the time'. Before, when the Hutu could not yet see, there was a semblance of harmony but the Tutsi had other plans all along. This makes the crime of the Tutsi all the worse. Not only did they want to discriminate and exterminate the Hutu, but they also hid their true intentions and pretended to be friendly with the Hutu who blindly believed them.

When he started secondary school, things got worse:

Yeah in the secondary school the problem was very difficult (...) The Tutsi were aware of the problem. But the Hutu – because of that event of '72 – they are afraid of doing anything... The Tutsi were trying to do something for their friends Tutsi. But the Hutu was afraid to do something for his friends Hutu.

The antagonism between Hutu and Tutsi that hitherto had been concealed from the naïve Hutu was now becoming visible. The Hutu children – concurrently with their improved education – began to 'see'. They could see what was really going on as the real nature of the Tutsi began to reveal itself, but the Hutu dared not yet act upon their newly acquired knowledge. Tutsi could help Tutsi, Chadrack explains, but Hutu could not show ethnic solidarity. This was due to their memories of 1972 and fears that similar events would occur again if a Hutu student openly expressed Hutu solidarity. Without me asking, he weaves big events like the massacres in 1972 into his

personal narrative of relations between students at school. He interprets changes in student behaviour in relation to national politics.

His memories of 1972 were obviously not first hand, personal memories, as he was hardly born at the time. The teachers did not teach them about the events in 1972, he explains. They learned about it through their parents. The killings in 1972 also affected his village.

What happened, at that time it was in the coffee season. And at every coffee season, all the businessmen go to the *centre de commerce* to have a meeting about how the coffee is being sold and so on. So they called those businessmen just as usual like there is a meeting. My father didn't go to that meeting. He didn't because he was sick. So my father was not there and the others went, supposing that they were going to a meeting. So all of them, no one returned.

That was many people being killed.

Yes! There were a lot of people because they were about 40 houses, and each house has a man.

As we shall see from other young men's accounts of 1972, 1988, 1991 and 1993, this one is rather unusual in telling very concretely about what happened in his particular village and how his own father fortuitously avoided being killed. However, his account remains very factual without any gore and blood or lengthy depictions of Tutsi atrocities.

Chadrack attended a secondary school run by the church. When Ndadaye was killed in October 1993, all teaching was suspended in all secondary schools, he says. But as opposed to other schools there was no aggression between Hutu and Tutsi students. '*We were obliged to co-operate. That doesn't mean that a Tutsi was a friend of a Hutu but we were obliged to be friends.*' In spite of this, he and some other students decided to flee.

When we stayed in the compound, even if there wasn't anyone to harm another, we were afraid of the situation. Some of us were trying to persuade one another to leave or to stay. But for us, we left the school at the right time. This is what happened. One Tutsi from the school tried to leave the school. All the Tutsi left the school. And at that morning when they decided, we saw that it was dangerous for us. So we decided to leave the school. The Rector tried to calm us but it was in vain. It was on 9th November 1993.

Chadrack refers to a diffuse sense of fear – ‘we were afraid of the situation’. He never saw any killing or else he is reluctant to tell about it. When the teaching was suspended after the assassination of Ndadaye, they just remained at the school and played football and basketball. What triggered him and his fellow students to leave the school were rumours about violence and anticipation of violence. At the other schools there were ‘too many killings’ he says. The Tutsi leaving the school was read as a bad omen. Similarly, the Tutsi students chose to leave the school and seek refuge at the centres²¹⁹ because they were anticipating violence from the Hutu.

At the time, if you were in the school you were told that, if you leave you will not be allowed to return in the school. So that some of us were afraid in order not to leave the school. But also at that time, there were some soldiers who were guarding us. At that time also, to leave the school was also something like a trick. It was dangerous. We were obliged to pass somewhere in order not to be seen by the soldiers.

You were afraid the army might come?

Yeah. If it was not for the army, then there were no problems. For example in the commune all the Hutu would stay in their homes. But they thought that soldiers would come and kill them in their... that’s why many Hutu were obliged to leave their houses and sleep in the bushes.

We see here how flight was not just a question of escaping violence. There were certain ‘staying put’ factors (Van Hear 1998: 20) that made them hesitate, such as the risk of being expelled from school, if they left. Although the soldiers did nothing to threaten them, they were perceived as a threat, due to memories of 1972 and 1988. Chadrack was convinced that they had secret plans, and substantiates his argument with reference to what they were allegedly doing in the villages, something that he did not experience first hand either.

When I left the school I came directly to Tanzania, and it was at that date of ninth, and I arrived at Nyarumana, I stayed there for one night, and then at 11th I arrived at Rulenge, Tanzania.

Did you leave alone?

²¹⁹ After Ndadaye was killed and the Hutu population started killing Tutsi, most Tutsi sought protection in town centres where they were installed in municipal buildings and protected by the army.

I was with other students. We were more than 50 people. We went together. [...] At that time in that region there was a kind of peace. So that's why we had that chance to cross the border without trouble.

We see here how Chadrack is keen to relate dates, routes and places while leaving out personal emotions and detailed narratives of violence, suffering and atrocities. Neither does he mention the fact that many Hutu were involved in the killings in 1993.²²⁰ This is not mentioned for obvious reasons, as he is making the Tutsi soldiers the villains and the Hutu the victims. This means that he has to remain at an aggregate level in his narratives, otherwise he might have to tell about Hutu looting and burning Tutsi homes. His narrative is the victim narrative. In order to make sense of why he is in a refugee camp it is important that he is the victim of brutal violence.

He explains that there is no 'special problem' in his village – and adds with a sarcastic smile that it is not a special problem because it is normal for there to be problems. However, his village appears to have been relatively peaceful throughout the period and his mother still lives there. He cannot return though, he explains, because he is a young man. People there think he is dead, and he would like it to remain that way, as it saves him a lot of trouble. He dreams of studying medicine or becoming a soldier when he returns, and for this reason he has avoided marriage in the camp. But he is pessimistic about the future. 'I will be too old' he says and expresses frustration that his life is rolling past without him being able to do anything.

Chadrack supports Palipehutu although he lives in Lukole A, works for an NGO and has many CNDD friends. Rumour has it that he is a big soldier in Palipehutu. Rumour also has it that he might shift allegiance.

Pierre

Pierre is 24 years old, is not married and lives with friends.²²¹ He has no education, no employment and no business activities, and he lives in the dreaded area of Village F2, Lukole B. I have met him a few times when I have held group interviews in F2. He is very keen to discuss the political situation

²²⁰ Reyntjens estimates that equal numbers of Hutu and Tutsi (roughly 50 000 in all) were killed following the assassination of Ndadaye (Reyntjens 1995: 15).

²²¹ We met Pierre in Chapter Four.

in Burundi with me, particularly the split in the Palipehutu leadership between Karatase and Kosani, in spite of him insisting on not knowing anything about politics. The fact that I have personally talked to Karatase appears to impress him. Today, however, he has agreed to talk about his own life. He has brought his brother-in-law along with him to the bar where the interview takes place.

Pierre's parents fled Burundi in 1972 and, like many young refugees in Lukole he was born and brought up in Rwanda²²². His experience of Hutu-Tutsi relations is therefore quite different from Chadrack's. However, Pierre's narrative is cast along much the same story line, as he also talks of a past where Hutu and Tutsi lived together in peace and harmony. This harmony was broken when the RPF *inkontanyi* started their offensive in 1990.²²³

Before, when I was in Rwanda, when I was very little, there was no problem between Hutu and Tutsi. [...]The problem started – became open – when there were fights between the army, the Rwandan army, and the *inkontanyi*, the RPF. Because everyone was taught about Hutu and Tutsi. [...] Even in Hutu group there were some teachers who were teaching Hutu. And also Tutsi, there were also teachers who were teaching Tutsi. [...]The *inkontanyi* – the RPF – were hidden in villages by Tutsi who were already there.

Not only did the invasion by RPF in the north of the country change ethnic relationships; it exposed the true nature of the Tutsi, according to Pierre's narrative. Their Tutsi neighbours, with whom they had so far had cordial and unproblematic relations, were potentially hiding *inkontanyi* in their houses. As Chrétien among others shows (Chrétien, Reporters sans frontières (Association), and Unesco. 1995), propaganda in the Rwandan media conjured up this image of all Tutsi potentially hiding or otherwise supporting the RPF, and encouraged all good Hutu to take any steps to prevent the Tutsi from supporting the rebels.

²²² Very few refugees in Lukole have made a simple one-way movement from Burundi to the camp. They have moved around the whole region for a mixture of reasons. However, the image of the homeland still remains strong in their flight narrative, casting Lukole as an exceptional space outside the 'national order of things'.

²²³ *Inkontanyi* (the tough fighters) is used about the Rwandan Patriotic Front.

Like Chadrack, Pierre believes the harmony of the past to have been only on the surface. Under the surface, the Tutsi had other plans, and it was only at a certain point in history that this ‘became open’ and the Tutsi showed their true colours. The fact that Pierre’s parents had fled Burundi due to ethnic conflict in 1972 and Chadrack’s father had almost been killed in 1972 does not alter this narrative of a childhood in ethnic harmony and blindness. It seems strange, from a purely factual point of view, that they should not have been aware of ethnicity all along. However, the narrative structure of their stories implies a ‘before’ and an ‘after’ in trying to explain why things went so awfully wrong.

The issue of a before and an after often turns up in other discussions with Pierre. When discussing marriage – he is not yet married for fear of being repatriated – we touch on the issue of inter-ethnic marriage. Like everyone else in the camp, he claims that it is only the Hutu who marry Tutsi women. But this has changed, he says. After the assassination of Ndadaye, Hutu no longer marry Tutsi. The Hutu are becoming like the Tutsi due to a specific event that put an end to their trust and opened their eyes.

Pierre’s family decided to repatriate to Burundi in 1993 when Ndadaye was elected. In spite of not living in camps in Rwanda and having what he calls a good relation with Rwandans, they repatriated to Burundi because ‘*When you are abroad, you don’t have all your rights*’ he explains. They wanted to go back and build their nation, as they thought all killings had stopped with the election of a new president. Like other repatriates, they were given a small plot of land. However, when Ndadaye was killed, his family was not slow to decide to leave again. They heard the news that Ndadaye had been caught by Tutsi officers at ten o’clock and by five o’clock the same day, they had left for Rwanda again.

So what happened after Ndadaye was killed in your village?

When Ndadaye was killed, everybody was threatened. And also I was afraid. We didn’t have time to stay and look at what was happening in Kirundo Province or Busoni commune. Because we were used to living abroad, we didn’t wait. We just went to look for refuge in Rwanda. [...] Because we thought that maybe it may happen what happened in ’72.

Pierre did not actually see any violence. He heard the news on the radio, and with the memories from 1972, he fled. Lemarchand argues that the memories of ethnocide in 1972 were strong dynamics in later events in Burundi. Thus a small provocation in Ntega and Marangara promptly triggered massive ethnic violence. It was within hours of Ndadaye's abduction that Hutu put up roadblocks and started killing Tutsi.²²⁴ Pierre gives the reason for fleeing so promptly himself: 'We were used to living abroad'. In a number of essays by secondary school students on their experiences of flight,²²⁵ they often gave detailed accounts of their hesitations about going abroad. They had heard rumours that you could not get any food or water in Tanzania and that the camps were full of wild animals. Furthermore, they were insecure about the route and often had to hire a guide to help them cross the border. In other words, choosing whether to stay or go was not solely determined by the insecurity that they sensed in Burundi, but also by their uncertainty about their destination. In contrast, Pierre and his family knew exactly what to expect in exile and had no reservations about leaving.

In May 1994, Pierre and his family left Rwanda and went to Burundi. He gives no details on the circumstances surrounding their choice to leave Rwanda. 'The war' in Rwanda is implied. While his family remained in Burundi, he decided to continue to Tanzania. Why did he leave when his family could remain?

The Burundi government when they saw someone from foreign country, they pretend that one is a killer. And when he is a young boy or an educated one, or a rich one he is caught. [...] And myself, I was among these people, and I was afraid, and I decided to flee the country.

I would often hear these explanations in the camp. The army is targeting young men because they are potential rebels. The educated and wealthy are allegedly targeted because they are suspected of planning what the Tutsi call

²²⁴ For a discussion of this aspect, see Lemarchand's 'Burundi: Genocide Forgotten, Invented and Anticipated' (Lemarchand 1996b).

²²⁵ In August 1997 I asked 20 8th form students from Lukole Post Primary School to write an essay on one of four subjects related to the camp. 13 of the students chose the following subject: 'Describe your personal experience of fleeing from Burundi and of living in a camp. What were your feelings when you were forced to leave? How has your life changed in the camp?'

the genocide against Tutsi after Ndadaye's killing. And anyone who has been a refugee is suspected of being a *génocidaire*. It is certainly quite plausible that the government army targets these groups in its increasingly desperate counter-insurgency operations²²⁶. However, for Pierre, these categories are a means to make sense of a diffuse sense of insecurity. The arbitrary nature of violence makes it all the more difficult to handle – creating insecurity and anxiety as well as the need to somehow make sense of it by finding rules and patterns. Pierre refers to general theories on who is targeted when and where. Such theories often come to him in the shape of rumours. Every time someone went missing or they heard gunfire, we may assume that rumours emerged. These rumours about the nature of violence help him navigate the general sense of anxiety in Burundi and act accordingly. For him, it meant leaving Burundi while his family remained. One rarely actually confronts violence face to face in situations of insecurity but the knowledge that it is around and could strike at any time is enough for it to have effects. The effects - the results of a sense of anxiety - include people deciding to flee the country, deciding to sleep in the bush every night and return to their houses every day, or deciding to kill their Tutsi neighbour 'just in case'. For Pierre and his family, anxiety about violence was interpreted and ordered through the perception that young men were being targeted.

Although the reason given by Pierre for his decision to leave Burundi while the family remained is the war, there may, however, have been a number of other factors playing in on his decision, tied up with various livelihood strategies. Likewise, in 1993/4 many refugees chose to return to their farms at harvest time. I interviewed refugees who had lived in Tanzanian villages just across the border and had crossed the border daily to tend their fields in Burundi. However, with Pierre's narrative being a flight narrative, it must invoke the imagery of specifically targeted violence, in other words with a perpetrator, a purpose and a victim. By inserting himself into a master narrative in the victim role, he lends authority to his own – rather contingent – life story.

²²⁶ For details on these operations, see (Adekanye 1996).

For Pierre the camp does not just mean loss. He emphasises that he has met many new friends, both while fleeing and in the camp. They are not family or old neighbours. But you get to know each other well in the camp, he explains, and the hardship teaches you to co-operate. He reckons that he is twice as intelligent as those who remained in Burundi. So his narrative of being the victim is also a narrative of increased freedom and influence.

Jean

Jean is the village leader in Village B3. We met him in Chapter Five, explaining about being a good leader in the camp. He is 30 years old and has been married since 1991. He has three children. He is originally from Gitaramuka commune in Karuzi province but has lived in Gitega and Bujumbura as well. In 1988 he was in the 7th form in secondary school when some things were stolen from the school. Three Tutsi and some Hutu – himself amongst them – were accused of theft and expelled from the school. However, the Tutsi students were readmitted shortly after. Had he been able to continue his studies, he would have liked to be a medical assistant. Instead, he tried his fortune working for various construction companies in Bujumbura. After some years, he quit his job and trained to get a driving licence. It is like a diploma, he explains, enabling him to seek employment as a driver. Unfortunately, Ndadaye was killed just when he had passed his test and was about to collect the documents. Everything was chaos and all offices were closed.

When Ndadaye was killed, in Bujumbura everything has stopped. Such as some activities. And these people who were going to work in different areas, they didn't go. There were many soldiers and many policemen around Bujumbura, and in villages like in Gitega or Muyinga, or somewhere else, there were killings. And because of these killings, Bujumbura didn't get food from these areas, and we had a real hunger in Bujumbura. And when we saw that, we decided to leave the city.

This is the most concrete passage in his account of the situation. Most of his answers to questions about his flight were more general and vague.

When did you flee the country?

I fled in 1993 when Ndadaye was killed. Because I was in Bujumbura, there were troubles, we directly fled.

What happened in Bujumbura?

OK. In Bujumbura, when Ndadaye was killed, everything was worse. Because these *putschists* said that we don't want to see two staying together. More than two people, we catch them.

It does not appear from his narrative that he has been personally threatened. Neither does he give long and detailed accounts of Tutsi atrocities against Hutu. And certainly Hutu violence against Tutsi is not mentioned. The closest he gets is that there were 'some killings' in the provinces around Bujumbura. These killings have no subject and no object and are referred to in the passive tense as if they had a life of their own. We do not know whether it is Hutu killing Tutsi or the army killing Hutu. All we know is that the effect was that there were food shortages in Bujumbura.

His personal experiences of the conflict were that he was not able to collect his driver's licence and a hike in food prices due to shortage. He also saw more police in the streets. This is interpreted into a large narrative on national insecurity and a city under siege due to fighting in the provinces. As opposed to the first two life stories, Jean does not openly claim that it was the Tutsi who were killing. He does, however, mention the *putschists* banning public gatherings, making them partially responsible for the situation.

What is remarkable about his narrative and a number of other life stories that I collected, is the fact that the killing of close relatives is not strongly emphasised. He mentions that his brother died *en passant* while discussing another issue, and I have to inquire directly about the details before he tells me that the brother was a teacher and was killed in 1995. He thinks it was the army in cooperation with the Tutsi who killed him, 'pretending he was a rebel'. That is all Jean has to say about that. Again, one is surprised by the lack of gory details about the evil acts of the Tutsi.

His narrative depicts quite precisely the sense of disruption, insecurity and invisible violence that resulted from the killing of the president and the failed coup attempt. After two months in this tense situation, he fled with a friend to Tanzania. They passed close by his home village and sent messages about their whereabouts. He was among the first to settle in Lukole camp.

His wife only came to the camp in August 1997 when she heard where her husband was and how to get across the border. Although he was already settled in Lukole A, they went to the registration site, Mbuba, and registered as new arrivals and were settled in one of the new villages in Lukole B. By the grin on Jean's and my interpreter's faces, I guess that this is a way to get extra rations, so I avoid probing further into it.

When asked about the relation to Tutsi students when he was a child, he answers thus:

Before the killing of Ndadaye, there was no problem. There was somehow problem but it was not open. It was not clear. It was for those who were clever, who were dealing with the Tutsi and these problems. But we couldn't notice that. We were children. But after Ndadaye the problem was open. [...]

When I was at primary school I didn't recognise if it's a Hutu or a Tutsi. I couldn't. But when I went in 7th form, I could.

As in the other narratives, we see 'the problem' lying latently under the surface. The problem only became 'open' in 1993 but it had been visible to the 'clever' Hutu before then. The more naïve the Hutu – the less education they have – the more blind they are to the problem. How is it then that they became aware of the ethnic groups?

We noticed because (at the boarding school) the Tutsi didn't want to share food with the Hutu. They didn't want to share the same plate in the school. [...] When they are sharing a bottle of beer, Tutsi didn't want to share with a Hutu.

But the Hutu don't mind sharing beer with a Tutsi?

No. There is no problem for a Hutu to share with a Tutsi.

The last comment is quite remarkable and quite characteristic of the way people in Lukole perceive the relationship between Hutu and Tutsi. 'We love them, but they kill us' people would say. Apparently, it is equally quite common for a Hutu man to marry a Tutsi woman while the opposite is

virtually impossible²²⁷. However, many people claim that this has changed recently, and many of the more radical Hutu in Lukole claim that marrying a Tutsi woman is a dangerous affair. A Tutsi man, on the other hand, finds himself too superior to take a Hutu wife, according to people in Lukole.²²⁸ This points to unequal relationships in both the sexual and ethnic realms. It is not merely a question of mutual 'othering' once the issue has become 'open'. According to the Hutu in the camp, the Hutu are tolerant and non-exclusive and not interested in 'othering' or excluding at all. They have it imposed on them from the Tutsi. In this way, they claim not to be interested in demonising the Tutsi, they only want peace and harmony. It is the Tutsi who are 'extremists' and racists. The effect of this position is, paradoxically, that the other becomes far more demonised and the process of 'othering' far more effective by putting the blame onto the other and taking the position as tolerant and non-exclusive.

The problem becomes 'open' either in relation to a specific date or in relation to the Hutu's increased awareness, and can either be an individual process, like entering secondary school or reading books about 1972, or it can be related to collective awareness. Jean claims that the problems started with the introduction of democracy.

Before Ndadaye government, Ndadaye propaganda, everything was all right. Hutu couldn't recognise that Tutsi were dealing with bad things. And they shared everything.

Although most refugees want democracy back, they also blame democracy for causing problems. Before democracy Burundians lived in unequal but harmonious relations, they claim. There is an ambivalent relation to awareness in this quote. On the one hand 'everything was alright' and 'they shared everything' before, when they were not yet aware; it was the fact that Ndadaye told them about their oppression that made everything worse. On the other hand, Jean explains that the Tutsi were also bad before, only secretly.

²²⁷ In English this sounds like a paradox, but we must recall that in Burundi it is the man who marries while the woman gets married. In Swahili the verbs differ for men and women, one is the active verb 'to marry' the other is the passive 'to be married' (check dictionary).

²²⁸ Ethnographies of Burundi confirm this picture. (See Albert 1963; Trouwborst 1962).

But myself, I was in school when Hutu began to be aware of Burundi conflict. And when we went to secondary school, the head teacher was a Tutsi one. And when they want to give mattresses they took the good ones and gave to Tutsi. But secretly. And bad ones they gave to the Hutu. Before Ndadaye propaganda, before Ndadaye government, Tutsi were bad, but they had to do that secretly. Now it is open.

This quote shows how Jean interprets local events, like the distribution of soft and hard mattresses, in relation to broader narratives about the Tutsi acting secretly and the democratic reforms opening the eyes of the Hutu. In some aspects, it is almost preferable when the Tutsi are openly bad rather than operating secretly. In that way, the Hutu can discover who they really are and wake up from their naïve trust in the Tutsi.

Hutu started to be aware when there were massacres in Ntega and Marangara (in 1988) because Tutsi showed that badness to the Hutu. And every Hutu who was around, was aware of that problem. And those Hutu tried to tell other Hutu who were in other provinces what Tutsi are doing to them. And Hutu began to be aware.

Ntega and Marangara in 1988, the massacres in 1972, the killings in 1991 and Ndadaye's abduction and murder in 1993 are all seen as watershed events that helped open the Hutu's eyes. However painful it has been, it is also perceived as a necessary process to reveal the Tutsi's secret plans, open the Hutu's eyes and hopefully also the eyes of the international community²²⁹. It is a step in the process of Hutu emancipation.

When Buyoya seized power by a coup d'état for the second time on July 25th 1996, the leader of CNDD, Leonard Nyangoma, was grateful to him for revealing the true intentions of the Tutsi army. *'We rejoice that the putchists of 21st October 1993 have at last signed their initial coup d'État and that they have thrown off their mask'* (Nyangoma 1996). Nyangoma wants the enemy to reveal its true character. In this way it is also easier to fight. Jean hints at a similar reading when saying that Tutsi violence in 1988 helped the Hutu realise the true nature of the Tutsi. He is, however, ambivalent, claiming at other times that it was democracy that caused all the problems.

²²⁹ This was a recurrent theme in the discussions I had with people in Lukole. They could not understand why the international community or the 'big nations' did not intervene when it was so obvious that the Tutsi were oppressing the Hutu. They were not sure whether this was due to Tutsi covering up the truth or whether the big nations knew 'the truth' perfectly well (America has satellites that can see everything, they would say) but did not wish to help.

Jean wants his children to have an education, although the educated are the first to be killed by the army. His reason is that it is the educated that can help solve Burundi's problems. It is, in other words, necessary for the Hutu to become ever more aware.

Steven

Finally, Steven's narrative is interesting because it is probably the most analytical and reflective. He has an ability not only to reproduce master narratives, but to skilfully relate his own personal life path to broader national politics. We met Steven, chief security guard in Lukole A, in Chapter Five. He was born in Tanzania and went to stay in Burundi as a child. He was in his final year at secondary school when Ndadaye was killed.

And when Ndadaye was killed, what happened at your school then? You were staying at the school at this time?

No, we fled. We fled immediately when he was killed. Because when he was killed, the population reacted, and how? The population reacted by killing the Tutsi. They said "Our president is killed by you. So that is why we will make a revenge on you." So they started to kill the Tutsi in the different regions. To prevent them from being killed as it happened in 1972.

Steven is one of the very few people I met in Lukole to mention Hutu killing Tutsi.²³⁰ He explains that it was due to fear that 1972 might be repeated. He is keen to emphasise that it was the uneducated and illiterate people who did this killing and that their reaction was spontaneous.

And were they organised in any way?

No, it was a spontaneous reaction. Spontaneous. Because they experienced what happened in the past for Burundi. They have seen by their own eyes. They have witnessed what happened in Burundi. So it was a spontaneous reaction. Even the government is saying that they are being mobilised by Hutu intelligentsia. But it is not true. The reaction has been spontaneous.

²³⁰ Albert also stands out, as he is the only one who mentions Hutu killing Hutu and looting Hutu property. And he does so on his own account. Because his father had been a member of UPRONA, his family had experienced being persecuted by other Hutu and he still feared for his security in the camp.

By the number of times he repeats the word 'spontaneous', it becomes apparent how important it is for Steven to emphasise this fact. He is well aware that the government has another reading of the event, namely that it was a genocide that was planned and orchestrated by the FRODEBU elite,²³¹ and he is anxious to dismiss these accusations. Steven expresses the educated CNDD elite's version of the events. His narrative is thus neither built merely on his own impressions and personal experiences of the conflict, nor on fragmented master narratives based on rumours and native theories as the other life stories above to a large degree are. He is expressing himself in direct dialogue with, and in opposition to, other political discourses.

As opposed to most refugees in Lukole, Steven's narrative does not deny or ignore the fact that Hutu also killed Tutsi. Rather, he takes issue with the nature of the killings. A central issue in the political field in Burundi has been to define whether the Hutu committed genocide in the days that followed October 21st 1993 or whether they reacted spontaneously and in anticipation of 1972 repeating itself.²³² If it were genocide, then the army was in its full right to clamp down strongly on all FRODEBU leaders, such as governors and *bourgmestres*, and the Hutu opposition cannot claim any right to participate in the political field as it consists of *génocidaires*. If, on the other hand, it was a spontaneous reaction by an uneducated and intimidated population, the Hutu leadership is exempted from responsibility and it is the Tutsi army that carries the responsibility, for reacting too harshly and for making the Hutu population fearful in the first place (through the 1972 massacres).

In this way, Steven reproduced the victim narrative. In Mishamo there was blood and gory details about the killings, but that was because the Hutu had not been involved. In this way the narratives strengthened the picture of the Hutu as innocent victims of the cruel Tutsi's violence. However with the violence in 1993 (and 1988), the Hutu lost their innocence. It is not an issue whether Chadrack, Pierre, Jean or Steven took part in the violence or not. What is at issue is the collective Hutu narrative. This narrative is imposed on them from outside as well, and made tangible by my presence in the camp

²³¹ For examples of the 'Tutsi' version see www.acgenocide.net.

²³² Steven's interpretation is strikingly similar to Lemarchand's (Lemarchand 1996a: xiii-xv).

and my questions about the past. The violence in 1993, and in particular the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, has made all Hutu potential genociders. The international tribunal in Arusha and international media all agree that what happened in Rwanda was a genocide. It is this image that they have to fight. And this is done either, as Steven does, by emphasising the difference between Rwanda and Burundi and by emphasising the spontaneous character of Hutu violence in Burundi, or, as the other interviewees do, by downplaying Hutu violence and avoiding details.

At Steven's school the army came to protect them but some of the students drew parallels to 1972 and decided to leave.

They said they came to protect us, but we thought they would kill us. Even in 1972 they said they came to protect the schools. But it was to kill Hutu.

1972 loomed strongly in their memory, and present events were interpreted according to this pattern. The fact that educated Hutu (including secondary school students) were said to be the main target in 1972, further emphasised their fears at the secondary school. Steven fled to Rwanda with roughly eighty fellow students. Others remained at the school and it later turned out that they were not persecuted and merely continued their studies.

After four weeks in Rwanda, he went to Tanzania and stayed with his mother who lives near the border with Burundi. However, his father sent a younger brother to fetch him back to Burundi. The brother told him that it was peaceful, some Tutsi were displaced and the schools were guarded by soldiers. When Steven returned to Burundi, he dared not return to school and instead stayed with his father. When the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi were shot down in a plane over Kigali on April 6th 1994, triggering the genocide in Rwanda, he was still in his village.

I was in my village. And I fled once again when the Tutsi militia came and burned the trading centre in which I was. They came and burned. They burned many of the kiosks, and they looted many goods from Hutu. And then they killed some of the people who were living there.

This account was common in the narratives that I heard in Lukole. I heard many times how Tutsi would come with machetes and petroleum, usually

escorted by the army, and burn, kill and loot trading centres. This is when Steven decided to flee again. He left on his own and his father followed a few weeks later. His father's wife remained in Burundi.

I ask Steven why some people decide to leave the country while others stay put. I express surprise that anyone should wish to stay in a place like that. He explains that it has to do with education. Only the educated can see that the Hutu are being persecuted. As with the other narratives, Steven operates with an idea of the problem being hidden versus open. He claims that there was inequality in precolonial times but it was worsened by the Belgians who said that Hutu were not as intelligent as Tutsi. Also education during the colonial period made the Hutu gradually aware.

Little by little they gained some conscience and they became aware of that discrimination which has been taking place for a long time. (...) when they became aware of the oppression, they tried to fight.

It is with education that they become aware of their oppression, and that is when the problems begin. They were taught at school that there were no differences between Hutu and Tutsi. However, *'in 1988, with the massacres of Ntega and Marangara [...] they were compelled to talk about Tutsi and Hutu.'* Here we see how swiftly Steven is able to link his school experience to political events at the national level. Similarly, when talking about his grandfather's cattle, he switches into a general description of *ubugabire* in Burundi. And when discussing why he attended a seminary school, he explains that the government had downscaled secondary schooling in regions that were predominantly Hutu, like Muyinga where he lived. Therefore, the church had tried to compensate by running more schools in these areas. He then goes on to say that he thinks that that was the main reason why the church and the former president Bagaza were opposed. Bagaza was infuriated to see that Hutu were still attending university, in spite of there being no secondary schools in the Hutu dominated regions. This is to say that when I inquired about his own life and schooling experience, he managed to relate it to broader issues.

Steven was very politically active at school when the democratic reforms came. In fact, he had been receiving clandestine propaganda material from

Palipehutu from as far back as 1988, but with the legalisation of FRODEBU, 'which is recognised even by the international community,' all the moderate Palipehutu members shifted. Only the radicals remained in Palipehutu, he explains.

Politics is for him connected with awareness and education. It is almost a duty for an educated person to involve himself in politics and take responsibility for the future of his nation. These are the ideas he brings with him to the camp: it is his duty – and everyone else's -- to try to study as much as possible, and for those who have studied to help develop the country in the future. He could easily stay in the Tanzanian villages due to his mother being Tanzanian and his language skills in English and Swahili, if he so wishes. But he prefers to remain a real refugee in the camp, not putting down roots in Tanzanian soil.

Master narratives and political ideologies

In order to fully grasp the production of narratives in life stories in Lukole, we must explore how they link to political ideologies, not in the sense of cynical manipulation by political leaders but as a means of making sense of life in a camp while being linked to larger discursive frameworks in the political field.

For Palipehutu and the refugees in Mishamo, the master narratives at hand did not only bring ontological *sicherheit* to the refugees whose symbolic order had broken down in 1972. The narratives were also an attempt at fundamentally subverting the official government discourse on ethnicity and history in Burundi. By recasting the Hamitic thesis in new terms, Palipehutu was able to claim that the Hutu had privileged rights to Burundi soil due to autochthony. This positioning in the political field in Burundi in the 1970s and 1980s was reflected in the way that refugees talked about the conflict.

In Mishamo Malkki found detailed narratives on Tutsi atrocities. The refugees would spell out in great detail how pregnant women were disembowelled and forced to eat part of the foetus, how penises and breasts were cut off the victims and bamboo sticks were inserted from the vagina or anus to the brain

(Malkki 1995a: 87-95). These macabre narratives were not the result of individual refugees relating their own traumatic experiences, but standardised narratives, told in the impersonal tense at any given opportunity – hence Malkki’s use of ‘panels’ for representing what she terms *mythico-histories*²³³.

The detailed, gory narratives of violence in Mishamo confirm a belief in Tutsi evil, and indicate Palipehutu’s hegemonic position in sanctioning and providing truths in that camp. I did not come across *mythico-histories* to the degree that she did, and the standardised narratives that I did encounter differed in a number of ways from the ones that she encountered in Mishamo. One explanation could be that Palipehutu did not hold such a position in Lukole, and neither was CNDD hegemonic, albeit more powerful than Palipehutu. This means that there were not the same ready-made answers for the refugees when searching for explanations as to what went wrong. Steven’s explanation of Hutu spontaneously killing Tutsi is the closest we get to official CNDD discourse concerning the events in late 1993. Although Chadrack and Pierre tend to blame the Tutsi more than Jean and Steven do, it is still far from the kind of mythico-histories that were found in Mishamo.

This shift in the political field in Burundi and in the political discourse of the Hutu opposition in the 1990s has had consequences for the narratives in Lukole. As argued above, the narratives are not mere reflections of the experiences of refugees. They are the means by which people attempt to re-establish order and meaning. This order and meaning is offered by political ideology. And while ideology has to relate to the problems of the refugees and to their memories, it is primarily shaped in relation to other ideologies (or discursive formations). Thus although Pierre’s experience of war and his Tutsi neighbours may have been similar to his father’s experience 21 years earlier in 1972, there were very different available interpretative schemes related to the

²³³ Panels are not simply quotations but are still ‘*extended narrative passages, clearly demarcated and set apart from the rest of the text*’ (Malkki 1995a: 56). They are an amalgam of quotes, testifying to the standardised shape and collective voice of the narratives.

prevalent political ideologies through which they could make sense of these events.

The life stories from Lukole express an ambivalent relation to the Tutsi and to the origin of the conflict. The whole aspect of harmony and of the conflict being hidden and open respectively, testifies to these contradictions. Probably, the concept of 'us' liking the Tutsi but them not liking us, illustrates best the perception in the camp. Here, the self is presented as essentially multiethnic and tolerant while it is the other who tries to undermine ethnic cohabitation and harmony. This ideological construction has reversed the construction of ethnicity by UPRONA in the 1970s and 1980s, when UPRONA insisted on non-ethnicity while clamping down severely on Hutu who attempted to express discontent, accusing them of inciting ethnic hatred.

As we saw in the previous chapter, FRODEBU/CNDD was keen to present itself as modern, rational, educated and moderate in opposition to Palipehutu, which played the authentic, populist note. Apart from being a local struggle in the camp, this relates to larger political issues and also influences narratives on ethnicity and conflict.

It is imperative for CNDD members in the camp to achieve recognition from the international community and they are well aware that the international community has put the searchlight onto Hutu *génocidaires* – for instance, in the shape of the international tribunal in Arusha. Therefore, it is important for any Hutu who wants to be taken seriously to distance himself from all kinds of Hutu chauvinism that might link him with the *génocidaires* of Rwanda. This is complicated by the fact that many Hutu did take part in the killing of tens of thousands of Tutsi civilians in the days after President Ndadaye's assassination, something that many Tutsi are quick to use as a reason for excluding Hutu from power. Any essentialistic categorisation of Tutsi in public discourse or reference to a Hutu nation, would imply associations with Hutu power in Rwanda in the early 1990s, thereby jeopardising any attempt to be taken seriously by the international community. Therefore, we find this vague definition of ethnicity in the life stories – on the one hand rejecting it while on the other clearly giving the Tutsi the blame for ethnic conflict. Hutu

involvement in killings in 1993 also leads to a general avoidance in the narratives of too many explicit details about violence, which is merely referred to as ‘the war’ or ‘the problems’.

Palipehutu and the refugees in Mishamo envisaged a Hutu nation as the solution to all their suffering, as this would not only help the Hutu, it would also be putting things back in their rightful place. Burundi was truly a Hutu nation that had been conquered by Tutsi, thus disturbing the authentic relation between people (*volk*) and national territory. This *Blut und Boden* ideology was not so obvious in Lukole. Here, the solution that most refugees would mention was democracy. If only Burundi could return to the democracy that it experienced so briefly in 1993 (as well as sharing the army) then peace and harmony would reign. In this ideological construction the ‘true Burundi nation’ is the democratic nation where one ethnic group does not get to oppress the other because the people’s voice is heard. This true character of the Burundi nation has been blocked by the Tutsi elite that has hijacked the state and prevented it from taking its place among the democratic, civilised nations, according to CNDD discourse.

The fact that political ideologies influence narratives of the past does not imply that all members of Palipehutu in Lukole tell detailed narratives of violence and atrocities while all CNDD supporters avoid it. Rather, the general shift in the political field has made it less relevant to tell the narratives of Tutsi atrocities. Thus even Palipehutu supporters such as Chadrack and Pierre avoid talking about violence. And inversely the CNDD supporters in Lukole would have an ambivalent relation to these narratives. I would be told about the evil doings of the Tutsi at times, but it was not commonly evoked.

To sum up, life stories in Lukole are rather vague on the nature of the conflict, avoiding the bloody details, and they show no obsession with ancient history. This may in part be due to the fact that political ideologies are not yet as strongly sedimented in the camp as they were in Mishamo in the mid-1980s, as the two main political parties continue to contest each other’s credibility; in other words there is not one, politically sanctioned, truth that the refugees are fed with. Furthermore, the ideology of the dominant party in the camp –

CNDD – is itself fragmented and contradictory when it comes to explaining ethnicity and the historical causes of the conflict due to the changes in the political field in the early 1990s. Finally, the memories of Hutu being involved in the killings in 1993 and an awareness that international opinion is sceptical towards the Hutu after the genocide in Rwanda, divests them of a pure victim position and forces them to avoid anything that slightly resembles Hutu nationalism.

From hidden to open

In the political field in Burundi it is imperative for all factions to define when the conflict began. This is what Lemarchand terms the meta-conflict, giving history an important role. Dating back to the Hamitic thesis and the academic and political contestations over the true nature of the conflict, it is vital to assert whether Hutu and Tutsi are ethnic categories and whether the Tutsi have always oppressed the Hutu on the one hand, or whether they are merely a figment of the German and Belgian colonial imaginations which split an essentially homogeneous and united people on the other.

In the camp, I saw similar disputes as to when the conflict started in Burundi. However, the question of when the conflict began is not so straightforward. I realised this when asking about the issue in life stories and in my survey. Apparently it is an indicator of political orientation (CNDD pinpointing the start to the 1960s and Palipehutu to the pre-colonial period). I therefore chose to ask respondents in my survey when they believed that the problems between Hutu and Tutsi started.²³⁴ I hoped in this way to be able to establish the most commonly held understandings of the past in the camp. As such understandings were assumed to be related to political conviction, I would be able to use it as an indicator of the strength of the two parties. Furthermore, I would be able to compare this with age, place of residence, length of stay, etc.

²³⁴ Question no. 39: When did the problems between Hutu and Tutsi start?

The answers were as follows:

Pre-colonial ²³⁵	119
Colonial	19
Since independence ²³⁶	124
1965	26
1972	81
1993	37
Other ²³⁷	14
Blank	44
Total	464

Figure 12. Opinions on the origin of ethnic conflict in Burundi.²³⁸

The figures indicate that a majority of the refugees in Lukole believe the problem to be recent. This indicates that a Palipehutu version of history is not dominant in Lukole although the number of respondents who believe the conflict to be age-old is not negligible either. However, the problem with a question like this – especially in a questionnaire where it is not possible for the respondent to elaborate – is that people do not have a fixed idea of when the problem started. The question therefore makes no sense to them.

This comes forth in the life story interviews where it is less a question of the problems starting at a certain point and more a question of the problems becoming ‘open’. Here, we see, firstly, that the problem was there all the time but became open at a certain point in time. Thus the respondents may at times believe to be answering ‘how long has the problem existed’ and at times be answering ‘when did the problem become open’. Secondly, the same individual can give several dates and criteria for when the problem became open. The same person may at times refer to the concrete event that triggered

²³⁵ Includes answers such as ‘When Tutsi came to Burundi’.

²³⁶ Includes answers ranging from 1958-1962.

²³⁷ Includes answers that cannot be dated, such as ‘When Tutsi started killing Hutu’.

²³⁸ As the question was open, I have grouped answers into categories such as ‘since independence’.

their flight – Ndadaye’s assassination - and later talk about becoming ‘aware’ at secondary school, or that the problem became open in 1972.

So, rather than asking refugees when the problems started, it would make more sense to ask when the problems became open – and even then, each respondent would have multiple answers. This is not merely to point out a weakness in the questionnaire. It is to illustrate how most flight narratives depict the conflict as latent, under a harmonious surface, only to break out at certain points in time.

It is apparent from the life story interviews that the perception of things becoming open is pervasive and that this is linked to certain dates and events, either at national level or in the individual’s life path. Usually, they would say that they had no problems with the Tutsi when they were children – they did not even know how to tell a Tutsi from a Hutu. This changed either when the Hutu became more aware, due to school education or due to democratic reforms and ‘Ndadaye’s propaganda’, or when the Tutsi went too far and showed their ‘true colours’ by openly killing Hutu.

There are two aspects to this that will be dealt with here. One concerns the need to explain how Tutsi individuals with whom one had no problems could become part of an ethnic other, and how ethnic harmony could be replaced by hatred and violence. The other aspect concerns the idea that awareness is painful but necessary.

The Tutsi’s secret identity

When asked to explain why they fled – or even when asked to describe their lives – these young men try to reconcile their experienced memories of the Tutsi with grand narratives of conflict and flight. How does one reconcile the fact that most Tutsi behaved and looked like Hutu with the fact that one has ended up in a refugee camp due to large-scale ethnic conflict? With the construction of a before and an after, one is able to reconcile the two facts. Before, the Tutsi were like the Tutsi of our memories. After, they were what political ideology tells us – the ethnic other.

In a study of Bosnian Muslim refugees in Denmark, Anders Stefansson observes a similar construction of the past (Stefansson 1997). The Muslim Bosnians allude to a harmonious, rich life in Yugoslavia and emphasise their friendly relations to Serbs and Croats. However, there was an ambivalent relation to this idealised past. For while, on the one hand, ethnic harmony was emphasised, on the other, *'the past was meticulously investigated for "traces" which seemed to lead to the outbreak of violence'* (Stefansson 1997: 5). Every little sign that could reveal that the Serbs had behaved as if they had secret plans, was scrutinised and analysed retrospectively to prove that their friendship was only superficial – a disguise that the naïve Muslims at the time believed was true friendship.

The similarities with Lukole are striking. But while Stefansson concludes that the Bosnian refugees were gradually building an essentialist ethnic identity, claiming ancient ethnic roots, the interesting point for me – in both the narratives of Bosnians in Denmark and the Burundians in Lukole – is the insistence not on age-old antagonisms, but on ethnic harmony in the past. This has, as mentioned earlier, in part to do with the fact that they had experiential memories (i.e. their individual memories from their life path) of relatively peaceful relations with neighbours of the other ethnic groups. However, young men born in Burundi the 1960s and 1970s would emphasise this harmony among ethnic groups during their childhood, in spite of the large-scale massacres of Hutu that took place in 1972. This indicates that the picture of ethnic harmony is perhaps not merely a historical fact, born from concrete memories, but rather a discursive construct. It certainly appears to be something that is emphasised rather than throttled down in their narratives. Refugees from Mishamo, on the other hand, who had not experienced wide scale ethnic violence prior to 1972²³⁹, were keen to emphasise the deep roots of the conflict rather than ethnic harmony.

²³⁹ I am aware that this is a crude reading of Burundi's history. There were ethnically motivated outbreaks of violence in the country, throughout the 1960s although the 1972 massacres exceeded them in scale beyond comparison.

One might propose that this discourse on a harmonious past is connected to a self-perception as tolerant, multi-cultural and non-essentialist. Refugees in Lukole would often claim that they never wanted the conflict and that they liked the Tutsi, while the Tutsi disliked the Hutu and started all the problems. As noted earlier, this is a refined way of 'othering' by claiming that it is only the other who is doing so. 'We' are merely the victims of this process. In this way, the Tutsi are to blame for the horrific events of 1993. The Tutsi had secret plans all along, and their friendship was phoney. Tutsi children were taught about the differences, while the Hutu children remained naively blind to the truth.

While we may see ethnicity as a construct -- as is now common practice in academia -- the Hutu refugees, on the other hand, see non-ethnic national unity as a construct that is hiding a deeper 'reality' -- the reality of ethnicity²⁴⁰. When they become aware of the 'reality', there is a strong sense of having been deceived and betrayed by the Tutsi who 'knew' all these years while pretending to be friends. In this manner, the real Tutsi is the stereotypical other, while the false one is the one pretending to be your friendly neighbour.

The concept of deception is central in a forceful article by Appadurai on the brutality of ethnic violence in the era of globalisation (Appadurai 1999). He argues that the body of the ethnic other can be deceptive. Thus Tutsi do not always have long noses and Hutu do not always have thick shins.

In a word, real bodies in history betray the cosmologies that they are meant to encode. So the ethnic body, both of the victim and the killer, is itself potentially deceptive. (Appadurai 1999: 311)

In other words, the Tutsi schoolmate who appeared to be just another little boy from the village (perhaps even with a flat nose) was deceiving you by hiding his true identity. It is the sense of betrayal and uncertainty about the other that pushes people to commit horrific acts of what Appadurai terms 'vivisectionist violence' against neighbours and old friends. One tries to stabilise the body of the ethnic other through these macabre acts of

²⁴⁰ No doubt, the government's 'double-talk' - banning the use of ethnic labels and promoting 'one people - one nation' while favouring Tutsi-Hima from the South in the administration - strengthens this image.

unmasking the specific body in order to find the true ethnic body. Appadurai is, in other words, arguing how individuals come to terms with the incongruence between individual experiences of the specific members of the other ethnic group and larger ideological constructs about the true nature of the other – hence his expression elsewhere of ‘ethnic implosion’ (Appadurai 1996). Ethnic conflict does not come from within or below, but from above. And when it is linked to and played out at the local level, ethnic violence gets cruel.

Whereas Appadurai’s point is to show how ethnic violence between neighbours occurs, this chapter has explored how refugees who have experienced such ethnic violence, narrate the violence. It is obvious from the life stories that the issues of betrayal and uncertainty about the ethnic other are strong elements in their narratives. This uncertainty only left them – according to the narratives - when the Tutsi showed their true intentions by killing tens of thousands of Hutu and their beloved president Ndadaye.

The painful process of revealing secrets

The other issue that comes forth in these narratives of before and after concerns the way openness is seen on the one hand to be painful while on the other hand being a necessary step in the Hutu’s road to emancipation and self-realisation.

Things were agreeable before. There was peace, and they got along with their Tutsi neighbours. It was only at a certain point in time that the problems became open. There are, however, ambivalent feelings about this time ‘before’ because the Hutu were also ‘blind’ then, and harmony was just an illusion. If the Hutu had remained blind, the Tutsi would have been able to continue with their secret plans. Therefore, becoming aware may have made things worse but it was also necessary in order to reveal the Tutsi.

These narratives relate to the stereotypes of the Hutu and the Tutsi that we saw in earlier chapters, where the Hutu are portrayed as naïve and honest and the Tutsi as cunning and secretive. However, the stereotypes are not

fixed, as it is possible for a Hutu to become less shy and less naïve through education or acculturation, while it is also possible to reveal the Tutsi secrets. These secrets are empty – they conceal the fact that Tutsi are not inherently more intelligent than Hutu. As long as the Tutsi keep their secrets and conceal this fact, they can maintain the illusion that they have privileged access to the secrets of power.²⁴¹

Becoming aware through education or through political awakening changes the Hutu nature by giving him knowledge and enhancing his ability to reveal the Tutsi secrets. Gérard realised that the Tutsi had a secret plan, when at school he discovered the system of marking Hutu exam papers with a ‘U’ and Tutsi’s with an ‘I’, making sure that the Tutsi got the best marks.

You see, to succeed in national examination it was difficult when you were a Hutu. Because there was a sort of selection, when they were giving marks of that examination. (...) They have a system to use a U and I. When you were at primary school, your teacher was a Tutsi, and he has a system to mark I and U in front of your names. And when they were collecting, they were giving marks to the examinations, they have to check if you are I or if you are U. And the I one, even if he had failed, he had chance to have marks. (Gérard 16.04.98)

This theme of using I and U was repeated countless times in the camp. It epitomises the idea that the Tutsi officially do not discriminate, while unofficially they have an intricate system to keep Hutu out of higher education – something that in itself would reveal their secrets. By using the I/U system, the Tutsi can make the Hutu believe that the Tutsi children are inherently better at school (provided, of course, that the Hutu do not discover the I/U system). Thus they are concealing the fact that the Tutsi are not more intelligent. However, the actual act of hiding – the whole set-up of the I/U system - is an instance of Tutsi intelligence. A real Hutu would never think up such a plan. It is as if there were two kinds of intelligence that the refugees operate with: true intelligence like mathematics, biology, etc. and false

²⁴¹ There was still a little doubt within the Hutu, however, just as there was a doubt in the audience in ‘The Emperor’s New Clothes’ until the child revealed the truth. If they were absolutely sure that the Tutsi were bluffing, then they would not need to educate themselves in order to gain access to the Tutsi secret. However, this doubt remains, and it is therefore necessary for them to gain access to them – e.g. through education – so as to display the impotence of the Tutsi, and prove that it was a bluff.

intelligence of scheming and deception. Interestingly, these are bound up with Hutu and Tutsi subjects at university. The Hutu are traditionally allowed to study natural sciences while political science, law and economics are allegedly reserved for Tutsi. Malkki observed a similar distinction between malign and benign knowledge. The mission schools were believed to have brought benign knowledge to the Hutu. This knowledge was perceived as an avenue for Hutu equality and strongly contrasted to the malign, secret knowledge of the Tutsi that was used to keep the Hutu away from power (Malkki 1995a). Paradoxically, it is this – impure – knowledge that the Hutu strive for. It is only through studying law and political science that they can wrench power from the Tutsi and reveal their secrets. In the process, the Hutu have to become more Tutsified in order to gain power.

When things become open – when the Tutsi secrets are threatened - the Tutsi become desperate and start killing Hutu indiscriminately. That is why some Hutu decide to take their children out of school and why quite a few people – especially among the less educated – would blame democracy for their misfortune. They are attempting to avoid awareness and trying to keep things ‘closed’. The general feeling in the life stories, however, is that the wheels cannot be turned back. Now that they have opened their eyes and seen the Tutsi oppression, it is no good returning to the days when the Hutu lived at peace with the Tutsi, naively accepting their lot in society. Most people in Lukole wanted democracy back and most wanted themselves or their children to have an education. So, although they nostalgically long for the harmony of the good old days, they are also aware that return is not possible once you have knowledge and once the Tutsi have (at least in part) revealed their true nature. Furthermore, the harmony was an illusion in the first place.

The narrative structure is closely linked to the idea of loss. A true community is presumed to have existed, only to be broken down when the Hutu took a bite of the apple of wisdom. The rupture is final. They can only attempt to cover this sense of not being whole – of having lost something – in other ways. The only thing the Hutu can do is continue what they started on. They need more knowledge and more awareness and they need to reveal the Tutsi’s secrets. Only then will a new kind of harmony reign.

Loss of innocence

Most refugees simply avoid going into too much detail about violence. We saw how this is connected to politics in the camp. However, their superficial narratives of violence also relate to the fact that they are told to me – the outsider. And whereas the outsider in the 1980s, like Malkkii, was presented with standard narratives on the cruelty of the Tutsi and the innocence of the Hutu, this narrative was difficult to maintain in 1997-98. They knew very well that I was familiar with the genocide in Rwanda.

Therefore, just as their narrative is about becoming aware and opening their eyes, it is also about losing their innocence, as only the naïve victim is innocent.²⁴² As the Hutu rid themselves of their naivety, they will no longer let themselves be killed without resistance as they did in 1972. Many refugees emphasised this point directly, or they hinted that it had happened in 1988, 1991 and 1993 when the Hutu knew what to expect and therefore fought back. Hence, the Hutu have matured but they have also lost their innocence and their victim position. When they narrate their story to me, certain things are left untold, as the Hutu now have something to hide as well.

Do refugees have a past?

We have seen how life stories are inserted into larger narratives and that these narratives are in part formed by political struggles. Drawing on previous chapters, we can see that these struggles took place both in Burundi and in the camp. In this final section we will draw on the discussion in Chapter Three in order to briefly explore a further aspect of the narratives – namely how they were formed by the ways in which the camp was governed by relief agencies.

Whenever there was a formal event in the camp such as the election of a street leader, the celebration of ‘African Refugee Day’ or the visit of the Tanzanian president, various dance troupes would entertain with ‘traditional’ dancing

²⁴² In a sense, Steven is pleading to this factor when stating that it was only the uneducated who participated in the violence.

and drumming. The best of these troupes were supported by various relief agencies who would provide them with clothes and drums, for instance, encouraging the refugees to preserve their cultural heritage. The cultural heritage was also kept alive by supporting basket weaving projects in which women made colourful traditional baskets and tablemats out of the material from WFP food sacks. The objective was to support Burundian culture so that it was not forgotten in the camp and to prevent the refugees from becoming 'cultureless'.

I found the performances aesthetically impressive and I always enjoyed going to these official events because they gave me the opportunity to observe how the relationships between refugees and agencies were almost ritually enacted. But basically at the time I found the dance troupes, theatre groups and basket weaving projects uninteresting seen from the point of view of what was actually going on in the camp. The refugees would never use these dance troupes for their own celebrations. They preferred Bob Marley and Zairean pop or singing their own songs. They never used the multi-coloured baskets but preferred plastic basins made in China.

Retrospectively, the dance troupes and basket makers are perhaps not so uninteresting, as they may be seen as ways of governmentalising and depoliticising culture. By supporting dance troupes and basket weaving, UNHCR was domesticating the past and exhibiting it in the form of cultural artefacts which represented an innocent Burundian culture devoid of any reference to politics or conflict. In this way, UNHCR attempted to create refugees as pure victims without any history or (political) culture. 'Why do you dance?' I asked one of the dancers from one of the most famous drumming and dancing groups, who practice almost every day of the week. 'In order to forget' was his answer.

A cultural performance that was not supported by any agencies -- or even known to them -- was a 12-year-old boy who made 'videos' -- or so I was told by friends in the camp. This 'video' turned out to be a shadow puppet theatre that he had made from a cardboard box, a piece of thin cloth, home made oil lamps and puppets cut out of cardboard and stuck to sticks. Entry fee was 20

shillings (ca. 3 US cents). The show was all about the Tutsi army fighting Nyangoma, people running away from helicopters and Bruce Lee and Rambo coming to the rescue. ‘This boy is an extremist’ my assistant excused, momentarily uncomfortable with me being exposed to this kind of cultural expression. He soon forgot his political correctness, however, and we enjoyed the show. It was certainly a far cry from the educative theatre group of OXFAM’s Sanitation Information Team, teaching hygiene and decent behaviour. And it was quite different to the aestheticised performances of the ‘traditional’ drummers. This young boy was taking on the political past in a direct and uncensored fashion that was far more dangerous than the other cultural forms and that questioned the neutrality and innocence of the refugees as victims.

As we saw in Chapter Three, refugees are meant to occupy the position of those who ‘lack’; they are constructed as lacking citizenship, a nation and livelihoods. Seen from the humanitarian perspective ‘genuine’ refugees are passive victims of violence that need helping and the role of humanitarian agencies is to provide such help in the best possible manner, providing food, protection, health and dignity. However, refugees do not always live up to the ideal of being hapless victims of war and persecution. Some may have left Burundi in order to seek employment or land, as was the case of those who migrated to the Tanzanian villages only to be deported to the refugee camp in 1997-98. Others may not be unequivocally conceived as passive victims of war. In the messy wars of present day Africa, one cannot distinguish clearly between combatants and civilians in the ways stipulated by various international conventions on refugees. The line between perpetrator and persecuted is blurred. This dilemma in humanitarian interventions was brought to the fore by the refugees that fled Rwanda after the genocide in 1994. The fact that it was the perpetrators of crimes against humanity that were living in the camps made some agencies (e.g. *Medicins Sans Frontiers*) leave the camp and UNHCR was criticised for housing, feeding and indirectly arming *interahamwe*²⁴³ and ex-FAR (*Forces Armées Rwandaises*). Whatever position the humanitarian agencies and their critics took, however, they all

²⁴³ Militias that were active in the genocide. *Interahamwe* means literally ‘those who work together’ (Prunier 1995a: 367-368).

operated with the conception that the camps consisted of *interahamwe* on the one hand and an innocent civilian population on the other.

In the case of Burundian refugees the dilemma was not so importunate. Here a picture of innocent civilians fleeing persecution and war was easier to maintain, as it was the Hutu fleeing from a Tutsi-dominated state. But there were also Hutu involved in fighting in the two rebel forces CNDD and Palipehutu.²⁴⁴ In order not to appear to be providing rear bases for these rebels, as the Burundi government continually insinuated, it was necessary for the camp authorities and the relief agencies to drive out any political activity and make sure that the camp was only a place for genuine victims of war. Therefore it was of utmost importance to ban and combat any political activity in the camp, as we saw in previous chapters. UNHCR did not only try to rid the camp of politics through the 'negative' power of forbidding it. The humanitarian agencies also tried to put something else in its stead, namely participation on the one hand and aestheticised cultural artefacts on the other. The distinction between the pure victim and the potential perpetrator of violence is linked to gender. Women, children and the elderly are automatically positioned as victims and 'civilians' whereas young men are more dubious. They are the ones who potentially took part in killing Tutsi in 1993, they were potentially involved in the genocide in Rwanda in 1995 and they potentially fought with Palipehutu in Giteranyi in 1995. This is not just the case in humanitarian discourse, as also the Burundian army sees young Hutu men as potential rebels. And as we saw in the previous chapter, this concept of young men operated among the refugees as well, as young men were forced to take sides as friend or foe in the political set-up of the camp.

Thus the young men are caught on a forked stick: on the one hand they are forced into a position as politically active while on the other hand politics is criminalized. Similarly, they are forced to revisit their past in the political competition to define what the conflict is about, while simultaneously having the past taken away from them and substituted by basket makers and dance

²⁴⁴ The armed wing of CNDD is the FDD (Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie) and the armed wing of Palipehutu is FNL (Front National de la Liberation). There is also a third rebel force in the country, Frolina. However, it is regionally based in the south and has no influence in Lukole.

troupes. In this paradoxical situation young men revisit their past with a mixture of wanting to explain the present and find a solution to the conflict in Burundi, together with a sense that they ought to forget their past; as if it is something to be ashamed of.

By trying to create genuinely innocent victims without any past or culture, the humanitarian agencies are attempting to create *tabula rasa*, where politics is forgotten and the past is aestheticised into cultural performances. Such refugees are obviously easier to imagine repatriated and reconciled than the actual scheming, plotting politicised young men that we find in the camp. However, the dichotomous picture of the genuine, apolitical, ahistorical victims on the one hand and the young male politicians on the other is more blurred, as many of these young men are aware of the opinions of relief agencies and international opinion. Their narratives are shaky, with CNDD in particular reproducing a discourse similar in some respects to UNHCR's, avoiding the past and referring to democracy, human rights and reconciliation.

Conclusion

In this thesis I set out to explore how people make sense in -- and of -- a world that is circumscribed by bureaucratic governmental action; a world where politics and history are relegated to the margins of society and the inhabitants are meant to act as innocent victims without a past. This world is at once extremely bureaucratic and tightly managed while simultaneously being full of rumours, myths, politics and historicity, as people inhabit it through everyday strategies.

A central but hitherto overlooked actor in this game is the young men that relief agencies only concern themselves with when they cause trouble and disturb the 'community spirit' of the majority of innocent refugees through their political actions and personal assertiveness. These young men are cast by UNHCR as potentially dangerous and as threatening to the image of refugees as victims. These young men play an important role in transforming the camp from an alienating space into a lived place that makes sense to the refugees, as they seize this same opportunity to rid themselves - and the Hutu - of their position as eternal victims by breaking with the stereotype of Hutu naivety and recapturing, or reinventing the camp.

It is against this background that I posed the following research question: 'How do young men make sense of life in Lukole refugee camp?' This called for a broad ethnographic study of the camp, its governing, its interpretation and reinvention by the refugees and by the young men in particular, and its insertion into the larger narratives of Burundi's past. In the process we have also witnessed the Hutu's gradual transformation from naïve peasants to more educated defenders of democracy and human rights. In the following I will briefly outline some of the conclusions from the core chapters.

Community, politics and young men

Humanitarian agencies attempt to manage refugees that tend to defy the hegemonic nation-citizen-territory constellation by producing them as apolitical victims that need helping in the name of humanity. Such victims are

by definition innocent and without roots or a past. If they have a past it should remain there and not be brought into the present. Through governmental practices of everyday interventions in the physical and mental wellbeing of the refugees, UNHCR is attempting to create an 'empowered' community out of the refugees. Empowerment in their eyes is an apolitical and ahistorical process of forming 'the community' and forcing party politics to the margins of the camp. Political activity is conceived by the camp authorities as introducing divisiveness and selfishness into 'the community'. Being political excludes the possibility of being a pure victim, and victims are the only refugees that UNHCR can cater for. These governmental actions have the effect of gendering the refugees: women embody the helpless refugee victim and the self-sacrificing cornerstone of the community while men embody 'trouble' in the shape of political activity and rule-breaking.

With closer scrutiny we see that these governmental practices of the relief agencies have quite unintended consequences in the camp. Certainly they do not manage to purge the camp of politics or create refugees as pure victims without a past. Rather than becoming self-governing citizens of the governmental practices, acting according to the categories that the humanitarian intervention had produced, the refugees interpret the camp according to a narrative of social and moral decay. The symptoms of this decay are identified by the refugees as lack of respect for men, the elders and the 'big men' by women, the youth and 'small people'. There is an understanding that the camp is 'flattening' and homogenising the population and thereby destroying Burundian customs, which are conceived to be hierarchic but harmonious. The refugees are, in other words, interpreting their experience of flight and exile in line with a narrative of loss, in which the UNHCR's equal treatment of all refugees, the quasi-urban nature of the camp and cultural mixing with Tanzanians and Rwandans are seen to have disturbed a Burundian culture that is depicted in a glossy, nostalgic picture. Burundi is produced as the static, hierarchical and harmonious place that the camp is not.

However, the narrative of loss is ambiguous. On the one hand, the camp is a threat to the self-evident social order. On the other hand, these processes of

alienation are painful but necessary steps in the progress of the Burundian Hutu. This relates to a recurrent theme in the camp: the narrative of the Hutu losing their pure Hutuness. As much as they cherish the virtues of the stereotypical Hutu who is honest and hardworking – stereotypes that date back to early colonial categories – some of the Hutu characteristics are also seen as anachronistic and keeping the Hutu in darkness and oppression, for instance his naivety and shyness (read: lack of initiative). For the Hutu to succeed, according to this narrative, they must become more assertive and less naïve, just as the Hutu from Rwanda have. In other words they must become more Tutsified if they are to manage against the Tutsi -- and if they are to manage in the camp. The camp appears to accelerate this process of becoming more aware. The hardships and challenges of camp life are perceived to strengthen the Hutu and prepare them for the challenges of the future. If they remain aligned with the ideals of yesteryear they will lose out, both in the camp and in Burundi.

Three groups have taken advantage of the possibilities that the camp opened up for them: the street leaders, the NGO employees and the businessmen. In all three groups young men are strikingly present. They become 'liminal experts' who are able to take advantage of the possibilities that the camp opens up, learning to play by the new rules and with the new rulers and outmanoeuvring the older generation. These young men have managed to free themselves – or rather, have been freed by circumstances in the camp – of norm and custom and have been able to shape their own destinies. However, this process is not unidirectional or total. Living in the camp does not mean that all former norms and habits cease to function. Most people juggle the different hierarchies of status markers from Burundi and from the camp, ambivalent as regards the Hutu virtues of 'the good old days' and the 'brave new NGO world' of the young liminal experts. And while this new elite breaks down the old hierarchies of the gerontocracy, it builds up new ones. Hierarchy and respect for 'big men' continues to be expected, just as women are expected to respect men. The latter can be explained by the fact that these young men are trying to rehabilitate the masculinity that they perceive to have lost to UNHCR. In this way they show strength and determination; they are the ones who are taking the camp back from UNHCR.

Breaking with past norms and conventions, challenging the virtues of Hutu 'shyness', honesty and naivety and becoming more assertive characterise these young men and express a transformation in the camp. Does this then imply a break with the past and simply living in the present? Ironically, this is far from the case. The past is evoked and brought into the camp – not as fixed mythico-histories but in a number of ways which reflect the unstable and unqualified character of Lukole. The past emerges in the tales of decay as the harmonious, good old days. The past emerges in the political rivalry in the camp to define the true nature of the conflict in Burundi. And the past emerges as memories of conflict and violence.

No doubt this past is constructed in the camp as an answer to present preoccupations. But it does not merely 'emerge' out of thin air, and its discursive elements are not produced in isolation in the camp. The narratives that are constructed in the camp draw on a repertoire of images that are related to the political struggle in Burundi to define the truth. Such images or discourses have a past and are linked to broader political discourses. Thus when a refugee explains that the conflict is age-old and due to Tutsi invaders from the north, s/he is drawing on a repertoire of images of Burundi dating back to colonial racial theories on the origin of the interlacustrine kingdoms of central Africa. This repertoire is linked to political projects that are determined to prove that their particular version of Burundi's past is the true one. Such projects involve more than historiographic disputes and are discursively linked to ideas such as socialism, anti-imperialism and democracy.

In Lukole rival political parties offer competing readings of the past and of the nature of the conflict in Burundi. On the one hand, Palipehutu presents the conflict as primordial and of the Tutsi and Hutu as racial categories. CNDD, on the other hand, presents a more moderate and contradictory understanding and exhibits less of an obsession with the past. In Lukole, one would rarely be told about the somatic differences between Hutu and Tutsi, and the hope for the future was to return to the democracy of 1993 rather than the liberation of the Hutu people. This shift in perception is due in part to the

change in the political field in Burundi, where it is increasingly difficult to articulate an oppositional Hutu discourse within the terms of race and territory. Along with the shift in government discourse on ethnicity in the early 1990s, the Hutu opposition had to rearticulate its oppositional discourse around issues such as democracy, multiculturalism and human rights.

We have noted how in Lukole the political parties offer competing ideological frameworks that can explain to the refugees why they have ended up in the camp.. However from our research perspective these ideological frameworks are also important as structuring factors in the struggle to define and dominate the camp. Political rivalry is intermeshed with personal networks and patronage systems that secure access to power and resources. These struggles have the effect of turning the homogeneous, alien space of the camp into space that is differentiated, contested and hierarchical, consequently investing the different parts of the camp with meanings that the refugees can decode and relate to. In short, the reinvention of Lukole is a survival strategy comprising various sub-strategies – such as rumour mongering -- for finding meaning in a world which no longer makes sense.

Because political activity is banned by the camp authorities it takes on a clandestine nature. Politicians are accused of being criminals by their rivals and violence in the camp is intertwined with political affiliation and criminal networks. The effects are to split the camp into CNDD and Palipehutu territory through violence and rumours of violence. Operating underground, politics is at once dangerous and appealing. It is dangerous because it is illegal and associated with selfish power thirsty individuals by the relief agencies; it is appealing because it offers an alternative to the bureaucratized space of the relief agencies. Politics transcends the camp, it points towards a broader horizon beyond the food rations and women's committees of UNHCR. Being involved in political activity offers not only an answer to the question 'why am I here'. It also offers a solution to the problems in the future. A politician might be breaking the law of UNHCR but he is fighting for a much larger and more noble cause. This is the other side of politics. It is the side of politics that UNHCR cannot see and that the refugees only see at

times. From this perspective, politics is far from sordid or selfish. It is about self-sacrifice and finding a purpose in life.

But politics brings the past as well as the future into the camp. Although the young 'liminal experts' appear to create themselves anew in the camp, rejecting old structures and hierarchies, they still relate to the past in various ways. In life story interviews individuals insert their personal memories into larger narratives in order to lend them authority as coherent meaningful narratives rather than merely a string of contingent events. But as opposed to the gory, detailed accounts of Tutsi atrocities that were told in Mishamo, these narratives are rather 'sterile', avoiding too many details on either Tutsi or Hutu violence. Certain aspects of the past are avoided and recounted in vague and general terms like 'then there was violence, and we fled our country'.

These perceptions relate to the recurring narrative of Hutu loss of innocence. In this narrative there were harmonious relations between Hutu and Tutsi until a certain point in the individual's life path or in the collective past; this is the point when the Hutu became aware of the Tutsi's true nature. This would happen either because the Hutu had become sufficiently 'intelligent' and 'opened their eyes' or because the Tutsi had showed their true colours and started killing the Hutu. This killing was in turn seen as a reaction to the newly awakened Hutu exposing Tutsi secrets. As the Hutu became more intelligent, they shed their Hutu naivety and no longer passively accepted their lot in society. This, I have argued, brought further loss of Hutu innocence, as Tutsi intelligence is seen as malign intelligence that corrupts the mind. Very concretely this innocence was lost when the Hutu – remembering how they had been killed without resistance in 1972 – started killing Tutsi in 1988, 1991 and 1993. Their involvement in these killings, together with their awareness of the genocide in Rwanda, meant that the Hutu could no longer claim a pure victim role. It seems reasonable then, to claim that this is why they avoid detailed descriptions of violence in their narratives. According to this narrative the Hutu have embarked on a one-way track with no way of turning back. Once the Hutu open their eyes, they cannot just close them and forget what they saw. Likewise the Tutsi cannot undo their deeds once they

come out in the open – although they can attempt to by killing all the intelligent Hutu.

Palipehutu and CNDD draw on these issues of innocence and victimhood in slightly different ways. CNDD is attempting to downplay ethnicity and appear as democratic and reconciling. In this way, they try to maintain the victim role in relation to violence, in particular when portraying their rivals as ‘violent extremists’. Palipehutu on the other hand is more explicitly anti-Tutsi and ethnicist (although this is also modified in official language) while on the other hand playing on the fact that it represents the true Hutu values and has therefore not eaten of the apple of wisdom as the rivals have. In this sense, Palipehutu has restrained itself from the temptations of malign Tutsi knowledge and thus remains pure and innocent.

Making sense of Lukole

For UNHCR Lukole constitutes a place to contain and maintain a population of 100 000 people that is out of place. Their past and future are irrelevant, and they are not meant to change in the camp. They are simply expected to be. For the Burundians living in Lukole, it is also a temporary waiting room where they can kill time, and they do not cut all their ties to Burundi. On the contrary, they are constantly relating to a Burundian past and future. This is not to say that they live in the past; they make sense of Lukole by inhabiting it and making it theirs.

The devastation of their established social order – the fact that their world has fallen apart - is overcome through political acts of remembering. This creates a schism between the humanitarian agencies on the one hand, which attempt to create pure innocent victims without a political past, and the camp population on the other, with its attempts through politics and memory to reinvent the space and avoid becoming the universal victim who has no agency and no past. This schism has concrete consequences, as politics and the potential politicians – the young male elite – are constructed by the relief agencies as a threat to the innocent refugee community.

The two perceptions are not islands unto themselves, but have consequences for one another. The fact that UNHCR conceives politics as sordid and that the international community sees Hutu politicians as potential *génocidaires* means that, on the one hand, politics is marginalised and criminalised, and therefore closely linked to violence and other clandestine activities. On the other hand, these politicians seek recognition from the international community. The meta-conflict in Burundi has been a struggle to define the truth about Burundi's past and although the struggle has been against other factions within Burundi, the narratives have always had a broader audience than the home audience. It is the international community that needs convincing about the 'truth' and it is the international community that is being fed with lies by the other part. Therefore the attitudes of the international community at any given time are highly relevant for the articulation of politics in Lukole.

Although refugee camps might appear to be seedbeds for the production of nationalist history, cut off from the rest of the world, this is not the case. People there relate to developments in the political field at home as well as to international opinion. In Lukole, this resulted in a double movement towards breaking with the stereotype of the naïve Hutu victim while simultaneously trying to avoid being stigmatised as Hutu *génocidaire*. This in turn results in a finely tuned balancing act between their two different audiences – first and foremost between the international community and the discontented refugees. Secondly, CNDD and Palipehutu each strike their own balance and attempt to outmanoeuvre the other in order to set the agenda for what is right and what is wrong in Lukole.

Refugees, conflict and change in Burundi

Despite its broad scope, this study has omitted certain aspects of life in the camp. I did not explore in any systematic way the life worlds of refugee women, children or elders, which would have enabled us to explore other effects of being governmentalised and put into other bureaucratic boxes than that of the young men. Neither did I systematically scrutinise the internal dynamics of relief agencies. These were explored through anthropological methods of observation and informal conversation with staff on the ground,

supplemented with policy papers. A more systematic analysis of the internal dynamics between staff at different levels and their life worlds could add an extra dimension to our understanding of relief interventions.

My approach has, however, enabled me to shed new light on refugee camps and on the political dynamics of the Great Lakes region in general. By exploring their political imaginations we are able to understand better what it means to be a refugee, and in addition we gain insight into the relation between exile politics and political formations in the homeland. Central to this approach has been the conviction that 'politics matters', not in the sense that politicians manipulate 'ordinary people' in order to obtain their personal goals of power and fame -- as is the conception of UNHCR -- but in the sense that political ideologies and struggles to take a position in the political field define what is politically thinkable. Such political battles set the limits for articulating a feeling of discontent that might be born out of quite different material conditions. With this basic assumption in mind, I explored the following aspects of refugee life in order to fully grasp the formation of identities and means of making sense in Lukole. I have chosen not only to explore political imaginations in the camp but to examine how they relate to camp management, in this way coupling relief work and politics. It was shown that the banning of politics and the concept of community participation affected the formation of political identities in Lukole. I have furthermore chosen to link the political imaginations I found in Lukole with the formation of politics in Burundi, as the two interact in a dialectical relation. Finally, I have tentatively linked this with the notion of the 'international community' from which all parties to the conflict want recognition.

This approach can help us understand two issues at a more general level: refugee camps and the conflict in Burundi. As regards the camps, the focus on refugees as victims has had dire consequences for thinking politics in the humanitarian discourse. As long as UNHCR continues to operate with its conception of refugees as pure victims and of women (and children) as bare humanity, it will perpetuate the gendering of refugees and the creation of young men as 'trouble'. Similarly, politics will remain sordid and

criminalized, rather than being an integral part of identity formation and social organising. As long as the past is perceived to be problematic, the past will turn up in problematic ways in the clandestine political rivalry of the camp. UNHCR's project of depoliticising and dehistoricising the refugee camps will never succeed and will merely distort the refugees' relations to politics and the past as something clandestine and criminal. Politics will not cease to exist but will need continuous policing, based on the negative and unproductive exercise of power, thus evading bio-power and the concomitant production of knowledge. From the point of view of the relief agencies, they are cutting themselves off from understanding what is actually going on in the camps in terms of political imaginations.

In relation to the conflict in Burundi, we have seen that there is a complex dialectical relation between exile identities and politics in Burundi. Palipehutu was born in exile by refugees who had fled the massacres in 1972. In the 1980s this political entity from outside began impacting on the political field in Burundi. And inversely the shift in the political field in Burundi in the early 1990s had the effect of modifying political imaginations in exile. Finally, refugees are important players in the regional conflict in a number of complex ways. Their political imaginations are not restricted to the field between Burundi and Lukole, but relate to the political situation in Rwanda, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, etc. as well as to their obscure notions of the international community. Events in these places are picked up by short wave radios in Lukole and interpreted through rumour and conspiracy theories, becoming pieces in a big puzzle that helps them make sense of their present situation in the camp.

At the time of writing, Lukole has existed for almost eight years. In Burundi a three-year power-sharing government was inaugurated on November 1st 2001, after negotiations between most of the political groups in the fragmented political field in Burundi. Despite these developments, the prospects of the refugees being able to return are slim, as fighting intensifies between the army and the two main rebel groups which did not take part in the negotiations. As virtually everyone in Lukole supported one or another of

these two groups, it is doubtful that they will trust the peace negotiations and decide to return.

Meanwhile, they remain in the camp, killing time and fighting each other in order to get to define the hegemonic version of the truth. With the polarisation and radicalisation of politics in Burundi, it is a question of how long a tolerant, moderate line will continue to prevail in the camp. Perhaps beautiful and dangerous mythico-histories will seem more appealing to the refugees as they become increasingly desperate, watching their options diminish for a return to the democracy that they briefly experienced in 1993. On the other hand, if moderate forces within the larger political parties manage to dominate the political field in Burundi and articulate the anxieties and discontent of the majority of Burundians, radical politics may be marginalized enough for the refugees to decide to bury the hatchet and return. But nothing is given in the unstable political landscape of the Great Lakes region, where one conflict seems to spill over into another and people, ideologies and anxieties cross borders and topple any attempt at establishing order of any kind.

Appendix A: Survey method

In April 1998 I carried out a survey of 464 adult refugees in Lukole A and B. I chose to do the survey at this late point in time so that I had an idea beforehand of the issues that could be of interest, which internal principles of social differentiation might exist and which biases, I could expect. The objective of the survey was twofold. On the one hand I wished to be able to test whether some of observations that I had made in the camp were more general phenomena or were merely the expressions of a small fraction of the population. Thus, for instance, I had the impression from a number of interviews that people were complaining that women no longer respected men in the camp. By asking in the questionnaire whether people saw any changes in relations between men and women and what changes they saw, I was able to see whether this was a widespread opinion. By asking about the respondents' objective life conditions, I was also able to correlate such opinions with gender, age, marital status, length of stay in the camp, etc.

The other objective was to make a baseline survey of the camp population with which I could compare my surveys of leaders, NGO employees and businessmen (see Appendix B). Without this baseline survey, the other information would make little sense.

As place of residence was assumed to be an important factor in social status and political opinion in the camp, I attempted to question respondents from all over the camp. I divided the camp into roughly equal sections among my 12 assistants. In this way one person would be given streets 1-10 in Lukole A for instance. He or she was then to carry out 4-5 interviews per street. I asked them to spread the interviews evenly down the street, as one end is closer to the market, the NGO offices and the hospitals and the other is close to the river with mosquitoes and bandits. In order not to simply choose to interview friends they should take the first house in each block (the streets are administratively partitioned into blocks). In Lukole B it was not possible to be quite so systematic, as the households are not in streets. They were also

requested to interview a woman every other time, although this did not seem to work, as 65% of the respondents were male.

The types of questions are as follows. The first 12 questions are on personal information about the respondent, including length of stay, commune of origin, and occupation in Burundi. Questions 13-23 are termed 'camp life' and concern the everyday practices of the respondent and his/her household in the camp. In this way I am able to get a picture of social stratification within the household (collecting firewood etc). I am also able to get a picture of livelihood strategies, and pastimes of various groups, depending on age, gender and location. Questions 24-29 concern education and attitudes towards this, as education is an issue that appeared to preoccupy the refugees a lot. However, there seemed to be a gap between ideal and practice, as large numbers of children appeared to stay away from school without their parents interfering. I also had heard a theory that businessmen were not so interested in education. I hoped to test these attitudes in the survey. However, the answers were very general and positive towards education, making it difficult to analyse.

Question 30 is about leadership. It is the intention of this question to map which institution people actually use in various situations. This might then be compared with the ideals of a good leader that they present in interviews.

The final two groups of questions are of a more attitudinal character. Questions 31-35 concern attitudes about the camp (changes in peoples behaviour, the good and the bad aspects of life in the camp, good and bad areas of the camp). Some of these questions provoked answers that were more useful than others. Respondents appeared to be willing to answer questions on changes in behaviour, whereas they often gave a sardonic answer to the question on spatial differentiation 'it is all the same, we are all refugees'. Such issues are apparently not suited for questionnaires.

The final questions concern attitudes to the conflict in Burundi; its origin, its causes and its solutions. I finish off with a multiple-choice question where I ask the respondent to state which of three statements he/she agrees with.

These were statements on Hutu-Tutsi relations that were equivalent to the different opinions I had heard in the camp on the issue. Unfortunately, I am not sure that they all understood the question, as some respondents would tick several choices.

I had done a pilot survey beforehand, in order to get an idea of how to formulate the questions so that they were not misunderstood, and so as to see which issues were relevant. I also discussed the questions with my research assistant in the camp beforehand. I instructed my assistants on how to fill in the questionnaire. They were instructed to introduce the survey thoroughly each time, explaining who I was and what it was for as well as guaranteeing anonymity (for the same reason I did not register address or name of the respondent). I followed some of the assistants in their interviews, both so that I could help them and so that I was able to observe some of the biases that arose.

There were a number of biases connected to the survey and I am very hesitant to use too much of the material or to draw too strong conclusions from it. A simple question such as language competence can be interpreted in many ways (we all know it when up-dating our CV and wondering whether we should still put German on the list, although it is 20 years since we learned it at school). Some respondents would be able to fill in the forms in English but still not put English as a language they mastered, while others would gladly list French and English although they were unable to communicate in any of these languages.

I have not used much of the data in this survey in the present thesis. Firstly, because the kind of analysis that I have carried out is more suited for qualitative data of which I have plenty. Secondly, I am cautious to use data that might be biased. However, the results have given me great inspiration as I probed further in my qualitative analysis.

Interviewer: _____

Date: _____

Questionnaire for Lukole Refugee Camp.

Simon Turner, Research Fellow
Roskilde University, Denmark

1. Age _____

6. Religion _____

2. Sex _____

7. Street/village, block _____

3. Education _____

8. Commune in Burundi _____

4. Marital status _____

9. Languages _____

5. Children _____

10. Refugee history (Dates and Places) _____

11. What was your occupation in Burundi/Rwanda? _____

12. What was your father's occupation? _____

Camp life

13. Do you have any opportunity of earning money in the camp (e.g. collecting firewood, trading, brewing beer, working for Tanzanians or other refugees, digging shamba, NGO, UNHCR, *za shughuli*)?

Please Specify: _____

14. How often do you go to watch a video? _____

15. How often do you play cards or uburugu? _____

16. How often do you go to a bar? _____

17. How often do you play football/volley ball/ basket ball? _____

18. How often do you do physical exercise? _____

19. What else do you do in the camp to spend your time (e.g. visit friends, go to market, listen to radio)? _____

20. Who collects firewood in your household? _____

21. Who cooks food in your household? _____

22. Who tends the garden? _____

23. Who collects water? _____

Education

24. Are you attending school? Which level? _____

25. Are your children attending school? Which level? _____

26. How important is education?

very important _____

quite important _____

not very important _____

unimportant _____

27. What is good about education? _____

28. Which kind of education would you like to have/ like your children to have? _____

29. Why is that a good education to have? _____

Leadership

30. Who would you go to with the following problems? (e.g. Family, friends, neighbours, *Abashingantahe*, Block leader, Street/village leader, security guardians, police, Camp Commandant, UNHCR, social workers, community mobilisers, others).

1) Problem between members of family _____

2) Problem between you and your neighbour _____

3) Problem between you and your husband/wife _____

4) Problem between you and leader _____

5) Problem between you and friend _____

6) Theft or robbery _____

7) Problems while collecting firewood _____

Social changes in the camp

31. Do you see any changes in the relations between men and women, after coming to the camp? (State which changes)_____

32. Are there other changes in the way people behave after coming to the camp? (state which changes)_____

33. What are the biggest problems in the camp?_____

34. Have you learned anything from staying in a refugee camp? (What have you learned?)_____

35. Are some areas of the camp better than others? Why?_____

The conflict in Burundi

36. What in your opinion is the reason for the conflict in Burundi?_____

37. What do you think is the solution to the conflict?_____

38. Which countries do you think support Buyoya's government?_____

39. When did the problems between Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi start?_____

40. Which of these statements do you agree with?

- 1) "Hutu and Tutsi do not look the same, we are different races/tribes."
- 2) "There are no differences between Hutu and Tutsi, we are the same tribe"
- 3) "You can only tell the difference between Hutu and Tutsi by the behaviour."

Appendix B questionnaires for leaders, businessmen and NGO employees

In early 1998 I did surveys of three influential groups in the camp. The main objective was to obtain a profile of these groups so as to compare them with each other and with the general population (see Appendix A). In this way I was able to determine any particular characteristics of these groups and hence evaluate what kind of people became street leaders, NGO employees and businessmen respectively.

The questionnaires were in French (and in English for NGO employees). NGO employees often filled in the questionnaires themselves in groups while I was present to assist them. In the case of street leaders, my interpreter would sometimes interview them in Kirundi and fill in the questionnaire in French or English. As very few businessmen speak and write French sufficiently, we would usually interview them and fill in the questionnaire ourselves.

123 NGO employees responded to my questionnaire. These were mainly social workers (community mobilisers), school teachers, employees at the hospitals and in OXFAMs Sanitation Information Teams. I have in other words not interviewed the guards, loaders and other menial labourers. I do not have the exact figures of NGO employees in Lukole at the time. But here follow some to give picture of the scale. AEF employed 86 community mobilisers in Lukole A and 36 in Lukole B and 154 teachers in Lukole A and 73 in Lukole B. OXFAM employed 50 refugees in its sanitation information team in Lukole A and half as many in Lukole B. The hospital in Lukole A had 176 employees altogether, including cleaners. The temporary feeding centre employed roughly 45 while the Mother and Child health centre had 23 Burundian staff. The figures from the hospital in Lukole B were slightly lower. Slightly less than half of the staff in the hospitals was employed as nurses, laboratory technicians and medical assistants.

Some of the questions did not work as expected. Thus it was difficult to get them to admit to having other income than their wages. My assistant would explain that I meant *za shughuli* – wheeling and dealing – which prompted embarrassed giggles from many. This bias can also be read from the fact that a higher proportion claims to have other income in the last 20 than in the first 100 interviews that we did, indicating that we got better at explaining the questions towards the end of the survey period.

I interviewed 62 street and village leaders. There were not many problems in the actual interviews as the questions were fairly simple. However, a UNHCR field officer did stop me handing out the questionnaires at a meeting and demanded that I cleared it with the security officer. The security officer had no remarks.

Finally I did a small survey of 79 businessmen. I attempted to select as broad a variation of different ‘types’ of businessmen based on my knowledge of the market. This knowledge had been achieved through interviews with the market committees who knew exactly how many businesses of various kinds existed in their market. Thus in Lukole A market in April 1998 there were 48 restaurants, 32 bars, 95 shops (including stalls inside the market) selling shoes, clothes, batteries, rice, salt, etc., 94 maize/sorghum beer sellers and 116 stalls with fresh fruit and vegetables (including maize and cooking bananas). Apart from this there were radio repairers, tailors, hair dressers, maize mills, butchers, bicycle taxi drivers and mobile cigarette vendors. I tried to cover as many of these as possible.

There were not many problems involved in these questions as they were quite factual. However, I was told that they would be reluctant to tell their income and would be likely to understate the size.

Questionnaire for NGO workers.

Simon Turner, Research Fellow
Roskilde University, Denmark

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Age _____ | 6. Religion _____ |
| 2. Sex _____ | 7. Street/village _____ |
| 3. Education _____ | 8. Commune in Burundi _____ |
| 4. Marital status _____ | 9. Languages _____ |
| 5. Children _____ | |

10. Refugee history (in Rwanda/Tanzania) _____

11. Job in Burundi _____

12. Present job(s) (agency, title, location) _____

13. Present job for how long? _____

14. Jobs before that in camp (job + agency) _____

15. Other income (e.g. business) _____

16. Block/street/village leader? _____

17. How did you get your job? _____

18. Mention 3 good things about your job with an NGO _____

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

19. Mention 3 bad things about your job with an NGO _____

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Questionnaire for Leaders.

Simon Turner, Research Fellow

Roskilde University, Denmark

1. Age _____

2. Sexe _____

3. Votre niveau d'étude _____

4. Etat civil _____

5. Enfants _____

6. Religion _____

7. Avenue/village dans le camp _____

8. Votre commune au Burundi _____

9. Quelle langue parle-tu? _____

10. Petite histoire de votre refuge (Date & lieu) _____

11. Votre travail au Burundi _____

12. Travail actuel (Homme d'affaires, ONG, travaille-tu pour les Tanzaniens)? _____

13. Combien de temps es-tu chef de village ou conseiller? _____

14. Es-tu élu? Quand? _____

15. Etais-tu chef de village au Burundi? _____

Questionnaire for Businessmen.

Simon Turner, Research Fellow

Roskilde University, Denmark

1. Age _____

2. Sexe _____

3. Votre niveau d'étude _____

4. Etat civil _____

5. Enfants _____

6. Religion _____

7. Avenue/village dans le camp _____

8. Votre commune au Burundi _____

9. Quelle langue parle-tu? _____

10. Petite histoire de votre refuge (Date & lieu) _____

11. Votre travail au Burundi _____

12. Quelle sorte d'affaire avez-vous dans le camp? _____

13. Où (Lukole A/Lukole B) ? _____

14. Propriétaire (associé, personnel, travail pour un autre)? _____

15. Rendement? _____

16. Avez-vous de travailleurs? Combien? _____

17. Quand as-tu commencé? _____

18. Autres travaux (par exemple ONG)? _____

19. Es-tu chef de village? Chef de block? Conseiller? _____

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