



UiO • University of Oslo

Defining Rwandanness

*Exploring Perceptions of Identity Amongst Rwandan
Migrants in Oslo, Norway*

John Lungu

Social Anthropology

60 Credits

University of Oslo

Department of Social Anthropology

Fall 2022

Copyright John Lungu,

2022,

Defining Rwandanness,

John Lungu

www.duo.uio.no

Publisher: Universitetet i Oslo

Abstract

Identity, specifically on an individual level adjusts after migration. The new environment that migrants find themselves in after migration provokes processes of acculturation influenced by social, economic, and cultural forces. This thesis explores the various adjustments in cultural practices, beliefs and identity of individuals that takes place amongst Rwandan migrants as well as their subsequent influence on generations that come post-migration. Autobiographical memory is used as a central point in understanding individuals' identity. While scholars have discussed the connection that exists between migrants and their home countries, much of it is centred on economics, poverty, and conflict. Little value has been placed on the unique cultural identity that these individuals possess. Migration entails adaptation to a new culture in language, food, religious environment, and many other factors. The two countries under study are Norway and Rwanda as host and home countries respectively. Identity is affected in one way or the other after moving to Norway as migrants clash or acclimatize to western values that maybe different from African or specifically, Rwandan values. While different people of Rwandan origin in Norway will still identify as Rwandan after migration, the specific characteristics that define this Rwandanness varies among them. It is these small but significant differences that are explored. By exploring the perception and beliefs of migrants through past experiences recalled, mementos and oral tradition, we get an idea of what it means to be Rwandan. Failing to present what identity means for Rwandan migrants from their own points of view, leaves a gap in the description of what it means to be a Rwandan in Norway. This thesis is a product of ethnography carried out among Rwandan migrants in Oslo

Acknowledgements

I want to firstly, thank my Participants who made time for me to conduct my ethnography. This paper would not have been realised without their active participation.

My gratitude also goes to my Supervisor, Arnd Schneider. His patience and guidance put me in the right direction throughout the fieldwork as well as writing process.

Lastly but not least, many thanks go to my family and friends, specifically my mother, two sisters and a lovely partner. Their encouragement and support was priceless.



Map of Rwanda. Source (<http://www.getamap.net/>)



Map of Oslo. Source (<http://Maps.google.com>)

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Background	2
Research questions.....	4
Terminology	6
Capital and its forms.....	7
Acculturation and adaptation	7
Thesis overview.....	10
Chapter 2: Methodology.....	13
A novice in fieldwork	13
Access to participants.....	13
Initial contact.....	14
Participant observation	15
Adjusting to the COVID	15
Time and Schedule	16
The phase strategy	17
Language and communication	17
Dealing with misinformation.....	18
Sample description	18
Ethical consideration	19
Focus areas.....	20
Participants	22
Study area	22
Chapter 3: Memories at home and in transit.....	24
Memories in mementos.....	24
The memory in songs.....	31
The memories in transit countries	32
The memories to Forget	35
A journey from Rwanda to Norway.....	37
Chapter Summary.....	39
Chapter 4 Life in Oslo.....	40
Picking an environment to live in	40
Prayer and Worship.....	42
Relations with people.....	43
Partnerships and marriage.....	45
Appearance in makeup.....	48

Related by blood	49
The married couples	51
Culture in dreadlocks.....	53
Dress code.....	53
Decorating the house.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Food we eat	55
Chapter summary	59
Chapter 5: Education and Career paths	60
Passion or safe career	61
The influential parent	63
We know what is best for you.....	64
Motivated by guardians.....	65
Under the ideal career.....	66
Discussion and Conclusion.....	69
References	76

Chapter 1: Introduction

“All of these stories make me who I am, but to insist on one is to flatten my experience and to overlook the many other stories that formed me. The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete” (Adichie, 2009)

The text above is extracted from Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s TED Talk, The danger of a single story. In the speech, Adichie presents the downsides of having single stories about groups of people. These dominant stories that are driven by media forces end up defining communities and a significant part of identity is left untold. Migrants, more so those from developing countries find themselves victim to the single-story phenomena. In the migration process, the mainstream media focuses on inflow of migrants into host countries and problems that arise from this. The positive aspects as well as unique culture practice defining identity is neglected. Even Return migration, specifically voluntary return which involves migrants making their way back is not given much attention and has been neglected or at least received the least amount of attention. When return migration is reported, it is usually those cases where people are forced return to return to their home countries or in efforts to repatriate migrants by offering them monetary benefits once they agree to return to their home countries. For instance, Rogge and Akol (1989) note the short comings of repatriation as a long term solution in dealing with migrants, there is little mention and focus on voluntary return as a possible solution let alone a mention of any positive that migrants bring to host countries. Cassarino (2004) notes this neglect as being due to the difficulty that comes with measuring and comparing cases of return migrants that are mostly scattered and thus, present a challenge when searching for data. One might however argue that gathering this kind of data is not the problem, instead the data itself goes against the status quo that presents migrants as a problem in developed countries. As noted in the opening statement, the reports

about problems caused by migration might be true to, but do not depict the full picture of what it is to be a migrant. Such is the picture that migrants find themselves painted, almost entirely by other with little to no say about their own identity.

However, the aim of this paper is not to point fingers at missing gaps or find faults in current literature. I instead wish to take positive approach to tackle the side of migrants that is not given attention: how identity they identify themselves. I try to construct identity from a migrant's perspective. By studying the factors that build up the identity of a migrant, we can determine the value that one still has of their home country as well as figure out the cultural diversity that exists in this context. Identity encompasses a wide range of factors ranging from food, language, clothing, and values between social relations. As Idang (2015) the culture of a group is what differentiates them from any other group. These practices are of course not rigid, thus not only does it contribute to the culture diversity in a host country, but it can be shared with younger generations. Thus, rather than defining migrants by their economic needs and burden on a host country, focus can be placed on the entire spectrum of contributions they come with to a host country. This thesis is meant to identify and explore the Rwandanness that exists with migrants living in Oslo, Norway.

Background

Also known as “the Land of a Thousand hills” is a small African country located in east-central Africa. The country borders four countries namely Uganda on the northern side, Burundi on the southern side, Tanzania on the east, and finally Democratic Republic of the Congo on the western side. Rwanda has four official languages: Kinyarwanda, Swahili, French, and most recently English was added to this list and has been steadily displacing French (Adekunle, 2007).

While the country has a rich cultural history that is well known locally, the small sized country is known to the rest of the world for civil war and conflict. A period characterised by socio-political disputes ended up in a deadly conflict in 1994. The civil, famously known as the Rwandan genocide put sent headlines across world (Adekunle, 2007).

Relative to the geographical size of the country, Rwanda is densely populated with the 2002 census indicating a total 8.1 million people. As a result of overpopulation and civil unrest in the past, the country experienced significant waves of migration. Before Rwanda gained independence 1962, close to 245,600 Rwandans migrated to Democratic Republic of Congo

because of famine and underemployment. After gaining independence, ethnic conflicts between Hutu and Tutsi groups resulted in additional 120,000 people to flee the country. By the late 1980s over 480,000 Rwandans took refuge in neighbouring Burundi, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania (Waldorf, 2009). Further displacements occurred during a genocide in 1994. During the period of the genocide, 2.4 million people were forced to leave Rwanda. After the genocide, the victorious political party; Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) created a Government of National Unity that put together the non-extremist political parties (Waldorf, 2009). In 1996, conflicts in neighbouring Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo resulted in close to 820,000 Rwandans returning back to Rwanda. An additional 10,000 from Uganda and over 1 million refugees who were forced to leave the country before and at the time of independence returned by 1996. It was estimated that fewer than a 100,000 Rwandans were living outside the country in 1997 (Waldorf, 2009).

In the European context, Belgium has the highest number of immigrants because of its past connection to Rwanda. On the other hand Norway houses small number that is less than one percent of the total immigrant population (SSB, 2021a) . This figure includes the first generation of children born in the immigration population. Out of the total population of immigrants from Africa, 916 are of Rwandan origin (SSB, 2021c).

Post genocide, Rwanda has undergone considerable change from the state it was in 1994. In the article Reconciliation in Post Genocide Rwanda, Zorbas (2004) outlines Rwanda's attempts to strike a balance between justice and healing, vengeance and forgiveness over the years since the genocide These attempts have not come with drawbacks or criticisms such as the authoritarian approach of the Rwandan government. There is however, no denying the fact that Rwanda is no longer the conflict-ridden country that it was during the genocide. If anything, it's current state seats as an example for other countries to follow.

Research questions

Amongst the determinants of return migration is how it is perceived by immigrants. This is not as simple as asking a question of whether, a Rwandan migrant wishes to return to Rwanda at some point. Instead, by analysing the various aspects of a migrant's livelihood and how they relate to Rwanda, it paints a better picture of how they perceive their home country. This thesis explores cultural, economic as well as social characteristics among Rwandan migrants. Comparisons are drawn among generations and different periods in terms of time and place. By taking note of these aspects, we note the level of attachment a Rwandan may still have for their home country. Through ethnography, topics of food culture, marriage, education, memories, religion, and work are discussed with participants to understand their perception of Rwanda. The concept of return migration has been studied considerably in academia. As Gmelch (1980) noted, anthropology and related disciplines treat migration as a system by examining the various streams from both sending as well as receiving societies. This study is neither meant to introduce new theories about return migration or place it at par with other phases of migration. Instead, it aims to understand existing knowledge through unique lives and experiences of participants with Rwandan background. By exploring lives of individuals in this sense, we can get an idea of how perceptions are shaped. An individualistic approach also helps avoid relying on mainstream generalisations that end up giving biased views on return migration.

One may wonder why we scrutinize people's livelihood to figure out their perception, as opposed to simply asking what they think about Rwanda and the prospect of returning. The key here is comparing the various attributes a cross generations and the groups that exist within. By so doing we get an idea of what is to be Rwandan and try to figure out how much 'Rwandanness' lies still lies within these individuals. These are merely social facts. As Durkheim (1895) noted, they are uncontrollable and unchangeable social forces in our environment that influence us. Despite this, social facts still give an indication of what the groups believes in terms of identity. Thus, by comparing life attributes, we can identify how close an individual is to being Rwandan and ultimately determine the perception of Rwanda.

How does autobiographic memory affect the identity of a Rwandan migrant?

For purposes of clarity, my focus area is personal or autobiographic memory. By this kind of memory I refer to instances recollected from the life of an individual. Cohen and Conway (2007) differentiated episodic and semantic memories with the former consisting of personal experiences at specific times and places while the latter consists of general knowledge and

facts about the world. My area of interest thus, falls in episodic memory. The differences between the two categories can be blurred because they intersect in many instances. What separates them, however, is that episodic memory is recalled with one oneself present in the past whereas this is not the case with semantic memory. I was therefore, not merely focused on extracting facts about Rwanda from my participants, it was their personal memories that I was interesting in.

How do Rwandan immigrants relate to their kin and social circles?

There are several theories that explain social capital, for this thesis I utilize Bourdieu theory of capital. He explained social capital is what provides access resources embedded in social relations. Within this theory, focus is placed on the resources, structure, and nature of the social relationships of participants. Through family and friends, we determine the kind of social resource in relation to Rwanda. Within the social network lies the concept of collective identity as will entail how much of Rwandan culture exists within the group that they find themselves in. The more interactions one has, the more social capital they are likely to have. As a benefit of having more social capital, their status in society is lifted as the currency buys a higher position (Bourdieu, 2011). Thus, if one seeks to understand the structure and how society functions, it becomes important to look at capital in all its forms.

What factors influence career choices amongst Rwandan Immigrants?

Career choice encompasses much more than economic gains. Bourdieu (2011) describes the concept of institutionalised cultural capital. In addition to the skills that these symbols of cultural competence and authority gives an individual, there is an aspect of status. From uniforms to the nature of work involved in career, society creates hierarchy of career. This is evident Rwanda society, as such it is essential to note how much influence this kind of capital has on the career choice of participants.

How do cultural beliefs compare amongst different generations of Rwandan immigrants?

Social groups differentiate themselves by how they look and behave. Weather it's by language or dress code, these attributes determine how they are viewed by society they live

in. I thus look at embodied cultural capital between different generations to see how this related to the culture in Rwanda. The food culture is also used in this case. I don't only compare cultural traits between generation but include the Norwegian culture as well.

Terminology

Return Migration

Several terminologies have been used to describe return migration. Gmelch (1980), notes that the since the topic of return migration came became an area of interest in the social sciences, various terms have been used to describe the phase including reflux, homeward, return flow, second-time, repatriation, and retro migration. Thus, for any of the referenced work that utilizes any of these terms, it should be clarified that they refer to return migration unless otherwise stated. The term return migration refers to the movement of emigrants returning to their homelands to resettle (Dustmann, 1996). This definition can be used in local as well as international context. For the case of this study, it will refer to movement across cultural boarders, specifically from Norway to Rwanda. This is not to be confused with forced return or forced repatriation. For this thesis, return migration refers to voluntary choice that an individual makes to return to Rwanda.

Rwandanness

Rwandanness refers to the quality of being Rwandan. The thesis revolves around what is identified as Rwandan. This definition comes from within the Rwandan community in Oslo. Whether it parents that have lived in Rwanda before or younger generations that have inherited beliefs. This is of course not always consistent for everyone because the individuals' social circles vary from person to person. So even if two Rwandan individuals find themselves in Oslo, their definition of Rwandan will vary because they are influenced by different social interactions it is simply a social construct based on how the participants understand their identity (Campbell, 2000). Nevertheless, Rwandanness is used as the base or control for comparison among the different individuals in my sample.

Memory

The term memory is used generally in this paper and not necessarily remembering information. I relate the past experiences of individuals attached to symbols that are kept as reminders as reminders. The referred to is by no means a "nothing but" definition of what autobiographical memory is. Memory is too complex to be placed into a single perspective. This definition is tailored to focus on the discussions raised in this paper, otherwise it would not be possible to all perspectives in this paper alone.

Capital and its forms

Capital refers to a kind of fuel that enables an agent's position to be reproduced within a social field. As Bourdieu (2011) noted, it can present itself in economic, cultural and social form. All these forms can be converted or transmitted between individuals, as well as determine power relations within social fields. Transmission of capital from parents to children can determine the direction children take within the social field. Cultural capital theory argues that the social origin of a family is closely tied to children likelihood of educational level of success (Nee & Sanders, 2001). It is important to note that these transmissions occur over long periods of socialization and maybe changed by external social factors. The balance of the different types of capital at any given time entails the structure that the social world operates in and ultimately determines the chances of success that one has in any given society (Bourdieu, 2011).

Acculturation and adaptation

Acculturation refers to the process of culture change and adaptation that takes place when individuals with different cultures come into contact or rather and individual moves into a space with different culture (Gibson, 2001). Adaptation on the state or process of adjusting to the social environment that an individual finds themselves in. Various studies have looked at aspects of immigrant adaptation and highlighted the various challenges that are encountered. Crossing cultural boundaries entails those individuals move to a different social world that has its own norms and, in many cases, different from that of an immigrant's home country.

The challenges with adaptation don't only affect individuals that migrate but the generations that follow. When children find themselves in between cultural identities between home and host countries that clash, there is little room for adaptation. In the case of religion for instance, being an active Christian is held in high regard by immigrant parents, but if their children are born in a society that does not value religious practice, there are bound to face challenges in adaptation.

Memory

Autobiographical memories represent past experiences that are guides and shapes present as well as future behaviors (Baddeley, 1992). When an individual encounters a problem, it is only normal to draw from similar experiences in ones past to find solutions. This also applies to maintaining identity in that aligning behaviour within one's social context requires considerable exposure simply past experiences. Before a Rwandan learns the processes involved in a marriage ceremony, they must first witness a ceremony before they can follow the process themselves and make it a part of their identity. As we will notice in subsequent chapters, Rwandan migrants build their opinion about marriage based on their experiences in their home country. Thus, general knowledge with Rwandan culture practice may state that marriage ceremonies are important and should be valued, experiences from autobiographical memory however will influence how an individual perceives this. For some, having witnessed the economic drain that comes with having marriage ceremonies has made them place less value on the ceremony itself. This is of course only a part of several other influences.

Neisser (1988) states that the social purpose of auto biographical memory stands at the core of memory functions. Shared memories enable conversations and facilitate interactions on a social level. Not only does social function enable friendship to be built but strengthening bond for those in the same social circle. Disclosure of one's own autobiographical memories to someone who was not present at the actual event means placing them in your cultural context. In the absence of past personal experience, social relationships can suffer. Pillemer (1992) states that conversations are more likely to be believed and persuaded when personal memories are incorporated. In generational relationships such as parents and their children, it can help information shared to be believable. When a Rwandan parent uses oral tradition to

encourage their children to travel their home country, it's more persuasive to include their memories of what made them love Rwanda.

On individual level, auto biographical memory is the basis from where identity is built (Conway, 2005). Memories from past experiences forms a significant part of who or what an individual identifies with. Throughout this paper, I use personal memory to understand Rwandanness. The relationship between self and memory is thus, significant when looking at identity. Conway (2005) also states that not only is autobiographical memory used for identity in the present, but also what identity has been in the past as well as what it's likely to be in the future. It worth noting that the relationship it's not only memory that affects identity, but the reverse is also true. Depending on one's identity of self, individuals may choose to alter, distort, and fabricate personal memories so they can align with their identity. Another function of auto biographical memory covered in this paper is in relation to emotions.

Pasupathi (2003) states that when past experiences are recalled, it is done so with an aim of regulating emotions. This is the case especially when the actual experience was a negative one. Pasupathi also questions. If recalled events for emotions only applies to the self or it is meant to elicit emotion from listeners as well.

Thesis overview

In the chapters that follow, I look at the capital of Rwandan immigrants in its various forms and how it shapes their livelihoods. Comparisons are drawn among cases between different generations as well as gender where possible. The focus on the three phases pre, during and post migration is down to the fact that people's decisions are based on both past and present experiences, both internal and external. It therefore, gives us an understanding of where an individual's perceptions originate from if we look at their migration journey rather than just focus on the present alone. Firstly, and foremost, The physical environment that immigrants live in is analysed regarding how they relate to these places. Because the research participants are spread across Oslo in terms of where they live, I look at specific areas to gain insight into what it entails to live in these different parts of the city. This is related to where immigrants or their parents have lived previously. Secondly, I move on to the social circles of Rwandans. This includes family, peers, and partnerships. Focus is placed on significant connections that Rwandans have within these social circles, seeing what is deemed important to them in the process. Within this section, I explore the understanding of marriage and ideal partners, noting where these preferences come from and whether they fall in line with parents' choices. Immigrants lived experiences for those that are married or living in partnerships are also explored.

In the next section, memory and the various ways through which Rwandans deal with memories is discussed. I incorporate concepts of visual anthropology to understand how memory is preserved through physical objects such as pictures. The feeling of grief and how it is dealt with in the case of individuals moaning their past is explored. Cultural practices such as songs are passed on from generations as way of remembering lost loved ones. The changes that these practices undergo while being passed on to younger generations are taken note of. Some of the participants interacted with spent time in transit countries and their lives were influenced by these temporary stops that lasted from months to years. I talk about positive and negative experiences in these transit countries including discrimination and stereotypes perpetrated by locals as well as mistreatment of immigrants. I explore these experiences through memories in transit to determine how the migrant's identity was shaped by such trajectories.

Fourthly, comes the embodied cultural capital of appearance. In a globalized world, fashion influence can come from just about anywhere. From clothes to makeup, I study the fashion

trends within the Rwandan community. I try to understand how physical beauty is defined or understood in their section of society. Relations are drawn between physical appearance and culture. As will be noted in specific cases, physical attributes such as dreadlocks have a strong connection to music, I thus look at inspiration behind such lifestyle choices. In addition to bodily decorations, I also talk about the houses of immigrants and what makes the places they live into homes through decorations. From pictures on the wall to certificates of past achievements, all these physical objects have a special meaning and thus are looked at to determine their significance in an immigrant's home.

focus is then shifted to the food culture of Rwandan migrants. There is a vast difference between Norwegian and Rwandan food culture. Thus, migrants go through the process of searching for stores or shops that stocks their desired food or at least food closely related to what they are used to eating. I explore the challenges that come with this search, the differences in taste as well as improvising in the case for those that cannot access the food they want. Comparison is also drawn from individuals who have moved from their parents' homes and how they have adapted their eating habits.

I then look at religion where prayer and worship is explored. For the most part, religion in Rwandan society plays a significant role in the lives people. Church service also remains a weekly activity in the age group of first-generation immigrants. I investigate how this trend influences the younger generations that were born in Norway and explore their reason for being active Christians in comparison to their parents.

Chapter six focuses on economic capital. This section focuses on how immigrants pick specific careers and what influences these choices. I look at how parents perceive specific careers, how these perceptions come into being and the role they play in determining their children's career. I also look at the dilemma of deciding on whether to follow passion or take up careers that will bring financial stability.

Finally, I conclude with a discussion summing up all the various forms of capital explored in previous chapters, as well as how they affect perceptions about immigrants' perception of Rwanda as a home country. As a side note, throughout the thesis I draw comparisons with my own personal experiences from Zambia where relatable. This not only gives me a better understanding of Rwandan immigrant's experiences and culture understanding, it shows that these experiences are not unique to individuals from one country alone but can be shared among other things.

Chapter 2: Methodology

A novice in fieldwork

One is never fully prepared for fieldwork if you are a novice ethnographer, as was my case. There is no theory specific enough to walk you through actual encounter in the field. The challenge first time ethnographers encounter is that methods literature does not explain how and what to observe specifically as it is difficult to put in words (Delamont, 2004). Thus, some previous experience would have been an advantage in the initial stages, looking at what I know now. First time interactions with participants formed a large part of my insecurities in ethnography. Because my participants were from a different country from me, I felt like an outsider stepping into their environment and this left me feeling insecure. Sæther (2006), reports similar experiences during her fieldwork in China, stating that she found herself in an inferior position as an 'outsider trying to get in' and this left a sense of having less control of her work. With time however, I adjusted to the fieldwork environment and tailored my methods in line with the unique participants that I interacted with.

Access to participants

Having defined my sample as people of Rwandan origin living in Norway, my first step in fieldwork was to identify participants within this category. As stated in the introduction, the Rwandan population in Norway or specifically Oslo is low, standing under one percent of the total African migrant population. It was thus, not easy to find participants. I identified participants through friends and family members who went on to introduce me to individuals of Rwandan origin. For reasons related to limited available participants in the initial stages of fieldwork, a snowball approach is used to gain access to more participants by using the ones available (Bryman, 2016). There were only a few individuals in my circle who had connections to Rwanda. I thus, decided to use snowball sampling in view of this circumstance. I was aware that my sample would risk being biased if I depended on one stream of a snowball sample. As selection depends on individuals who are already

participants, it is possible that the individuals can share characteristics (Cohen & Arieli, 2011). Thus, to ensure some diversity, I extended my search for participants to Caritas, an organisation specialised in dealing with migrants' welfare. In addition, social media platforms like Facebook provided an alternative search space.

For the most part, the individuals I came across were eager to become participants. They openly participated and were okay with the topic of discussion. However, there were a fair share of individuals that were not interested as I had the least interactions with them. Despite explaining what the topic of my thesis was about, some individuals assumed I was trying to get information about conflict and politics in Rwanda, something they were not comfortable sharing. Bringing up a topic about migration journey seemed to trigger some bad experiences in the process leading to their settlement in Norway. Thus, they preferred not to participate altogether. For the others who were busy, they were interested in participating, it just seemed inconvenient to incorporate me in their schedule. It was either work or school that hindered the possibility to make time with me. They had their own studies and work assignments to focus on. I kept getting rescheduled to a point where a meeting did not seem feasible. Because of this initial assumption that my ethnography was going to be time consuming, I had to make it clear that I would fit into their schedule and that it would only require them to interact with me like they would with any other friend.

Whether an individual decided to participate or not. What was important for me was that they understood my topic and what it entailed to be a participant. I did not want to secretly push them into sharing information that they would otherwise be uncomfortable with knowing that it was being recorded. The names and descriptions of participants would be anonymised so that any data about them would not be traced.

Initial contact

Before meeting with potential participants, I sent a brief description of my topic. I did to ensure they at least has some idea what the meeting was about before explaining further during our meeting. I believed this put me in a better position to convince them in coming onboard. Madden (2017) argues that the initial phase of communication, that he refers to as negotiating is crucial in determining how comfortable and open a participant is likely to be moving forward. I therefore, paid much attention to the initial interaction knowing how important it was for the quality of my ethnography.

I prepared a set of unstructured open-ended questions that I was going to ask. This form of question can be a starting point as well as guide a conversation (Bryman, 2016). I did not ask every question but instead, chose to pick what seemed appropriate. Often times I would only ask one or two of the questions I had prepared before the conversation moved in a different direction.

Participant observation

Throughout my ethnography, participant observation was incorporated to gather verbal as well as observed data. This form of qualitative observation is suitable in observing and evoking meaning out of participants' behaviour (Bryman, 2016). As every situation was unique, my interaction with participants varied and depended on what seemed suitable. There were times when I was only a spectator and completely observed my participants interactions. I used a voice recorder and notepad to capture these interactions. As much as the recorder was efficient in capturing verbal conversations, it created an unnatural environment when participants knew they were being recorded. It is worth clarifying that participants were made aware of the recording prior and were never recorded in secret. The notepad on the other hand did not seem to affect the observation process. The only weakness was that if I missed an observation, there was no other way of recalling the moment. In the rest of my encounters, no recordings were captured at all because I was actively socializing and taking part in activities. This enabled me to build a relationship with participants that went beyond data collection.

Adjusting to the COVID

It was during the period of my fieldwork that the COVID19 became a pandemic. As a result, I adjusted modes of communication with participants. I turned to online platforms for communications because recommendations from authorities discouraged physical meetings. The constant increase in infection cases also brought about fear in the general population and thus, made it difficult to meet participants in person even if social distancing guidelines would be observed. The lack of meeting in person had its weaknesses, as there is an aspect of body language that could not be replicated in digital communication. As Murthy (2011) argued that conducting ethnography in the absence of face-to-face interviews risks missing a

significant description of participants. As such, there was also less to observe about the participant during video calls. Despite these barriers that the online alternative came with, under the circumstances, digital communication was better than no communication at all. The lockdown may have presented challenges in carrying out field work but also created opportunity for working in a safe and healthy space (Arya & Henn, 2021). Measures were put in place to ensure the safety of participants. Social distancing, wearing of face masks as well as use of hand sanitizer was strictly followed. At no time were participants health put at risk so that ethnography could be carried out. Where necessary, physical meeting were avoided in favour of online meetings.

Ethnography timeline

I officially started conducting fieldwork in May 2020, this went on until August 2021. There were several breaks and delays in between. The delays where mainly due to the Covid restrictions on gatherings and travel and that led me to adjust my geographical area of study. I also took a break during the summer of 2021.

Time and Schedule

As a result of mostly virtual meetings as well as physical meetings that were far between, my schedule was manageable. I planned video calls and arranged visits well in advance depending on who was available. Other meetings were unplanned for, for instance I was invited to join activities by participants. I would thus make time to join, carrying out observations in the process. Though my schedule was flexible, my participants were not always available. They had jobs, businesses and other commitments that needed attention. Their only free time came in form recreational activities. Whether it was sports during weekends or social events after working hours, I would join where possible to interact with participants. This was much more feasible than asking when someone would be free to meet. This strategy helped optimize my fieldwork to get the most out of my interactions with participants with the amount of time that was available.

The phase strategy

During my ethnography, I designed a timeline with notable phases that guided my research. These phases were periods before as well as after migrating from Rwanda to Norway. I applied these criteria, noting what made up participants lives during these phases. Lubbers and Gijsberts (2016) used a similar approach when they compared the pre and post-migration labour market positions of migrants in the Netherlands. Observing similarities as well as differences in these periods presented how the lives of migrants had changed since leaving Rwanda. I was not only interested in the occurrences in these phases but the reason behind these changes and whether they happened voluntarily.

I analysed the phases by focusing on the social, economic, and cultural capital that an migrants had at these times. The forms of capital cover topics related to marriage partners, children, friends, occupation, and source of income that I explore in the chapters that follow. As most of my participants where quite young during the pre-migration phase in Rwanda, it was quite difficult to discuss for instance, their beliefs about marriage during that period. I turned to comparing the phase to that of their parents or guardians. The generational comparison is important because it presents acculturation in environments influenced by different values and beliefs (Schvaneveldt et al., 2005). It was thus, necessary to incorporate the strategy in my methodology if I was to gain such insight.

Language and communication

When it came to language, most of the participants could understand and speak English. The level of proficiency however, differed amongst. With Norwegian being the official language, it is widely used as a mode of communication amongst themselves. It was complicated asking everyone to speak to me in English as I can barely understand Norwegian. They often found themselves looking for an English word in our conversations. As interested as one maybe in talking about their story, there will be a barrier as they would not express themselves as well in a language that is not their native (Watkins et al., 2012). In certain instances, there was an element of awkwardness listening to my participants speak in English as they could not find the right words. Kinyarwanda, the official language of Rwanda was understood and spoken by most participants. The participants would switch between English and Kinyarwanda when

talking to each other. As somebody who comes from Zambia, I could understand a few words. Kinyarwanda is part of similar Bantu languages that are spoken across sub-Saharan Africa (Phillipson, 1977). Several times I would ask for confirmation if words meant the same thing as I understood them in my own language.

A few participants, especially the elderly could only communicate in Norwegian and Kinyarwanda. As I could not fully understand the two languages, these meetings were only possible if there was another person who could translate the conversation to me. The three-way communication had its limits, though we managed to interact on the most basic of levels. It is difficult to maintain a good flow when you cannot understand the other person well enough. There are also potential privacy issues since a middle or third person is involved. Since the people that helped to translate were not professional translators, I was wary of not getting too personal with questions so I could not provoke any discomfort. Lastly words would be lost in translation as my translators could not find the right words. I had taken basic lessons in Norwegian during the early stages of my fieldwork, this however did not help much when it came to having an extensive conversation.

Dealing with misinformation

There were times when participants would give out false information. When this happened, I was careful to shift the discussion in a different direction, understanding well that the topic could have been uncomfortable. Other times the misinformation seemed to be told so I could see the participant or an opinion in a specific way. I simply took note of these instances and did not interrupt the conversation. Migration as a topic, especially in the context of Rwanda can be sensitive so it was expected that not everyone is proud to identify with or willing to share all their experiences.

Sample description

Norway houses a total 140414 African immigrants (SSB, 2021a) . This figure includes the first generation of children born in the immigration population. Out of the total population of immigrants from Africa, 916 are of Rwandan origin (SSB, 2021c). This represents less than

one percent of the total immigrant population. As of 2021, about 75 percent is concentrated in the age group between 20 and 66 years. I included the first generation of children born to Rwandan immigrants because they were in one way, or another influenced by their immigrant parents or guardians despite being born in Norway. The children were also important when it came to analysing generational capital. While this project was by no means a quantitative study, these numbers give an overview of where my sample stands in the larger immigrant population in Norway, and specifically Oslo.

Ethical consideration

Ethical considerations play a significant role when conducting ethnography. To ensure that the research did not lead to any misunderstandings, the participants were well informed about the nature of the research and given a chance to decide on whether they wished to take part in the research or not. There were times when I had random conversations with people regarding my research. I sometimes forgot to mention that I was a researcher as such interactions were not planned. As my field developed however, it became practice to inform people no matter how random that I was in the process of collecting data. It was important for my own conscious that I was not tricking people or hiding my identity to extract information from them.

To ensure that consent was given, a consent form was also provided to all the participants to read through and give consent by way of signing. Making people sign a document had its own limitations. Some participants felt insecure as they did not fully understand what the signature meant. I often had to make it clear that the document was not going to be used against them. For those participants who could not understand the language the consent form was written in, a translated version was made available. This was in line with the requirements of the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD).

For many Rwandan people, the migration period was a stressful one considering it happened during conflict. Getting people to understand that I was not at all interested in the politics of Rwanda or the genocide was quite difficult and it took some convincing. I tried not to overstep the privacy of participants. Even though participants consented to giving me information, it was important that I knew when a conversation was getting uncomfortable. Knowing that it was during these periods that migrants lost a valuable part of their lives.

Anonymity was guaranteed and no information that could be used to identify the participant would be made public. Most of the names used in the thesis are made up, unless the participants consented that their actual first name was used.

Significance in wider context

This research was not only beneficial for me as a researcher as it is easy to think of a thesis as being for academic purposes only. I did not only mention to my participants what the research was about but went further to stress the benefit this would have on their part as participants. Identity forms a significant part of how we are seen by others. Hence, this research is one such platform for my participants to rightly describe what makes up their identity as Rwandans. This is not necessarily the basis of my research, but if it helps in finding solutions or provides some information for further research on this topic or something similar, I would be more than glad to make such contribution.

Focus areas

Memory

In the context of memory, we can define an object as a symbol in that it can represent a memory. A similar definition can apply to a sign, but a symbol is only one type of sign. In comparison to signs such emotions, objects possess have a concrete and permanent property which is grounded in their physical structure. This is to say even long even after people have passed on, the objects that represented their identity or culture will still convey an idea or two about them even if no other records exist.

for purposes of clarity, I focus on objects that Rwandans themselves created or shaped.

Csikszentmihalyi and Halton (1981) distinguishes man-made and natural objects with the former being dependant on human intention to exist while the latter does not. The water's natural physical constitute is independent of human intention. A photo album on the other hand exists because it was designed by an individual. This intentional relationship to man-made objects becomes significant because it influences life. it is generally accepted that things made, used, owned and surrounded by people could be used to accurately describe the personalities of the owners.

Household power

Amongst other topics discussed was intra household power. By listening to the migration strategies employed by different participants, I took note of power relations in terms of decision-making power and how that changed before and migration to Norway. As migration is not always an individual decision, it was worth learning who had a say in making decisions. I looked at this from a gender perspective, it would give an idea of the position that men and women hold in a household when it comes to decision making. These discussions went further in finding out if the participants position of power has changed since migrating. As most of them have gotten formal education and found a stable source of income, there is bound to be a shift in decision making power compared to the pre migration period.

Migration strategies

In trying to determine family connections of participants, I turned migration strategies. We spoke about how migration to Norway happened and the motivations behind it. The people that aid migration are likely to have a close relationship with migrants. In Chain migration; A process where an individual migrates with the help of a friend or family member to settled in the host country (Gmelch, 1983). This is significant as I would know the person to compare my participants with during our discussions.

Still under the envelop of perception, I gathered data about how participants felt about Rwanda. This was not just through word but observation as well. Marianma learnt to speak her mother tongue in her teen years for instance. She realised communication with relatives in Rwanda was difficult, they could not speak English or Norwegian. She took it upon herself to learn her mother tongue, Kinyarwanda. Julian on the other hand makes an effort to visit his home country at least once every 2 years. I took note of these small acts that individuals did to stay connected to their home country and related it to what they had to say. For the individuals that had visited Rwanda after migration. I looked at how the trip affected their view of Rwanda. Before leaving for Rwanda, it is only normal to have expectations of what they expected to find. What they found upon arrival and how this affected their view about Rwanda was my area of interest. These expectations and reality ranged from the state of the country in economic; finding employment, investment opportunities, access to natural resources such as land, having a successfully establishing a business or social; Reconnecting with family members and friends. analysing these expectations would thus give an idea of

whether the participant perceived return as feasible or not.

Participants

I interacted with a sum of 24 participants. My sample was concentrated in ages between 20-35 years of age. I initially planned to find participants across young, middle as well as old age groups. With the young being under 20, middle age between 21 and 50 and 50+ being categorised as old age. The idea of groups would create categories for generational comparisons. I would thus, analyse different perceptions across age groups. As I fell in the middle age group, I could argue this influenced the age of participants in my sample. It was easier for me to find participants in my age group as compared to individuals who were 50+ years old for instance.

As much as the age distribution was not what I had hoped for in terms of age, my aim was to have at least 10 participants that I could interact with on a regular basis. I managed to reach this target, even though most participants were concentrated in the same age group.

There were other potential research participants that I did not meet at all as we could not get passed planning for the first meeting. These were individuals I interacted with mostly on social media. After contacting them several times to arrange a video call, I could not get a concrete date.

Study area

The study area of this project was meant to be Oslo. However, a few of my participants lived outside Oslo. I included the participants to balance my distribution between age and gender. My project only had two females initially. I therefore set out to find females and elderly that lived in the surrounding areas of Oslo. I found more female participants in the counties surrounding Oslo including Moss, Homlia, Ski and Ås. Not to make this a justification but these participants spent some time in Oslo for work and social purposes. They had friends and family in Oslo and made trips their social circles. I thus, saw it fit to include them in my sample as they fit all other criteria except for where they lived. Meeting with participants outside the Oslo perimeter was never a problem either. For the most part we had video calls

and the few trips I made to follow them did not present any challenges whatsoever. There home areas where easily accessible by train in under an hour.

Chapter 3: Memories at home and in transit



Arri's photo Album

Memories in mementos

Human beings possess the ability to make and use objects. These objects are not simply tools to interact for needs of survival or comfortable living. The process of interacting with objects shapes the identity of their users (Csikszentmihalyi & Halton, 1981). Thus, not only do humans give identity to objects through naming, creation and type of use, the objects themselves reciprocate this quality to give identity to their makers and users. If we, therefore, want to learn about Rwandanness, we must look at the objects that surround or define people

of Rwanda. Specifically, those objects that are cherished as well as the reason behind this close attachment gives us the much-needed knowledge as to what it means to be Rwandan for a particular individual. It is common practice in social science to understand human life from the self as an individual or in kind of relationship between people. To better this understanding of identity, this chapter will discuss the component of human to object relationships.

In this chapter, I investigate the personal world of memory and focus on objects that bring the past to the present. Personal memories are in most cases imprinted in one's memory unconsciously.

Memories do more than just stimulate remembrance. For people who have lost a home or are no longer in touch with loved ones, memories provide validation for lived experiences that are no more. From a migrant's perspective, that memory can lay in mementos. When they travel miles away to what can be termed a different world, the one way their memories can be preserved is by use of symbols that take them back to moments in their life. These memories shape and are part of a migrant's identity and thus, the symbols that represent them are just as significant. Even if the previous life is no longer existent or far away from home, memories are kept alive in this way. It thus, becomes important to examine how memories are kept alive and past experiences preserved because this is identity consisting of unique feelings whose detail ought to be given attention (Naguib, 2008).

Autobiographical memory can be recalled from either an observer or field view point. People remember memories either from the original point of view as an experiencer or from the outside as an observer Nigro and (Neisser, 2004).

Csikszentmihalyi and Halton (1981), state that there are some generational differences in terms of what mementos are kept in a home in that young people opt for active and self-defining objects while the older generation focuses on contemplative, past related objects. In Jack's apartment, there was a small space in one corner of his living room reserved for his past achievements. These were placed on a small table which was covered with a white cloth. He had been playing in junior tournaments during middle and high school days. Most notably on the table, was a golden ball, that he received from a tournament where he was the best player. There was also a couple of certificates on the table that belonged to Jack's young brother, Gift. He took classes in karate and had the certificate to show for the belts he completed. Seeing these sporting achievements displayed in their house highlighted their passion for

Commented [JL1]: Side thoughts
-add a story about the red veranda with cobra. It reminds people to keep the house tidy.

-Remember tithum and how he told the same story differently everytime. Talk about this and the possible reasoning behind it.

Commented [JL2]: Maybe a few more sentences to introduce the argument of generational differences.

sport. Even though Jack studied economics and worked in a bank, it was easily noticeable how much love he still had for football. A few months before we met, he got a parttime job to manage a group of under 15 football players. This was in addition to a non-league football club that he played for on weekends. He said the parttime managerial job gave him a little extra income, but most importantly he was doing what he loved.

Julian's apartment was even more decorated, compared to Jack's. He too had achievements on his living room wall. They were placed right beside the television set such that you could see them upon taking a seat. Just like Jack, these were first, second and third place medals Julian received when he played football as a teenager. In addition to the medals, Julian had a small corner dedicated to pictures of friends and the various trips he made in the past. There was a snap instant digital camera just besides the picture wall. He took a picture of any friend that had visited his apartment, me included. What struck me most in Julian's apartment was a picture that stood right on the bench of the TV set. It was a nicely framed photograph of his grandparents in their traditional Rwandan gowns. This was the only visual memory he had of his grandparents as he never got to meet them in person. Julian's parents however told countless stories about them, which he came to love. He thus, keeps the picture to keep their memory alive. I also noticed that Julian uses the surnames of both his parents, his mother was Norwegian while his father came from Rwanda. He kept both surnames to retain identity of both cultures.

The home houses arguably the objects that are most special to the person living there. The easy access translates into regular interactions with such objects and are thus, involved in making up the person's identity. thus, objects in the household contains symbols inform objects that reflect and shape the owner's life. Arri used photographs to preserve his childhood memories. Having left Rwanda suddenly and lost all contact with his best friend Brian, it was important that he kept their childhood experience alive. He turned to his photographs in a small photo album that he owned. The first picture visible at the top suggested a front cover was missing. The album was stored in an improvised blue cover, clearly not originally made for the album as it was slightly bigger in size. At the top of the inner side of the cover, in bold letters, where Arri's names, neatly written in blue ink. There lay various pictures of himself, his best friend, family, and a few other people that had impacted his life. The album must have had about 30 pictures in total. There was no noticeable order in terms of how the pictures were arranged. The photobook had some empty spaces in between photos perhaps because some photos had been removed or replaced in a

different position. In one of the pictures, there stood two boys, side by side with hands over each other's shoulders. The picture was taken on what looked like a veranda with some flowerpots in the background. "This is me and my best friend Brian". I could tell who Arri was in the picture because of the resemblance. The casual appearance suggested this was a random photograph. They were both bare footed and in shorts with Brian topless and Arri wearing a vest. Arri explained that their neighbourhood had one photographer who passed through once a week to take pictures. "We always asked him to take a picture of us when he came, but he wanted us to pay and we never had that kind of money". He narrated how on one particular day, they were lucky to get a photo free of charge. The photographer had only one picture left in his film roll after a busy day. Upon Brian and Arri asking for a free photo as usual, he agreed this time around. "There was no time to change into clean clothes as the photographer was unwilling to wait long. Brian also lived a few blocks away so that would have taken longer. He just asked us to stand in front and hold each other and the picture was taken, that's why we look so unprepared". This was far from normal photo taking procedure because these were times when picture taking was a special occasion that involved several meetings at agreed upon times with the photographer. Arri and Brian's case was thus, a shortcut and it showed in the photograph. A week later the picture was developed and delivered. Arri claims to remember the excitement he felt when they saw the picture. "We didn't know the exact day when the photo would be delivered so that one week felt like a lifetime. When the photo came, it meant a great deal. It's hard to put in words the never-ending excitement. I still feel it every time I look at this picture". They carried it all day long so everyone could have a look.

This photograph brought back a unique memory for Arri. Cohen and Conway (2007) state that events do not always routinely repeat themselves, neither are memories always generalized. Events like the one brought by Arri's photograph are one-off as it was not every day that he took picture. Not only was this a one - off experience, it was the first time it happened. The usual or much more occurrence, which would not be remembered in detail was that the photographer would pass through Arri's neighbourhood and not take any picture because they didn't have the money to pay. The unique experience on the other hand stand out in one's memory. The uncommon events seem better recorded in memory than routine and common events.

Because the photos brought back such priceless memories, Arri's photobook had become an object of reverence. He had come to appreciate record keeping. The photobook took on a

special status, it symbolised Arri's younger self with his then best friend, but it also brought back the joy and excitement he once felt in that moment of taking the picture and receiving a physical copy of the photograph. Naguib (2008), states that photographs illustrate how specific objects inform and sustain memory as well as testimonies to past experiences. They signify how specific objects inform and sustain memories. "I have kept my memories of Rwanda fresh because of these pictures. Just one of them brings back countless memories that I would otherwise forget if I did not have any records." Arri's statement seemed valid as he had not returned to Rwanda since he left as a kid. Return visits to a migrant's home country can reaffirm friendship and family ties and ensure that memories are kept alive (Asiedu, 2005). In the case of Arri, travelling was not possible at the time, he therefore utilized the photographs as a way of remaining connected to his loved ones. Individuals have strong bonds with personal mementos and keep them safe to avoid feelings of loss when such items are lost (Csikszentmihalyi & Halton, 1981).

Seeing Arri's photo album left me amused. I remembered owning one in the past, but at some point I caught up with the digital age and scanned all the copies. We spoke about why he had not done this too. Arri felt a part of the memory was attached to the physical copy. "I've looked at these pictures on a computer, they just don't return the same feeling of satisfaction. Even with my eyes closed, just the scent of the album takes me back to a point in my past, that's why I still keep and use these copies." The photo album brings its own unique memories for instance. It meant much more than just a photobook that keeps pictures. He recalls saving up for this one in particular for weeks. These memories don't just exist for remembering but they are motivation for the present (Naguib, 2008). For Arri, in the same way he saved up to buy a photo album, he can draw from this energy to save up for something bigger, just by looking at the photo album.

Objects carry a utility purpose also operate in a symbolic function. Arri's photo book may have been designed for the sole purpose of storing photographs, instead in assumed additional symbolic responsibilities of being a product and motivation for hard work. The two functions thus cannot simply be separated no matter how practical an object is. No matter how functional an object is, it can socialize an individual to a way of life that they represent.

Not only was significance placed on scent and appearance of the photobooks, but the texture of the photographs also played a role and provoked their own memories. I noticed some

pictures were worn out on the edges. “This one got soaked in rainwater, it was a rainy day when I picked it up from the photographer, that’s why the corner is washed out.”

The art of record keeping seemed to run in the family. Arri’s love for keeping photographs was something he shared with his parents. They had an even larger collection of pictures. With a home being a place where individuals keep a physical representation of their story, the home of Arri’s parents was well decorated with family pictures. He spoke about how thankful he was that his parents were alive to tell him about his past. Csikszentmihalyi and Halton (1981), parents will see the need to pass on their mementos to the next generation so that special memories maybe kept alive even after they are gone. Even though Arri had not yet inherited the photographs, his parents had already started creating value by telling him who was in the photographs. The photographs further aided these explanations of knowing who all the people in the pictures were.

Arri narrated that at his parents’ house, there were countless pictures on the walls of the house that went back to when they were teenagers. “It’s like a movie in pictures on those walls, it amazes me every time.” The appearance on the wall was a reminder of why it is important to capture memories. He thus, continued to do so on every chance that he got so he could give the same feeling to his children in the future. I never got to visit his parents’ home, but the description was enough to tell how much value him and his family placed on pictures.

Csikszentmihalyi and Halton (1981) states that ease with which taking photographs have become in the digital could be used to explain why digital photos maybe seen to be less valuable than physical copies. Photographs could be seen as an evolved version of picture making. The photograph requires less involved of the artist and more from the mechanism in the camera. Similarly, modern day photography has become even easier to carry out with introduction of smart phones. Perhaps the extra effort taken due to advancement in technology and less human effort will also reduce the value of its symbolic function. This is of course not implying any change in the skill level of today’s photography, but simply the interruption of a machine changes the process and could possibly make it less appreciated.

Like Arri, his parents were not fond of digital media. For they mainly valued privacy, Arri’s parents feared it was easy for digital photos to end up in the wrong hands as they were easy to acquire and replicate. Their photographs were personal and not to be shared with just anyone. " They don't even use social media, their pictures are for them to see and only those they wish to show". Csikszentmihalyi and Halton (1981) also state that the true meaning of mementos is

Commented [JL3]: Talk about the belief that it is a bad spirit if the photos land in the wrong hands.

never disclosed to visitors. For instance, any other visitor for Arri's parents would not know who the people in the pictures are, that privilege is reserved for close family members like Arri.

Sensory quality of Kinyarwanda

"I have a lot of stories to tell but it's not easy in English you know, it's not the same emotion" these were Kurumera's words coming from the fact that English was not his first language, Kinyarwanda was. As unique as it was listening to Arri explain the various memories, I could not help but notice the barrier English created in between our conversations. As well as he could communicate in the language, he run into a pause every now and then, sometimes giving up on making a point because he couldn't find the right words in English. "The small clay cars that kids play with. What are they called in English? Anyway, I'll tell you when I remember".

Schrauf and Rubin (2000) observed that childhood memories are more easily accessible in their first language, and this childhood amnesia is more likely to be found people tested in second language. This is to say memories can be tied to a particular language, in this case Kinyarwanda. Although Arri seemed to recall his memory quite well, I remained curious to know if he had left out certain parts that he would have remembered had he been using Kinyarwanda.

Language not only affects which memories are remembered, but also the likelihood of true or false memories. (Grosjean, 2020) suggests that bilingual individuals utilize two different language modes. This is to say the using a particular language is not just using it's words, it makes a unique mind-set that would otherwise differ from another language. If so, then there is a chance my participants, using English as a second language could be recalling there memory in a different mindset, would could end up altering the story from actual events. This is by no means suggesting stories retold in a different mind are false, instead it is simply acknowledging the different energy that possibly exist between the actual memory and its recall. For instance, when Arri was talking about his photo album, perhaps he could have expressed himself with more or less energy.

The memory in songs

While photographs are truths reproduced to preserve and stimulate memory, songs can trigger remembrance for collective grief (Holst-Warhaft, 2005). Titum kept his memory about Rwanda alive through songs. I noticed a guitar when I visited him at his house. He had never spoken of music in our video call conversations, so I was quite surprised to see a musical instrument. "I use this one for myself mostly."

Titum and his parents migrated to neighbouring Democratic Republic Congo (DRC) during the genocide in Rwanda. He recalled his parents and tens others would gather to sing songs of praise as well as mourning those that had passed away along their journey. "The songs kept us together and gave encouragement to those who were about to give up or had lost loved ones". This is a similar practice to lament singers who sing to families of the bereaved. Holst-Warhaft (2005), states that lament singing is a practice that is incorporated by African culture. The songs were particularly important for Titum's parents, as he was made to learn and sing all the songs. "Mother would sing these songs all the time, whether she was preparing food or cleaning up. At the time it felt like punishment because she always wanted us to join the singing". He thus, learnt to sing the songs from the frequent practice. The songs of sorrow are still a part of Titum's life. Having lost his mother, he used the songs to keep her memory alive. He said it was not so much about the words in the song but the memories and emotions that these songs triggered when he sang. He not only learnt these songs from his mother, they sang together. Such is the memory that comes back when he picks up the guitar. He offered to sing one of the songs for me. The song was called *Kurundi ruhande*. The direct translation for this was 'on the other side'. Just before singing he exclaimed jokingly "Just don't cry okay." As soon as he started singing, I figured what he meant. This was a slow tempo song that had a sad tone attached to it. I was saddened by the tone even though I could not understand the words as the song was in Kinyarwanda. He did however translate the lyrics afterwards.

*You can beat me, you can kill me
I will find myself on the other side,
You can hate me,
I know the parents I lost still love me on the other side,*

*Oh dearest Blackman, why do you not like your fellow brother and sister,
You destroyed our homes, now we have nowhere to sleep.*

You have sent our parents to the grave when they should have raised us

*Now they lay in peace,
watching over us on the other side.*

*We are safe, they are safe
On the other side.*

Extract from the song 'On the other side'.

For Titum, the songs refreshed the memory of his late mother whom he spoke well of frequently. It was because of her that Titum ended up in Norway. She coordinated her family's journey from Rwanda, Congo, Uganda and then finally Norway. Despite the size of Titum's family of 6 siblings, they were all kept together by the mother throughout the journey. It is understandable why he valued her memory so much.

The songs were not originally performed with an instrument, the group would simply gather and sing with *Gukoma amashyi* or a clap. It was a personal initiative that Titum took up to incorporate an instrument. He also felt it sounded better with the guitar, especially that there was no group to sing with him as it was in Congo. "The instrument adds another voice to the song."

He knew several other songs that he would sing to himself, the one he performed in my presence was his favourite. He knew all the words and had managed to incorporate a guitar. He did sing the other songs in private and when the mood was right.

The memories in transit countries

It is easy to underestimate the period migrants spend in transit because focus and significance is often placed on the origin and destination. But as Gmelch (1980) argued, migration as a process has different phases, transit countries included that are equally important. A significant amount of time is spent in these temporary destinations while migrants seek documentation to their destination. In the case of Rwanda, countries in transit included its

neighbouring countries those in southern Africa. When I met Sandra, I always assumed she was born in Rwanda because she only ever mentioned coming to Norway at the age of four. It turned out she was born in South Africa when her parents were seeking asylum there. She has mixed memories about the country that took her parents in when they left Rwanda. Most of these were about how her family was mistreated and discriminated against. South Africa has fallen culprit to mistreatment of African migrants to this day, the problem of xenophobic attacks are well documented (Landau et al., 2005). There is one story that seemed to hold significance about how Sandra perceives South Africa as her country of birth. She narrated that at the time her mother was pregnant, she received antenatal services from South African health facilities. Her mother always told her how hostile the service providers were towards migrants. "They would always tell my mother she was not welcome to receive healthcare service, about how she and all the other migrants were just a burden to South Africa." On the day her mother was giving birth. She narrated how the midwife that was attending to her mother had nothing good to say despite being in labour. "The midwife told my mother if she could have had things her way, she would just let mum give birth on her own." I wasn't shocked at some of these stories as I've heard them from people who have travelled to South Africa. This is in line with xenophobic attitude that has long been a problem in South Africa towards foreigners. As a result of such stories from her mother, Sandra does not enjoy relating herself to South Africa.

Despite the bad experiences, Sandra's parents seemed to appreciate South Africa nevertheless. "Of course, my mother has told me a lot of good stories about our time there, they just get overshadowed by the bad ones". The South African identity was evident in their house, they had three flags, that of Rwanda, Norway as well as a South African one. "My parents always remind me that I am partly South African, and they will always embrace that part of me". For her mother especially, South Africa provided them with shelter when they needed it most. Despite all the bad treatment they got from individuals, South Africa still provided them with the basic needs they needed to survive, without which they would probably not be alive. Despite all the negative talk from the midwife for instance, she still did her job well enough to ensure Sandra was born safely. For Sandra on the other hand, there are only two points to being received as a foreigner, it's either you are welcome or you're not, nothing in between. From the mixed stories that she heard from her parents. Her verdict was that they were never wanted in South Africa.

While Sandra distanced herself from South Africa, the transit country her family went through to get to Norway, Edison developed attachment for his. His parents fled to Tanzania when he was two years old. He lived in Tanzania until he was 12 years old. He thus spent enough time to develop a relationship with the country. I can recall the first time meeting him, he said he was from Tanzania. "I was born in Rwanda, but I left at such a young age I don't remember anything, except for the things my parents told me." The connection to Tanzania also showed in the way his family communicates. Several times our conversations were interrupted by a phone call from his parents or siblings, they used a combination of Tanzanian Swahili and Norwegian. He stated that his parents still use Kinyarwanda when talking to each other. They never taught him to use any Rwandan language, the only knowledge he has of the language, he learnt through listening. "Maybe they felt because I grew up in Tanzania, I was only supposed to learn the culture of that country". He did admit it was alright for him as he felt and chose to identify as Tanzanian rather than Rwandan.

Like Sandra, Edison also spoke about some mistreatment by the locals in Tanzania. In one of the stories, he said something that I was familiar with in Zambia. The locals used a term called "*Kasai*" to refer to migrants who came from Congo and Rwanda. In Zambia, the term has similar reference, it's used to refer to an individual that speaks the language with a foreign accent. Such terms as *Kasai* usually have one goal, at least in the Zambian context, they were made to intimidate and make fun of migrant families. These remarks went as far as songs being created to mock African foreigners. Edison still dislikes the word and does not appreciate whoever uses it. However, this topic of discrimination did not seem to have moved Edison with regards to calling Tanzania his home. He considered these minor issues and part of any society. "People will always try to find your weak spot, if you let that get to you, you let them win." He admitted to bullying friends himself. He was one of the oldest students in his class and generally around friends. His bigger body size further intimidated the friends in his circle. "I bossed my friends around, even though most of them knew my parents were foreign, they never dared to make fun of me."

Edison however recalled how his parents always reminded him to conceal his family's foreign identity. "I was always told to say that I am Tanzanian, I was never to talk about my parents as being from Rwanda. We were all Tanzanian". This emphasis was not because his family was in Tanzania illegally, it was from a safety point of view. His parents knew about migrant discrimination that is widespread in Tanzania. It was part of a strategy to not be seen as outsiders. This perhaps explains why the parents used Swahili to speak with Edison, this

would mask the foreign identity and make them feel at home. It was, however, easy for Edison to gel into Tanzanian society than it was for his parents. He basically grew up in Tanzania, so nobody ever really noticed he was from Rwanda. "It was only when my parents showed up that people would ask questions about my identity". His parents had a different accent that even Jack said was so easy to differentiate even though they were fluent in Swahili. He recalls a time when his father tried to get a Tanzanian national Identity card pretending to be a citizen. "The process was simple, a number of people did it actually. All they had to do was claim they lost their identity card. They would then be asked a few questions and that was it." This however, did not go as planned for Edison's' father. Within the first few sentences of introducing himself, he was immediately sent back. "It was quite funny when he returned home, we knew the authorities had figured out his accent".

The memories to Forget

Apart from the photos and songs that keep memories alive, there were participants who preferred to forget about their past. During my fieldwork, I had planned to discuss the topic of memories expecting every participant would have one way of remembering their time in Rwanda or at least those that had lived there. It came as surprise to have found someone who was trying to erase memories about their past. Such was the case for Carol. I met her through Julian, he had given me her Facebook username. I made contact and invited her to be a participant. When she realised my thesis was about Rwandan migrants, the first question she asked was if this was about the genocide, and if so, she was not interested in talking about that. After clarification and a bit of convincing, she agreed to participate on condition that we did not touch topics of the genocide. She still ended up talking about the war on her own. During our conversations and suggested that I should include it if I was talking about Rwandan identity. "You cannot write about Rwandan identity without mentioning the war." Even though my initial plan was to speak as little as possible about the conflict, I chose to include it here because the participant suggested it.

Carol explained that the reason why she tried not to have any memory about Rwanda originate from the genocide itself. Many of her relatives died, including both her parents. Fleeing out of Rwanda during the Civil War did not go so well either. In the period of the genocide, over 200,000 people from the provinces of Butare, Kibungo and Kigali-Rural had

fled into Burundi (Lemarchand, 2004). Carol was a part of this group that fled south. "It's just a terrible experience that I just wish to keep out of my mind". As much as Burundi was a safer haven during the Genocide, it brought its own problems. The worst for Carol came during her time in the camps. "People were scrambling for food in the camps, even though there was enough for everyone, they still ended up fighting and harming each other." At some point aid was reduced and water borne diseases spread in the camps. "People were dying every day, I was part of the lucky few that made it out there alive". Such is the memory she wishes to keep out of her mind and thus the fear of keeping records.

She did not attend events organised by the Rwandan association either. The Independence Day celebrations have gone past in her absence. She recalled being invited for several get together gatherings a few years ago. She turned the invitations down. Her avoidance stemmed from the discussions that arose at these events. "All they talk about is sad stories and people who died, it never feels like we are celebrating anything, so I would rather not join at all." She acknowledged that over the years she has noticed her circle of Rwandan friends get smaller. The invitations have also stopped coming in as often as they used to. "Perhaps they just got tired of inviting me or maybe the association is just not as active as it used to be, I don't know." She acknowledged that her parents would have wanted her to remain connected to her country of origin. Even during the Civil unrest, they were active in peace negotiations. "My parents always spoke about how they would nurture me to become a leader when I was young. They wanted me to be like them, just better". The Civil conflicts gave her a reality check and it was at that point she realised politics was not always a clean game. Carol said her parents were one of the first to be targeted by opposing groups, despite not being violent. She thus decided to take a role in the backseat, learning from her experience. "The quiet people always survive in conflict because they are not seen to stand for anything. I still hold Rwanda dear to my heart, it is the experiences I went through with family that I don't want to keep memories of." It was relief for Carol when her documents to travel to France were ready. For her moving to France and finally coming to Norway was an opportunity to start afresh and restart her life.

A journey from Rwanda to Norway

For most of my participants, I usually focused on a single phase or topic that I discussed with them in detail. For Kurumera however, we explored so many aspects of Rwandan culture. I could argue he gave me the best overview for my research as I could get back to him for clarifications. I met Kurumera in a development class during my undergraduate degree. I can recall our first meeting regarding my thesis. We met at a bar called Mastermind in Oslo city centre, a place he suggested because of the fair price of alcohol. Being the very first meeting, I was quite nervous even though I knew him from before. We ended up discussing our migration journey.

Kurumera left Rwanda at the age of five. Just like Edison and Sandra, his journey was not as straight forward as moving directly from Rwanda to Norway. A large population of people who fled the genocide to Europe migrated to Belgium because of its colonial ties to Rwanda (Abaka & Gashugi, 1994). Kurumera initially left Rwanda and fled to Uganda. From Uganda, he migrated to France where he was adopted by his Aunty. She took legal care when Kurumera's father died in the genocide. He spent two years in France after which he returned to Rwanda. This was a decision made by his guardians so that they could adopt Rwandan culture and identity and not be drawn to the European ways of life at a young age. He and his brother returned to Rwanda to live with the grandmother until age 11 when they returned to France for the second time. It was in France where he acquired secondary education as well as attending a year of college.

Kurumera had few positives to say about his life in France. He said the only good thing that came out of his life in France was his education. He complained about racism to high levels of inequality. He felt racism was widespread as he experienced it in all sectors of his life, including school. At some point he felt he had made a mistake moving from Uganda. It was family that made him move to France. He mentioned that it was easier to settle in France compared to Uganda. Several of his friends went to Belgium instead which he felt was a better option than France. He called Belgium the 6th province of Rwanda because of the higher population of Rwandans in the country. And that if there was no possibility to return to Rwanda, the next option he would turn to would be Belgium as some of his family members went there after the genocide.

Since settling in Norway, Kurumera travels to Rwanda at least once every 2 years for vacation which normally lasts a month. He spoke well about Rwanda, both about his visits and the state that the country is in. He is quite enthusiastic about development, so he mostly focused on the economic and political aspects of the country. He placed emphasis on the Rwandan government and how they have made positive adjustments to the country in general. "Rwanda is a much better country to live in than when I left as a teenager" he felt welcomed as someone living in the diaspora. For him the environment was even better for those that wanted to return permanently. This was not the case with previously according to him. From his short visits to Rwanda gave him an idea of the challenges he would face if he decided to make his return permanent. He spoke about adaptation into the social life as being one of the major challenges. Even though he spent time living in Rwanda he could help but notice the differences when interacting with the locals. "The people who live there could tell I had Rwandan roots, but they also knew I was not living there". This was evident in the language proficiency for instance. Kinyarwanda has evolved as a language, there are words that are outdated, when I went there, I used the words and looked weird." The second challenge is that of perceptions of the locals on those that return. From thinking that they are not fully Rwandan because of the time spent living in host countries, thus being seen as outsiders. Especially in times when one cannot communicate fluently in a local language. Kurumera ended on a positive note stating that despite the challenges as in every other place, he stated that it takes commitment if one wants to acclimatize to life and the culture in Rwanda.

As a final question I Asked about what it would take for him to settle back in Rwanda. He smiled and responded that there was still a long way to go and changes he needed to see before he could even consider returning permanently. With stability being one of the reasons why he could not go back. Fearing that as stable as the country seems to be, any change in regime could bring back conflict. So as much as Norway did not entirely feel like home, he felt it was still a safer option to remain leaving in the host country as things stand. He did however state his plans of going to invest in hope of building up Rwanda and that was as far as he could go for now.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an account of the various ways memories establish themselves in Rwandan identity. The role of various objects in mementos to help recall or keep memories alive is explored. The past experiences and how they have affected how individuals view themselves as Rwandans is amongst the discussions covered.

Memories do more than just stimulate remembrance. For people who have lost or are no longer in touch with loved ones, they provide validation for lived experiences that are no more. From a migrant's perspective, that memory lies in lived experiences in their home countries. They travel miles away to what can be termed a different world. These memories shape and sometimes define who they are. The experience of migrants cannot simply be placed in a category of good or bad merely because they originate from Rwanda or because they were all affected by civil conflict. It is thus, important to examine how memories are kept alive in order to preserve past experiences because this is part of their identity. They signify how specific objects inform and sustain past memories. As can be seen from how the photographs kept memory through their texture, scent, including parts that worn out provoke different memories. While photographs are truths reproduced to preserve and stimulate memory, songs can trigger remembrance for collective grief.

It is easy to underestimate the period migrants spend in transit because focus and significance is often placed on the origin and destination. migration as a process has different phases, transit countries included that are equally important. A significant amount of time is spent in these temporary destinations while migrants seek documentation to their destination. The experiences in transit areas is whether good or bad are part of a migrants identity.

Apart from the photos and songs that keep memories alive, there were participants who preferred to forget about their past because of the trauma that these thoughts come with. They thus prefer to forget such memories



Overview of Oslo city

Commented [JL4]: Find a picture of Rwanda to put aside this

Picking an environment to live in

As was stated in my methodology chapter, I interacted with research participants mostly online. I did also, visit private homes where possible. Statistics from SSB (2021b), estimate that a total of 137 Rwandan immigrants and their children live in the Oslo municipality. I would not specify an area in Oslo where my participants were concentrated as they came from different parts of the city. One lived in Grønland while Another came from Bislett, others were based in Carl Berner, such was the pattern with the rest. These various areas were however, close to the city centre and where accessible in short time periods.

Bartzokas-Tsiompras and Photis (2019), argue that migrants are more likely to live in areas with services such as easy access to public transport for easy mobility. Julian for instance, chose Grønland because his workplace was just two stops away with the metro. Oslo inner city also has scooters and bike sharing services that complement traditional public transport service (Böcker et al., 2020). These further make mobility easier within the city centre. Having lived in Ski with his parents before moving to Oslo, Julian used their vehicle to move around. Thus, even though their home was far from the town centre, the vehicle made it easy to get around to the gym and the shopping mall. In Oslo however, a private vehicle, though convenient, was unnecessary in reference to parking fees and maintenance costs. “I see no need for a vehicle where I live, it is just a burden looking at all the costs you have cover.” The high cost of living in Oslo is well known amongst its residents. Thus, with all this in mind Grønland, seemed like the right place to settle on.

Commented [JL5]: Insert a quote about cost of living in oslo or norway

Despite the inner-city areas providing advantage with regards to transport services, living there comes with its own disadvantages. One of the downsides of living in places like Grønland is that one is susceptible to stereotypes. The inner city has a higher migrant population and thus, as a resident with a migrant background, one will find themselves associated with negative stereotypes. Julian spoke about the downside of living in Grønland was related to racial stereotype. Vassenden and Andersson (2011) in their article Religion among young people in Grønland, explore how an individual’s skin tone contributes to their religious identity. The study finds that non-white individuals are more likely to be labelled as religious than white people. Being black, Julian felt living in this area put a label on his back related to vices such as drugs that are rampant in Grønland. Nafstad (2011) reports that despite perceptions towards drug users shifting from criminals to people who are sick, this perception shift has only applied to white Norwegians while migrants continue to carry the criminal identity. This would be a possible source of Julian’s concerns about stereotypes.

Commented [JL6]: This is a good example in a wrong place. Find a quote that fits better here

Part of Julian’s motivations for moving to Oslo was the push from his parents. They encouraged him to move to Grønland as it was a multi-cultural area. “There is a famous saying in Kinyarwanda, that my parents always say: *Aho ubuhoro buri umuhoro urogosha*” This translates into ‘Where there is peace, a machete could cut the hair’. This a widely proverb in Rwandan that tries t bring out the benefit of living in peace with those around. It common practice to live in peace and harmony with neighbours in Rwanda (Adekunle, 2007). Having lived in Ski before moving to Oslo, the former was usually his point of comparison.

Ski being predominantly native Norwegian, migrant families can find themselves in cultural bubble that differs from the rest of the residents. Such had been the case with Julian's family.

Cultural consideration from a racial vantage point was quite new for his parents or at least it was not important during their time in Rwanda. It was common practice to be acquainted with neighbours in Rwanda as they are seen as part of the extended family. "My mother said in Rwanda, she was so close to her neighbours it was okay to go to their house to ask for sugar". Ski was quite the opposite, as they did not even know the names of some of their neighbours. In Norwegian context, it may be normal for neighbours to distance themselves as a sign of respect for one another. For Julian's parents however, it simply came out as unneighbourly. Especially seeing that the only families that seemed to be neighbourly towards each other were those that were close to each other.

It thus, came as no surprise Julian's parents encouraged him to move Grønland. They believed he would at least live in a environment with people of similar culture and feel much more at home. "They believe I would feel at home when if I stepped outside to see black people that looked like me. I don't entirely feel that way there is a downside to living here too." While Julian acknowledged the idea of togetherness as in Rwanda was ideal, he felt it could not be replicated in Grønland.

Prayer and Worship

In a historical context, Rwandan society was polytheistic, and religion was viewed upon as something that brings unity. People believed in a supreme being called Imana. There was also belief in life after death as well as worshiping ancestral spirits. When a person died, they turned into *Abazimu* or spirits of the dead. It was believed the spirit continued to live and involve itself in human issues. During the period of colonialism in the late nineteenth century, Christianity started finding its way in Rwanda through Roman Catholic missionaries. Provision of education and healthcare were used as tools to gain ground and dominance. Christianity thus became dominant, and most Rwandan citizens practiced the religion. However, after the genocide, A rise in Islam started to occur because of accusations against the catholic church and its involvement in the steering the conflict (Adekunle, 2007). Religion is part of people's lives in Rwanda. Whether an individual worships or not, they find themselves affected by it in everyday life. Politicians for instance use the church to gather

Commented [JL7]: You might want to find a quote that states friendship ties in a Norwegian context take longer to solidify

support and followers. It is normal routine for families to spare time each week to visit their various places of worship. For my research participants, I observed similar tradition. Sandra for instance, attended church on weekends. The first time I spoke to Sandra about meeting in person, she suggested we meet on Saturday after her church service. I took interest in her religious life and asked about this in our meeting. Sandra was a Christian. She always specified and corrected me that she was an Adventist Christian. Every Saturday, Sandra joined her parents to attend church service. This has been family tradition for as long as she can remember. Her parents take church service seriously and there must be a good reason if you didn't want to attend service. She recalls several instances going to church with a hangover because she had been out partying the previous night. Sandra said she did not take the existence or non-existence of God seriously. In her own words, heaven was probably just a myth. What was important for her was that church brought people together in a peaceful environment, that it provided motivation for people in need. She of course, would never say this in front of her parents as they are full time believers.

I did notice some religious practices from other research participants as well. Ebo who is friends with me on Facebook usually shared bible quotes on his stories. He too mentioned that church run in his family, and he sometimes joined service when he visited them.

When I went to his place, he asked me if I was Christian and offered to pray before eating. He also placed candles on the table. This he said was traditional practice he inherited from his family. His mother believed the light from candles kept bad spirit away and made food safe to eat. He did not believe this to the core, but still did it because he learnt from his parents.

Relations with people

Peers and kin play a role in shaping ones understanding of society. Social learning theory explains that individuals observe and learn attitudes from parents and peers to gain acceptance (Miklikowska, 2017). Thus, I looked at my participants social and family

networks to figure out how this part of life shaped their cultural being. Desai and Killick (2010), note that relocation to a new place doesn't only disrupt social life patterns but also pushes individuals in new social relationships. Arri spoke about his then best friend, Brian who he lived with in the neighbourhood of *Kimironko* in Rwanda.. Brian was what Arri referred to as an ideal friend. The word 'friend' encompasses relationships with a varied spectrum of emotional intensity, which can range from very close to more distant (Westcott, 2012). Throughout our conversation when he described their relationship, he used the term *umunwanyi*, which basically means close friend in Kinyarwanda. "*Umunwanyi*" Brian and I did everything together, we had fun around the neighbourhood". Arri recalled making toy cars using *Ibyondo*, which was basically mud from clay soil. He and Brian would make the toy cars and push them around the house. During school holidays, he had more friends return from boarding school and they would ride their toy cars as one big group. From Arri's point of view, this is what seemed to define friendship. A mate that one could spend quality time with. But since moving to Norway, he is yet to meet friend as close to him as his childhood best friend. "I only have surface friends here, not a single *umunwanyi*." This was in reference to how difficult it can be to develop friendships in Norway generally.

Chris focused on present connections. He had quite a diverse group of friends. Being a Videographer, he met different people in entrapment that he befriended. When I visited his studio, pretty much anyone that came through seemed to know him quite well. He always introduced them in the lines of "this is my good friend". Whether this was just a good gesture, or he literally meant good friend I was not sure. He believed that being surrounded by different people increased opportunities. This was an attitude he learnt from his videography career. Like Arri, he once kept to himself as he thought it was hard to make friends in Norway. "I came to realize that was kind of me with the problem. Here, the person next to you is just as shy, so if you don't make the first step, you'll just look at each other and not say anything. It's about making the first step and not waiting for the other person. I cannot count how many friends I have now because I spoke to them first".

Another one of my participants, Vanny, presented his own views on the matter of friends. He didn't agree with Chris' thought that it was easy to have friends in Norway. He felt social relations weren't easily built in Norway. "You can meet someone a couple of times here, that still doesn't make you friends." Westcott (2012) argument that about the word friend holding different meaning could be applied in this case. Perhaps those who Chris referred to as friends were simply acquaintances in the eyes of Vanny. He went further to clarify this

point, "There are people that I hang out with, but it ends there. I've never shared any serious conversation with them except casual talk when we are socializing. The next day, we go back to our actual friends that we talk to throughout." Vanny blamed cultural differences as the reason why he struggled to build bonds with for instance native Norwegians. Sias et al. (2008), argue that the most difficult aspect of intercultural relationships is navigating mutual interests across cultural differences. I felt Vanny was trying to put up a similar point as it was easier to make friends that were of African descent.

Partnerships and marriage

Marriage in both Norwegian and Rwandan context carry similar meaning to formally recognise two individuals as partners. The differences, however, lays in the processes involved leading up to the point where marriage is fully recognised. Even before any prior interactions with participants, I had already noticed some differences in Norway marriages compared to what was custom in my home country. The simplicity of the celebrations was the biggest difference. The one wedding ceremony I attended had way under 50 people in attendance and was the only event leading up to the marriage. In Zambia on the other hand, there would be two or three events before the main marriage ceremony. It came as no surprise when I when Kurumera shared a similar view. Coming from a family of several older siblings, he witnessed and was actively involved in several marriages' preparations. The procedures seemed complicated for Arri to explain, so much that he got back to me after giving me an initial overview of the steps in a marriage. "There are many steps involved but I think mainly four are still a must these days, if am not mistaken. You have *gufata irembo* where the man's family representative visit the woman's family representatives to declare the intention to marry. *Gukwa* refers to the process of paying dowry. *Gutwi kurura* where the bride prepares a meal for her in laws for the first time and *Ubukwe* which is the actual marriage ceremony". He did acknowledge knowing little about several other practices that still take place in the Rwandan community.

Kurumera's limited knowledge came from observing his elder siblings, who followed the various ceremonies during their respective marriages. His elder brother, who got married in Norway, followed the four ceremonies *Gukwa*, *Gutwi kurura* and *Ubukwe* but decided to skip *Gufuta*. Kurumera's brother had already met the brides family several times before and the

Commented [JL8]: -when talking about married couples. You should stress out the the celebrations of marriage are simple where as the technicalities are a tiresome process. The authorities act like relatives here.

intention to marry was casually announced. Such an act would have been frowned upon had this been done in Rwanda. Kurumera said that this was because there were no relatives to put pressure on him to follow the proper marriage procedures. There is so much overt pressure from society that everyone is obliged to follow the **rules**. Durkheim (1994), spoke about this covert pressure that society exerts on individuals within. Despite not being openly enforced, people who defy the generally accepted procedure, marriage practice in this case are looked down on. Perhaps Kurumera's brother was able to skip some traditions because he lived outside a strong Rwandan society bubble. Kurumera's parents where there to ensure some traditions like dowry were not skipped but they did not force their son to go through everything.

Commented [JL9]: Insert a quote here about society pressure

Kurumera said that like his brother, he would do away with some of the traditions that seemed unnecessary when it was time for him to marry. " I think tradition is important for us all but if it comes at a cost that people cannot afford , then it's not right". Kurumera made this point because carrying out all the four or five marriage ceremonies required resources that not everybody could afford. It could thus, be draining financially for people who lacked a steady income. He explained that in the past, referring to his parents' times, it was possible to carry out these events because there was cooperation and support from relatives. The family members to those who wished to get married would contribute what they had and that made things easier. Because all that cooperation has been lost, it has become difficult to follow tradition. "People only want to attend these events with little or no help to those getting married. These days, if a couple needs assistance from family and friends, they must take it upon themselves to create marriage committees for financial support, otherwise they will most likely bear the entire cost on their own. Something that is meant to be celebration just turns into a stressful act which should not be the case".

In **Norway**, there is less societal pressure when it comes to procedure for marriage, in comparison to Rwanda at least. While less time is spent organising several events in Norway, there is documentation that needs to be submitted approved. If relatives or society added stress to marrying couples in Rwanda, authorities did a similar thing in Norway. For migrants, the process of getting a marriage approved can be lengthy and tiresome. Kurumera's brother had to wait more than a year for his partners documents to be verified as she did not have Norwegian citizenship. "They needed birth records which my wife did not have at the time. So we made two trips to Rwanda, the first time to collect and then second time to have them **verified**"

Commented [JL10]: Talk about how in Norway the cost is with authorities. If the problem with marriage in rwanada was relatives and society, then Norway has a similar problem with authorities

Commented [JL11]: You can add a bit more about marriage in Norway

Couples can move in together without ever considering marriage. Norway stands amongst countries where cohabitation is widespread and institutionalized than other similar societies with about 90 per cent of first partnerships being cohabitations (Wiik et al., 2009). Chris had been cohabiting his girlfriend, Mayte. The two decided to move in together about a year ago. The two lived together in a single bedroom apartment in St. Hanshaugen. There moving in together was motivated by saving costs. due to the rental prices in Oslo, it was only wise to move in together so they could share the rent. Norway is amongst the top countries with the highest cost of living in the world (Wiers-Jenssen, 2019). This was done outside their parents knowledge. He simply told them he was sharing an apartment with a flatmate and not necessarily cohabiting. "I wouldn't tell them because they would never approve, my parents believe in marriage first, then everything else after". His girlfriend Mayte migrated from Brazil and Chris felt this helped in creating an understanding of keeping their living together a secret from their parents." Mayte understands our situation because we have similar cultures when it comes to parents and marriage. I dated a Norwegian (native) before, it was difficult to make her understand because she though i was being keeping our relationship a secret". He went on to criticize his ex-girlfriend and native Norwegians in general. I felt he had a bad experience dating a native woman "I will give you a piece of advice, you can be in a relationship with anyone except Norwegian women. When you date a Norwegian woman, everything must be equal. I remember we used to split the bill to buy bread with my ex, we lived like roommates in school. It was not a good thing because the bond was missing. We're together but living apart. Mayte and I share everything". Chris was okay with splitting significant bills like rentals, which he did with Mayte.

Despite seemly having a stable relationship and cohabiting, Chris was not discussed marriage with Mayte. "Marriage is not something you rush into, there is still so much we need to achieve before we can even start to talk about marriage". This was in reference to economic stability.

Not everyone shared Chris' view opinion, Jack preferred native Norwegians. He felt African women specifically had a habit of seeking commitment too soon. Jack had no plans of getting married soon. He thought African women were obsessed with marriage and children. For him, it was difficult to have a causal relationship with a fellow Rwandan or any African woman, he thus, preferred native women who were mostly 'relaxed' with their dating intentions. The idea of marriage came out as more of a burden for Jack, than for instance being that it was not the right time. he did mention however, that the day he decided to marry, he would settle with someone from his home country because it would please his parents.

"My mother has always told me to bring home a woman that speaks 'the language'. Even when she speaks about me finding a partner, she says I should travel to Rwanda just to find a wife".

Appearance in makeup

While one looks at suitable partners, it is normal to see how they present themselves

One of the very first things I noticed about Marianma was how much she treasured her appearance. During our first video call, she connected her camera and immediately excused herself as she noticed her foundation makeup was somehow uneven. She picked up a small mirror in one hand and a puff in another, swiped her nose area for a couple of seconds. This happened two or three times whilst on the video call. During short moments of silence when I was taking notes, she picked up her phone to take what I assumed to be selfie pictures from different angles of her face. This I noted was part of Marianma's identity, to look good. The attention to detail she paid to her face was amusing. I also noticed the selfcare in practice when we met in person. She had a tiny little fan-like device that she pulled out of her purse. She told me the device was meant to keep her face dry and thus, her makeup would not fall off.

Commented [JL12]: You can connect this to being a suitable marriage partner

At the time I was carrying out fieldwork, there was a no-make-up challenge trending on social media at the time where women shared pictures of themselves without any make up. The challenge was aimed at promoting self confidence in natural beauty. I asked Marianma's opinion about this challenge. "I respect their view, but I would never share a picture of myself without makeup. It's like walking around naked and claiming you want to appreciate your body. Make up is an art for me, just like you wear clothes to cover your body, I wear makeup to cover my face". She had been wearing make for as long as she can remember. "I picked it up from my friends." Her mother was not against her wearing make-up, but often she felt Marianma spent too much time on the mirror.

Marianma came from Holmlia, where she lived with her parents. I never got to visit her home, we only met at her university in Ås. She was part of an African student association at the University. She spoke well about the association and what it stood for. She said it was a

platform where African students could express themselves and their culture. I attended one of their monthly general meetings, having received an invitation from Marianma. It was only a handful of people in attendance. The organisers, Marianma inclusive was visibly disappointed at the low turnout. There was a discussion at the end of the meeting about the low number of people that came to which Marianma was quite vocal. She criticized African students, claiming they were inactive and wouldn't take part in building the association. Marianma joined the association in hope of meeting and interacting with African students. She was born in Norway and needed more experiences with people that had lived in Africa to embrace her Rwandan side. 'It feels like I don't know much about African culture. I was raised in a predominantly white neighbourhood and went to private school. Since leaving secondary school, I've tried to develop that side of me". I thus understood her frustrations when organisers were the only people turning up for meetings at the association.

Related by blood

Erdal (2017) argues that chain migration has been responsible for the growth and diversity of the Norwegian-Pakistani population in Norway. Similarly, for my research participants, chain migration was the means through which they brought or followed family members to Norway. Jack came from a family of seven, all of them lived in Norway at the time of my fieldwork. His parents lived in Kolbotn, a small town outside of Oslo. Once or twice a month he made trips to visit and check on them. There were also times when he was summoned to help in tasks that they could not manage to perform alone. During one of the weekends I visited, he had just returned from painting the parent's balcony. With a slight tone of complaint in his voice and hands covered in spots of dry paint, Jack explained he was called to complete the task. He still preferred to do it himself, as opposed to hiring somebody else and paying unnecessary bills. It was ingrained in him from a young age that children ought to take care of their parents, as the parents did. This assistance is not only in terms of household chores or tasks but finance as well. Thus any need that arises from parents end, is responsibility of the working children.

Jack shared a rented apartment with his young brother, Gift. Then there was Bernard, the second young brother who I thought was living in the apartment as well. It turned out he only spent so much time at the brother's place as it was central, Bernard lived in the outskirts of

Oslo. As much as Jack emphasized this was a shared apartment with his brother, there always seemed to be a sense of big-small brother responsibility in their interactions. I was led to the conclusion that he had been asked to live with his siblings as part of responsibility and not necessarily because they wanted to live together. Jack covered 3 quarters of the rent, because he had a skilled job while the brother was a student. The dominance also appeared in their interactions around the house where Jack almost always had a final say. I did however notice how they shared their weekends. If Jack had a social gathering at home on one weekend, the next weekend would be left to his sibling to play video games with his friends. I can recall a time when he didn't want to go home because Gift had a small gathering at home. Magubane (2017), used a term called 'black tax' to denote the kind of family responsibility that an individual always has. Despite completing school and finding a stable job, they still have an obligation to take care of younger siblings in one way or the other.

Sandra and Sandrine were sisters, with the latter being the older of the two. When I met Sandra in Oslo, it was usually at her sister's place in Grünerløkka area in the inner-city. Sandrine shared the apartment with three other friends. Despite being the young sibling, Sandra seemed to play the big sister role. When I visited her the first time, she was the one packing cutlery in the dishwasher. She apologized for the mess in the house. " people who live here don't like to clean unfortunately". It was a similar situation to when a mother visits her child's home and must clean up the house.

In the weekends, the two sisters plus friends would usually go out to have fun with friends. Sandrine almost always ended up drunk and was most likely to end up causing trouble. Sandra thus, always made sure to stay sober so she could look out for her sister. When I asked about how she seemed to always be the responsible one of the two, her response was that this is how it has always been. Even their parents treated Sandrine like the younger child.

Sandra was still living with her parents. She completed her studies in economics and was seeking employment, preferably in Oslo. From her words, she was in no rush to move out of her parents' house, it was a comfortable place to live. She spoke well about her parent's cooking when they prepared *Ibihaza*, a typical Rwandese dish consisting cut pumpkin mixed with beans. Also being almost a similar body size as her parents, Sandra always sneaked into their wardrobes, picking out a few clothes to wear. As strange as it may sound, she travelled to Oslo wearing her dad's suite. Such where the benefits she was not willing to give up by moving out of her parents' house.

Sandra did however wish for more privacy. "The only reason I want to move from my parents' house is so I can have my own bathroom, I can share any other room in a house except for that one space. I just want to find it the way I left it, sparkling clean". She could not stand people in the house not dropping the toilet seat after use, a wet floor after showing or lack of toilet paper on the role.

Sandra's plans to work in Oslo were motivated by her sister being there. She didn't want to necessarily live with Sandrine, but close enough to be there for her. This made sense when I thought about the mess in Sandrine's house. Sandra's long time best friend, Karin also lived in Oslo. They had not lived in the same town since high school in Lillestrøm 6 years ago. This further motivated her find work and move to Oslo, so they could be close again. I never got to meet her best friend, but she spoke fondly of her. Sandra also showed me tones of pictures of them together. The pictures were a range from party life, church and travels they had been to together. It was evident there was a strong bond between them. Sandra drew some comparisons between herself and Karin. She spoke of feeling a bit behind when it came to personal development compared to her best friend. Karin had been working for two years and was already working towards getting a house. "It just feels like I have lagged behind. Normally you want to be on the same level as your best friend but I'm not working now so she pays for everything when we go out. I feel like I'm exploiting her sometimes".

The married couples

Amongst my research participants, Micah was the one who most recently settled in Norway. She initially came to Norway for her PhD but decided to settle after meeting her partner, Robert. They had one child together. Both Micah and Robert were previously married with two and three children respectively. I found their relationship quite confusing because Robert was still living with his ex-wife and children. It was almost as if Micah came into the picture as a second wife. I related it to polygamy in Zambia where a man continues to live with his wife while openly bringing in another woman into his life.

Micah was renting an apartment in Ås where she lived with her baby Mbonipa. She was still pursuing her PhD at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences and needed to be close to school. However, she spent most weekends at Robert's place in Oslo. She seemed very comfortable when I met her at Robert's place. The kind of comfortable that says she was not a

guest or visitor in the house but lived there. She had her own bedroom in the house to share with baby Mbonipa. During times when Micah's schedule was heavy, she usually left baby Mbonipa at Roberts place. "When I have a busy week, Mbonipa stays with Robert. I'm a bit uneasy usually because I don't like leaving my baby out of site for long periods. I would rather have a babysitter for a couple of hours". As true as this sounded, I thought the actual reason she didn't want to leave Mbonipa at Roberts house was because Robert's ex-wife was there. There were also issues of balancing school and taking care of Mbonipa. As much as Robert supported her financially, responsibilities to take care of Mbonipa took up much time, as a result her studies were being delayed. I wondered why they did not wait to have a child, seeing that Micah still had school to worry about. Wiik et al. (2010) argue that 50 percent of all first children are born outside marriage. Micah said this was the only feasible way for her to stay in Norway after studies as they prepared to get married. Norway has a complicated process of marrying a partner living in another country, especially outside Europe. She said many of her relatives looked down on her for having a child with a man who already had a wife. Specifically, her parents did not want the relationship to end in a marriage. She still went against their wish and says they eventually accepted that was what she wanted.

Another young couple I interacted with was Eric and his Norwegian wife Emma. I never got meet them in person as work meant that Eric was mostly on the go. We did however communicate via video calls. The couple owned a small dog by the name of Mollie. We discussed family and marriage during one of the video calls. Eric and Emma agreed they were not ready to have kids. He said the couple was in no position to have a child because of their busy work schedule. They both spent a majority part of the day out of the house. He did not know how long the situation without a child was going to last. Thus, the reason why they got a Dog instead. Mollie was their baby, as Eric always referred to him. "Mo is no substitute for an actual baby, but with him around we don't feel alone in the house and most importantly he requires less attention. I just carry him around in my car whilst working. Emma can also take her to work when I am busy, we cannot do that with an actual baby". They had a dog walker who took Mollie out for physical.

Eric however, admitted to his mother pressuring him about when a baby was coming several times. She's reminded him several times that a dog is no replacement for a baby and that she would like to have a grandchild. I could relate to this as it happens often in Zambia when a

couple is recently married. There is usually high expectation from relatives to see children in the first few years.

Culture in dreadlocks

A simple but precise description of Privilege would be that he had dreadlocks. Much about him seemed to be influenced by Rastafarian culture. He had three bracelets with Jamaican colours, each with a unique pattern. He also wore a necklace that had an African map pendant. His dreadlocks were just about shoulder length. The locks seemed well taken care of. Privilege also smoked quite a lot. When I met him at his place, he stepped outside several times to smoke a cigarette. I declined when he offered me a smoke, to which he exclaimed jokingly "Good for you, smoking is bad for your health, stick to alcohol".

He enjoyed reggae music, something I noticed from playlists he shared on his Facebook newsfeed. The playlist was dominated by African reggae artists like Lucky Dube and Alpha Blondy. During our meeting, Privilege spoke about how reggae music kept him connected to Rwanda and Africa in general. "I listen to reggae artists that speak from the heart, such music touches the soul. I mostly listen to African reggae, because I can relate to the message in the song". He attended concerts in Norway including one by a Norwegian-Zambian artist, Admiral P that I knew. He even knew about Maiko Zulu, a well-known reggae artist in Zambia. We spoke at length about Zambian music as he was curious to know the reggae culture there. He developed a relationship with Rastafarian culture in his early teenage years. He felt it was easier to express oneself as a Rastafarian in Norway compared to Rwanda. "People only think about marijuana when they see you with dreadlocks, but Rastafarian culture and lifestyle goes far beyond smoking weed".

Dress code

Factors such as climate, religion and wealth will determine a societies clothing pattern. With Rwanda generally experiences warm weather for the most part of the year, it is not common to find people wearing heavy clothing. Throughout history, men were wearing Animal Skin

and Bark shirts. Women on the hand wore animal belts with Fringes as well as ornaments and jewellery. Brightly coloured clothes were imported from merchants who from Arabic and Persian regions. Colonisation as well played a role in that governments in power promoted the importation of clothes from western countries (Adekunle, 2007).

Jack gave much attention to his clothing. He put a mirror near the exit to check his outfit before stepping out of the house. When I visited him and we planned to go out, he would change shirts two or three times, asking for my opinion about which one looked better. Quite often he was uncomfortable with what he was wearing when we went out and he would spend the rest of the evening complaining about why he did not pick something else to wear. He's wardrobe was quite diverse, he's attire depended on the occasion. This was evident on his social media page on Instagram. He posted pictures of himself in a suite, as well as different set of casual wear. I knew he loved 'Airforce Nike' sneakers as he had the same type in blue, red and purple colours. He explained the shoes were a recent edition and that he spent quite an amount of money to purchase each pair. There was even a picture of Nike sneakers on the wall of his bedroom. Jack felt he was well built physically, except for his legs which he was never comfortable revealing. He never liked wearing shorts as he thought his legs were too small for his body. He thus, preferred to wear loose trousers to make his legs look bigger. Even during some of the warmest days during the summer, he still opted to wear jogging pants when the rest of us wore shorts.

Food we eat



A typical Ugali meal

Rwandans have historically grown and consumed staple foods mainly due to their subsistence economy. Their diet mainly included cone, sweet potatoes, cassava which were consumed with beans and various vegetable. A majority had two meals a day consisting of breakfast and a main meal. They also incorporate some traditional dishes foods in *Umutsima*, which is a dish of corn pasta, *Isombe* made up of cassava leaves, and *Mizuzu* which is fried plantains (Adekunle, 2007).

Food forms a part of an individual's identity. Not only is identity tied to where the food is found geographically, but also how it is prepared and consumed. States that despite the sporadic studies relating to food culture in sub-Saharan African countries, the few conducted studies show considerable adjustment in food acculturation after migration. (Saleh et al., 2002) found that Ghanian migrants in Australia replaced cassava flour with potato starch. Countries in this region, where Rwanda is found, has cultural similarities and food is one of them. For instance, the Rwandan staple food ugali is also main a dish in several southern African countries including Zambia. Even though this dish has unique names in the various

countries, the ingredients are very similar if not the same: a paste of either cassava or maize meal boiled and cooked. What differs is the consistency. One would thus, assume that food adjustments for migrants from the sub-Saharan region would be similar. It would also mean that there are limited amounts of local sub-Saharan foods going across continents to Europe. As a result, even before factoring in the voluntary changes that may occur in food preferences, there is already a push factor that lies in unavailability of foods that a Rwandan migrant was used to in their home country.

Naidu and Nzuzza (2014) have written about how the relationship between memory and place can be interpreted in the context of food. The performance, as he calls it, of preparing and eating food from one's home country, whether it is ingredients, the tools used, the preparation techniques, ways of eating and who food is shared with, the whole process creates memories. When any of these processes of food preparation are performed in foreign land, memories of the events and as well as the people that food was shared with would be triggered. Even quality of food in terms of taste, smell and appearance play similar roles. As has been mentioned in previous chapters, memories enable past events of significance to an individual to be relived. Food can thus trigger these memories.

During one of my visits at Jack's house, he prepared *Ugali*. The *Ugali* was much firmer than the one I was used to in Zambia. He had tasted southern African version of *Ugali* before and he felt the opposite. "The *Ugali* you guys in the south make is undercooked, it is way too soft. That is closer to baby porridge than *Ugali*". As hard as I thought it was, this was nothing close to the *Ugali* in Rwanda according to Jack. Firstly, the maize meal in Norwegian stores results in a different quality of *Ugali*, which was to Jack's displeasure. "The meal in kiwi takes longer to cook and it doesn't harden well enough". He opted to buying maize meal from the middle eastern stores in Grønland as they offered wider variety. "I usually buy two different brands from and mix them, It doesn't come close to our own but it's much better taste"

Not only are differences found in names and quality of *Ugali*, preparation too. In Rwanda, *Imbabura* is a type of brazier used to cook food. The brazier uses charcoal to cook food. heats. I knew about *Imbabura* because it is also widely used in Zambia. From my experience, use of braziers in Zambia is partly economical, compared to an electric stove. The high cost of electricity means that food that takes longer to cook is best not prepared on an electric

stove. A brazier is thus, used as an alternative because it is cheaper to buy charcoal. Above all, Jack shared the economical view too, but added that for his parents especially, they grew up in an age of using *Imbabura*. There are of course advantages to using a brazier such as the economical aspect but, it is a way of preparing food tied to Rwandan culture, and that alone brings its own satisfaction.

According to Sobal and Bisogni (2009), people's food choices can be shaped by turning points such as migration. In Norway, Jack went through a shift not only in what food he ate but how it was prepared. There was no longer use of braziers as was the case for his parents.

Even though food acculturation is not linear, the amount of time a Rwandan lives has lived in Norway will have an effect on what food they eat. Donkin and Dowler (2002), argue that migrants originating from developing countries may find it difficult and take longer to adapt to the food culture in developed countries because staple foods from countries like Rwanda are not exported to the developed world. It is easier for a migrant from Italy to adapt foodwise in Norway because pasta is readily available in the stores. The same cannot be said for matoke, a delicacy from Rwanda. Arri was one of those participants who struggled in his first year in Norway. Initially in Norway, he was driven by temporal excitement of seeing foods that he seldom consumed in Rwanda. "The cereal for breakfast and pasta for dinner, these were foods I rarely ate in Rwanda, suddenly I had to eat them almost every day. The meals were nice few weeks or so, afterwards I just wasn't satisfied. It would fill up my stomach but taste wise, the food was flat".

Parents and guardians of migrants also play a role in upholding food traditions. Even though Julian was not motivated he's not meals from Rwanda, he's parents helped him keep some food culture by ensuring he ate *Ugali* occasionally. Like Julian, Arri said he was lucky enough to have parents that made effort to find food that was as similar as possible to food in Rwanda. It was especially easier a few years ago before he moved out of his parents' home as they had a Rwandan dish from time to time. "They prepared Ugali and we eat together, the African way". The African in this case meant eating from the same plate that is placed at the centre. It is common practice even in Zambia to Ugali together. If there are too many people to fit one place, younger ones would be given their own plate to share. This of course promotes a feeling of togetherness within the family but most importantly everyone eats at the same. Naidu and Nzuzi (2014) conducted a study amongst Sierra Leonean migrants living in South Africa and found that the migrants connected emotionally to their relatives

back home through shared food in a recreated home atmosphere. Even though they had not been in physical contact with families for a number of years, the recreated atmosphere kept their memories fresh.

He admitted that he felt the impact more when he moved into his own place. "Now that I'm staying alone, I'm forced to prepare my own food". The loss of interest brought got me thinking about active participation in food cultural practice. Julian and Arri admitted to not taking part in making Rwandan food during the time they lived with their parent in Norway. Perhaps this contributed to loss of interest in preparing *Ugali* when they started living alone. Breaking away from family and becoming independent may produce its own trajectories in food habits that would be absent if a migrant was living with family as opposed to being alone.

When the process of how food is prepared and eaten is repeated for a long time, the process becomes routine. For children that grow up seeing food prepared and eaten a certain, it is automatically incorporated as culture sometimes without any explanation as why things are done a particular way. For instance, Ugali is eaten with bare hands in Rwanda. Even for families that use cutlery to eat foods like rice would never use a it for cutlery. We too eat ugali with bare hands in Zambia but there, it has however never been explained to me why this is the case, neither have I asked why.

Still on routine but in a religious sense. A religious family will always pray before a meal. Such was the case for Sandra and her family. (Spagnola & Fiese, 2007) state that rituals are unique to different families. They reflect a distinct family identity. Coming from a religious family, such was the case for Sandra. They followed strict religious rules. The first being most widely practiced was to pray before any meal. "it has always been the case with my family, we cannot eat food before it has been blessed with prayer". Their mother would randomly point at anyone at the table to pray, especially if there seemed to be no volunteer or if the same person had prayed before. "The prayer is supposed to be in Kinyarwanda. My mother is always say God can't understand a prayer if you use a language other than your own. Of course, I don't believe them but I still do it. I struggle with words here and because we don't use the Kinyarwanda except for during prayer." She spoke how her parents have always been strict with religion. As Adventist Christians, it also meant that Sandra family where not supposed to prepare food or do any work on Saturday. All food preparations was thus done the previous day. As much as Sandra followed most of the religious practices in the presence of her parents, she did not follow them to the core in their absence. "Sometimes I

prepare food on Saturdays when they are not around, I'm much more flexible". Thus, Rwandan families like Sandra's have ritualized their ways of eating food. Through repeated and prayer and perhaps constantly enforced rules at the table from her mother, Sandra finds herself carrying out these practices although uncommittedly, even in the absence of her parents.

Chapter summary

In this chapter, I discuss the culture in everyday life of research participants. I try to determine where their ways of life positions itself in the wider context of Norwegian and Rwanda culture, drawing comparisons where possible. As I will specify in individual cases, migrants showed different cultural traits relating to Norway and Rwanda. Thus, by looking at their ideas, customs as well as social behaviour, a connection can be drawn to see how their perception of Rwanda stands.

An estimate of 137 Rwandan immigrants and their children live in the Oslo municipality. Most of these are situated around the city centre where transport and other city services are easy to access. Despite the inner-city areas providing advantage with regards to transport services, each place has its own set of advantages as well as disadvantages. Julian spoke about the downside of living in Grønland was related to racial stereotype.

Peers and kin play a role in shaping ones understanding of society. Social learning theory explains that individuals observe and learn attitudes from parents and peers to gain acceptance. Relocation to a new place doesn't only disrupt social life patterns but also pushes individuals in new social relationships. As observed participant have their unique way of understanding social connections. some find it easier than others to develop them.

There are also different beliefs attached to who a marriage partner should be. Parent and guardian play role in determining these potential relations. But in other cases, children may take their own as observed in some participants.

Chapter 5: Education and Career paths



A health worker wearing a white coat gives out health information

Education is a core factor in any society because it is means by which culture and customs are driven. Rwanda had a pragmatic system of education before western education was imposed by European missionaries. The father figure in the house provided vocational training to their sons while mothers guided their daughters in domestic chores. As was common in many African societies including Rwanda, educating girl children was discouraged, instead they were restricted to focus on marriage (Adekunle, 2007). Even

though times have changed since these practices were actively taking place, many of the practices still find themselves intertwined in modern society.

Many if not all individuals have to decide about career choice at some point in their lives. Choosing the right career can make the difference between enjoying or detesting what may be termed as the purpose of life (Shumba & Naong, 2012). Furthermore, it is interesting to note influences that lead to these career choices. In this chapter I focus on how careers of my participants have been shaped or affected by people around them. From the closest family members to the society around them in Oslo.

Passion or safe career

Within the context of balancing between desires and the real world. There lies the decision to make on what career path to take. It can be a challenge to turn passion into a career. This obviously isn't as straight forward as picking one over the other. In the case of Jack for instance who chose a career in economics despite being passionate about football. The biggest spot in Rwanda remains to be football. But in order to make meaningful income, one needs play in the top league or better yet the national team. Jack saw himself taking the route of a football career in his teenage years. He attended school at *École Francophone Antoine de Saint-Exupéry* (EFASE). Despite having classes, much of his focus was placed on football. The school schedule only allowed for sports to be played once a week, on Thursdays. The rest of the week was filled with academic activities. I could relate to such a school system as growing up in my primary school days, there was very little room to develop extracurricular activity like sport. Thus, Jack and a number of his friends would sneak out of class to play football. They would organise themselves into teams and play *amafaranga y'umupira w'amaguru*. This was basically football that rewarded the winning team. All the players would contribute small amounts of money for the winning prize and the winner of the match would walk away with the total amount. This was much more interesting compared to seating in class all day long. "It wasn't just fun playing the game, I made some money out of it because I was almost always on the winning team". This was obviously something he did without the knowledge of his parents. Just like the school he went to, football was of little importance to his parents, compared to education at least. Jack narrated how on a number of occasions; his father found him playing football during class hours. "I was unaware my father had come to school that day, he came to pay for my tuition fees. He went to my class but did

not find me there as I was out at the pitch. I don't like to remember what happened when he found me." Despite getting in trouble for skipping class, Jack continued to play football at every opportunity he got.

When Jack arrived in Norway, his aspiration for football as a career had started to fade. He mostly blames it on a knee injury that he says troubles him to this day. This coupled with other factors such as weather meant that he played less football as time went by. Having moved from Rwanda, a warm country all year round, it was easy to play football outdoors, even during the rainy season. The story in Norway was the exact opposite and did not seat well with Jack. "I just couldn't handle the cold, instead of playing football, I paid more attention to keeping myself warm." He had always viewed himself as an exceptional player, but these limitations made him feel ordinary in the game. As his interest in football died down, his focus on school improved.

Jack always envisioned himself being wealthy in future. One of the primary reasons he wanted to take up football was because he admired the lifestyle of successful players and how much money they made. Even though he moved away from the dream of making it in football, he still wanted to be comfortable financially. Thus, he took interest in economics for that reason. I was convinced money was at the centre of his dreams when I walked into his apartment and found several motivational books on how to get rich or be successful in life. At the time of my fieldwork, he was reading Rich Dad Poor Dad by Kiyosa and Lechter. He gave me a few pointers from the book during our chat. He has a degree in economics and works in a private bank. This in his own words is the best alternative route to making money. He plans to tap into real estate as a business when he has enough savings.

Whether economics was motivation that came from his readings, or it was a career that he had some passion in, I was not sure. He however, mentioned that this was a personal decision. His parents on the other hand, were initially not for the idea of him heading into the field of economics. Jack's father especially, felt he would find it a little bit difficult to find work compared to if he had chosen a course in the medical field. This perception however changed shortly after he completed his studies. He got offered a job at the company where he completed his internship. "My parents still live in the old days so their advice can be outdated. It's only when you succeed that they believe you made the right decision going against their wishes."

The influential parent

Parents and guardians play a role in the occupational as well as career development of their children. In the absence of parental approval or support, young adults can be reluctant in pursuing or exploring diverse career paths. (Knowles, 1998) noted that students and young adults cite parents as an important influence on the career choice that they decide to pursue. The opposite may also be true, parents can limit the options that their children have in deciding which career path to take. Based on the parents' experiences, they maybe want to avoid fields of study. In an African home, Career choice is always a topic of discussion. I personally can testify these discussions took place during my upbringing. Most notably in these discussions, was how one sided they were. It was the parents talking and child listens. Being parents, they knew what career was best for me and it mattered less what I was passionate about, let alone the ideas that I wanted to share with them. The only freedom I had was choosing from their list of careers that they had laid out. These options only had two or three choices, a career in medicine, engineering, or law. These where careers that were worshiped by my parents as well as those my colleagues. This forceful approach of deciding a child's future cannot only be seen in bad light as there are reasons behind such actions.

I had separate discussions with Arri and Jack regarding careers that our parents wanted us to be adopt. We all seemed to agree that Medicine, engineering and law never miss out this list. The power of these fields extends beyond economy. Most notably, these are careers that carry a sense of pride in the family and local community. It's proof of an educated child in a family that commands respect. Arri remembers the times when his father gave him advice about making it in life, his uncle who was medical doctor was always used as a good example, and that Arri needed to be like in order be successful. In short, his uncle's career in medicine was the starting point for all his good qualities. "My uncle was happily married; he was humble and religious and well respected. This according to my dad was because he chose to be a medical doctor." As strange as this sounded, there was truth in it. In cases of arranged marriages for instance, one of the first questions parents want to know about a potential husband for their daughter is what he does for a living. There are no second thoughts about a

man working in any of these mentioned fields as it is believed this qualifies him to be a worthy husband that will be respected and take care of the family. Such is the weight of status they carry in African society.

Medicine and Law have an extra edge over engineering because they are a perfect definition of white-collar careers. Palmer (1997), noted appearance in plays a role in choosing a medical field over engineering. The handywork of the engineering profession generally can give the medical field an edge as it is preferable to look smart. The lab coat and the periwig add further authority to how these careers are viewed by society. When Jack had talks with his parents about career choice. Reference always made to the lab coat. "My mother was obsessed with lab coats, it's almost as if she thought medicine was just about wearing one. She always referred to doctors as angels because of the white color of their coat. She would always ask; don't you want to look like those angels?". There was little talk about the nature of the job itself. For Jack especially, he could not stand the sight of seeing wounds or injured people that characterise the medical environment.

Lastly but not the least, the careers can uplift family status within extended families. The perceptions of these white-collar jobs are spread across the African society, specifically Rwanda in this case. For those parents that never received an education, it is a way of gaining respect from extended family and society in general. As Arri put it, having a child in any of these careers ensures they have something to brag about during family meetings.

We know what is best for you

As mentioned earlier, the parents-child relation can translate into a one-sided discussion. Due to the culture of viewing a respectful child as one that only listens their parents' wishes. It becomes difficult to express one's feelings as a child without coming out as rude. Even there were children like Jack who broke the norms and expressed themselves to their parents. This forced a counter measure that I will refer to as convincing tactics because of its nature. The most common of these tactics, that I experienced with my mother, was the story that parents always got first place during their school days. As inconsistent as these stories can be in their timeline, parents would use them to regain authority during discussions to gain the upper hand. By stating that they smart in their early days, they reinforce the idea that they know

what they are talking about and should be listened to. Jack can recall his father stating that during his early days, he never wasted time playing football because he was focused on studying and getting good grades. There was no proof to show for this but it was still to be taken as gospel truth. In a sense these tactics were not merely for career choices they were also meant to help children work hard. They would give themselves as examples to their children when they noticed a weakness. This was meant to be motivation if a child had not performed well in school. As much as most of these claims were not true, it was community practice that was believed would encourage children to work hard and get good grades that would ultimately lead them to the prestigious careers mentioned above.

Motivated by guardians

It's not always that children go against their parents' wishes in terms of career choice. Simoné, did not need any convincing when he pursued a degree in development studies. This decision came merely from looking up to his mother, Esther who has a similar degree. Mickelson and Velasco (1998), noted that mothers are more influential in talking their children into a particular career and that the children's career is much more likely to match that of the mother. In a similar study, Mickelson and Velasco (1998), also noted that adolescents were more likely to approach their mother for discussions regarding career choice. For as long as Simoné can remember, Esther has always been involved in organizational work in humanitarian organizations. It is through her work that she travelled to Rwanda and several other African countries. It was also through her work assignment in Rwanda that she met Simone's father. Because of the traveling nature of his mother's work, Simoné has lived in Uganda, Burkina Faso and Rwanda. The experience of having spells in different countries is what sparked interest to take up his mother's career. That's what led Simoné to pursue studies in development. In addition to the travel experience, he felt she had set up a base for him to walk through. The connection and networks Esther has built through the years would make it easy, he felt, to build a career compared to if he had to start from scratch in a different field.

Simone now works with Caritas and admitted, he is not as satisfied with his career choice anymore. He pointed out the politics involved in humanitarian work as being the reason behind his loss of interest. These were barriers that he overlooked or might not have taken

into consideration before. “All I saw when my mother left for work was somebody going to save the world, I thought it was that straightforward.”

In addition to only having a surface view of his mother’s career, he was blinded as a beneficiary. What he experienced growing up around his mother’s career were the benefits, not necessarily the actual work. As an only child, Simoné found himself in the upper section of society in a developing country. He went to a good school and had privileges that most children in the developing world would not have. As comfortable as it was growing up, he never got to experience the nature of work in his mother’s career.

Simoné was left trying to figure out the next step to take in his career path. A new job was on the list of things to do. He was quite specific when describing the kind of job that he was looking for, it seemed like wishful thinking. The opportunities that he had so far found did not appeal to him. Perhaps he did not want to repeat the same mistake he made for his current job. If all failed in job seeking, further education was still an option. He was considering a return to school but had not figured out what he would study.

Under the ideal career

Circumstances of life can limit ability to pursue a desired career. Whether it be finance of lack of opportunities in general, these reasons can force individuals to divert interest into other fields that are less ideal. Arri shared a story about his father, Joseph who did not want his son to become a nurse. After completing high school, Joseph applied at medical school in hope of pursuing a career in medicine. Unfortunately, he was not picked amongst the selected candidates. Arri stressed out that his father was unlucky to not be picked. This in my understanding, was to say his grades were good enough, he just was not picked as there were too few places in relation to the number of applicants. He explained a system of selection that I was all too familiar with back in Zambia. Only the University of Rwanda offered a course in medicine in the whole country at the time, with just under 20 candidates in each class. This created stiff competition even amongst the best performing students. Arri never mentioned how good his father’s grades were, but I understood why he categorized his failure to get admitted into university as going down to luck. The few that made it past the selection process still had to go through a phase of applying for sponsorship as this was not guaranteed for everyone. With the medical field having one of the highest tuition fees in Rwanda, candidates that did not receive financial support had to drop out at some point.

Ngesi (2003), noted that a poor financial base for students coming from disadvantaged communities hinder choices to get appropriate educational programmes or careers. Because of these barriers, Joseph settled for a less desirable position in clinical medicine. This course was offered at several colleges with more study places, so it was easier to get admitted. The turnover rate at Butare University Teaching Hospital is quite high amongst nurses (Nkomeje, 2008). However, the easiness that came with being admitted into this school program was its weakness. Clinical officers thus ended up being seen individuals that could not get into medicine. They were referred to as *umuganga wibinyoma*, that translates to a fake or failed doctor. As a result of such discrimination and labels, there were signs of inferiority across this field of study. The discrimination also spread other positions that were considered below that of a medical doctor. Joseph, just like many others in this field thus, kept his career quiet, for fear of being looked down on by colleagues that had gotten into the so-called top careers. The inferiority complex manifested differently in those students that could not stay quiet. They instead chose to be seen as medical doctors by taking pictures in lab coats with stethoscopes around their necks. Joseph was not the idea of pretence, he never wanted to be mistaken or referred to as a doctor because he was not one. He was not proud of being a Clinician but could not pretend to be someone he was not. Joseph was aware of his limitations and competences. He was aware of the role he played in providing services and was committed to carrying out his duties as a clinical officer.

Because of experiences in clinical medicine, Arri's father was not for the idea of his son studying clinical medicine or anything that he felt fell under the level of a medical doctor. For Arri however, the perception was totally different from his father. He put his passion and desire to make music aside and went on to become a Nurse. As much as he did not want to have a career in the medical field, it was easier to get a job. He did not have the grades to apply for a degree in medicine school. Even though he settled for nursing, he only had positives to say about the profession. Seeing and interacting with all the students in his class and school gave him motivation. These were brilliant minds that could go through the most rigorous academic programs, including medicine if given the chance. They might have not gone for their desired careers, but these circumstances were for the most part unchosen. Arri's described Joseph's line of thinking pessimist. A 'brilliant orphan' as he liked to call his father, alluding to the fact that he was smart but was limited by finance and opportunity. He recalled Joseph narrating to him how on a number of occasions students in class would correct their then physiology teacher when she made a flawed explanation. This was a degree

holder from the best learning institution in the country debating theories with first year students. He wondered how this was not motivation enough for his father to realise how special he was.

The differences between Arri and his father here is that for Arri, becoming a nurse was a steppingstone. Unlike his father, not much focus was placed on where Nursing ranks in the medical field, it was simply a field he would stay to finance his music career. He was making music on the side. As much as that did not bring him any income at the time, he was able to finance his career in music from the income obtained from nursing work. His stage name was Dr Arri, coming from the fact that he was an artist working in the medical field. Whether this would be seen as inferiority I was not sure. It was interesting to note that he is only other person in the family in the medical field, all his younger siblings have careers in other fields. Perhaps his father managed to convince them to avoid the medical field.

It's worth noting that these are two different experiences from different countries in different time periods. Arri might have acknowledged difficulties in the health and that it is easy for individuals to feel inferior because the industry made one feel like they were at the bottom of the food chain. He admitted to feeling like his efforts were being disregarded. This would explain the frustrations and sometimes unprofessional conduct that characterises nurses in Rwanda. Nkomeje (2008) noted that nurses at King Faisal Hospital were only moderately satisfied with their professions. This likely result in switching career because they were not happy with the nature of the profession (Uwayezu, 2006).

This, however, was not to justify these actions, neither was it supposed to leave any clinician thinking less of themselves. He does not regret studying Nursing and given a second chance he would do it again.

Discussion and Conclusion

In the migration process, focus in mainstream media is often placed on inflow of migrants into host countries. Return migration, specifically voluntary return has been neglected or at least received the least amount of attention in the migration process (Cassarino, 2004). More so, literature on reasons for return migration, arguably influenced by host country immigration policies, puts less priority on the return phase of the migration chain. When return migration gets an audience, attention is focused on economic or financial objectives. This is evident in initiatives to repatriate immigrants by offering monetary rewards upon return to their home countries. As noted in the introduction chapter, these mainstream motivations to return are true, but do not represent all the factors likely influence return migration. The task thus, arises to figure out other factors likely to influence return migration, that are usually neglected in mainstream discussion.

In this thesis, I tried to construct these ‘other reasons’ from a migrant’s perspective. This originates from the idea that immigrants who have lived in Rwanda before may not maintain the exact same cultural beliefs and practices as they did in their home countries. By studying the factors that build up the identity of a Rwandan migrant, we can bridge a relationship that exists with their home country. Various factors such food, clothing and language are building blocks of identity and can thus, be used to understand the relationship that exists with an individual. While discussing multilingualism and identity in Canada, Davila (2019) talks about how African francophone immigrants identify and relate to black American Hip-hop culture in response to being marginalised in school. Similar reasoning can be applied in a Rwandan context. In chapter 4, Jack admitted to identifying more as Tanzanian than Rwandan as he related more with the former country’s culture. The identity that I refer to as Rwandanness in this study is a collective term for the beliefs and practices that build up identity from a Rwandan immigrant point of view. This identity can vary between by age and more collectively between younger and older generations. Renzaho et al. (2011) uses acculturative family distancing which refers to the gap in the process of acculturation between migrant parents and their children. Such gaps can be a source of different identities between generations as parents maintain values and norms from countries of origin while children adopt behaviours in host country. In chapter three, Jack and his parents had differing opinions regarding marriage partners as his parents felt it was wise to stick to women of the

same culture as his. Similarly, Julian was not comfortable living in Grønland because of racial stereotypes associated with the area, this is despite his parents being of the view that it was better to have a Rwandan or anybody close to your identity as a neighbour. Whether acculturative family distancing plays a role in these cases is debatable. We can however conclude that Rwandanness is unique to an individual and one of the reasons behind this lies in the variations in the pace of acculturation. An individual does not simply take up a whole of Norwegian culture and dispose off everything they identify with about Rwanda. The different variations and combinations of these building blocks of identity were thus, worth exploring and comparing between various generations amongst the Rwandan migrants. The idea of comparing various aspects of culture is not to assume a belief and practice is bound to change when an individual migrates to a host country.

Memories

The degree to which memories are copied or reconstructed from the original event can vary. It was not possible to tell how much of my participants recollections were accurate. What is true and worth considering is the factors surrounding and influencing the memory. The amount of time that has passed is worth factoring in. Recent memories are less likely to be reconstructed from the actual event than older memories (Nigro & Neisser, 1983). For memories whose actual events took place in Rwanda and years have passed, it would be expected that participants would have most of their memories reconstructed.

The stories of participants showed how past experiences can shape the present lives of Rwandan migrants. The good memories as well as mistreatment incurred at home and in transit determined how individuals identified with these areas. From bad experiences of war and xenophobia to good experiences preserved in memory. We noted how objects are used as symbols to remember valuable moments in past lives. Arri used a photo album to remember his best friend as well as those dear to him. These objects represent moments in time that can be revisited and relived (Naguib, 2008). It's important that objects are in their original form. For Arri, it was not just what was in the picture, it was the texture and scent of the photo that preserved these special memories. Generally, this is also good alternative for maintaining memory about Rwanda for individuals who are unable to travel. The objects remain a reminder of the Rwanda that still exists within them. For the future generations can utilize these pictures and have an idea of their roots.

Memory also extends to songs. For both singers and listeners, they trigger collective grieve.

Titum learnt songs from his mother that he still sings to this day. As much as the songs triggered similar emotions, we noted that his mother grieved those individuals lost during the conflict, for Titum he used it to remember his mother after she had passed on. The songs are also capable of changing, as Titum did by adding an instrument. These further shapes the song to suite a memory that an individual wishes to trigger.

we can also conclude that while generations that follow adapt to new environment, they do not entirely through away their beliefs and principles. There is a slight change from the practice of their parents such as when Titum added a guitar to a traditional song or when Arri used social media while keeping his families value for physical photographs.

Relationships

Amongst peers and those that are kin, we noted how relocating affects social groups. Participants like Arri struggled to create new social circles. The bond created between him, and his closest friend seemed irreplaceable, so much it was the first thing that came up when he spoke about friends. This is not an assumption that such individuals do not make friends, perhaps they just prefer the old set of friends and interactions they had in Rwanda. The usage of Rwandan terms further supports this view. Usage of local terms *Umunwanyi* indicated a deeper connection. So much that even the direct translation of best friend did not carry the same weight as saying it in the local language. This brings us to a discussion that language plays a role in determining social circles. When Jack communicated with his young brother, there was a lot of bilingual Kinyarwanda/ Norwegian usage. In this case too, despite both being fluent in Norwegian, there were still words that could not be directly translated from Kinyarwanda. Use of bilingual is not only about finding the perfect words of expression, but it can also channel respect, sadness or joy. This can show just how much meaning words can lose by simply being translated in another language (Blume & Board, 2013). Language can be used as a path for creating and maintaining social relations, it can also be true however, that it can also be a barrier as was the case with Arri.

Deeper than friendship, different patterns with regards to dating were noted. Practices such as cohabitating, arguably acceptable in Norwegian society was adopted by several participants. Chris for instance, who lived with his girlfriend admitted it would be taboo in Rwanda to move in with someone you were not married to, this is also a belief shared by his parents. Marriage is not merely seen as a legal or formal union of people; it is approval from those in

attendance that two people can be together. Thus, cohabitation is seen as an unacceptable shortcut to marriage, in a Rwandan context at least.

Even with some participants adopting the culture of cohabitation, we noted that people like Chris did not entirely agree with Norwegian cohabitation. The idea of splitting every bill in the house was still odd to him. From a Rwandan point of view, evident in Chris' parents, significant bills could be split but buying basic needs such as food could be bought by either partner. One would wonder where the line is drawn between what counts as significant bills or not.

The idea of what consists of cohabitation leads us to what it means to cohabit. We noted how Jack felt it was best to avoid African women if you are not ready to commit. Even if cohabitation is a taboo in Rwandan society, there is still expectation that two people living together will at some point get married. This is unlike the idea in Norway that people can cohabit for as long as they want and not receive any pressure about commitment from the people around them (Wiik et al., 2009). Even Sandra viewed cohabitation and generally relationships as instrumental towards marriage.

The reasons for marriage can go beyond meeting a life partner when it is viewed as a strategy. In Micah's case, she was going to get married so she could stay in Norway. This brings dynamics of polygamy. Polygamy is illegal in Rwanda and is not recognized under Law (Polavarapu, 2011). However, it is worth mentioning that people still marry several partners in secret. This could explain why individuals would have it as an option for the sake of obtain documentation to live in Norway.

A similar view can apply to having children from a strategic point of view. Normally, having children should happen when both partners are ready to do so. Using Micah as an example she didn't seem ready to have a child because there was school to worry about. However, circumstances required her to have a child if she was to continue living in Norway.

Looking at family relations amongst my participants leads to a discussion of responsibility. One would assume that getting a job or financial independence entails freedom to break away from family when it comes to responsibility. This is not the case; it could be argued the opposite is true for Rwandan family. Being a bread winner in a family means added responsibility to take care of younger siblings. As was evident with Jack living with his younger brother. The concept of black tax and notion that you're not successful until family is taken care of comes into play. From a parent's point of view, the main purpose of having

children is so they can one day take care of them. This is evident in small tasks around the house, Jack's was not living with his parents, but from time to time, he paid them a visit every now and then so he could maintain the house where he could. The practice of responsibility in a family does not only benefit the parents and siblings on the receiving end, but it also earns the provider extra respect. I would compare this to the sisters, Sandra, and Sandrine, where despite the former being younger and unemployed. She was respected more because she seemed responsible compared to the sister.

We noted that religion still plays a significant role in the lives of some Rwandan migrants. This was incorporated in their weekly lives, as practiced in Rwanda. Despite some participants being active Christians, they did not follow their doctrines entirely. The seventh day Adventist church in Rwanda is quite strict on the appearance of congregants (Peck, 1992). That includes no makeup, treated hair or revealing clothes. Having interacted with Marianma, who still considers herself an Adventist. Her understanding of religion had shifted. It was more to do with the inner spiritual self than appearance that matter. From interaction with peers from her church, she side-lined the rules of a classic Adventist. These prohibited forms of art are still practiced by people in Rwandan that do not belong to the Adventist church. There are even deviant members within Adventist church that dress up as they please. So, it would be a false claim to assume the idea of make up in church was known from Norway. Perhaps it was about adapting to Norwegian culture or simply expressing themselves because they had freedom to do so in Norway. We also noted that Marrianma's parents where still loyal to the church practice in Rwanda. Perhaps this was influenced by their strong beliefs about the existence of God, that Marianma for instance was not a strong believer of.

Apart from individuals who attend church, albeit for different reasons, different forms of worship were practiced. From sharing interesting Bible verses on social media to praying before a meal. All these are part of worshipping and count in the eyes of those that practice them. This would never be sufficient in Rwanda as a religious person is seen as one who incorporates all these different forms together.

Appearance

Appearance outside church was something notable. Jack was always aware of his dress cord and wanted to be up to date with the latest shoes of his favourite brand. However, he's

Rwandan fashion side was not entirely neglected as he wore bracelets from Rwanda every time. This alone differentiated him from any other individual that would otherwise be wearing the same shoe as him. This mixture of different culture extended to lifestyles. Privilege, who was quite obsessed with Rastafarian culture stuck to his Rwandan roots. By only playing Rwandan and generally African reggae, he maintained a part of Rwanda in him whilst embracing Rastafarian lifestyle.

The food culture amongst Rwandan migrants has several dimensions. The most influential aspect pertains to availability. Adjusting diet went down to what was available in the stores. We noted how Julian turned to middle eastern dishes as they were the closest available and affordable alternative to the staple Rwandan food.

In addition to availability, preparation is also another factor. Rwandan local dishes take time and a level of know how to prepare. Thus, even when Julian was surrounded by immigrant shops that sold maize, he seldom prepared staple food because of the amount of effort it took to prepare these dishes. As a result, we notice a shift in cultural practice where staple Rwandan food is only prepared on weekend or special occasions when there is enough time. Lastly, the quality of ingredients such maize meal affects taste. I could testify the quality *Ugali* meal sold in Norway is nowhere near the quality sold in Zambia. I would thus, understand why Arri was not so excited to prepare meal frequently. A combination of all these factors can influence diet.

Economy

The influences affecting economic capital were discussed. When it comes to career choice parents or generally guardians will have a say in an individual's career choice. Historically in Rwanda, some careers are more respected than others. We noted how Arri's father respected medicine and law practitioners because of their status in society. This in turn had a bearing on the nursing path that he ended up taking. The ease with which it was to find a job was also a determinant in career choice. Thus, taking all these factors in account can limit room for choosing a career that an individual is passionate about. Just like Jack, one would have to be deviant to find themselves in a career that they really want.

In cases where an individual cannot go for their desired career choice. It will usually manifest as a second career or a hobby. Jack had passion for football, but because he could not take up the sport because of school, he still practices the sport on a semi-professional level.

As parents usually have their own opinions about what they feel is the best career choice for their children. They will stop at nothing to convince their young ones into agreeing with their ideas. This lays ground for a discussion of society truth. These are tactics that parents use to convince their children into careers. In the case of Jack's father, he was first in class so that alone was reason enough to agree with his suggestions.

Whether or not children agree with their parents in picking a career. What is true is wherever they end up, their parents will at least have some say in it.

We have explored the various forms of capital that build up the identity of Rwandan migrants in Oslo. It is evident that several cultural practices have changed since moving to Oslo. Even more evident are the changes in the second and third generations. They still identify themselves as Rwandan, whole or partial and have every right to do. What we also get from this is that identity is fluid in that what one considers Rwandan could be foreign to the next individual. Rwandanness can thus not be defined by any specific combination of cultural practices. Instead, it is the small bits and pieces that different individuals carry within their lives that makes them Rwandan. Just as speaking Kinyarwanda qualifies an individual to claim Rwandan identity, a few bracelets on the arm too, should be allowed to claim the same identity.

References

- Abaka, E., & Gashugi, J. (1994). Forced migration from Rwanda: Myths and realities. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, 14(5), 9-12.
- Adekunle, J. (2007). *Culture and customs of Rwanda*. Greenwood Press Westport, CT.
- Adichie, C. N. (2009). The danger of a single story. In: TED Talk.
- Arya, D., & Henn, M. (2021). COVID-ized Ethnography: Challenges and Opportunities for Young Environmental Activists and Researchers. *Societies*, 11(2), 58.
- Asiedu, A. (2005). Some benefits of migrants' return visits to Ghana. *Population, Space and Place*, 11(1), 1-11.
- Baddeley, A. (1992). What is autobiographical memory? In *Theoretical perspectives on autobiographical memory* (pp. 13-29). Springer.
- Bartzokas-Tsiompras, A., & Photis, Y. N. (2019). Measuring rapid transit accessibility and equity in migrant communities across 17 European cities. *International Journal of Transport Development and Integration*, 3(3), 245-258.
- Blume, A., & Board, O. (2013). Language barriers. *Econometrica*, 81(2), 781-812.
- Böcker, L., Anderson, E., Uteng, T. P., & Throndsen, T. (2020). Bike sharing use in conjunction to public transport: Exploring spatiotemporal, age and gender dimensions in Oslo, Norway. *Transportation research part A: policy and practice*, 138, 389-401.
- Bourdieu, P. (2011). The forms of capital.(1986). *Cultural theory: An anthology*, 1, 81-93.
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods*. Oxford university press.
- Campbell, A. (2000). Cultural identity as a social construct. *Intercultural Education*, 11(1), 31-39.
- Cassarino, J.-P. (2004). Theorising return migration: The conceptual approach to return migrants revisited. *International Journal on Multicultural Societies (IJMS)*, 6(2), 253-279.

- Cohen, G., & Conway, M. A. (2007). *Memory in the real world*. Psychology press.
- Cohen, N., & Arieli, T. (2011). Field research in conflict environments: Methodological challenges and snowball sampling. *Journal of Peace Research*, 48(4), 423-435.
- Conway, M. A. (2005). Memory and the self. *Journal of memory and language*, 53(4), 594-628.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Halton, E. (1981). *The meaning of things: Domestic symbols and the self*. Cambridge university press.
- Davila, L. T. (2019). Multilingualism and identity: articulating 'African-ness' in an American high school. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 22(5), 634-646.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2018.1424709>
- Delamont, S. (2004). Ethnography and participant observation. *Qualitative research practice*, 217(205-217).
- Desai, A., & Killick, E. (2010). *The ways of friendship: Anthropological perspectives*. Berghahn books.
- Donkin, A. J., & Dowler, E. A. (2002). Equal access to healthy food for ethnic minorities? *Food in the migrant experience*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Durkheim, E. (1994). Social facts. *Readings in the philosophy of social science*, 433-440.
- Dustmann, C. (1996). Return migration: the European experience. *Economic policy*, 11(22), 213-250.
- Erdal, M. B. (2017). Pakistani diaspora communities in Norway: Part of a transnational social field for how long? *THE PAKISTANI DIASPORA*, 197.
- Gibson, M. A. (2001). Immigrant adaptation and patterns of acculturation. *Human development*, 44(1), 19-23.
- Gmelch, G. (1980). Return migration. *Annu Rev Anthropol*, 9(1), 135-234.
<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.an.09.100180.001031>
- Gmelch, G. (1983). Who returns and why: Return migration behavior in two North Atlantic societies. *Human Organization*, 42(1), 46-54.
- Grosjean, F. (2020). The bilingual's language modes 1. In *The bilingualism reader* (pp. 428-449). Routledge.
- Holst-Warhaft, G. (2005). Remembering the Dead: Laments and Photographs. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 25(1), 152-160.
- Idang, G. E. (2015). African culture and values. *Phronimon*, 16(2), 97-111.
- Knowles, S. S. (1998). *Effects of the components of parent involvement on children's educational and occupational aspirations*. Alfred University.

- Landau, L. B., Ramjathan-Keogh, K., & Singh, G. (2005). *Xenophobia in South Africa and problems related to it*. Forced Migration Studies Programme, University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg.
- Lemarchand, R. (2004). The Rwanda Genocide. In *Century of genocide* (pp. 419-438). Routledge.
- Lubbers, M., & Gijsberts, M. (2016). Comparing the labour market position of Poles and Bulgarians before and after migration to the Netherlands. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 4(1), 1-18.
- Madden, R. (2017). *Being ethnographic: A guide to the theory and practice of ethnography*. Sage.
- Magubane, N. N. (2017). *Black tax: the emerging middle class reality* [University of Pretoria].
- Mickelson, R. A., & Velasco, A. E. (1998). Mothers and Daughters Go to Work: The Relationship of Mothers' Occupations to Daughters' Career Aspirations.
- Miklikowska, M. (2017). Development of anti-immigrant attitudes in adolescence: The role of parents, peers, intergroup friendships, and empathy. *Br J Psychol*, 108(3), 626-648. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjop.12236>
- Murthy, D. (2011). Emergent digital ethnographic methods for social research. *Handbook of emergent technologies in social research*, 158-179.
- Nafstad, I. (2011). Changing control of the open drug scenes in Oslo—Crime, welfare, immigration control, or a combination? *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention*, 12(2), 128-152.
- Naguib, N. (2008). Storytelling: Armenian family albums in the diaspora. *Visual Anthropology*, 21(3), 231-244.
- Naidu, M., & Nzuzi, N. (2014). Transnationalised memories among migrants: How 'indigenous' food can bring home closer. *The Anthropologist*, 17(2), 333-340.
- Nee, V., & Sanders, J. (2001). Understanding the diversity of immigrant incorporation: a forms-of-capital model. *Ethnic and Racial studies*, 24(3), 386-411.
- Neisser, U. (2004). Memory development: New questions and old. *Developmental Review*, 24(1), 154-158.
- Ngesi, M. J. (2003). *A study of systemic processes influencing educational change in a sample of isiZulu medium schools*
- Nigro, G., & Neisser, U. (1983). Point of view in personal memories. *Cognitive psychology*, 15(4), 467-482.

- Nkomeje, A. (2008). *Exploring the factors that contribute to job satisfaction among registered nurses at King Faisal Hospital, Kigali, Rwanda*
- Palmer, S. R. (1997). Engineering education for primary school students. Putting students back into engineering education: Proceedings of the 9th annual Convention & Conference, 14-17 December 1997, University of Ballarat, Victoria,
- Pasupathi, M. (2003). Emotion regulation during social remembering: Differences between emotions elicited during an event and emotions elicited when talking about it. *Memory, 11*(2), 151-163.
- Peck, R. G. (1992). Theological education in context: a pilot extension program for the Seventh-Day Adventist church in Rwanda.
- Phillipson, D. W. (1977). The spread of the Bantu language. *Scientific American, 236*(4), 106-115.
- Pillemer, D. B. (1992). Remembering personal circumstances: A functional analysis.
- Polavarapu, A. (2011). Procuring meaningful land rights for the women of Rwanda. *Yale Hum. Rts. & Dev. LJ, 14*, 105.
- Renzaho, A. M., Green, J., Mellor, D., & Swinburn, B. (2011). Parenting, family functioning and lifestyle in a new culture: the case of African migrants in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. *Child & family social work, 16*(2), 228-240.
- Rogge, J. R., & Akol, J. O. (1989). Repatriation: Its role in resolving Africa's refugee dilemma. *International Migration Review, 23*(2), 184-200.
- Sæther, E. (2006). Fieldwork as coping and learning.
- Saleh, A., Amanatidis, S., & Samman, S. (2002). The effect of migration on dietary intake, type 2 diabetes and obesity: the Ghanaian Health and Nutrition Analysis in Sydney, Australia (GHANAISA). *Ecology of Food and Nutrition, 41*(3), 255-270.
- Schrauf, R. W., & Rubin, D. C. (2000). Internal languages of retrieval: The bilingual encoding of memories for the personal past. *Memory & Cognition, 28*(4), 616-623.
- Schvaneveldt, P. L., Kerpelman, J. L., & Schvaneveldt, J. (2005). Generational and cultural changes in family life in the United Arab Emirates: A comparison of mothers and daughters. *Journal of comparative family studies, 36*(1), 77-91.
- Shumba, A., & Naong, M. (2012). Factors influencing students' career choice and aspirations in South Africa. *Journal of Social Sciences, 33*(2), 169-178.
- Sias, P. M., Drzewiecka, J. A., Meares, M., Bent, R., Konomi, Y., Ortega, M., & White, C. (2008). Intercultural friendship development. *Communication reports, 21*(1), 1-13.

- Sobal, J., & Bisogni, C. A. (2009). Constructing food choice decisions. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 38(suppl_1), s37-s46.
- Spagnola, M., & Fiese, B. H. (2007). Family routines and rituals: A context for development in the lives of young children. *Infants & young children*, 20(4), 284-299.
- SSB. (2021a). *05184: Immigrants, by country background, contents and year*.
<https://www.ssb.no/en/statbank/table/05184/tableViewLayout1/>
- SSB. (2021b). *09817: Immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents, by immigration category, country background, contents, year and region*. Retrieved 08-11-2021 from <https://www.ssb.no/en/statbank/table/09817/tableViewLayout1/>
- SSB. (2021c, 18-10-2021). *Immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents*.
<https://www.ssb.no/en/statbank/table/07110/tableViewLayout1/>
- Uwayezu, A. (2006). *Exploring the reasons Rwandan nurses change employment status*
- Vassenden, A., & Andersson, M. (2011). Whiteness, non-whiteness and 'faith information control': religion among young people in Grønland, Oslo. *Ethnic and Racial studies*, 34(4), 574-593.
- Waldorf, L. (2009). Revisiting Hotel Rwanda: genocide ideology, reconciliation, and rescuers. *Journal of Genocide Research*, 11(1), 101-125.
- Watkins, P. G., Razee, H., & Richters, J. (2012). 'I'm telling you... the language barrier is the most, the biggest challenge': Barriers to education among Karen refugee women in Australia. *Australian Journal of Education*, 56(2), 126-141.
- Westcott, H. (2012). Imaginary friends: Migrants' emotional accounts about friends outside Australia. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 47(1), 87-103.
- Wiik, K. A., Bernhardt, E., & Noack, T. (2010). Love or money? Marriage intentions among young cohabitators in Norway and Sweden. *Acta Sociologica*, 53(3), 269-287.
- Wiik, K. A., Noack, T., & Lyngstad, T. (2009). Can We Take Them at Their Words? Cohabitators. Marriage Intentions and Their Subsequent Behavior in Norway', Paper presented at the XXVI IUSSP International population conference. Marrakech, September,
- Zorbas, E. (2004). Reconciliation in post-genocide Rwanda. *African Journal of Legal Studies*, 1(1), 29-52.