"So we thought not to lose our background completely":

Agency and belonging among

South Sudanese Acholi in New Zealand.

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A thesis

submitted to the Victoria University of Wellington

in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in Anthropology

Victoria University of Wellington

2012

Abstract

The members of the South Sudanese Acholi population in New Zealand are part of the burgeoning number of refugees worldwide. As such, they are at risk of having their personal experiences submerged in the stereotypical view of 'the refugee experience'. The South Sudanese Acholi community are a small but distinct ethnic sub-community within the wider South Sudanese refugee-background population in New Zealand. One of my primary aims in this thesis is to represent the specifically-situated experiences of individuals from this group within the broader contexts of refugee resettlement. A fundamental aspect of these experiences is the ambiguous and often contradictory senses of belonging which community members describe. Using analysis of the narratives through which these individuals make sense of their resettlement experiences, I determine agency to be an important consideration in experiences of belonging and, therefore, I argue that the role of agency to belonging should be more widely recognised.

In this thesis I demonstrate how various attempts by South Sudanese Acholi at cultural (re)production in New Zealand are intimately linked to the many difficulties these individuals experience in resettlement, and particularly to how these difficulties impact the development and maintenance of a sense of belonging. Analyses of individual and common factors demonstrate the importance of belonging to experiences of resettlement. This is apparent throughout all aspects of South Sudanese Acholi's everyday lives. This thesis is organised around the interlinking nature of three aspects of everyday life: marriage, cultural performance, and discursive practices. A central unifying factor is that each of these aspects of every day experience can be understood as attempts in developing more stable senses of belonging.

Data was collected through a combination of participant observation and unstructured interviews. Participant observation was primarily undertaken among the Sudanese Acholi Cultural Association (SACA), a community-organised Acholi cultural performance group. Although not exclusively the focus of this research, the members of this group comprise the basis of my research participants and their resettlement experiences form the basis for my

results. A focus on participants' stories about their lives in resettlement allows analysis of the importance of their everyday practices and perceptions to the ways in which they experience and understand their lives in New Zealand and demonstrates that the on-going interaction between their experiences as refugees and their resettlement experiences are mutually reinforcing. I suggest that if refugees' own voices and opinions are to be accurately represented, a holistic perspective of the full range of their experiences is required.

The ambivalent, multiple, and multifaceted nature of belonging described by South Sudanese Acholi individuals' is a defining feature of their resettlement experiences. I suggest that South Sudanese Acholi attempts at performing and reproducing their customary cultural practices in New Zealand serve primarily as creative means of adapting to the conditions of resettlement in ways which allow the construction, development, and maintenance of feelings of belonging among community members. However, I also determine that lack of agency is especially important for understanding the ambivalence about belonging South Sudanese Acholi demonstrate when speaking of these resettlement experiences. I argue that behind many of the everyday actions taken by refugees are simultaneous attempts to rediscover a sense of agency and to recreate a foundation for belonging.

Acknowledgements

This research would not have been possible without many people. Most importantly, I thank the Sudanese Acholi Cultural Association (SACA) and the Acholi and South Sudanese communities in New Zealand. Thank you for your time and energy. Words cannot express how thankful I am to have worked with such thoughtful, welcoming, and generous people. I can only hope this research helps in some way.

My supervisors, Dr. Diane O'Rourke and Dr. Hal Levine, thank you for your help, support, and encouragement throughout my tertiary education. Your expertise and understanding added considerably to my postgraduate experience. Special thanks go to Dr. O'Rourke, who I am honoured to call a mentor and friend. Thanks for your understanding and kindness, as well as the seemingly-endless reference letters.

I want to thank all the academic and administrative staff in the School of Social and Cultural Sciences (SACS) over the last six years, especially Dr. Catherine Trundle and Dr. Jim Urry. I must also thank the SACS postgraduate students, members of the Victoria University Wellington Anthropology Society (VUWAS), and the 2010 Honours cohort in Anthropology.

I wish to express my love and gratitude to my parents, Heather and Larry O'Byrne, and the rest of my family for their endless support and assistance.

Of all the people involved through this process, I particularly wish to acknowledge my wife and best friend, Marie. You have supported me in hundreds of ways throughout the years. This thesis is dedicated to you.

Abbreviations

Comprehensive Peace Agreement	(CPA)
Department of Labour	(DOL)
Lord's Resistance Army	(LRA)
New Zealand	(NZ)
Refugee Services Aotearoa New Zealand	(RSNZ)
South Sudanese Acholi	(SSA)
United Nations	(UN)
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	(UNHCR)

Glossary

awal	calabash
bul	drum
larakaraka	courtship dance
otoli	war dance
sukuma	a green leafy vegetable
ugali	a semolina porridge

Contents

Chapter One

"I am from somewhere, I am from somewhere":

South Sudanese Acholi in resettlement in New Zealand

Introduction: Gaining an Acholi mother, becoming a Sudanese son

"You should teach me to cook!" I was worried that Bernice[1] was spending too much time and money preparing food for my Wednesday afternoon visits. "I can bring the meat; I just need you to teach me."

"Acholi men do not cook! They only help their mothers in the kitchen," Bernice replied, "*but you can peel the onions"*.

With that, and as I worked my way through a small pile of onions, Bernice proceeded to show me how to fold pastries stuffed with rice and potato into small, dainty triangles. The next Sudanese Acholi Cultural Association (SACA)[2] committee meeting would be occurring at Bernice's house, and she would be providing a light lunch of these homemade pastries, as well as the Acholi staples of *sukuma*[3] and *ugali*.[4]

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[1] I have changed the names of my participants to protect their identities as much as is possible for members of such a small community. Names, although somewhat randomly chosen, were specifically chosen to sound English. Most Acholi have multiple names, one of which is usually English.

[2] SACA is a South Sudanese community-organised and run Acholi cultural performance group that quickly became the focus of my research. For more information about SACA and their performances, refer to Chapter Four.

[3] A green leafy vegetable similar to kale, cooked in stock with garlic and onion and a favourite dish in refugee camps. Also called 'Sukuma wiki,' (Swahili for "lasts all week") summing up its importance in a refugee camp diet.

[4] A type of porridge made from semolina flour, the Acholi staple carbohydrate.

That Sunday, I arrived at Bernice's home early. After placing my backpack in the corner of the small living room which had become its habitual resting place, I prepared my voice recorder and asked Bernice if there was anything I could do to help.

"*Today, my son, you are helping me to cook. We will make the food.*"

The first time this was mentioned, I ignored it, believing it just a turn of phrase. It was not until other committee members arrived that the full import of the statement became clear. When Diana, one of the last to appear, finally arrived, I was in the kitchen, stirring the *sukuma* and watching as Bernice told me how to tell when the fried pastries were cooked.

"*Look! He is learning to cook!*" Diana shrieked. "*Bernice has another son!*"

The rest of the women ran into the small kitchen and started laughing gleefully.

"*You are very lucky, Ryan, Bernice is a good mother to have! She will teach everything you need to know about being Acholi.*"

"*Pity you are not a girl!*" someone else shouted over the laughter, "*she needs some brideprice!*"[5]

This drew a new peal of laughter from the group. Some of the women ran to their cars, appearing moments later with digital cameras. Apparently the sight of a man cooking was too amusing to ignore, and they delighted in taking photos of me cooking.

"*Now, I will take a photo of the boy and his mother!*" Diana laughed. "*We will keep this one forever.*"

I certainly was not expecting this when I began my research. Luckily, at that stage I was still unmarried (and therefore a child in the eyes of the Acholi women). It seems it is not unusual for

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[5] Bernice has four sons and no daughters. As discussed in Chapter Three, sons can be a drain on money and daughters a source, because a man's kin group makes a series of marriage payments to a woman's kin group to allow their marriage. At the time of the research, one of Bernice's sons was just beginning the process of negotiating his marriage payment.

a male child to help his mother prepare food, especially when there are guests, but to do so entailed my being 'adopted' in the process. I think, also, that they knew I considered myself to be an adult already, and that the incongruity of this made the situation all the more hilarious. No matter, I now had an Acholi mother.

This event had an important effect on my research. Following that casual Sunday adoption Bernice began to tell me more about her life, her background, and her personal experiences than she ever had before. Bernice had already proven to be the community member most interested in meeting with me. Indeed, after my first meeting with the SACA committee, she had taken it upon herself to track down my contact details and arrange our first interview. After the difficulties I had contacting other participants, this was a welcome surprise.[6] Even better, Bernice brought a list to that first interview, *"of all things that [I] need[ed] to know"* about Acholi culture and arranged a series of dates to allow us to discuss these. We had already become close, and I truly looked forward to my weekly journey to visit Bernice in her home. The food was always delicious and the conversation stimulating, even when talking about things that had nothing to do with my research itself. Most importantly of all, the intimate nature of the relationship I developed with Bernice gave me access to stories about her refugee and resettlement experiences which I may never have heard otherwise and which fundamentally shaped the direction of my research and analysis. In the concluding section of this chapter, I reproduce one of these stories and discuss how and why it and my relationship with Bernice were so important.

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[6] Almost no-one in the South Sudanese community in New Zealand owns a computer or has readily available internet access. Further, those with phones are extremely reticent to make phone calls. Therefore, it was sometimes extremely difficult to arrange meetings with some community members.

Approach and argument

This thesis addresses the resettlement experiences of refugee-background South Sudanese Acholi (SSA) in New Zealand (NZ).[7] I specifically focus on the attempts SSA make to reproduce and rejuvenate their identities and customary cultural practices in a context of refugee-background resettlement, and then tie these to the difficulties they face in developing and maintaining a sense of belonging in NZ. In doing so, I analyse SSA attempts at (re)producing their customary cultural practices, maintaining Acholi-specific subjectivities, and creating a sense of "*being Acholi*" in themselves and their children.[8] The creation and reproduction of Acholi culture and subjectivities are linked to simultaneous interactions between, firstly, the community's perception that resettlement is not the positive experience its members had hoped for, and secondly, a need to reaffirm SSA identities which create social ties among community members in NZ while also maintaining links to networks in the South Sudanese homeland. All of these demonstrate the significance of agency in SSA attempts at developing or maintaining belonging.

Indeed, I argue that the actions of SSA in NZ show agency to be a vital component in the negotiation of belonging, and the position I take throughout this thesis is that analysis of the Acholi resettlement experience allows important insights into belonging as a theoretical issue. Fundamental to this is the observation that a lack of belonging is a key defining feature of refugee resettlement. Another key component of resettlement is loss or lack of agency. My

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[7] Throughout this thesis I use the terms 'Acholi,' 'South Sudanese,' and 'South Sudanese Acholi' to describe different aggregations of people. I use 'Acholi' when referring to a particular set of culturally-defined practices while I use 'South Sudanese' to refer to people who trace their citizenship to the nation-state of South Sudan. 'South Sudanese Acholi,' then, are those members of the South Sudanese nation-state who define themselves through the practice of Acholi culture.

[8] The early social organisation of the Acholi was probably based on patrilineally-defined segmentary lineages, much like those in *The Nuer* (Evans-Pritchard 1969[1940]). Unfortunately, reliable ethnographic data on Acholi society is limited. Early accounts are fragmentary and focus almost exclusively on Ugandan rather than Sudanese Acholi communities (Bere 1947; Dyson-Hudson 1962; Girling 1960), although Kaiser (2006b) notes Grove (1919) seems to be sole exception. However, if historical social and cultural patterns were similar to those in colonial-era ethnographies, these patrilineages were probably grouped into territorially-dispersed clans. Although clan members claim nominal descent from a common genealogical ancestor by virtue of territory, they can seldom give the exact nature of this relationship (Atkinson 1989; Byrnes 1992).

argument is that the loss of a sense of belonging is one of the fundamental elements of the process of becoming a refugee and that underneath many of the actions undertaken by refugees is an attempt at rediscovering a sense of agency which is simultaneously an attempt toward recreating a foundation for belonging.

My main aim in this thesis is to provide an analysis of the intersection between culture, experience and belonging through a descriptive focus on the resettlement experiences of SSA in NZ. Special attention is placed upon those SSA who are most intimately connected to the SACA, an Acholi cultural performance group. Therefore, particularly important in this research was the role played by Acholi cultural performance and other customary cultural practices in SSA resettlement experiences. By placing attention upon the practice and (re)production of Acholi culture in NZ, the importance of agency to the development of belonging becomes apparent. Through investigation of the reasons behind the continuing (re)production in resettlement of customary Acholi cultural practices, I argue that SSA attempts at cultural (re)production are intimately linked to difficulties they have in developing and maintaining a sense of belonging in resettlement and their subsequent attempts to create, develop, and maintain a sense of control over their lives, belonging, and resettlement experiences. In this way, rather than an event ('getting resettled'), resettlement is a continual process of *becoming* resettled.

By preserving their culture, SSA in NZ attempt to ensure cultural continuity in the next generation while simultaneously strengthening their ethnic identities. This creates practical, social, and economic links with other Acholi in NZ, South Sudan, and throughout the diaspora. It also develops individual and collective senses of agency and control over the conditions of resettlement. A primary strand of my argument is that through the explicit and conscious reproduction of customary Acholi cultural practices, a specifically Acholi community is created. This gives an individual a group with which to identify, creates a community to which they feel connected, and reinforces the feeling of agency and control over their own lives they require to gain a sense of belonging. The practice of Acholi culture therefore functions as a significant means of gaining and enacting agency as well as an important marker of identity within an ethno-cultural community of belonging.

Kushner and Knox (1999: 411) argue that "the need to establish a sense of belonging is crucial for the forcibly displaced or dispossessed." Belonging, however, is a much disputed and multidimensional term, the meaning of which is often implicitly assumed or taken for granted (Antonsich 2010; Baak 2011b). In a review of 169 different works relating to the concept of belonging, Antonsich (2010: 644) argues that belonging "should be analysed both as a personal, intimate, feeling of being 'at home' in a place (place-belongingness) and as a discursive resource that constructs, claims, justifies, or resists forms of socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion (politics of belonging).

As I will show, both of these aspects are significant to the development (or lack thereof) of feelings of belonging among SSA in NZ: SSA explicitly privilege a place-belongingness toward both a South Sudanese and, as demonstrated by the SACA charter reproduced in Chapter Four, an Acholi homeland. Moreover, as I demonstrate specifically in Chapter Five, SSA are also intimately engaged in discursive politics of belonging involving its construction toward inclusion in South Sudan and its resistance to a New Zealand society they perceive as exclusionary.

The belonging demonstrated by SSA in NZ, however, is not quite as dichotomous as Antonsich's simple opposition suggests. He is a geographer, and the prioritisation of space in his definition is immediately obvious. His model does not include the cultural elements through which SSA individually and collectively attempt to construct their senses of belonging. The performative aspects of sociocultural life are an important aspect of SSA attempts to develop belonging, and be seen through such aspects as the reproduction of customary marriage practices (Chapter Three) and song and dance (Chapter Four). I argue that not only are these performative aspects important to creating of feelings of belonging but that they are also tied to the performance of agency, itself a vital component in belonging.

Important for understanding SSA practices in resettlement are the affective elements of belonging. According to Hammond (2004: 3), belonging is connected to turning space into cultural and affective place through processes involved in home-making and community formation. In this way belonging is social, cultural, spatial, and psychological (or affective). This affective component of belonging is important because, as Valentine, Sporton and Nielsen (009:

244) argue, belonging is "not just about being able to 'fit in' … [it is] about emotional attachment and security." Indeed, Baak (2011c, 2011d) notes that belonging is most often sought through the creation and maintenance of affective attachments to place and people. As such, it is inherently relational. Because of this, Lovell (1998: 1) notes that, although belonging is often linked to locality and expressed through culture, in the final analysis belonging is fundamentally defined through the individual experience of social relationships. This aspect of belonging is of undeniable importance to SSA in NZ: not only does their lack of coherent and consistent feelings of belonging demonstrate their experiences of exclusion from the social-relational space of the NZ community, but their attempts at developing belonging are always specifically social.

A background to refugees

Refugee resettlement is a complex process which engages refugee-background individuals in a variety of new and problematic situations and experiences. Understanding the experiences of refugee-background SSA in NZ and their responses to that resettlement calls for background knowledge of global and national refugee policies and practices. Central to these is the role of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).[9] The 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (also known as the Refugee Convention) and amended by the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (United Nations 1967) defines a refugee as:

> "[A person who] … owing to a well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons
> of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political
> opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such

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[9] UNHCR identifies seven categories of people under the collective title "persons of concern to UNHCR". These categories are: (1) refugees; (2) asylum-seekers; (3) internally displaced persons; (4) returnees; (5) returned IDPs; (6) stateless persons; and (7) others under UNHCR protection (UNHCR 2009: 5). All South Sudanese Acholi in New Zealand come under the 'refugee' category. In 2008 there were approximately 15.2 million 'refugees' in the world (UNHCR 2009: 2) with the number of refugees from Sub-Saharan Africa around 2.1 million.

fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it" (United Nations 1951: 1, Article 1A(2)).[10]

A major component of UNHCR's mandate is to find durable solutions to refugee situations. UNHCR recognises three solutions: (i) repatriation; (ii) integration into country of asylum; and (iii) third country resettlement (UNHCR 2006, 2009: 10).[11] As one of UNHCR's ten core resettlement countries, NZ has accepted up to 750 refugees per annum since 1987 (Department of Labour (DOL) 2009b: 6; Human Rights Commission (HRC) 2010: 337; Refugee Services New Zealand (RSNZ) 2009a).[12] Including the sporadic resettlement of South East Asian refugees before 1987, NZ has now accepted around 30,000 refugees from 50 countries (Coleman 2009; RSNZ 2009b).

Most SSA in NZ arrived between 2002 and 2006. Like all refugees in NZ, SSA were given permanent legal residence upon arrival in NZ. Furthermore, current legislation states refugee-background persons can apply for full citizenship five years after their arrival (RSNZ 2009a, 2009d). This means almost the entire SSA population in NZ meet the eligibility criteria. As refugee arrivals, SSA participated in a mandatory six week orientation period at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre and are given access to health and counselling services, English language training, and basic literacy skills (DOL 2009a: 3). They are also given housing from

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[10] This definition is one whose generative history lies in the outcomes of a major global event, World War Two. According to Chimni (2010: 12-15), its normative contemporary usage is deeply associated with the political convergence between imperialism and humanitarianism during the Cold War.

[11] Repatriation is UNHCR's preferred solution and is ideally provided to the majority of refugees (Harrell-Bond & Voutira 1992: 8; UNHCR 2009: 10). However, less than one per cent of the global refugee population will ever experience resettlement (Caritas 2010: 2). For example, compared to the 11 million refugees who participated in repatriation schemes between 1999-2008, only 807,000 were given third country resettlement (UNHCR 2009: 11). Furthermore, as countries of first asylum, developing countries continue to host over 80 per cent of the world's refugees, with the 49 least developed countries in the world hosting 20 per cent of the world's total refugee population. The average length of time spent in refugee camps in these countries of first asylum is now over 17 years (Caritas 2010: 2).

[12] These countries are: Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States (HRC 2010: 337).

Housing New Zealand, twelve months resettlement support from RSNZ (RSNZ 2009c); and a resettlement grant of up to $800 and a household re-establishment grant of up to $1200 by Work and Income NZ (DOL 2009a: 5). Furthermore, refugees are entitled to a weekly living allowance and an emergency benefit of the same value as all other eligible residents (HRC 2010: 343).

As many social scientists have demonstrated (Daniel 2002; Hathaway 2003; Marlowe 2010; Phillips 2011; Zetter 1988, 1991, 2007), the act of labelling somebody 'a refugee' is an act of classificatory dehumanisation, where an individual is reduced to a category and stripped of agency and personal history. This can result in significant difficulties with that individual's development of feelings of security and belonging. Due to discussions held with various refugee-background persons about the label 'refugee', I choose to use the descriptive term 'refugee-background' rather than the definitional term 'refugee'. The term 'refugee-background' was consciously chosen by members of the refugee-background community in NZ to best represent the conditions of their lives. Although explicit in indicating they are no longer refugees, the term simultaneously serves notice of the refugee-background community's continuing inequalities vis-à-vis other NZ citizens and highlights the continuing effects of their experiences upon their resettlement (Adam Awad, pers. comm. 2010; O'Rourke 2011b).[13]

There is no such thing as *the* refugee experience, any more than there is any other particular type of experience, such as 'the NZ experience' or 'the female experience'. Refugees each enter into conflict, flight, and resettlement in different ways; each has experienced loss, trauma, and dislocation differently. It is also important to highlight that the so-called 'refugee experience' does not cease with third country resettlement. As Brun (2001), Eastmond (2007), and Malkki (1992, 1995a, 1995b) demonstrate, the common homogenisation of over 20 million separate individuals into the shared suffering of a singular 'refugee experience' is an example of the discursive and symbolic violence refugees continue to face every day.

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[13] For further discussions of shifting away from the 'refugee' label, see Hebbani, Obijiofor and Bristed (2010) and Wille (2011).

Civil war and South Sudanese refugees

Acholi and other South Sudanese refugees in NZ officially became citizens of the independent state of South Sudan following the July 2011 independence. Previously, South Sudan was nominally part of the larger country of Sudan. Independence followed two civil wars and five decades of nearly continuous conflict. A combination of global political-economic and geopolitical Cold War interests alongside widespread social, political, and economic discrimination were major causal factors in both these conflicts (Johnson 2003).

The First Sudanese Civil War (1955-1972) began as a southern independence movement led by officers within the Sudanese military establishment and ended with the signing of the Addis Ababa Agreement (O'Ballance 1977). In September 1983, war reignited following the Sudanese government's decision to impose Sharia law on the non-Muslim and self-governing southern states (Institute of Security Studies 2004). This was met with anger by political and military leaders in the south and quickly erupted into violence on an unprecedented scale (Hutchinson & Jok 2002).

It is estimated that the Second Sudanese Civil War (1983-2005) killed more than two million people and caused another 4 to 5 million to become refugees. Further, a staggering 80 per cent of the population were displaced at least once (Morrison & De Waal 2005*).* As Hutchinson and Jok (2002) demonstrate, this conflict included high levels of internal conflict among dissident groups within the armies of the southern independence forces and led to escalating levels of violence against women, children, and other non-combatants.

The second war ended when the Sudan People's Liberation Army and the government of Sudan signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) on January 9, 2005. After six years of preparation, over 98% of the South Sudanese population voted in favour of independence in a referendum held in January 2011 and, on the 9th of July, the Republic of South Sudan became the world's newest country (Encyclopaedia Britannica Online 2012)*.*

South Sudanese Acholi in New Zealand

The Acholi are a predominantly Christian ethnolinguistic group from the border area of northern Uganda and southern South Sudan.[14] Ethnologue (2012) estimates there are 1.2 million Acholi speakers in Uganda and 45,000 in South Sudan. In both cases they are a numerical minority among other, larger ethnic groups such as the Nuer and Dinka in South Sudan. Linguistically, Acholi is a derivative of Luo and a member of the Nilo-Saharan linguistic group (Bender 1996; Metz 1991). Nilotic peoples probably entered the region about A.D. 1000 and were most likely a collection of migratory pastoralists. Over time, the area's fertility would have led to an increased reliance on crop cultivation (Byrnes 1992).

The current South Sudanese population in NZ is estimated at around 600 to 700, mostly ethnically Nuer or Dinka (DOL 2007; RSNZ 2009b). Due to problems with immigration and census questionnaires in both NZ and Australia, however, true quantification of South Sudanese resettlement is notoriously inaccurate.[15] South Sudanese number less than 400 in the city in which this research was conducted and the Acholi are not a large group within this community. According to a contact in a refugee services NGO, the maximum number of Acholi ever living in NZ, including children born in resettlement, is considerably less than 140 (Robert Byer, 11/01/2011, pers. comm.). I estimate there were less than 70 Acholi in late 2011.

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[14] Following Ugandan Acholi anthropologist Okot p'Bitek (1970), I use the term 'tribe/tribal' cautiously and, where possible, prefer not to use the term at all. p'Bitek questioned the validity of the term 'tribe' in relation to most African peoples, holding that it has no real basis in the African ethnological or historical records but is rather a pejorative term historically implicated in the rationale underlying European colonisation of the African continent. Therefore, I prefer the terms ethnic group, ethnicity or ethnolinguistic as those which best describe what makes the Acholi a distinct society or population.

[15] For more information regarding problems with the collection of reliable census and immigration data and the difficulties in establishing trustworthy total population numbers for the South Sudanese communities in both New Zealand and Australia, please refer to Robinson (2011).

Positioning the research

In an attempt to move away from viewing refugees as homogenous, giving voice to the specifically contextual elements of the multiple experiences refugee individuals have is an important component of my research, both methodologically and politically. Eastmond (2007: 253) reminds us that the use of individual narratives:

> serve as a useful reminder of the critique raised against the notion of 'the refugee experience' as a uniform condition and of the tendency to think of refugees as an undifferentiated, essentialised and universal category quite irrespective of the different historical and political conditions of displacement and of the individual differences between people who became refugees.

Narratives are therefore "necessarily part of a more holistic approach" (Eastmond 2007: 249) to understanding refugees experiences and subjectivities, especially in relation to how these are formed in the broader context of history, culture, and conflict (Brettell 2003: 26). This is one reason I focus analysis on the particular experiences of a small number of participants. The strength of this as a method is that it allows attention to be placed upon varying experiences of life and how different individuals live and perceive those experiences.

Research on social processes and cultural flows at all stages of refugees' experiences is a defining feature of social science over the last three decades (Hammond 2004a, 2004b; Harrell-Bond 1989). Many forced migration scholars have adopted transnational or diasporic theoretical frameworks so as to better elucidate refugees' cross-border lives and sociocultural fields (Al-Ali & Koser 2001a, 2001b; Hopkins 2006) and refugees' own transnational networks have become an important focus of this work (Abelhardy 2010; Carruthers 2009; Cheran 2006). A major component of transnational research among refugees has been the analysis of refugees' agency (Essed, Frerks, & Schrijvers 2004; Kibreab 1996, 2000; Lewis 2010). This is important, as a fundamental component of the argument I will make throughout this thesis. For the purposes of this thesis, I follow Jackson's (1995, 1998) intersubjective definition of agency, where agency is defined as individual's subjective evaluation of their ability to establish some

degree of control over their lives. Therefore, my argument throughout this thesis is that agency or lack of agency is not only vital to considerations of refugees' experiences of resettlement, but also that agency or lack of agency is a vital component in the development of a sense of belonging in resettlement.

As a corpus, research on transnational migration links multiple actions, interactions and networks (social, cultural, political, and economic) between countries of home and host and demonstrates how these connections form identities, define activities, and shape structures (Appadurai 1996; Kearney 1995; Vertovec 1997, 1999). Brettell (2003: 48), following Glick Schiller, Basch, and Szanton Blanc (1992, 1995), defines transnationalism as "a social process whereby migrants operate in social fields that transgress geographic, political, and cultural borders."

According to Nolin (2006: 49), "by linking places of origin, processes of migration and flight, and place of exile transnationalism offers [refugee studies] an alternative way of conceptualising population movement in order to attain a more nuanced understanding of ethnicity, cultural change, and connections between space, place, and identity." From the importance of multiple international connections between place, ethnicity, identity and culture to my participants in this thesis, transnationalism is a fitting rubric under which to analyse SSA social interactions.

Safran (1991: 83-84) defines a diaspora as requiring a collective consciousness formed through forcible dispersal from a homeland and, despite theoretical disagreements over the definition of diasporic communities, this "diasporic consciousness" remains a fundamental attribute (Abelhardy 2008; Clifford 1994; Cohen 1997).[16] Wahlbeck (2002) argues place of origin is an important component of a definition of diaspora precisely because of its importance to most diasporic communities, even if that "'home' is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense, it is a place of no return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of 'origin'" (Brah 1996: 192).

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[16] Brettell (2006: 329) notes there is much conceptual overlap between diaspora and transnationalism and the terms are used interchangeably within the literature (Levitt 2001; Van Hear 1998).

Refugee-background groups often use music and other performative aspects of culture to help them form identities, negotiate meaning, and make sense of their new environments (Conquergood 1988; Kaiser 2006b; Reyes 1986, 1989; Roberson 2010). These communal aspects of culture are important expressions of both self and community and, in this way, culture, identity, and community are all made and remade through "a shared process of practical action" (Calhoun 2003: 559). The use of culture can also be an important form of enacting agency within situations of marginalisation, as well as a significant means of identification and both of these aspects of cultural (re)production were important among SSA in NZ. On the other hand, Hage (1997) suggests these practices may just be individuals' responding to the constraints of migration through the mobilisation of sociocultural resources with which they are already equipped. Hage argues that refugees, like all of us, use their sociocultural background as their first resort.

Ehrkamp's concept of "the dialectical construction of identity" (2006: 1673) provides analytical insight into how interactions between NZ residents and SSA influence identity construction. Ong (1996: 738), specifically oriented to the subject-forming imperatives of the nation-state, conceptualises these practices as "the dialectical processes of self-making and being-made" and argues that positioning refugees within the constraints of resettlement is vital for understanding the multiple processes of identity formation refugees practice and endure. Refugees' identities are therefore central to understanding their experiences of resettlement and Nolin (2006: 45) argues that as refugees re-establish their communities in resettlement, their experiences of displacement lead to widespread reconfiguration of their individual identities and their conceptualisations of the basis of group membership, both of which in turn lead to "a more complex, place-informed and place-based identity."

Methods

The methods used in this research can be described as 'ethnographic.' Kawulich (2005) notes this term includes a wide array of data gathering techniques, including participation,

observation, interviewing, and narrative analysis. The primary methods used here were participant observation and unstructured interviewing. Over a period of seven months between February and August 2011 I conducted 19 individual interviews with five key participants (including five each with Alfred and Bernice) and three group interviews with the full SACA committee. Except for Alfred, all key informants are SACA members. Participant observation ranged from participation in cultural performances and practices to attending committee meetings on ten separate occasions and was undertaken to coincide with SACA. SACA spend every second Sunday afternoon at dance practices, language classes, or committee meetings, and attending these sessions was significant for my research. Once, while showing me SACA's language resources, we engaged in an impromptu Acholi-language class. Another time, a committee meeting turned into a story-telling session when members discovered I was interested in proverbs, myths and legends.

The framing of my research was in part guided by the intention to gain a greater level of skill and experience with multiple research methods (particularly participant observation) in preparation for PhD research. According to Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (2007: 352), participant observation is the act of "establishing a place in some natural setting on a relatively long-term basis in order to investigate, experience and represent the social life and social processes that occur in that setting" and forms the basis of much anthropological research.

My approach to fieldwork was to not turn down any invitation to participate and, when conducting interviews, to make a concerted effort to spend longer with the interviewee than required to complete the interview. Often, this meant spending a whole afternoon at my informant's home, eating, drinking, and watching television, as well as chatting informally. As this research was among a refugee-background community, I expected some people to show hesitancy talking about their experiences. I believe my approach to fieldwork proved most useful in building rapport. This can be demonstrated by two community members asking me to

act as editor for their autobiographies, one of which explicitly details their experiences at the hands of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).[17]

Through meeting and spending time with SACA, the group's members quickly became my focus. It was apparent, however, that English language restricted participation: very few SACA members were comfortable speaking English. Together we considered using other group members as interpreters, as happened when I attended committee meetings, but the committee's general consensus was I would get everything I needed from the English-speaking members. The small number of members who did feel comfortable conversing in English (Bernice, Diana, Regina and William) therefore became my principal informants and I conducted multiple one-on-one interviews with each of them.

Narratives are a fundamental part of a social actor's everyday performance of their identity (Cortazzi 2007: 383; Turner 1979); a process Langellier (2010: 70) calls "performing narrative identity." As Bruner (1986) notes, life leads to experiences that can only be narrated as stories. In turn, the very act of narration organises and gives meaning to experience. Further, as Cruikshank (1998) and Turner (1986) have argued, story-telling is a symbolic resource used to come to terms with events outside everyday experience. As Eastmond states (2007: 250), narratives "can tell us about how social actors, from a particular social and cultural vantage point, make sense of their world."

Through a combination of interviews and participant observation, I engaged in many conversations with people within the SSA community about their refugee and resettlement experiences. These invariably led to stories about their lives and histories. Often, these stories would interlink and overlap, juxtaposing time, place, and event. Through the continuing recurrence of narrative as means of description and explanation among members of the SSA

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[17] The Lord's Resistance Army are an armed militia of unknown strength originating in northern Uganda in 1987 but who have also operated throughout South Sudan, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. During the period of extreme violence in what was then southern Sudan in the early to mid-1990s, the LRA was renowned for attacks on Sudanese farms, towns, and villages, as well as refugee camps. For such an infamous group, there is little dependable data about them. For more information on the LRA, their leader Joseph Kony, and the agenda and ideologies to which they are said to ascribe, see Finnstrom (2008).

community, I suggest narratives play an important part in the way SSA make sense of their experiences. As individuals with relatively low levels of literacy and from a predominantly oral cultural background, this is to be somewhat expected.

Culture is not only central to lived experience; it is also a fundamental component of narrativity. Meaning is made, remade, and understood through our culturally-specific lens. Despite this, Jackson (2002) shows it is the very human and experiential nature of narratives which allow people to speak across cultural boundaries. Storytelling is a privileged mode of interpersonal communication which can bridge artificial sociocultural divides. I purposefully attempt to use narrative in just this way. As Kaiser (2006a: 616) and Kumsa (2006: 233) argue, neutrality is impossible in refugee research as any position approximating neutrality privileges the status quo and therefore the objectification and continuing marginalisation of the refugee subject. The political power of narrative resides within what Michael Jackson (1998: 4) calls the "intersubjective", the meeting place between two persons through which their shared humanity is reaffirmed. In this social dialectic, Jackson (1998: 123) argues, "the act of telling one's story transforms one's situation. One acts instead of being acted upon. Rather than being a mere creature of fate, one connives in one's own destiny." Narrating a life story is therefore an act of agency where the object quite literally becomes the subject (Foucault 1997) as well as author. In giving equal (or even privileged) voice to the usually-silenced, an argument for the use of narrative is an explicitly political one (Brettell 2006).

Conclusion: One reality of refugee resettlement in New Zealand

It was noticeable how differently people in the SSA community spoke to me following my marriage halfway through fieldwork. Suddenly, Bernice in particular began telling me intimate stories of her traumatic experiences, as well as speaking to me about aspects of Acholi gender relations she had previously only mentioned in an abstract fashion. The following quotes were the last words spoken in the last interview I conducted as part of this research project, and follows a longer narrative about the almost unimaginable events of her life in Uganda and

South Sudan. This was the most heart-wrenching discussion I had with any of my participants. Simply writing about it returns me to Bernice's living room, the sadness in her voice, her bodily comportment, the look upon her face as she spoke of the perceived injustices of her life in different times and places, including during her resettlement.

> BERNICE: I don't know even if I ever told you. About the person at Work and Income? I filled the form and then the lady said to them 'Ok, now make an appointment for this lady.' But the man never rang me yet. They were asking me, 'What do I want?' […] So I said to her, 'You know, in my heart, I need money. I want to work. But my situation is just hard!' And he said, 'What can you do?' And I said, 'If you can just look for a job, a part-time job, something I can do. Something that won't let my back to get pain or my leg to get sore' […] And then he told me, 'Don't be distressed. Because maybe you will get a job or you will not, but don't get distressed.' And I said 'I will not get distressed.' Because I know the stress of living […] And so he said, 'Ok Bernice. Let me come back to you in another week.' But then he never called up, he never made another appointment. But that was two month, maybe three month ago and he didn't even come back!

In many ways, this interview was bitter-sweet: my relationship with Bernice had developed to an entirely new and intimate level and yet we both knew this would be our last meeting for quite some time. The level of intimacy with which Bernice narrated her life left me emotionally drained and close to tears. Variously, her narrative involved the loss of some family members, her betrayal by others, and the ambiguous position she held as a Ugandan in South Sudan and as a woman in a patrilineal and patriarchal society. She experienced harrowing events as a wife, a widow, a daughter and a mother. Her narrative was full of hardships suffered and overcome.

As we sat in her small and sparsely furnished home, it was apparent the sadness of her life had not ended when she left Africa. As her narrative moved to her life in New Zealand, Bernice's sense of disappointment with her resettlement outcome was palpable. Hunched on the couch,

she spoke about problems getting appropriate support and what she seemed to perceive was the continual failure of her hopes and aspirations. She continued:

> *BERNICE: That is the challenge that we are facing. That is why it is not good here. And I don't know, Ryan, I just don't know. I am just living like that! […]*
>
> *Because before I went for my [back] surgery I went for the course in cooking and catering. But I find it is very challenging for me with my health […] I don't know. If I was to finish the course, I would be sure of it [employment]. But if I do not finish the course, I don't know. Because they [employers] will say, 'But you need the qualifications!' Because I did the course for like three months but then I had to went for my surgery. The course was supposed to take two years.*
>
> *RYAN: Maybe you should talk to Work and Income about getting back into the course?*
>
> *BERNICE: No. Because the school is closed. I went to go back again last year [2010], but the school was closed. So those are the challenge I am facing! Because after the operation, it was not easy for me to recover! It was not easy. And now the time is coming, you know? Taking now over six years. And old age is coming now also."*

This interview was also an important formative moment in my research. As the last interview I conducted, the experiences Bernice spoke about remained with me for a long time. I had specifically undertaken participant observation to gain greater understanding of the ways refugees experience their lives in resettlement and I was already interested in the issue of belonging. However, it was the continuing intellectual and emotional effects of this final interview which decided the direction this thesis would take.

Emotional reflexivity is an important yet overlooked part of anthropological fieldwork that can have significant consequences for anthropological knowledge production. Anthropological

fieldwork is an intersubjective experience which gathers its data through social interaction (Spencer 2010). As Spencer (2010: 29) notes, the very idea of having participants in our research depends on those participants possessing subjectivity. Davies (2010: 230) argues that "our subjective and emotional states during fieldwork not only affect the research process itself, but can shed light upon the communities we seek to understand." For me, this summarises my research experience. In developing an emotional response to the narratives I was being told, my research began to follow previously unexpected trajectories and ended with an entirely different focus to that originally planned. By engaging with me, not as a researcher, but as another human being, the community's response changed not only my focus and direction, but also my motivation. I wanted to provide a conduit for the stories I was hearing. I wanted to do justice to the lives and experiences of those who selflessly gave their time and energy to help me.

Therefore, in Chapter Two I introduce my participants and their stories and provide the context and general background of SSA expectations and experiences in NZ. I also argue that the experiences a person has as a refugee and those they have in resettlement cannot be disentangled and that the entire spectrum of an individuals' experiences must be accounted for when attempting to understand their development of feelings of belonging. I also argue that an approach to belonging which focuses on agency is important for understanding the development of the multiple, ambiguous, and sometimes contradictory senses of belonging spoken about by SSA in NZ.

Following this, Chapters Three and Four each detail attempts at reproducing customary Acholi cultural practices in NZ, with Chapter Three focusing upon the reproduction of historical Acholi marriage practices and Chapter Four analysing the reproduction of customary Acholi cultural performances. Through these, I demonstrate how SSA use their traditional cultural practices as a means to help them create and maintain their shared identities and I discuss the role of these cultural practices in the development of individuals' senses of belonging. Again, the issue of agency is shown to be an important factor both in attempts at cultural reproduction and in the development of belonging throughout these chapters.

Chapter Five describes and analyses a dominant SSA discourse about the benefits associated with repatriation to South Sudan. This is a discourse which, due to SSA experiences of resettlement in NZ, is becoming increasingly common among the SSA community. Indeed, idealised narratives of return have become an important means through which South Sudanese in NZ reiterate and express their belonging toward another place and people. The roots of this discourse can be found in a combination of the independence of South Sudan, the positive evaluation of South Sudan by a recent returnee, and experiences of resettlement. I suggest that the prominence of this discourse is not so much about unambiguous feelings of belonging toward South Sudan as it is about the failure to develop a sense of belonging in NZ.

The creation and dissemination of this discourse is also shown to be a significant component of some SSA individuals' attempts at developing agency and belonging and thus taking control of their resettlement experience. Chapters Three, Four and Five are linked through a focus on how SSA's everyday practices and discourses affect their development of a sense of belonging in NZ and how the activities connected to these everyday practices can be understood as attempts at enacting their agency and taking control both of the development of their lives and of their senses of belonging.

Chapter Two

"When they come here […] they have great expectations":

Perceptions and Experiences of Resettlement in New Zealand

ALFRED: Most people now will go back home. Yes. Especially from big nations like Canada, Australia, America. A lot of people are going home from there. I mean, they experienced difficulty. This resettlement process, sometimes you get advantage and sometimes you get disadvantage. I mean, like children, maybe they grow up and they go to prison or they do not get any proper education, so then that is the disadvantage. But if children are grown up successfully, they enter university, they have the skills, they are working now, then that is good.

But unfortunately, that doesn't happen really very often. And a lot of families, now, they are very disappointed. Because when they come here to this Western world, they have great expectations. They think, 'ok, I will come to there, I will get a good job, I will get a good house. I will drive a good car. The kids will go to the good schools. They will get a good education.' And the other things. Like they think that they have money. But when they get here, they find that the government subsidy is not enough. And so much else! Yes, the government subsidy is not enough. The kids start mixing up the culture. So they get frustrated at end. Oh yes, people get very frustrated at the end!

Introduction: An overview of the conditions of resettlement

Alfred succinctly summarised for me the SSA view of resettlement in NZ. SSA and other refugee-background individuals really did have great expectations before they arrived. 'Western' nations like NZ are seen as places where refugees can finally live without fear (Tan 2012), where jobs are plentiful and where a refugee can own a house and buy a car. As Alfred indicates, many of the SSA community's experiences and perceptions of resettlement in NZ can be traced to their pre-resettlement expectations. Life in a refugee camp is hard. As mentioned in the previous chapter, only one per cent of refugees ever achieve resettlement (Caritas 2010: 2).

According to Department of Labour spokesman Stephen Dunstan, those that do gain resettlement may have unrealistic expectations of life in NZ (Hill 2012; cf. Marete 2011: 186). Instead of comparing their new lives to those in a refugee camp or their country of origin, refugees make comparisons between themselves and other groups in the host society. Kaiser (2000) noted the same pattern among SSA refugees in Kiryandongo refugee camp in Uganda, where camp residents, rather than comparing their quality of life in Kiryandongo to that of their pre-war lives in southern Sudan, made the local Ugandans the basis of their lifestyle expectations. This is presumably a generalisable process of making existential evaluations in relative rather than universal terms. Still, as Kaiser (2006a: 605) notes, the fact that life elsewhere may be worse than that in resettlement in no way condones how resettlement lacks opportunities for most refugees.

In this chapter I continue the introduction of my key informants and give the reader a sense of their everyday lives in resettlement in NZ. Their collective stories of their lives as refugees and their subsequent resettlement in NZ provide the context of SSA expectations and experiences and the constraints within which the following three chapters are situated. If we wish to understand the general context of refugee-background life in NZ, it is important to consider the intersection between two interrelated and co-constituting sets of factors. The first are individual experiences of warfare, conflict, and life in refugee camps that provide the pre-resettlement context of refugee-background SSA's lives. The second are the specific NZ

institutions and entitlements which structure SSA's perceptions and experiences of resettlement.

This chapter has three principal aims. The primary aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how individual SSA experiences of resettlement in NZ are connected with everyday issues that impact the development of those individuals' senses of belonging. In doing this, I demonstrate how conditions of resettlement structure and constrain the development of belonging in NZ and how SSA's belongings are often multiple and ambiguous. A second aim is to provide an overview of the resettlement of SSA in NZ and to demonstrate how their experiences are particularly situated rather than universal. Finally, I wish to provide some evidential basis for one of my sub-arguments: that an individual's so-called 'refugee experience,'[18] (generally conceptualised as ceasing with resettlement (Kushner& Knox 1999: 15)) cannot be easily divided from experiences of resettlement. My argument is that these often analytically separated aspects of refugee-background reality must be considered together to understand the perceptions and meanings which refugee-background individuals' attribute to their resettled lives.

This agrees with Kaiser (2010: 44), who argues that there are indisputable links among life in exile, life before exile, and life after repatriation, if and when such a movement occurs. My work bears out McSpadden and Moussa's (1993: 222) argument that although resettlement is often considered the end of 'the refugee experience,' "negotiation, resistance, and identity reconstruction continue." Janzen (2004: 22) notes that, for refugees, telling a story about life often leads to a story about conflict and vice versa. For refugees, Janzen argues, neither life nor conflict can be conceptualised without the other.

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[18] In some literature, 'the refugee experience' is apparently that part of a refugee's life that occurs between flight and resettlement (Bernard 1986). Not only does this definition separate the experiences of flight and life in a refugee camp from those in resettlement or following repatriation, as though there is no connection between the experiences in the former and how life is approached in the latter, but it also displays a distinctly homogenising tendency by assuming all or most refugees experience the same things.

Meeting Alfred and conditions of resettlement

If anyone within the SSA community in NZ can provide an overview of the community's resettlement experiences, it is Alfred. Alfred is a well-known and respected leader within the Acholi and wider South Sudanese communities. Alfred also works as a community liaison with a refugee service NGO in one of NZ's primary resettlement areas. He therefore comes face-to-face with the everyday issues of many refugee-background individuals. As well as having his own expectations for resettlement, Alfred has developed a well-rounded view of the refugees' resettlement experiences, as well as the bureaucratic, legal, and funding restrictions within which NGOs and the NZ government must work.

Alfred is an exceptionally good broker. He excels at getting people together and helping form connections among different people. That is a major part of his refugee service role, a role he seems to have mastered during his time in Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. Alfred is a very charismatic man and the first SSA I ever met. Even at our first meeting he spoke at length about his people's history, culture, and way of life. Once my fieldwork began, Alfred almost single-handedly provided me the opportunities I needed to meet the SSA community. For example, it was Alfred who introduced me to SACA and arranged our first meeting. He also demonstrated an uncanny ability to turn up in times and places where I did not expect him: on more than one occasion I was surprised by Alfred's presence at the house of someone I was interviewing.

Alfred's resettlement would probably feature highly on any list of successful resettlement stories: his family includes two full-time wage earners; his wife Regina (another key informant) successfully gained a tertiary level qualification in nursing; and they have recently purchased their own home. Due to poor resettlement outcomes among all refugee-background communities in NZ (Tan 2012), any one of these would probably put Alfred and Regina's resettlement experience among the most successful. At the same time, Alfred speaks openly of the difficulties he and his family have experienced in resettlement, and how this has resulted in his lacking a feeling of belonging in NZ.

SSA in NZ are particularly concerned with safety and security for themselves and their children. This is one area in which NZ provides immediate and incontrovertible advantages over life in either a refugee camp or the South Sudanese nation-state. There is no war or threat of war in NZ. People can generally live without fear of physical attack on themselves or their property. There is unlikely to be a bombing or other random act of violence. NZ is a safe place to live and raise children.

Other important considerations are concerns with how the NZ government, social welfare, and health services guarantee a minimum standard of living not available in their country of origin. Refugee-background persons, like all legal residents, are guaranteed a certain level of health care, primary and secondary education, and access to legal and human rights and democratic freedoms, no matter their background or social position. Here, NZ again provides incontrovertible advantages over South Sudan, especially in regions of South Sudan only beginning to gain access to development and aid-related resources. Here also NZ is literally years ahead of anything that South Sudan can hope to achieve.

The realities of refugee-background resettlement in NZ are not all as positive as these previous points would lead the reader to assume. As can be determined from the quote which began this chapter, there is a significant disjuncture between South Sudanese refugees' hopes and aspirations for their resettlement and the actual lived reality of their day-to-day lives in NZ. Based on SSA descriptions of life in NZ, there is a disconnection between the evaluations of their needs and experiences made by refugee service institutions and those made by refugee-background persons themselves. SSA believe this disconnection shows a lack of understanding by refugee service workers of the urgency and importance of the issues and situations refugee individuals must deal with on a daily basis. That Alfred, himself a refugee service employee, makes these same comments highlights the extent of this problem in refugee-background individual's everyday lives.

Particularly worrying for SSA parents is how life in resettlement affects the life chances of their children. As Alfred notes, there are some success stories. Some children are able to attain a university education (although none yet from the SSA community). Others do have jobs

(unfortunately also rare among SSA youth). As far as the South Sudanese are concerned, however, these successes are few and far between. As indicated above, the success stories are even more limited among the Acholi subsection of the community: none have yet entered tertiary education, let alone gained a tertiary qualification, and almost all those with employment only have classically migrant-oriented and low-status jobs (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury 2006, 2007; Connor 2010; Fozdar & Torezani 2008): cleaners, supermarket and factory workers, industrial or agricultural labourers. Even those who left NZ for opportunities in Australia usually only find work in the agricultural sector.

An even greater problem for Acholi parents is that their children's success in resettlement is often perceived as being associated with assimilation (a word used by several community members). In order to have success in the employment or educational sectors, youth have to acquire the linguistic skills and social and cultural capital required to enable them to compete with other NZ residents (Bourdieu 1977, 1984; O'Rourke 2011a). Young people's acquisition of the necessary skills and competencies for successful integration and resettlement is, paradoxically, often seen as a loss of their culture, heritage, and identity by adults. As I demonstrate in Chapter Four, the fears which parents have about their children's Westernisation or assimilation are a major contributing factor to the establishment of the SACA cultural performance group and form an important basis of their activities.

It is important to note the significant and recurring links SSA make between their ideas on repatriation and the experiences they have of resettlement, and how this process has affected them, their families, and their culture. In the quote which began this chapter, Alfred highlighted problems with changing cultural values, assimilation of the community's children, and the disjuncture between the aspirations of SSA before their arrival and the actual reality of their day-to-day lives in resettlement. According to Alfred, these factors will ultimately contribute to the massive repatriation of the South Sudanese diaspora no matter where they were resettled.

The very fact that the most successfully resettled would consider repatriation to South Sudan gives some indication of the difficulties of resettlement: despite Alfred securing employment with a refugee service NGO, his success in this role did not seem to translate into success in

those aspects of resettlement more strongly connected to belonging. As Alfred told me more than once, "*life in NZ is difficult*" and, despite his successes, it always remained *"just too hard."* On top of these factors, he is concerned about his children's Westernisation and the loss of their Acholi identities.

The rest of this chapter will focus on detailing various aspects of different SSA individual's lives in NZ through an emphasis on their own narratives about their perceptions and experiences of resettlement. With these, I establish that the constraints which structure SSA resettlement experiences also structure how their lives are perceived by the narrators themselves. Following Marlowe (2011b), an explicit focus on the narrative element of individuals' resettlement experiences allows me to demonstrate the necessity of a holistic perspective when attempting to understand refugees' ambiguous, multiple, and sometimes contradictory descriptions of belonging.

By demonstrating how conditions of resettlement affect SSA individuals in such a way that their experiences in resettlement lead to ambiguous senses of belonging, I show how experiences of life as a refugee and experiences of life within resettlement mesh to constrain their development of the human need for belonging (Eisenlohr 2011). In this way those aspects of 'the refugee experience' widely considered to negatively impact the development of a sense of belonging in resettlement (physical, emotional, and psychological trauma; injury and death of loved ones; loss of trust; culture loss; devastation of social networks (Kushner & Knox 1999: 15; Marlowe 2011a)) actually show the impossibility of separating 'the refugee experience' from refugees' experiences of resettlement. My argument is that an individual's experience of life as a refugee and their experience of life in resettlement are continuous in the same way as the narratives through which they recount, describe, and evaluate their lives. Experiences in the past give meaning to and structure the present while experiences in the present reorient and give meaning to experiences from the past.

Meeting Diana and narratives of belonging

Several members of the South Sudanese and Acholi communities in NZ have had lifesaving medical operations in NZ, including two of my key informants. These are Bernice, who I introduced in Chapter One, and Diana. Diana is a SSA woman who received resettlement in NZ in 2006. Before her resettlement, Diana was employed by a number of NGOs and development agencies in South Sudan and also worked as a teacher during her time in Kakuma refugee camp. She is one of the original members of the SACA cultural performance group and, until the time of her family's secondary migration to Australia in January 2011, acted as the group's secretary. A mother of two young boys, she is well aware of the difficulties of raising refugee-background children in a resettlement context. Because both her children were born outside South Sudan (one in Kakuma, the other after resettlement), she is also aware of the difficulties in providing youth with the relevant knowledge and experiences they need to create and maintain viable SSA identities.

Diana's health concerns began during one of her several abductions by the LRA Ugandan militia group in the early 1990s. Despite suffering severe physical, emotional, and psychological abuse, Diana was able to convince the unit that held her prisoner to release her and several other hostages. Abandoned in north-eastern Uganda, she and the survivors fled to Kakuma refugee camp. It was here Diana got the medical treatment she needed for the wounds she suffered at the hands of the LRA. It was also in Kakuma that she met her husband, had her first child, and was first diagnosed as needing life-saving heart surgery for which she continues to take medication.

Most medical operations undergone by members of the SSA community in NZ are unavailable in South Sudan. New Zealand is one of the few refugee-receiving nations to accept individuals whose resettlement would pose a drain on their health services' resources. Diana and her family were still given resettlement in NZ despite the NZ government knowing she would require urgent life-saving heart surgery on her arrival. NZ should be commended for resettling Diana and other refugees with similar health issues. In doing so, they literally provided Diana

with a second life and for this she is extremely thankful. Further, in 2010 she was diagnosed with an aggressive form of breast cancer which required surgery and a combination of radio- and chemo-therapy.

Like the resettlement stories of Alfred and Regina, those of Diana and her family probably rank among the most successful of the SSA community in NZ. Indeed, the resettlement context of Diana's family and that of Alfred's are remarkably similar. Both families have two wage-earning adults, a rarity among South Sudanese in NZ. Likewise, since gaining resettlement, both have a family member who successfully attained tertiary education in nursing. This they achieved despite having to work and study at the same time. Both families also have at least one child born in Kakuma as well as another born in NZ. Similarly to Alfred, when her health permits Diana also worked for a prominent NZ refugee service NGO.

Considerations around safety, security, and health together mean NZ is often seen as 'a second home' by SSA in this country. This is particularly true for those suffering from significant health-related issues. For example, Diana explicitly recognises that her own health problems mean there is little chance of her living in South Sudan again. Her hope is her children will repatriate when they are old enough to make the choice for themselves. Asking if she preferred living in NZ to South Sudan seemed to raise something of a dilemma for Diana, as she tried to balance the ambiguity of conflicting emotions she felt toward her former home with the lack of a definite sense of belonging she feels in NZ. Finally, in a rather ambivalent statement, she differentiated between a familial or affective home in South Sudan and a pragmatic or day-to-day home in NZ:

> "DIANA: The situation of comparison is really very challenging! Because that
> is home where I grow up and learn and I love everything there! That is home!
> And then here, this is a home that has given me life, and is protecting me,
> and is keeping me alive. And so this, this is also a home. So, to be fair, this is
> my life now. My children are here. I know there is no problem here. I am fine.
> I can get [my cancer] treatment here. I just call it [South Sudan] home […]
> because most of my people are there, my parents, my relatives. They are still

all there. And it is actually home. And then, NZ on the other hand, is my
second home.

For many SSA in NZ, the violence which plagued their homeland for the greater part of five decades means life in NZ may be the first time they or their families have ever felt entirely safe. Unfortunately, for many who experienced it, the psychological and emotional trauma of life in a warzone continues to affect their lives in resettlement. Their concerns over violence and safety continue but now, rather than fearing for themselves, they fear for the safety of friends and family who still face the possibility of a fresh outbreak of violence in South Sudan or a continuation of unsafe and unhygienic conditions in a refugee camp. Diana provides a typical account of the fears which undermine the positive aspects of resettlement for resettled South Sudanese:

> *DIANA: And the fact that I came here when I was already matured, been*
> *trying to settle here, in NZ, it has been very difficult for me. Knowing what is*
> *happening back there. It keeps interrupting the settlement here. So if there*
> *would ever be a total peace and I knew that everyone would be safe, then*
> *maybe that would give me settlement here. But knowing that they are still*
> *struggling, fighting here and there. Their independent they are fighting for,*
> *their peace, is still struggling, that has not been achieved, there is still*
> *obstacles on the way. That is disturbing us and really destructing our mind*
> *[…] So, there is a guilt of, what really disturbs me and other people most, is*
> *the guilt. You know, ok, I am here, I am ok. I am eating, no fighting. But still,*
> *meanwhile, part of my family are still there and suffering. So that is the thing*
> *that touches us so much, really. So you wish that, like, everybody should start*
> *living happily over there. That would make everything fine.*

Diana's feeling of guilt is common in discussions with SSA and, as has been shown by Kushner and Knox (1999: 15; cf. Jackson 2008: 63), is common throughout refugee resettlement. As Kushner and Knox (1999: 16) note, these feelings are particularly worrying for those refugees whose families are denied or cannot afford to participate in the family reunification process.

SSA's concerns for the safety of people in Africa are still very real concerns indeed, as violent death is still a common occurrence in South Sudan and refugee camps in the region. For example, Diana's father-in-law was shot and killed in an incident in Kakuma just before Christmas 2011. Unfortunately, a combination of health issues and prohibitive cost meant neither Diana nor her husband could attend his funeral.

I have argued throughout this chapter that the experiences of refugee life and those of life in resettlement cannot be disentangled. I suggest Diana's ambiguity towards belonging in NZ is critically tied to this sense of guilt and that this demonstrates important theoretical principles underlying the general construction and maintenance of belonging. The realities of life in South Sudan refugee camps in eastern Africa are important components of the development of a sense of belonging in NZ. As demonstrated in Chapter One, belonging is a relational feeling, developed and understood through a person's subjective evaluation of their place and esteem within their everyday social connections. If Diana's family were safe, she could turn her attention toward life in NZ and attempt to create the affective links needed to feel connected to the people and places of resettlement. They are not safe, however, and the knowledge of their daily insecurity continues to break down the sense of stability she needs to "feel at-home-in-the-world" (Jackson 1995, 2005). Therefore, life in South Sudan and a continuation of the life experiences she had as a refugee in Africa disturbs Diana's peace of mind in NZ and constrains her ability to feel at peace in resettlement. This reveals not only the affective and social components of belonging, but also demonstrates the ways in which experiences of resettlement cannot be dissociated from those of pre-resettlement.

Conclusion: Toward a holistic perspective of agency and belonging

In conclusion, I highlight the interlinking nature of SSA's perceptions and experiences of life in resettlement and show how a holistic perspective which centres on refugees' own narratives of their lives is required if we wish to understand the complex relationships between

resettlement, agency and belonging. I will discuss this through a focus on SSA parenting and child-rearing practices and the involvement of NZ government institutions within these practices. These are fundamentally important practices for the SSA community, particularly the women among the SSA community. As I demonstrate throughout this thesis, educating and raising children is a central concern among community members, especially as they view life in NXZ as leading toward their children's' Westernisation. As has been demonstrated in the section above, an individual's experiences of being a refugee and their refugee-background experiences in resettlement cannot be easily disentangled. One necessarily frames the other and they must therefore be considered together in any analysis of refugee-background individuals' resettlement experiences. In this concluding section, and following Jackson (1998) and McSpadden (2004), I discuss how institutional involvement in the everyday lives of resettled SSA, by reducing the feelings of agency and control which SSA have toward their existence, can actually work to hinder their development of senses of belonging.

From SSA perspectives, and similar to how South Sudanese view state intervention in Australia (Losoncz 2011; Wille 2011), parents among the South Sudanese community believe the NZ government privileges the rights of children over those of parents. Parents believe that, through being undermined by government policies which effectively subvert their traditional generational hierarchies, they are losing their authority within the household. Parents within the community are already finding that the different child-rearing practices in NZ lead to a lot of tension between themselves and their children.

According to Bernice and Regina, the additional involvement of government institutions in the day-to-day lives of SSA households can be extremely problematic for the maintenance of their culture, as well as for intergenerational relations within the community. SSA parents already have significant concerns with their children's changing cultural values. Every community member I spoke with talked about this problem as one of their most fundamental problems with resettlement. SSA parents and elders are hyperaware of the 'problems' of their children too quickly integrating into the social and cultural values of mainstream NZ society (Deng & Pienaar 2011: 168). They feel that the freedom their children are being promised by the NZ

social system only encourages them to assimilate sooner. This results in children losing touch with their parents as well as their culture. Once, over a delicious and fragrant lunch that Bernice had spent several hours showing me how to prepare, she complained:

> BERNICE: And that is what I am looking here in NZ, it is very hard [...] Because there is no one to support you, we don't have anybody here to help us. And to make it worse, you know, in this country you are free to do what you want. That is what they say [...] And those are the challenge we are facing [with] the children here. It is really different.

> RYAN: It seems particularly hard on the boys for some reason.

> BERNICE: Even girls, even girls [...] you say with the girls it is good, but it is not. You know the woman who was here the other day? One day her little girl was trouble! I don't know if she was 14 or 13 or something. One day she didn't go to school. So the school ring the mum and they say to her, 'where is your daughter?' But the mother did not know. So she rang the police and together they try to find her. But when she went home, the mother ask, 'where were you?' But she did not want to say, so the mother start smacking her And after that [the girl] call the police. And the police support her! And the police took [the mother] away and she spent the night in the prison! And she even had to go to the court! Oh, it was very hard! Very, very hard!

> [...] But instead of the government saying that the girl was young and the parent should know where was she, they took her side! Those are the bad part! They shouldn't support a young girl like that to do those things against her parent! And that is not even the worst part! Because now they are supporting the children. So, I, like a parent, I don't have a choice or any help!

Many South Sudanese childrearing cultural values and practices are apparently incompatible with those held by mainstream NZ society. Further, the SSA community are at times baffled by the seeming contradictions within the governmental and legal establishments with whom they

must interact. Hebbani, Obijiofor, and Bristed (2010: 40) have shown that the collective value attributed to corporal punishment among the South Sudanese community in Australia led to repeated conflict between South Sudanese parents and the Australian state. Milos (2011: 152) notes that the Australia South Sudanese community feel many of these conflicts can be traced to Australian schooling practices which encourage the freedom and independence of children and teach them to phone police if they are threatened with physical discipline. This has led to great concern among the community's parents, who worried "about losing control of their children, and [who] experienced a sense of impotence due to the protection of children's rights by the Australian government" (Shakespeare-Finch & Wickham 2010: 36).

As exemplified in Bernice's narrative above, similar encounters have taken place in NZ. These encounters have led to something of an existential crisis among some parents as they struggle to come to terms with the loss of the familiar social roles that previously structured and gave meaning to their everyday lives. Without the established routines and everyday cultural practices which made up the unconscious and habitual knowledge or *habitus* (Bourdieu 1984) of her background, the mother in Bernice's story was left floundering in an unfamiliar system organised around unknown rules. For the woman in the story above, the very involvement of the NZ government not only shifted the internal power relations of her household, underlining the disconnection between her life in resettlement and her pre-resettlement understandings of the world, but, through imposing precise limits upon her actions, it redefined the boundaries of her resettlement experience.

It is my argument that one of the most important reasons the woman in Bernice's story, and the rest of the SSA community, are so discouraged by such seemingly contradictory institutional involvements in their everyday life is because of the ways in which these involvements impact upon and constrain their agency. My understanding of belonging follows Jackson (1998), Kushner and Knox (1999), and McSpadden (2004), and conceptualises agency as a central component to the ability to develop a sense of belonging. In this view of belonging, a lack of agency is a fundamental reason for the lack of a development of belonging. To be more precise, it is an individual's feeling as if they have no control over their lives which hinders the

development of a sense of belonging. I suggest that this is why the stories such as the one above are so important for understanding the difficulties of developing a sense of belonging in resettlement: not only does institutional involvement constrain this woman's actions and redefine the social relationships which previously structured her existence, but it also constrains that very element which is vital to the development of her belonging, her sense of agency and control. Throughout the remainder of this thesis I demonstrate how SSA attempt to create a feeling of belonging in their everyday lives through their individual and collective attempts at taking control of their lives.

Therefore, and following Marlowe (2011b) and O'Rourke (2011a), I argue that a holistic perspective is needed when attempting to understand the multiple experiences of refugee-background individuals in contexts of resettlement. Analysis of any individual factor will not provide the complete picture. Some aspects of the resettlement experience will be missing. Particularly important is knowledge about, and an attempt to pay attention to, refugee-background individuals' own subjective evaluation of their experiences. Although the various separate issues of resettlement are themselves individually challenging, it is the ways in which they combine that make the overall SSA experience of resettlement in NZ an extremely marginalising one and which cause problems for their successful resettlement, as well as for their development of a sense of belonging.

What makes any one issue worse is the way different variables combine to create very negative results. The separately problematic issues of employment, education, economic marginalisation, social exclusion, and the loss of cultural identity are all further complicated by the vagaries of integration, the uneven process of refugee resettlement, and the unequal power relations that underpin refugee-background individuals' social interactions. These difficulties are intermeshed in ways which feed off and reinforce each other. I suggest they also combine to underscore SSA individuals' already existing feelings of powerlessness resulting from their subjective assessments of lack of control over the conditions of their lives in resettlement. As demonstrated above, an understanding of how refugee-background individuals' development of belonging is impacted by resettlement demands beginning from

those refugee-background individuals' own perceptions and experiences. Over the course of the next three chapters, I provide an overview of refugee-background SSA's own appraisals of resettlement and link these to their attempts at developing belonging. My argument is that the ambiguous and sometimes contradictory connections between resettlement and belonging only become apparent when attention is paid to refugees' own voices.

Chapter Three

"We want to keep our traditions and our culture":

Acholi marriage practices in resettlement in New Zealand

Introduction

South Sudanese Acholi in New Zealand believe their marriage traditions are among the most important of all Acholi cultural practices. Because of this, they say it is important to continue to reproduce these practices while in resettlement. In the quote in the chapter title, Regina summarises the South Sudanese Acholi community's position on continuing their customary marriage. Reproducing marriage practices is of value to the resettled Acholi in several ways. Wedding committees and marriage payments cement kinship and social networks as well as passing on Acholi identities to their children. Because the adults associate customary Acholi marriage practices with particular people, places, and events of their past, it is also a link to their former lives and the social and geographical spaces that had anchored their identities and belonging. Changes to these customary practices are therefore met with a mixture of sadness, disappointment, and resignation. Yet the conditions the community faces in resettlement mean these customary practices must change.

SSA efforts at maintaining these marriage practices in New Zealand faces the same difficulties stemming from their refugee-background as attempts at preserving and reproducing any other Acholi sociocultural institution. These problems include the small size of the community (which limits not only possible marital partners but also people who can be approached for brideprice contributions) and difficulties gaining education and employment (which limit access to money and other resources needed to marry). Not only are their social and kin networks devastated by the prolonged conflict in South Sudan, but once in New Zealand they find it difficult to get well-

paid or full-time employment. In both scenarios, a man's ability to make customary marriage payments is significantly reduced. The single most significant issue in the eyes of the community, however, are the specific difficulties related to the gathering and payment of brideprice.[19]

Following my description of SSA's perceptions and experiences of resettlement in Chapter Two, in this chapter I describe customary Acholi marriage payment systems and how these are simultaneously reproduced and transformed in NZ. In doing so, I show how negotiating and paying brideprice functions to create networks and maintain long term social relations among SSA in NZ and throughout the diaspora. I also provide the first strand of my larger thesis argument on how SSA's experiences of resettlement in NZ affect their senses of belonging. Through an analysis of community reactions to changing brideprice practices and what these mean for maintaining Acholi culture in NZ, I demonstrate how the everyday tensions of resettlement play out in the reproduction of customary marriage practices and how they are linked to individuals' difficulties with the development and maintenance of a sense of belonging in NZ.

Therefore, in this chapter I argue that differences of opinion around reproducing Acholi marriage payments in NZ reflect on-going difficulties of integration within NZ society and are best understood in relation to individual experiences of the resettlement process. This is especially true, I suggest, where individual's experiences of resettlement necessitate the questioning of otherwise taken-for-granted categories of belonging, such as their 'natural' or automatic membership in the SSA social grouping. In this way, I suggest, SSA marriage payments are highly contested sites of sociality precisely because of the way in which they problematise senses of belonging based on assumed categorical similarities (such as being

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[19] Following Radcliffe-Brown and Forde (1967: 48), for the purposes of the following discussion I use the term 'brideprice' to explicitly refer to those specific types of marriage payment which move from a prospective groom and his kin group to that of the kin group of his prospective wife and which are necessary to enable a marriage to take place. In this way, 'brideprice' is distinct from 'bridewealth,' which refers to goods a bride brings with her into a marriage and which never become the property of her husband or his kin, and refers to marriage payments moving in the opposite direction to dowry. I use the term 'marriage payments' as a broad overview term to refer to all payments involved in the SSA marriage process.

Acholi). This conclusion agrees with Baak's (2011a, 2011d) analyses of how community social practices among Australian South Sudanese simultaneously act as means of exclusion and inclusion, creating and negating different individuals' senses of belonging at the same time.

As Radcliffe-Brown and Forde's classical work *African Systems of Kinship* reminds us (1967: 49), marriage is not an event but "a developing process," a complex institution which must be analysed in reference to all its components as well as to the whole social system of which it is part (Radcliffe-Brown & Forde 1967:53). Acholi marriage payments provide an excellent example of this developing process as they involve multiple payments from a range of actors in a variety of social positions over a period of many years. These payments necessitate involvement in a wide variety of long-reaching social, economic and political ties among groups and through time.

All my participants view the specificities of customary Acholi marriage payments as distinctively Acholi and as something which marks their ethnicity and culture as unique. Acholi marriage payments are viewed as an important means of distinguishing Acholi from other South Sudanese ethnic groups in NZ. For example, Regina, explicitly contrasting the Acholi with other South Sudanese tribes, told me:

> *REGINA: Different tribes, the Nuer, Dinka, others, they have different marriage practices. But also, they have different attitudes to Westernisation! The Acholi, we want to keep our traditions and our culture going, we want to keep them alive.*

Those who believe that continuing to reproduce Acholi marriage payments is a cultural necessity speak about their concerns with 'Westernisation'. An important discourse around the necessity of reproducing Acholi marriage payments is that 'Westernisation' will result in the loss of Acholi-specific culture and identities. A concurrent thread is that those who do not wish to maintain these practices are already losing their traditions.

Despite the majority of community arguing for the continuing necessity of brideprice practices in NZ, some individuals are taking an increasingly pragmatic view. These people hold it is too

expensive to maintain the historical brideprice system in NZ. For example, Bernice consistently highlighted the general poverty of the SSA community, commenting that an unreflective continuation of marriage payments hinders newly-weds lives together. When placing the difficulties associated with reproducing these practices in the context of the other constraints SSA face in resettlement, Bernice argues that the community in NZ should significantly reduce the cost of brideprice.

Everyone else I spoke with agreed with prevailing ideals on the cultural necessity of Acholi marriage payments and argued strongly for the need to reproduce Acholi traditions in NZ. They perceived brideprice payment as the only way Acholi can legitimately get married and maintain their culture and social networks at the same time. As well as legitimating marriage, brideprice builds and maintains wide-ranging social networks built on debt obligations. Moreover, they argue that without brideprice there can be no marriage and that children from that marriage cannot be legitimate.

The legitimacy of children is an important concern for SSA contemplating return to South Sudan. Brideprice functions to transfer membership of a child from the lineage of their mother's father to that of their father. If the child or its parents returned to South Sudan without paying the first instalment of brideprice, the mother's family can demand the child in lieu of the outstanding brideprice debt. Brideprice payment also works as a means of circulating wealth among kin or other social networks. Without paying brideprice for his marriage, a man is neglecting his obligations to his kin and other networks and may be shunned or abused on return to South Sudan. Both these scenarios mean the continuation of customary brideprice payments are of utmost importance.

Discourses surrounding the payment of brideprice in NZ reflect on-going debates on how to integrate within NZ whilst still maintaining distinctive Acholi identities. A focus on these discourses demonstrates SSA marriage payments as highly contested cultural sites linked to individual difficulties with resettlement that are experienced as issues of belonging. My argument is that Acholi community members' differing opinions toward transformations in historically-practiced marriage systems are connected with personal experiences of

resettlement within NZ generally, the degree of economic and social success they have in NZ specifically, and how these in turn affect the development of their senses of belonging.

An overview of Acholi marriage payments

In order to create a valid SSA marriage, a series of payments must be made. As in most patrilineal societies (Radcliffe-Brown & Forde 1967: 47), these generally move from the husband's kin group to that of the wife's father and his kin group. Several stages are involved, and at each stage several payments are made. The stages are: (1) approaching the topic of marriage and entering negotiation with the bride's kin; (2) pre-brideprice payments; and (3) brideprice.

Before brideprice can be negotiated, a man makes a series of payments to demonstrate his desire to marry a woman. These payments include: the "*time wasting fee,*" for the bride's family allowing the groom's proposal and a fee paid by a man to his wedding committee for negotiating brideprice on his behalf, called a "*speaking fee*". Once these are paid, a man also pays the bride's family so negotiations can proceed to the next stage. This is termed "*opening the mouth of the mother*". In NZ, the "time wasting" and "speaking" fees are each around NZ$1500 while the fee to open negotiations is around NZ$2000.

Each of the partners have a committee comprised of tribal elders, friends, local 'big men' and senior kin members of both genders (excluding parents) to negotiate on their behalf. Together, these committees decide what amount of brideprice will be paid. Historically, payments would be in tobacco, food, and animal skins. Nowadays, and especially in resettlement where traditional goods are not readily available, most fees are paid in money.

Once marriage negotiations begin, other payments must be paid before brideprice itself can be negotiated. These include: a payment to the bride's father to enter his house and another "*for interrupting the girl school*"; a cash fine for any of the groom's kin who enters the house wearing shoes, or swears, or otherwise disrespects the bride's family; payment to the bride's

mother and aunties (father's sisters and mother's co-wives) for raising the bride; a separate payment to her mother for giving birth to her; and a further payment to her father if sexual relations have taken place. This increases for any children the couple may have. Once these have been decided and either paid at the time (as they rarely are) or agreement is reached regarding when they will be made (as is more common), brideprice negotiation can begin.

An overview of brideprice

The brideprice is the most important of all marriage payments. Until brideprice payments begin, a couple are not considered married, no matter the length of their relationship. In these situations, divorce is easily achieved. Furthermore, children are considered illegitimate until the first brideprice instalment is paid. As a patrilineal society, a woman marries into the tribe of her husband. Any children belong to the family of her husband and his father. Children born without the payment of brideprice have not transferred out of their mother's patrilineal kin group, and all rights towards these children remain with her kin.

Brideprice was paid through the mobilisation of kin and friendship networks (a goat from a friend, a sheep from a brother, a cow from your father, etc.). The members of a man's wedding committee are often also major contributors to his brideprice. Brideprice was traditionally paid by a combination of animals (most importantly cows, but also sheep and goats), animal pelts, food, millet beer, feathers, gold, and money. Through the years, however, these payments have been increasingly converted into money. Even the animal portion has been increasingly "cashed up" (Hutchinson 1992).

Money is now the most common method of brideprice payment in NZ as well as in South Sudan. Schechter (2004) presented many reasons why the animal portion of brideprice is demanded and paid in cash. These include: a lack of animals (from death or loss in conflict); a decreasing need for animals among urban or camp-based populations; the ways banking or investment of money decreases risk of theft; the ability of money to be used in payment for

other goods and services; and the mobility of money if flight or escape is needed. Many of these reasons became particularly important during the prolonged conflict of Anyanya II.

Conversion of brideprice into money is increasingly problematic in resettlement as well as in South Sudan. Standard brideprice is escalating and, most problematically of all, has suffered exponential inflation in the last two decades. In the brideprice negotiation process, one cow used to be the equivalent of several US dollars. This meant that if a family demanded a brideprice of ten cows, only around US$30-50 would be required to pay that amount. However, one cow may now be worth the equivalent of up to US$1000. Thus, a brideprice equivalent to ten cows means that US$10,000 may now be required. This cost does not directly related to any real monetary equivalent for cattle but is a combination of cattle's status price and increasing amount of money from the diaspora coming into the marriage market. Thus, in the space of one generation, normal brideprice has grown from 3,000-10,000 Sudanese Pounds to over 25 million Sudanese Pounds. This is the equivalent of around NZ$20,000. These inflationary brideprice calculations make paying for marriage more difficult than ever.

Through their involvement in the negotiation, gathering, and paying of brideprice, wedding committees fill several important functions. I suggest, however, that the most important function is only tangentially involved in the marriage payment process. As mentioned earlier, committees are small groups composed from senior and respected people close to the kin of the marital partners. In Africa, committees often include people such as local priests or ministers, members of government, and local businessmen. They therefore come from a wide range of kin and other social networks. These patterns continue in NZ, where committees are commonly comprised of priests, ministers, and leaders from among the South Sudanese as well as other refugee-background communities. I suggest that one of a wedding committee's most important functions is therefore the creation of enduring networks of wide-ranging social relations. Further, because of the fact that committee members often pay a significant portion of a man's brideprice obligations themselves, brideprice debt functions to maintain the stability of these networks over time.

For the two NZ-based marriages on which I gathered data, total brideprice required were each NZ$15,000 and initial brideprice instalments were both around NZ$3000. Payment of around 20% of brideprice seems to be standard as a first instalment, no matter the total brideprice agreed upon. Whatever is left over becomes a debt the groom owes his father-in-law. This is on top of any debts he owes his social networks for helping to contribute to his first brideprice instalment. Historically, debt payment may be made in the form of a few animals here and there depending upon his herd's breeding success and any incoming brideprice from his sisters. For Acholi in NZ, however, further payments are almost exclusively made in sums of several thousand NZ dollars. It may therefore take a man many years to save enough to pay each following instalment.

Acholi marriage payments in resettlement

Many of the difficulties faced in reproducing Acholi customary marriage practices in NZ result from a combination of macro-level factors and the community's refugee-background context. Macro-level factors, including South Sudan's increasing incorporation within the global political economy, the spiralling cost stemming from "cashing up" cattle and other exchange objects, and the transnational nature of Acholi marriages, are exacerbated by conflict resulting in extensive loss of property, animals, and the social networks through which men would gather and pay brideprice. All of these have led to pervasive social and cultural change among Acholi both in South Sudan and throughout the diaspora.

The long-running Sudanese conflict means Acholi men face significant problems paying brideprice in cattle. Those in resettlement live in situations with very little family they can rely upon to help. In our first interview, Alfred described the 'traditional' Acholi marriage system for me and summarised a range of difficulties associated with reproducing these and other Acholi cultural practices in the contemporary world:

ALFRED: If a boy here [in NZ] wants to marry a girl, he must consult his parents. They may be back in Sudan. His parents must arrange to visit the lady's parents […] The lady's family then prepare a list, this list contains all the things such as how much money must be paid, how much goats and cows must be paid. This price will still be set in Sudan even though it will probably be settled in NZ [dollars]. This money is paid to family back home if possible, and is preferred to be paid in animals. However, because of war and living in the refugees camp, now today, these animals are preferred to be paid in money. This is because there is a lack of animals; there are no animals, here or in Sudan.

The transnational nature of Acholi marriage further compounds these and other difficulties. Payments may be negotiated by kin networks anywhere in the world and the community in NZ deem those living elsewhere to be disconnected from the everyday realities of life in NZ. These difficulties are further heightened by lengthening periods of engagement and the resulting increase in the number of children born before marriage. This makes brideprice more expensive because a woman's family will fine her husband for not following the 'correct' engagement process.

These situations are exacerbated for men whose wives have family in South Sudan. The transnational nature of the South Sudanese diaspora means marriage payments are differently evaluated by people in South Sudan and those abroad. A constant refrain among SSA in NZ is that people in South Sudan believe that people in resettlement are considerably financially better off than those in Africa. For example, Bernice notes that the brideprice requirements asked by women's' families in South Sudan are extortionate and unnecessary:

BERNICE: And the problem also, like if you say I should pay [NZ] $10,000, because they will calculate the money back in Africa. Because it will be too much! If they calculate back there. And so that is another thing hard for us here. That is like too much! And so it is really confusing people. And getting money here also hard. It is very hard!

Bernice's analysis of the inflationary conditions of transnational marriages is similar to Schechter's (2004: 268-294). In a section discussing marriage payments in Kakuma in the mid-2000s, Schechter shows how Dinka had little understanding of conditions in resettlement and the poverty of resettled men. Further, Schechter argues that following the influx of foreign currency from diaspora members engaging in the increasingly transnational marriage market or otherwise sending remittances, cattle are now being overvalued. This is particularly true in refugee camps where access to money, resources and animals are even more limited. Combined, these factors led to brideprice requirements which effectively push non-resettled males out of the marriage market while simultaneously compromising the financial stability of men in resettlement.

SSA give several reasons why they have difficulty reproducing their marriage system in resettlement. Despite the salience of each factor, the most commonly mentioned was the increasing expense.[20] This was of such concern that everyone I spoke to raised the issue without prompting. As I demonstrate below, there is wide variation in how people speak about this. Some, like Alfred, tell of the difficulties gathering brideprice while living in resettlement. Others such as Bernice talk of how excessive brideprice can cause financial problems. Diana and Regina, on the other hand, talk about the effect of brideprice on children's legitimacy. In all cases, the underlying problem is the same: a general lack of resources stemming from a refugee-background context and the difficulties in finding and maintaining employment.

Resettlement is strongly associated with an inability to afford marriage payments. The brideprice cost quoted earlier (NZ$15,000) is a significant amount for anyone in NZ to spend on any aspect of life. The real cost is much higher for those who live in resettlement and with little in the way of money or moveable goods. William told me his inability to afford brideprice has meant he and his partner remain unmarried, despite the fact that the SSA community describe them as husband and wife. For William, as with most SSA in NZ, lack of strong English literacy,

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[20] It must be noted, however, that brideprice and other marriage payments are also on the increase in South Sudan, as well as within refugee camps throughout Africa. What makes this scenario different, I propose, is the level of poverty *relative* to others in the surrounding society.

poor employment prospects, and overdependence upon low-wage labour mean brideprice is becoming prohibitively expensive. He cannot see himself marrying while living in resettlement.

Alfred had three children before he began his brideprice payments. This was costly yet unavoidable. The conditions of life in Kakuma refugee camp and then NZ meant he was unable to begin his payments any earlier. In 2008, Alfred paid a first brideprice instalment of NZ$10,000. This was the equivalent of 25 million Sudanese Pounds out of a total brideprice debt of 35 million Sudanese Pounds. Although his initial brideprice was 35 million Pounds, the fact he had children before beginning his payments meant he was fined an extra 5 million Pounds. The real cost of his brideprice is therefore 40 million Sudanese Pounds and he still has 15 million Pounds or roughly NZ$6000 to pay.

The intersection between the difficulties of resettlement and the increasing cost of marriage means the first instalment of brideprice is often delayed, sometimes for many years. Moreover, the patrilineal cultural logic which determines children's ethnicity to be that of their father also states children are illegitimate if born before brideprice has been paid. Illegitimate children may be taken by their mother's parents if they consider her brideprice neglected. As Bernice states:

> *BERNICE: You still need to go and pay something to the parents. Otherwise, you can say you are married because you have the document [i.e. the NZ marriage certificate] but if you were to go back home, the parent will take the girl [the bride] and the children away!*
>
> *RYAN: Really?*
>
> *BERNICE: Yes, because you did not pay [brideprice]! So you are not married! Oh yes, they need the money!*

Although the removal of children has not happened in NZ, the threat hangs over any marriage where brideprice payment has not begun. Thus, even more worrying than the rising cost of brideprice is the necessity of making a timely first instalment. The unfortunate situation for Acholi throughout the diaspora is that difficulties saving money in resettlement increase the

likelihood of the removal of children. This increases the pressure upon the groom and his committee and kin. If they want to keep their children, they must pay all the pre-brideprice marriage payments as well as the inflationary cost of brideprice.

Beyond a simple monetary calculation, the threat of removal particularly worries those contemplating future repatriation. Alfred mentioned this as the deciding factor behind the payment of his first brideprice instalment in 2008. Alfred and Regina decided to begin brideprice payment rather than obtain a mortgage for a house. With their children getting older and the situation in Sudan becoming increasingly stable, Alfred and Regina decided it was increasingly likely they would visit family in South Sudan. Without the first payment of brideprice, however, the threat of their children's removal remained too great.

Community debates around changing payments

At least two members of the SSA community suggest that marriage payments in NZ should move away from those practiced in South Sudan. Individuals' taking this position highlight that payment in NZ should be significantly reduced because of the relative poverty of the community to other NZ residents. Once, during my weekly visit to Bernice at her home in the distant, low-income suburb of the city in which she lives, our discussion turned to her own experiences with brideprice. At that time, her son was in the middle of negotiating his marriage payments and the process seemed painful and difficult. Bernice's life in NZ is effectively that of a beneficiary and her son has had great difficulty attaining work beyond low-wage, part-time employment. Further, they have no family to help them. Marriage will be an expensive process. The practical realities of resettlement were beginning to temper Bernice's beliefs about maintaining customary Acholi marriage practices:

> BERNICE: It will be very hard! You need to work very hard to get enough money to allow your boys to get a girl and get married! [...] Like, for example, my son, he take this girl, the captain of the group [SACA]. They are now getting married [...]

Now, they [the girl's family] want us to pay all this money, they want us to pay everything […] But we are poor and we didn't have anything […] It even affect our group [SACA] and that was hard! Because they [the girl's family] don't like to let this lady come to my son and they didn't like [how] the NZ system is like changing it […] Even here in NZ, where no one pays the school fees anymore, still they want us pay! And then the money, like 'apolo na atim,' to the mother for taking care of her, still we need to pay those things. Yes. It is very hard!

Bernice and Alfred both told me negotiations for this marriage were causing feelings of misunderstanding, grievance, and hostility within the SSA community in NZ. Alfred, discussing the negotiations, said:

ALFRED: What is important now is that we settle a few demands to make them [the bride's kin] happy. So those are the few things to push for, so at least we should have something like around 3 grand to settle for. So they can go on with their life and make people back to a normal situation here. Because it is tense now! Because it is building a lot of tense! And we don't want that tense to build up. It is good to resolve the problem and get back to a normal situation.

These misunderstandings revolve primarily around varying perceptions of brideprice and, almost intuitively, are split along kinship lines which reflect the direction in which brideprice moves: the bride's kin take a hard-line traditionalist stance on the necessity of full marriage payment while the groom's kin argue excessive brideprice damages the couple's future because their earnings are spent paying brideprice rather than saving for a house and children. Further, the groom's kin say too large a brideprice and too strict adherence to the full payment traditions do not reflect the realities of resettlement.[21]

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[21] I do not know what was finally decided upon during this negotiation process. However, comments made by Alfred (the head of the groom's committee) and the overt resignation in comments made by Bernice suggest that tradition will win over circumstance and a full brideprice will be required.

Speaking about an earlier marriage within the South Sudanese community, Bernice commented on how, in the process of negotiating brideprice for that marriage, some account was made of the everyday conditions of life in resettlement. Told in relation to the negotiation process of her son's wedding, Bernice gave this example as an important precedent for the reduction of marriage payments in a NZ context. For me, however, it highlights the expense of marriage payments for resettled refugees and provides an example of the ways in which sociocultural norms are constantly in the process of being negotiated and remade by individuals' situated actions.

> *BERNICE: When the time came they [the bride's family] said that they want all the money. And then the boy family come, they said that they don't really have the money. So [the bride's family] say, 'You know, for us, we need some money. Because we are always talking, you are going to pay like NZ$1000 for communicating.' Like we say 'for opening the mouth of the mother'. Yes, so he send that money from Australia. Then after that start arranging the wedding […] And then we had a celebration. It was just not like the one at home. Yes, because no [brideprice] money even! Only $1000, but then after that nothing. And then they sent that money back home and she went with the children to Australia. It was just simple, not really like the one back home!*
>
> *RYAN: And why, do you think, it was so different?*
>
> *BERNICE: Because no money! Back home you can't do the wedding before you pay. You need to pay! You need the money!*

Linking these statements back to comments made about Bernice's son's marriage given earlier, it is not marriage payments per se which concern Bernice but rather the escalating prices demanded and how these impact the married couple's future.[22] Bernice's position, however,

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[22] It would be interesting to know if Bernice would have taken this position if the woman was her own daughter rather than a friend's, or if she was part of the patrilineage receiving the brideprice payments. The answer to this is unknown, of course. My own opinion is that Bernice sincerely thinks this is the best thing in the situation.

opposes the majority of the SSA community who note that brideprice remains a fundamental Acholi cultural institution even in resettlement. In their opinion, Acholi in NZ will still need to follow the complete payment process. Diana believes that by paying brideprice, a man indicates he is serious about his marriage. Brideprice therefore guarantees the stability of that marriage. She said:

> *DIANA: In NZ, people make their choice, like elsewhere […] Now a lot got messed up. Not only here. Also in the refugees camps, in the war situation, that really mess everybody up. And then it is messing the culture. But still, they are keeping some it. People who are ready to marry, they go on with the same thing [brideprice and other marriage payments], they just accept it. The dowry payments will never stop, even here.[23] People that get married outside Sudan will still have to pay.*

> *Ryan: Well, it seems that because most people still have family and stuff in the Sudan, they need to get married in the traditional fashion, don't they?*

> *Diana: Yes, yes. But the different culture is affecting it in many ways. But again, those who wanted to use a different culture, of not doing this and that, those marriages doesn't stand! This dowry payment and all this cultural thing, this is securing the marriage. Because, everybody think that if a man really wants you and loves you, then he must do something. So if he didn't do it, it is automatically considered that this man doesn't love you, he just having his way here. And that brings a lot of mistrust to the marriage. And at the end of it, it is no good.*

Brideprice therefore plays an important role creating and reinforcing social ties beyond those involved in the marriage itself. Through gathering the resources needed, brideprice ties together two or more kin networks as well as binding them to the other, non-kin social networks that provided a portion of the brideprice. Alfred says the members of a wedding

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[23] Brideprice is usually termed "*dowry*" by Acholi themselves.

committee themselves often hold part of a man's debt obligations, especially in contexts of resettlement where kin networks are so small. This obligates the committee to maintain their own connections with the man and his kin and, in NZ, is a primary factor in deciding who a man asks to be a committee member.

Regardless of differing ideas about the cost of brideprice in NZ, however, all community members were adamant about the wider sociocultural importance of brideprice: brideprice is not an antiquated cultural system but a central institution through which other sociocultural systems are integrated. Brideprice not only recognises and legitimates marriage and kinship ties but, by maintaining a constant flow of people and things between different social networks, forms a fundamental component of the political and economic life of Acholi society. In fact, brideprice obligations encourages men to borrow brideprice from each other while, at the same time, those other men are obliged to borrow to help pay the brideprice for their own weddings. This supports the growth, development and maintenance of wide networks built from people from who the groom acquires his brideprice, as well as furthering social cohesion between those networks.

Conclusion

SSA marriages taking place in NZ do so within the context of an increasingly transnational multiscape (Appadurai 1996) that connects Acholi in NZ to those in South Sudan and throughout the diaspora. One significant reason for continuing Acholi marriage payments in NZ is that these payments intimately link transnational and diasporic networks in multiple interconnected ways. Marriage payments enable transnational networks by linking and maintaining connections among separate Acholi individuals and communities around the world. These connections are created by the marriage payment negotiation process itself, as well as through the ways in which marriage payments are gathered and paid.

Through the mobilisation of the transnational networks required to pay for marriage, the contemporary practice of Acholi brideprice not only necessitates the existence but also the continual maintenance of transnational social networks. This function is built into the cross-cutting nature of debt obligations at the core of marriage payments. For instance, although any one marriage may result in a strong network of transnational ties created by debts undertaken to gather brideprice, the true value of these ties cannot be understood until they are positioned within their full social context. Often, as soon as a man makes a brideprice instalment, the resources from this payment are used to pay some of the brideprice debt of his wife's father or brothers. Thus, although a father may be owed brideprice, he or his sons owe brideprice themselves. Brideprice resources are not static but continually moving around multiple transnationally-connected networks. The transnational mobility of brideprice therefore not only reinforces ties between individual people or families but simultaneously reinforces the network and that thing which allows the origin and continuation of the network: belonging within the Acholi ethnic group, where being Acholi equates to socially and culturally knowing and acting (and therefore belonging) as a group member.

Through this connective and mutually constitutive network function, marriage payments maintain important social connections with South Sudan and allow the possibility of future return to that country by consciously reproducing the practices and relationships needed to fit into the South Sudanese social structure. Importantly, for SSA contemplating repatriation, the transnational nature of Acholi marriage practices allow and maintain the possibility of participants' return by legitimating both the marriage and any children of that marriage. This cultural legitimisation not only allows those persons engaging in brideprice to be positioned within wider social networks but also allows the incorporation of them and their children into existing South Sudanese social structures.

As well as placing people within wider networks of Acholi and South Sudanese individuals and sociocultural institutions, Acholi marriage practices specifically identify those who engage in their reproduction to be ethnically Acholi. As Acholi marriage payments are described as distinctively Acholi, they work as a means of differentiating Acholi individuals from those

among other African groups practicing similar marriage customs. In this way, Acholi-specific marriage payments are important means of reproducing Acholi culture and community in NZ as well as producing specifically Acholi individuals with specifically Acholi identities.

By necessitating a series of meetings among committees comprised of diverse groups of people working on behalf of each marrying party, the negotiation process brings together a number of individuals and social networks. This means the wedding effectively functions as a single node through which a wide array of connections are created and maintained. Indeed, as I have suggested, this could be one of the most important functions wedding committees fulfil for SSA in NZ, especially when considering the refugee-background nature of the community. This is because wedding committees allow a man and his kin to more strongly connect themselves to other members of the Acholi, South Sudanese, and other refugee-background communities in NZ, as well as to other members of wider NZ society such as priests, ministers and business associates.

In addition to socially and economically connecting individuals within the Acholi community in NZ, customary Acholi marriage payment practices generate a form of social belonging that connects these individuals to others in the South Sudanese community in NZ as well as to a larger and generally more sporadic nostalgic or imagined community of belonging in South Sudan. Again, it is the knowledge of and participation within the Acholi sociocultural institution of brideprice which defines them as Acholi and through which they gain and maintain membership within a group of belonging. Importantly, this is also a form of belonging explicitly tied to a place: the same networks are at play within the NZ community, for example (otherwise they could not be reproduced here), but it is through recourse to the specifically (ethnic and imaginative) place-based identification with a community of origin that the reproduction of these practices develops belonging in the most effective way.

The marriage practices of SSA in NZ mobilise multiple forms of belonging simultaneously while, at the same time, differences of opinion over these practices highlight the contingent, fluid, and contested nature of belonging. Despite the many functional benefits of reproducing marriage payments in resettlement, not everyone in the SSA community in NZ wishes to maintain these

practices. Different discourses surrounding Acholi marriage payments in NZ reflect on-going debates within the community around how to integrate into NZ society whilst still maintaining distinctive Acholi identities. I have suggested that these debates highlight variations within different individuals' experiences of resettlement in NZ and show marriage payments to be highly contested cultural sites.

Indeed, individuals' difficulties with resettlement play out in community debates over the reproduction of customary marriage practices. Different arguments put forward in these debates demonstrate how belonging is multifaceted and can be constructed, developed and maintained in varying ways for diverse individuals. These debates highlight how cultural reproduction and belonging are intertwined and are linked to individuals' difficulties with the development and maintenance of a sense of belonging in NZ. Any one individual's attempt to control these debates as a means of helping them with the development of their own sense of belonging will in turn affect the subjective evaluations of belonging made by others. This highlights the ways in which contests over the position and place of culture are just as much contests over access to and control over, the conditional and relational nature of belonging.

Chapter Four

"Dancing is like our identity. It shows us who we are":

The Sudanese Acholi Cultural Association performing belonging

BERNICE: We [SACA] think our culturals is an important part of our identity. Our culture and background is especially important for us [as Acholi] in NZ. We think understanding our culture is an important part of understanding us as a group. Your study will help you and then others to understand us. Plus, it may get the children interested in their culture again, make them excited to learn about the history and language and traditions. We hope so.

Introduction

The Sudanese Acholi Cultural Association (SACA) is an Acholi cultural performance group formed by a collection of refugee-background SSA women in 2008. SACA is currently organised by a seven-person committee who attempt to ensure the group stays true to the community's original vision for the group. During discussions with SACA on their role in helping SSA negotiate resettlement in NZ, members continually speak about the group in a way which emphasises the specifically performative basis of their activities. They highlight the importance of performance for the reproduction of unequivocally 'Acholi' identities and are definitive that an embodied or performative knowledge of Acholi culture is vital for members' identification as Acholi. They state it is not only knowledge but also the ability to participate in Acholi culture which makes someone Acholi.

Bernice' summary of SACA's position toward my research which began this chapter emphasises the importance of Acholi culture in helping shape Acholi resettlement experiences in NZ. In Chapter Three I analysed how SSA in NZ maintain their cultural heritage through customary brideprice practices. In doing so, I demonstrated the importance the SSA community place upon specifically-Acholi cultural practices as a means of identification with their culture, heritage and history, highlighting the difficulties they face maintaining these practices in resettlement. Here I present the second strand of my analysis on the importance of a sense of belonging to refugee-background individuals' experiences of resettlement by highlighting the use of cultural performance in developing a sense of belonging. I do this through an investigation of SACA's role in educating the SSA community's children in their ethnic, cultural, and historical backgrounds. Focusing on the performative (re)production of 'traditional' Acholi cultural practices in NZ and demonstrating how these performances are associated with the creation and maintenance of explicitly Acholi identities, I argue that SACA members privilege specifically cultural and performative forms of belonging.

Cultural performances form the core of SACA's activities. A large reason SACA has taken the form it has is the importance of cultural performance to Acholi society, especially with the education of youth in Acholi moral principles and worldview (Kaiser 2006b: 188-189). As the quote that forms this chapter's title indicates, SACA members explicitly link performance of Acholi culture to the (re)production of Acholi identities. SACA are equally certain culture is passed down in the interaction of performance and education. I suggest that for SSA in NZ, the importance of cultural education stems from a concern their children will not be able to participate in Acholi cultural life on return to South Sudan.

It is important to highlight the importance of the embodied aspects of identity formation and belonging. As well as performances and the cultural knowledge needed to participate in performances, the physical and emotional embodied reactions of participants to their performances is a foundational part of feeling like a SACA member and, through association, of feeling Acholi. Through the very act of participation in cultural performance, SSA gain a sense of identity and belonging which they feel but may be unable to articulate.

William always described core SACA members as those who "*give themselves up*." At first I thought he only meant giving of their time and effort to help the group. After engaging in my first performance with SACA, however, it suddenly struck me that my understanding of William's repeated statements was too disembodied. William also meant giving themselves up to the moment of the performance and to the physical and emotional affects which come from performance. Cultural performances' success in creating a sense of Acholi identity, group membership, and a wider sense of belonging actually come from the physical acts involved in those performances. My first practice certainly gave me a sense of membership.

The visceral nature of members' participation within SACA performances should not be understated. I suggest many group members experience belonging (to their cultural and ethnic backgrounds as well as to the group itself) through their embodied and emotional performative actions. Indeed, the true extent of the viscerality on display in these performances as well as in performers' responses to them leads me to suggest that performances are not so much for any audience as they are for performers themselves. What I mean is that, in the creation and meaningful reproduction of the actions and movements which comprise a performance, a performer is physically and emotionally positioning themselves as members of a particular category of person, in this case, SSA. A sense of group membership and belonging is therefore created by the individual action as much as the social field within which it is enacted.

To follow this point out, I also suggest that the individual practice of Acholi culture is just as significant as social practice in creating a sense of membership and belonging within the Acholi category. This definitely seems the case for Bernice. Often during our meetings Bernice would break into impromptu songs or even dances, sometimes only for a few seconds at a time. I was always the only person present during these occasions, and I always felt these interludes were used as a mnemonic aid or for re-focusing her self-identification. Certainly, Bernice usually had the look of awakening from a dream when she had finished.

The origins and aims of the Sudanese Acholi Cultural Association

The original concept of a performance group came from a conversation among women discussing the boredom of life in resettlement. Without jobs or money their everyday lives were spent indoors, at home. There was little to break the monotony. Speaking of this boredom, Diana said:

> DIANA: The idea, the group, it was a conversation […] We were just sitting there and we said: 'We are so bored right now! And back home we used to have some dancing, and culturals, and stuff like that. But right now we are really bored!' And then [we] said: 'Why can't we form a group? And dance?' And we said, 'How can we do it? And then who and what is needed?' And that is where the conversation started […] And we said 'Ok. Let's give it a try!'

Boredom can permeate and submerge all other aspects of everyday existence in resettlement (Kushner & Knox 1999: 412; Newbury 2005: 279). As Kushner & Knox note, a common theme of resettlement is the deadening boredom which comes from a lack of opportunities, resources, and interpersonal interaction. Although lacking from almost all the resettlement literature, themes of boredom occurred frequently during my fieldwork. For example, almost every time I met Bernice she would say she had nothing to do except go to church and attend rehabilitation classes at the local swimming pool.[24] Even then, the debilitating effects of her back and leg complaints sometimes forced her to miss these activities.

In Figure One (pg 70, below) I reproduce SACA's charter exactly as they presented it to me. This charter sets out the group's aims and commitments and introduces themes that recurred in

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[24] The role that local churches, religious groups, and church-based community organisations play in helping to create positive resettlement experiences for refugees in NZ and other refugee-receiving countries should not be underestimated Abelhardy 2008: 61). Indeed, these probably form some of the most positive experiences that Acholi in NZ have of resettlement. They certainly provide most community members with their best chance to consistently meet and interact with other members of NZ society outside their own ethnic community. One of the more unfortunate aspects of my research experience is that I did not fully understand nor did my original research plan allow me to investigate the true extent which religion plays in the Acholi resettlement experience until it was too late.

discussions I had with individual members. SACA's charter illustrates some of the key ways in which group members conceptualise their place in the world, their origins, and their identities. SACA is explicit in defining member's affiliations to both a national (South Sudanese) and an ethnic (Acholi) identity. Importantly, both these prioritise a spatial mode of identification, with the ethnic identifier 'Acholi' being specifically linked to location.

After much debate, I chose not to edit SACA's charter as the text itself helps show two important aspects of SSA's resettlement experiences. First, it highlights the everyday realities of one of the most problematic aspects of resettlement: English language competency. When asked, Acholi reiterate the difficulties they have with English, especially with reading and writing, and particularly in finding and keeping employment. Second, the main reason I present the agenda in the form I do is to exhibit the obvious abilities of the group in planning, organising, and clarifying their goals. SACA members have been able to construct an articulate, comprehensible, and focused charter many organisations would be proud of.

SACA's charter clearly details some of the specific physical, embodied, and performative acts through which SACA construct and maintain a functional and viable community of belonging. Singing songs, performing dances, telling stories: SACA have purposely listed performative cultural traits allowing membership in the Acholi community to be expressed and determined. These performative aspects of culture are important for the everyday activities of the group, as well as the role it plays developing and maintaining a specifically Acholi community in NZ. Cultural performances are used to create embodied identities of membership and belonging as Acholi. They are also a means of community formation, generating feelings of communitas through shared participation in ritual activity (Turner 1968, 1988a, 1988b). Further, by linking performance and culture to ethnicity, performance also becomes a marker of ethnic identity and belonging in a specifically Barthian sense (1969).

Figure One: Charter of the Sudanese Acholi Cultural Association

SACA's performative activities are, I suggest, attempts by members at regaining a sense of belonging similar to that Jackson (1995) calls "being-at-home-in-the-world." For SACA,

belonging is tied to culturally determined group membership and grounded in the performance of customary Acholi cultural practices. It is a form of belonging learned, produced, and demonstrated through performance. Further, this is a dialectical form of specifically (but not uniquely) cultural belonging: a practitioner of Acholi culture expresses and reinforces their Acholi identity at the same time as they publicly confirm their membership within an explicitly Acholi social grouping. I suggest this is why cultural performance is so important to core members. Through learning, teaching, and performing, members' belonging is given expression.

The public performance of Acholi culture

Performances provide a form of education and entertainment for community members, giving them knowledge about the country, culture, and people to which they trace their roots, and are therefore fundamental to SACA's roles in the SSA community in NZ. At the same time, performances provide members with an activity to break up the monotony of everyday life. This is not all SACA offers SSA in NZ. By presenting a performative and artistic experience, SACA physically shows its members who and what the Acholi people are: what clothes they wear, how they speak, what dances they do, how they do them. They physically manifest Acholi culture and are simultaneously productive of an embodied and a knowledge-based ethnic identity.

SACA engaged in several public performances over the course of my research. All these performances included the presentation of between one and three traditional Acholi songs and dances. The principal dances performed were the *Otoli* (warrior dance) and the *Larakaraka* (courtship dance),[25] considered among the most important Acholi dances (Acholi Reunion 2008; Acholi Sensation 2011; Kaiser 2006b). As the different elements which comprise an Acholi

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[25] As Kaiser (2006b: 188) notes, however, these and other Acholi dances are not really separate dances per se but rather *styles* or ideal-types of a particularly-themed dance.

performance are so important to the production of Acholi identities, by briefly describing SACA performances I illustrate how Acholi identities are formed and expressed.

Critically, performances provide those without experience of life in South Sudan a tangible means of identifying themselves and others as Acholi. As Abelhardy (2008) and Lewis (201) highlight, to portray 'authentic' culture demands the physical and material elements that together make up artistic performance: the costumes and instruments as well as the activities themselves. The group's core members recognise the importance of this physical manifestation of Acholi culture. They recognise it is difficult to create a coherent sense of belonging without easy reference to something tangible. SACA believes these physical elements are particularly important for children because *"They can see and know that: "Oh! This is Acholi people and Acholi culture and this is what they do."*

SACA performers can be divided into three categories of people: core adult members, occasional adult members, and children. The majority of the group's core members are South Sudanese born adults who define themselves as Acholi either by birth or through marriage into a patrilineally-defined Acholi family group. Due to differences in activity levels, work schedules, and event attendance, it is difficult to assess member numbers. Attendance is usually around 20 people of both genders and varying ages. The highest attendance I witnessed (the March 2011 South Sudanese Referendum Party) involved nearly 40 performers.[26] A noticeable aspect of membership is that core members are usually either: 1) unmarried Acholi men without children, or 2) South Sudanese women who have children identifiable as Acholi and born outside Sudan.[27] There are exceptions to these generalisations. For example, Diana is SSA and

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[26] This is a significant number given the size of the Acholi community in NZ. If my estimation of a total NZ population of around 70 is correct, this equates to half the community actively performing Acholi culture at this event.

[27] By this I mean that the women may be from any ethnicity but, through their marriages to Acholi men, their children are therefore Acholi and they themselves become somewhat incorporated into the Acholi ethnic group.

has two sons with her Kuku husband. Diana says her husband and sons are not group members because "*they are all Kuku.*"[28]

Lack of male performers is SACA's largest difficulty and was certainly an issue at almost every performance I observed. Lack of men have meant adaptations to performances which, according to Kaiser (2006b: 190-191), would historically be more strongly gender defined. An example of this is the *Larakaraka* courtship dance, which has very definite male and female roles. Sometimes, to enable the group to perform this dance, women in NZ must take on the roles of men. I witnessed such role crossing at a multicultural community event. Although the performance was well received by the crowd, who said it was "vibrant," "colourful," and "full of energy," group members themselves seemed disappointed. While recognising the audience liked their performance, they seemed deflated by the lack of male performers. Although they recognise the need to adapt performances to fit the constraints of life in NZ, at the same time this adaptation is seen as reducing the cultural value of that performance. This event failed to authentically represent the gender roles of Acholi culture and thus failed to teach the appropriate cultural gender roles to the child performers, an omission particularly problematic in such a strongly gender differentiated society.

SACA performances are always accompanied by instruments: a large drum (*bul*) held between the knees and hit with a short stick; a hand-held half-drum made from the dried shell of a calabash (*awal*) and played, as were those Kaiser (2006b: 194) observed in Kiryandongo, with a fistful of bicycle spokes held together with electricians tape; and a standard hand-held sports whistle used to direct dancers and alert them to changes in direction or timing. SACA's *bul* is carved out of Ugandan wood, with figures of dancing bee-hive haired women running across its head and neck, and is covered with a black and white marbled goat skin decaying from overuse. I was told that the *bul* is the most important instrument: "*It is the voice of the dance.*" It keeps the rhythm and maintains the beat. The drum is also that instrument which the singing,

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[28] Married men do not belong to the group, nor have I ever seen any participate in any of the group's performances, including the South Sudanese Referendum Party.

dancing, and other instruments seem to play off. At all the performances I witnessed, the eldest woman played the *bul*.

The *awal* provides a distinctive staccato percussion, somewhat like maracas, and is usually played by men. Some *awal* are, unfortunately, in a poor state of repair - left behind a parked car by a child, they are now sewn together with twine. Both were imported from Uganda and are not easily replaced. Beyond the obvious expense and difficulty in getting these items shipped from Africa, Kaiser (2006b: 188) highlights that all Acholi instruments must go through a blessing and initiation ritual before they can be publicly used. Therefore, even though the *bul* in particular could probably be easily substituted for a drum sold in one of several African specialty stores in NZ, to do so would reduce the cultural authenticity of a performance.

When performing, men always wear shirts with trousers while women are always dressed in white tops and handmade blue or green double-pleated skirts very similar to netball skirts (cf. Kaiser 2006b: 195). Although the elder women always wore t-shirts or polo shirts, teenage girls often wore camisoles short enough to reveal their midriff. This concurs with the many Ugandan-made DVDs of Acholi dances that group members delighted in showing me anytime I visited their houses, as well as with Kaiser's (2006b: 194-195) observations from Kiryandongo refugee camp in Uganda.

The final elements comprising SACA performances are spears, shields, anklets and headgear. The anklets and headgear are reminiscent of styles common throughout South Sudan and Uganda but are made in NZ from readily available materials. Male head dresses are made from peacock rather than the customary ostrich feathers. Women also wear feathers, gull or blackbird, and often dyed red. Anklets are small bells handmade from metal objects such as coins and suspended from leather or plastic loops. Another percussive instrument, they are extremely effective due to the constant stamping of feet. Although sometimes worn by the men, shoes are not worn by the women as *"they just get in the way."*

Shields and spears have special ritualistic importance: "*Because you cannot dance the Otoli [war dance] without a spear*!" the group said in unison, as if talking to a particularly ignorant

child in response to what must have seemed like one of my more pointless questions. Although seldom physically used, they are always symbolically represented, even if only through positioning ones hands and arms as if holding the necessary equipment.

I only ever saw the group physically use shields and spears once, at the South Sudanese Referendum Party. The significance of 'proper' shields and spears at this event should not be understated. This was an important event for the South Sudanese community in NZ, a party at which all South Sudanese ethnicities gathered together to celebrate the end of war and their new country. Most importantly for SACA members, and unlike their usual performances at multinational refugee community events, the South Sudanese Referendum Party was explicitly South Sudanese in focus. They were on show in front of hundreds of other South Sudanese at an event featuring performances from the cultural groups of other South Sudanese ethnic groups, such as the Nuer.[29] For a group whose charter (see Figure One, page 70) explicitly states "*Their [the Acholi's] Culture value [is] known to be the best in Sudan,*" this was an event at which to stand out. It was not enough to symbolically represent their spears and their shields: spears were found, shields were made.

Most significantly, and unlike the performance I described earlier in this section, at the South Sudanese Referendum Party the Acholi community put forward almost a dozen male performers. Further, the Acholi went to great lengths to ensure that they would stand out as a separate and distinct entity within the boundaries of the wider South Sudanese community. The participation of usually peripheral group members made sure that the greater South Sudanese community knew the ethnically Acholi identities of the performers. As mentioned earlier, the descriptive place-oriented components of the ethnic identifier 'Acholi' are particularly explicit in the group's charter. I suggest here that those members of the SSA community in NZ who participate in and belong to SACA privilege their belonging to their Acholi ethnic identity over a 'naturalised' South Sudan. For SACA members that day, not only was it

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[29] One of the group privately told me that the Nuer *"stole the idea [of having a cultural group] from us anyway"*.

extremely important to be categorically or socially Acholi, it was perhaps even more important to be *culturally* Acholi.

In the act of publicly performing their Acholi identities and cultural practices, at the South Sudanese Referendum party SACA members publicly displayed their membership in two related and distinct social categories. They were simultaneously both South Sudanese and Acholi. This performance therefore worked to create and publicly draw attention to performers' membership in two distinct and interrelated groups of belonging at the same time. Importantly, however, this performance was one which also simultaneously included and excluded members of the audience from those same categories, thus creating a hierarchy of belonging. Although SACA celebrated their shared South Sudanese national identity with the audience, the form of group belonging they performed and thus prioritised was that of being Acholi. Performance therefore emphasised Acholi culture as a means of ethnic distinction at the same time as it operated to highlight their belonging within a wider national group.

SACA performance and education

Being culturally Acholi does not just happen. SACA members are adamant that the intersecting roles of cultural knowledge, performance, and education are vital to creating and maintaining culturally identifiable Acholi people. One must learn to become Acholi and then demonstrate their knowledge through performing that identity. A person may be born Acholi and yet not be able to act Acholi. Conversely, some of the group's ethnically non-Acholi women have become culturally Acholi through gaining performative knowledge of Acholi cultural practices. This is an example of a prioritisation of performative ethnicity linked to a cultural means of belonging. I suggest this is a major reason Acholi parents in NZ are so worried by the process they call 'Westernisation': without knowledge of Acholi culture, their children will be unable to identify with their Acholi ethnicity.

A refrain similar to 'being Acholi requires acting Acholi and engaging in Acholi cultural practices' occurred frequently throughout my fieldwork. This is where a performance group comes in. Explicit knowledge of Acholi history and cultural practices are essential for grounding Acholi identities, particularly in the group's children. For example, Diana told me:

> *DIANA: For us, without forming this group, the children and the young people born here will not know anything about their history. So that is what we are doing. And now, the attempt we make, so far the children are already able to know who we are. Because they are able to try some things and they can see and know that: "Oh! This is Acholi people and Acholi culture and this is what they do." And so that is what really makes them what they are, they know their song. They know they can tell themselves from others, because they know the Acholi song and dance.*

Importantly, as Diana's quote indicates, being and knowing are two separate aspects of identity. Someone can be born a particular type of person, but knowing how to distinguish one's self and others takes knowledge of the cultural things which together comprise and allow expression of that identity. SSA children in NZ see pictures of Acholi in Africa and, through the knowledge gained from the education provided by SACA, know those people are Acholi. Yet, as Diana demonstrates, in itself this is not enough. They need to "*know their song.*" That is, if they are real Acholi they also need to know how to participate in Acholi cultural life.

This is why cultural performances are so important for SSA in NZ. Moreover, this is why a cultural performance group is so important: dances are connected to songs which tell about historical events. Cultural performances and education go hand-in-hand. Because SACA members explicitly conceptualise children's cultural education through performance, performance and education are one and the same thing. Bernice explained the background of the group's dances, saying:

> *BERNICE: In our culture, all the dances they are telling a story, so they are very interesting. It is not just dancing, it is telling stories. That is why there are a lot of*

song in Acholi. Because all the song have meaning. They all have meaning […]
And that is because everything that happen they have a song for it. And then in
the future, if they start singing, they will know 'Ok. This happen in this year, this
happen in this place.'

RYAN: And that is why the dancing is so important? Because all the dances are to
songs and all the songs have meaning. Or one reason why?

BERNICE: Yes, yes. It is a really like giving the young ones to know what happen.

RYAN: Like a form of education?

BERNICE: Yes. Yes, because there was no writing and things. And if you can
remember all those song, then you can remember when all those thing happen,
and what happen […] If the song is being sung, because you know the meaning of
song, you can feel it in your heart.

Kaiser (2006b: 189) notes similar uses of performative cultural practices during her fieldwork with Acholi refugees in Kiryandongo refugee camp. The camp-based Acholi Kaiser worked with regularly used singing and dancing as means of entertainment and cultural transmission. Beyond this, however, Kaiser found Acholi in Kiryandongo used performance to reproduce and educate camp residents in a form of mythico-history (Malkki 1995a) which simultaneously told stories and morally evaluated people and events. Kaiser argues that the use of performance as a simultaneous means of cultural transmission and moral education is a historically important part of the socialisation and acculturation of Acholi children. It is therefore unsurprising that Acholi in NZ should use cultural performances for similar purposes.

When speaking about the group's aims, SACA members gave a synthetic picture of the resettlement experience and the problems which must be overcome to reproduce Acholi traditions in NZ. They had a definite position on the role SACA's presence and performances play in connecting the community in NZ to their heritage in South Sudan. In what follows, I give

an extended discussion of SACA's conceptualisation of the Acholi resettlement experience and the role they have within the SSA community in NZ:

> *WILLIAM: The group came into existence […] because we thought there are important things to work out […] because we have got a lot of kids born here [or] brought from home when they were little. So they don't know anything about Acholi culture or Acholi people or the origin of Acholi people. We thought, while being in NZ, because it's a different country, so we thought not to lose our background completely, it is important to keep the little ones know what is taking place exactly [...] So that is the most important part […] Now the little ones who doesn't know anything completely from that period, at least today, at least they have got some of that stuff, and knew more about where they came from.*

> *BERNICE: Yes, because we really want them to learn but they are not really interested in it. We are having to forcing them to dance. Yes, they are not interested.*

Adult's fears of children's 'Westernisation' and loss of their identities and culture are common among refugee-background and migrant communities around the world (Kushner & Knox 1999: 407). One Acholi couple I spoke with have three children. Two of these children were born in NZ while their eldest daughter was born in Kakuma refugee camp. A similar situation occurs for virtually all other group members.[30] This couple are worried that, because their children were born in exile, they will never develop any historical or cultural identification with South Sudan. They fear their children are becoming 'Westernised,' just as they recognise that they too are becoming 'Westernised' through increasing acclimatisation to a NZ way of life. In this, as in many difficulties with resettlement, it seems children are made representative of the problems

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[30] As far as I can tell, all the group members' children were born in refugee camps or resettlement with the exception of one woman. This woman seems to be the exception purely because she is a grandmother and the eldest group member. Although all her own children were born in South Sudan, her grandchildren were all born outside the country.

faced by the community as a whole. I asked why children are not interested in their culture. Bernice replied:

> *BERNICE: Um, I think that now they just adopt the culture, the Western culture. Because the way that we dress for the song and dance is very different and things like that. They are really not interested, I don't know why!*

> *WILLIAM: They do not want to just give enough to work it out. Only some few of us who are trying to put this life together. Because, to make us good people within this society. And if I am not exercising my culture, which means I have got nothing to do, in the near future the whole system will break down. Which meant that, if I put it [cultural education] away, the [young] generation will never exist anymore.*

SACA members feel responsible for instructing the community's children. Even William, who has no children, feels this obligation. Part of this responsibility is to ensure children learn the knowledge and skills to allow their return to South Sudan. This replicates the findings of Kababe (2010: 17) among Ethiopian refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. Kabebe notes that Ethiopian parents feel an obligation to teach their children the language and culture of their ethnic homeland, hoping not only to provide them with the skills they need to return to Ethiopia, but also reinforcing their identities as Ethiopians in London (cf. McSpadden & Moussa 1992). Further, the provision of knowledge about the Acholi language as an important component of this educational responsibility:

> *RYAN: Well, just going back to what you were saying, that it is important for the children to know where they come from, what are the most important things for the children to know? Is the language or the history or what?*

> *WILLIAM: Yes, well, that is a pretty good question. Now in a different place […] if you come from a background where you speak only English, then no matter what happens you are not going to forget English completely, even if you are going in some other different direction, for example the Sudan. You will never forget that,*

because that is your origin, that is a part of your life already. The most important part of it. Which is why we are teaching our kids in this stage [...] We just thought that it is very important to give them a direct life with at least some of our languages. Because it is very important. And most of the kids does not want to put themselves into that, but if they were to go home, what would happen? For example, if they could not communicate with their elders who are back home there? Which meant that we did not give them that opportunity to learn! And we are not going to do that. They are part of us, so we should take them to that state where we came from. Yes. So that is the most important part of that, the kids learning our own dialect, our own language. That is part of it, yes.

Linguistic knowledge is considered particularly vital for children's abilities to identify with other aspects of Acholi culture, both while in NZ and in the event of their return to South Sudan. As such, Acholi language holds a privileged place within the SSA diasporic consciousness, just as the 'home' language does for many diasporic communities (Abelhardy 2008: 54; Kabebe 2010). As with other refugee communities in the world, Acholi in NZ worry that without linguistic competency their children will be "*out of place*" on return to South Sudan (Malkki 1995a). This is a constant fear for a community who see resettlement demanding partial social and cultural assimilation from their children:

RYAN: So, a lot of the dancing and stuff here. Is any of it to do with ideas of wanting to teach the children their background, their culture? Because I very strongly get the idea that it is.

DIANA: Yes, we really want to teach them. We want to teach them to pick up the stuff. The young people coming through, they can't learn the words. Because these young people were born outside Sudan, and they can't. They were just born on the way, or in the settlement in the refugees camp. And others were born here. And so if they didn't pick it right now, they won't be able to do it.

BERNICE: Yes, because our language and our culture is important to us. It is important because it is important for our children. They need to know their language, their culture, their history. Even now, if we go back and we have been speaking our language here, it will be hard for us. It is hard to understand them [in South Sudan]. So we need to teach our children so that they can understand. So that they can go back and not feel different or out of place.

The importance which SACA places upon teaching their children echoes other refugee-background groups around the world (Abelhardy 2008; Al-Ali & Koser 2001a, 2001b; Kabebe 2010). According to Fanjoy (2011), refugee-background communities prioritise children's cultural education because they are considered the community's future and their primary means of maintaining their cultural continuity. This is somewhat paradoxical, Fanjoy argues, as the possibility of even partial assimilation means children are therefore also the site of a community's greatest fears.

DIANA: We wanted to really let them know everything, if they ever went home they shouldn't be green. They should know everything. Because, by the time we started [SACA], we knew that one day it will be alright at home. There will be peace, and if the children choose to go back there, they should know something. And not only that, they are here as children, and we are here, and we are unique. And ourselves, we cannot be totally integrated. Still that uniqueness will remain. So we can always say, 'I am from this place!' And if they say, 'So you are from this place, what do you know about the place?' And then you have to give them something, culturally, about yourself. And it is an identity, we just wanted to make an identity for the children as long as they remain here. Because if you go home, and say 'I am an Acholi!' When you can show it? Because speaking is not enough, because anyone can learn how to speak, you have to get into the culture of it!

As Diana indicates, some of the strongest reasons SACA wants to educate the SSA community's children in their customary cultural practices is their hope those children will one day

repatriate. If they should, they need to know how to act and participate in the sociocultural life of that country. The rather idealised notion of return underpinning their diasporic consciousness therefore has a very real and practical element to how it structures and determines SACA's actions.

There are at least two interconnected reasons why SACA hopes their children will return to South Sudan. Firstly, as with many refugee groups, resettlement is considered temporary: either they or their children will return to South Sudan when it is safe to do so (Long & Oxfeld 2004: 02). Secondly, adult Acholi maintain an active place-oriented identity, whereby culture and belonging are explicitly tied to place and form a primary means of social identification. The discursive and imaginative constructions of ideals of return are common throughout the diasporic discourses of different refugee groups around the world (Brah 1996; Carruthers 2009). In the next chapter I analyse SSA ideas about their children's repatriation to South Sudan, positioning these within a broader South Sudanese community discourse of return.

Conclusion: Performance, belonging, and the resettlement experience

Although SACA specialise in the performance of Acholi dances, that is not all they do. They also sing, write poetry and tell stories. Through the preservation and revitalisation of these customary Acholi sociocultural forms, SACA assists Acholi in NZ come to terms with the uncertainty of resettlement. They also help members of the SSA community develop a sense of belonging through membership in an ethnically and culturally defined social group. Moreover, the integration of education and performance functions to create and maintain specifically Acholi identities as well as group membership based in both social and cultural belonging. At the same time, these performative actions communicate that ethno-cultural heritage to members of the South Sudanese community in NZ.

Several points can be gleaned from the SACA's charter and actions. Firstly, SACA strongly place the locus for individual and group identification on a place-based ethno-national identity of

SSA. The creation of a 'Sudanese Acholi' defined performance group allows the formation and performance of group-based belonging within a particular Acholi ethnic group at the same time that this is positioned alongside a South Sudanese national belonging. However, although SACA is a group which values their culture, heritage and identification as both Acholi and South Sudanese, the phrasing and emphasis in SACA's charter and performances suggests Acholi identities take priority over their South Sudanese equivalents. Nowhere was this more obvious than at the South Sudanese Referendum party. Although always introduced and referred to as South Sudanese at other events I observed, in this instance SACA were first and foremost Acholi. As attested to by the effort they put into their performance at that event, they certainly did not distance themselves from the South Sudanese identity or community of belonging. They did, however, make a strong public statement of the hierarchy of belonging they felt. Being (and thus belonging to) Acholi was more significant than being South Sudanese.

SACA make use of partially-circumscribed and essentialised cultural traits (such as song and dance) as a means of delineating the similarities and differences between themselves and other social groups. This is an example of ethnic boundary maintenance in the Barthian sense (Barth 1969). Linked to this ethnic boundary maintenance is the categorisation of self and other through the creation and reproduction of specific requirements for group membership. It therefore shows simultaneous examples of primordial, instrumental, performative and constructivist ethnic identification (Nagel 1994), problematising simplistic or singular understandings of ethnic identity formation and boundary maintenance.

A noteworthy focus in SACA's charter and activities is their emphasis upon specifically performative aspects of culture. Culture is an instrumental means of identity construction that, when expressed through collective performative action acts as a means for group members to establish a performative basis for their senses of belonging. Performance therefore acts to identify belonging inwardly, on the basis of individual attributions of their belonging to or membership within a particular sociocultural unit, and outwardly, on the basis of the public demonstration of their membership with a particular sociocultural unit through the reproduction of the customary practices associated with that unit. One of SACA's more

instrumental functions is the actual physical production and reproduction of Acholi cultural practices. This instrumental element should not be forgotten, as without obvious physical, material, and embodied mnemonic aids, it could be extremely difficult to construct or maintain viable Acholi-oriented subjectivities, especially for those who have no personal experience of life in South Sudan.

The visible and communal aspects of performances also function as social expressions of participants' identities. Acholi living in NZ appreciate Acholi culture for its heritage and traditions as well as a means of ethnic distinction. More significantly, I suggest, cultural performances are valued for the ways in which they act as a confirmation of being part of a group of belonging and through which people can build and maintain networks which provide them with much needed social support. In this way, a person is not Acholi simply through being a categorical Acholi. Rather, that person must indicate their Acholi group membership through the performance of Acholi cultural practices. As Diana noted, it is not enough to say they are part of the group. Instead, they "*have to give them something, culturally […] you have to get into the culture of it!*"

What brings culture, performance, identity, and belonging together is the value placed upon a culturally-defined Acholi ethnic heritage which can be created, taught, maintained and defined through cultural performance. I suggest performative culture is viewed as an important element in the construction of children's identities as SSA as well as vital for maintaining adults' own identities. Through the performance of discrete and named aspects of Acholi culture SACA members identify with and become identifiable as Acholi.

Chapter Five

"So, finally, he was frustrated, so he go back home":

Experiences of resettlement, discourses of return

WILLIAM: That part of you where you have been born, that is part of you. That background, where you have been born, where you belong. You just can't forget it. You remember it every day. At the moment you grow up every day thinking: "I'm from somewhere. I'm from somewhere." You just tell your generation, every single day, "ah, kids! I am not from here! I am from over there! I belong to somewhere else. Or my parents are somewhere, my grandparents, my ancestors […] It is very important to teach them that they need to visit and experience the life that their ancestors did"

Introduction

Ideals of return to South Sudan play an important role in SSA's experiences of resettlement in NZ. Ideas of return underlie many of the practices and values of the SSA community in NZ, and I have briefly highlighted different community members' thinking about return in the preceding chapters. For example, while discussing the role of SACA in SSA experiences of belonging in Chapter Four, I showed the importance of a discourse about return to South Sudan and linked this to the specific nature of SACA's aims and actions. Likewise, I noted in Chapter Three that the possibility of return to South Sudan was an important reason that SSA wished to maintain their customary marriage practices and highlighted that Alfred made his first brideprice instalment because of difficulties returning to South Sudan if he did not.

Collective and individual discourses and imaginings of future return to the place of origin are common among diasporic refugee communities. To have discovered the presence of this discourse among the SSA community in NZ is therefore not surprising. What is interesting, however, is how this discourse gained in importance and gathered momentum over the duration of my fieldwork. My fieldwork occurred during a unique time for South Sudanese, and discourses highlighting the benefits of repatriation occurred frequently over two crucial periods: the first just after the South Sudanese referendum in February 2011, the other following Diana's temporary return at the same time as South Sudan's independence in July and August 2011. A discourse which initially resembled the classic diasporic imagination of return to a time and place before exile became, quite rapidly, a widely held and oft-repeated truism that not only was repatriation actually physically possible, but that repatriation would bring with it that sense of belonging that William says can only come from "*being in the place you belong*".

Therefore, in this chapter I demonstrate how the SSA community's discourses on the possibility of return advance repatriation to South Sudan as a positive alternative to resettlement and establish how this discourse emerges from the resettlement experiences of South Sudanese in NZ. Further, I show how a discourse which promotes return allow those who perceive resettlement as marginalising to position their experiences within an imagined repatriation to South Sudan. In doing so, I present the third element of my larger thesis argument on the intersection between SSA individuals' resettlement experiences in NZ and how these affect their sense of belonging. I first demonstrate that the construction and reproduction of this discourse is linked to individuals' experiences of resettlement in NZ. Secondly, I show this discourse to be connected to South Sudanese understandings of belonging specifically framed as a 'naturally' place-oriented group membership.

Following Long and Oxfeld's (2003) suggestion that physical and imaginative practices of return migration must be analysed as situated within specific individual's particular perceptions and experiences, in this chapter I draw on interview data from three members of the SSA community to provide an overview of Acholi adults' return discourses. In doing so, I show how various Acholi speak about their own and other community member's transnational return

practices and use these to examine the connections between individual senses of belonging in NZ, discourses regarding permanent future return to South Sudan, and perceptions and experiences of refugee background resettlement.

Adult community members' emphasis on the successful preservation of their culture, heritage, and identities in NZ highlight individuals' need to retain a functional knowledge of their customary cultural practices if they wish to return to South Sudan. Not all South Sudanese in NZ wish to return, however. Therefore, vital to an analysis of the dominant discourse of return is the question of why some community members may not be planning repatriation. Investigation of these narratives reveals both the heterogeneous nature of refugee's experiences generally and the SSA community in NZ specifically, as well as the pragmatic everyday concerns which individuals must deal with before return can be contemplated.

The South Sudanese community's dominant return discourse states that for those who do return to South Sudan, the social and economic rewards are substantial. In particular, the promise of easily and quickly gaining employment alongside the possibility of a relatively peaceful existence close to friends and family makes return to South Sudan seem almost utopian compared with the lack of social connections and sense of belonging experienced in NZ. For the community members who openly spoke to me about their ideal return scenario, the most important aspect of the dominant return discourse was this promise of immediate, high-status, and well-paid employment. The promise of better employment was particularly attractive for community members such as Alfred and Diana who believed the skills they gained in resettlement could not only help South Sudan's development but would assure them suitable employment on their repatriation.

Alongside better employment, the dominant return discourse reminds potential returnees that, unlike the difficulties they sometimes have coming to terms with the NZ way of life, they already have an in-depth knowledge of the social and cultural systems of South Sudan. Returnees can combine this knowledge with their kinship and other social networks to assist them in reintegration into South Sudanese society. Moreover, in the dominant return discourse, returnees can again live near friends and family they have not seen for many years.

Close proximity to these networks will help create a sense of being in a place of belonging. Underlying all the separate components of the dominant return discourse is an implicit assumption that life in South Sudan brings with it a consistent and non-contradictory sense of belonging.

Of the three interviewees whose return discourses I discuss in this chapter, only Diana has returned to South Sudan since becoming a refugee. Her return narrative provides an important background to my argument. Importantly, apart from the first of Diana's interviews, all other quotes in this chapter took place after Diana was back in NZ in August 2011. Although she is aware her repatriation is virtually impossible, Diana hopes her children will repatriate in the future.

Alfred has not yet returned to South Sudan, although he is certain he and his family will repatriate in the future. Of the three interviewees I discuss here, not only is Alfred the most committed to maintaining and reproducing the dominant discourse of return, he also provides the most complete example of this discourse: that of a man I call 'Ghali'. Ghali's story not only provides a detailed account of the dominant return discourse, it demonstrates how this discourse is based upon difficulties experienced in resettlement and shows the importance of these experiences to problems in developing a sense of belonging in NZ.

Bernice is the final interviewee I present. Bernice's life has been one of continuing marginality: as a widow in South Sudan; abandoned by her brother-in-law in Kakuma; her social and economic marginalisation in NZ. The circumstances of Bernice's life as a refugee have meant she has not and cannot return to South Sudan. Beyond the impossibility of repatriation, however, Bernice says that even if given the chance she would not take the opportunity. Bernice believes NZ will be the location in which she will spend the rest of her life.

Using these three interviewees, I analyse the process of discursive creation of return among the South Sudanese community in NZ, the reasons behind the reproduction of this return discourse, and provide a specific example of the discursive form under discussion. I argue that the South Sudanese return discourse is strongly associated with a broader community project of

discursively and imaginatively constructing the viability of future life in South Sudan. Specifically, I demonstrate how the maintenance of discourses and ideals of repatriation allow Acholi in NZ to live with the everyday structural constraints they face in resettlement. Finally, I link SSA discourses of return with resettlement experiences, processes of discursive construction, and negotiations of belonging I explore further in the concluding chapter.

Diana's return: A story of success

I first realised the importance of return discourses during my second interview with Diana. It was the end of May 2011, and the Republic of South Sudan was six weeks from becoming the world's newest country. People previously pessimistic about the CPA now became animated about South Sudan's potential. Alfred, who said in March that concerns with the region's safety meant he would not be going back for many years, began planning a trip. Diana went one better: she had not only planned her trip, she had purchased flights to return in July.

Diana suffers from heart disease and breast cancer. In early 2011 she entered remission. Her renewed health and the hope which came with it finally convinced Diana to make the arduous journey to reconnect with her family and come to terms with her past. She discussed her plans with her doctors and it took a great deal of persuasion to gain their approval. In the end, they gave her one month away from her life-saving drug treatment programme. The tickets Diana purchased were for one month exactly: she would be away the longest possible time her doctors would allow.

Undertaking this trip was not an easy decision. It cost Diana over NZ$ 2000 and three days travel in each direction from Wellington through Sydney, Bangkok, and Nairobi to Juba, South Sudan's capital city. For a family who had to raise two growing boys and pay Diana's medical expenses on two part-time wages, this journey cost a significant portion of Diana's time as well as her family's disposable income. Despite this, Diana felt the time was right to go: there was

finally *"a kind of peace"* in South Sudan and, by the time she arrived in mid-July, there would be a new country.

The reasons Diana gave for her return were connected to her experiences of conflict in Sudan, as a refugee in Kakuma, and throughout resettlement in NZ. In fact, for Diana, these are entangled, interrelated, and reinforcing. Stories told by individuals like Diana effectively critique the standard depictions of resettlement as fundamentally different to life as a refugee, demonstrating the basic continuity between refugeehood and resettlement and highlighting that both are variants of life forcibly lived outside of the place and culture to which an individual feels a sense of belonging. Speaking of her reasons for travelling back to South Sudan, Diana told me:

> *DIANA: One of the major reason I am going is that I am the only one here [in NZ]. We were ten in the family. The rest are still in Sudan […] And now that there is peace, which is not a complete peace, at least they are now within the reach. And they have all met each other, after the war, except me. So they wanted to see me. And so I should try and go by all means, so that they can see me, so that they can see how I am.*
>
> *And in seeing me, one of it is that I am not being so lucky. The war affected me in other ways. I went through a lot of abduction, with the [LRA] rebels, and hardship. And I also suffered with the health issues. And all this time I was by myself. When this happened and when I had the [heart] surgery, I was here […] And then the worst thing was last year when I was diagnosed with breast cancer, and they thought they would not see me again. But I told them, 'I am ok, I am here, and I will still be there for them.' And they said 'ok.' But they still need to see me.*
>
> *So, since I left the Sudan in 1991, it has been a very long 20 years of almost unimaginable that I would ever see that place again. So I have to now go back and really see what it is like […] that is what I want.*

Before her return, Diana was not expecting to find South Sudan a viable alternative to life in NZ. Despite urban overcrowding and problems associated with a general lack of development, however, Diana's views on the country had changed significantly by the time she arrived back in NZ:

> DIANA: Yeah, the trip was good, and I was really in for a shock. I didn't know it [South Sudan] was that good. There has been a huge change. In other areas there has not been so much change, but [in Juba] has been a huge change, it is starting looking very nice. A whole new town from those times. I didn't expect that much, but I found there has been a big change. It is really very good […] There will be, if nothing happen wrong or something challenging came, then within the next two years there will be something really good and really quick to take shape.

As we sat in the living room of her small and impeccably kept suburban three-bedroom home, we ate, talked, and watched a DVD of African music videos purchased during her visit. She was tired and sluggish, but a smile lit up her face as she showed me her children's presents. Despite the hardships she had endured to return, and despite tolerating on-going frustrations with the country's lack of infrastructure, Diana spoke in a way which made her overall experience sound resoundingly positive. While we spoke Diana showed me many photos of the home and family she had not seen in over 20 years, again revisiting the people, places, and events of her past.

> RYAN: And what do you think about going home again now, because last time we spoke you weren't too sure?

> DIANA: Well, it is just my health about what I am worried. It can't let me. If I am healthy I would just be going. If only I was healthy, we could just be going.

> RYAN: So, how were your family back there anyway?

> DIANA: They are really good.

RYAN: Happy to see you finally, I imagine?

DIANA: Yes. They were very happy to see me. But they were hard to say goodbye, to come back. All my friends and colleagues who are successful, they are better off. They are working, they have jobs and money and the kids can go to school. […]

This is the road to where I got abducted by the LRA […]

RYAN: And how did that make you feel?

DIANA: It was, it was really hard to go back and to walk into my history. Going back to this place was like walking straight back into my history.

RYAN: So, was it, kind of, I don't know. Like a relief?

DIANA: Yes, it was really relieving. It was really a relief, and I was also happy to see that all those places can now all function again.

At the time of this interview, most people put Diana's tiredness down to jetlag. No-one knew she had developed a serious and potentially life-threatening bout of malaria which would require two weeks hospitalisation. Despite this, after her release from hospital Diana was still extremely positive about her return experience: malaria, like landmines, was a necessary if unfortunate risk to reconnect with her family, culture, and her personal experiences, both joyful and traumatic. During the return process, the country had shifted from being a place existing primarily in her imagination, memory, and communications with her family, and had again become somewhere a person could realistically live.

Diana's return was important both for Diana personally and the South Sudanese community in NZ in general. Other South Sudanese already told stories about people's return to South Sudan, although these narratives were often phrased in abstract terms and based on hearsay about anonymous returnees from elsewhere in the diaspora. Through her own return, Diana became a pioneer and exemplar for the South Sudanese community in NZ: she was the first to return to

South Sudan as an independent country. Others used her as point of reference for their own return ideals: her positive assessment of life in South Sudan made a reassuring counterpoint to the struggles and realities of resettlement. Diana's visit helped community members construct a discourse that positions life in South Sudan as a positive alternative to life in NZ.

Alfred: Diana's success and the construction of discourses of return

The success of Diana's visit seemed to have strengthened the potency of the return discourse already under construction among South Sudanese in NZ. For example, alongside the better employment opportunities Alfred expected to encounter on his repatriation, he explicitly mentioned Diana's experiences when speaking of his own planned visit. Most important of all was her positive estimation of South Sudan's development. Given Alfred's use of Diana's evaluation to justify a change of position in his own plans of return, I suggest that comments made by other Acholi in NZ can be understood as part of a broader community process of discursively and imaginatively constructing an idealised repatriation.

This was a unique time to be South Sudanese, both in South Sudan itself and throughout the widespread diaspora. This was their first experience of South Sudanese independence, for which they had borne decades of suffering. The period between the February referendum and South Sudanese independence in July brought new hope to the community in NZ and, coupled with the difficulties of resettlement, already potent discourses highlighting the feasibility of return to South Sudan began gathering extensive dissemination. This momentum increased even further following Diana's successful return and her positive assessment of the country's future. Diana's evaluations, South Sudan's recent independence, and the already widely-disseminated diasporic narratives of returnees gaining well-paid and high status jobs all combined to reinforce marginalising experiences of resettlement in NZ and make permanent return to South Sudan seem increasingly beneficial.

Alfred mentioned several important factors relating to his positive rethinking of return. These were: the positive first-hand evaluation by Diana; wider diasporic narratives about the positive support provided for returnees by the South Sudanese government; and linked to each of these, his optimism of finding suitable employment upon repatriation. For these reasons, Alfred decided to plan his own visit. He would use this trip to rebuild his social networks, particularly with those people who had successfully returned or gained government jobs themselves:

> *ALFRED: You see, now I am really definitely wanting to go back […] I have spent long enough away from my family now. It is really good to go and to spend some time with them.*

> *RYAN: So how long will you go for?*

> *ALFRED: Well, I think at least for two months. Because, really, Diana just touched the base. And most of my friends, they haven't been to university but they just end up finishing high school. But today, if you go home, most of them are like school principals. Some of them are even Directors, of government departments. Even with that small knowledge. Because the government now is looking very really seriously for encouraging people to come back. Especially people from the Western world, with the Western ways and the Western philosophy. Because they see the only way we can develop faster is once there is a lot of contribution from the people who have been living abroad. So you go back, they assess your qualifications and 'boom!' Then they give you a good job straight away!*

Alfred wanted to return to "*check it out, what is happening*" and, importantly for his ideal repatriation scenario, to re-establish connections with his former social networks. Although Alfred would spend some time visiting family, an important function of this first return trip was to rebuild the social networks necessary for his family's repatriation. He also wanted to make his own evaluation of the likelihood of gaining employment and the permanence of the peace process. This echoes the findings of Long and Oxfeld (2004: 12), who note that refugees' first

provisional returns are often to re-establish social ties, kinship networks, and decide the viability of future repatriation. Connecting Alfred's upcoming visit to his discourse about returnees getting *"a good job"*, I asked him if he was planning the visit with the intention of repatriating in the future. The interview continued:

> *RYAN: And so you were saying you were looking to build your networks and stuff, was that looking to go back sometime in the future?*
>
> *ALFRED: Yes. So, I will go there and I will be building up my network and I will come back and do my Masters. I just want to finish my Masters […] And then when I finish, by that time South Sudan maybe will be a bit developed. And so, say, let's put about five years' time from now, that will be a good time for me and that will be a good time to go and so we will think about going back then […] Yes, so, it is just a matter of getting those experience here and take it back home.*

The dominant discourse of return promises returnees well-paid and high-status employment close to friends and family in a situation of relative safety and stability. Alfred's interview shows how the varying aspects of the dominant return discourse are narrated in the everyday stories told about life in resettlement in NZ. There is a potent sense of place-oriented belonging underlying this discourse: for Alfred and Diana, at least, there is still a deep longing to return to South Sudan, despite the value placed on the obvious advantages NZ provides over South Sudan in terms of safety, education, and health and social welfare benefits. No matter the benefits NZ may offer, Alfred still feels *"out of place"* in NZ and *"back home"* in South Sudan. Therefore, if South Sudan were proven to be safe, this factor itself would be enough to rebalance the cost-benefit analysis of the resettlement-repatriation equation. The story Alfred told me about a man called 'Ghali' presents a concrete example of the discourse under discussion.

The discursive construction of return: the example of Ghali

Although stories like Ghali's are ubiquitous among the South Sudanese community in NZ, the protagonists remain nameless in most South Sudanese repatriation narratives. Despite being named, Ghali's story works just as well about general principles of return as it does about the specific experiences of a real individual. Alfred told me the story of Ghali as part of the reasons why he changed his mind on repatriation. Alfred had previously given an abstract description of how returnees were easily finding well-paid high-status employment. The narrative of Ghali provided a concrete and personal example of exactly what he meant. Ghali also provides an example of the type of social network Alfred would seek to mobilise on his return: high-performing and well-educated personal acquaintances employed within the South Sudanese government.

Ghali's return narrative goes like this:

> ALFRED: So, for example, Ghali, he got a law degree from home, and then he came to Kenya. We have been there together for about 5 years, in Kakuma refugees camp. And then from there we came to here in about 2000, and then straight away he spent one year at [a polytechnic institution] to polish his English, and then he went to [a university] to do a Master degree [...] And then after that he went for [another] Masters degree. And then after that he managed to get a job with a Ministry [...] And he worked there for 5 years [...] Then after that he decide to submit his proposal for PhD, the first one didn't went through. The second one didn't work through [...] So, finally, he was frustrated, so he go back home in October last year [2010] [...] And now he is working! He is now a Principal Analyst with the Ministry of Public Service. And so now I am grateful that if we go home we have someone with the good contact, so if we go home he can connect me with someone straight away. So once I get home, I will be able to start building now my contacts and stuff.

Ghali and the other anonymous individuals with stories like his are paradigmatic for the return ideal promulgated by the discourse circulating throughout the South Sudanese community in NZ. Ghali's story works to highlight the benefits of return because it problematises the supposed benefits of remaining in NZ. Ghali is one of the few South Sudanese in NZ to have a tertiary degree before entering life in resettlement. His story tells of someone who worked hard throughout resettlement and yet still felt as if he was failed by the resettlement process. Ghali was frustrated. Indeed, despite attaining language competency, two separate Masters Degrees, and employment with a government ministry, the dominant return discourse highlights how Ghali still felt undervalued in NZ. I suggest, therefore, that Ghali's story relates just as much to problems of belonging as it does to difficulties in resettlement or the benefits of return to South Sudan. Importantly, despite his otherwise successful experience of resettlement in NZ, Ghali did not integrate into NZ. He never developed a sense of belonging.

Because Ghali's story can symbolically apply to all possible returnees, I suggest Ghali provides an "ideal-type" (Wahlbeck 2002) of the narrative through which the return discourse is framed as well as indicating what successful resettlement means for South Sudanese in NZ. Successful resettlement is not just gaining employment or tertiary education, but rather the ability to feel as if one belongs within or is valued by the host society. Therefore, it is not just the potential of getting high level jobs with relatively low levels of education and experience which makes repatriation an attractive option but the perception that returning individuals are also considered valued members of South Sudanese society. This is something which, according to the resettlement stories I was told, is missing from the experiences of most South Sudanese in NZ. The refrain of not being a valued member of society is an important one and underlies many of the components of the return discourse described throughout this chapter.

Ghali is portrayed as someone who attempted to negotiate the intricacies of resettlement but, finding resettlement problematic, successfully engaged in the ideal return scenario. In this scenario, the skills and experiences South Sudanese in NZ gain through the resettlement process become useful tools benefitting not only themselves but the development of South Sudan. Further, it is only through repatriation that the refugee label is truly negated, although, I

suggest, the experience of being a refugee continues indefinitely. A constant refrain throughout the South Sudanese return discourse speaks of the ability to give something back to help with South Sudan's development. This return discourse implies refugees gain skills otherwise unavailable in South Sudan and can therefore offer much to the rebuilding nation.

Bernice's story: Alternate discourses among a heterogeneous community

The constraints of life in NZ and the realities of the situation in South Sudan together assure that not all South Sudanese in NZ who wish to return do. Others simply do not wish to. To some extent this should be expected, as not everyone faces the same day-to-day issues nor do they have the same experiences of NZ, South Sudan, or the flight which made them refugees in the first place. South Sudan's insecurity came up repeatedly in my participants' narratives. Moreover, permanent return is impossible for those who suffer from serious health concerns. For individuals such as Bernice and Diana whose experience of life is necessarily perceived through the lens of healthcare, the benefits of NZ over South Sudan are obvious. Likewise, those with school-aged children are reluctant to encourage their repatriation without gaining some form of NZ education. Furthermore, some have started a new life and family in NZ while others have none remaining in South Sudan.

On top of more practical concerns such as health and insecurity, the dominant discourse favouring return is of no interest to some community members. For some, NZ presents new opportunities or a better quality of life. For others, the historical processes which created South Sudanese refugees also mean that not all members of that community necessarily feel particularly 'at home' in South Sudan or as if they 'belong' with other South Sudanese.

Bernice's story makes an instructive case study of those who do not wish to return. Of all the people I interviewed, Bernice best represents a position of non-conformity to the diasporic discourse promulgating repatriation. When I asked Bernice if she wanted to go back, she hesitantly replied:

BERNICE: Umm, that is a hard question. I am not really quite sure. I don't know. You know, when I was in Kakuma, I said, 'if God didn't give me the resettlement, and there was peace in Sudan, that people should back.' Because there is nowhere else to go.

But, it is my feeling, that these people are, I don't know. There is just something that I don't like it. Especially the fighting. I don't know why. Maybe because of the hardship that I have gone through. I am not quite sure. I don't feel it like going back to my home. I don't know how to explain it. You know, there is something like, people are not really trustworthy. You know what I am meaning? People are really, they are, not like having the love for each other [...]

Like, somebody is thinking about himself or herself more than the other person. And the reason I am saying, is that you can see that land, it doesn't need you to go and fight! Plenty of land to cultivating. Plenty of land not even cultivating! And still they are fighting. Although they say for their right, maybe. Because the Arab was forcing them and their children, not going to learn in university and all those things like that. Of course. I know that is there. But also if there were no Arab people, it is in our self, we are having the problems with our self. So I find it really very hard.

Bernice is explicit in her fears over issues of safety and security, citing her perception that the violence which caused her to flee in the first place is by no means assured of ending with the establishment of an independent country. She is especially concerned with the possibility of future ethno-tribal conflict, particularly how this relates to a South Sudan where power is divided along ethnic lines mirroring those of the civil war.[31] Return therefore offers Bernice little but a continuation of that which made her a refugee originally. She continued:

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[31] Ethno-tribal divisions over how to distribute power and resources within the southern independence forces at times led to the formation of splinter groups which fought each other rather than the Sudanese government forces

BERNICE: And so you can see how they are fighting among themselves [...] I don't know, but I feel there is something wrong with the Sudanese. Because you can see really, even if there is nothing, then they will just start to fight. Because they like fighting! They like it! They will even fight in the market, everywhere. You will not find one day when they are not fighting [...] And if now the Dinka, I am not talking against the Dinka, but if they are to be the President and they did not really work hard to make sure that the people are just like one people. Because if they don't do that, it will be hard for other tribes, yes. Just they will be oppressing other tribes. So, if those things are not taken away from the life of the Sudanese, I don't know. I don't know. I don't trust them.

The attainment of South Sudanese independence cost the lives of millions. Not to be forgotten, however, is what it cost those who fled as refugees: they may have been left with their lives, but the loss of their friends and family, inability to access their land, property and possessions, and the continuing effects of a variety of attacks upon their physical, psychological, and emotional well-being cannot be overstated. Bernice continues to experience the war as an assault upon her trust of other South Sudanese themselves. As she says, the violence she experienced was often southerner against southerner, based in villages and refugee camps far from the war itself, and over insignificant events. Thus, despite independence, the continuing North-South violence in places like Abyei and inter-tribal hostilities over access to resources, places in government, and current and future power-sharing arrangements continue to worry Bernice and other survivors. Further, like other Acholi, Bernice frames her thinking of return around issues of safety and security. However, uniquely among the community (who more commonly spoke of renewed North/South violence), Bernice drew attention to her concerns about outbreaks of ethnic tension within the country. This issue is also common within outsider's reviews of South Sudan's future (Kaiser 2010: 54; Mailer & Poole 2010).

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that they were initially united against. For example, one major internal conflict in August 1991 split the SPLA and pitted a Dinka majority armed group against a Nuer majority group (Hutchinson 1996, 2000; Hutchinson & Jok 2002).

The threat of future inter-ethnic violence seems to have been lost within the more common pro-independence discursive constructions on successful return to South Sudan. The promise of successful repatriation is the promise of a journey from an unfulfilled or meaningless "bare life" in exile (Agamben 1998) to one in which all aspects of the diasporic vision is fulfilled. In this way, repatriation is a utopian vision, importantly predicated on several unproblematised assumptions: that the returnee will have no difficulty finding employment upon their return; that their quality of life will be similar to that they experience in NZ; that development in South Sudan will continue; that their contribution to the development of South Sudan will be valued; that the country will remain relatively free from violence and oppression and will remain committed to equitable and democratic government; and, perhaps most importantly, that through being in their place of origin, they will experience a fundamental and unquestioned sense of belonging. These are significant issues for a country with a long history of widespread oppression.

Alongside an ambiguity regarding the real likelihood of successful return, unknown future security in the region may account for the apparent contradictions among some SSA regarding their statements made about return. An excellent example of this ambiguity can be found among some of Alfred's comments. In his discussion of repatriation, Alfred consistently made a distinction between an ideal he generalises *could* be undertaken by anyone and *should* be undertaken by everyone given the opportunity, and the specific ideas he has for his own family where his children will almost certainly *not* take part in repatriation for at least another ten years.

Although excited by the success stories he has heard about the return of Ghali and other diaspora members, Alfred still exhibits caution in his own approach. His first return will be undertaken alone, his wife and children remaining in NZ. Ostensibly this is because of work and school commitments, but Alfred also mentioned the prohibitive cost as well as the fact that it would simply be *"easier."* I suggest that underneath the confidence and enthusiasm Alfred presents, he may realise that the South Sudanese community's return discourse is highly idealised and that repatriated life may not be as easy as that discourse asserts.

Conclusion

A fundamental component of SSA responses to resettlement has been the community-wide construction and dissemination of a discourse which promotes permanent return to South Sudan. In this discourse, life in South Sudan is promoted as a positive and viable alternative to life in NZ. This narrative is further strengthened by the recurrence of one persistent element: the ubiquitous tale of the success of other returnees in finding employment. The discourse which features this narrative further highlights the exceptional benefits provided to returnees by the skills and experiences they gained through resettlement and positively contrasts the social worth of these skills and experiences in South Sudan with what is felt to be the denial of their value by NZ society.

This discourse gained in salience through a unique historical conjuncture between South Sudanese independence, the positive evaluation of current conditions in South Sudan following Diana's recent return to the country, and the increasing strength and commonality of this return discourse in SSA's everyday interactions and conversations. Through this conjuncture and the continuing power and durability of the dominant return discourse, this discourse has become somewhat hegemonic and self-perpetuating. The utopian view of South Sudanese reality disseminated by this discourse has resulted in a fundamental shift in the SSA community's conceptualisation of both the viability of South Sudan as a place to live and the specifically structured imaginary of the community's diasporic consciousness. Instead of solely existing as an imagination of that return, this reframed consciousness has inescapably been reframed as something eminently achievable. I suggest it is no longer a discourse of diasporic consciousness but, following this important historical moment, is now explicitly a discourse of repatriation.

Significant components of the South Sudanese community's dominant return discourse are the stories about people such as Ghali. By any evaluation, Ghali's resettlement was a successful one. He gained high level education and well paid fulltime employment. His experiences of resettlement, however, are portrayed as much more negative. Despite his successes, he could

not integrate and therefore failed to develop any sense of belonging in NZ. Implicit in this is a generalised sense of community members feeling a sense of not belonging within NZ. I suggest that, more than simply highlighting the benefits of return to South Sudan, the South Sudanese community in NZ reproduce stories like Ghali's to make their own failure at the successful development of belonging seem more acceptable. I also suggest, however, that the South Sudanese community's discursive construction of repatriation is predicated on somewhat idealised notions of belonging and inclusion.

Not all community members necessarily believe or agree with the return discourse which exists within the NZ community. Indeed, individuals' specific problems with repatriation, the possibility of future violence or undemocratic government, and the problematic assumptions which underlie the South Sudanese community's discursive construction, reveal the inherent ambiguities and contradictions of a return discourse which, as mentioned above, is otherwise constructed as a utopian ideal. Moreover, even those community members who seem to believe the dominant return discourse do not entirely ignore the ambiguities between these discursive constructions, the everyday realities of life on the ground in South Sudan, and what may take place upon repatriation.

Some who do wish to return realise they will probably never do so. Various reasons are given. Diana cites health constraints, William, financial. Regina highlights her children's educational opportunities in NZ. William also tells of obligations towards the community in NZ, while Alfred implicitly speaks of poor timing. Whether the reasons given are because of the many benefits that community members gain from their lives in NZ, the constraints under which they determine their lives to be lived in resettlement, or the continuing lack of resources and benefits, and the questionable security situation in South Sudan, all these members of the SSA community hold a rather ambivalent position to life in NZ: they are forced by circumstance into life within a society they cannot fully participate in and thus have no real sense of belonging towards. On the other hand, they are generally unable to return to that place they identify with and feel attached to. I believe it is important to highlight that, despite the many obvious benefits and advantages of living in resettlement in NZ, the durability and power of the return

discourse I have been discussing and the fact that community members still wish to return to South Sudan further emphasises the importance of a specifically place-oriented sense of belonging among SSA.

In the final analysis, it is their agency and their ability to have some control over their lives which are possibly most negatively impacted. Michael Jackson (1998) notes that having some positive subjective evaluation of one's ability to control one's life is the cornerstone of feeling "at home in the world." If this is true, then due to the limitations placed upon their agency in resettlement, those wishing but unable to return may also be those who feel the constraints of the refugee resettlement process most strongly.

Chapter Six

"That is home! And then here, this is also a home":

Belonging and experiences of resettlement.

> *WILLIAM: NZ is the place where I am living at the moment. It is not my home. It is not where I belong. That is my attitude towards this country. Because, if you are being brought to a certain place, you cannot say that this is your home. Because I go where I go. One day, you never know, one day I will go back home and I will say: "I will never go back to NZ." Because it is wise, sometimes, to make a decision in life. Because it was not my decision to be coming to NZ. But it was because of the war that led me to coming to this country and that led me to being in this country. That's why most of the Acholi people who ended up here and that ended up in Australia. I think that if it was not because of war, we would not have ended up here […] I know from years at home, each and every Acholi who are outside, abroad, UK, US, wherever. That is not their home, that is not where they belong.*

Conclusion

Difficulties with resettlement play out in debates among SSA community members that show belonging to be multifaceted and constructed, and developed and maintained in varying ways for diverse individuals. The differences of opinion within the community over the reproduction of their customary cultural practices highlight the contingent, fluid, and contested nature of belonging. The contests which take place over these cultural practices are also challenges over access to and control of the conditional and relational nature of belonging. I therefore suggest

that belonging is dependent upon several important parameters. These are significant social relations, an identity or sense of self, and some feeling of agency. All these components are apparent in the attempts individuals within the SSA community in NZ make to develop and maintain their senses of belonging.

I have done this through a focus on narrative accounts by refugee-background SSA of their own resettlement experiences. Most arrived with great expectations for life in resettlement. Life in NZ provides many objective advantages to the alternative in South Sudan, not least of which are the social welfare and health benefits and the safety and security provided by NZ. Despite the benefits NZ provides resettled refugees, however, SSA individuals' general experiences since their resettlement have been more difficult and less rewarding than they had hoped. The everyday realities of resettlement have meant many community members have had to temper the aspirations they had for life in NZ. The difficulties they have experienced have made a stable sense of belonging difficult to achieve. For most SSA in NZ, the feelings of belonging they have been able to develop are often fragmentary, diffuse, and contextual.

I have argued that conditions of resettlement constrain the development and maintenance of refugee-background belonging and, because of this, the senses of belongings SSA individuals' can develop are often multiple and ambiguous. My understanding of belonging conceptualises agency as a central component, especially for the ways in which an individual's perception of their agency (defined as their subjective evaluation of their ability to establish some degree of control over their lives) impacts their ability to develop a sense of belonging. It is not just about control but, significantly, about perceptions which they have about that control. Belonging in this formulation depends upon self and society, structure and agency. It is a sense of being aware of and grounded in an everyday environment which an individual has at least some understanding of and within which they have some capability to act and participate. This is a sense of belonging dependent upon a sense of agency similar to Giddens (1984: 9), who defined an agent as "a knowledgeable and capable actor". Giddens' agent is someone who not only possesses the knowledge and capability to act upon the situations and contexts of their life, but who is also knowledgeable about their capability to act upon those situations. In this view, lack

of agency is a fundamental cause of lack of belonging. Without a feeling of control over the conditions of life, an individual will be unable to develop or maintain an unambiguous or coherent sense of belonging.

The quote from Diana which forms this chapter's title indicates just how ambiguous and multifaceted belonging among SSA in NZ can be. This is further highlighted by the quote from William; although William's own sense of belonging is much less ambiguous than Diana's, it is also very different from hers. He openly speaks of his lack of attachment to NZ and his failure to find a place within NZ society. Resettlement has been difficult, employment hard to come by, and he has been unable to gather the funds necessary to marry. He feels as if he does not belong in NZ. This echoes other members of the SSA community, whose feelings of marginalisation are compounded by lack of employment.

Lack of employment not only leads to a lack of money and resources but is also connected with a sense of meaninglessness and a dulling boredom which highlights the pointlessness of everyday existence. Without structure or purpose, one day bleeds into another. There is no sense of control. This is distinctly problematic as, according to Jackson (1998: 16),

> In Marx's vision of the human condition, active, purposeful labour (praxis) is seen as the driving force. Work produces and reproduces both self and societies… Not only does work provide the livelihood of persons, it creates modes of sociality and sustains a vital sense of what it means to coexist and cooperate with others. Accordingly, human labour not only generates and regenerates organic and social being; it is the means whereby human beings create and recreate the intersubjective experience that defines their primary sense of who they are.

Following Jackson, successful resettlement and the successful development of belonging depend upon success in engaging in purposeful labour of some kind. Labour defines self, community, and existence. This statement seems especially accurate if the term "active, purposeful labour (praxis)" is expanded beyond labour-as-employment to include all aspects of

life requiring some degree of purposeful action toward a specific end. This conceptualisation of praxis allows an understanding of active and purposeful labour consistent with the practical actions undertaken by SSA in NZ to develop feelings of belonging. For example, both the reproduction of customary Acholi marriage payments and the performance of Acholi music are specific uses of Acholi cultural practices through which SSA in NZ try to (re)produce and (re)create simultaneous and co-constituting SSA identities and belongings. This is demonstrated by the belongings of most of my participants, whose subjective quality of life and senses of belonging are contextually dependent and change constantly, shifting with event, conversation, and moment.

The competing and often conflicting variations in belonging among SSA in NZ demonstrate that refugee experiences and attitudes "always defy generalisation" (Hammond 2004: 214). That capability of refugees' multiple and ambiguous experiences to defy easy generalisation reveals the moral and methodological necessity of giving voice to the particularities of individual refugee-background narratives and treating individuals' stories as a necessary foundational element in any research undertaken among refugee-background communities. As Eastmond (2007: 261) argues, "we need to continue seeking ways of listening to and representing refugees' experiences, in their great diversity." These realities far surpass the simplistic label 'the refugee experience.' Therefore, and following Hammond (2004: 208), I suggest there must be a "redirection of the study of refugees toward a more actor centred approach… that brings into focus political and economic forces at work at local, regional, national, and global levels within which [they] interact."

In providing an overview of SSA's lives in NZ, I have demonstrated that refugees' experiences are not universal and therefore cannot be homogenised. Emphasis on refugee's own narratives of their perceptions and experiences highlight the constraints which structure their lives and, therefore, which necessarily structure their perceptions of those lives. The often conflicting SSA individuals have had throughout their lives have combined in a variety of unique ways to lead to ambiguous senses of belonging.

In any attempt to understand the general context of refugee-background lives it is important to consider the intersection between the experiences of life someone has prior to resettlement and the specific contexts of their life in resettlement. Examples of these from among members of the SSA community include the effects of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, continuing feelings of guilt, and multiple instances of capture, rape, and torture by various military groups. These are testament to the impossibility of disconnecting a refugee's experiences from refugee-background individual's experiences of resettlement. These often analytically separate aspects of refugee-background reality must be considered together if we are to understand the perceptions and meanings refugee-background individuals' attribute to their resettled lives, and this demonstrates the necessity of a maintaining a holistic perspective when undertaking any research among refugees.

This thesis has been organised specifically to highlight the interlinking nature of three important aspects of the everyday lives of SSA in NZ: brideprice payments and other customary marriage practices; 'traditional' Acholi songs, dances, and performances; and the construction and dissemination of a discourse about the benefits of repatriation. SSA attempts at (re)producing customary Acholi cultural practices are intimately linked to the difficulties individuals' experience in resettlement, particularly to difficulties with the development and maintenance of a sense of belonging. Customary cultural practices fulfil a variety of important social, cultural, affective, and psychological functions. This is apparent throughout all aspects of their everyday lives. Through focusing on the SSA community's attempts at cultural and ethnic continuity through the (re)production of their customary cultural practices, I demonstrate the importance of Acholi culture to the everyday identities and belongings of SSA in NZ. Individual identities are created and reaffirmed and, at the same time, individuals' membership in groups comprising other similarly-identifying individuals is expressed. Categories of particularly-situated and defined social, cultural, and spatial modes of belonging are created. Simultaneously, these categories of belonging and individuals' membership within them are negotiated and contested.

Customarily, brideprice traditions play an important role in creating and reinforcing SSA social ties. By maintaining a constant flow of objects and people between otherwise weakly-connected networks, marriage payments form a fundamental means by which Acholi society has traditionally been structured. The mobilisation of wide-ranging social ties needed for a man to gather his required brideprice furthers the cohesion between multiple networks of likewise-connected individuals. Network ties lead to interpersonal relations and an important community of belonging is created. For SSA in NZ, these networks often extend beyond the context of resettlement and engage individuals' in transnational communities of belonging that extend to South Sudan and throughout the diaspora.

This is particularly important in contexts of resettlement, and the alliance function of brideprice is almost certainly one reason it remains such an important institution for SSA in NZ. In fact, I suggest it is precisely because of the refugee-background context of Acholi in NZ that the alliance function of brideprice remains so important: when you live in a context with little or no family and little or no help from other sources, all means of creating and maintaining cross cutting alliance ties become important safety nets for possible future difficulties. Brideprice networks form the basis of interpersonal relations of social and existential security which span continents and generations. In this way, brideprice functions as an obvious form of developing and maintaining a specifically social sense of interpersonal or relational belonging.

Ideas of return to South Sudan underlie many of the practices and values of the SSA community in NZ. An increasingly widespread discourse on the benefits of return portrays repatriation as a positive alternative to life in resettlement. I have suggested the SSA community's return discourse is strongly connected to a community-wide process of discursively and imaginatively constructing the renewed viability of life in South Sudan. However, this discourse is also the result of a more generalised feeling among community members that they have failed to establish any sense of belonging within NZ. The construction and dissemination of the dominant return discourse allows SSA to live within structural constraints of resettlement by making their failure to develop a sense of belonging in NZ more acceptable. The return discourse is based on several unproblematised assumptions, the most significant of which is

that returnees will experience an unquestioned sense of belonging through the simple physical act of emplacing themselves in their place of origin once more. This discourse emerges from the resettlement experiences of SSA in NZ and is intimately connected to individuals' difficulties with coming to terms with life in resettlement and their associated difficulties in developing any sense of belonging in NZ.

Individuals may actually hold quite an ambivalent position toward life in South Sudan as well as to that in resettlement: NZ provides many objective advantages over South Sudan. This is particularly true for those with health concerns or educational aspirations. No matter the benefits NZ may offer, members of the SSA community still feel "out of place" in resettlement. SSA are economically marginalised, feel they are restricted from full social and cultural participation in NZ life, and have struggled to develop any real sense of belonging. In fact, the continuing durability of the return discourse demonstrates that, despite the advantages offered by life in NZ, a spatially-oriented sense of belonging is an important means through which SSA understand their place in the world. Indeed, the assumption that repatriation will necessarily bring an unambiguous feeling of belonging further highlights that SSA conceptualisations of belonging are specifically framed in relation to a 'naturally' place-oriented group membership.

Cultural performances create embodied identities of membership and belonging and, through shared performative activity, are also an important means of community formation. What brings together culture, performance, identity, and belonging is the value SSA place upon a culturally-defined Acholi ethnic heritage created, taught, and maintained through cultural performance. This is a form of belonging learned, produced, and demonstrated through performances that express community members' belonging to a particularly-defined ethnic group. Through participation in cultural performances such as those produced by SACA, SSA in NZ gain a sense of identity and belonging tied to the performance of specific actions deemed appropriate to members of that group. These specifically shared activities act as everyday social expressions of participants' cultural identities. By engaging in practices recognised as being Acholi, an individual makes a statement of identification with that culture and community as well as the value they place on that culture. Group membership and belonging are therefore

created as much by the individual performative action as by the social field within which those actions are performed.

Performances emphasise Acholi culture as a means of ethnic distinction while simultaneously highlighting members' belonging within the South Sudanese national group. Through linking performance and culture to ethnicity, cultural performances become a marker of group members' ethnic identity as well as their sociocultural and place-oriented forms of belonging. The place-oriented components of the ethnic identifier 'Acholi' are explicit within all aspects of SSA attempts at developing their individual and collective senses of belonging. An obvious example of this was the performance by SACA at the South Sudanese Referendum Party. At this event, SACA members publicly displayed their membership in both the South Sudanese and Acholi social groups. By specifically focusing their performance on obvious markers of Acholi-specific culture, Acholi membership within the South Sudanese nation was claimed at the same time as a distinctive hierarchy of identities was publicly expressed. This allowed Acholi membership within the wider South Sudanese community but, by demanding knowledge of Acholi cultural practices as the marker of Acholi ethnic identity, effectively denied reciprocal membership to non-Acholi South Sudanese. The fact that performance played an important role in this public boundary marking suggests that boundary creation and maintenance is a distinctively performative social practice.

I have mentioned throughout this thesis that the SSA community's attempts at cultural reproduction are as much about a means of exclusion and boundary maintenance as they are about inclusion and the development of belonging. This form of ethnic boundary maintenance almost exactly replicates Barth's (1969) thesis on ethnic group distinction and the role which key cultural traits play in the creation, maintenance, and policing of ethnic boundaries. For SSA in NZ, culture provides the content and definition of ethnicity as well as providing the means through which it is measured.

A central unifying factor throughout this thesis is that the everyday experiences of SSA in NZ can be understood as individual and collective attempts in developing more stable senses of belonging through shared membership in an ethnically and culturally defined social group.

Attempts at cultural reproduction made by SSA in NZ mobilise multiple forms of belonging simultaneously. Participation in the (re)production of customary Acholi practices specifically identify those people who engage in their reproduction to be culturally and ethnically Acholi. Through their participation in Acholi culture, SSA reproduce both the Acholi culture and the Acholi community in NZ, as well as producing specifically Acholi individuals with specifically Acholi identities. In this way, Acholi cultural practices generate a form of sociocultural belonging that connects these individuals to others in the South Sudanese and Acholi communities in New Zealand, South Sudan, and throughout the diaspora. Knowledge of and participation within these cultural practices is what defines participants as Acholi and it is through their knowledge and participation in these performative actions that individuals gain and maintain their membership within a group of belonging explicitly tied to a place and a culture.

The ambivalent, multiple, and multifaceted nature of belonging described by SSA individuals' is a defining feature of their resettlement experiences. I have argued that South Sudanese Acholi attempts at performing and reproducing their customary cultural practices in New Zealand primarily serve as a creative means of adapting to the conditions of resettlement in ways which allow the construction, development, and maintenance of community members' feelings of belonging. However, I have also shown that lack of agency is an especially important factor in understanding the ambivalence toward belonging that SSA demonstrate when speaking of their resettlement experiences. Narrative accounts given by SSA of their lives in resettlement are replete both with feelings of powerlessness and with the specific activities they undertake to combat the felt lack of existential control. These activities can be conceptualised as attempts to retake control over, and thus agency in, their everyday lives. I therefore argue that, behind many of the everyday actions taken by refugees in contexts of resettlement, are simultaneous attempts to rediscover a sense of agency and to recreate a foundation for belonging.

In fact, many of the difficulties which refugee-background SSA experiences in their lives in resettlement in NZ can be understood as constraints upon their agency which simultaneously serve as constraints upon their feelings of belonging. By reducing their feelings of agency and

control, the constraints within which they live out their everyday lives also hinder their development of senses of belonging, and these separately problematic issues combine to underscore their already-existing feelings of powerlessness.

For these reasons, I suggest that maintaining Acholi culture is as much about developing a sense of agency in resettlement as it is an attempt to reproduce Acholi identities or culture. Performing Acholi traditions are as much about control over the actions and definitions of one's life as they are about demonstrating ethnicity. The creation and dissemination of positive discourses of return to South Sudan are as much about maintaining an option to return as they are about any actual return itself. Although very few SSA in NZ will probably ever repatriate, belief in having the choice to return or not is important. In all these acts, agency is reclaimed.

I argue, therefore, that agency is a central element in the lives and experiences of any individual, just as it is an important factor in the development and maintenance of an individual's sense of belonging, whether they have a refugee-background or not. This is a component missing from many representations of refugees and is virtually invisible in the literature on the development of refugees' senses of belonging in contexts of resettlement. This is significant. Agency and belonging must be understood as co-constituting. Refugees' lives demand it.

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