

## DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

### The integration and livelihood strategies of 'self-settled' refugees the case of Casamance refugees in The Gambia

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# **The Integration and Livelihood Strategies of ‘Self-Settled’ Refugees: The Case of Casamance Refugees in The Gambia**

By

**Charlotte Rebecca Ray**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the University's  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

## Abstract

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The concept of self-settlement has evolved over the past decade. Academic literature has varied on its definition and has often caused confusion. It has previously been related to 'spontaneous' settlement, undocumented migrants, IDP migration and has been blurred amongst the vast literature on local integration. Self-settlement in the context of this research concurs with academic literature (Bakewell 2002, 2002; Hovil 2007; Polzer 2004, 2009) where refugees have greater freedom of movement and may or may not be officially registered. This research refers to refugees who have been externally displaced as a result of conflict and settle outside refugee camps and formal settlements. They negotiate the terms of their settlement directly with host communities who dictate the rate of integration and subsequent access to resources.

The Gambia has hosted Casamance refugees fleeing from low-level civil conflict in southern region of Senegal for nearly 30 years. It is West Africa's longest running civil conflict. Official registration figures (although ambiguous) estimate 11,000 Casamance refugees are permanently located in Gambian communities (WFP 2012). In this context, international legalities are clearly set out as in any other refugee situation. Casamance refugees have taken flight across an international border and until they are able to return they have been granted refugee status and protection in The Gambia under the 1951 Geneva Convention.

However, the parameters of refugee terminology are thus confused as refugees are self-settled in host communities instead of formally settled within refugee camps. Refugee literature tends to investigate the impact of camp-based refugees on local communities. Rarely does this literature investigate self-settlement. In addition, the historical, cultural, socio-economic and ethnic ties between The Gambia and Senegal have caused repeated mobilisation across the international border, and this is further facilitated as the conflict escalates and subsides. As a result of increased demographic pressures, there is increased competition for community resources such as land,

shelter, water, and natural resources which affect the sustainability of existing livelihood strategies.

Adopting the Capital Assets Model from the Sustainable Rural Livelihood Framework, a conceptual framework was devised to understand the integration of Casamance refugees and how they are able to access resources. As a result, six villages were subject to environmental, socio-economic and livelihood assessments using an extensive multi-method approach over a two phase fieldwork period. This was to understand the impacts of refugee integration, and how both hosts and refugees access resources to implement livelihoods.

The results from this study indicate that there is relatively equal availability of resources for both groups. However there is differential access to resources, which is based on traditional community structures and the shared cultural heritage between host and refugee. Results also highlighted that tensions did exist between groups but these were between and within host and refugee groups. These tensions however, have been adequately mediated and resolved as a result of the traditional community structures in place within these communities.

The thesis ultimately presents three themes of discussion from the results of this case study. Firstly, the theme of self-settlement will be revisited and how it can be adopted in refugee situations given an understanding of common characteristics shared between host and refugee groups. Secondly, it modifies the Capital Asset Model for wider applicability in self-settled refugee situations. Finally, self-settlement will be considered in relation to various levels of policy and how it can better understand and support self-settled communities.



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## *Abbreviations*

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AALCC:	Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee
AALCO:	Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization
AU:	African Union
CSB:	Corn Soya Blend
CU:	Concern Universal
DfID:	Department for International Development
ECOWAS:	Economic Community of West African States
EFA:	Education For All
EMOP:	Emergency Operations Programme
EU:	European Union
FFW:	Food For Work
GAFNA:	Gambia Food and Nutrition Agency
GBoS:	Gambia Bureau of Statistics
GID:	Gambia Immigration Department
GNP:	Gross National Product
GRCS:	Gambia Red Cross Society
HDI:	Human Development Index
ICRC:	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDMC:	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP:	Internally Displaced Person
IDS:	Institute of Development Studies
ILC:	International Land Coalition
IRO:	International Refugee Organisation
LI:	Local Integration
MDGs:	Millennium Development Goals
MFDC:	Mouvement des Forces Démocratique de la Casamance

NaNa:	National Nutrition Agency
NGO:	Non- Governmental Organisation
NIA:	National Intelligence Agency
OAU:	Organization of African Unity
OCHA:	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
RA:	Research Assistant
RRA:	Rapid Rural Appraisal
SJFF:	St Joseph's Family Farm
SLA:	Sustainable Livelihood Approaches
SRL:	Sustainable Rural Livelihoods
STI:	Sexually Transmitted Infection
UN:	United Nations
UNDP:	United Nation Development Programme
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VDC	Village Development Committee
WFP:	World Food Programme

# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1. Outline of Research**

Self-settlement is a relatively under-researched topic which has varied in definition and understanding. Self-settled refugees are increasingly hard to identify and analyse given that they often live outside of formal protection boundaries and are not necessarily recognised by host governments if they reside outside of refugee camps and formal settlements. However, as this research will identify, there are increasing numbers of self-settled refugees, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, that are able to negotiate the terms of their settlement directly with host communities and are able to integrate, implement livelihoods and can sometimes become self-reliant without the need for assistance. It is important to understand this group of refugees as its success may alleviate long-term pressures from humanitarian actors and national governments and prove exemplary for interim and durable solutions.

At the same time, it is not only the understanding of self-settlement and the initial integration within communities that is important. It is important to understand how self-settled groups are able to access resources in order to implement and sustain livelihoods especially in protracted refugee situations. There is a plethora of UNHCR, development, and academic literature (Loescher et al 2008; Crisp 2003; Jacobsen 2001; Smith 2004) that document how protracted refugee situations can blur the boundaries of interim and long-term solutions. It is therefore vital to understand whether self-settled groups are not only able to temporarily integrate within host communities but also able to sustain integration and access resources that enable self-reliance.

This research will use self-settled Casamance refugees in The Gambia as an example to explore the concept of self-settlement, how they integrate in host communities and how they are able to access resources in order to implement livelihoods. Casamance refugees have fled sporadic but continual conflict in the southern region of Senegal since 1982 and therefore, because they have crossed an international border, they are classed as refugees. This situation is unusual because refugees are settled within host

communities rather than within refugee camps or formal settlements. At the same time, in contrast to many self-settled groups that are often excluded from protection and aid, Casamance refugees have been recognised by the Gambian government and UNHCR and therefore many have been entitled to basic protection. It is therefore important to understand the policy implications of self-settled Casamance refugees and whether this has enhances/ inhibits integration into host communities.

## **1.2. Research Aim and Objectives**

This aim of this research is to:

To examine the integration, livelihood strategies and policy implications of “self- settled” refugees within host communities in Sub-Saharan Africa.

To achieve this overall aim, four research objectives have been identified:

1. To critically evaluate relevant and current literature theories.
2. To identify key socio-economic and environmental resources used by both host and refugee populations.
3. To determine and analyse the livelihood strategies of both populations in relation to the Capital Assets Model.
4. To inform policy makers and Non-Governmental Organisations of the challenges of integrating self-settled Casamance refugees into Gambian communities.

## **1.3. Thesis Structure**

Chapter Two will set out the research project in regards to understanding a self-settled refugee in relation to international law and protection guidelines. As will be explained, the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Protocol are still the only universal legally binding document in regards to the protection of refugees. However, there are gaps within the definition which does not necessarily capture those displaced as a result of emerging global contexts. At the same time, the implementation of the Convention is



challenged when many host states do not officially recognise those who are placed outside of refugee camps or formal settlements. The chapter will more importantly further identify the concept of self-settlement and question how self-settled groups can be protected given that many lie outside of formal protection and laws. In addition, this chapter will introduce the importance of livelihoods for self-settled groups and how this can contribute to successful integration and self-reliance. Figure 1.1 highlights how the remainder of this thesis will be structured.

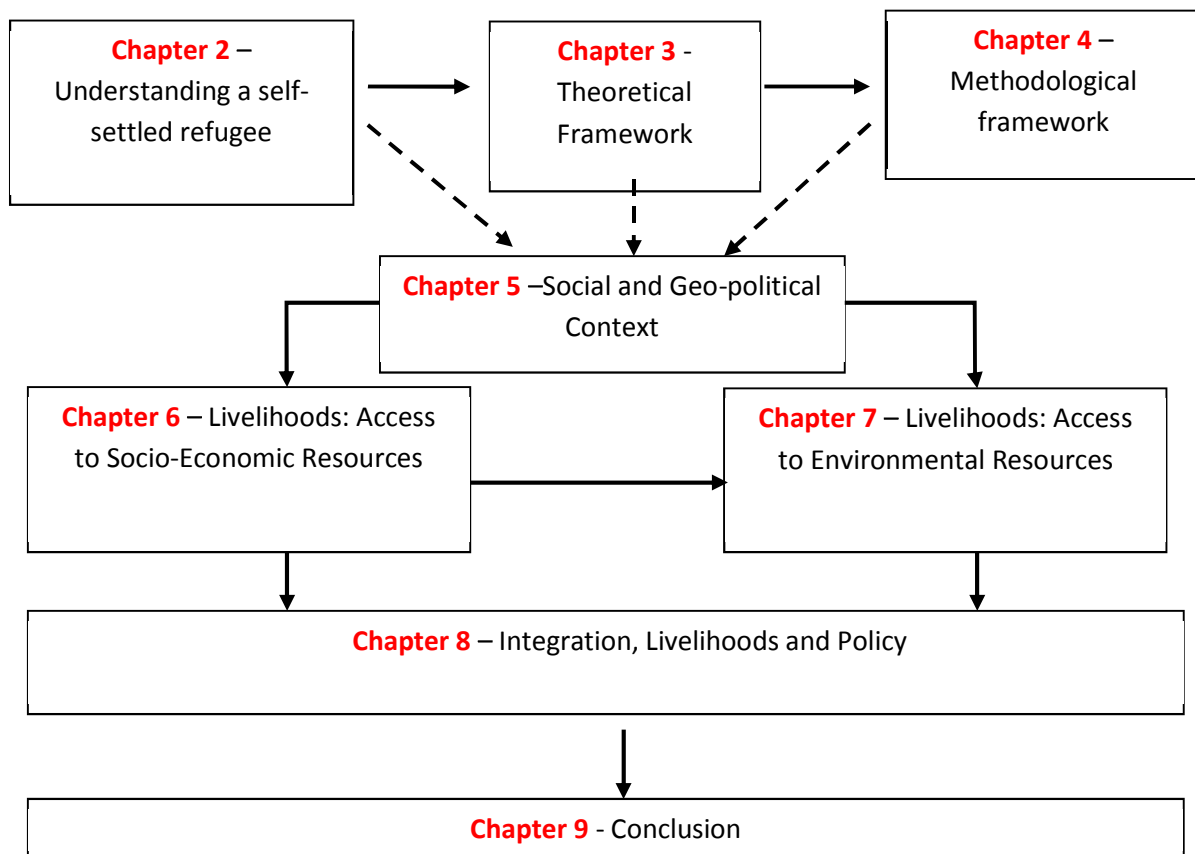
Chapter Three will address the theoretical framework that was adopted in this research. It was not only important to understand the integration of self-settled groups but how they are able to access resources in order to implement livelihoods. As a result, the Capital Assets Model as part of the Sustainable Rural Livelihoods Framework (SRL) was adopted to investigate the livelihood strategies of hosts and refugees. In addition, this framework has rarely been used when investigating refugee groups leading to the creation of the conceptual framework. This refugee lens was used in order to investigate the livelihood strategies of both host and refugee groups.

Chapter Four will address the methodological framework that was implemented highlighting the use of grounded theory and a multi-method approach. The literature that has been consulted in regards to refugee protection, theory and methodology informed the selection of the case study for this thesis.

Chapter Five will introduce the case study for this research and how the refugee definition of self-settlement applies to Casamance refugees who have been uprooted as a result of the Casamance conflict. It will explore the background to this conflict and the subsequent displacement it has caused. At the same time, this chapter will identify how The Gambia has previously protected and integrated other groups of refugees and this will be compared to the Casamance case study.

Chapters Six and Seven are based on the empirical findings from the data collection period and investigated how hosts and refugees accessed both socio-economic and environmental resources in order to implement livelihood strategies. This was analysed in relation to the Capital Assets Model in order to understand the differences

and commonalities between the groups. Chapter Eight will therefore discuss the findings of the empirical data and relate them against the original aim and objectives that have been identified. It will focus on three main discussion points that have emerged from the data. Firstly, the discussion relates back to the wider literature on self-settlement and will analyse whether it can be considered a durable solution and how applicable it is other global contexts. Secondly, the discussion will re-engage with the SRL framework and discuss how the Capital Assets Mode can be adapted to other self-settled and refugee situations. Thirdly, the discussion will inform policy on the steps that can be taken in order to further understand and facilitate self-settlement and how aid/ development can be effectively targeted within these communities.



**Figure 1.1:** Thesis Structure

## **2. Understanding the Concept of a Self-Settled Refugee**

### **2.1. Introduction**

Firstly, this chapter will introduce the concept of self-settlement and how it is understood within the wider literature on displacement and refugee studies. It will understand how self-settlement is interpreted by academic scholars and practitioners and create a working definition for the purpose of this research. Secondly, self-settlement will be understood in relation to international law. The 1951 Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol are the legally binding instruments under international law that state and clarify guidelines on the definition and protection of refugees once they are in flight and have crossed an international border (Feller 2001). There has been much criticism, debate and ambiguity surrounding the definition which has raised questions of whether it is still relevant within refugee studies and emerging global contexts. It is important to understand how this has impacted on subsequent regional policy and the protection of other groups of displaced persons. Thirdly, the cycle of displacement for self-settled refugees will be explored. This will understand emergency, post-emergency and durable solutions and further understand how self-settled refugees can integrate into local communities. This appropriately highlights underlying gaps in the existing literature on self-settlement and justifies why this research is relevant in current refugee contexts. Finally, the need for sustainable livelihoods will be introduced stressing its importance for self-settled groups. It will briefly explain why livelihoods are important for self-settled groups in order to access resources and become self-reliant.

### **2.2. Introducing Self-Settlement**

Literature has varied on its definition of self-settlement and has often caused confusion. It has previously been referred to as 'spontaneous' settlement (Connor 1989; Schmidt 2003) but this can cause confusion amongst displacement and migration literature as it tends to refer spontaneous settlement to that in the form of

organised urban dwellings such as squatter settlements and shanty towns. Literature has also referred to self-settlement as integration within local communities but with settlement options provided by either UNHCR or national governments (Van Damme 1995, 1999; Kibreab 1989). At the same time, it has been confused with literature regarding undocumented migrants, as seen in many Caribbean case studies, IDP literature and even confused with the vast literature surrounding local integration. The concepts of local integration (Crisp 2003, 2004; Low 2005; Polzer 2009; Jacobsen 2001) and self-settlement have become somewhat blurred and at times they can be referred to as the same. Gale (2008) has identified that local integration is more often than not initiated informally by refugees or displaced persons and has been a natural durable solution for many years especially in the 1950s and still occurs today without contact with official state or international assistance (Polzer 2009). It is important to understand that the notion of self-settlement relies on those who are displaced living outside of formal settlements and negotiate the terms of their settlement directly with host communities. Self-settlement however, has to an extent been neglected by policy makers and wider research (Bakewell 2008) because it is sometimes considered the same as local integration, there is little literature on self-settlement, it is not explained within the 1951 Geneva Convention and it is not defined within the cycle of displacement or durable solution literature.

This research is in agreement with later academic literature on self-settlement. Research conducted by Hansen (1982, 1990) and Bakewell (2000, 2002, 2008) on self-settled refugees in Zambia, by Hovil (2002, 2004) regarding the greater freedom of movement for self-settled refugees in Uganda and the work by Polzer (2005, 2009) regarding Mozambican refugees in South Africa are examples of how self-settlement has been interpreted in current literature. These, along with this research, argue that self-settled refugees directly negotiate the terms of their settlement with host communities usually by-passing official channels of protection.

The concept of can be self-settlement is unclear but examples from existing literature have noted the positive impacts of such groups in terms of social integration and

livelihoods. For example, Bakewell (2002) has extensively researched Angolan refugees integrated within Zambian communities whereby factors such as shared ethnicity and similar livelihoods have enhanced self-settlement. Similarly, Hovil (2007) has identified that self-settled Sudanese refugees in Uganda have been able to effectively integrate and by-pass political structures by paying local taxes. Polzer (2009) also explains how, in some situations, those refugees who share ethnic origin with their hosts have been able to utilise these networks in order to obtain citizenship documentation. These commonalities have led to closer social integration regardless of refugee status or formal intervention enhancing the plight of self-settlement. At the same time, much of the varying literature is in agreement that there are large proportions of refugees and displaced persons living outside of formal settlements and who have integrated with local communities (Harrell-Bond 2000, 2002; Schmidt 2003; Meyer 2008). This however, further blurs the boundaries of self-settlement because, as Bakewell (2008) reiterates, those outside camps or formal settlements are usually outside of formal support networks and many do not receive humanitarian protection or legal status.

There are limitations to self-settlement and it is not always applicable in situations of mass displacement. However, there has been little empirical research carried out on the impacts of self-settled refugees especially those who reside outside of formal settlements and are supported by local host communities. Therefore, as a working definition, self-settlement in the context of this research applies to refugees who have been displaced (in this instance externally and as a result of conflict) and settle outside of refugee camps or formal settlements. Refugees in these circumstances negotiate the terms of their settlement directly with host communities and it is these host communities that dictate the rate of integration and subsequent access to resources. Self-settled groups may be officially registered with national governments or humanitarian agencies but the majority are not because they are not specifically defined within international law and are therefore not necessarily entitled to protection. This research will present an unusual scenario where self-settled refugees have been recognised by a host government entitling them to humanitarian protection which has advocated its success.

### **2.3. International Protection for Self-Settled Refugees**

The 1951 Geneva Convention (and the subsequent 1967 Protocol) remains the only universal legally binding Convention on the rights of a refugee externally displaced from his or her country of origin. In order to understand the Convention and its relevance to self-settlement, it is important to examine both the 1951 Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol in order to evaluate its relevance. Although certain literature will be investigated, it is important to note that this is not an extensive critique of the legal specifications within the Convention as this has been previously investigated by a variety of others (Hathaway 1990; Kourula 1997; Goodwin-Gill 2002).

#### **2.3.1. 1951 Geneva Convention and 1967 Protocol**

As a result of the changing political context and the mass exodus of refugees within Europe after World War Two, there was a need for the newly created United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to recognise the scale of this refugee problem and provide a suitable programme that dealt primarily with refugee problems. The 1951 Geneva Convention was formulated in order to regulate the legal status of refugees and underpin their basic rights at an international level (UNHCR 2007: 5). Within this mandate, a refugee was defined as:

“A person who is outside his or her country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of persecution because of his or her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion; and is unable or unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country, or to return there, for a fear of persecution” (UNHCR 1951).

As history has suggested, one of the motivations for drafting the 1951 Geneva Convention was the desire of states within Western Europe to share the post-war burden with other members of the newly created United Nations (Shoyele 2004: 548).

At the time of ratification, the Convention was confined to those who had become refugees as a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and had an optional geographical dimension for states to confine and accept refugees that arrived from Europe. Concerns were raised as a result of emerging political tensions within Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa but were initially overlooked as it was considered “a child of its time” (Goodwin-Gill 2004: 6) building on previous initiatives and addressing the changing political climate within the Cold War context. The Convention was amended in 1967 with the *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees* which removed temporal and geographical restrictions.

This protection marked an important shift within International Refugee Law as greater numbers of people would be able to seek international protection in comparison to the original guidelines of the 1951 Convention. Although there were fewer legal restrictions, the definition sparked debate on the nature of its foundations. Hathaway (1990: 133) argues that the Convention was “simply a triumph of state interest” and its purpose was not specifically to meet the needs of refugees but to solve the challenges a State faced when accepting refugees into their country. This is increasingly apparent with many states questioning the Convention in the context of present migration challenges (Gonzaga 2003) within domestic law.

Due to changing circumstances and additional refugee situations, the Convention is now argued to be somewhat out-dated with many states and organisations expressing concern that the conceptual definition is too narrow as it does not necessarily sufficiently protect other categories of people that are in need of international protection (Gonzaga 2003). Bhatt (2001:80) vigorously argues that “the 1951 Geneva Convention on refugees doesn’t work” on the basis of the changing political and economic environment over the last 50 years and suggests a reform of the current system to create a more effective and current instrument of international law. Although the 1967 Protocol formally extended the scope of the 1951 Convention, its failure to alter or extend the definition as a result of emerging contexts signifies that it is those who flee due to reasons of ‘fear of persecution’ who are still entitled to

international protection and can exclude those who flee due to civil strife, political instability and natural disasters (Shoyele 2004: 549). The arguments over the limited nature of the Convention as well as confusion over applying it within international and domestic law has led to States incorporating it within their own mandates and applying international refugee law in alternative ways in order to address these limitations (De Andrade 1998). In addition, as will be identified below, States have also entered into regional agreements in an attempt to broaden the scope of the Convention and to understand the regional nature of displacement.

### 2.3.2. The 1951 Geneva Convention and Self-Settlement

As a result, the understanding of self-settlement becomes further unclear within these critiques. As the 1951 Geneva Convention states, a refugee has fled as a result of a “well- founded fear of persecution” and has crossed an international border. UNHCR in this respect were given the task of “promoting international instruments for the protection of refugees, and supervising their application “(UNHCR 2007: 7). However, it is important to understand that these tasks need to be handled carefully as not to infringe on the national sovereignty of states and dictate how the Convention should be implemented. Ultimately, it is host governments who are responsible for protecting refugees (International Debates 2008: 16) and UNHCR maintains a “watching brief” (ibid: 17). As a result, this can complicate self-settlement as many host states do not necessarily recognise such groups given that they are not explicitly contained within the Convention and therefore fall outside of protection boundaries. This can thus complicate the relationship between UNHCR and nation states especially as there are now a number of additional refugee situations, such as self-settlement, that confuse the terms of the 1951 Geneva Convention.

The boundaries of self-settlement thus become blurred within these parameters. Fitzpatrick (1996) however, suggests that although the Convention definition is incomplete, it should not be abandoned altogether. Carlier and Sztucki (1999) also give credence to this notion and specifically maintain that the definition will always be valid



as it is the only basic and universal instrument regarding refugee law. Compared with Bhatt and Hathaway, Walker (2002/3: 608) defends the limited nature of the definition because “in a context where states can and will restrict immigration, the offer of protection to a limited class of individuals... can be plausibly justified”. Walker furthers this by suggesting that several approaches and strategies are still needed to be adopted by States and agencies so that the Convention is adhered to and implemented effectively. These include strengthening the relationship between States and the 1951 Geneva Convention, a strengthened role for UNHCR in order to assist the refugees that fall outside of the Convention and the creation of new international arrangements to address problems caused by poverty, war or natural disasters (ibid: 609).

The *1998 International Conference on the Protection Mandate of UNHCR* organized by the Working Group on International Refugee Policy<sup>1</sup> also dismissed the notion of implementing a stricter interpretation of the refugee definition instead suggesting that UNHCR pursues more effective monitoring of the 1951 Refugee Convention so refugees do not suffer from a restricted interpretation (1999: 210, 214). Ogata (2000: 4) argued that the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention has been “at the very heart of UNHCR’s protection mandate...but it may now be a time to expand that key instrument with a new protocol... to address this century’s new realities.” If a new protocol was introduced, the new Convention would still remain sacrosanct but attempt to fill gaps in areas that the convention does not currently cover (ibid: 41). Although the 1951 Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol do not anticipate alternative refugee situations, they have proved flexible instruments for affording international protection and are pivotal human rights instrument still used in contemporary refugee situations (De Andrade 1998). The article of *non-refoulement*<sup>2</sup> for example, went so far as to prevent States from expelling or returning refugees to the State they were fleeing/fled (Ahmad 2009) and reflected the need for an

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<sup>1</sup> The Working Group on International Refugee Policy is an independent platform of eight NGOs established in 1993. Its members include Amnesty International, Médecins sans Frontières, the Netherlands Red Cross, The Refugee Foundation, the Dutch Refugee Council, and Caritas/Mensen in Nood, Dutch Interchurch Aid, and Pharint Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> Article 33 of the UN 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugee

important international human rights instruments within the Convention (Jackson 1991). As limited as the conceptual definition may be, articles such as *non-refoulement* give greater credence to the Convention and support other elements of international law.

The 1951 Geneva Convention continues to prove its credibility within international law but there is consensus that there needs to be an effective system in place in order to address past, present and future refugee situations. Given that the last amendment of the definition was in 1967, at a universal level there have been few advancements since (Sztucki 1989) and there is a clear need to update the Convention with specific mandates acknowledging those issues not drafted within the original Convention. This is equally applicable to self-settled refugee groups who become blurred within international legal regulations, UNHCR recognition and host state protection. This further hinders the protection that can be offered to such groups.

### 2.3.3. Regional Approaches

Although there are flaws with the 1951 Geneva Convention and 1967 Protocol, it remains the only universally binding document that all states adhere to on refugee rights and protection. However, the scale and variety of displacement scenarios have pushed the boundaries of legal protection for refugees. As a result, additional regional agreements have been formulated in an attempt to address the gaps within the conflicting interpretations of the definition (Gonzaga 2003:241). These regional agreements have been recognised due to changing socio-economic and political situations that have led to displacement. Figure 2.1 highlights regional agreements that have occurred as a result of the 1951 Geneva Convention and they are all, in some way, linked as they aim to regionalise displacement problems. For the purpose of this research, the 1969 Organisation of African Unity will be briefly discussed. Other regional agreements such as the 1984 Cartagena Convention and the 1966/2001 Bangkok principles can be found in Appendix 1.

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**Figure 2.1:** The 1951 Geneva Convention and subsequent regional agreements

#### *1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU)*

Set in the context of rapid decolonisation, the Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa was an attempt by the OAU and its African member states to draft a regional, legally binding convention on refugees based on the need to find an African solution to an escalating refugee situation. One flaw of the 1951 Geneva Convention was in regards to the legal exclusion of over one million African refugees that were also in need of protection at the time of its drafting (Chartrand 1975: 269) and this was a fundamental reason for extending the original convention. The OAU was a milestone in its creation and was believed to go beyond that of the 1951 Geneva Convention. At the same time it also recognised the importance of regional agreements to refugees and displacement in light of emerging contexts. The OAU was seen as the perfect forum to find solutions to refugee problems because its member states included both countries of origin and of asylum (Chartrand 1975). It was created in conjunction with the 1951 Geneva Convention to include

people and situations that occurred after January 1951 (Kourula 1997). However, due to the various ambiguities previously identified regarding the Geneva Convention, further provisions were required independent of and broader than the established definition of the 1951 Geneva Convention (Arboleda 1995). These provisions were dedicated to the total liberation of African states which addressed the concerns of those fleeing from colonial conflicts (Nyanduga 2004: 92). The Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa in 1969 (African-Union: 1969:1) extended article 1A of the 1951 Geneva Convention to:

“every person, who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality” (OAU: 1969).

It recognised that the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Protocol, constituted the “basic and universal instrument relating to the status of refugees” (UNHCR 1969). This new systematic two-tier definition also reflected actual situations that contributed to refugee problems in the region (Kourula: 1997). Shacknove (1985) identifies that both the 1951 Geneva Convention definition and the OAU definition reflect different historical contexts and that the OAU took steps on a regional scale to account for refugee situations that arise outside the 1951 Convention. Within this African context, the OAU definition reinforced the borders of Africa as a region (Tuepker 2002). In addition, the 1969 OAU Convention was the first international instrument to codify the principles of voluntary repatriation (Forced Migration n.d.)

The 1969 Convention grants a much larger group of people the protection of refugee status compared to the 1951 definition (Chatrand 1975). Although this represents an

improvement of refugee status, it has also raised several issues regarding the broadened definition of a refugee and the confusion encountered by states and international agencies over which definition to use in specific situations (ibid). Shoyele (2004) also suggests that the broadened definition creates additional confusion. In comparison to the 1951 Geneva Convention where a person fleeing his or her country of origin needs to be able to demonstrate that there is significant harm to be feared, there are no such guidelines in the OAU Convention. If a refugee or displaced person determines their justification for flight, how can the OAU contest this fear? Tuepker (2002) argues that in practice, the only radical aspect of the OAU Convention was that it was largely contained through “cultural specificity”. The OAU definition allows for more fluidity in comparison to the 1951 Geneva Convention, however, it can then be argued that the broad generality of the OAU convention has been deemed as ‘second class’ once outside the African Region. Levitt (2001: 56) explains that amidst the positive spirit of the OAU Convention, its inability to adequately predict and respond to conflict has hindered the ability of Convention guidelines to be put in place. More importantly however, the 1969 OAU definition (similarly to the 1951 Geneva Convention) does not specifically include groups of displaced such as self-settled groups thus proving problematic for effective protection.

#### 2.3.4. Categories of Displacement

Self-settlement is an emerging category that has recently been given more attention by UNHCR and academic scholars (Crisp 2003, 2004; Bakewell 2000, 2002, 2007, 2008; Hovil 2002, 2004; Polzer 2005, 2009) although this attention still remains low. However, as self-settlement is not specifically mentioned within the 1951 Geneva Convention it is therefore difficult to identify self-settled refugees and even harder to provide protection for them, especially when they are not recognised by many host states. Self-settlement is therefore open to debate and controversy and this research will specifically investigate how self-settled refugees are able to access protection and

integrate within host communities. At the same time, there are still various categories who still struggle for international recognition and protection.

Changing socio-economic and political contexts have led to additional groups of displaced people and as a result many have consequently been denied international protection as their plight is excluded from the 1951 Geneva Convention (Sztucki 1999: 60). In a current context, these additional categories have signified “someone in flight... the reasons for flight may be many; flight from oppressions; flight from persecution; flight from civil war; flight from natural disasters, earthquake, flood, drought, famine” (Goodwin Gill and McAdam 2007). Figure 2.2 provides a brief description of those additional groups.

The blue box highlights the *1951 Geneva Convention and 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of a Refugee* recognising groups of refugees that have fled and crossed an international border in need of protection. As a result of emerging contexts (many on a mass scale), Stateless Persons and Asylum Seekers are also formally recognised within the Convention and they are highlighted in green. The red boxes, however, identify groups of migrants who are not recognised under the Convention but are examples of additional groups who have become apparent as a result of emerging global contexts. IDPs are a group that have received much more attention and protection (especially in relation to other displaced groups) in recent years given that states are actually acknowledging and accepting the *Guiding Principles* as part of domestic law (Forced Migration Review 2008). The initial unease and suspicion from States and national actors towards IDPs has since become a realisation that although not legally binding, these principles have some legal significance (Cohen 2004). At the same time, Environmental (Black 1991, 2001, 2006; El-Hinnawi 1985; Jacobsen 1988; Stavropoulou 2008), Climate (Johnson & Krishnamurthy 2010), Disaster (Guterres 2008; Cohen and Bradley 2010) and Development (de Wet 2005 7; Turton 2003; Colson 1971; Samson and Singh 1997) Displacees are also emerging groups that are not protected under the 1951 Geneva Convention. Similarly, the purple box highlights self-settlement which is also not protected under the 1951 and subject to investigation in this research.

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**Figure 2.2:** Categories of displaced persons within the 1951  
Geneva Convention

#### **2.4. The Cycle of Displacement for self-settled refugees**

Under the 1951 Geneva Convention, a refugee has fled his or her country of origin due to a well-founded fear and has crossed an international border in order to seek refuge. At point of entry, the State to which the refugee has entered is primarily responsible for protecting refugees while UNHCR seek ways to help refugees re-start their lives, either through local integration, voluntary return or through resettlement in 'third'

countries. Figure 2.3 demonstrates the cycle of displacement created by UNAIDS and UNHCR to understand HIV-related needs of refugee populations and their host counter-parts. Although a health related issue, the diagram can be used to conceptualise the general needs of refugee populations. It is important to understand how this cycle applies to self-settlement and how the process of integration can be facilitated by States and international actors.

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**Figure 2.3:** Cycle of Displacement. **Source:** UNHCR and UNAIDS 2005

### Emergency Phase

As figure 2.3 illustrates, the *emergency phase* is the point at which a specific situation results in a crisis and people flee either internally or across an international border to seek international protection, thus resulting in IDP or refugee status. In the case of refugee status, (given that this research project primarily focuses on refugees), refugees are screened and assessed by national authorities and various UN/ humanitarian organisations and then usually transferred to refugee camps in order to



be sufficiently protected. During this emergency process, in order to ensure the safety of refugees, International Law states that refugees must be located at a reasonable distance from point of entry and in recent years this has been interpreted as varying between 30 and 50km from the border (OAU Article 2 1969; Hosford 2007).

### *Post Emergency Phase*

Once refugee status has been declared, the *post emergency* phase is the process in which after refugees are safely transferred into camps, they will be able to temporarily resettle and have access to basic amenities such as food, water, shelter, healthcare and education. This phase integrates refugees within camps and represents a temporary transition period.

In situations of mass displacement into a country of asylum, it is standard procedure by both national governments and UN agencies that those in need of protection are safely transferred to refugee camps where they can receive the resources and support required under international refugee law. Refugee camps are built within rural and urban communities where they have an impact on the host community especially in terms of livelihoods, political and social integration. Depending on various situations and international involvement, there have been mixed feelings towards camps by both host and refugee populations but is the usual means of protection by UNHCR. This way, UNHCR can standardise and maintain the resources given to refugees.

Many actors are in consensus that refugee camps are now undesirable but key questions remain as to what the viable alternatives are acceptable to all stakeholders. Local integration is not always feasible to ensure the protection of refugees and establishing camps has facilitated refugee survival. As a result, refugee camps still remain the 'first response to refugee and displacement crises' (Crisp 2003; Bakewell 2008: 442; Polzer 2009). In Africa, 60% of refugees officially registered by UNHCR reside in camps (which does not include IDPs within similar settlements) and as a result many refugee populations are segregated from the local communities which enables

little interaction and limited freedom of movement or economic independence (ibid; Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005; Bakewell 2008).

Self-settled refugees can appear within various stages of this model. They will be included within the emergency phase when they have recently crossed the international border in seek of protection. This model highlights how categories such as self-settlement bypass the traditional cycle that is anticipated by international organisations. Rather than progressing to each stage of the cycle, all stages across the international border are directly linked. This is because self-settled refugees are outside of refugee camps and formal settlements and directly enter in local host communities. Therefore the emergency and post-emergency stage can be amalgamated. If self-settled groups tried to follow each stage independently, they may find themselves even more vulnerable. This is because access to basic amenities such as food, water and shelter are mandated for refugees who are in refugee camps and does not necessarily include self-settled groups. This highlights the central importance of integration throughout the cycle of displacement for self-settlers as refugees will be able to negotiate the terms and access to resources directly with local communities and can bypass official channels that may either force them into camps or neglect their needs. This also rids of any potential segregation between refugees and host communities. Temporary integration may lead to permanent integration, resettlement into other communities or even repatriation. This process becomes much more fluid with self-settlement.

#### *Durable Solution Phase*

Although there has been extensive literature on the causes, trends and impacts of refugees within Africa, there has been less literature on the debate regarding durable solutions for African refugees, especially in regards to camp-based refugees versus local integration (Whitaker 2002). In relation to this research, much of the supporting literature on durable solutions highlights the advantages refugees can have on local communities and this is highlighted in much of the local integration literature (Porter

et al 2008; Jacobsen 2002; Orach and de Brouwere 2005; and Whitaker 2002). There are various durable solution options for policy makers to consider.

### *1. Repatriation*

Voluntary repatriation is usually the most desired durable solution policy makers. It is the end result where those displaced return to their homes and rebuild their lives. Although voluntary repatriation is not specifically addressed in the 1951 Geneva Convention, it follows directly from the principle of *non-refoulement* and thus the involuntary return of a refugee would result in refoulement (UNHCR 1996: 10). In reality however, the destructive effects of armed conflict and natural disasters indicate that the process of protection needs to be continued well after repatriation. Refugees returning to countries where peace is fragile, infrastructure weak and basic necessities depleted, may lead many to displace once again or bring about hostile conditions that they may have endured while a refugee (Feller 2006: 513). This is an example of how humanitarian support offered through durable solutions as they show little regard for refugee needs or motivations (Wilson and Nunes 1994: 173, Gale 2008: 542)<sup>3</sup>.

### *2. Third Country Re-settlement*

In the case that refugees are unable to return to their country of origin or are unable to stay in the current country of asylum, UNHCR will facilitate resettlement in a third country in order for them to retain protection. Traditionally, resettlement was the preferred solution involving advanced industrial societies but has shifted to a more humanitarian response in line with domestic and foreign policy considerations (Neuwirth 1988). This is reflected through UNHCR statistics that state of the 10.5 million global refugees, approximately only 1% are submitted by UNHCR for third country resettlement (UNHCR n.d.).

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<sup>3</sup> For other repatriation studies please refer to Black and Koser 1999

### *3. Integration*

In direct relation to this research, integration has been described as the preferred solution if refugees are unable to repatriate. At the same time, it has been argued that many of the provisions of the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to economic and social rights are not only based on humanitarian considerations but are aimed at facilitating a refugee's integration in the country of Asylum. As a result, integration as a durable solution is a step taken for those who choose not to voluntarily repatriate or resettle after the cause for their displacement has ended. Integration, however, has been interpreted in differing ways by policy makers and academics (Jacobsen 2001/2; Crisp 2003; Polzer 2009) ranging from camp-based integration, self-settlement, and naturalisation. These different scenarios also have varying measures of protection. As a result, integration is not the preferred durable solution. This has led to a range of literature on local integration (Jackson 1991) where in a current refugee context there is not enough emphasis and confusion with self-settlement literature.

In terms of local integration UNHCR have advocated the positive impacts of self-sufficient refugees integrating within local communities as they are a source of labour and can expand consumer markets for local goods. Jacobsen (2002) believes there is too much negativity associated with refugees integrating within a State. It is argued that if states were to recognise the benefits refugees could bring to communities, it could have a direct impact on international assistance, refugee related security problems and could ultimately utilise the resources available. Similarly, Whitaker (2002) argues that although refugees are commonly perceived as problematic or a burden to society, it is clear that they can also bring many benefits. There are basic, general impacts refugees can have on local infrastructure, the environment and natural resources but, they also provide cheap labour and justify increased foreign aid (ibid).

There are other problems however, that inhibit the success of an integration policy. A sound refugee policy by the host State is key for issues of security and utilising

resources. Gordon-Lennox (1993: 20) argued that in seeking a solution to a refugee problem:

“local integration in the receiving country no longer seems to be a feasible [option] in many situations.... [as a result] variable approaches are being pursued with greater frequency, in order to implement a more vigorous promotion of voluntary repatriation.”

This can be the case in situations where there is increasing competition for livelihoods and resources and where the refugee community are of a different socio-economic, culture or ethnic background. Also, those who have scarce resources and poor agricultural productivity may not always benefit from additional numbers within the community. At the same time there is also a large cost associated with hosting large numbers of refugees and migrants. Other burdens consist of security concerns, inter-State tensions, and irregular migration, social and political unrest as well as environmental damage (UNHCR 2001).

The solution of local integration has been well established within the 1951 Geneva Convention. It acknowledged the role of local integration as part of achieving durable solutions. Article 34 states:

“The contracting states shall as far as possible facilitate the assimilation and naturalization of refugees. They shall in particular make every effort to expedite naturalization proceedings.”

In order to understand local integration, it also needs to be defined. Crisp (2004) coherently defines local integration as a ‘process which leads to a durable solution for refugees’ with three dimensions consisting of 1) Legal, whereby refugees gradually gain the rights of residents and eventually full-citizenship; 2) Economic, whereby refugees establish sustainable livelihoods which is independent from aid, are able to

fully participate in the local economy and can achieve the same living standards as the host community; 3) Social, whereby refugees live among host population with no fear of discrimination, intimidation or exploitation. Literature on local integration has been suggested that refugees should be considered as less of a burden in society given development they can constitute for the host country (Low 2005). In addition, local integration has meant less dependence on state and humanitarian aid and is a way for refugee to be able to self-support themselves. Low also highlights that social and cultural interactions between refugees and local communities are important and enable refugees to live alongside the host population, without discrimination or exploitation and as contributors to local development (ibid). Local integration literature has mainly been considered in light of the relationship between refugees in camps and local communities directly affected. Rarely has self-settlement been considered part of this integration strategy.

As this thesis will argue, self-settlement very much links with local integration literature demonstrating the positive impacts for local host communities yet it differs in a variety of ways. Firstly, self-settled refugees are usually outside formal settlements<sup>4</sup>, they do not necessarily have access to basic amenities through international organisations or host governments and they progressively integrate with local communities from the start of their displacement cycle. Self-settlement can be considered as both a temporary solution (in preference to refugee camps in some cases) as well as a long term durable solution in cases of protracted refugee situations and if voluntary repatriation is not possible.

## **2.5. Self-Settlement and Livelihoods**

This research not only aims to investigate the integration of self-settled refugees but also investigate the livelihood strategies implemented by both hosts and refugees in order to assess whether they can be sustainable in such self-settled situations. Given

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<sup>4</sup> The notion of refugees being a potential asset and not a burden is central to anti-camp rhetoric. Refer to Harrell-Bond (1986) and Smith (2004).

that self-settlement is under-researched, there has been little evidence to understand how such groups access resources to implement livelihoods and the impacts it has on the relationship between refugee and host. Bakewell's work in Zambia has very much advocated that one of the reasons for successful integration of Angolan refugees is that they implement similar livelihood strategies to their hosts and therefore are able to peacefully co-exist without either group having to radically change ways of life.

Much of the literature on local integration also emphasises the importance of livelihoods for groups as this will dictate their level of self-reliance once protection and humanitarian aid has stopped. Porter et al. (2008) suggest that many of the impacts of refugees on host countries focus on livelihood opportunities, constraints and competition. This is important because regardless of whether refugees are in camps or integrated within local communities, impacts such as those above are vital to the relationship held between refugees and their hosts. Similarly, Jacobsen (2002b) and Orach and de Brouwere (2005) argue that livelihoods are important in establishing the long term presence of refugees as well as the benefits of living with their hosts regardless of the long-term settlement outcome.

At the same time, the 1951 Geneva Convention is (on paper) very lenient on the clause of wage-earning and self-employment for refugees. Article 17 states:

“Contracting State[s] shall accord to refugees lawfully staying in their territory the most favourable treatment accorded to nationals of a foreign country in the same circumstances, as regards the right to engage in wage-earning employment”

In legal terms, restrictions of refugees shall be lifted if they have been resident as a refugee for three or more years, has married a national of the host state, or has one or more children possessing the nationality of the country of residence. This in theory provides refugees ample opportunities to engage in and sustain livelihoods. However, the reality does not necessarily reflect the Convention as, as anti-camp rhetoric insists, refugees within camps are often denied basic rights such as livelihood opportunities and therefore there are little chances for refugees to become self-reliant in such

circumstances. At the same time, many self-settled refugees are unable to register, or as the case in Uganda (Hovil 2007), many self-settled refugees have found alternative ways of acquiring documentation which means the 1951 Geneva Convention on employment rights does not necessarily apply to them as they are not recognised by UNHCR or host States. Refugees outside of formal norms can also be driven into illegal employment, thus making their refugee status even more precarious. It is important in this research to understand how self-settled refugees (who are registered) access resources and engage in and implement livelihood strategies.

## **2.6. Summary**

This chapter has identified self-settlement in the context of this case study, wider literature, international law and refugee protection. It has demonstrated that there is current confusion on the definition of self-settlement and that there is little empirical work investigating the impact of self-settled refugees on host communities. Although the 1951 Geneva Convention and 1967 Protocol is still the only universal legally binding convention regarding the rights of a refugee, this chapter has highlighted that the Convention has become somewhat outdated and does not necessarily include emerging categories of displaced persons. This has complicated the protection that can be given by international organisations and host governments. This is exacerbated by the fact that many self-settled refugees are unable to register and unable to access basic resources in their country of asylum. Even with additional regional agreements such as the 1969 OAU Convention, many of these groups are still excluded from protection.

As a result, this chapter highlighted how self-settlement applied to the cycle of displacement and that the process is much more fluid. Literature identified that self-settlement is very much linked with local integration but rarely does this literature investigate self-settlement in isolation (Bakewell 2001, 2002, 2008, 2011; Crisp 2003, 2004; Hovil 2007; Polzer 2009). There is not only an emphasis to understand the integration of self-settled refugees but also how they are able to access resources to



implement and sustain livelihoods in host communities. In order to understand and evaluate the livelihood strategies of self-settled refugees, Chapter Three will apply an appropriate theoretical framework in order to 1) establish a suitable conceptual framework 2) use the framework to explain findings and 3) relate findings and analysis back to the literature.

### **3. Exploring the Sustainable Rural Livelihoods Framework: The Capital Asset Model**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter will briefly outline the importance of adopting a livelihoods framework in a development context. The Sustainable Rural Livelihoods framework will be outlined and discussed in relation to the Capital Assets Model that is adopted within this research to assess how self-settled refugee groups access resources and assets to implement livelihood strategies. The framework will then be assessed and critiqued to measure its previous success and why it was adopted for the purpose of this research. In addition, the SRL has rarely been used within refugee studies and so a conceptual framework will be devised in order to highlight the frameworks relevance within this research and how self-settled refugees integrate into Gambian communities and are able to implement livelihoods.

#### **3.2. The Importance of Adopting a Livelihoods Framework**

The 1997 UK Government White Paper on International Development committed the Department for International Development (DfID) to promoting 'sustainable livelihoods' in order to contribute to the overall poverty eradication (Carney 1998: 2). In addition, in regards to income inequality, livelihoods give households the ability to learn skills and create household income in order to move above the poverty line. Livelihoods are complex and diverse but can secure legal rights and provide better access to services (Chambers 1991) which are ways in which to alleviate poverty. High rates of poverty have been found amongst rural households headed by farmers (Haughton and Khandker 2009) given the lack of ownership or assets and restricted access to resources. At the same time, the dependence by rural households on the natural environment for agricultural livelihoods sets the poverty levels outside usual economic and social norms (Sackey 2005). Therefore, it was important to define a livelihood. The most common definition of a livelihood is:

“A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living” (Chambers and Conway 1992:10<sup>5</sup>)

Chambers and Conway’s definition has been vastly utilised when undertaking livelihood studies and consequent definitions have been drawn from this. Chambers and Conway also identified many other factors concerning the definition of a livelihood as a means of gaining a living including livelihood capabilities, tangible assets and intangible assets (ibid). Lipton and Maxwell (1992) also argue that a livelihood constitutes more than just monetary income and explain how a livelihood incorporates income both cash and in kind, together with the social institutions, gender relations, and property rights required to support and sustain a given standard of living.

These interpretations of a livelihood raised questions over the sustainability of household livelihood strategies. Therefore, the term ‘sustainable livelihood’ relates to a wide set of issues about the relationships between poverty and the environment (Scoones 1998). In order for livelihoods to be sustainable there are many constraints faced by individuals and households, which include production and income patterns as well as consumption and investment needs for households (Dorwood et al. 2009). These general constraints are further exacerbated within displaced populations. In these circumstances, repercussions of violence, access to resources, food insecurity and a breakdown in institutional norms are only a few factors that alter sustainable livelihoods (Unruh 2008). Approaches to sustainable livelihoods have evolved from poverty, participation and sustainable development (Brocklesby and Fisher 2003; Sen 1987; Chambers and Conway 1992) as a means of linking socio-economic and environmental concerns. Scoones explains that a livelihood is sustainable when it can:

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<sup>5</sup> Prior to the 1997 UK White Paper, early definitions of livelihoods can also be viewed in the Brundtland Report (WCED 1987) and earlier versions of Chambers work (1987, 1989).

“...Cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base” (Scoones 1998: 5).

Scoones identifies that individuals and households are in need of certain resources and assets in order to implement livelihoods but also correctly identifies that they need to be aware of other factors that can infringe on these assets and have coping mechanisms in order to maintain them. This interpretation is one of many that academic and practitioners have developed to represent various themes such as environmental factors (Scoones 1998), development factors (Ashley and Carney 1999; Carney 2002) and even people-centred factors (Titi and Singh 1994). The late 1990s and early 2000s saw a shift in development discourse and sustainable livelihoods were seen as an appropriate opportunity to target poverty alleviation with a specific need to target rural households with new people-centred methodological approaches.

### **3.3 The Sustainable Rural Livelihoods Framework (SRL) and The Capital Assets Model**

The SRL<sup>6</sup> was, at its time of adoption, in line with development discourse in the 1990s with a focus on human wellbeing and sustainability rather than economic growth (Solesbury 2003). The SRL framework was a desirable scenario to address the objectives, scope and priorities for development (DfID 1998) and was an analytical device to observe the complexity of livelihoods, understand the influences on poverty and identify where interventions can best be made (Farrington 1999; FAO 2004; Helmore and Singh 2001). It was also intended to mobilise rural communities to enhance their capacity to sustain their own livelihoods (Ellis 2000; Frankenberger, Drinkwater and Maxwell 2000). These reasons were why organisations such as CARE International, Oxfam, World Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

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<sup>6</sup> Given the shifts in terminology, many also refer to the model as Sustainable Livelihood Approaches (SLA) (Ashley and Carney 1999; Norton 2001; Carney 2002; Morse, McNamara and Acholo 2009). For the purpose of this research however, it will be referred to as the SRL highlighted in the original DfID framework.

and DfID respectively incorporated a sustainable livelihoods approach into their policy mandates.

The framework was design to be 1) people-centred; 2) dynamic; 3) cognisant of people's livelihood strategies and; 4) aware of the forces that contribute to poverty and conflict (Unruh 2008: 105). The framework was intended to be a holistic method of addressing development issues of relevance to the discussion of livelihoods (DfID 2001) which sets vulnerability and sustainability as two extremes representative of the quality of the livelihood system in regards to capabilities and assets (Amekawa et. al 2010). It can be used as a simple checklist to explore, pursue and link key connections and elements of livelihood success (Ellis 1999; Scoones 1998). It was also intended to contribute towards the development of a 'hybrid' methodological approach including qualitative methodologies and participatory rural appraisal (ibid) to address the issue of poverty at a conceptual and at varying practical levels within international development (Farrington et al. 1999). At its time of development, the SRL framework shifted development practice from resource-centred to human-focused and was expected to initiate and sustain positive change (Carney 1998, 1999; Alteralli and Carloni 2000). Figure 3.1 highlights the SRL framework highlighting the Capital Asset Model which is adapted within this research.

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**Figure 3.1:** The DfID Sustainable Rural Livelihoods Framework  
**Source:** Adapted from Carney 1998, 1999

### *The Capital Asset Model*

This research investigates how hosts and refugees in rural communities access resources in order to implement livelihood strategies and generate capital. The Capital Asset Model provides a basic understanding of community assets and is a useful indicator of where they lie on the poverty scale and whether sustainable livelihoods are achievable (Scoones 1998).

Scoones (1998) and Bebbington (1999) highlight that it is the obtaining and utilising these assets that formulate sustainable livelihoods. They are stocks, which may depreciate over time or be expanded through investment. The value and use of an asset depends not only on the quantity owned but also on the ownership status of the asset (Winters et al 2009). Assets may also fulfil more than one function but are fundamentally different in their relative effectiveness depending on the function they are performing (Dorward et. al 2009).

### *Natural Capital*

In rural communities, natural capital is evidently important given the dependence on the natural environment for agricultural production. This not only provides employment but also access to food and resources to generate income (Landry and Chirwa 2011). Natural capital refers to the natural resource stocks (soil, water, air) and environmental services from which resource flows and services useful for livelihoods are derived (Scoones 1998). Historically, farming has been considered the principal economic activity of rural households, particularly poor rural households, and the dominant view of development has been the small-farm first paradigm which emphasizes promoting agriculture among smallholders (Ellis & Biggs 2001). In this sense, there has been much effort towards the accumulation of and securing rights to natural resource such as land based on the argument that ownership is linked to agricultural production, food security and rural income generation (Winters et al 2009).

In this context, many rural households have access to land but many do not have legal rights to ownership which questions the long-term sustainability for rural farmers. Also, when put into a conflict context, the loss of natural capital in terms of land assets is a vital factor and increases the short-term use of land resources in other (stranger) communities (Korf 2002; Unruh 2008). More importantly the weak legal protection of resources held under customary tenure makes rural communities vulnerable to

dispossession especially in communities with poor governance and weak protection (ILC 2012).

At the same time, utilisation of local environmental resources such as forests and water supplies can provide a substantial contribution to the wellbeing of rural communities and access to these resources is highly dependent on household factors such as demographic and economic characteristics (Babulo et al. 2009; Charnley 2005). Bokil (2002) identifies that effective management and utilisation of natural resources can have important, positive impacts on issues such as poverty, hunger, the local economy and gender inequality. Both hosts and refugees in this research are subsistence farmers and depend heavily on the natural environment highlighting the importance of natural capital

#### *Financial Capital*

Financial capital is defined as the capital base (cash, savings, and basic infrastructure) and comprises the material possessions and investments which can be converted into economic resources. In rural communities, especially in an African context, it is not only the formal financial institutions that are in place that constitute financial capital but also traditional activities such as cattle ownership which indicate wealth and financial capital (Torkelsson and Tassew 2008).

Financial capital is often a difficult asset to draw on due to factors such as low levels of employment, low income and high levels of poverty. It is also not unusual to find that rural populations engage in urban trade in order to access financial capital as rural skills are not necessarily applicable within urban areas (Kvernrod 2004). Financial capital initiatives usually are provided in forms such as micro-finance or credit-union facilities provided by humanitarian donors and stake holders in order to create small-scale financial capital in rural communities. Phillips (2004) states that if micro-finance institutions or programmes are set up, there should be an on-going presence with proven skills, expertise and the ability to effectively oversee this progress. In



displacement scenarios, there is a need to fully understand external constraints such as governmental policies as the individuals displaced may have:

“limited freedom of movement, extreme difficulty getting permission to work legally, have no access to land for agricultural production and not be permitted by local communities to possess livestock” (ibid: 6-7).

This highlights the importance of financial capital as means to gain access to other forms of capital such as human, social and natural (Johnson 1997), which can enhance an individual’s livelihood if they have been deprived of assets previously.

#### *Human Capital*

Human capital comprises the skills, knowledge, and ability to labour, health and physical capability important for the successful pursuit of livelihood strategies (Ashong and Smith 2001). The role of human capital is crucial in understanding capability and is an indicator of a person’s vulnerability, levels of poverty and the availability of infrastructure. It also refers to human beings investing in themselves by means of education, training or other activities which raises their potential future income (Woodhall 1995).

In a development context, it has been argued that individuals “possess lower human capital...which limits their capacity to earn higher income” (Sackey, 2005: 42). At the same time, if a person can become more productive in making commodities through better education, better health... it is not unnatural that they can directly achieve more in relation to other capitals (Sen 1997). This is directly applicable to the conservation of natural resources within rural communities.

Human capital is very closely related to other forms of capital but securing an education and enhancing learning capacity is essential for raising productivity, sustainability and food security of small-scale rural households (Wallace 2007). If an individual has a certain level of human capital they are able to make sound judgements

as to whether they perceive themselves to be in poverty or not, and that has much to do with the education they have received (Sillah 2012).

### *Social Capital*

Social capital is the social resources (networks, social claims/relations, affiliations and associations) which people draw upon when pursuing livelihood strategies (Bebbington 1999). It has also been defined as “the norms and social relations embedded in the social structures of society that enable people to coordinate action and achieve desired goals” (Narayan 1997: 50). It is especially important when understanding the relationships and transactions between individuals, households, and rural communities.

The social capital concept includes the social structures in which individuals and communities experience collective behaviour, follow a set of identified rules/ norms and the opportunity for the pursuit of sustainable livelihoods (Mearns 1996). This can be through improved household income (Lyons and Snoxell 2005; Woolcock 1998) as it is naturally embedded within community relations, norms, practices and institutions (Mukherjee et al. 2002). Personal networks, relationships of trust and membership of formalised groups all impact on the availability and access to resources (De Haan, Brock and Coulibaly 2002). Reinforcing social relationships can enhance social capital in communities where corrupt political and financial systems operate (Development Finance Forum 2004) and can facilitate community development where networks, culture, and tradition, are deeply embedded.

### *Physical Capital*

This includes basic infrastructure such as shelter, transport and resources such as water and energy which enable people to pursue livelihoods (Carney 1998). This access to infrastructure and markets not only encourages non-agricultural livelihoods but is also vital in sustaining agricultural income and supplies (Winters et al 2009). It has been noted that variables such as access to water, markets, ownership/ access to production equipment infrastructure, facilities, transport equipment and improved

seeds are vital in sustaining livelihoods (Hassanshahi et al 2008). In agreement, Sackey (2005) claims that ownership of physical assets reduces poverty levels and means that this capital is closely related to other capital assets. Physical capital in this respect provides the basic amenities to enhance other capital but also indicates the quality of institutions that are able to enhance income (Woodhall 1995).

### *Livelihood Strategies*

It is important to understand that all five capital assets are closely linked and in relation to this research, the access to capital assets directly relates to the implementation of livelihood strategies by households. These strategies can be an indication of how rural communities are able to complement resource availability, cope with unexpected falls in resource supply or increase in demands (Dorward et. al 2009). In addition, it is an indicator of self-settled integration. Scoones (1998) originally identified that there are three types of livelihood strategies which are a key part of the analysis process of the framework. These are:

1. *Agricultural intensification/extensification* to implement livelihood strategies by means of agriculture (including livestock and forestry). Intensification is the increase of labour input (Rao and Rogers 2006) and extensification is the means to provide additional land for agricultural cultivation.

2. *Livelihood diversification*<sup>7</sup> is the process by which a household's income capacity is strengthened in order to efficiently cope with shocks or stresses that may occur. Ellis defines livelihood diversification as:

“The process by which rural families construct a diverse portfolio of activities and social support capabilities in their

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<sup>7</sup> Refer to plethora of works conducted by Ellis (1998, 2000, 2004, 2005) on livelihood diversification.

struggle for survival and in order to improve their standards of living” (1998: 5<sup>8</sup>).

Ellis also makes it clear that livelihood diversification is not necessarily synonymous with income diversification. Diversification is complex as it can refer to seasonality<sup>9</sup>, agriculture or non-farm based livelihood strategies. For example, in the case of rural communities, many rely on similar activities to the exclusion of other income generating activities such as livestock, crop or fish production.

3. *Migration* can create additional livelihood opportunities as goods, financial resources and people are all mobile (DfID 2001). Migration varies depending on factors such as seasonality of movement, length of time away, assets and social structures and institutions but it contributes to household income and forms a central part of risk mitigation strategies such as remittances (Hussein & Nelson 1998: 5). Rural- to- urban migration has been a contributing factor to the reduction of rural household numbers causing, in some cases, permanent loss of income. Urbanisation can also lead capable and educated individuals away from traditional rural connections. At the same time, migration can add much value to a household income and it is often argued that rural households with access to urban remittances are the most productive farmers in southern Africa. This is simply because they are able to afford the inputs so vital to increase yields (Potts 2000)<sup>10</sup>.

Once livelihood strategies have been determined, livelihood outcomes can be assessed and therefore mechanisms can be put in place in order to achieve sustainable rural livelihoods. It was important to understand how both host and refugee groups

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<sup>8</sup> Also refer to works by Adams and Mortimore 1997; Dercon and Krishnan 1996; Lipton and Ellis 1996; Unni 1996 on livelihood portfolios.

<sup>9</sup> Refer to Ellis (1998) and Iliya and Swindell (1997).

<sup>10</sup> Please also refer to Potts (2012) most recent work on ‘de-urbanisation’ which suggests the rate of urbanisation is decreasing and therefore does not necessarily result in permanent individual or income losses for rural households.

accessed resources, capital and livelihood strategies. This would greater inform integration and its sustainability.

### **3.4. The SRL: A Critical Approach**

As Scoones has highlighted, sustainable livelihoods in the late 1990s were associated with good 'sustainability' and development policy needed to be able to move forward linking sustainability to other aspects of, and the term was appropriately linked with livelihoods (Scoones 2007: 591). At the same time, it can be argued that the SRL framework received increased attention as a result of the UN's MDGs which have continued to provide direction for international development (Butler and Mazue 2007). The framework has been subject to much analysis and critique since 1998.

Basic flaws within the initial framework are based around terminology and how it has not been specifically defined for users. For example, definitions of 'poverty' and the 'poor' are complex and have multiple meanings and there should be appropriate definitions to apply to the SRL. At the same time, terms such as 'capital' can cause confusion and may reduce the participant's ability to assert values (Arce 2003). This confusion is created by the fact that the framework has a lengthy manual that should be referred to prior to being put into practice. At the same time, given the importance of adopting a livelihood framework, there is still deep criticism that the approaches are too embedded within a Western world discourse and not enough focus on rural development (Moser and Norton 2001).

Scoones (1998) has provided a plethora of literature and analysis regarding the framework. He explores key conceptual and methodological issues surrounding the framework. Figure 3.2 interprets each process within the framework and attempts to determine three underlying factors:

1. How can one assess who achieves a sustainable livelihood?

2. What are the livelihood resources, institutional processes and livelihood strategies which enable the achievement of this framework for different groups of people?
3. What are the practical, operational and policy implications? (Scoones 1998: 3)

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**Figure 3.2:** IDS Sustainable Livelihoods Framework  
**Source:** Scoones 1998: 4

Although highly influential, Scoones focuses heavily on environmental sustainability neglecting other key factors such as educational, financial or infrastructural sustainability which are key to the Capital Assets Model. Hinshelwood (2003) also argues that the SRL framework can be considered too simple when rigidly interpreted and implemented. Its application did not take into consideration of issues of power and politics as well as key issues relating to culture or gender. It has been criticised for its lack of understanding of the fluidity of people's livelihoods and how these are shaped by local institutional practices and relationships (Clever 2002; Adato and Meinzen-Dick 2002). Sen (1997) also argued that such frameworks were simplistic in viewing human capital as a given within society. It assumes that characteristics of capital assets such as human capability are in place in society without the need to further question it (Bebbington 1999). Additional asset characteristics such as diversification, power relations, social rank and gender relations are not accounted for within the existing framework and there is little acknowledgment that assets are basic agents of power that act to challenge, change and reproduce rules that govern the control, use and transformation of resources (ibid; Dose 2007; Barrett et al. 2006; Scoones 1998; Ellis 1998; Rew and Rew 2003; Mukherjee et al. 2002).

The SRL framework however can mean everything or nothing to users in regards to assessing rural livelihoods (Scoones and Wolmer 2003). Its hybrid, multi-entry approach has meant that development, policy, and action can be entered at and focused in various stages of the framework, which has been suggested to go beyond its standard formulae (ibid). It offers a practical way to understand and respond to the diverse worlds of the poor and its strength is in understanding the ways that families derive their livelihoods from different capabilities and assets and working with community members and other organisations to reduce household vulnerability (Butler and Mazur 2007). Bebbington (1999) also argues that a framework of sustainable livelihoods is needed in order to examine a person's perceptions of access to resources as well-being and poverty are related to livelihood choices and strategies. This stresses the importance of the Capital Assets Model as it better understands how people make a living but also why (ibid). This can also advocate the use of participatory



methods enhancing learning between local communities and outsiders (Scoones 2009; Hinshelwood 2003).

It is important to understand that the Capital Assets Model has mainly been used in relation to the wider SRL framework. Although it has been widely used and critiqued in a variety of academic and policy oriented settings, it is still one of the leading frameworks for understanding livelihoods. This is directly applicable to the use of the Capital Assets Model as sustainable livelihoods are crucial in terms of rural development, poverty reduction and environmental management (Scoones 1998). Adopting a sustainable livelihoods framework is an example of meeting the demands of an evolving geo-political climate including a plethora of development discourse. De Satagé (2004) explains that adopting such frameworks can help to understand how people live, and to identify factors and trends that can enhance or undermine livelihood sustainability. Ellis (2001) also suggests this type of framework is an opportunity to understand the accumulation and limitations of assets amongst the poor and the surrounding environment to move them out of poverty. At the same time, the model has rarely been used when investigating displaced groups such as refugees justifying its adoption within this research.

### **3.5. Conceptual Framework: Adding a Refugee Lens**

Extensive work has been carried out on testing, implementing, and critiquing the SRL framework. As yet, however, no alternative model has been produced to replace or further challenge the existing framework. Although rarely with refugee groups, the approach has been adapted in many ways and one notable literary adaptation is the use of the framework within armed violence scenarios (Collinson 2003) (Figure 3.3). Collinson has taken the initial model and adapted it given that much of the existing literature was based on stable development situations that did not include conflict (ibid). In relation to this research, Collinson's model highlights the instability of situations which is transferable to displacement situations. She highlights that there are additional factors involved when securing livelihoods and this research highlights

the importance of these factors within the Capital Asset Model. Similar to this research, the adaptation of livelihoods in situations of armed violence is very context specific and most refugee groups will experience a loss of assets. Longley and Maxwell (2003) suggest that a greater understanding of the 'conflict' context is needed in order to understand how armed violence will impact on the access to sustainable livelihoods. It is important to understand the politics of armed violence especially that within rural borderlands and how that can affect displaced communities pursuing livelihoods.

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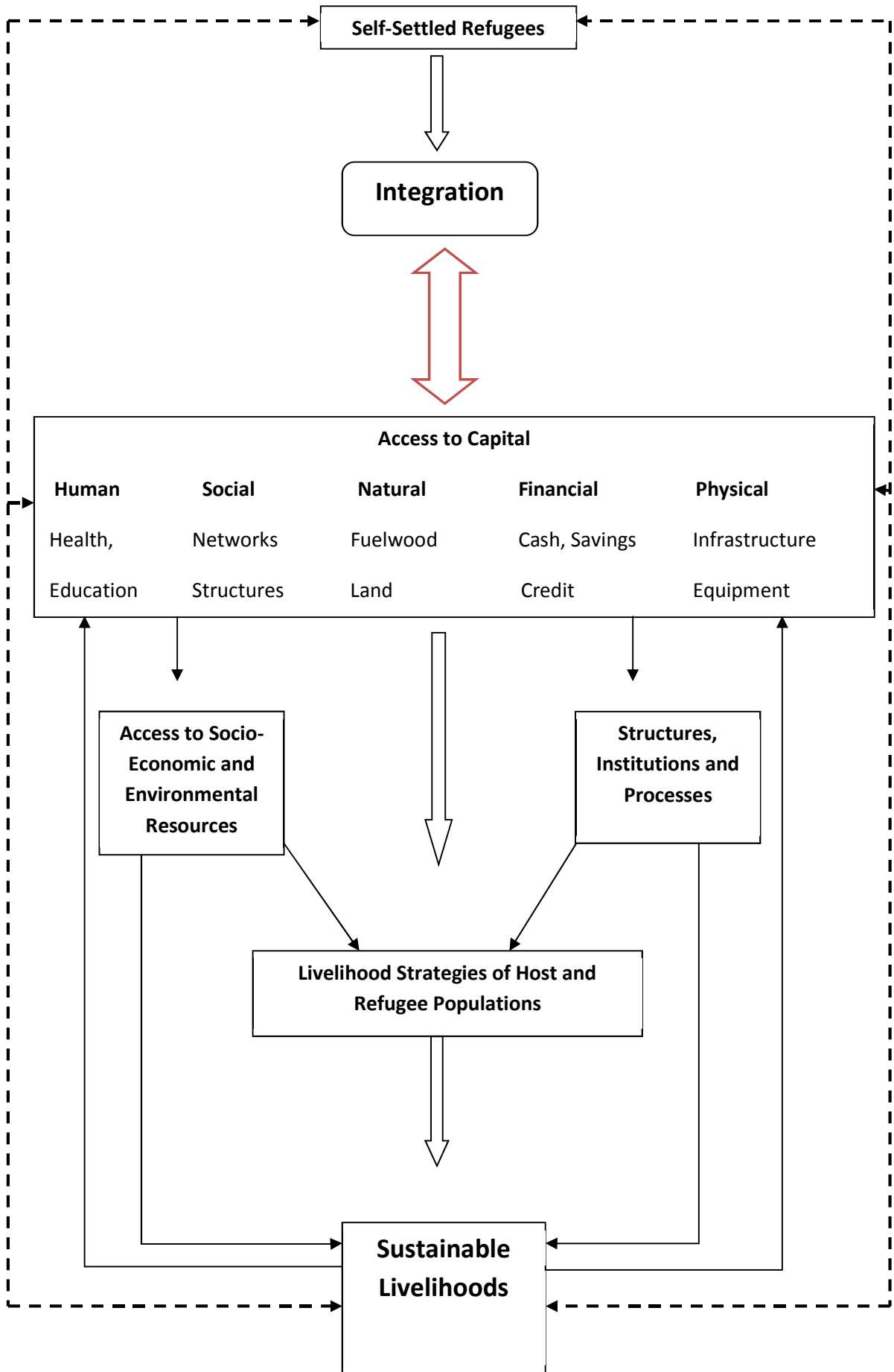
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**Figure 3.3:** Adapted livelihoods framework in situations of conflict and political instability **Source:** S. Collinson, ed. 2003

Although the SRL has been used extensively, shifts in development discourse have side-lined the framework in favour of other concepts and methodological approaches in regards to livelihoods. In addition, it has rarely been used in a displacement context, investigating refugee groups. Displacement is an additional factor that can exacerbate the connections, networks and relationships of trust that exist within rural communities and, as a result, safety nets become exhausted and tension can arise (Unruh 2008). In addition, self-settlement has been identified as an under-researched but a viable temporary and long-term solution in displacement situations. Refugees sometimes choose to self-settle outside of refugee camps and formal settlements given that they face loss of legal rights, livelihoods, community development and assets with encampment. In this case, self-settlement can be advocated when host and refugee groups share common characteristics. At the same time, self-settlement raises questions on sustainability of livelihoods for both host and refugee groups given that both communities will use, share and compete for community resources. It is in this respect that the integration and livelihoods of self-settled refugees directly link given the increase in population demographics and competition for local and natural resources which may have been limited to begin with. The Capital Asset Model will be used to understand how self-settled refugees access capital assets to enhance integration and to implement and sustain livelihoods. Scoones (2009) previously suggested that the focus on the individual asset pentagon as an economic term diverted many from the model as a whole and its shift from a checklist to a framework changed the way it was viewed and allowed it to become politicised. However, given that the model has rarely been used in displacement situations it will be applied as part of a wider conceptual framework to not only understand rural livelihoods but also to understand the integration process of self-settled refugees.

Figure 3.4 highlights the conceptual framework to be adopted within this research. Firstly, it is important to identify self-settled refugee communities and how they are able to facilitate integration into host communities. The level of integration determines the availability of and access to resources and it is important to understand what assets refugees are in possession of and how they are able to build up their

capital asset “stocks” in order to implement livelihood strategies. The increased access to capital may determine the level of integration within communities and so access to capital and integration is a two-way process on-going during self-settlement. The access to capital by self-settled refugees ultimately leads to the implementation of livelihood strategies but it also has wider implications within the community. It is important to identify and understand how self-settled groups access socio-economic and environmental resources and how this links with policy structures and the long-term integration process. These will impact on the sustainability of livelihood strategies and self-settlement.



**Figure 3.4:** Conceptual Framework  
 Source: Author

### **3.6. Summary**

This chapter has outlined the use of the Capital Assets Model within this research. It has drawn on the importance of livelihood frameworks for understanding how households implement and sustain livelihoods as well as cope with external factors such as shocks or risks. The model has been highlighted in relation to the wider DfID SRL framework where its supporters argue it is neutral and people-centred. Critiques of the framework have argued that the framework does not necessarily reflect the reality in practical terms and excludes some vital aspects such as gender and politics. In addition, the framework has rarely been implemented in displacement situations to understand how refugees access resources and implement livelihoods. There are additional difficulties in displacement and more specifically self-settled situations where increased demographics and competition for existing resources are put under additional pressures.

As the conceptual framework highlighted, integration of self-settled refugees and the implementation of livelihoods are directly linked and the use of the Capital Assets Model allows the documentation of livelihoods, to assess and monitor current strategies, design and implement interventions and challenge the way we think about rural people and development options (Scoones and Wolmer 2003). As Scoones and Wolmer (2003) concluded, there is still no alternative option to this approach but it should not discourage researchers, academics, developmental organisations or even Government from continuing the search for a realistic, but politically sophisticated, sustainable livelihoods approach.

Chapters Two and Three have identified the concept of self-settlement and highlighted the importance of livelihoods. A methodological framework needs to be devised in order to adequately investigate how self-settled refugees integrate into host communities and how they access resources to implement and sustain livelihoods. Chapter Four will understand the process of researching refugee groups and devise an appropriate methodology for the data collection process in order to fully understand the integration and livelihood strategies of self-settled refugee groups.

## **4. Investigating Self Settlement and Sustainable Livelihoods**

### **4.1. Introduction**

Chapter Three explained the use of the Capital Assets Model as the theoretical framework for this research. It identified that it was not only necessary to understand the integration of self-settled refugee groups but also how both hosts and refugees are able to access resources to implement livelihood strategies. A methodological framework was devised in order to capture information on self-settlement and livelihoods as a result of the conceptual framework also outlined in Chapter Three.

Firstly, this chapter will understand grounded theory as the research philosophy and existing methodological literature on refugee research. This is in order to establish a comprehensive working methodology. In turn, this will lead to the research design. This will explain the Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) that was conducted and how this informed village and participant criteria for data collection. In addition, the advantages of applying a multi-method approach will then be explored as well as the strengths and weaknesses of methods used. Finally, methodological concerns such as positionality and ethics will be discussed.

### **4.2. Research Philosophy**

The aim of this research project was to examine the challenges, livelihood strategies and policy implications of integrating 'self-settled' refugees within host communities in Sub-Saharan Africa. The pre-existing literature identified that there had been little academic research investigating self-settled refugee groups and how they were able to fully integrate, access resources and implement sustainable livelihoods. As a result, the research philosophy was based on Glaser and Straus (1967) grounded theory which generates/ builds on theory from empirical data. It is a form of qualitative analysis in order to understand and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin and Strauss 2008). Grounded theory is widely practised in both qualitative and quantitative methodologies and there is much academic support for its implementation, although there are variations in its application (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Glaser 1978, 1992;



Strauss and Corbin 1990, 1994, 1998, 2008; Charmaz 1995, 2000, 2006; Covan 2007; Clarke 2005; Stern 2009 and Birks and Mills 2011). For the purpose of this research, grounded theory was used to investigate how self-settled refugee groups were able to integrate into host communities and how both hosts and refugees accessed resources to implement livelihood strategies. Results from a multi-method approach substantiated if self-settled integration was possible and how both groups accessed resources to implement specific livelihood strategies. This ultimately informs the sustainability of such livelihood practices for both groups and the validity of the Capital Assets Model in situations of self-settlement.

Klunklin and Greenwood (2006) observed that grounded theory is closely linked to symbolic interactionism whereby close contact with individuals and their everyday activities gives a greater understanding about the choices they make and why. As Table 4.1 highlights, symbolic interactionism gives a greater understanding of the context and theory of the research process and grounded theory is putting those questions into action. This case study is a hybrid of these theories whereby a hypothesis was not used to determine results but results represented a range methods and data sets. The analysis of such data was completed qualitatively using coding techniques based on themes, theory and questions asked.

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**Table 4.1:** Methods used in Symbolic Interactionism and Grounded Theory

**Source:** Adapted from Klunklin and Greenwood (2006)

### **4.3. Refugee Methodologies**

It was essential to understand refugee methodologies as it ultimately informed the research design and methods adopted in this research. It was also important to understand refugee methodologies in light of the plethora of refugee literature (identified in Chapter Two) especially given emerging global contexts and the contested definitions of a refugee. It has been commonly agreed that a major

contribution to refugee research literature consists of situation reports by human rights organisations and NGOs in order to promote change in policy (Jacobsen and Landau 2003, Black 2001, Bakewell 2007) as well as countless qualitative and quantitative methods which have been employed by academics and researchers. This is especially relevant in situations, such as self-settlement, that is under-researched and not thoroughly defined in the literature. At the same time, before a research methodology is applied, a researcher's terminology needs to be defined and in consistent use throughout (Jacobsen and Landau 2003). The terminology of the 1951 Geneva Convention and 1967 Protocol has been identified, understanding the basic context of the research project. In addition, terminology has also been defined in regards to the theoretical and methodological framework in order to determine the data collection process to investigate the livelihoods of both host and refugee groups.

Refugee methodologies are broad, complex and have a range of disciplinary interests (Colson 2007: 321) and it is essential when working with refugee communities to understand how they function as a whole (Guerin and Guerin 2007: 151). In relation to this research, this aspect is important given that greater understanding is needed for both host and refugee groups and how they interact with each other, not just independently. At the same time, it has been argued that trying to address policy when conducting research in refugee communities weakens the way in which methods are implemented in the field and will ensure that fundamental flaws will continue to be ignored at policy level (Bakewell 2008). As a result, research questions must determine the methodology in regards to refugee and forced migration situations as a policy friendly methodology can limit the research questions to be asked (*ibid*; Schmidt 2007). The use of participatory methods is essential within a refugee research project because questionnaires and surveys alone will not provide the depth of information intended within a social research project (Guerin and Guerin 2007). Participatory methods which include increased involvement of beneficiaries, valuing of local knowledge and promotion of social change through the active engagement of participants (Dona 2007; Chambers 1994) are important in the context of a rural African refugee research agenda where the typical interview methodologies are not

sufficient to validate data. Similarly without participatory methods, there are limitations in forming quick social relationships. Time is needed to gain trust within communities as well as permission and collaboration in order to collect data (ibid). At the same time, this can cause ethical considerations depending on how integrated a researcher is within the study site and how that then informs bias, values and results (Jacobsen and Landau 2003). In this research, it was essential to be flexible when researching refugee communities in order to regularly update and validate findings (Bloch 1999:378).

There was a need to look beyond stereo-typical host-refugee relations which Guerin and Guerin (2007) refer to as *Non-Compartmentalization*. This suggests that refugees who live in close proximity to their hosts and have shared ideals need to be treated in an equal manner so the researcher can understand the community as a whole. Separate group/ gender interviews can still take place but the understanding of social practice, economics and even local community politics is essential. Colson (2007) has previously described the experiences of refugees who are self-settled as comparable and contrastable to those who are warehoused in camps. Colson assumes that if refugees are registered but are self-settled they are in the same category as refugees registered within camps. It was important not to make such generalisations in order to thoroughly understand self-settlement, enhancing quality of data.

There are constant methodological, ethical and control issues when researching refugee groups and this has widened gaps in academic research. However, this is also an indication that refugee methodology has become outdated and there is a need to explore new methods. There is a need to take refugee methodologies and make them transferable along more longitudinal lines (Koser 2004). There is still a relatively large influence of data that is collected scientifically and ethically because it is a powerful tool for policy implementation. Jacobsen and Landau (2003) argue that too often research has failed to maintain appropriate standards of transparency and representativeness, which has resulted in flawed policy. They further their argument specifying the failure to use robust methods can undermine the credibility of refugee

research. This has led to further debates on refugee methodologies (Rodgers 2004; Landau and Jacobsen 2005; Schmidt 2007; Voutira and Donà 2007; Mackenzie *et al.* 2007; Bakewell 2007).

These debates made sure that this research employed multi-methods that fully engaged with both host and refugee groups. This research was not only limited in the literature on self-settlement but also as a result of the less established methodologies, formal definitions and bureaucratic categories (Bakewell 2008: 450). The methods implemented in this case study were selected in order to minimise formal categories and definitions so that community dynamics of self-settlement were fully explored.

#### **4.4. Research Design**

Empirical data was collected in Western Region of The Gambia, West Africa where the majority of self-settled refugees reside. This region has seen sporadic waves of violence since the start of the Casamance conflict in 1982 (as will be discussed in Chapter Five) and varying refugee settlement patterns. Work previously conducted by the researcher, local NGOs and UN organisations has stressed the importance of understanding the integration of self-settled refugees and the socio- economic, environmental and political implications they have on local communities and policy. It would be impossible to target all self-settled groups since 1982 and so this research concentrated on self-settled refugees who had arrived in The Gambia since the last major influx in 2006. Those who had arrived prior to this period were not excluded from the study but tested for comparative purposes in regards to integration and livelihoods.

The case study from this research project combined several factors regarding host/refugee relations, integration and livelihoods and needed a methodology that suited the needs of all potential stakeholders and beneficiaries. As a result, a four stage research process (Figure 4.1) was developed in order to implement a multi-method approach as well as to link each stage of research so it could relate back to the relevant research objectives in order to achieve the overall research aim (Table 4.2).



**Figure 4.1:** Four Stage Research Process

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Chapter Included Within</b>
To critically evaluate relevant and current literature theories	Chapter Two, Three and Four
To identify key socio-economic and environmental impacts for both host and refugee populations	Chapter Five and Six
To determine and analyse the livelihood strategies of both populations in relation to the SRL Framework	Chapter Four, Five, Six and Seven
To develop and apply an analytical framework in order to inform policy makers and NGOs of the challenges of integrating Casamance refugees into The Gambia	Chapter eight

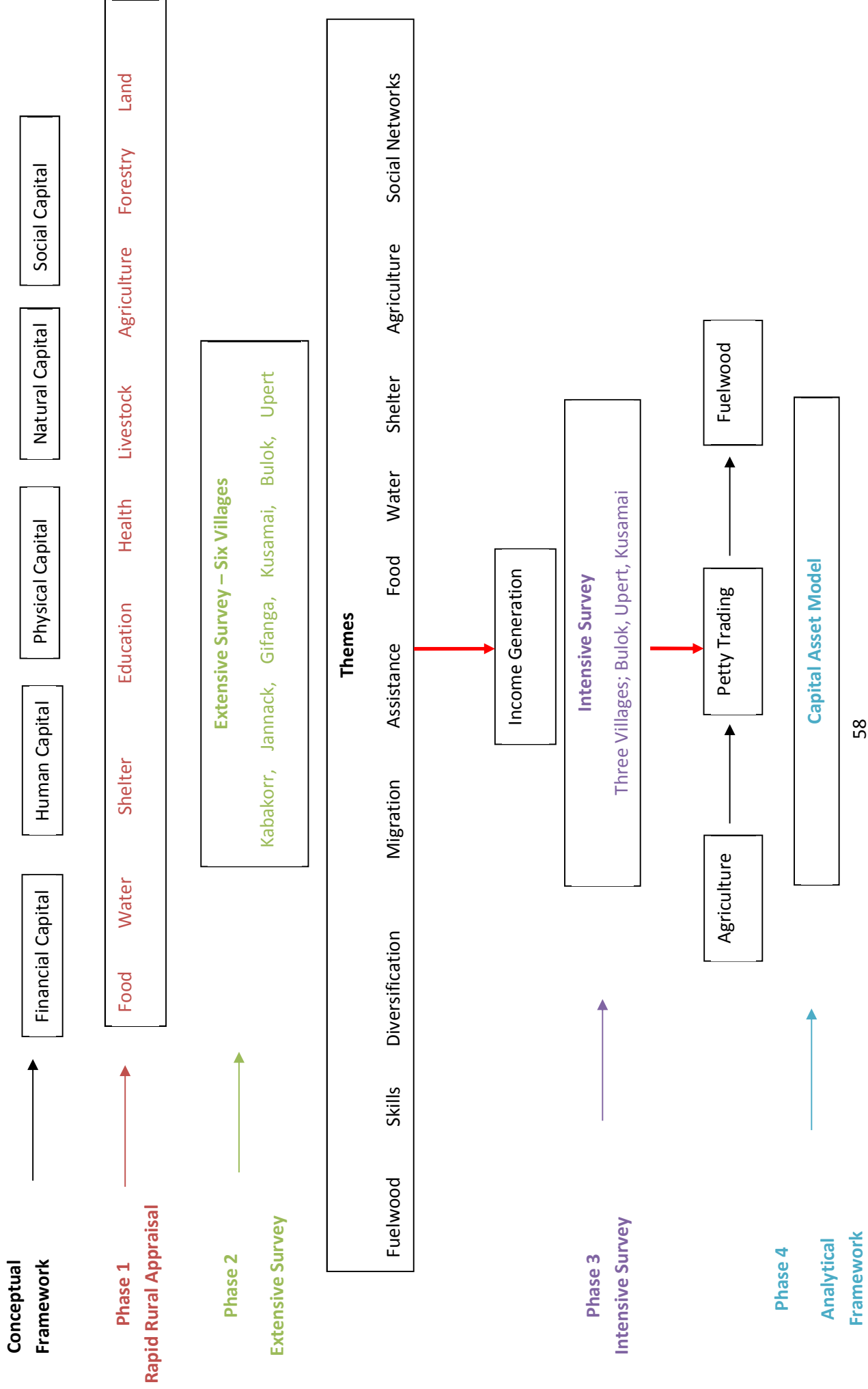
**Table 4.2:** Objectives of Thesis in relation to Chapter Structure

This process was developed into a research design (figure 4.2) that gave specific details regarding data collection. The understanding of the conceptual framework was incorporated within Phase one, the RRA, in order to investigate generic challenges of integrating Casamance refugees in The Gambia. This investigated any existing research on self-settlement in The Gambia and humanitarian interventions for refugee communities. Results from the RRA led to the selection of villages and themes to explore in the latter stages of research. It was necessary to collect empirical data in two phases in order to 1) oversee the various livelihood activities in both the rainy season (months June-October) and the dry season (months November-May) 2) understand the relationship between host and refugees during the 'hungry period' (months May-September) where food insecurity is at its highest and, 3) gain a year-round perspective on the availability of and access to community resources.

Phase two, the extensive survey, explored identified themes in greater detail engaging with greater numbers of host and refugee participants. Additional methods were applied to follow up on issues identified in the RRA, map community resources, and understand the broad integration issues at the community level. Initial results suggested that income generation was the main challenge for self-settled refugees and their hosts. At this stage (Phase three, the intensive survey), it was important to investigate income generation in greater detail and so the number of sample communities was reduced and livelihood strategies were specifically investigated at the household and individual level. Phases two and three of this research design fulfil research objectives two and three as identified in chapter one.

Finally, an analytical framework was applied in order to interpret results, analyse them against the Capital Assets Model and relate that back to the conceptual framework and literature on self-settled refugees. This would inform policy makers on the challenges of integrating self-settled Casamance refugees in rural Gambian communities. This fulfils objective four of the research objectives.

**Figure 4.2: Research Design**





#### 4.4.1. Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA)

The RRA was conducted in order to interview hosts and refugees in Western Region about integration. It is important to note that at the time of the RRA (2009), the majority of the refugee population had been permanently settled in Gambian communities for nearly three years and there were no apparent signs of return. Using the Capital Assets Model at a broad level, key issues in health, education, environment, livelihoods and social networks were identified and data sets relating to these issues were secured (Figure 4.3). Census data, climate data, agricultural stocks and crop production levels were obtained from the relevant Government Departments, as well as data on refugee registrations from UNHCR and Gambia Red Cross Society (GRCS). Land cover information extracted from aerial photographs and satellite images were also obtained in order to create a database of population and environmental change at the district and community levels for the period 1980-2008 (where available). Using this data, the timing of refugee influxes were examined in relation to access of capital assets. The missions of Government and NGO sectors were also identified during this phase.

Secondary Data Sets		
Census Data Satellite Imagery Agricultural Stocks/ Crop Production Climatic Data	Refugee Registration Data	Missions of Government and NGO sectors

**Figure 4.3:** Secondary data sets collected during the RRA

After these data sets were secured, a pilot study was conducted in refugee communities to explore themes and issues identified above at community level in relation to hosting refugees. This study was opportunistic although there was some pre-planning in relation to what villages would be visited, and the access to these

villages was determined through a local source. A significant importance of conducting a pilot study was so that the researcher could be introduced into communities with the knowledge they could return to conduct further research. Six villages were visited during this pilot study and all were within 5km of the international border which has been subject to constant refugee incursions. An initial meeting with the Alkalo (village chief) was conducted in all communities prior to any interviews taking place as this would grant approval within the village. Mixed gender focus groups were held in each community and a semi-structured interview was conducted with each village Alkalo and any community elders if they were available (Table 4.3). There was insufficient time to conduct thorough, in-depth interviews and those who participated were chosen on the basis of being present in the community at the time of data collection. Themes discussed were to an extent pre-planned (through information collected from secondary data sets/ grey literature) but gave participants the freedom to elaborate if they chose to.

<b>Village</b>	<b>Method Used</b>	<b>Position in Community</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Main Occupation</b>
Bulok	Semi-Structured Interview	Village Alkalo	Male	Jola	Farmer <sup>11</sup>
Bulok	Semi-Structured Interview	Refugee President	Male	Jola	Farmer
Bulok	Semi-Structured Interview	Imam	Male	Jola	Farmer
Bulok	Focus Group Discussion	Host	Female	Jola	Farmer
Bulok	Focus Group Discussion	Host	Female	Jola	Farmer
Bulok	Focus Group Discussion	Host	Female	Mandinka	Farmer
Bulok	Focus Group Discussion	Host	Female	Jola	Farmer
Bulok	Focus Group Discussion	Refugee	Female	Jola	Farmer
Bulok	Focus Group Discussion	Refugee	Female	Jola	Farmer
Jannack	Semi-Structured Interview	Alkalo	Male	Jola	Farmer
Jannack	Focus Group Discussion	Refugee	Male	Jola	Farmer
Jannack	Focus Group Discussion	Host	Male	Jola	Farmer
Jannack	Focus Group Discussion	Host	Female	Jola	Farmer
Jannack	Focus Group Discussion	Host	Female	Jola	Farmer
Jannack	Focus Group Discussion	Refugee	Female	Jola	Farmer
Upert	Semi-Structured Interview	Alkalo	Male	Jola	Farmer
Upert	Semi-Structured	Refugee (Former	Male	Jola	Farmer

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<sup>11</sup> Participants saw themselves as farmers above any other livelihood strategy they conducted which is a fair reflection. It was unclear however, if any of these participants implemented any other livelihood strategy that they sustained all-year round.

	Interview	stipend for NGO)			
Upert	Focus Group Discussion	Refugee	Male	Jola	Farmer
Upert	Focus Group Discussion	Refugee	Male	Jola	Farmer
Upert	Focus Group Discussion	Host	Female	Jola	Farmer
Upert	Focus Group Discussion	Host	Male	Jola	Farmer
Ballen	Semi- Structured Interview	Alkalo	Male	Jola	Farmer
Ballen	Focus Group Discussion	Host	Male	Jola	Farmer
Ballen	Focus Group Discussion	Host	Male	Jola	Farmer
Ballen	Focus Group Discussion	Host	Female	Jola	Farmer
Ballen	Focus Group Discussion	Host	Female	Jola	Farmer
Kalling	Semi- Structured Interview	Alkalo	Male	Jola	Farmer
Kalling	Focus Group Discussion	Refugee	Female	Jola	Farmer
Kalling	Focus Group Discussion	Refugee	Female	Jola	Farmer
Kalling	Focus Group Discussion	Refugee	Male	Jola	Farmer
Kalling	Focus Group Discussion	Refugee	Male	Jola	Farmer
Kalling	Focus Group Discussion	Refugee	Male	Jola	Farmer
Kusamai	Semi- Structured Interview	Alkalo	Male	Jola	Farmer
Kusamai	Focus Group Discussion	Host	Male	Jola	Farmer
Kusamai	Focus Group Discussion	Host	Male	Jola	Farmer
Kusamai	Focus Group Discussion	Refugee	Male	Jola	Farmer
Kusamai	Focus Group Discussion	Refugee	Male	Jola	Farmer

**Table 4.3:** RRA Interviewee Characteristics

Results from these discussions and interviews were themed and ranked according to their status of importance by participants. Focus group rankings were based on a collective answer from the group and this was quantified in relation to answers given in the semi-structured interviews. Table 4.4 highlights the main themes that were discussed during the RRA and the colour coding highlights the status of importance of each theme as highlighted by communities. Agriculture<sup>12</sup> and food were the two themes that emerged as the most important. This can be considered typical for both hosts and refugees as farming is the primary income generating activity and additional population numbers has increased demand for food. More interestingly, the RRA highlighted that themes such as forestry and land were not initially considered a challenge to the integration of refugees. In terms of their general importance for livelihoods however, it was necessary to pursue them further to gain a greater understanding of livelihood strategies for both groups.

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<sup>12</sup> Agriculture was discussed in terms of access to seeds and crop varieties within each village.

Village Name	Food	Water	Shelter	Education	Health	Livestock	Agriculture	Forestry	Land
<b>Bulok</b>	Most Important Issue	Very Important Issue	Less Important Issue	Most Important Issue	Not an Issue	Not an Issue	Very Important Issue	Less Important Issue	Not an Issue
<b>Jannack</b>	Most Important Issue	Most Important Issue	Most Important Issue	Less Important Issue	Less Important Issue	Not an Issue	Very Important Issue	Very Important Issue	Very Important Issue
<b>Upat</b>	Most Important Issue	Less Important Issue	Not an Issue	Less Important Issue	Less Important Issue	Less Important Issue	Most Important Issue	Not an Issue	Not an Issue
<b>Ballen</b>	Very Important Issue	Less Important Issue	Not an Issue	Not an Issue	Most Important Issue	Not an Issue	Very Important Issue	Most Important Issue	Very Important Issue
<b>Kalling</b>	Most Important Issue	Most Important Issue	Most Important Issue	Very Important Issue	Very Important Issue	Less Important Issue	Very Important Issue	Less Important Issue	Less Important Issue
<b>Kusumai</b>	Very Important Issue	Less Important Issue	Most important Issue	Most important Issue	Not an issue	Not an issue	Very Important Issue	Less Important Issue	Not an issue

**Table 4.4:** Results from the Rapid Rural Appraisal conducted in January 2009

The themes discussed in table 4.4 facilitated the data collection process and highlighted the need to pursue these themes in greater detail with hosts and refugees. It was important to integrate the issues raised in the RRA to understand how they impacted on the availability of and access to socio-economic and environmental resources for both groups.

The RRA also gave highlighted villages to be reinvestigated in the latter stages of data collection as a result of community acceptance, response rate and the reliability of information collected. It was also decided that logistical support within these communities was initially needed in order to gain further acceptance and trust. An informal collaboration was set up with an international NGO, Concern Universal (CU) which has been present in The Gambia since 1992 and has been actively engaged in

refugee communities. Their local partner, Saint Joseph Family Farm Centre (SJFF) based in Bwiam, Western Region, puts it at the forefront of refugee influxes and any potential challenges within the area. A research assistant/ translator was chosen from SJFF so they could provide local and historical information, mode of transport to and from remote villages as well as initial acceptance into communities. The issues of being affiliated with an international/ local NGO will be discussed in section 4.7.

The RRA supported the use of the Capital Assets Model within this research as it identified key natural, human, physical and even social assets that were of importance and concern for hosts and refugees. This was even more pertinent given that agriculture (the main livelihood strategy of both groups) was the most important issue identified.

#### **4.5. Data Collection**

As figure 4.2 highlights, after the RRA, data collection was broken down into two separate phases in order to collect a variety of data at different times of the year as well as filter from community level discussions to more intensive household/ individual data collection.

##### **4.5.1. Phase Two: Extensive Survey**

It has been previously identified by local and international agencies that fifty six communities in Foni districts within Western Region<sup>13</sup> have hosted Casamance refugees. As a result, six villages were identified by the researcher. This decision was based on time it took to complete the RRA in communities. It would have been unrealistic to target all refugee communities in the timescale provided and it was decided that there would be less depth in results if there were a greater number of communities.

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<sup>13</sup> Western Region has since been officially renamed to West Coast Region. However, for the purpose of this research it will continue to be named Western Region.

Villages were selected due to size, proportion of population and the total number of refugees officially registered within them. It was important at this stage to identify villages that had a large population of refugees as well as villages that had few refugees. It was also important to identify if there were any villages where the number of refugees outnumbered the local population. This was to investigate the increased pressures on local resources and whether the increased population had led to the breakdown of local management systems. Statistical data from the 1993 and 2003 censuses and the 2006-2007 Senegalese refugee registration informed village selection taking into consideration the significant increase in local population (Figure 4.4). It was also important to select villages that had been researched before (by the researcher, local or international aid agencies) receiving greater humanitarian support and compare that to villages which had received less attention. The consistency of humanitarian intervention in certain communities also affected the villages chosen for settlement by refugees.

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Lancaster Library, Coventry University.

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**Figure 4.4:** Population changes in refugee villages since 1993  
**Source:** GBoS and UNHCR



Before village criteria was finalised, a meeting with CU and SJFF was set to discuss village selection. Villages were identified by the researcher but it was important to listen to the recommendations of local agencies that are active in the region. Village selection, highlighted in figure 4.5 identifies the six sample settlements chosen:

- 1. Bulok** - This is identified as the second largest refugee community within Western Region after Sibanor. The head of the refugee community resides here and it was important to understand his role and how he was able to assist refugees in the community and other Foni districts. Bulok is also based on the main road and is the first Foni village highlighting a shift from the urban Kombo districts. Previous fieldwork experience indicated that this was a large settlement with a large refugee community. It was important to understand whether refugees had access to transport links to travel to urban centres for livelihood purposes.
- 2. Kabakorr** – This village is further inland but also based on the main road, with access to main transport links. It was identified however that this community only hosts a small number of refugees in relation to border communities. Previous NGO research had identified that the lack of refugees within this village was due to its geographical location and refugees were hesitant to reside here as it was considered too far from the international border.
- 3. Upert** – According to the 2003 census, Upert had a very small proportion of people living in this border village. Since the arrival of Casamance refugees in 2006, there was a sharp increase in population numbers and the number of refugees now outnumbers the local Gambian population. Geographically, this village was interesting because it is situated on the Gambia- Senegalese border where rebel activity is rumoured to take place. This village is also frequently used by both groups to travel to and from Casamance.
- 4. Jannack** – This village has an equal proportion of host and refugee residents and has been researched extensively in the past by various agencies such as Concern Universal, SJFF and the UN. As a result of the RRA, Jannack was a village that had highlighted many themes of importance. For this reason and

given its previous humanitarian support, it was appropriate to further research this community.

5. **Kusamai** – This village was also previously identified in the RRA and similarly to Jannack has a large refugee population and has received a vast amount of humanitarian aid and support. Its accessible transport links to the Casamance border is also a factor as to why refugees reside there.
6. **Jifanga**<sup>14</sup> – A village close to Kusamai with a large refugee community and also on the same connecting road heading to the Casamance border. The close distance between Jifanga and Kusamai made this village interesting due to potential competition for natural resources.

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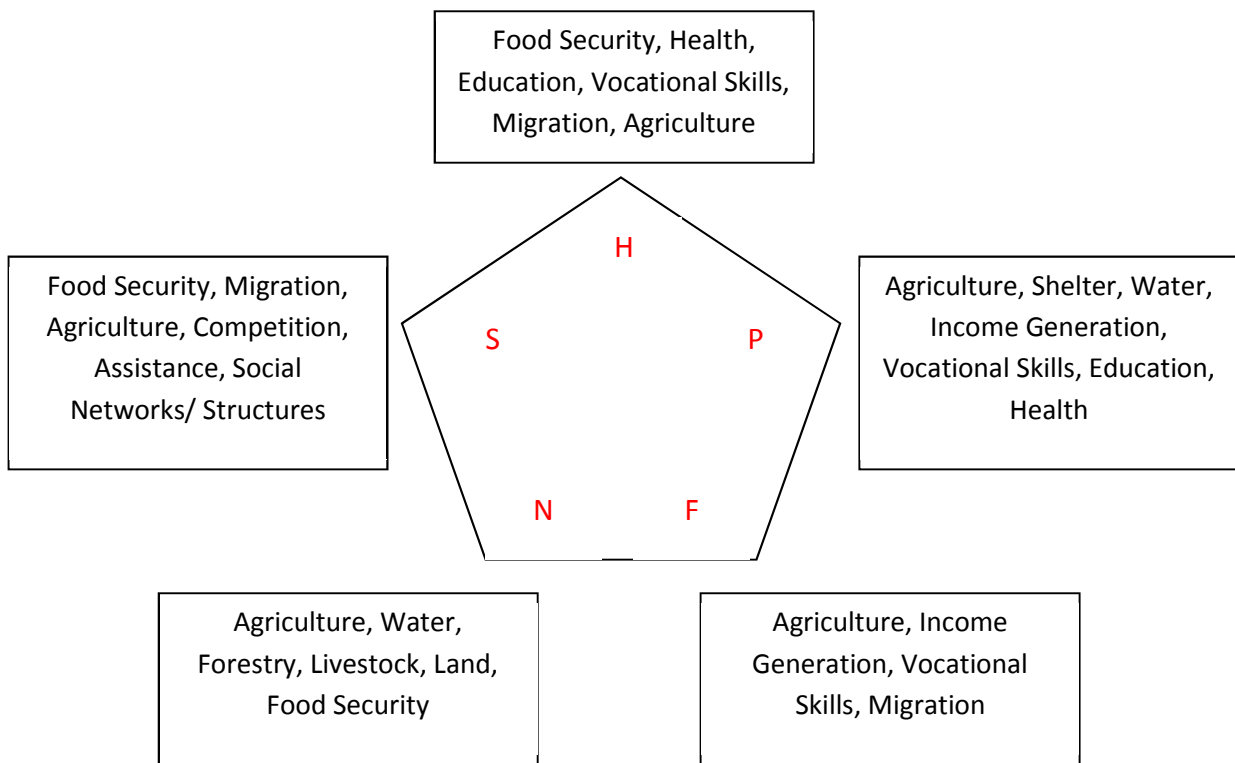
<sup>14</sup> In the early stages of research there was slight confusion on the exact spelling of this community but has since been clarified as Gifanga.

Library, Coventry University.

**Figure 4.5:** Base Map of The Gambia highlighting settlements chosen for data collection  
**Data Source:** GBoS

Upon analysing the data collected from the RRA and comparing that from census data obtained from the Gambian Bureau of Statistics (GBoS), five out of six villages were located within the same District boundary of Foni Bintang. The village of Bulok was located within Foni Brefet and a small sample of research was undertaken in the village of Ballen (in conjunction with the UN World Food Programme) which is located in the District of Foni Kansala. Although this can be criticised as a small sample considering refugees also reside in four other districts, it has the largest Gambian population from the 2003 census with 15,136 people (GBoS 2003). The geographical setting mainly within one district boundary supports the reliability and validity of data as sampling a village from each district boundary would not necessarily consider a fair representation of refugee integration.

At this stage, the themes pursued during the RRA informed the themes that were to be further pursued. It was to understand integration and access to resources at a broader community level. In relation to the Capital Assets Model, themes were linked back to gain a general understanding of the availability of resources at the community level. It was clear at this stage that themes were overlapped and related to one or more asset and this applied to both hosts and refugees (figure 4.6).



**Figure 4.6:** Extensive survey themes in relation to Capital Asset Model

#### 4.5.2. Phase Three: Intensive Survey

At this stage, there was a shift from community understanding of integration and livelihoods to a more in-depth household/ individual understanding. As a result, the village sample was halved from six to three. The three villages to be assessed were:

- 1. Bulok** - Bulok was an interesting village to conduct fieldwork in. Its geographical location situated between Kombo East and Foni Brefet provided easy access to the urban trading centre of Brikama and easily accessible transport links allows business and trading to take place more frequently in comparison with other Foni communities. This village was also a key place of interest due to the position of the refugee president. Initial Results indicated that because of this, the refugee community were able to access the same resources as many

Gambian host families to implement numerous livelihood strategies (for example, selling of firewood and charcoal, fishmongers, beekeeping and second hand clothes selling.) Due to the large size of this community, the access to natural capital was more in demand compared to smaller communities and so there was greater competition for local resources such as Baobab, Monkey Bread and forest fruits which were key for income generation. It was necessary to map how resources are collected and by whom and the availability of markets for refugees to sustain livelihoods. A large Gambian military presence in Bulok also made this village interesting.

2. **Upert** – Originally, Upert was identified as a relatively small border settlement with few inhabitants but vastly grew as a result of the refugee influx. This has led the village to expand and has ultimately twinned itself with the nearby settlement of Nyang-Bolong as both hosts and refugees ultimately consider themselves as residents of Upert. As a result, they were used together as part of this study as to not differentiate between the social and political norms already in place within the community. At the same time, the geographical location of Upert was always a point of interest. Initial results suggested that immediate access to natural resources across the international border had allowed refugee households to benefit from resources on both sides of the border. It appeared that the refugee population hold a great deal of power and are influential in local village politics.
3. **Kusamai** –As a result of the refugee influx in 2006, the population of the village of Kusamai had increased dramatically and there is still a large refugee population. However, by contrast to Upert and Bulok, the power within this village is still very much retained by the host population. Kusamai has close transport links to the Senegalese border and transport frequently passes through the village. Given the distance from the village to the main road, very few people travel to the roadside to engage in income generating activities suggesting that there is greater competition for resources within the village. Aside from farming, the collection of fuelwood and bush products is in high

demand as a livelihood strategy. At the same time, although there is free access to land within Kusamai, there are still many refugees who are being hosted within a Gambian compound.

At this stage, there was a shift from generic themes to focus on the livelihood strategies conducted by both groups as initial results highlighted income generation as the most important theme for both groups. Three main livelihood strategies were identified within these communities:

- 1. Agriculture** – Agriculture is the primary income generating activity for hosts and refugees and for that reason it was important to continue to investigate this theme. Factors such as unpredictable levels of rainfall, unavailability of ‘good’ or fertile seeds and the slowing of humanitarian assistance concerned farmers in regards to the annual harvest. Farmers, however realised that until an alternative sustainable livelihood is found, they would need to continue to depend on agriculture. For the purpose of this study, agriculture was investigated by means of ‘upland’ crops such as cereals and grain. Rice production was largely excluded from the study because although it is the staple food crop in The Gambia, rice production has significantly declined and The Gambia as a whole imports 80% of rice and therefore was not surveyed.
- 2. Petty Trading** – There were many income generating activities undertaken by female members of each community and has highlighted gender empowerment and supplemented household income. This is one of the most popular informal sector activities. These activities include the sale of horticultural produce at local village markets, the sale of local bush<sup>15</sup> products such as baobab, monkey bread and mint leaves and the occasional income from the sale of items made at the skills centre such as soap, batik and tie n’ dye (Figure 4.7). The latter was particularly popular with refugee women. In

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<sup>15</sup> ‘Bush’ products will be referred to as solely products that are collected by individuals from the local woodland or forest. They do not refer to any kind of bush meat as this is not eaten in The Gambia.

order to incorporate all these activities, they were grouped under the sub-category of petty trading.

3. **Fuelwood** – During the dry season when the harvest has been completed and food stocks are running low (hungry season), a major source of income is fuelwood. It is undertaken by both men and women and is sold in small bundles in the village, on the main roadside or in larger stacks which are brought by middle men and transported to the Kombo districts to be sold. This theme is of importance but concern due to forest depletion rates, lack of stock replenishment and the demand for it to become a year-round income generating activity. It was also interesting to investigate the political dynamics of fuelwood, especially if refugees had access to cross-border resources.

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be found in the Lancaster Library, Coventry University.

**Figure 4.7:** Refugee Women's tie 'n' dye made at Bulok Refugee Skills Centre.  
**Source:** Author



## **4.6. Methods and Approaches**

### **4.6.1. Multi-Method Approach**

This research adopted a multi-method approach. This was because of the variety of data and wide range of participants involved (Table 4.5). It also gave smaller data sets on methods that could be independently analysed. Since the shift from purely quantitative methods within geographical research (Billinge et. Al 1984), multi-method research is an attempt to combine research methods to address a particular research problem using both qualitative and quantitative methods (McKendrick 1999). One advantage of applying multi-methods in rural African communities is that it diversifies data collection where data resources can be weak. It also helps to maintain the interest of participants. Multi-methods can also structure the research process around existing community hierarchal structure's by introducing the researcher to the community, generating descriptive statistics and identifying key networks within communities (Cook 2005). Baker (1995) also highlights that in communities with close social structures and strict hierarchical processes, it is best to use local advice on whom to speak with, where and when. This formal introduction becomes much more fluid when a researcher is better known in the community and movements are not so closely monitored compared to when they were considered an outsider. It can be suggested that there was an element of bias in the original selection of participants for this research but it was not challenged in order to gain acceptance into communities. This also highlights the importance of ensuring multi-method data sets are collected by the same communities which ultimately enhances the principle of triangulation.

<b>Methods</b>	<b>Applied in Phase Two (Y)</b>	<b>Applied in Phase Three (Y)</b>
Focus Groups	✓	
Key Informant Interviews	✓	
Alkalo Interviews	✓	
Personal Narratives	✓	✓
Daily Diaries		✓
Resource Mapping	✓	✓
Livelihood Mapping		✓
Livelihood Surveys		✓
GPS Mapping	✓	✓
Host Family Interview		✓
Refugee Family Interview		✓
Tally Charts		✓
Intermarried Interviews		✓

**Table 4.5:** Methods applied during phase two and three

#### 4.6.2. Oral Methods

Various oral methods were used as a way of networking, interviewing, and verifying data and were used in conjunction with written methods. Interviews, discussions and focus groups were conducted orally in a local dialect by the research assistant. This was then translated and written in English by the researcher in the form of note-

taking. It was important to use oral methods in the traditional ethnic Jola language in refugee communities as many participants were illiterate.

#### *Alkalo Interviews*

As highlighted in the RRA, in order to gain acceptance and trust within communities, it was necessary to gain permission from the village Alkalo (Baker 1994, 1995, 2000). The Alkalo (usually male) in every village was interviewed and was given Kola nuts, a traditional gift, to recognise that they symbolise respect in traditional social and cultural society. The Alkalo was interviewed to represent a community overview on refugee integration as well as be used to analyse traditional community structures in refugee communities.

#### *Key Informant interviews*

Key informants were identified in order to understand, assess and critique current policy implemented within refugee communities. These informants included Government officials, international agencies and local NGOs in The Gambia and in important bases such as Dakar and Ziguinchor, Senegal (Table 4.6).

<b>Name of Organisation</b>	<b>Number of Interviewees</b>
WFP	1
UNHCR	3
UNICEF	1
GRCS	4
GAFNA	1
Concern Universal (CU)	6
TANGO	1
NaNa	1
NDMA	1
Saint Joseph Family Farm Centre (SJFF)	3
Fajara Skills Centre	1
Department of Planning	1
Department of Forestry	1
Ministry of Agriculture	1
GBoS	2
Department of Immigration	1
Ministry of Education	1
National Environment Agency	1
Procas (Ziguinchor)	1
APRAN (Ziguinchor)	1
WFP (Ziguinchor)	1
UNHCR (Dakar)	1
British High Commission (Banjul and Dakar)	2

**Table 4.6: Key Informant Interviewees**

*Focus groups* (Figure 4.8)

Focus groups have become increasingly popular and enable an exploration of interactions and integration through social networking systems (Conradson 2005). Two focus groups were originally set up in each village for host and refugee (Table 4.7). It was mixed gender and attendance was determined by who was available at the time. Initial focus groups took place in October/ November which represented the start of the harvest period for communities. Female turnout was particularly low, although those that were involved were active and did express their views. As anticipated, male participants dominated discussion and it was deemed necessary to create further focus groups (Table 4.8) which were single gender and employ a female research assistant to allow women to be at ease without the pressure of a male presence. Focus groups were originally held on generic issues identified in the RRA but subsequent groups were created discussing livelihood strategies (Table 4.9). Even though focus groups are good for starting initial discussion and understanding themes or topics, it is important to remember that information collected are not necessarily facts and therefore they cannot account for all community perceptions and beliefs.

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thesis can be found in the Lancaster Library, Coventry University.

**Figure 4.8:** Host community Focus Group, Jannack

**Source:** Author

<b>Name of Village</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Host or Refugee</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Main Occupation</b>
Bulok	9	Host	7 Male 2 Female	Jola	Farmer
Bulok	7	Refugee	3 Male 5 Female	Jola	Farmer
Upert	7	Host	7 Male	Jola	Farmer
Upert	9	Refugee	8 Male 1 Female	Jola	Farmer
Jannack	10	Host	8 Male 2 Female	Jola	Farmer
Jannack	10	Refugee	5 Male 5 Female	Jola	Farmer
Kabakorr	10	Host	7 Male 3 Female	Jola	Farmer
Kabakorr	5	Refugee	4 Male 1 Female	Jola	Farmer
Gifanga	10	Host	9 Male 1 Female	Jola	Farmer
Gifanga	10	Refugee	6 Male 4 Female	Jola	Farmer
Kusamai	8	Host	6 Male 2 Female	Jola	Farmer
Kusamai	5	Refugee	3 Male 2 Female	Jola	Farmer

**Table 4.7:** Characteristics of Mixed Gender Refugee/Host Focus Group Participants

<b>Name of Village</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Host or Refugee</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Main Occupation</b>
Bulok	5	Host	Female	2 Mandinka 3 Jola	Farmer
Bulok	5	Refugee	Female	Jola	Farmer
Upert	5	Host	Female	Jola	Farmer
Upert	5	Refugee	Female	Jola	Farmer
Kusamai	5	Host	Female	1 Fula 4 Jola	Farmer
Kusamai	5	Refugee	Female	Jola	Farmer

**Table 4.8:** Characteristics of Female Refugee/Host Focus Group Participants

Name of Village	Focus Group Theme	Number of Participants	Host or Refugee	Gender	Ethnicity
Bulok	Petty Trading	6	Host	Female	4 Jola 1 Mandinka
Bulok	Petty Trading	6	Refugee	Female	All Jola
Upert	Fuelwood	7	Host	5 men 2 women	All Jola
Upert	Fuelwood	8	Refugee	4 women 4 men	All Jola
Kusamai	Agriculture	6	Host	Male	All Jola
Kusamai	Agriculture	6	Refugee	Male	All Jola

**Table 4.9:** Characteristics of Livelihood Strategy Focus Group Participants

#### 4.6.3. Participatory Methods

##### *Participant Observation*

A way of validating data was by means of participant observation where I could observe the behaviour, reactions, body language and social interaction of participants. This was conducted in a variety of different ways and a natural part of the research process. Firstly, basic socio-demographic information was collected before methods were implemented in order to retrieve information such as numbers within a focus group, ratio of male to female participants and social groupings of participants. Due to the language barrier, a research assistant translated questions and answers and this became an opportunity to observe reactions and interactions between participants. Although there is a clear limitation to participant observation and the use of a translator (as will be discussed in chapter 4.7), it is a useful tool to implement when working in a politically sensitive context and can add to the variety of data collected.

##### *Participatory Geographic Information Systems (GIS)*

As a result of the RRA, it was clear that there were underlying environmental concerns in many villages in this area due to the acceleration of deforestation as well as the

amount of arable land for agricultural utilisation and cattle grazing. In order to effectively investigate and evaluate these environmental impacts, participatory GIS methods were applied to capture local knowledge and opinions on various social and environmental impacts.

It has been previously argued that GIS is a tool for the storage and analysis of quantitative data as it is implemented through computing technology. This underpinned much of the critical writing on GIS throughout the 1990s (Kwan & Knigge 2001, 1999) but more recently there has been much debate on the use of GIS for qualitative research especially when examining community development and planning projects (ibid 2000). Participatory GIS can be seen as a tangible shift from traditional concepts of GIS to a type which is more socially aware and gives greater privilege and legitimacy to local spatial knowledge. It is not necessarily technology- led and is rather context and issue driven (Dunn 2007). Participatory GIS was a way of linking community participation and GIS in a diversity of social and environmental contexts (Saha et al 2007) whereby community and individual participation is important for empowering communities and defining local issues. Ideally, this then leads to development within community planning and community-developed solutions (ibid 2007) and the use of maps, GIS and web technology can enhance communication between villages and their governments (Aditya 2008).

Community mapping has been widely successful in rural areas and Alcorn (2000) has previously highlighted the power of participatory maps which communicate information immediately and convey a sense of authority for local communities. Community base maps have the ability to empower grass roots efforts, hold governments accountable and provide information to all stakeholders such as farmers and government ministries. Firstly, community maps were printed in the form of Google Earth maps where both hosts and refugees collectively annotated basic community resources such as schools, health facilities, forest and water points (Figure 4.9). This was completed in all communities. To compliment this, the researcher included additional resources using a GPS unit. In addition, community maps were



expanded into specific livelihood resource maps where communities would identify on similar Google Earth maps the locations they travelled to collect fuelwood. This was separated into host and refugee groups in order to compare whether locations were varied for the different resources. In terms of spatial literacy, there was a lack of familiarity with GPS by host and refugee participants. In contrast there was greater understanding of how to interpret satellite images which justified its use in further understanding livelihood strategies.

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**Figure 4.9:** Annotated village map of Bulok where community resources were mapped

#### 4.6.4. Survey Methods

##### *Livelihood surveys*

As the research design in figure 4.2 identifies, agriculture, fuelwood and petty trading were highlighted as the three main livelihood strategies for both hosts and refugees. Each livelihood strategy was assigned a village in order to further investigate the access to livelihood resources and sustainability of each livelihood strategy. For example, the village of Upert would be further investigated regarding fuelwood given access to cross-border resources; the village of Bulok would be investigated regarding petty trading given transport and market links; and the village of Kusamai would be further investigated regarding agriculture given that it is still the primary livelihood strategy and there was greater response from participants in this community in earlier stages of research.

Twenty participants were selected for each survey in each village and this would be halved with equal number of hosts and refugees. In the case of gender, participants were chosen as a result of the livelihood activity implemented. Petty trading surveys were completed by women only, agriculture by men only<sup>16</sup> and as fuelwood was undertaken by all members of the community there would be ten male and ten female participants (Table 4.10). Each survey was conducted individually and consent was given using thumbprints. If the researcher was present, questions were translated into the local dialect but this task was at times delegated to the research assistant to complete. The researcher was able to verify surveys as basic socio-demographic information had been completed prior to each survey.

It is important to note that these surveys were completed in September 2010 and are a representation of what is sold at that time of year, known as the “hungry season”. Vegetable garden produce is not always sold because the rains are too heavy for production and women usually try to sell all year round products such as okra, hot pepper, onion as well as the remaining produce from the previous harvest such as groundnuts but in forms of powder and paste.

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<sup>16</sup> Although women farm rice fields and are involved in the planting and harvesting process, these surveys targeted male participants.

<b>Village</b>	<b>Livelihood Survey</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Host/ Refugee</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Status in Household</b>
Bulok	Petty Trading	Female	Host	Jola	First Wife
Bulok	Petty Trading	Female	Host	Jola	First Wife
Bulok	Petty Trading	Female	Host	Jola	First Wife
Bulok	Petty Trading	Female	Host	Mandinka	First Daughter
Bulok	Petty Trading	Female	Host	Jola	First Wife
Bulok	Petty Trading	Female	Host	Jola	Second Wife
Bulok	Petty Trading	Female	Host	Fula	First Daughter
Bulok	Petty Trading	Female	Host	Jola	Second Wife
Bulok	Petty Trading	Female	Host	Jola	Second Wife
Bulok	Petty Trading	Female	Host	Mandinka	Third Daughter
Bulok	Petty Trading	Female	Refugee	Jola	First Wife
Bulok	Petty Trading	Female	Refugee	Jola	First Wife
Bulok	Petty Trading	Female	Refugee	Jola	First Wife
Bulok	Petty Trading	Female	Refugee	Jola	First Wife
Bulok	Petty Trading	Female	Refugee	Jola	First Wife
Bulok	Petty Trading	Female	Refugee	Jola	Second Wife
Bulok	Petty Trading	Female	Refugee	Jola	Second Wife
Bulok	Petty Trading	Female	Refugee	Jola	Second Wife
Bulok	Petty Trading	Female	Refugee	Jola	Second Wife
Bulok	Petty Trading	Female	Refugee	Jola	Daughter <sup>17</sup>
Upert	Fuelwood	Male	Host	Jola	Head of Household <sup>18</sup>
Upert	Fuelwood	Male	Host	Jola	HH
Upert	Fuelwood	Male	Host	Jola	HH
Upert	Fuelwood	Male	Host	Jola	Son of HH
Upert	Fuelwood	Male	Host	Jola	HH

<sup>17</sup> Not known whether participant was only daughter or one of many in the household.

<sup>18</sup> Head of Household was shortened to HH

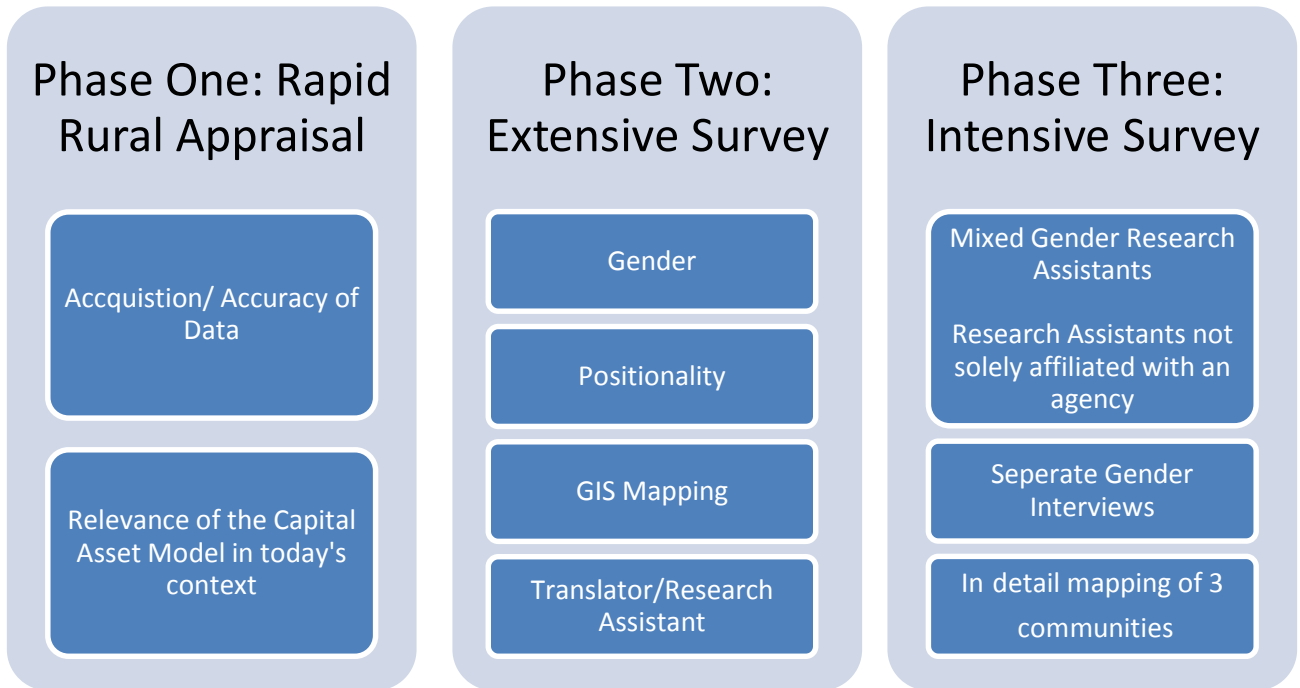
Upert	Fuelwood	Male	Refugee	Jola	HH
Upert	Fuelwood	Male	Refugee	Jola	HH
Upert	Fuelwood	Male	Refugee	Jola	HH
Upert	Fuelwood	Male	Refugee	Jola	Hosted by Alkalo
Upert	Fuelwood	Male	Refugee	Jola	Brother of HH
Upert	Fuelwood	Female	Host	Jola	First Wife
Upert	Fuelwood	Female	Host	Jola	First Wife
Upert	Fuelwood	Female	Host	Jola	First Wife
Upert	Fuelwood	Female	Host	Jola	First Wife
Upert	Fuelwood	Female	Host	Jola	First Wife
Upert	Fuelwood	Female	Host	Jola	First Wife
Upert	Fuelwood	Female	Refugee	Jola	First Wife
Upert	Fuelwood	Female	Refugee	Jola	First Wife
Upert	Fuelwood	Female	Refugee	Jola	Second Wife
Upert	Fuelwood	Female	Refugee	Jola	Sister of HH Wife
Upert	Fuelwood	Female	Refugee	Jola	Wife of HH Brother
Kusamai	Agriculture	Male	Host	Jola	HH
Kusamai	Agriculture	Male	Host	Jola	HH
Kusamai	Agriculture	Male	Host	Jola	HH
Kusamai	Agriculture	Male	Host	Jola	HH
Kusamai	Agriculture	Male	Host	Jola	HH
Kusamai	Agriculture	Male	Host	Jola	Son of HH
Kusamai	Agriculture	Male	Host	Jola	Son of HH
Kusamai	Agriculture	Male	Host	Jola	Brother of Alkalo
Kusamai	Agriculture	Male	Host	Jola	HH
Kusamai	Agriculture	Male	Host	Jola	HH
Kusamai	Agriculture	Male	Refugee	Jola	Hosted by HH
Kusamai	Agriculture	Male	Refugee	Jola	Hosted by HH
Kusamai	Agriculture	Male	Refugee	Jola	Hosted by HH
Kusamai	Agriculture	Male	Refugee	Jola	HH

Kusamai	Agriculture	Male	Refugee	Jola	Son of HH
Kusamai	Agriculture	Male	Refugee	Jola	HH
Kusamai	Agriculture	Male	Refugee	Jola	HH
Kusamai	Agriculture	Male	Refugee	Jola	Uncle of HH
Kusamai	Agriculture	Male	Refugee	Jola	Hosted by HH
Kusamai	Agriculture	Male	Refugee	Jola	HH

**Table 4.10:** Livelihood Survey Interviewee Characteristics

#### 4.7. Methodological Concerns

This research highlighted some methodological concerns. Figure 4.10 highlights methodological issues encountered during the RRA and phase two and how they were refined for phase three of data collection.



**Figure 4.10:** Methodological concerns

##### 4.7.1. Positionality

Firstly, it was important to understand the position of a white, female researcher conducting research within a male-dominated African society. Despite The Gambia's turbulent and somewhat ambiguous relationship with Britain, it is still a former colony and a relationship that is still welcomed among the Gambian communities today (Focus Group 2009) which would encourage participants to practice and speak English. Acceptance was also accelerated due to my willingness to learn the basics of the local Jola language and my ability to communicate at a basic level enhanced my reputation

in communities. The ability to greet in the local language is of high importance as it marks a willingness by the researcher to want to be accepted and empowers local communities that their culture and traditions are of importance. This acceptance was also boosted as many communities have been subject to research projects by a plethora of local and international organisations (Figure 4.11). However, it must be added that communities emphasised the need for the researcher to feedback results as many organisations have previously conducted research in communities but never filtered results back and this was a major source of disappointment and suspicion (especially medical research) for villagers.



**Figure 4.11:** Aid Agencies frequently visit refugee communities.

**Source:** Author

At the same time when undertaking fieldwork, it is important for a researcher to reflect on how an outsider can relate to the local people (Binns 2006). As the research process continued, it became more apparent that my position as an outsider, and who I was accompanied by, affected the way I was viewed and treated by research participants. It was originally important to gain acceptance and trust from each village

Alkalo. I originally employed a male research assistant from SJFF who was familiar with refugee communities and was a partner in implementing various NGO projects. This was the best approach to begin the data collection process otherwise acceptance could have taken up valuable time and limited the scope of data collection. I was immediately welcomed and accepted and methods were not questioned. However, during the extensive survey, the longer I appeared with my well-known, agency-affiliated research assistant, the less I was considered an independent researcher. I was soon regarded as an additional international figurehead that had power and influence with international NGOs. As a result, there was a distinct shift from the research questions to a general needs analysis of the community. Guerin and Guerin explain (2007) when working with refugee communities, the research participants may feel in a position of lesser power and as a result may try to please the researcher and give them answers that they want to hear, instead of revealing anything new. This can partly be accounted for by the positionality of the researcher. It was essential to break away with the bias of a research assistant and re-establish myself as an independent researcher with my own agenda instead of being affiliated with an international agency. This was achieved by using various assistants who spoke the local dialect and were not affiliated with any specific agency. Focus groups and interviews were also repeated to verify previous data that was collected.

#### 4.7.2. Gender Bias

Conducting research in a male dominated society was always going to be a challenge, especially when trying to obtain impartial, reliable data from female participants. Male dominance became increasingly apparent during interviews and focus groups as it is the men who have power and influence within society especially over women in regards to decision making, financial and domestic matters. This was highlighted in the small number of women attending the focus groups as well as their limited contribution to discussion especially on sustainable livelihoods. It became clear that some women are literate and in some cases educated and are key to providing the family with alternative income other than farming. All women collect water from the various watering points in the communities and also maintain a peaceful domestic



situation. For this reason, it has been deemed important to employ a female research assistant to conduct interviews and focus groups with women only in an attempt to gain an overview of the struggles and needs of different people within the community. A male research assistant was still employed with male participants as a female may limit the range and depth of information obtained but by expanding my assistant options allowed greater scope for data collection.

#### 4.7.3. Local Research Assistant/ Translator

There was a need to constantly verify and validate data collected due to the data collection process conducted in a foreign tongue. There were few logistical problems using a translator but it became more apparent that using a local research assistant can lead to misinterpretation, confidentiality and security issues (Jacobsen and Landau 2003). To minimise these issues it was essential to hold daily briefings with the research assistant to discuss the day's itinerary and explain all aspects of the methods. This allowed the assistant to raise any questions he or she had at the time so that time would not be wasted in the field. Debriefings were also held after the day was completed in order for the research assistant to relay any feedback he or she picked up in the various villages which may have been missed or misunderstood by the researcher.

#### 4.7.4. Ethics

When working within refugee communities, the question of ethical approval continues to be raised given that they are considered to be vulnerable. Issues such as political and legal marginality as well as adapting poor methods on how to conduct ethical research have arose from refugee research studies (Jacobsen and Landau 2003: 187). Themes such as objectivity and reactivity (i.e. distancing yourself from the field) can be cause for concern. Living in research communities for an extended period of time did raise ethical issues. However, by regularly removing myself from rural to urban areas I was able to create a research/participant barrier whereby I was detached from the community to remind them that I was an independent researcher and not part of the community. In terms of data collection, participants were firstly briefed on the task

that they were involved in which was explained to them in local Jola dialect by the research assistant. They were given a consent form to sign (Appendix 1) by thumbprint and the option of taking a *participant information sheet* (Appendix 2) which most declined due to the lack of literacy. These ethical precautions were important to remind participants that participation was completely voluntary, they could withdraw from the research at any time, and that data used would be used anonymously as to protect their identity rights.

#### **4.8. Summary**

This chapter has explained and justified the choice of methodology for this research project. Grounded theory was chosen as a methodological framework as the results from this research would inform the use of the Capital Assets Model and the concept of self-settlement. As a result, research design was appropriately created. The RRA proved key in identifying initial themes and villages that could be sampled during collection and this led to a two-phase data collection process to gather a wide range of detailed data sets. Villages and themes were selected and justified and a multi-method approach was adopted in order to actively engage with all participants and not limit the range of data that could be collected. In using this approach, methodological concerns such as positionality, use of research assistants and ethics were raised but were successfully dealt with.

In order for this methodology to be successfully implemented, a greater understanding is required of the broader, historical relationship between The Gambia and Senegal and why Casamance refugees have been able to self-settle in local Gambian communities. Chapter Five will introduce the Casamance conflict and the geo-political context of this research. More importantly, it understands the relationship between host and refugee groups and how they have previously been able to integrate and access resources to implement livelihood strategies.

## **5. Social and Geopolitical Context of the Research**

### **5.1. Introduction**

Firstly, this chapter will explore the geographical location of this research. It will identify the location of Western Region in The Gambia in relation to Casamance, the southern region of Senegal. Refugees have fled from Casamance as a result of a small scale separatist movement since 1982 and it is West Africa's longest running civil conflict. This research investigated Casamance refugees who fled as a result of the last major skirmish of violence in 2006.

A brief historical overview of the conflict will be given in order to understand migration patterns and the reasons for self-settlement of refugees in The Gambia. The Casamance conflict will then be discussed in relation to Gambian politics, external relations between The Gambia and Senegal and Gambian refugee policy. This will better inform how Casamance refugees are able to integrate into The Gambia and question why integration has, since the 2006 influx, changed from temporary to long-term. Finally, Gambian livelihoods will be further explored in order to understand choice of location for self-settled refugees and access to livelihood resources.

### **5.2. Research Parameters: Geographical Location**

Casamance, the southern region of Senegal is geographically located between The Gambia and Guinea Bissau and comprises around one-seventh of Senegal's land area (Figure 5.1). Since the start of the conflict in 1982 Région de la Casamance has been divided into three administrative regions; with their administrative centres in Ziguinchor, Sèdhiou (known as Middle Casamance) and Kolda. Politically, it has been divided since 1982 (in an attempt to destabilise the rebellion movement) but is regularly referred to as one region. Although part of Senegal and historically under French colonial rule (even though prior to 1866 it had largely been under non-Diola, Portuguese control), Casamançais tradition has varied in comparison to that of the North in cultural and economic terms and previously was given a high degree of autonomy from Dakar (Evans 2003; Englebert 2005). As a result of the separatist

movement fronted by the *Le Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance* (MFDC), the conflict has caused mass internal displacement, refugee migration, economic devastation and collapse, environmental degradation, contributed to the war in Guinea Bissau and fuelled political tensions between The Gambia and Senegal (Evans 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004; Foucher 2002, 2004, 2007; Marut 1995, 1999, 2010; de Jong 1998, 2007; Sonko 2004).

The focus of this research are Casamance refugees who have migrated north mainly from Ziguinchor Region into five Foni Districts<sup>19</sup> in The Gambia (Figure 5.2) since 2006. The reason for this has been based on socio-economic, historical and cultural factors (that will be discussed below). The conflict itself has mainly contained itself in Ziguinchor region but since 1995 has spread eastward into Sèdhiou Region (which was known then as Sèdhiou department). The Gambia is the smallest country in mainland Africa, one of the poorest countries in the world and is currently ranked 168 in the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI). The Gambia and Senegal have similar physical geography with a tropical climate bringing two seasons; a dry season from the months of October to May and a wet season from approximately June to October. In terms of the refugee influx, given the similar geographical terrain, Casamance refugees, have similar rural livelihood strategies to their hosts that are transferable across the international borders.

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<sup>19</sup> Foni Brefet, Foni Bintang-Karanai, Foni Kansala, Foni Bondali and Foni Jarrol

**Figure 5.1:** West Africa Base Map highlighting The Gambia and the Casamance region where conflict has occurred since 1982  
**Data Source:** GBoS, Bing Maps and MapLibrary.org

**Figure 5.2:** Map of Ziguinchor Region and the Five Foni Districts  
**Data Source:** GBoS, Bing Maps and MapLibrary.org

### 5.3. The Casamance Conflict<sup>20</sup>

The Casamance conflict is West Africa's longest running civil conflict. 2012 marked its thirtieth anniversary still rooted within a separatist rebellion and no closer to peace. It is stemmed from an original plight of independence from the MFDC but is now embroiled in sporadic skirmishes, despite previous peace accords signed by both the MFDC and the Senegalese Government. As Foucher (2007) has previously published, this conflict and the plight of the MFDC "provides a fascinating and somewhat counterintuitive case study". The Casamance conflict is fronted by the MFDC in a bid for independence from the rest of Senegal and Marut (2010), Foucher (2002, 2012) and Evans (2003, 2004) have noted a plethora of deep historical roots surrounding the political, social and economic causes of the conflict.

The MFDC was originally founded in 1947 by Émile Badiene and was not originally known as a separatist party as it is known today but it did stand for Casamance interests (Foreign & Commonwealth Office 1999). Post-independence, there was a vast amount of organised support for the MFDC. Local communities showed support by purchasing MFDC membership cards which were at first very successful. The then President, Léopold Senghor, had promised to review Casamance status twenty years after independence and the 1982 demonstrations in Ziguinchor were linked to that previous promise (ibid) and so the MFDC was re-formed under the leadership of Diamacoune Senghor. As Paul Nugent (2007) has identified, there is a direct link between the current, newer foundations of the Casamance conflict regarding separatism and the historical ethnic violence that occurred in the region of West Africa. Similar to the Islamization of the ethnic Jola tribe in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the

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<sup>20</sup> It is beyond the scope of this thesis to critically examine the Casamance conflict. This has been extensively researched by Evans, Foucher, Marut and more recently Evans and Ray (2012). This section aims to give the reader the background needed in order to understand motive of flight for Casamance refugees.

active 'Wolofization' in northern Senegal in the early 1980s created marginality between the Casamance region and the rest of Senegal (ibid)<sup>21</sup>.

More violent demonstrations in 1983 for an independent Casamance initiated a string of violent clashes with the Senegalese government (Evans 2004). More notably, 'Red Sunday' in which estimates of those killed vary between 50 and 200 (although official statistics state 24 deaths) led to continued government repression with house arrests and curfews and essentially drove the movement underground and prompted the military operation<sup>22</sup> of the MFDC (ibid) although it was not until 1990 that the conflict became fully 'militarized' (Evans 2007; Englebert and Hummel 2005). It is difficult to estimate how many members there currently are in the MFDC. Estimates range from a few hundred men to around 4,000 (ibid). It was believed in 2003 that there were around 4,500, and responsibility of operations is shared between members due to lack of resources and reserves (Evans 2004, 2008; Evans and Ray 2012).

There are two main factions within the MFDC, the Front Nord and Front Sud and, as the names suggest, are geographically located North and South of the Casamance River. In terms of unity, the MFDC have continued to fracture due to conflicting reasons on the outcome of the conflict mainly in relation to the peace process and the laying down of arms. The Front Sud, with its bases situated along the Guinea Bissau border were continually in active combat, and the militarised wing of the MFDC. It has previously refused any involvement in the peace process. The Front Nord however, have previously reached an informal agreement with the Senegalese government whereby they retired from active combat in exchange for Senegalese forces leaving and having de-facto control of the majority of Bignona Department (ibid). Consequently, these factions have continued to split within themselves and are divided on a clear, unified mandate which has made peace negotiations stagnant, credibility for their plight and the need for international response limited.

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<sup>21</sup> This also very much relates to the historical resistance movement in Casamance which existed under Portuguese colonial rule in 1645 until the French took power (Gehrold and Neu 2010).

<sup>22</sup> The military wing has been commonly referred to as the Maquis or Attika which is Jola for 'fighters'.



In comparison to other conflicts, the Casamance conflict is small-scale but it has been resilient (de Jong and Gasser 2005) and caused heavy military activity with an estimated 700,000 people affected since the start of the conflict (ibid). Geographically, heaviest military activity occurred during the 1990s and was predominantly situated along the Casamance/Guinea-Bissau border where key rebel bases were situated. This led to direct bombardments by Senegalese military along this southern front and there has been great internal instability as a result (as will be discussed below). The destruction of land, shelter, livelihoods (work mainly conducted by Evans 2001/2002) and the migration of thousands of people both internally and across international borders made this the bloodiest time in the conflict (Evans 2003; Foucher 2002; Lambert 2002). In addition, use of land mines by the MFDC (figure 5.3) highlight that south of the Casamance River was a main target. In more recent years, use of land mines along the Gambian border has increased. Even at the height of violence in the 1990s, the MFDC were never strong or unified and lacked coordination between its political and military wings (IRIN 2007). Attempts to re-unite the different factions of the organisation have proved impossible and in both the past and present, differences have been highlighted through violence (Evans 2004). Political changes in leadership in Guinea-Bissau in the early 2000s (notably 2002 and 2005) geographically shifted the military activity of the conflict which headed North across the Casamance River along the Gambian border where the conflict now remains. This change of military activity is also in line with a shift in displacement patterns where self-settlement was no longer temporal but on a long-term basis.

**Figure 5.3:** Geographical locations of land mines lay by MFDC  
**Source:** Handicap International

### 5.3.1. *War Economy*

Lack of investment, collapsed infrastructure and market availability are just a few of the reasons why a war economy has developed in the region (Evans 2004). Foucher (2002, 2007, 2010) has analysed the war economy as weak and the goods are mainly low value which are exploited by rebel groups and refugees. Two contrasting situations of the war economy can be highlighted either side of the international border with greater advantages along the Gambian border where communities play a key part in business and have benefitted from the stronger Gambian economy (ibid).

Timber is the largest commodity and is heavily exploited on both sides of the international border. Extraction has been known to occur in areas surrounding the Gambian border and much of it is transported to mills and urban markets in The Gambia. It has been alleged that some of these enterprises are run by associates of The Gambian President but this has never been confirmed (Evans 2003). At the same time, there is also greater demand for timber given its key uses for furniture and may explain the increased demand across the Gambian border. Given the insecurity and mass displacement along the Guinea-Bissau border, however, it is difficult to analyse timber exploitation (ibid).

Cannabis or 'yamba' is another of Casamance's main export crops and The Gambia is probably the largest market for it (and can be justifiably argued to be part of an extensive network in the region). Marut (1999) concludes that the cultivation of cannabis pre-dates the conflict but the conflict has fuelled the supply with a large market in The Gambia. This is not necessarily confined to rebels but also to local rural and urban communities (refugee groups included) as well tourist markets in Casamance, Gambian coastal resorts and also Dakar. The Gambia has been described as an 'entrepôt state' because it has provided buying power, access to national and international markets and has processing facilities that are, due to the conflict, limited in Casamance (Evans 2003). Additional items such as charcoal and cashew nuts also fuel the war economy, but as Foucher (2007) suggests they are low value and not necessarily sustainable.

### 5.3.2. *Peace Negotiations*

During the 1990s, The Gambia was an active member in conflict resolution to develop a unified position to advance the peace process, after both the Senegalese government and the MFDC agreed on a new, progressive initiative. The Gambia has previously been used as neutral ground for peace talks between the Senegalese government and the MFDC rebels and was able to initially oversee a ceasefire. The Banjul Agreement set the framework for further meetings but was disrupted by Senegal's presidential elections in 2000 (Evans 2000). President Wade<sup>23</sup>, who had openly criticised the manner in which President Diouf had handled the Casamance conflict, was initially suspicious of President Jammeh, the Gambian President, and his relationship with the ethnic Jola community and the MFDC. As a result, Jammeh was offended to be side-lined and in 2000 The Gambia withdrew from its mediation role (Baker 2002).

More recently, the role of The Gambia in the peace process has been less high profile especially compared to the role it played in the early 1990s. It has now adopted the view that it will only become involved in the Casamance issue if and when it is invited to do so by the Senegalese government (The Gambia Department of Foreign Affairs 2007). It has been clear that President Wade had wanted to keep the Casamance issue as an internal matter and this has been justified by a lack of international recognition and support for the MFDC (de Jong 2005; Foucher 2002; Evans 2003). It can be suggested that the need for Wade to keep the Casamance affair internal was also demonstrated in 2001 when planned peace talks in Banjul showed evidence of having been deliberately sabotaged by Senegal with an attack on MFDC forces (Baker 2002). Renewed hope was given to the Casamance question in 2004 with a signed peace agreement which prompted voluntary repatriation by many who had previously fled (Evans 2007). Sporadic attacks and continued banditry hindered this peace accord and paved the way for the conflict to escalate again in 2006 where larger groups of

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<sup>23</sup> Since 2012, Senegal elected a new President, Macky Sall. His role in the Casamance conflict will be assessed in Chapter Eight as it occurred after data collection had finished. In terms of the longevity of the Casamance conflict, this chapter will continue to describe and assess the role of President Wade.

refugees crossed the border into The Gambia. Since 2004, the peace process has stagnated with verbal indications re-prioritising the conflict. This could change as a result of the new Senegalese president but at time of writing there has been little progression.

### 5.3.3. *International Response*

Although the MFDC have had difficulty in creating and sustaining a unified mandate, recent initiatives have agreed that there is a need for international involvement and response (Evans 2011/2012<sup>24</sup>). The Casamance is geographically isolated from the main centres of power and international communications available in Dakar. Although Senegal has a particularly good reputation for its largely free press and established links to Western academia, journalists who are mainly based in Dakar can have difficulty travelling to the region as well as reporting on the conflict. It is known that Wade did not tolerate journalists, especially foreign reporters commenting on the conflict. Previously, both Senegalese and foreign journalists have been arrested for reporting on the conflict and most articles are written in French so the majority of the English-speaking world cannot access information (Evans 2002). Although associated with France, and representing a strategic interest, France has generally tried to stay distant from the internal dispute in Senegal to save itself from any international embarrassment (de Jong and Gasser 2005). In addition, the conflict has not disrupted sub-regional stability and therefore international response remains low (ibid; Foucher 2002, 2007; Evans 2010<sup>25</sup>). Senegal has made significant efforts to downplay the conflict, again partly to avoid international and political embarrassment. France has supplied arms to Senegal but has stressed that this is not for a military solution in Casamance (Evans 2000).

### 5.3.4. *Migration/ Displacement patterns as a result of conflict*

The conflict has ultimately caused a three-wave displacement pattern that has been both temporary and long-term (Figure 5.4). Firstly, the majority of displacement has

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<sup>24</sup> Personal Communication

<sup>25</sup> Personal Communication, July 2010. Also refer to Evans and Ray (2012)

been through internal displacement. IDP estimates have ranged between 10,000 and 40,000 (IDMC 2011). The last comprehensive survey completed which included IDP figures was completed by the NGO Caritas in 1998 estimating 50,000 IDPs near the end of the twentieth century (Evans 2007). Official UN figures estimate around 24,000 and unsurprisingly, in a potential attempt to down play the conflict, the figure of 10,000 has been estimated by the Senegalese Government (ibid). Secondly, around 7,000 refugees are believed to have fled across the Guinea Bissau border. Similar to the plight of IDPs, there has been mass displacement along this southern border area, but there are few reliable sources to confirm refugee numbers. Figures vary and are at best inconsistent (refer to figure 5.7). Thirdly, and in relation to this case study, there are an estimated 7,546<sup>26</sup> refugees who have crossed the border and have self-settled into rural Gambian communities in Western Region<sup>27</sup>. These refugees are believed to originate from areas such as Dioloulou and Sindian, north of the Casamance River.

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<sup>26</sup> This is excluding approximately 1,000 Casamance Refugees who are permanently residing in the main urban centres in The Gambia.

<sup>27</sup> Small numbers of Casamance refugees who crossed into The Gambia in the earlier 2002 influx also fled to coastal communities in Kombo South.

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unabridged version of the thesis can be found in the Lancaster  
Library, Coventry University.

**Figure 5.4:** Casamance Displacement Map  
**Data Source:** Bing Maps and MapLibrary.org

In June 2004 the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRS) assessed the humanitarian situation in the worse affected areas in north Casamance. For example, in the village of Djondji, three-quarters of the population had fled to The Gambia (Red Cross c.2005). Due to the on-going conflict, a mass return and reconstruction project does not attract those who have fled (ibid). The Casamance conflict is unusual in the sense that skirmish's occur which will cause a wave of displacement but once conflict has ceased, those who have fled will usually return once they feel safe enough.

Migration patterns, especially in the north, have been sporadic and temporary and until 2006, return usually occurred although there is not much information on the return process (Evans 2007).

The type of displacement that occurs along the Gambian border is in contrast to that along the Guinea-Bissau border. The area in and around Lower Casamance is an area that people have suffered longer-term displacement, living in a different environment where ethnicity, culture, tradition and history are not shared by comparison to refugees and hosts in The Gambia. The loss of and inability to access shelter and land were defining impacts of displacement for refugees in Guinea-Bissau and show two contrasting impacts of the conflict. At the same time, the return process for refugees in The Gambia has been much more difficult to determine (Evans 2007). When fighting has erupted and refugees have flooded across the Gambian border, they have resided with neighbours, friends or extended family and have temporarily been hosted until it was deemed safe enough to return back across the border. This was the temporary refugee pattern up until 2006 when intense fighting in Northern Casamance drove refugees back across the border into The Gambia and this has been where they have remained. As will be discussed, there have been previous initiatives to put refugees into refugee camps but given the sporadic nature of the conflict, shared ethnic and cultural heritage and access to natural resources across both sides of the border have facilitated self-settlement.

#### **5.4. The Gambia and the Casamance Conflict<sup>28</sup>**

The Gambia's political system has been contested and ambiguous (Yeebo 1995), especially since the 1994 coup. Records on economic and social developments have been mixed although still favourable given the boost in tourism, financial investment and school enrolment but this can be overshadowed by rumours of violence, fear and terror on political grounds (pers comm. 2007, 2009/ 2010). The disintegration of the Gambian press, oppression of opposing political parties as well as a number of human

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rights abuses (political killings, witch hunts, enforced disappearances) have created suspicion in regards to The Gambian President (Perfect 2010; Butler 2010; Amnesty International 2009; IRIN 2009). More generally, President Jammeh's distant and strained relationship with the West, and with former colonial ruler Britain have added to this disdain as well as a number of alliances within the Arab world including Libya and Iran (Tourey 2000).

This uncertainty also relates to bi-lateral relations with Senegal and has created more tension (Africa News 2011). In relation to the Casamance conflict, it has been argued that President Jammeh has tended to exploit the conflict for his own domestic and international political ends. Depending on Gambia's political position, Jammeh will either condemn or support Senegal's response to the conflict (Evans 2008). This has been exacerbated by the fact that there have been rumours circulating that Salif Sadio, Senegal's most wanted man, has taken refuge in The Gambia which has maintained Senegal's suspicion towards Jammeh and The Gambia.

Historically, relations between The Gambia and Senegal have fluctuated. After Senegal's independence from France in 1960 the British had made their position clear that it would prefer a close association between Gambia and Senegal within the wider "Senegambia" context (Hughes and Perfect 2008a, 2008b). Post-colonial relations were very similar to pre-colonial relations given that there was always interest from Senegal to unify with The Gambia on political, social and economic grounds with The Gambia retaining a degree of internal autonomy (ibid). This would also ensure a greater degree of security for Senegal as an independent Gambia may potentially create close affiliations with more radical West African countries (Hughes 2006). Gambian independence in 1965, however, highlighted an improved independent economy and as a result there was less desire for a political and economic union. There have been additional signs of unity since independence with 1) an association agreement in 1968 and trade agreements in 1970 and 1973 (Hughes 2006) 2) A defence treaty and 3) the Senegambian Confederation signed after the 1981 coup in The Gambia aimed at closer

integration (ibid.) These ultimately failed due to 1) strong Gambian independence, 2) a suspicion of Senegal and 3) an improvement in the Gambian economy.

The very geography of The Gambia created a difficult relationship and The Gambia was frequently blamed for Senegalese problems (Hughes and Perfect 2008). The escalation of the Casamance discontent was yet another moment in erratic relations between these two nations and has caused controversy since Jammeh came to power in 1994 (Evans 2004). Failed peace accords and reluctance by President Wade to involve Gambia in communication slowed relations and even interrupted economic relations with constant border troubles.

More recently, the integration of Casamance refugees in The Gambia has added to the complexity of Gambian-Senegalese relations as President Jammeh is an ethnic Jola<sup>29</sup> and indeed represents the transnationality between the Gambia and Senegal (Foucher 2002). His home village and favoured retreat of Kanilai is in close proximity to the international border where refugees have entered. Furthermore, Jammeh has promoted Jola to senior government, army and civil service positions (Evans and Ray 2012). This has led to sympathy for the MFDC rebels and recognition of the plight for Casamance refugees which has fuelled rising political amid allegations of hosting, protecting and even arming MFDC rebels in The Gambia<sup>30</sup>.

In addition, Jammeh's Jola ethnicity has also been scrutinized for boosting presidential credentials with a majority stronghold in Western Region (and rising given the boosted Jola refugee population). In 2001 and 2006 there were waves of accusations that Senegalese nationals from Casamance were being issued with Gambian voting cards to boost Jola support for Jammeh in the Gambian presidential elections (Baker 2002; Hultin 2008). Prior to the presidential election in 2006 there had been a huge influx of refugees fleeing across the border into Gambia. The border had previously been closed, so those refugees who had recently entered were registered and issued voting

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<sup>29</sup> Similarly to the majority of Casamance refugees who also belong to the Jola ethnic group.

<sup>30</sup> This is in sharp contrast with his predecessor: as a Mandinka from north of the river, Jawara had no particular ties with the Casamance Region.

cards for the election. This aided the “landslide”<sup>31</sup> victory achieved in 2006 (Africa Research Bulletin 2006).

Relations between Gambia and Senegal have never been effortless or unproblematic and the Casamance conflict has fuelled these tensions (Evans 2004; Evans and Ray 2012; Foucher 2002, 2007). However, socio-economic and cultural history, however, has always remained within national politics of both states, especially as a way to mediate any tensions and there have been many agreements between them to maintain key links, although in practice they do not necessarily amount to anything concrete.

#### 5.4.1. Gambian Refugee Policy

Jacobsen (2002a) has argued that the refugee policy of a host government is a vital component in order for refugees to create sustainable livelihoods. She also argued that many refugees living in border areas have not undergone formal determination and do not necessarily qualify as refugees and therefore their legal status is precarious (ibid). Jacobsen (2002b) also stresses the idea that if a host government was to realise the benefits refugees could bring, it could have a direct impact on the assistance of accessing and utilising resources. In terms of the Casamance conflict, the invasion of politics has undermined Gambian refugee policy and shaped its foreign policy (Baker 2002). This is demonstrated in the Refugee Act of 2008. It ambiguously states that even though refugees are protected by the 1951 Refugee Convention, the Act does not apply to a person ‘who is recognised by The Gambia as having the rights and obligations which are attached to the possession of the nationality of The Gambia’ or ‘has acquired Gambian nationality... and enjoys the protection of The Gambia. (The Gambia Refugee Act 2008: Part VII, 23(1) and 24(c)) This stands in contradiction to many of the benefits that Casamance refugees actually reap in terms of being self-settled and able to access humanitarian support. Also many Casamance refugees are

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<sup>31</sup> Although Jammeh claimed it was a landslide victory, only 59% of the 640,000 registered voters turned up and the election focused on the weak and divided opposition rather than Gambian support for Jammeh. Please refer to Africa Research Bulletin, Oct 2006

already are in possession of Gambian nationality, which may have had repercussions in the 2011 Gambian presidential election (Evans and Ray 2012).

The implementation of the 2008 Refugee Act was hard to verify in the case of Casamance refugees. It can be suggested that the wording of the Act was a way in which The Gambia could ease any potential tensions with Senegal. In addition to Casamance refugees, The Gambia has hosted both Sierra Leonean and Liberian refugees, many who had previously been living in The Gambia (mainly in urban areas), and some supported by UNHCR in refugee camps (United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants 2001). No verification could be sought by The Gambian Government or by UNHCR<sup>32</sup> whether the 2008 Refugee Act was used for both groups.

The UNHCR Cessation Clause however, was brought into effect at the end of both conflicts and marked the mass return of refugees who had previously resided in The Gambia. Many did not want to return and therefore The Gambia granted both Sierra Leonean and Liberian refugee's naturalisation into the country, whereby, under section 12(1) of The Constitution of The Gambia (1997), refugees can naturalise as a person who has been ordinarily resident in the Gambia for a continuous period of not less than fifteen years. Others may also naturalize under Section 11(a) if married to a citizen of The Gambia and, who since marriage, have been ordinarily resident in The Gambia for a period of not less than seven years (UNHCR 2009<sup>33</sup>). Many have been discouraged to do this because Section 12(4) requires renunciation of all other citizenships with no option for dual nationality. In retaliation, The Gambia Government has issued to those who did not want to give up their citizenship status, national passports by their issuing authority and given residence/work permits which are renewed annually by The Gambia Immigration Department (UNHCR 2009). In comparison to Casamance refugees, The Gambia Government has distanced themselves from any official legislation for refugees to apply for citizenship or Gambian nationality.

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<sup>32</sup> Both organisations referred to each other for clarification.

<sup>33</sup> Personal Communication.

### **5.5. Integration of Casamance refugees in The Gambia**

As a result, Casamance refugees are self-settled in local Gambian communities rather than in refugee camps or formal settlements. There are many reasons for this self-settlement. Firstly, as Chapter Two identified, host States are required to settle refugees at a reasonable distance from the frontier of their country of origin. However, given that Gambia is approximately 47km in width (North to South) and 338km in length (East to West) it creates difficulties placing refugees. Secondly, prior to 2006, the registration of Casamance refugees was ambiguous and rarely conducted due to the relatively low numbers crossing the border and the temporary nature of their settlement. 2002 saw the largest numbers with around 60% children and 30% women as many men had stayed behind in Casamance (Baker 2002). Figure 5.5 highlights the main direction of movement into The Gambia in 2002 and indicates the mass influx into the Foni Districts across the porous international border. At this time, a retreat in fighting and a plan by the Gambian authorities to relocate refugees to a refugee camp at Bambali caused most refugees to return (some testimonies conclude refugees returned days after violence occurred). These sporadic, temporary influxes continued until 2006.

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can be found in the Lancaster Library, Coventry University.

**Figure 5.5:** Casamance refugee movements to The Gambia, 2002  
**Data Source:** Adapted from Concern Universal (2006), GBoS, Bing Maps and MapLibrary.org

Given the severity of fighting in 2006, approximately 7,000<sup>34</sup> refugees crossed the border into The Gambia, and many into the same villages and compounds they had previously been hosted in. UNHCR became concerned about the impact this was having on local food security (UNHCR pers comm. 2009) and have since conducted two mass registrations; one in 2006-07 and a registration in early 2010. 2006 was different in comparison to previous skirmishes as hard-line rebel factions were in control of bases around the Sindian area and armed military clashes with the Senegalese army caused this current wave of mass displacement. Rebel bases in northern Casamance are key to the military wing of the MFDC and have sparked consistent clashes. It is for this reason, why many refugees will not permanently return to their homes and are happy to seek long-term refuge and protection in neighbouring The Gambia. As a result, fifty-six communities were identified by local and international agencies as hosting Casamance refugees and have remained (Figure 5.6).

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<sup>34</sup> The official UNHCR figure of 2006 was 6,946 but figures from UNHCR field office, The Gambia have varied between 6-8,000 on 2006/7 registrations. Most recent statistics however, highlight an estimated 11,000 Casamance refugees in The Gambia (UNHCR/WFP 2012) although these statistics are unable to be verified at time of writing.

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**Source:** United Nations WFP (2006)



### *Shared Cultural/ Ethnic Heritage*

In regards to refugee integration, ethnicity has been a contributing factor for the self-settlement of refugees. Both hosts and refugees share Jola ethnicity<sup>35</sup>, as well as wider socio-cultural and historical relations. The porous international border separating The Gambia and Casamance has rarely affected activities, events or livelihoods that occur and has existed pre-conflict and even pre-colonialism.

The Jola ethnic group are mainly located within the Foni Districts (known as the Jola heartland) and southern Senegal (formally known as the 'Region de la Casamance' until 1983<sup>36</sup>). This ethnic group can often be thought to represent the middle ground between the Islamised Mandinka culture of The Gambia and the West Atlantic culture of the Upper Guinea coast where Migration patterns have resulted from war and social upheavals (Madge 1995). The Jola comprise around 11% of The Gambian population and have been present in The Gambia region for longer than any other ethnic group (Hughes and Perfect 2008). The nature of Gambian society is cross-cultural, communal, and fluid and consists of mobile relationships<sup>37</sup> which extend to the Jola ethnic group<sup>38</sup>. The shared ethnic linkages demonstrate a traditionally strong cross-border relationship and this has had a direct result on choice of settlement for Casamance refugees. The social lineage networks that have been identified above are even more prevalent in this situation. In previous literature investigating local integration (Orach & de Brouwere's 2005, Baker 2002 and Bakewell 1999, 2002), ethnicity has been considered a key factor and is directly linked with integration and livelihood strategies. In communities where there are similar ethnic or cultural ties with the host community, the speed of integration has been much quicker in comparison to other refugee situations. Bakewell (1999) has also argued that this ethnic link can complicate the return process as the concept of home, community and integration becomes blurred and makes the international border almost non-existent. This is demonstrated

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<sup>35</sup> Also been referred to as Diola, Djiola or Joola

<sup>36</sup> Interestingly, when referring to Senegalese maps and those presented within this thesis, the area is still widely referred to in its original form.

<sup>37</sup> Please refer to Claire Madge's work (1994, 1995) on the notion of communal villages

<sup>38</sup> Also refer to work by de Jong (2001, 2002, 2005), Marut (1995, 1996, 2002), Lambert (1998) on Jola ethnicity.

in the Casamance situation where refugees have returned to the same communities, families and households.

Although the Casamançais are separated from Gambian communities by a porous international border, they are socially integrated and consider themselves a single group of people. An extensive social history between The Gambia and Senegal has existed prior to the conflict and pre-colonialism<sup>39</sup>. Historically, Casamançais have relocated to The Gambia for various economic, political or social reasons but it has been rare for Gambians to relocate to previously French territory. Even within this research, Gambians will cross the border to stay and visit kin in Casamance but it has been rare for them to stay permanently whereas the Casamançais have a strong history of relocating to The Gambia (Nugent 2007). These historical relations mark an important trend in ethnic and religious roots in the West African region, as well as migratory movements and specific livelihood trends, especially in Casamance. The Casamance conflict has enhanced the importance of this shared cultural heritage and has been a determining factor as to why previous refugee camps have failed. Casamance refugees want to reside with relatives and extended family, and have the opportunity to return to Casamance as and when they want. In addition to these pre-existing historical and ethnic ties, both groups implement similar livelihood strategies and therefore are in need of and use the same resources. Access to these resources in The Gambia and across the international border in Casamance can start to explain why tensions have not necessarily escalated as a result of self-settlement.

#### *Humanitarian Assistance*

In terms of humanitarian assistance for Casamance refugees in The Gambia, there were previously refugee camps situated in Bambali, Kwinella, Sifoe, Kitti and Basse. This was partly in the context of the UNHCR field office closing in December 2001 and its operations moved back to the regional headquarters in Dakar (Baker 2002; Evans and Ray 2012). The 2006 influx renewed the need to reopen refugee camps situated in

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<sup>39</sup> For more information regarding the historical Senegambian relations, refer to work of de Jong, Nugent and Hughes and Perfect.

Bambali and Kwinella which are located in the North Bank of the country. This would prove a greater distance from the porous international border. Work carried out by NGOs, however, found that transferring refugees to camps encouraged non-registration and a dispersion of refugees along the border area (Relief Web 2002). As a result, refugees would not be forced into refugee camps as it was deemed too difficult to effectively monitor and register refugees at the border (GID 2007). Refugee camps did not work in this situation as the shared cultural history meant that refugees were hosted by extended family and were still close to the international border in case they wanted to return.

Self-settlement was seen as the short-term solution on the basis that refugees were issued I.D. and ration cards to access basic food stuffs and commodities from humanitarian agencies and international organisations. The 2006 influx was not initially of concern to organisations given that there were few refugees who collected rations back in 2002. As refugees stayed longer, however, there was a need to provide assistance in Foni communities in order to relieve pressures on community resources (Concern Universal pers comm. 2009). Joint assistance from UNHCR and the World Food Programme (WFP) issued ration cards in accordance with refugee status (Duthie 2007) and support from NGOs such as GRCS (which has been previously supported by The Gambian Government) and Concern Universal provided on the ground relief through the means of farming equipment, seeds and sensitisation programmes on health issues in larger refugee communities. In comparison to the lack of response by refugees in 2002, refugee families who had crossed the border in 2006 had left their homes in Casamance with very few possessions other than what they could carry (Focus Group Discussion 2009). Cattle were left behind (and in most cases more than likely seized by the rebels), farms were left unattended and corrugated roofing for shelter was taken from compounds (ibid). It was deemed a priority to supply refugees with temporary supplies until they returned back across the border as was the nature of previous influxes (SJFF pers comm. 2007, 2009). Although there was refugee support, lack of funding and governmental support meant that work was limited and it was even harder to assess those that were the most vulnerable (Duthie 2007).

Differing policy views between UNHCR and WFP have led to an inconsistent approach in assessment of the refugee situation in regards to re-registration and durable solutions and an environment of dependency has been created since 2006 from both hosts and refugees (to be discussed in Chapter Six).

### *Ambiguous Statistics*

Table 5.1 and Figure 5.7 represent official UNHCR statistics on registered Senegalese refugee populations in both The Gambia and Guinea-Bissau from 1998-2009. Although these figures give an indication of numbers within each country and fully support the nature of conflict at respective periods, there are a few anomalies that needed to be addressed. Firstly, these numbers do not include those refugees who have not officially registered or give any indication of numbers prior to 1998. Questions then need to be asked whether these figures still include those who are not necessarily in need of refugee status and have created long-term self-sufficiency in either The Gambia or Guinea-Bissau. More importantly, statistically there are many years where the numbers of refugees have stayed the same and these need to be viewed with caution as it is very possible that no registration took place in those years and figures from previous registrations had been used as a proxy. For example, it was confirmed in-country that a re-registration took place in 2007 but nothing has been conducted in subsequent years confirming why 2008 and 2009 statistics have remained the same. At time of writing, figures from the 2010 registration were not ready for circulation. Also, figures from 2003, 4 and 5 in The Gambia have recorded extremely low numbers which would mainly be due to the repatriation or return of Casamance refugees from the previous influx in 2002. No confirmation could be given by UN authorities during data collection, to verify these figures. This adds to the complexity of the Casamance conflict given that additional factors are in place to facilitate integration without the need for humanitarian support. It also confirms the confusion of self-settlement. Although there is a support mechanism in place by international organisations it confirms the literature that self-settled groups mainly lie outside of humanitarian

norms and interventions (Bakewell 2002; Crisp 2003, 2004) and the misunderstanding of the term self-settlement.

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found in the Lancaster Library, Coventry University.

**Table 5.1:** Casamance Refugee Registrations 1998-2009  
**Source:** UNHCR (2010)

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can be found in the Lancaster Library, Coventry University.

**Figure 5.7:** Graph of Refugee Registration 1998-2009

### *Towards Long Term Integration*

The 2006 influx saw a shift from temporary to long-term integration status. A mass registration process was conducted by UNHCR with support from their on-the-ground partners as well as the Gambia Immigration Department (GID). As previous refugee camps had failed to attract Casamance refugees, the immediate solution was to temporarily integrate refugees into local Gambia communities<sup>40</sup> and this 'temporary' solution is still in place (Evans and Ray 2012). Now six years after initial entry (or re-entry in some cases), it is important to understand the challenges of this temporary situation and how these challenges are resolved by both host and refugee communities. There has been no mass influx across the Gambian border since 2006 and it is believed that existing community structures are able to effectively cope with in-coming refugees if needed. Situations in 2010 and 2011 saw a further 500 refugees cross the international border into The Gambia as a result of renewed clashes between the Senegalese Army and MFDC rebels (Agence France-Presse 2011). Given the fluidity of movement by Casamance refugees, a more recent refugee registration took place during 2010. However, it has been suggested that this registration was widely known by refugees and consequently encouraged the re-registration of many Casamançais who left the Foni districts and either returned to Casamance or migrated away from the rural areas (Pers Comm. 2010). Therefore recent statistics can be considered ambiguous and not necessarily a true representative of refugees integrating and implementing livelihoods in Western Region. In addition, these statistics did not capture the further refugees who crossed the border into The Gambia during late 2010 and throughout 2011.

In order to monitor the ground situation, a refugee president was appointed by UNHCR after the 2006 influx and was given the task of identifying new groups of refugees, unregistered refugees and observing the cross-border situation in order to formally relay this information back to UNHCR and other stakeholders (Colley 2009). Figure 5.8 identifies the conceptual process of refugee arrival. In theory, refugees who

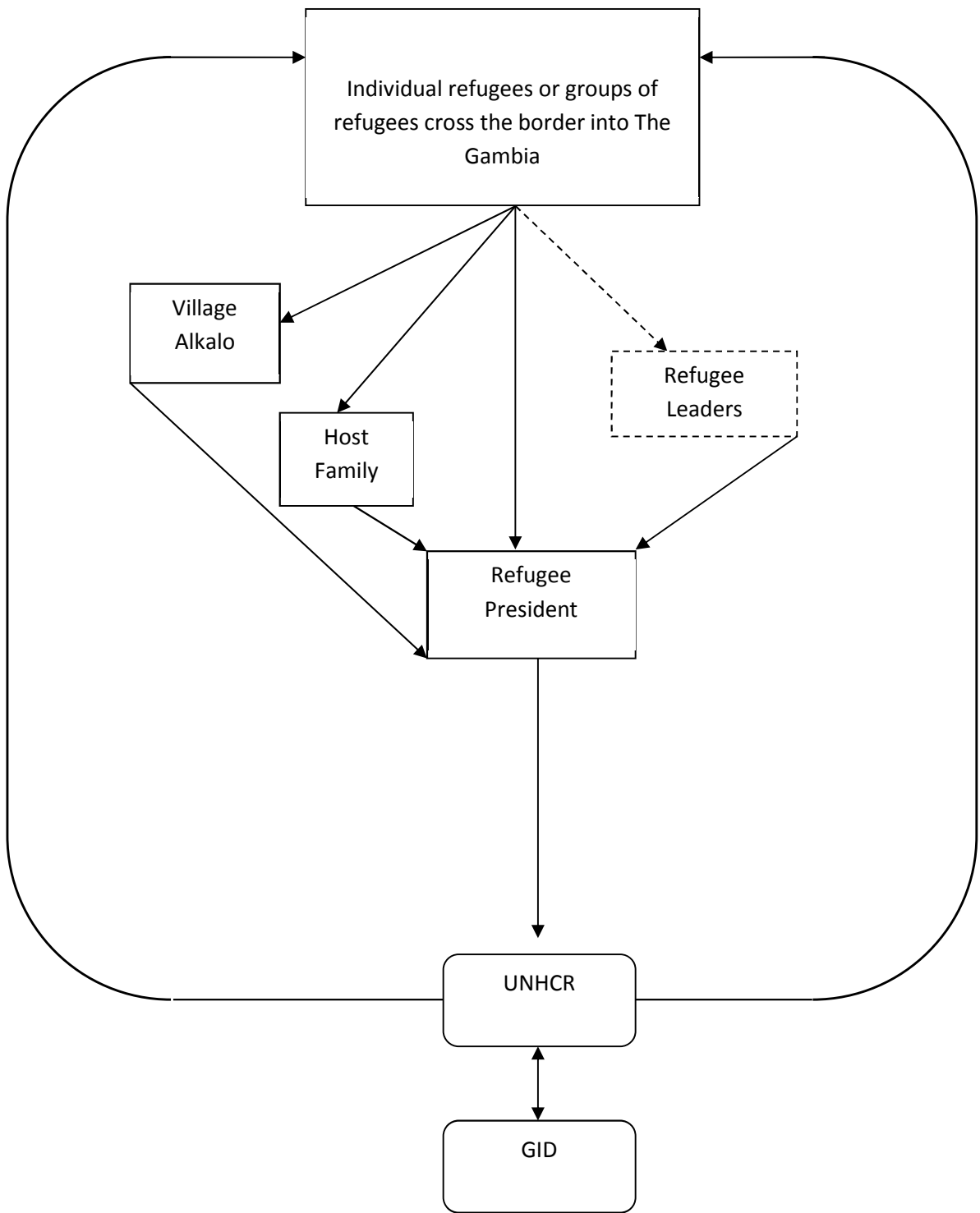
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<sup>40</sup> Although it was more of a process of refugees settling where they wanted to rather than a local integration effort by policymakers.

had recently arrived or were unregistered would contact the refugee president either directly or through their host family or Alkalo and he would then formally contact UNHCR to secure identification and registration<sup>41</sup>. UNHCR would then inform GID and refugee identification cards and documentation would be secured for integration to take place.

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<sup>41</sup> The dotted line in figure 5.8 represents the communication with refugee leaders who have been identified by Hopkins (2011) since data for this research was collected.



**Figure 5.8:** Conceptual process of refugee registration after the 2006 influx.



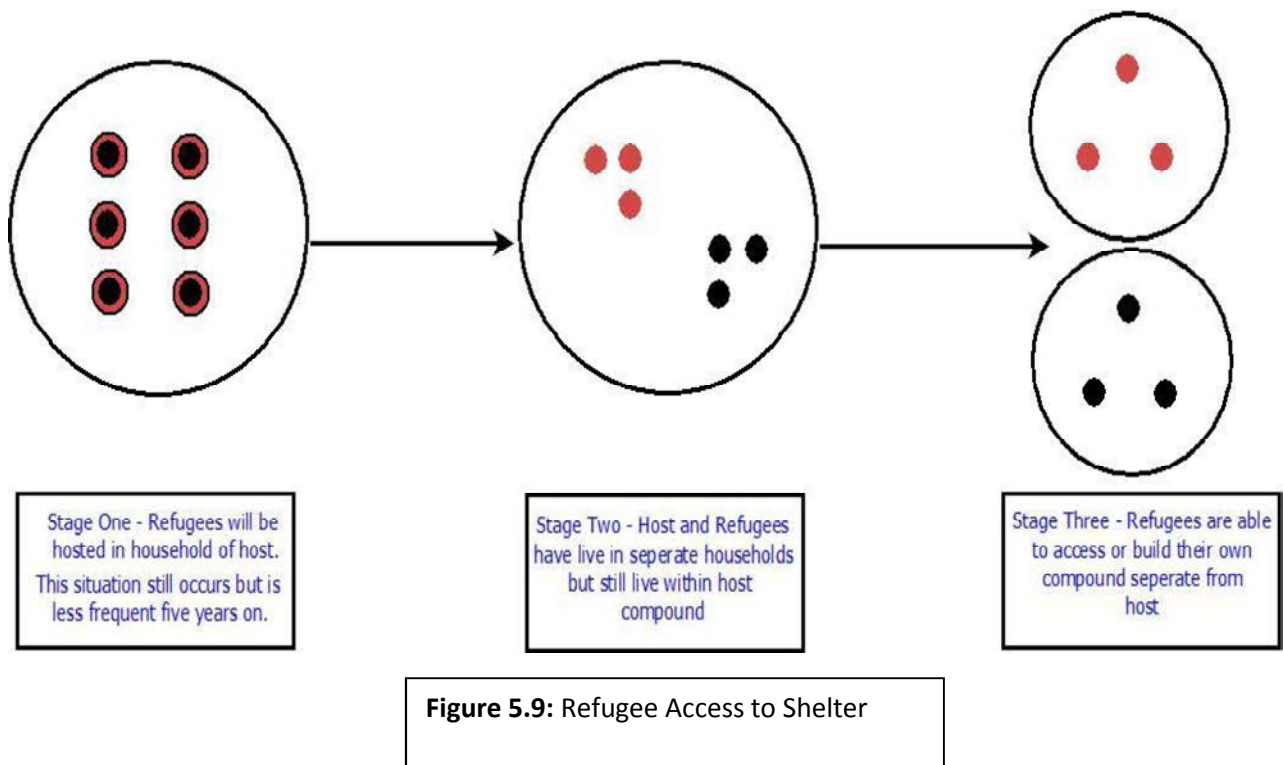
In practice however, the process of securing registration and documentation has been difficult to identify and clarify. Both UNHCR and GID acknowledge that a refugee president exists and that he is occasionally used to provide information regarding the refugee situation in the Foni Districts. The effectiveness of this appointment however, rarely goes beyond that of the humanitarian mandate to monitor the ground situation and can be suggested as a convenient appointment due to his geographical location. The refugee president is located in the village of Bulok (as discussed in Chapter Four) and has good access to transport and communication connecting it to the main urban centres. In addition, the police/ military checkpoint<sup>42</sup> in Bulok may also suggest an important village for a refugee leader to be placed.

Refugee interviews, however, suggested that not all individuals or groups of refugees had access to the refugee president, especially those located in close proximity to the porous border. Furthermore, many were hesitant to use him as an informal mediator as they were unsure of his official role and who he would relay information back to. Although the appointment of a refugee president kept policy makers such as UNHCR and GID informed of the refugee situation in the Foni's, his role has done little to action development or humanitarian response from policy makers. Results suggested that his role was more hierarchical than practical. Aside from the refugee president, Hopkins (2011) identifies that each rural village has a refugee leader appointed by UNHCR and their local partners the Gambia Food and Nutrition Agency (GAFNA) who would relay village information directly from the village to the refugee leader based in Bulok. At the time of research, however, these leaders did not exist but these processes perhaps begin to identify a willingness from the authorities to delegate this particular refugee situation towards local communities in order for it to be effectively managed at the grassroots level. It also suggests that efforts made to enforce local political structures for refugee integration ease the demand for national involvement and could further diffuse political suspicion between The Gambia and Senegal.

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<sup>42</sup> Checkpoints are official Gambian military, police, immigration, and customs posts that are located on main roads in The Gambia.

Once refugees have arrived and negotiated basic integration with either their hosts of the village Alkalo, one of the first tasks would be to try and secure access to shelter. This was identified as a priority over any other resources to begin with. Three varying stages of integration in regards to access to shelter were identified (Figure 5.9) Firstly, given the traditional historical and ethnic ties between these communities, refugees rarely encountered problems initially accessing shelter and as a result many would reside with extended family within a host household. Many hosts explained that they were obliged to offer support and shelter to refugees given the close ties and family networks. At that stage, most refugees would share accommodation or rooms with their Gambian hosts. As refugees settle, integrate and begin to access resources, some refugees would move from their host household into separate shelters but remaining within the host compound. Finally, as refugees further integrate within communities and are able to implement and sustain livelihoods, some have the opportunity to acquire their own compound whereby they separate from their initial host family and are able to access/ build their own separate shelter on their own plot of land. Many refugees are in this category at this stage of settlement but it is important to note that the land they use for shelter will not necessarily legally belong to refugees and will usually belong to a member of the host community (as will be discussed in Chapter Seven in terms of access to land). It is also important to note that although it was indicated that these stages were a progression of the long-term integration process, it is not necessarily a sequential process. There are some refugees who still do not have access to their own shelter or compound especially as the price of corrugated iron sheets for adequate roofing is relatively high, however, personal communication within villages indicated that those refugees who did not have shelter were recent arrivals and families who hoped soon to return to Casamance.



## 5.6. Livelihoods

The decision to remain self-settled in rural communities rather than put in refugee camps has therefore had a direct impact on the availability of, access to and the increase in competition for resources. It is important to not only understand the reasons for self-settlement and the facilitated integration of refugees but how, as their settlement becomes long-term, they are able to implement sustainable livelihoods. The Gambian economy is still developing. The geography of the country; a narrow strip of land, a product of an agreement during the colonial era and these borders highlight how little thought was given to its economic viability (Baker 1995). The economy of The Gambia is still predominantly agriculturally based, although in recent years, tourism has played an important role in the development of the Gambian economy which both host and refugee groups are engaged in. The economy has fluctuated since President Jammeh came to power in 1994. Factors such as the value of the dalasi regularly increasing, the increase in price of imported food stuffs such as rice reaching

a regional high (IRIN 2008) as well as the lack of economic investment and the rise in the price of groundnuts has increased the stress on households. Self-settlement in Western Region has meant that rural agricultural farmers face these challenges and as population numbers has increased, there is increased pressure on local resources.

### *Agriculture*

Historically, the Jola have been farmers and collectors of natural products. Through early trade links and colonial rule, cross border trade was encouraged for products such as rice, bush/forest products, palm fruits and groundnuts as a cash crop. At present, agriculture, especially subsistence farming, accounts for the majority of commercial livelihoods and domestic consumption in The Gambia. Baker (1994, 1995) has previously identified three types of farming in The Gambia:

1. Rice farming takes place in the swamps where the water table is high and the up-lands for rain-fed rice. A steady decline in rice farming for women has led to the mass movement of international development agencies to create and implement alternative livelihood strategies in order to supplement income and sustain agriculture within the communities.
2. Dry land farming consists of the cultivation of crops such as groundnuts, millet, sorghum and maize. Given weather inconsistencies, this particular type of farming has proved the most popular and sustainable.
3. Animal husbandry, although rapidly declining, is the type of farming where communities will employ a herder to herd cattle if lucky enough to own any. This traditionally has been implemented by members of the Fula tribe who are traditional herders and is still present in many aspects of rural society.

These types of farming are still in practice. However, as was identified in Chapter Two, Ellis (1999, 2000) highlights the importance of livelihood diversification in order to give rural households additional income generating opportunities. As a result, the collection of bush products has dramatically increased over the past 30 years. As Madge (1995: 109) argued, research had suggested the importance of products collected from the

bush (Madge has categorised the bush as forests, fallows, semi-cultivated land, river and sea) but has continued to be focused on the short-term adaptation to economic and or environmental stress. During the hungry period (May-September) where food insecurity is at its worst, the collection of such products and other forms of small-scale livelihoods are vital for the survival of communities. The environmental impacts on these natural resources, however, have continued to be neglected and this is heightened as a result of the refugee influx.

The importation of foodstuffs into the country has consistently remained high as domestic agriculture has not met national food needs. At the same time, the presence of overseas development assistance in the form of aid has become a permanent feature since the mid 1990's (Baker 1995). As rice production has declined, The Gambia has become ever more dependent on imported rice from Asia given its inexpensive nature and this has led to cereal imports reaching a peak of 40% within West Africa (Moseley, Carney and Becker 2010). In terms of gender, there have historically been ethnic responsibilities for women who take part in income generating activities but there has been a push from the Gambian government to try and bridge this gap between men and women and greater aid and development for women in order to give them greater opportunity and power within society (Baker and Edmonds 2004).

More recently there has been a push to encourage people to return to agriculture and make Gambia self-sufficient. The 'Back to the Land' initiative launched in 2007 by President Jammeh and the Gambian Government created incentives for the youth, urban migrants and farmers to return to rural land rather than migrating to urban areas for work. This has pushed enthusiasm but in reality, rural communities have hardly been hit by the effect of this incentive. Its aim was to minimise the effect for farmers on fluctuating food prices and become self-sufficient in food (Fadera 2010) such as rice but the average farmer does not benefit from this scheme with the President's own farms benefitting from new tractors and farming equipment and mainly in and around the President's home village of Kanilai.

### *Groundnut Trade*

Groundnuts in The Gambia were and still are the main cash crop for export. Around 45/50% of cultivated land is allocated for the production for groundnuts (Kuye 2006) and planting begins shortly after the first rains have occurred. However in terms of the economy, the dependence on a single cash-crop made it vulnerable to risks such as bad weather, pests and price fluctuations (Sillah 1990). This had direct effect on export earnings that were at best precarious (ibid). More recently, Gambian groundnuts exported to the EU have shown high levels of aflatoxins which have caused concern (EC 2007) farmers can no longer rely on their one cash crop for income and has led to the increase cultivation of millet, sorghum and maize. During the trade season (traditionally running from December to March), groundnuts are sold locally, in urban centres and to government officials and licensed buyers. In previous years, government had fixed a set price for a 50kg bag of groundnuts each season (Swindell 1978). In recent years there have been concerns at the local, community level that government have been exploiting the price of groundnuts so farmers ultimately lose out and it can be then sold on for a higher profit by official agents (Focus Group 2007). In rural communities where poor travel and market infrastructure make it difficult for farmers to sell, middle men (large commercial buyers) will travel to local communities to buy groundnuts from farmers, although there have been difficulties in accessing payment for these rural farmers with a lack of and inefficient micro-credit institutions. Most host and refugee populations are engaged in groundnut cultivation as similar geographical terrain in Western Region of The Gambia and in Casamance determine similar livelihood strategies.

### *Stranger<sup>43</sup> Farmers*

In order to maximise productivity, crop and income, there have been many working agricultural groups in place since the 1920s. There would be groups of young, able-bodied men who would work on the farms to collectively cultivate the land. This work is still a popular movement in mainly rural areas where work is reciprocal. There are

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<sup>43</sup>It has been referred to strange farmers in the literature but I will refer to its original context of Stranger farmers.

also *working Kafoos* in communities with combined labour groups consisting of men and women of all ages who work the farms and are either fed by their host or paid a small amount of money. This type is very popular with women's vegetable farms (Madge 1995; Kuye et al 2006). Historically there have also been groups of farmers who have migrated into The Gambia at the beginning of the planting season and at the beginning of the harvest to cultivate land and crops. This group known as 'strange farmers' mainly travelled from neighbouring Senegal but also historically from Mali and Guinea-Bissau. It is based on a host-client basis whereby local Gambian farmers allow (mainly) Senegalese migrants on the basis that they will work between two and four days a week in return for a plot of land on which he works the rest of the time cultivating groundnuts which he will sell at the end of the season (Swindell 1978: 4). This was very popular along the Southern, rural Gambian-Senegalese border and highlights the historical relationship between Gambians and the Senegalese. This can also explain the implementation of similar livelihood strategies by hosts and refugees.

#### *Sustainability of Livelihood Strategies in Refugee Communities*

Although the flood of refugees across the Gambian border does not affect the central economic infrastructure, it is clear that it does affect it at a local level. With an increase of the local rural population by 15% this puts added pressure on existing livelihood strategies and food security in the area. The area already faces structural food insecurity during the lean period (months July-September), before the harvest in October when cash and stocks are at their lowest (FAO Conference Paper 2008). Forty-six percent of rural households in The Gambia fall below the food poverty line, compared with fifteen percent in urban areas and four percent in the Greater Banjul area (ibid). This situation has been exacerbated as a result of the refugee situation and there has been added pressure on natural resources in the Foni districts and this has led to increasing competition for these resources especially in regards to livelihoods. Land is a potential long-term complication, especially in regards to ownership of cultivated land. This also raises questions about the difficulty in the ownership land for women and female headed households (Njie 2007). More recently, according to the

Food Crisis Prevention Network (FCPN), West Africa has suffered due to rising food prices especially the price of cereals. This is a cause for concern in the region as a whole especially as WFP needs 30% more funding to feed the same beneficiaries (IRIN 2008). The Gambia was a country identified as at greatest risk as a result of the 2007-2008 Food Price Crisis (Wiggins, Compton and Keats 2010). Farmers rely on the annual harvest in order to support their families but recent harvests have proved disastrous (Daily Observer 30/11/07: 2; WFP 2011) and have directly affected agricultural production within communities increasing the competition for local and natural resources.

One of the main reasons for low food security levels within these refugee communities is in regards to the low level of access to basic foodstuff by communities. Around 91% of the community inhabitants are dependent on agriculture. Since the most previous harvests have been poor the ability to feed families was reduced and the burden of hosting refugees meant that reserves were depleted faster (Concern Universal 2007). It also led to increased exploitation of local forests without regard for the environment (ibid). As a result, many sell livestock instead in order to support household consumption (O'Connor 2007). Local and international NGOs have identified that this is a problem and have supported local communities especially at this time of year to ensure food security (Concern Universal 2006).

### **5.7. Summary**

This chapter has explored the scope of the research project. Casamance refugees have been sporadically self-settled in The Gambia since the start of the conflict. Until the nature of the conflict shifted from the Guinea-Bissau border, north towards The Gambia in the early 2000s, settlement was usually temporary. Prior to the 2002 influx there was no humanitarian assistance to support these refugees and until the 2006 influx, assistance was not readily received given the fear by refugee communities of being transferred to refugee camps. As the conflict intensified in 2006, it caused the largest influx into The Gambia with official figures stating 7,546 self-settled refugees in



Gambian communities. Although 6-7,000 refugees may not be considered a global humanitarian crisis, given The Gambia's geography, population density and GDP, it comprises almost 15% of the five Foni Districts affected by Casamance refugees. As a result, this has increased the demand to access and compete for community resources as humanitarian aid has been at times slow. The shared cultural heritage between The Gambia and Senegal has facilitated the integration process of Casamance refugees.

Therefore, it is important to further understand how hosts and refugees access resources in order to implement livelihood strategies. Chapter Six will present empirical data collected and the results relating to the access of socio-economic resources. More importantly, as the shift from temporary to long-term integration becomes more apparent it is vital to understand if refugees are able to sustain access to these resources in comparison to Gambian hosts.

## **6. Livelihoods: Access to Socio-Economic Resources**

### **6.1. Introduction**

Chapter Five demonstrated how Casamance refugees have been able to self-settle into host Gambian communities as a result of shared cultural heritage. It is clear that initial has taken place and many refugees have been able to further integrate by accessing their own households and compounds, separate from their host (Figure 5.9). In addition, given the physical geography of The Gambia and Casamance, both hosts and refugee implement similar livelihood strategies which are mainly based around agriculture. This chapter will investigate how refugee groups are able to access socio-economic resources in order to implement livelihood strategies as highlighted in objective Two of this research. The Capital Assets Model will be used to investigate these resources in relation to human, social, financial and physical capital. It will highlight any commonalities and differences between the groups and will explain how shared cultural heritage is integral in accessing resources and implementing livelihoods.

### **6.2. Human Capital**

#### **6.2.1. Education**

Access to education for both hosts and refugees directly relates to the United Nations 'Education for All' (EFA) policy which aims to promote MDG two of achieving universal primary education. UNHCR covers the cost of basic education including Senior Secondary schooling for registered refugees. In comparison, Gambians have to pay for school fees for all children. Matty Bouy, the then Director General of the Department of Education, stated that the Gambian President's Initiative provides free education for girls in The Gambia although additional senior secondary subjects such as home economics would incur costs by families (Bouy 2009: pers comm.).

Information regarding refugee education was difficult to obtain, especially from government offices that acknowledged the attendance of Casamance children within

Gambian schools but were unable to provide statistics. The numbers held within local schools were estimates made by teachers. They estimated 30% of school children were refugee children (Jannack Lower Basic School 2010: pers comm.). There was confusion amongst refugee groups regarding access to UNCHR school fees. Household interviews indicated that some refugees were still waiting for UNHCR to pay school fees and that they had to pay instead. One refugee participant in a focus group explained:

“UNHCR should pay for fees but they have not this year. We just pay instead as we want our children to be in school”  
(Refugee Focus Group: Jannack: October 2009)

Refugees also mentioned that they were unsure whether UNHCR paid for school fees only or whether they also contributed towards additional resources such as books or uniforms. This confusion was evident in all refugee communities involved in this study.

At the same time, host groups were also confused on how they accessed initiatives such as free education for girls. Host focus groups and household interviews explained that many had had previously paid school fees and were waiting to be reimbursed. Thi

explained:

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“It is frustrating. Some families ask extended family to help with fees and some families hope they have enough harvest. The Government should come pay back families who have girls in school.” ( This i : Jannack: September 2009)

He added:

“I know other village Alkalo’s who have never heard of this initiative” (ibid)

This suggests that basic access to education is available in these communities but details such as finance is not clarified for hosts or refugees. This could potentially undermine how effective EFA is and how it is reaching cross-border rural areas.

Host and refugee children are integrated into the same schools and in the villages involved in this study travel the same distance. They also frequently travel together. Focus group discussions indicated that lower basic schools were generally located nearer to the community so that smaller children could travel together. School distances become further for upper basic schools and even more distant for senior secondary schools. Poor infrastructure and expensive transport has made it difficult for children from these villages to continue their studies at higher levels. At senior secondary level, it was commonly agreed within focus groups that if households had extensive family networks, children would travel to the urban Kombo Districts for secondary education. For example, a host in the village of Kusamai explained that he was educated at lower and upper basic level within the Foni Districts but was sent to live with extended family in the town of Brikama to continue his senior secondary education. It was explained that this is common practice for both hosts and refugees, whereby individuals could create further income generating opportunities given the additional educational opportunities.

Conversely, some Casamance refugees in The Gambia send their children back across the border to be educated within the French system (de Bruin pers. comm. 2010). These movements form part of broader and long-standing cross-border educational traffic, even in peaceful areas of Casamance, but only recently have humanitarian programmes been put in place to ensure the safety and welfare of educational migrants who frequently cross the international border into Casamance (ibid; Evans and Ray 2012). However, there were no refugee households in this study who sent their children back across the border for education. This can mainly be attributed to those families retaining shelter, arable farm plots and additional livelihoods in Casamance. However, the majority of refugee households interviewed did not want to

send children back across the border for long periods of time due to instability in the area and many did not have the financial means to cover transport and education costs.

Teacher observations indicated that there was some gender imbalance regarding enrolment, as host and refugee families still traditionally send boys to school rather than girls (Jannack Lower Basic School 2010). Unsurprisingly however, no household openly admitted that they sent boys to school in preference to girls.

In Western Region, both boys and girls are occasionally taken out of school prior to farm cultivation. A teacher in Lower Basic School explained:

“Education is important but farming is the only way for some households to make money. It is expected that some children will occasionally help their families on the farm but they usually tell us if they will miss school.... I have never had any problems with children having lots of time off school to help on their family’s farm.” (Jannack School Teacher: Jannack Lower Basic School: 2010).

This research also highlighted that WFP and other local agencies have helped to provide school meals and made donations to schools such as stationery and tables and chairs. Both host and refugee children have benefited from these initiatives suggesting similar access to educational resources. Children travel together to the same schools, have the same teachers and the same education. All focus groups and household interviews stated there were no tensions between hosts and refugees in regards to education. The major constraint for both groups was a lack of knowledge on how to access and claim UNHCR/ Government school fees.

### 6.2.2. Health Care

Similar to education, registered refugees also have access to free basic medical care by UNHCR and Gambians have to pay for health care<sup>44</sup>. The cost of healthcare for Gambians (excluding medication) is between D5-20<sup>45</sup> depending on if the patient is an adult or a child and what treatment is needed.

Prior to the 2006 influx of Casamance refugees, UNICEF disclosed that it was not unusual for Casamançais to cross the international border into The Gambia to seek medical care or have their children vaccinated (Kang, 2007). There is also misunderstanding amongst refugee households how to access free healthcare from UNHCR, and what services it covers. It was generally understood that refugees travel to local health centres and upon producing their refugee identity card they are able to access healthcare and the health centre would recover the costs from UNHCR directly. However, not all health centres were covered under this system and some refugees complained that they had to pay for healthcare because their local health centre was not recognised by UNHCR to reimburse the costs. It was unclear what health centres in refugee communities were covered by UNHCR policy. One medical staff complained that they were still waiting to be reimbursed by UNHCR and were therefore unable to purchase additional medical treatment. At the same time, one refugee stated:

“We know we should have our costs paid for by UNHCR but there have been times we have turned up at the clinic for treatment and we have had to pay ourselves. We don’t know when and where we have to pay.” (Refugee D: Jannack: October 2009)

Many refugees had similar experiences to the way the healthcare system under UNHCR was run within these communities.

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<sup>44</sup> Unless in a registered government health facility.

<sup>45</sup> Approximate exchange rate of £1 = D50

Some household interviews suggested there were slight differences between hosts and refugees in terms of healthcare. One Gambian host explained:

“It is expensive to seek medical treatment. We sometimes have to walk all the way to the main road for treatment and can only use donkey carts if they are available from neighbours or relatives. It is a big problem as we do not have costs covered like refugees do” (Host A, Upert, October 2009)

It was identified mainly by host village elders that refugees deserved the access to healthcare because of what they had suffered as a result of their flight and that Gambian hosts would accommodate Casamance refugees as best they could. At the same time, these elders also described the expense of health care similarly to the quote above. At the household level, it was identified that there were, at times, disputes with regards to medical treatment and this was usually amongst women and access to healthcare for their children. For example <sup>This i</sup> <sub>been</sub> a literacy teacher in the village of Kusamai explained: <sub>removed due</sub>

“Women in my compound have quarrelled before over healthcare. My wife wanted to use medicine for our son as he was sick and asked her sister if she could use some of the medicine she had from the doctor before. Her sister said no as she was keeping it in case her child was sick again as it was expensive to buy. My wife was not happy and as household head it is my duty to sort these problems out. We took our son for treatment in the Kombos.” (Personal Story: Kusamai: November 2009)

These disputes were often resolved at the household level but would sometimes need intervention from the village Alkalo and elders. Results suggested that these disputes did not occur regularly.

Results from the RRA indicated that hosts were not overly concerned with health issues as a result of the 2006 influx of Casamance refugees. There had been preliminary health concerns such as rates of Malaria, STI's and HIV/AIDS, but these were on-going concerns within the communities that effected both host and refugee groups. In addition, although improved transport links have meant easier access to major hospitals in Bwiam, Serrekunda and Banjul, the rising costs of medication and transport have meant that some hosts and refugees have been reluctant to travel further to seek medical attention. There were slight differences between hosts and refugees in terms of the cost of healthcare but these were not overwhelming. In comparison to hosts, refugees did not understand how to access free healthcare.

### 6.2.3. Vocational Skills

Refugee communities have been recipients of agricultural seeds such as groundnuts from a variety of donors (UNHCR, CU and SJFF). Previous harvests, however, have demonstrated poor yields and as a result there was a desire from both hosts and refugees to learn new skills to enhance livelihood diversification<sup>46</sup>. Rigg (2006) argues that the best means of promoting pro-poor growth in rural areas is through endowing rural households with skills. As a result, there have been a number of Skill Centres created in refugee communities (Bulok, Kusamai and Gifanga) which were aimed at providing vocational skills for both hosts and refugees. Many of these Skill Centres have been funded by humanitarian aid agencies such as UNHCR and have mainly been aimed at empowering women by enhancing their vocational skills in order to provide for themselves and their household. These centres have focused on skills such as tie 'n' dye and soap making (Figure 6.1). Figure 6.1 is an example of a Skills Centre in the village of Kusamai that has been aimed at both hosts and refugees collectively. One woman explained:

“I was chosen to help teach tie 'n' dye because I have made it lots of times before. I was given dye and materials and so we

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<sup>46</sup> In March 2012, The Government of The Gambia declared a food and seed emergency as a result of severe crop failures from the previous 2011 harvest highlighting the importance of livelihood diversification.



have set up our Centre here in the village. We sell what we make and then we can afford to go to Brikama and buy more supplies” (Kusamai Skills Centre: Kusamai: December 2009)

This item has been removed due to Data Protection. The unabridged version of the thesis can be found in the Lancaster Library, Coventry University.

**Figure 6.1:** Host woman in Kusamai learning the process of tie ‘n’ dye **Source:**  
Author

The Skills Centre in Kusamai was utilised by hosts and refugees but results suggested that many skill centres set up by humanitarian organisations are mainly for refugee groups given that they are considered vulnerable as they are displaced. This i

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due to Data

“We had a Skills Centre that was used by refugees when they arrived but it is no longer in use as it is being used to house a refugee family. I was hoping the international agencies would notice and have a new Skills Centre that both hosts and refugees could use” ( This Interview: Gifanga: November 2009)

The village of Bulok had two skills centres, one of which was for the local Gambian community and one for the refugee community and was mainly available to women rather than men. Women from neighbouring communities could also join the Skills Centre if they wanted to but a lack of funding meant that spaces were limited. One host woman who had been involved with the Skills Centre stated:

“I am happy I have the opportunity to learn such skills. It was initially unfair that such opportunities were available to just refugees. Now we are able to learn too, we feel equally able to earn more money to provide for our households.” (Host Petty Trading Interview 3: Bulok: September 2010).

To confirm with this, another host woman added:

“It is not a problem that we learn these skills separately. Once training is over, we know we will be able to work together and help each other to travel to market to buy materials or sell our produce if needed. “(Host Petty Trading Interview 4: Bulok: September 2010).

Although this is an example of skills available for both groups, it also highlights potential tensions if host women are not given the opportunity to learn such skills. In addition, not all communities had access to Skills Centres and there was little explanation as to why some villages were given preference over others. This may have something to do with size, demographics, or previous humanitarian activity (as explained in Chapter Five). At the same time, there were no Skills Centres identified that directly target men (host or refugee) in trades such as carpentry or construction. These livelihoods are assumed to be passed down through family connections. It was stressed however, that these skills would be useful for knowledge, as well as income generation. In the village of Kusamai one blacksmith explained:

“I had no formal training and was taught the trade from my father. It is not my primary income but I do it in addition to farming and can supplement my income. My business is mainly in the village and through word of mouth by villagers. It is difficult because sometimes I have to charge more in order to buy materials and equipment to do the job. There should be better opportunities for men to learn skills within the surrounding community instead of needing to travel to the Kombo’s to learn these trades. We would benefit much more from it”. (Host Blacksmith: Kusamai: April 2010).

This suggests that more opportunities should be given to men rather than just for women. In addition, although some hosts and refugees have certain skills, only a select few can implement it as a livelihood strategy as many Skills Centres do not have the resources to be maintained and train greater numbers of participants.

#### *Challenges of sustaining and marketing vocational skills*

One of the biggest challenges for vocational Skills Centres is sustainability and access to infrastructure, equipment and materials needed. For example, the refugee Skills Centre in the village of Bulok was set up as a result of successful women’s vocational training in the urban town of Fajara in order to transfer these skills to empower local women in skills such as hairdressing, cooking and sewing. The project in Bulok was successful, but has since stopped due to constraints such as high rent, the need for additional equipment and more importantly, the lack of consistent funding to provide these skills (Fajara Skills Centre 2009). Findings suggested this is not unusual. When speaking to women during focus groups, those who had previously attended training explained that once initial training stopped, it was impossible to continue to practice such skills due to lack of equipment and financial means. One refugee woman complained:

“What good are these skills and centres if we do not have the means to continue once support has stopped? Materials and equipment are expensive and we need to travel to Brikama in order to source them and find them cheaper. I sometimes try and continue tie ‘n’ dye but mainly for the household as I will not be able to make much money by the time I buy my transport, materials and then spend the time making anything” (Refugee Skills Centre: Bulok: October 2009).

At the same time, it was explained that:

“Training for various skills has been available but the funding ran out and so most training was incomplete and therefore individuals are not able to make significant additional income” (Refugee Focus Group: Kusamai: October 2009).

As a result of these constraints, learning skills have not been highly productive as a sustainable livelihood strategy. To confirm this:

“I attended the Skills Centre that was set up in the village and it was a chance to learn new skills and socialise with other refugee women of the community but I no longer take part in this activity. Once training stopped and there was no more access to cloth or dye, I did not have the means to travel every week to Brikama to buy, or the money to keep up this activity. It is as if, they [in reference to NGO who set up the centre] do not want to support us anymore.” (Refugee Petty Trading Interview 2: Bulok: September 2010).

This also raises issues of market access and availability. One host woman stated that she is able to make some income from vocational skills such as soap making, jam making and tie ‘n’ dye as she is able to travel to the village of Sibanor located on the

main road where there is more demand for these products. At the same time, one refugee woman in the village of Kusamai explained that she had the knowledge to grow a variety of agricultural and horticultural produce could make tie 'n' dye, soap and jam but there was not sufficient market access in order to make a sustainable livelihood for the household. She was unable to leave her husband and the family in order to travel to the urban areas every day and therefore her skills remained underutilised. Villages located along the border travel greater distances to the main road (between 5/7km) and limited market opportunities do not give many the incentive to pursue these skills further. One host woman explained:

“I am able to make my soap but I don't have a place where I can sell it. I leave some at the front of my compound with my sister who will sell if anybody is interested or I will travel throughout the village to try and sell it to other women who need to wash their clothes or pots and pans from cooking.” (Host Petty Trading Interview 9: Bulok: October 2010).

At the same time a refugee woman explained:

“Bulok is a big village and sometimes it is too much to travel around if I am not guaranteed someone to buy anything. I mainly rely on selling it from my compound.” (Refugee Petty Trading Interview 4: Bulok: September 2010).

The difficulty in successfully marketing products questions the sustainability of such activities as a livelihood strategy and suggests that humanitarian agencies should incorporate these factors when creating Skills Centres.

#### *Differences between hosts and refugees*

Access to, and sustainability of, vocational activities are issues relevant to both hosts and refugees. Skills Centres have also contributed towards women's empowerment and enhancing the skills of host and refugees to pursue alternative livelihoods. A petty

trading focus group conducted in the village of Bulok explained that women felt more confident because they were able to generate their own income. Many women agreed that they were able to buy school uniforms and food commodities, without always needing to ask their husbands/ family members for financial help. However, there are differences between hosts and refugees, as there are fewer opportunities for host groups to access vocational skills. Host men and women wanted to know why there had been no such vocational training offered to the host community, as these were skills they could equally benefit from. There were no overt tensions between hosts and refugee but there were some serious questions raised by host groups as to why humanitarian agencies felt it not necessary to extend vocational training to the host community. One host woman questioned why there was a Skills Centre set up for refugees and not for hosts:

“Hosts and refugees are one people. We share the same village, family and food. We also implement the same livelihoods so why do we not have the same opportunities to increase our income?” (Female Host A: Bulok: October 2009)

She continues:

“If I do not have, my refugee will provide and the same applies for if a refugee was in need. We live happily with refugees”.  
(ibid).

Although she stated that this was not a source of conflict between hosts and refugees it is clear that there are local struggles that hosts and refugees face.

At the same time, there were not only inequalities between hosts and refugees but also differences between Skills Centres in communities. The refugee Skills Centre situated in Bulok had been subject to humanitarian support and private investment by the Fajara Skills Centre. Even though there were other Skills Centres within refugee communities, many did not have the materials to offer a range of skills, adequate

teachers or infrastructure. It is impossible to suggest that there are no tensions between hosts and refugees in regards to access to vocational skills centres. However, both hosts and refugees agreed that the inequality of access to such skills is a result of inadequate humanitarian support.

The increase in population size has contributed to the availability of human capital as there are larger numbers to add to individual and household income as well as additional labour to assist on farms. Additional population numbers have also put vast pressure on the little resources already available in the communities and there was more demand for household survival rather than enhancing education or knowledge. Levels of education and knowledge within these refugee communities are not a fair indicator of the sustainability of livelihoods. There are still high levels of illiteracy and, low numbers of both host and refugee children attending school. As one host mother stated: “education is expensive” and these rural families do not have the financial resources in terms of money, land or cattle in order to continue every child’s education or seek to develop knowledge by pursuing additional vocational skill. At the same time, there were not only constraints for those who lacked an education to pursue human capital but access to education and increased human capital did not ensure livelihood sustainability or food security. Vocational skills added to human capital levels but the inconsistency of Skills Centres and a lack of market access meant that such activities could not be sustained.

### **6.3. Social Capital**

#### **6.3.1. Social Networks**

Chapter Five identified the linkages between The Gambia and Senegal and why Casamance refugees have been able to integrate within Gambian communities. In order to understand these linkages further, it was necessary to investigate social structures in order to understand the impact on access to resources. There cannot be enough emphasis on the shared cultural heritage contributing to the high levels of

social capital within refugee communities. There are a variety of social networks in these communities. They are not rigid structures and individuals can access a variety of social networks at the same time forming the basis of integration and community development. As a result of the research, several informal social networks have been identified and will be explained below.

### *Refugee Networks*

Whilst most refugees have a Gambian host and socialise together as one community, refugees have also gained certain independence and some now socialise, work and liaise with other refugees. For example, in the village of Upert, the number of refugees exceeds that of the local population and the short distance to the international border has meant that refugees are able to draw on networks on both sides of the border. Upert's geographical location has meant that it has been closely associated with cross-border rebel activity and it can be suggested that these links give refugees greater influence in the community. Refugees who now have their own household/compound, independent from their Gambian hosts, generally tend to socialise, cook and liaise with each other. Household interviews concluded that this was purely for convenience. General daily activities suggest that refugee groups frequently interact with Gambian households.

### *Host Networks*

Similar to the established refugee networks, there are groups of Gambians that socialise, communicate and liaise with other Gambians. Many of these networks were in place prior to the refugee influx and have continued. For example, the village of Kabakorr is host to only fifteen refugees residing and they very much kept relations separate (Figure 6.2). The host focus group mentioned that networks had been established prior to the refugee influx. Hosts do not purposely isolate themselves from refugee groups and regularly communicate in regards to social events, but there is little interaction on a daily basis. This may also have much to do with the sporadic locations of compounds in the village of Kabakorr with refugees located further away



on the periphery. The village Alkalo, in this particular instance, did not feel that this was a source of tension or that the community were less welcoming to refugees because:

“Everyone has to work for the individual. Refugees do not share rations and hosts do not share their food. This is how we survive” ( This i : Kabakorr: September 2009).

The statement made by i contradicts much of information given by hosts and refugees that rations and resources are shared between groups. This can be attributed to the geographical location of Kabakorr. Although situated on the main road, its distance from the international border may have deterred refugees from travelling there (SJFF Pers. Comm. September 2009). Instead this can be viewed as a rare example where there are clear differences between hosts and refugees.

These host networks were more prominent in communities with larger host numbers. They were created and utilised prior to the refugee influx as a matter of convenience and can explain why many household activities were kept separate. When in communal areas such as the bantaba<sup>47</sup> or market place, host and refugee groups willingly integrated and socialised.

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<sup>47</sup> A Bantaba is an area or bench near the centre of the village which is covered from the sun and acts as a social meeting place for members of the community. Village meetings, social occasions or humanitarian aid programmes usually gather at these so villagers know where to locate them.

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can be found in the Lancaster Library, Coventry University.

**Figure 6.2:** Personal Story of a Refugee living in Kabakorr

This suggests that the proportion of refugee/ host population can be considered important to refugee integration. Figure 6.2 highlights a lack of interaction with the host community in comparison to communities with larger refugee groups. In these circumstances, villages such as Jannack and Kusamai that had large refugee numbers but did not exceed that of the host population, there were higher levels of interaction between both groups. It also attributes the geographical location of refugee communities in their proximity to the international border.

*Gender Networks*

Gender networks are both between and within host and refugee groups. Within domestic spheres, women cook, clean, care for children, and engage in domestic chores together. With the exception of Kabakorr, compounds in other refugee communities share food which means greater numbers of women cook together. Women also travel to market together as well as engage in livelihood activities together such as fuelwood collection, petty trading and even vocational skills training where refugee and hosts train together. The same is applied to men who socialise within compounds, on farms and in communal settings such as the bantaba. These

groups can consist of hosts and refugees and relate to traditional community hierarchy.

There are clear divisions between genders and this has been explained in depth within the methodology (Chapter Four). However, men did recognise the role of women as an integral part of refugee integration and the livelihood strategies of households. Traditionally, although the husband/ father would be “head” of the household, it is the women within the household that provide the basic means to live and this includes integrating refugee families and helping them settle. The slightly higher figures for female refugees (Baker 2002) also suggest that livelihood diversification may stem from the women within the community encouraging additional income generating activities. For example, fuelwood collection was a gendered activity where hosts and refugees travel together. It was understood by male focus groups that women were responsible for collecting fuelwood to be used domestically and to be sold locally. One host explained:

“As men, we are responsible for collecting the greater value wood which can be sold in large quantities to either middle men or in the urban markets. We are much stronger to cut down these types of wood and therefore this is our responsibility”. (Male Host Fuelwood Interview 3: Uper: August 2010).

Men and women do travel together to collect fuelwood but only on occasions. During data collection, there was evidence that men and women travelled together but that was across the international border and it was understood they would collect fuelwood in different areas but then return to The Gambia together. All trips taken to observe fuelwood collection was with gendered groups and consisted of both hosts and refugees.

### *Village Elders*

The village Alkalo system is based on traditional hierarchical structures and gives community leadership to one individual (usually male). Village elders consist of a variety of village members (usually male and from founding families) chosen from traditional hierarchal structures. They are able to make political, social and economic community decisions together with the village Alkalo. The system also plays a decisive role in resolving disputes and easing local tensions. This particular network holds a great deal of power within all communities. As the methodology highlighted, an outsider should make themselves known to the village Alkalo and elders before interaction with the rest of the village. The village Alkalo has the authority to turn away individuals and families from the village and the elders stressed how important it was for refugees to be accepted into The Gambia because they are considered one group of people.

In terms of refugee integration, the Alkalo and village elders act as mediators if there are tensions between hosts or refugees, as their judgements are highly respected by all members of the community. Village elders can consist of both hosts and refugees depending on number of years an individual has been living in or associated with the village. The Alkalo however, will always be Gambian which may limit the political influence refugees can have within a community. In some villages where there is a greater refugee presence, there will be a higher refugee influence within the village elder system and again these are based on traditional lineage networks and caste divisions. As part of a refugee focus group in the village of Upert, the village elders explained that the high numbers of refugees within the village has caused tensions in the past because of the amount of power they can hold and especially as they have been perceived by some of the host population as being wealthier. These tensions are not uncommon in this hierarchal system and were expressed by hosts and refugees. The village Alkalo is always at the forefront of community decisions and that ultimately is a Gambian. This can impact on the level of political integration refugees can achieve, however, results suggested that refugees were not given access to fewer resources as

a result of the traditional community structures. In some cases, refugees were given greater access to plots of land or places to collect fuelwood because of their status within such structures.

#### *Extended Family/ Lineage Connections*

When refugees crossed the border into The Gambia, most were hosted by Gambians they had known for many years, some of whom were also extended family. The close, cross border activity and the shared Jola ethnicity<sup>48</sup> represents the social ties and networks in place prior to the Casamance conflict and how the international border can be considered as insignificant on a day-to-day basis. This has accelerated the rate of integration and in the majority of interviews conducted, either with hosts or refugees, it was made clear that they consider themselves as one people.

Refugees were hosted by Gambian families through lineage networks such as sharing the same family name. For example, the Alkalo in Jannack explained that it was common for a refugee with the family name 'Bojang' to be hosted by a family who were also 'Bojang'. These links could even reach as far as the urban centres or other rural provinces. It was not uncommon for refugees to regularly travel out of the village to stay with either Gambian or refugee relatives elsewhere in The Gambia. These connections allowed many refugees to access additional social networks giving them greater access to resources. In some cases they were not confined to rural communities and could extend resource acquisition and livelihood strategies in rural areas, urban areas and across the international border.

#### *Inter-Marriage (Figure 6.3)*

Intermarriage between hosts and refugees within these Foni<sup>49</sup> communities is common. This can be explained by the ethnic and lineage ties between the Jola community in The Gambia and Senegal. The dynamics of an intermarried couple

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<sup>48</sup> For more in-depth information regarding the Jola ethnic group consult various works by Nugent, P. (2007), de Jong, F. (2005), and Foucher, V (2002).

<sup>49</sup> Or Fogny as Northern Casamance districts are sometimes referred to.

indicate that each spouse legally enjoys the benefits of being a host or a refugee. Data suggested that that if a refugee was married to a Gambian, they could still retain their refugee status, allowing them to continue to collect food rations (before these ceased in 2010) and could still apply for a Gambian ID card. In terms of livelihoods, an intermarried couple were able to farm land in the village where they lived, from the spouse's family (whether that was in the same or neighbouring village) and potentially had access to land across the border in Casamance. An inter-married couple also had greater access to the social networks in place.

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**Figure 6.3:** Example of Intermarried Couple in the Village of Upert

### *Livelihood Networks*

Both hosts and refugees are involved in a variety of livelihood activities and there are associated networks with different livelihoods. Livelihood networks determine access to resources in order to pursue livelihoods. For example, these groups determine places to travel to collect fuelwood or the position in the market where produce is sold or even the amount and type of land given to crops.

Livelihood strategies are highly dependent on the social structures. For example, if a host had access to large plots of land, the land available for their hosted refugees would be greater in comparison to other hosts and refugees (Kusamai Alkalo interview). Figure 6.4 highlights the area that one host travelled to collect fuelwood with his family and other members of the community. The respondent lived in close proximity to the Alkalo's compound and sometimes travelled with him. As a result, he did not have to travel long distances in order to collect fuelwood for domestic use as his wife or children could go if the compound needed immediate supplies. He was thus able to spend more time collecting fuelwood for income generating purposes as a result of the social networks he had utilised.

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**Figure 6.4:** Tracking of fuelwood collection by Gambian Host in the village of Upert

At the same time, social networks within communities allowed for both hosts and refugees to acquire seeds for crops and cereals. One refugee participant explained:

“If I am in need, I am able to approach other refugees or even my host to provide seeds for my garden. Even if I do not have enough produce to sell, I will at least have small amounts to use in the household.” (Refugee Petty Trading Interview 5: Bulok: September 2010).

The use of cattle to farm land was also highly dependent on social networks within communities. For example, when asked who he would lend his cattle to, a refugee farmer replied:

“I will lend my cattle to anyone who approaches me but also to friends and extended family” (Refugee Farmer interview 1: Kusamai: July 2010).

As identified, some refugees (although not many) were able to bring assets and resources across the border when they fled Casamance and in some cases this included cattle. It was generally accepted that refugees would farm their land first but then lend their cattle to other farmers, especially hosts, who did not have any. These examples highlight the importance of social networks to engage in livelihood strategies for both hosts and refugees.

#### *Host and Refugee Access to Social Networks*

There are instances where refugees appear to have greater livelihood networks, especially if they live in border communities. Some refugees are able to access livelihood resources as a hosted refugee in The Gambia, as well as resources in their home villages in Casamance. It was observed that at points where rebel activity and fighting became heavier, less cross border livelihood activity took place, but it did still occur. Also, if a refugee was an elder and linked closely with the host village traditional structures, they would have access to the same resources as the Gambian Alkalo and Gambian village elders would have access to, in some cases making them better off



than the average host family. However, apart from these shifts of power in communities where there was a greater refugee presence, it was Gambian elders and hosts that determined the plots of land to farm, where shelter could be located, and where to collect fuelwood. Some hosts mentioned that refugees could freely choose the areas to pursue livelihoods but, the deeply embedded community structures and traditional caste system meant that resources such as land was pre-allocated and only certain areas could be used for certain activities. For example, the

said:

“Refugees in Jannack will be allocated agricultural land by their host. They will use the areas specifically allocated for farming. No host or refugee would use any land for any purpose without consulting with me and the village elders.”

Interview: Jannack: September 2009)

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It is important to understand that the Alkalo and village elders not only made decisions for refugees but also determined where Gambian families could travel to access resources and pursue livelihoods due to community structures. The access to livelihood networks was equally important for both host and refugee groups.

These varying social networks have enhanced the access to resources and the livelihoods that both hosts and refugees implement. This research suggested that higher levels of social capital, especially among refugee groups, meant they were able to access greater numbers of resources to enhance household income and the sustainability of existing livelihood strategies. Higher levels of social capital could also give both hosts and refugees greater freedom to collect natural resources enhancing income opportunities.

## 6.4. Financial Capital

### 6.4.1. Micro-Finance

The research identified five micro-finance institutions set up within Western Region, one in each Foni District and all members of the community, including refugees had access to them (Interview Foni-Kansala Credit Union 2009). They were commonly known as ‘credit unions’ where small-scale loans could be acquired, but they were also micro-financing opportunities where individuals, households and community groups could deposit savings<sup>50</sup>.

Village Alkalos explained that access to credit unions on an individual basis was not common but did occur for both hosts and refugees. There was a general consensus amongst both groups that there were greater and more immediate priorities within individual households than to utilise credit union facilities. For example, a host household head in the village of Jannack explained:

“I have never really thought about saving my money in the credit union because my family are in more need of the money and it would be pointless to save that money if it would help to pay for resources such as children’s school fees or buy a bag of rice to feed the family.” (Host Individual Interview 4: Jannack: May 2010).

Few hosts or refugees admitted to having personal savings accounts with credit unions and those individuals who did have access to and were using micro-finance institutions were generally literate and in many cases had previous experience working with humanitarian organisations in the area. This was the case for one Gambian woman who was married to a refugee in the village of Kusamai. She engaged in multiple

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<sup>50</sup> Credit Unions in these rural areas were generally not supported by the humanitarian sector or private companies such as Reliance or Gambia Women’s Finance Association (GAWFA) but were supported by The National Association of Cooperative Credit Unions of The Gambia (NACCUG) which is the only credit union trade association in the country and represents every credit union in the country.

income generating activities such as horticultural farming, soap making, jam making and tie 'n' dye which were undertaken in the community and neighbouring villages. She had access to, and was regularly using, the local credit union as a result of her livelihood activities. However, she was previously trained through humanitarian aid programmes in tie 'n' dye and soap making. This is how she was able to understand the benefits of joining the credit union and the importance of engaging in a variety of livelihood strategies to diversify her household income.

There is general misunderstanding over the role, process and purpose of micro-finance institutions and this has not been effectively disseminated to communities. This was confirmed during individual interviews with various skilled workers, in the study villages, as they did not believe they had enough money to open an account with the credit union. Some refugee respondents also explained that they did not know whether they could access such a facility because of their refugee status. Each credit union in Western Region explained that refugees were able to access and utilise the credit union if they wanted to but in reality very few in this study used credit unions. This is not dissimilar to host groups and can be attributed to low income generation in these communities.

There is also a gender gap in the access to micro-finance institutions especially, at the community level. It was identified that some villages did have access to a credit union as part of a community fund, which would be used for community projects including forest projects, mosque building, and seed-stores. However, the exact process of contributing to the fund was unclear, although it was mainly handled by the Alkalo, community elders or the Village Development Committee (VDC)<sup>51</sup> if there was one established within the village. The village of Bulok had an established VDC who was

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<sup>51</sup> VDC's is a type of council within the local government structure where representatives are elected. The chairperson also acts as a representative to area councils (in this instance, all villages belong to Brikama area council). The VDC is responsible for planning community development and communicating with all relevant stakeholders. Usually the president of the VDC is the village Alkalo and these structures very much adhere to traditional community hierarchal structures.

particularly active in Food For Work programmes (as will be explained below). Refugees did confirm that they contributed to community funds. Most community funds were handled by the Alkalo and village elders and this rarely included women. Many women, through the implementation of humanitarian initiatives, have been urged to utilise credit unions and it was clear that some women, mainly those engaged in a variety of livelihood strategies and were slightly better educated, were using credit unions but these were very few. There were no signs of tensions between host and refugee as a result of micro-finance opportunities. It can be suggested that given the limited knowledge and lack of financial capital in these communities, there was little conflict.

Bartsch (2004) argued that microfinance can play an important role in the drive towards the economic and social empowerment of refugees but there has been a lack of implementation from policy makers. This to an extent is true, but in reality, the amount of financial capital available for poor rural communities and refugee groups who have no collateral does not depict a fair notion of society. Most of these rural communities are unable to “save for bad days” or borrow money in a safe and secure environment apart from neighbours, relatives or kin. Although there were credit unions set up within every district, they were underutilised because of a lack of knowledge of the purpose of credit unions and micro finance. At the same time, many hosts and refugees did not see the benefit of a credit union as many could not secure enough profit from existing livelihood strategies to justify depriving the household of basic amenities.

The use of financial capital is important as it provides both groups with financial security. In reality, however, both hosts and refugees admitted to struggling to meet daily financial demands. This issue was emphasised by a small group of refugee farmers who explained the difficulties in accessing financial support. One refugee explained:

“I not only have to worry about ensuring the household is sufficiently provided for but I also need to make sure that I have enough money to hire farming equipment if I need. This is very important because if I do not do this then I may not be able to cultivate or harvest good produce and therefore I will have even less money than before. How are we able to put money in the credit union when our situation is so unstable” (Refugee Agriculture Focus Group: Kusamai: August 2010).

This suggests that the access to financial capital does little to sustain existing host and refugee livelihoods. Those who have access to financial capital such as credit unions, however, are able to further enhance their individual financial position.

#### **6.5. Physical Capital**

Basic infrastructure such as schools, shelter, medical facilities and transport links were needed by and important to both hosts and refugees. It was clear that existing infrastructure such as seed stores was not sufficient to cope with additional population numbers and that communities were in need of additional schools and medical facilities. At the same time, infrastructural constraints impacted on livelihood strategies for both hosts and refugees. Many women complained of the poor fencing for community gardens, as well as a need for a reliable water supply. One host woman explained:

“I had a plot in the community garden, however there was inadequate fencing and cattle used to come and ruin our crops. There was little maintenance on the land and so after a while we all stopped using it and now it is overgrown and cannot be used at all.” (Host Petty Trading Interview 3: Bulok: September 2010).

Figure 6.5 is the garden that the host was referring to and although the water supply is intact, the lack of fencing has meant gardening no longer takes place.



**Figure 6.5:** Failed horticultural community garden In Bulok  
**Source:** Author

There were concerns by communities with regards to the maintenance and deterioration of physical assets such as water pumps that was vital for households and livelihoods. Figure 6.6 identifies just two of many water pumps in these communities that have fallen into disrepair. This disrepair was mainly attributed to a lack of water pump maintenance. One respondent in the village of Bulok explained that this was not an immediate issue as there were plenty of other water pumps in the village that both hosts and refugees could use.



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**Figure 6.6:** Broken water infrastructure in the villages of Kusamai and Gifanga  
**Source:** Author

Geographical location, social capital and traditional community structures heavily influence access to physical capital. It was observed that access to transport links work generally well in these areas. The tarmaced main road enabled vehicles to pass through most rural villages, either travelling to the urban areas of, further up-country to the provinces, and even across the international border into Casamance. The major constraint is the financial capacity of hosts and refugees to use these transport links on a regular basis and make regular profit from. Many people do travel to urban markets and it can be suggested that potential denial in access to these facilities could occur with any refugees who were not necessarily registered as documentation is often needed when travelling through police checkpoints based on the main road. However, refugees explained that they never had any problems at various checkpoints when they travelled and even if some were not registered they could always borrow a refugee or Gambian identity card from extended family or through social networks. At the same time, market opportunities were not readily available in all communities. Villages that were located near or on the main road had greater access to market

facilities. Border villages, had to factor in additional logistical costs such as labour in order to sell produce at a main road market or in an urban centre. Market access in these rural communities is a contributing factor to the economic sustainability of livelihoods and affects both host and refugee populations.

The ownership of machinery and farming equipment such as motorised ploughs or milling machines was one of the larger constraints for both groups but also highlighted inequalities between hosts and refugees. All refugee farmers interviewed complained that they did not have access to adequate equipment to harvest their crops and relied heavily on the host community to either borrow or hire equipment (if they had the financial means). One refugee farmer even suggested that as a result, his harvest was not as successful because he had to wait to borrow equipment but there was nothing he could do because he was a refugee and that his host, and the community, had been very generous in the refugee plight. At the same time, the inadequacy of such equipment restricted host groups. A host focus group explained that not many people owned sufficient equipment to cultivate their land and it was very much a case of having to borrow or hire from family, neighbours, or even the Alkalo if necessary.

The access to physical capital directly impacts on the access to and availability of human, social financial and natural capital. It has allowed refugees to further integrate into communities as they have been able to access shelter, independent from their hosts. However, the constraints of infrastructure such as seed stores and farming equipment impact on livelihoods for both hosts and refugees.

## **6.6. Humanitarian Assistance**

Data collected indicated that there had been a variety of humanitarian and development projects implemented since the 2006 refugee influx. There were few agencies/ organisations in The Gambia that led projects specifically for refugee communities but agencies such as UNHCR, WFP, Concern Universal (CU), GRCS and



SJFF have had a long-term presence in Western Region which has been scaled up since the 2006 influx.

#### *Assistance to Refugees*

UNHCR has provided refugee communities with assistance prior to the 2006 influx. They are responsible for registering all refugees and providing refugee cards and identification. In addition, as explained above, UNHCR are also responsible for refugee school fees, medical assistance and more recently, livelihood programmes. Although UNHCR was heavily involved during the initial registration process in 2006, its programmes and policies have been based on those original statistics (Barry 2009) and subsequent refugee numbers have been estimates from a variety of sources. These statistics may or may not account for those who have returned to Casamance, migrated to urban areas for work, or new arrivals who cross the border in relatively low numbers. The potential problem with these generic statistics is that they are unable to capture those refugees who are vulnerable. UNHCR relies heavily on local partners to carry out its work on the ground especially with livelihood support, providing seeds and some materials for refugees to sustain livelihoods within the agricultural sector (Jatta 2009).

UNHCR's sister agency WFP has also been active within refugee communities since the 2006 influx. It has provided refugees with basic food assistance under its Emergency Operations Programme (EMOP) until it ceased in 2010. Its programmes and initiatives, run jointly with UNHCR and local partners, indicated that food aid was necessary for vulnerable households. However, similar to UNHCR, its aim to identify those who were vulnerable became a major challenge to its assistance and is one of the reasons for withdrawal of food aid. This can be attributed to the fluid movement of Casamance refugees making it hard to track where they settle, integrate or implement livelihoods.

Figure 6.7 is an example of refugee food distribution day in the village of Bulok. It displays food aid provided by WFP and distributed by their local partner GRCS to

refugee groups on a monthly basis. Refugees were provided with basic food commodities such as rice, oil and corn soya blend (CSB). Quantities of rations were based on number of people in a family and was calculated based on the age of each family member. There were a total of ten distribution villages within Western Region<sup>52</sup> and distribution usually took place over the course of a week by various GRCS teams. Figure 6.8 indicates the average number of refugee men, women and children (broken down by age category) who received WFP food rations between 2007-2009. The graph is an average due to inconsistencies in the data collected. There were months where either distribution did not occur or data was missing and there were no backdated records to verify previous distributions. Figure 6.8 suggests that refugees receiving WFP food rations between 2007-2009 were adequately provided with basic food needs. It also must be noted that as people get older, they may transfer from one age category to another. Therefore this could be a reason why there is a decrease in the number of children aged <5 who receive food rations and an increase in the number of children aged between 5-18 receiving rations. It also highlights that a large proportion of refugees were receiving food rations. Humanitarian country reports (UNICEF, WFP, NaNa) stated the increased nutritional status of refugees since the 2006 influx, was better than the nutritional levels of the local Gambian population (WFP 2007, 2010).

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<sup>52</sup> The ten distribution sites were: Kampant, Bwiam, Batabutu, Kabakorr, Somita, Kandonko, Faraba-Sutu, Bulok, Ndemban and Kaimu Karanai

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**Figure 6.7:** Refugee Food Aid Distribution in the village of Bulok  
**Source:** Author

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**Figure 6.8:** Total Average Number of People Receiving Food Rations Broken Down by Age and Gender 2007-2009  
**Data Source:** WFP and GRCS (2007-2009)

### *Assistance to hosts*

As a result of the 2006 influx, humanitarian agencies realised that it was not enough to provide basic assistance for refugee groups alone and as a result there were some programmes in place that have supported Gambian hosts with resources such as food. One successful scheme, although only short lived, was the Food For Work (FFW) initiative which was used to alleviate pressures on hosts so they could develop community assets (WFP 2008). This scheme gave hosts the opportunity to work on various projects such as community forests and vegetable gardens, in order to receive food rations (Figure 6.9). There was an active representative in each village who would log the names of hosts who participated, the activity they were part of and the consistency of their work. This information was fed back to WFP in order to calculate monthly food rations. The FFW representative in the village of Bulok explained:

“I have my log book which I record all names, hours and activities completed. This is not only a good way for us [hosts] to be rewarded for hosting refugees but also a way to enhance our skills and work together as one community” (FFW Coordinator: Bulok: May 2010).

Most of the activities were aimed at community development and food distribution would occur at the same time and at the same sites as refugee food distribution. It was viewed as a welcome incentive for host groups and one elder in the village of Kusamai explained:

“We are happy to be involved and we are even happier with the outcome. We [as hosts] also have times of hardships and are happy for a little more assistance. But, the food they give doesn't last. We still need to go and buy food from the market and so we still have much pressure.” (FFW host 1: Kusamai: May 2010)

The FFW programme was, as a personal observation and through community interviews, a successful project. This was also supported by host interviews. Hosts did not feel abandoned as a result of hosting refugees and it gave hosts the opportunity to earn food rations rather than relying on donor aid. However, similar to refugee food rations, the deliverance of food aid by WFP and GRCS was inconsistent and as a result some participants lost interest in the scheme. More importantly however, the FFW scheme did not occur all year round which angered some members of the community.

One Host explained:

“I have been part of the FFW scheme and was very pleased to be given food rations by GRCS. However, we were not told when future activities would take place and I have been waiting for two months for something to start again.” (FFW: Bulok: May 2010)

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**Figure 6.9:** Local brick making in Bulok as part of the FFW scheme to be used as a Police building  
**Source:** Author

*The challenges of accessing humanitarian resources*

In terms of the access to humanitarian assistance, both host and refugee groups were confused in regards to what assistance they are entitled to, what they have actually received and who they received it from. Using the FFW initiative as an example, host participants did not fully understand when and where FFW activities would take place and how long they would run. Not all communities had FFW representatives (only Bulok and Kusamai in this study) and this made them unsure as to when and if they could receive food rations. At the same time, focus group discussions and interviews identified that few hosts and refugees knew who they were receiving aid from. Along with these findings, Hopkins (2011) also identifies that there was general misunderstanding on how to access necessities such as medicine or school fees and who they would access it from. During an interview with the This i I asked:

“Are you receiving humanitarian aid as a result of hosting refugees?” (CR: i : September 2009)

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To which he replied:

“Yes. We do we receive support sometimes. I think we receive aid from SJFF, GRCS, WFP, and the government. However they never provide enough and not everyone receives equal amounts or what they should.” ( This i : Gifanga: September 2009)

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CR: “Do you know what aid you receive from these agencies?”

“They give us similar materials and they come to the village frequently. GRCS provide us with food and the government has provided us with wells. Refugees get help with medical and education costs but I do not know how they access this as I am

a host and do not have this help”  
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It was clear from this conversation that neither hosts nor refugees were particularly interested in who provided aid. It suggests that prior to the Food For Work incentive, there were rising tensions between hosts and refugees however, these communities, especially hosts, were more concerned that their hospitality to refugees and the hardships faced by both groups were recognised by external actors, especially those who provided aid.

As well as not fully understanding how to access aid resources, there were also complaints from both hosts and refugees regarding the quality of support from agencies. In Jannack one, refugee family explained that the poor quality seeds they had previously received from UNHCR were only held in store as a last resort in case the seeds that had been donated by relatives, hosts and neighbours were not sufficient. At the same time, some refugees and hosts complained of the time it took for agencies such as UNHCR, WFP and GRCS to deliver agricultural necessities and sometimes seeds arrived in the middle of the agricultural season, too late to be sown.

A challenge encountered by both host and refugee groups was the reduction of food rations (including host FFW) during the period of research and the complete withdrawal of food support by the end of data collection in 2010. Moreover, hosts and refugees complained that WFP and their local partners had failed to adequately prepare communities for this transition. However, Malcolm Duthie the then Country Director of WFP stated that there were few protestations as a result of ending food rations, which strengthened the argument that many refugees had been fully integrated and could become self-sufficient (Duthie 2010: pers comm.). The data collected does support this to some extent however, it was clear that a lack of exit strategies and sensitisation inhibited the overall sustainability of these communities. For example, it was not uncommon for refugees to explain the end of food rations. One refugee stated:

“They just left. They [WFP] were late delivering food rations for two months and then they never came back. We were then told that we would no longer receive rations. We now have to support ourselves but do not have the means to.” Refugee B:  
Upert: January 2011

### *Challenges for humanitarian aid*

Humanitarian aid has political challenges and the political position of humanitarian agencies has to an extent inhibited the effect of aid. For example, due to political sensitivities of the conflict as explained in Chapter Five, the Gambian Government does not provide humanitarian assistance and their ambiguous refugee policy suggests that external actors need to be cautious when assisting these communities. At the same time, the closure of the UNHCR field office between 2002-2006 ultimately affected the organisation’s consistency in delivering programmes and the extent to which it can create an effective mandate. The sporadic nature of the Casamance conflict also inhibits the ability to track migration patterns of Casamance refugees. It was well known that many refugees had left the Foni districts in favour of the main urban areas but many still returned for the monthly food ration distribution. There is no formal process in place whereby the internal migration of Casamance refugees in The Gambia is tracked and policies in place to ensure refugees are assisted accordingly.



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**Figure 6.10:** Transporting WFP  
Food Rations across the Border  
into Casamance.

This vehicle is transporting WFP  
food rations across the border  
into Casamance. This exacerbates  
the problems of identifying those  
who are genuinely vulnerable and  
urges the need to track refugee  
migration in order to understand  
their movements. Similar vehicles  
will also transport rations back to  
the main Gambian urban centres.

**Source:** Author

The UNHCR refugee counselling centre based in the urban area of Bakoteh was put in place as a support network for urban refugees, including Casamance refugees. It is estimated that there are over 1,000 Casamance refugees living in Gambian urban areas, but this centre does very little in terms of tracking or supporting Casamance refugees. It has limited instructions from the UNHCR field office and humanitarian agencies are unaware of locations where Casamance refugees reside and whether it is a temporary or permanent move. In addition, WFP acknowledged that many refugee households were capable of obtaining basic resources in order to integrate and implement livelihoods (Duthie 2010: pers comm.). However, the end of food support assumes that all refugees have access to food security and livelihood resources. There is a need for policy to shift in order to target those who are still vulnerable and unable to access basic resources as well as target refugee development.

Personal communication with UNHCR, WFP and its local partners highlighted the disorganisation and miscommunication which made implementation of programmes

fragmented and ineffective on the ground. There was an obvious communication barrier between WFP and UNHCR and individual initiatives were not coordinated between local implementing partners. Both hosts and refugees noticed this and as a result they were able to approach varying organisations in order to fulfil their needs which only fuels dependency. The Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) conducted each year (2007,8,9) would suggest that policies and mandates are in agreement, however the process of obtaining, implementing and sharing data proved a strain on the relationship between WFP and UNHCR and this was evident in the refugee communities<sup>53</sup>. At this stage, what was proving more damaging was the miscommunication between the UN and its local partners (namely GRCS) employed to undertake the ground work, such that programmes were not successfully implemented and at time incomplete. GRCS has since been replaced by GAFNA representatives but this miscommunication is still evident. To further this problem, there was a lack of coordination between agencies in The Gambia, Dakar and Ziguinchor as well as a lack of triangulation between The Gambia, Senegal and Guinea-Bissau on how to deal with Casamance refugees.

## **6.7. Human, Social, Financial and Physical Capital: The Impact on Self-Settled Integration**

### **6.7.1. Importance of cultural factors**

Both hosts and refugees accessed the same socio-economic resources to enhance integration and implement livelihood strategies. However, it can be argued that there is a greater emphasis on socio-economic resources to enhance self-settled integration. These communities rely heavily on informal political structures (community hierarchy), social networks and shared cultural heritage to get access to resources and to facilitate integration. However, in relation to the capital assets model, cultural factors such as ethnicity and caste are not considered, although literature has highlighted the

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<sup>53</sup> There was a JAM conducted in 2012 but findings are not yet available. Initial programming suggested they were using similar policy and methods as they had done in previous missions.

importance of them to implement livelihoods (Winters et al. 2009; Scoones 2009; Bernstein 1992; O’Laughlin 2005; Unsworth 2001; Rew and Rew 2003; Ellis 2000).

### *Ethnicity*

One of the interesting aspects of this study was the close relationship between the Casamance Diola and the Gambian Jola. This shared ethnicity underlines the shared cultural history that has facilitated refugee integration. These ties have been instilled in the communities for centuries (De Jong 2007) and represent the deep rooted connection between this group of people. Therefore when it came to hosting Casamance refugees as a result of the conflict, the general consensus was to uphold these ties. The research confirmed this from both host and refugee groups and it was explained that as a result of shared ethnicity, refugees were able to easily access communities and it allowed them to settle on a temporary and long-term basis. Both hosts and refugees stated that ethnicity facilitated this process and the level of access to these communities may have been different if hosts and refugees did not share ethnicity. This differs from some of the wider literature that suggests that ethnicity can cause economic disadvantage and restrict access to resources (Hickey & du Toit 2007).

In terms of implementing livelihoods, shared ethnicity meant that both groups adhered to the same traditional hierarchical structures and gave refugees greater opportunities to access social networks which gave them greater access to livelihood resources. In relation of the Capital Asset Model, it was difficult to analyse the impact of ethnicity as the model does not include wider cultural factors that are key within this research. These communities extensively utilised their ethnicity, especially in terms of social capital and to access networks and structures, and natural capital; to utilise cross border resources. This has strengthened host and refugee ties and as argued, access to cross border resources can help to explain why tensions have not escalated between hosts and refugees. This shared ethnicity has demonstrated why Casamance refugees have chosen to self-settle and why they abide by the same traditional community structures as their hosts. To further this, data collected by the

author from Casamance refugees in Guinea-Bissau suggests a different experience whereby a lack of shared culture, language, history, and more importantly ethnicity, has prevented some Casamance refugees from fully integrating and (figure 6.11).

Casamance Refugees in Guinea-Bissau

When in Sao Domingos, one refugee stated the difference in ethnicity between the Diola Casamançais and Creole Guineans created a less harmonious integration process.

“It has been common practice for refugees to be given land to farm by hosting communities, and after a year of clearing, planting and some harvesting, the hosts have taken the land back for their own utilisation and left refugees to start the same process again with new land. There are refugees who have been here since the height of the conflict in the 1990’s and have had a settled experience but it is not the majority. We don’t have the same ethnicity and it sometimes harder for us to have a good relationship with our hosts.” (Refugee in Guinea Bissau: Sao Domingos: July 2010).

**Figure 6.11:** Casamance Refugees in Guinea-Bissau

*Caste/ Class System*

The research suggested that aside from the wealth of social capital needed to access resources, traditional caste systems within these communities also dictate the availability and access to resources. Caste and social class are central to how livelihoods are structured and implemented within communities (Scoones 2009) and asking basic questions about how local communities are structured will help determine livelihood dynamics, especially agricultural livelihood strategies (Bernstein et al 1992). What was evident in all communities was the informal political structures that both hosts and refugees adhered to which was a determining factor in the access to capital assets. Scoones (2009) points out that one of the failings of livelihoods approaches over the last decade was ignorance of structural forces such as class. As O’Laughlin (2004) has argued, in order for a comprehensive livelihoods analysis to take place,

there is still a need to understand and analyse the complex underpinnings of power and politics within societies and how this affects the availability and access to political spaces, especially in terms of implementing livelihoods. For example, these communities have a traditional hierarchy consisting of an Alkalo and village elders which determine community politics. Although the village Alkalo will be Gambian, there are many refugees who have village elder status and are influential in community politics. At the same time, communities with a larger refugee presence will also have a great deal of power in communities. The village of Uperet has a large refugee community who have been able to easily access land, shelter and resources in order to fully engage in livelihood activities. Although the Alkalo is Gambian, the strong presence has meant that refugee groups are highly influential in the community.

It is fair to suggest that the cultural underpinnings in these communities has allowed refugees to be part of traditional community hierarchy and given a certain degree of political power. It is through themes such as caste, however that politically, refugees can be at a disadvantage in comparison to their hosts. As explained in section 6.3.1, traditional caste systems allow refugees to have political influence but this system would not allow a refugee to become a village Alkalo. This political hierarchy remains with the Gambian host.

Traditional caste systems and Informal community politics are not formally incorporated within the Capital Assets Model and therefore it is unable to analyse the influence they have on capital assets. This is embedded within what Shaffer (2008) refers to as cultural capital that is based on caste and class systems. As pre-existing literature and this research has suggested regarding this refugee situation, these themes are vital for refugee integration and the subsequent access to resources. There are instances where refugees are at a political disadvantage, however the adherence to the same community structures allows them to have a basic political voice and access to resources they may not necessarily have access to, if the caste system between hosts and refugees was different.

### 6.7.2. Importance of social capital for both hosts and refugees

As Malley et.al (2009) point out, sustainable rural livelihoods rely on bottom-up approaches which harness social capital and social networks. Resources are constantly utilised as coping strategies as well as to reduce risks within a rural context (Perez 2002). This was evident when analysing the access to social capital within these communities, as access to resources was mainly determined by cultural factors but maximised by social networks and structures. There was little evidence to suggest that refugees were denied access to particular social networks and in some cases refugees have better social connections to some Gambian hosts. One refugee in the village of Upert explained:

“I am very close to the village Alkalo. Our families have been associated before I was a refugee and since I have become a refugee I have had much help from the Alkalo and he has shared much with me including food, land and cattle.” (Upert Individual Interview: November 2009).

This highlights that both hosts and refugees can access a plethora of social networks which can enhance the access to resources in order to implement livelihoods. The networks gained through social capital allow gendered societies to develop opportunities which are not necessarily present within educational institutions (Jones and Chant 2009). This is directly applicable to traditional community structures and the allowance of displaced people to access such networks. Similar to Gale (2006), this research highlighted that social networks and reciprocity was demonstrated through kinship ties which provided greater resources for both host and refugee households.

When analysing access to and levels of social capital within these communities, there was an overriding difficulty because capital is culture specific (Krishna 2002) and is something that the Capital Assets Model does not take into consideration. Cultural aspects such as informal politics, traditional caste systems, ethnicity, and gender roles are ways of enhancing social capital in these communities. The model gives little guidance on how to identify or measure social capital in the form of social networks

(Rew and Rew 2003) making it impossible to attribute it to the sustainability of livelihood strategies. It is clear from the data that the informal social structures that hosts and refugees belong to determine the rate of integration and sustainability of livelihood strategies. For example, Refugee Bojang was considered a village elder. He crossed the border in 2006 and has been able to pursue the same activities he implemented when he lived in Casamance. He stated:

“We belong to the same community structures but we live across an international border. I regularly visited my brothers and uncles in The Gambia and when I became a refugee I was considered a village elder like I would have been in my home village in Casamance. Just because I have crossed a border does not mean my status within the community changes.” (Refugee Individual Interview: Jannack 2009).

This research highlighted the positive outcomes of social capital for both host and refugee groups. High levels of social capital for hosts and refugees allowed greater access to other forms of capital and enhanced the access to socio-economic and environmental resources (as will be discussed in Chapter Seven).

### 6.7.3. Differential access to resources

Findings from this research have shown that access to socio-economic resources are relatively equal for hosts and refugees given shared cultural factors that facilitate integration. However, there are instances where there is differential access to resources between host and refugee groups which can develop from low-level tensions into conflict.

As research has suggested above, there were some tensions between hosts and refugees over the access to resources. This was evident in aspects of human capital around vocational skill training and even social capital when refugees have greater access to social capital in comparison to some of their hosts. However, these tensions

were mainly between women and were not overwhelming in the community. Another area of potential conflict between hosts and refugees arises in the form of paid labour in relation to harvesting agricultural crops. Many host farmers stated that they paid for labour on their farms, mainly in the form of women's cooperative (also known as Kafoos<sup>54</sup>) (figure 6.12), whereas only half of refugee farmers did this mainly due to lack of financial capital. When investigated further, some refugees mentioned that as a result of not being able to afford paid labour, they harvested smaller amounts in comparison to their hosts. This is interesting because it highlights that these tensions do exist, however this was the case for only a few refugee households. If these tensions did escalate, both hosts and refugees agreed that existing community structures would effectively mediate tensions.

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**Figure 6.12:** Paid labour in the form of women's cooperatives to harvest crops  
**Source:** Author

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<sup>54</sup> During data collection, Kafoos were commonly identified as informal women's cooperatives. This can be to coordinate micro-finance if available or operate collectively to transport goods to market, to carry out post-harvest activities (processing and packaging), and to research market prices (Concern Universal).



In terms of market opportunities, this was different between hosts and refugees. There is much competition between women in order to grow produce and sell it for cash. This competition was evident in local market spaces. There is a lack of market spaces within communities for refugees to sell their produce. A host focus group conducted in the village of Bulok identified that there were a total of three markets in the village where women were able to sell produce. However, it was increasingly difficult to identify all three markets and after several interviews with mainly refugee market traders it was identified there were two markets within the village where women were able to sell their produce.

One of the market spaces was a formal structure constructed as part of a previous humanitarian initiative located on the main road to promote local income generating activities (Figure 6.13). However, this market space had mixed reviews from both locals and the NGO sector. It was built, as many others were, along the main road to boost market trading. Many now stand unused because they were either not promoted enough by humanitarian agencies or there is insufficient produce within villages to sell at such a market place. The market place in Bulok is usually active in the morning but when unused, men and women use it as a social gathering space. One of the main observations from this particular market place was that it was predominately used by the host groups. When asked where refugees sold their produce, one host woman replied:

“They [refugees] sell their produce in the other market located inside the village. They are able to use this space but many of the tables are in constant use and they prefer to sell their produce together.” (Host Petty Trading Interview 2: Bulok: September 2010).

It was increasingly difficult to locate the other market where refugee women sell their produce. It was eventually pointed out that the second market was sporadically located on the main non-tarmac road leading to the centre of the village. This was more informal in comparison to the market on the main road where make-shift tables were brought by refugee women to sell their produce (Figure 6.14).

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**Figure 6.13:** Host women selling produce within formal market in Bulok  
**Source:** Author

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University.

**Figure 6.14:** Refugee women selling produce within informal market in Bulok  
**Source:** Author

These figures highlight a stark difference in market trading opportunities for host and  
refugee women.

Earlier community discussions had suggested that both host and refugee women had the same access to markets in order to sell their produce. However, individual interviews with refugee women concluded that because hosts use the formal market on the main road, refugee women are unable to guarantee a space there to sell their produce on a daily basis. All women interviewed stated that people from neighbouring villages travel to Bulok in order to buy produce but mainly from the market located on the main road. One refugee woman complained:

“We are unable to access the market on the main road. The tables are reserved for host women and we [as refugees] rarely get to use it. Therefore we lose out on customers because most people will always go there first before coming into the village. We are unable to compete and some of us are unable to sell produce every day.” (Refugee Petty Trading Interview 5: Bulok: September 2010).

As a result, many refugee women sold less because of the inequality in market access. It was clear that although there were no formal barriers in place preventing refugee women attending the market on the main road, it was an established place for Gambian women to buy and sell produce. This made it increasingly difficult for refugee women to access this market suggesting that in some areas, hosts do have greater access to resources. This confirms that although conflict is not overt, tensions between hosts and refugees do exist.

### **6.8. Summary**

Due to shared cultural heritage, the availability of socio-economic resources was relatively equal for both host and refugee groups. As a result of ethnicity and traditional hierarchical structures, both hosts and refugees were able to utilise a plethora of social networks to access resources and implement livelihood strategies.

Access to these resources did at times differ depending on host or refugee status. Refugees and hosts accessed education and healthcare differently but there was general confusion by groups on how to fully access such resources. This was similar to initial vocational training for hosts and refugees but once training was completed, many hosts and refugees were unable to continue these skills due to a lack of financial and physical capital. However, there were inequalities between host and refugee groups. Refugees seem to have fewer opportunities marketing their produce and may have less political influence. However, it must be noted that these inequalities are not overwhelming due to the shared cultural heritage and an adherence to traditional community structures. Depending on caste and social networks, there are some refugees who are wealthier and have greater political power in comparison to their Gambian hosts but this is true between and within host and refugee groups. It was clear that political authority is ultimately retained by the host community under these traditional hierarchal community structures and therefore if tensions did escalate, there is no formal mechanism in place for refugee views to be heard. This is something that will need to be addressed as resources continue to deplete.

## **7. Livelihoods: Access to Environmental Resources**

### **7.1. Introduction**

Chapter Six identified how hosts and refugees access socio-economic resources in order to implement livelihood strategies. It demonstrated that both groups were able to utilise similar resources, highly dependent on social capital. In addition, shared cultural heritage furthered the integration process for refugee groups and also allowed many refugees to access additional resources as a result of their status in traditional community hierarchies.

This chapter will demonstrate how hosts and refugees access environmental resources that enhance income generating opportunities and is an indicator of livelihood sustainability. The Capital Assets Model will be used to investigate the access and availability of natural capital which will identify how communities were able to utilise natural capital to implement livelihood strategies.

### **7.2. Natural Capital**

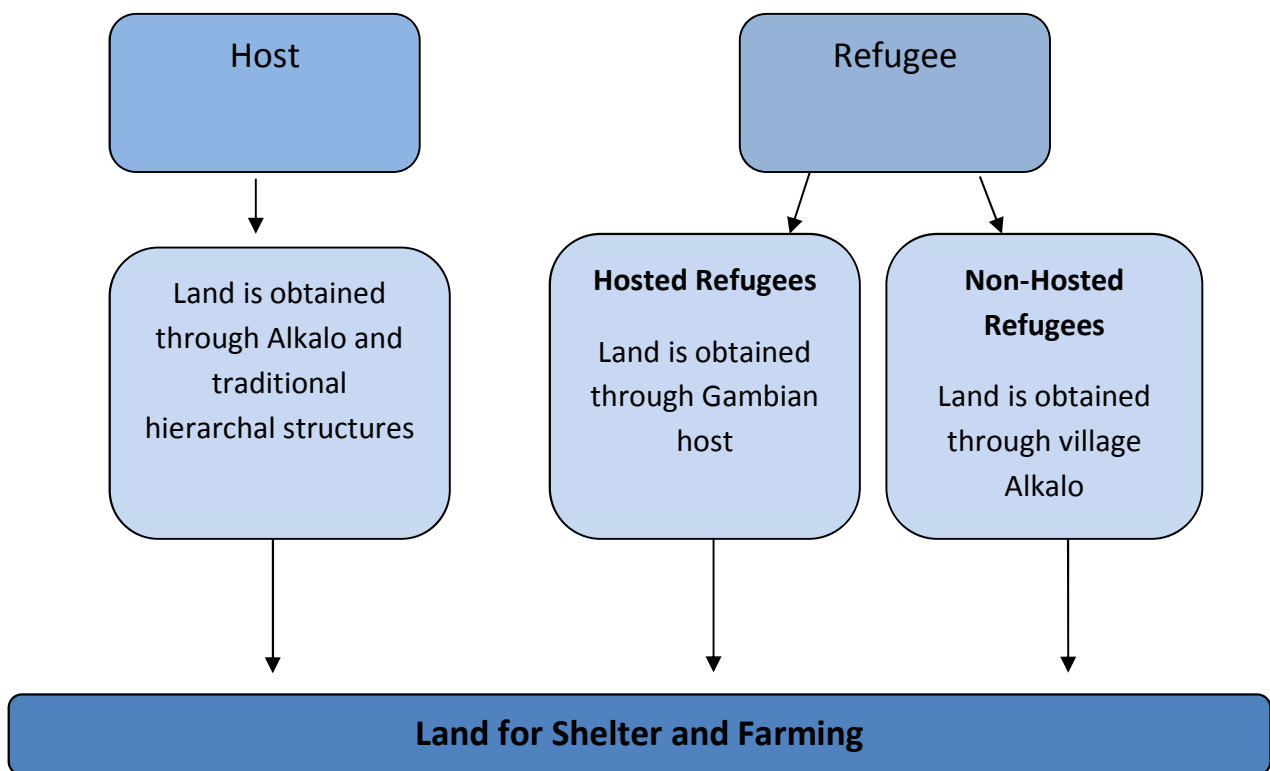
#### **7.2.1. Land**

##### *Access to Land*

Land allocation is based on communal land tenure and observation by the researcher noted that there appeared to be enough communal land in these communities for both hosts and refugee families that have settled. This may explain why there have been no tensions between host and refugee groups over the allocation of land for shelter or cultivation. Traditionally, land in The Gambia is allocated in a village to those who originally cleared it for shelter and farmland and was divided between families according to need. Individuals and families who arrived later had to seek a host or relative and they then would be allocated land for shelter and cultivation by verbal consensus, in agreement with the village Alkalo and would gain usufruct rights without the need for legal title deeds. This tradition has since continued in these

communities and Casamance refugees also adhere to these traditional norms given the close cultural, ethnic and historical ties. Land for community use (such as mosques, schools and clinics) is based on a community decision that is discussed with community elders but ultimately made by the village Alkalo.

Prior to the 2006 refugee influx, access to land for farming and shelter in these villages was given on a temporary basis to be returned to the village if refugees repatriated back to Casamance. Although settlement is now more permanent, village Alkalos agreed that there are still three main avenues used to access land. Firstly, there was access to land for arable farming and/or for shelter. The access and availability of this land was different depending on whether you were a Gambian or a refugee. For Gambians, land is obtained directly through the village Alkalo. For refugees, there are two avenues to access land; 1) as a hosted refugee where land is obtained through the Gambian host family or 2) as a non-hosted refugee where land is accessed through the village Alkalo (Figure 7.1).



**Figure 7.1:** Access to Land within rural communities

*Utilisation of Land*

The approximate area of land allocated is unknown in most cases. Most host farmers interviewed stated they ‘owned’ between three and five plots of land to cultivate various crops and cereals. Refugees would also be allocated land in plots but information was harder to determine as the number of and size of these plots depended on their host. One host farmer explained that stating exact details of land size within communities is very similar to disclosing financial information and many do not like to disclose such detail, especially if they have more land in comparison to others. Agricultural livelihood surveys however, suggested that host groups cultivate between 3-5 plots of land and around one hectare of land for rice cultivation. Interestingly, however refugee farmers stated that they also use between 3-5 plots of land but it was pointed out in all surveys that they do not own the land. a farmer in Kusamai explained:

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“I do not own any land here. Land was given to me for cultivation” (Agriculture Livelihood Survey 9: Refugee: Kusamai: July 2010)

In agreement, This i stated:

“This land is just given to me for cultivation. I do not own it.”  
(Agriculture Livelihood Survey 3: Refugee: Kusamai: July 2010)

All refugees pointed out that they do not own such land but they were freely able to cultivate crops on the land allocated and any produce or cash made from products would be kept for the farmer and his family. All refugee farmers interviewed said they did not need to give their host family any form of payment for the use of agricultural land.

Assistance on agricultural land was common practice within these communities in order to maximise agricultural production and included assistance to clear, cultivate and harvest land. It was identified that if a household, whether host or refugee, did not have enough labour to cultivate their land, the community would provide assistance. This does depend on the access to social networks in the community. One host farmer concluded:

“If I am in need, I know I am able to rely on members of the village to help me. Refugees are also part of the community and they would also help and I would always help a refugee if they needed my assistance.” (Host Farmer interview 3: Kusamai: July 2010).

### *Ownership of Land*

Although there is a general understanding on how to obtain land in these communities, there is still a sense of confusion regarding ‘ownership’ of land for both hosts and refugees. Casamance refugees have been able to have access land with relative ease and in many cases have been able to build shelter for their long term

settlement. Refugees who have built on land are thus responsible for all taxes on that shelter. These taxes are paid to the Alkalo, who is then responsible for paying the District Council Office located in the Local Government Area of Brikama. In this case, refugees use the same system as Gambians but there is not necessarily any legal entitlement to that shelter, as it is on borrowed, communal Gambian land. Refugees gave mixed responses in regards to their entitlements to shelter with some stating that if they returned to Casamance they would give the shelter to either their host or the village Alkalo. Others, however, stated that because they built the shelter and had been paying taxes on it, it would remain theirs, even if they returned to Casamance. No clarification could be found but land allocation issues were mainly identified to be an informal process between a refugee and their host in what happens to the shelter. Land given for cultivation has no legal title because it is communal land that belongs to the community. There are informal agreements between hosts and refugees, that if a refugee returns to Casamance, the land will revert to the community. Previous testimonies from refugee farmers stated that they had no ownership of cultivated land which could suggest a form of tension between host and refugee groups. In reality, host farmers had the same legal entitlement to cultivated land as refugees.

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, a host farmer in Kusamai explained:

“There is no legal documentation with regards to land in these communities. It was owned by our great grandparents and their fathers.” (Agriculture: Livelihood Survey 4: Host: Kusamai: July 2010)

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also explained:

“No paperwork is needed for hosts or refugees to acquire land. It is rare even for hosts to own paperwork for their shelter. We know the shelter is legally ours because we pay taxes on it.” (Agriculture Livelihood Survey 1: Host: Kusamai: July 2010).

Unusually, there was one refugee family interviewed who were able to produce title deeds proving legal ownership of land (Figure 7.2). It is unusual, especially as no other refugees interviewed were able to obtain any similar documentation from a Gambian host. It was also unusual because many Gambian households that were interviewed were also unable to produce such deeds. This relates back to the allocation of land through informal communal structures rather than formal government structures. However, this particular situation was a private transaction from one individual to another transferring land, shelter and resources. It can suggest that this was not necessarily a legal document but can be considered as a security document to make the refugee feel safer. It must also be mentioned that the refugee in possession of this document may be of some status, as he disclosed that a fee of D28, 000 was paid for the resources and it is unusual for a refugee, let alone a host, to have access to this type of financial capital.

There are no formal structures in place to oversee or verify ownership of land in these communities. It was made clear that the refugees who reside within the Foni Districts share the same rights as Gambians in terms of land ownership and there was no difference in the security of these rights (National Disaster Management Agency 2010). However, Malcolm Duthie, the then Country Director of the United Nations World Food Programme, stated that the major humanitarian concern for Casamance refugees was securing legal rights to resources such as shelter and land, as these continue to make refugees vulnerable and could prove problematic in terms of long term integration (Duthie 2010: pers comm.).

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**Figure 7.2:** Land title deeds  
**Source:** Author

### 7.2.2. Fuelwood

Fuelwood is a vital domestic resource. It is an important source for heat, light and cooking and is used by every family in these communities. It forms a key livelihood strategy within communities, given the access to forestry resources in the surrounding environment and the demand for fuelwood in rural and especially urban areas. It also highlights the importance of livelihood diversification in rural communities given volatility of previous rains and a series of poor agricultural harvests. The additional population within these communities as a result of the refugee influx has exacerbated

existing pressures on natural resources and there has been more emphasis on the collection of fuelwood as a livelihood strategy.

The collection of fuelwood is usually performed by groups involving the most able members of the community both men and women. Data collected indicated that host and refugee children are also engaged with this activity and that fuelwood collection was segregated by gender but hosts and refugees do work together. There were a few examples where refugees and hosts did not travel together to collect fuelwood and this can be explained by the type of wood that was being collected. It was mainly identified that refugees and hosts collected fuelwood together in terms of small bundles that are kept for domestic use or sold locally. Interviews identified that if higher value wood (such as timber or rosewood) was collected in large quantities then individuals would travel in separate groups of hosts and refugees. In this situation, the decision to travel in such groups had more to do with refugee documentation and the various checkpoints they would need to pass to travel to the urban centres. In addition, travelling in larger groups to transport larger quantities of fuelwood kept costs down for hosts and refugees. One host explained:

“It is expensive taking [fuel] wood to the Kombos. Some woods also will not sell if we keep it in the village. This is why we sometimes group together and take wood to the Kombo’s collectively. It is much cheaper for me to do this.” Fuelwood Livelihood Survey: Male Host 2: Upert: July 2010)

Communities were somewhat vague when describing the places they travelled to in order to collect fuelwood. This ambiguity was prominent throughout data collection. Data suggested that there were no formal boundaries in place for fuelwood collection and it was pointed out by communities that forests are shared with neighbouring villages. There were no clear divisions between hosts and refugees with most refugee participants stating that they were not allocated particular areas to collect fuelwood and could use the same forests as their hosts. When asked if there were boundaries

and places where hosts and refugees could not collect fuelwood the response was mixed. Some participants (both host and refugee) responded that there were no boundaries and people could travel as far as they pleased. Others responded that there were some boundaries between communities, as well as areas that had been previously designated by the Department of Forestry. However, the majority of these communities did not know where these boundaries were. When seeking clarification from the Department of Forestry, Abdoulaye Sanneh (Pers. Comm. 2010) stated that the department only operates in communities where there are established Village Development Committee (VDC) structures and the focus is on participatory forestry management in regards to community forestry programmes. At time of data collection, few communities had an established VDC and so there was little national support. As a result, it was better understood that there were informal boundaries between villages/ers which were designated by and adhered to according to traditional hierarchies.

Figures 7.3 and 7.4 highlight two villages where fuelwood was as a principle livelihood strategy. Figure 7.3 highlights the village of Kabakorr and the two main areas where the community collected fuelwood. These areas were identified through GPS tracking. One household explained that it is common for some people to travel considerable distances to collect fuelwood, especially if they are pursuing it as a livelihood strategy, but because of concerns such as lack of transport, most people are reluctant to travel far and would prefer to stay close to the village to collect fuelwood. Figure 7.4 highlights the boundaries for fuelwood collection in the village of Jannack. Rather than using various sites as in Kabakorr, one main site is used by the community for all fuelwood supplies. Hosts and refugees use this site in Jannack. However, within these boundaries there are divisions and households/ individuals will use certain areas to collect fuelwood. This relates to the role of social capital within these communities and linked with the traditional hierarchal structures within the community (Chapter Six).

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**Figure 7.3:** Fuelwood boundaries in the village of Kabakorr

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**Figure 7.4:** Fuelwood boundaries in the village of Jannack

It was also important to ascertain whether fuelwood resources were accessed from across the international border in Casamance as a result of the increased demand for fuelwood resources. As expected, both hosts and refugees stated that due to security reasons they did not cross the border. Neither the researcher nor research assistant were formally taken to areas very close to or across the border to collect fuelwood (probably for security reasons. However, it is known that the porous border is utilised to collect and transport fuelwood from Casamance. This information was obtained through key informant interviews, informants on the ground and through individual household interviews and cross-border observation. Given the rapid fuelwood depletion within Gambian communities, it can almost certainly be suggested that resources such as mahogany, and rosewood come from Casamance and can be sold in main urban centres in The Gambia.

There is a strong political element to collecting and bringing back fuelwood from Casamance. Individual interviews suggested that rebels would control various points along the international border and would oversee what crosses the border and in some cases, fees or even bribes must be paid in order to cross the international border<sup>55</sup>. One host male explained:

“It is sometimes much harder for me to bring fuelwood back from Casamance. We [as Gambians] can travel across the initial border to collect fuelwood but if we travel further in country we do not necessarily know who will stop us and what we will need to give them. Sometimes, if this is the case, we will travel with refugees who know the areas better and we only allow the men to travel as it can be much more dangerous for women, especially as the conflict is still on-going.” (Male Host Fuelwood Interview 6: Upert: January 2011).

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<sup>55</sup> Please refer back to Chapter Five (5.3.1) and the work of Martin Evans on the War Economy (2000, 2002, 2003, and 2004).



A refugee focus group in the village of Upert concluded that it was easier for them to travel across the border to collect fuelwood because many frequently travel for social occasions or to tend to their land/ farms and so they know exact locations to travel to. However, both hosts and refugees explained that it was sometimes difficult accessing vehicles in order to transport fuelwood back across the border into The Gambia and therefore both groups would take what they could on foot or, if possible, join with others and take a small donkey, horse or ox cart. The Department of Forestry stated they are unable to control the utilisation of fuelwood resources across the border (Department of Forestry 2010) and therefore these resources are much more accessible for hosts and refugees.

#### *Marketing of fuelwood*

Fuelwood is commonly gathered and transported to the village on foot carried on an individual's head packaged in bundles (unless an animal cart is available). This is also where children were indicated to be utilised as they help to transport fuelwood back to the household.

All fuelwood collected would be separated for domestic and commercial use. Domestic fuelwood was usually made up of dead wood that has naturally fallen from the trees. No clarification could be sought from the Department of Forestry to understand whether it was prohibited to take live wood but the village This in Upert explained:

“It is easier, especially for women and children to pick dead wood from the ground. They do this and only cut from the trees if they need to. That wood, however is usually sold locally.”

This i Interview 2: June 2010)

In terms of the amounts of fuelwood that are kept for domestic and commercial consumption, the response was varied and sometimes inconsistent. Also, the amounts of fuelwood kept for domestic and commercial consumption depended on the gender of the participant. Host and refugee female surveys were very similar stating between

75%-100% of fuelwood was kept for domestic consumption. These figures may seem a little high but it is fair to suggest that at least 50% of what women collect is kept in the compound for domestic use. In contrast, the majority of male interviewees stated that between 75-100% of fuelwood they collected was used for commercial purposes and this can be explained in two ways. First, men stated they were able to physically collect and transport more fuelwood in comparison to women and children. Secondly, men would usually collect higher value fuelwood (such as timber) in comparison to women and would sell it as an income generating activity.

Some fuelwood was prepared in small bundles (Figure 7.5) and then sold either in the village or on the main roadside. This is the most common scenario and the wood is sold for approximately D10 per bundle. Alternatively, fuelwood was prepared into larger bundles that will be sold *en masse* to either middle men<sup>56</sup> or taken to the urban centre by individuals to be sold on (Figure 7.6).



**Figure 7.5:** Fuelwood prepared in small bundles for sale for D10 at roadside  
**Source:** Author

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<sup>56</sup> Middle Men are generally known as men who have access to large vans or lorries and travel between communities buying large bundles of fuelwood from individuals and then transport that to the main urban centre to sell on.

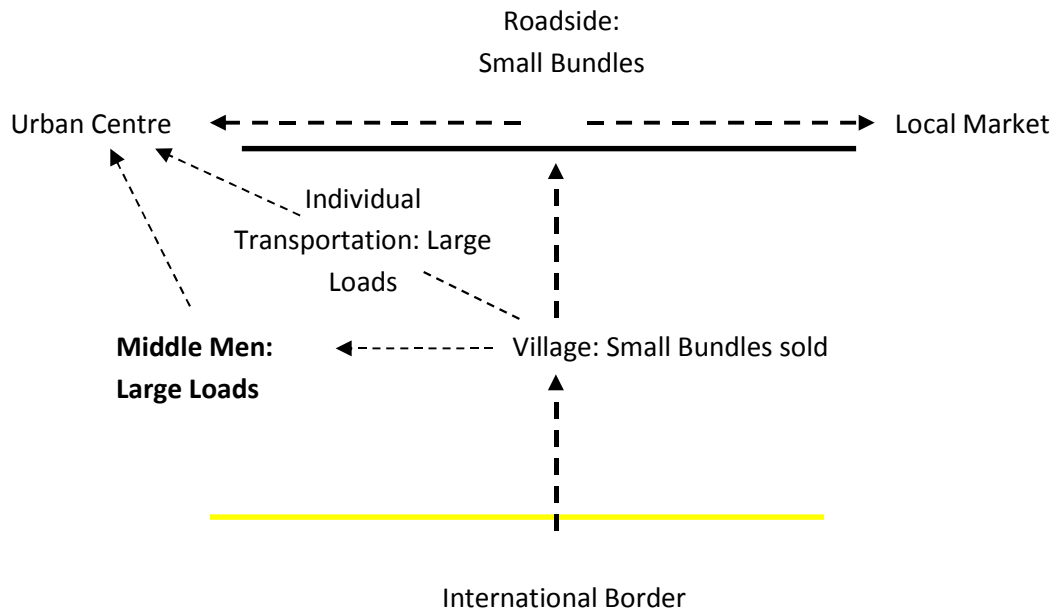


**Figure 7.6:** Fuelwood ready to be sold *en mass*

**Source:** Author

Most of these communities were aware of the considerable income opportunities available to them by selling fuelwood. Fuelwood is sold within villages to households, individuals and also travellers to or from Casamance (it was explained in Upert that these commodities are cheaper to buy on the Gambian side of the border). From the village, fuelwood is often transported to the main roadside or local market. 80% of refugee surveyed stated they regularly travel to the main urban centre (between 2-3 times a week) to sell fuelwood. This is in stark comparison to hosts who stated that they only use public transport once a week and make use of the roadside and local market more often. Most host men stated that they only travel to the urban centres to sell fuelwood if they have larger bundles or have higher value wood. Figure 7.7 highlights the various ways in which households in the village of Upert sell fuelwood. The bolder lines highlight the routes which both hosts and refugees regularly use and the lighter lines highlight the routes occasionally used. The majority of profit made from this livelihood strategy is kept for domestic use, meeting the household daily needs, especially in terms of food security. Profit was also mainly kept on an individual basis although most men stated that they gave some money to their wives for domestic use. More importantly refugees stated that they did not usually

give any payment to their hosts from fuelwood sales but would share profit if their host was financially struggling.



**Figure 7.7:** The process of retailing fuelwood in Upert

*Sustainability of fuelwood resources*

Although fuelwood resources are depleting, there are measures taken within communities to conserve the natural environment and sustain community (rather than individual) income. These measures are mainly in the form of Community Forest Projects (Figure 7.8) that have been initiated as a result of humanitarian assistance<sup>57</sup> and are designed to enhance community development. These projects are not only targeted at producing fuelwood but also allow communities to understand the importance of environmental sustainability in relation to issues such as climate change and food security. There were Community Forest Projects in Jannack, Gifanga and Bulok. Communities stated that they were taught by relevant organisations how to effectively manage the community forest and therefore each villager understood their role. Profit was usually dedicated to the community (such as mosques, farming

<sup>57</sup> The villages in this research had no community forest projects that had been initiated by government although there are some in Western Region.

machinery or storage) and so the main challenge is deciding what the money was spent on. The traditional hierarchy of the village (Alkalo and village elders) would ultimately decide how community money was spent and did not necessarily represent all community groups, including refugees and women. For example, in Gifanga, a community mosque was recently built as a result of community funds. Women of the community mentioned that there were not enough funds to build them sufficient quarters outside and they were hoping that they would have more say in subsequent decision making processes (Gifanga Female Host Focus Group: April 2010). These projects were seen as a sustainable way for communities to continue to grow and provide important infrastructure for all members of the community, both host and refugee.



**Figure 7.8:** An early Community Forest Project in the village of Jannack. Once the timber trees are mature enough, they will be sold and the profit will be used towards a new seed store for the village.

**Source:** Author

### *Fuelwood/ Natural Resource Governance*

Aside from Community Forest Projects, there are few formal structures in place in terms of fuelwood governance. As mentioned, in many communities there were no formal geographical boundaries between villages when collecting natural resources. One host focus group participant in the village of Upert described it as a “first come first served” system<sup>58</sup>. This made identifying areas to collect fuelwood confusing and suggested that individuals could travel anywhere to collect fuelwood. It was highlighted however, there is an informal system dictated through traditional community structures and social networks that determined where people can collect fuelwood. For example, one refugee woman explained:

“As women, we are only allowed to go to certain areas to collect fuelwood” (Fuelwood Livelihood Survey 2: Female Refugee: Upert: July 2010).

When asked if she travelled in places different to her host, she responded:

“No, us women travel together regardless of host or refugee. The decisions are made by the Alkalo, the village elders and even the heads of households” (ibid)

At the same, it was male surveys that identified that hosts and refugees travelled to different areas to collect fuelwood. One host explained:

“I use the area along the border surrounding Jakine and I know some refugees travel the other way, towards Jannack.”  
(Fuelwood Livelihood Survey 3: Male Host: July 2010)

When asked if this created conflict, not only between communities but also between hosts and refugees, the majority verdict suggested there was a form of healthy competition, which rarely escalated. However, the evidence was in fact contradictory.

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<sup>58</sup> This situation may also be described as ‘tragedy of the commons’ scenario as analysed by Garrett Hardin in 1968. This scenario stems from the exploitation or depletion of a shared limited natural resource which is of importance to a variety of people.



Some days/ weeks hosts and refugees used some areas and at other times it changed (personal observation). It was ultimately unclear who could collect fuelwood, the type of wood and where.

### 7.2.3. Bush Products

Research by Madge (1994, 1995) and Baker (1995, 2000) has highlighted the importance of local woodland/ forest products that are essential for domestic consumption and livelihood diversification, especially for women. For the purpose of this research, bush products were treated separately, rather than as a sub-category of fuelwood, because they were sold separately from fuelwood.

There are two fruit seasons in the Gambia. Citrus Fruits in dry season and Mango in rainy season. Bananas grow all year round. Bush products, as identified in Table 7.1, are in high demand in both rural and urban areas and for both host and refugee groups. The access of these products allows both host and refugee women to sell additional produce at market. One refugee woman explained:

“I grow produce (horticultural) in my garden and I collect baobab and monkey bread from the bush. It is not much but it means I am able to sell more at the market” (Petty Trading Focus Group: July 2010)

This also highlights bush products as an important source for livelihood diversification.

Product	Domestic Use	Commercial Use
Orange ( <i>Citrus sinensis/aurantium</i> )	x	x
Lemons/ Limes ( <i>Citrus Limon/aurantifolia</i> )	x	
Mango ( <i>Mangifera Indica</i> )	x	x
Banana ( <i>Musa acuminata × balbisiana</i> )		x
Baobab Fruit ( <i>Adansonia Digitata</i> )	x	x
Monkey Bread <sup>59</sup>	x	
Maad <sup>60</sup>		x
Mint ( <i>Mentha</i> )	x	x
Cashew ( <i>Acardium Occidentale</i> )		x

**Table 7.1:** Bush Products for domestic and/ or commercial use

The collection of bush products is similar to fuelwood. Host and refugee women travel together to collect bush products along with children. Collection was determined by social networks (Chapter Six). There is difficulty tracing where these products are

<sup>59</sup> It is important to note that the Baobab tree can also be referred to as the Monkey Bread Tree. This caused initial confusion on identifying the various forest fruits. However it was clarified within the refugee communities that Monkey Bread is a local name for a forest fruit which, once opened, is a bright yellow colour, and similar in consistency to Baobab with black seeds in the middle and mainly used for domestic cooking.

<sup>60</sup> Maad is the Jola name and is commonly referred to as Caba in Wolof. It is a local fruit that is enjoyed with hot pepper and Jumbo



collected from in order to determine the access to them by both hosts and refugees. Many trips were taken to areas where bush products were collected and communities would travel to “common” areas in order to highlight daily routines. These places usually had few people around and may not have given the most accurate overview as to how much competition is between hosts and refugees to access these products. However, it was explained by one host family and their host refugees that it was easier to cross the border for these products because there was less competition and larger quantities could be brought back across the border into The Gambia and be sold for a profit. When asked about the security concerns, it was explained that “everyone knows who the rebels are and you would at times offer them something for making the journey across the border much easier” (Individual Interview Refugee 1: Uper: 2010).

#### *Marketing Bush Products*

The constant demand for bush products has meant there are opportunities to supplement household income for hosts and refugees. It was frequently observed that at all markets, garages and checkpoints along the main road sold these products were being offered for sale. These products are sometimes sold within compounds, but most women sell them at the local market in order to enhance sale of these products. Some women did mention that they sometimes travelled to urban areas to sell bush products but due to the popular nature of these products, both hosts and refugees stated that people frequently travel to the Foni districts to buy these products (sometimes in larger quantities) to sell in urban centres. There is growing competition to market these resources (as will be discussed below). When conducting interviews in Casamance, one family in the village of Djinacki explained that they would make greater profit if they sold such items across the border in The Gambia and so women and children would often travel and stay with extended family or relatives in border communities or even travel as far as Brikama to sell bush products.

### *Sustainability of Bush Products*

There is increasing competition for bush products and as resources are depleting, communities are taking advantage of the resources (especially cashew, maad and even baobab) across the border in Casamance. This i stated:

“Gambians cross the border all the time to collect bush products. We see them when we are also collecting them. I know some of them and I extend my greetings to their families as we are all related. I think that resources are better here in Casamance and that is why people come to collect them all the time. They like to collect large quantities of Maad”

Interview: Djinacki, Casamance: July 2010)

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The Alkalo of Djinacki further explained:

“Refugees in Gambia and Gambians coming into Casamance must mean that they have to travel further for these resources. They are not being replenished here either.”

As with fuelwood, there is no formal governance to determine who has access to these products and where. It is again very much based on a “first come, first served” system which raises issues on the long term sustainability of the natural environment.

#### 7.2.4. Water

Water is vital for both domestic use and for livestock as well as agricultural and horticultural produce where most commonly open wells are used for irrigation. Traditionally women and young girls fetch water together and it is viewed as a social activity to meet and communicate with friends. The RRA and initial focus groups highlighted how communities were not overly concerned with the availability of or access to water. There were testimonies, however, especially in the village of Bulok

that villagers (both hosts and refugees) were concerned regarding the increasing distance they were travelling to collect water for household use.

There were a variety of sources of water within each village including boreholes, hand-pumps, open wells and closed wells which provided the water supply (Figure 7.9).



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**Figure 7.9:** Four main sources of drinking water within communities. From Top Left Clockwise: Borehole, Hand-Pump, Open Well and Closed Well.

**Source:** Author

Figure 7.10 identifies the water points in the village of Bulok. The main concern for host and refugee households was the increasing distance people needed to travel to collect water. This was partly because some water points were over-used and depleted (refer to Figure 6.6). It was also because as communities expanded, compounds were

located further away from the centre of the village where the majority of water points are located. This has contributed to the increasing distance hosts and refugees travel to collect water. Although there are numerous water points, they are mainly based in and around the centre of the village. Both refugee and host households stated that they travel to the main water points for their drinking water but mainly use open wells for water to bathe and wash clothes (Figure 7.11).

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**Figure 7.10:** Locations of water points in the village of Bulok



**Figure 7.11:** The use of open wells for bathing and washing clothes  
**Source:** Author

There is an abundance of open wells within all communities but observations and discussions concluded that very rarely do host populations use open wells for drinking water. If individuals drink from wells it is usually from a closed well. One household explained that they knew that the water from open wells “was not good” and used alternative water points. However, they did admit that because of convenience sometimes it was easier to drink from an open well which was closer but “this did not happen all the time”. Some larger communities do have access to boreholes to further improve the quantity of water supply but these were mainly communities based along the main road such as Bulok or Sibonor.

#### *Sustainability of water resources*

Access to water was not necessarily problematic as all villages investigated had access to one or more hand-pumps for access to clean, safe drinking water. A recent survey

by WFP and the NaNa concluded that as a result of the provision of physical infrastructure such as pumps, taps, protected wells and boreholes, 66.8% of the refugee communities in Western Region had access to safe water (WFP & NaNa 2010). During 2008-2009, the American Embassy funded a project, implemented by SJFF, to restore hand pumps in nineteen host groups and to train villagers in pump maintenance and water management (Gregg Pers. Comm. 2009). This training did include refugees and there was mixed response by some host communities in regard to this. The host focus group in Gifanga stated that they did not want the refugee community to be trained in hand pump maintenance, not because they were refugees, but because if they returned to Casamance, such skills would no longer benefit Gambian communities.

Although the number of water points has increased as a result of incentives such as that explained above, there is still insufficient knowledge with regards to water pump maintenance and repair. Knowledge about boreholes was something that many of these communities did not understand. In the village of Bulok, the borehole had been installed by the European Commission (EC) however, the Alkalo stated that the water was no longer good enough to drink and therefore the community had been using alternative sources, mainly hand pumps. They had little knowledge of how to maintain or repair boreholes and only a select few from communities had the knowledge to repair or maintain water pumps. One host who had been trained as part of the hand pump maintenance incentive said:

“These skills are very important and this is why we were trained by the American Embassy. But, we were trained for a long time and it is not very easy to pass this knowledge on.” (Bulok Individual Interview 1: Host: 2009)

The overall concern for water access is the distance households and individuals have to travel in order to collect water. As villages have expanded, new compounds are based further away from water points. This suggests that refugees are adversely affected as

they settled in some communities later in comparison to many Gambians. It is estimated that around 30% of refugees were sourcing unprotected water (mainly open wells), which was a cause for concern (WFP & NaNa 2010). This could be a result of the increased population size. This research indicated that some refugees were concerned about the quality of drinking water but these reservations were similarly held by Gambian hosts. The distance a refugee or host needed to travel to collect water depended on the location of the compound and there was no overt difference in the access to water between hosts and refugees.

#### 7.2.5. Crops

Agriculture is the primary livelihood strategy within these communities and both hosts and refugees are traditionally subsistence farmers. Crops (agricultural and horticultural) are a vital supply for household food consumption as well as household income. Hosts and refugees grow the same crops and there has been a need for both groups to diversify the range of crops grown in order to meet livelihood, income and food security needs. One host farmer explained:

“I produce groundnut to sell and this provides my household with money. There have been many times, especially in the last few years where my groundnut has not made much money and I have to buy less food. I now plant more crops such as Cous and Maize to produce extra food for my family. (Agriculture Livelihood Survey 6: Host: Kusamai: July 2010).

CR: “Where did you get the seeds from?”

Response: “I borrow from my friends/ family or I buy them from the market” (ibid)

This environmental and economic need to diversify crops highlights essential coping strategies that enables both host and refugee households to enhance food security.

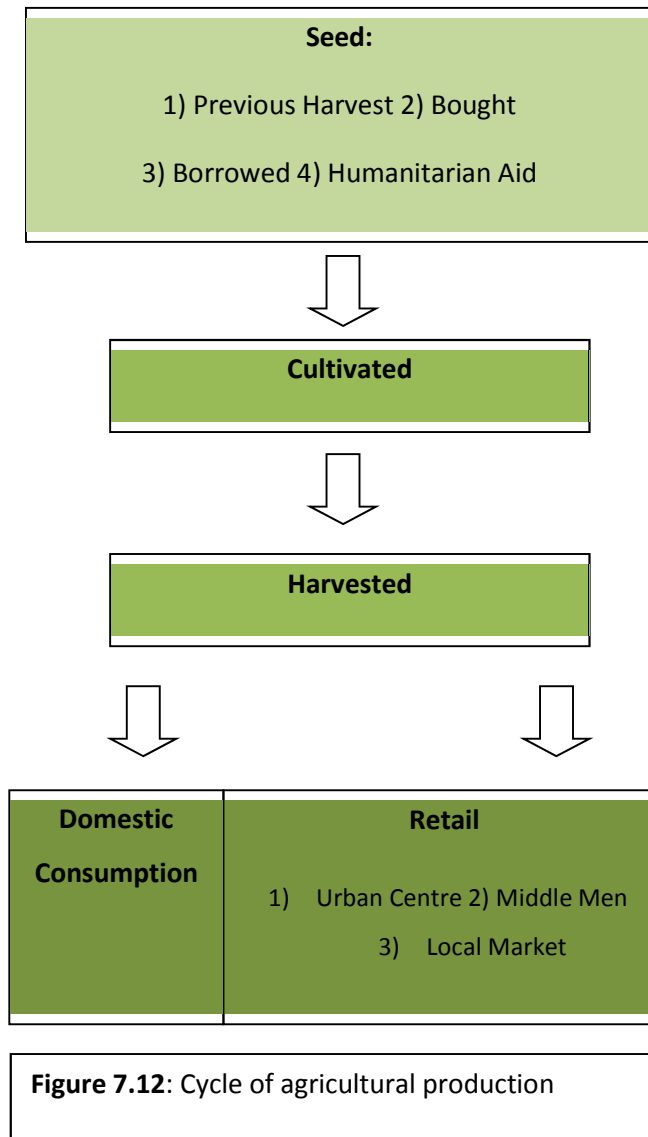
### *Groundnuts and Cereals*

Groundnuts are the primary cash-crop within these rural communities. A variety of factors such as unpredictable rains and poor seeds have reduced the overall quality of groundnuts produced and therefore communities are also growing cereals such as such as maize, millet, and findi<sup>61</sup> in greater quantities to provide additional food and income. Figure 7.12 identifies the cycle of agricultural production for both hosts and refugees. Seeds are obtained in a variety of ways and then cultivated and harvested. The end product is either kept for domestic consumption in order to maintain food security or is an income generating activity. Farmers will also keep a proportion of seeds/ harvest for the next agricultural season. If villages had a functioning seed store it would be stored there. The village of Kusamai explained that the seed store had fallen into disrepair and farmers had to store produce either in the household or not at all.

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<sup>61</sup> Findi is a local name for Fonio (*Digitaria eilis* and *Digitaria iburua*).





Village Alkalos explained that both host and refugee groups cultivate groundnuts for cash income but they also cultivate cous (millet) as a ‘close second’. This was verified from agricultural livelihood surveys conducted, which found that both host and refugee farmers grow groundnuts, cous and at least half of respondents farm maize. In terms of cultivation, it was identified that both hosts and refugees had difficulty in obtaining fertiliser to maximise agricultural production, mainly because of the cost. Some agriculture livelihood surveys conducted in this research indicated that hosts used fertiliser more often than refugees but both host and refugee farmers use local fertiliser (which consists of natural manure) as it was the only affordable option.

Once crops were harvested, they were separated for domestic and commercial use. Cous and maize were kept for domestic use and if sold, it was within the village or at the local market. Other crops, such as findi, were used for domestic consumption in order to feed the household throughout the year. As expected, groundnuts were mainly used for income generating purposes which would be sold locally, at the urban centre or sold in large quantities to middle men. This process applied to both hosts and refugees.

The main source of competition/ pressure was for farmers to produce early groundnuts which were harvested around September/ October time as it was sold for a higher price in comparison to the rest of the year. There was competition between all members of the community, and not just between host and refugees in order to cultivate this type. Figure 7.13 identifies the levels of early groundnut production from 2005-2009. Early groundnut produced in Foni Brefet, Foni Bondali and Foni Jarrol show trends that it is increasing in comparison to previous years. In addition, one farmer stated:

“Early groundnut makes more money when it is sold at market. It is in farmer’s best interest to produce this type. This will provide better income for the household” (Agriculture Livelihood Survey 2: Host: Kusamai: July 2010)

This confirms the increase in competition to produce this earlier type and the need to provide a higher income.

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**Figure 7.13:** Early Groundnut Production Levels 2005-2009  
**Data Source:** Department of Planning (2010)

Access to fertile land is essential and refugees are heavily dependent on the allocation of land by their hosts or Alkalo which can result in smaller plots of land or less fertile land. Due to traditional land tenure and allocation, the most fertile lands had previously been allocated to host farmers and new arrivals would subsequently only have access to less fertile land that was not previously in use. It is important to note that this allocation is not based on host and refugee status. Quality of seeds is also a key factor in groundnut production and this has varied for refugees. Many refugees complained that seeds that had been donated to them by organisations such as UNHCR had been of poor quality and as a result they had to either buy seeds or borrow them from hosts in order to obtain some sort of crop in the harvest period. One refugee in the village of Jannack explained:

“Look at these seeds... These cannot be used for farming. They are of poor quality. We tried to use them last year but they

failed. They were given by UNHCR so we thought they would be good” (Refugee Individual Interview: Jannack: November 2009)

This was confirmed through refugee focus groups in Jannack that explained that previous donations of seeds by humanitarian agencies such as UNHCR had failed and they ultimately had to borrow from hosts/ relatives or had to buy them.

### *Horticulture*

The rapid growth in horticultural production in these communities is a result of various humanitarian interventions and is now considered an alternative income generating activity for women of the community, especially in the dry season.

There is a basic cycle that can explain how both hosts and refugees implement horticulture. Seeds are obtained via three main avenues; 1) humanitarian assistance, 2) bought from a market or 3) in kind assistance from fellow hosts or refugees. Seeds are then planted and harvested (And stored if available). After harvesting, petty trading livelihood surveys identified five avenues that can be pursued: 1) produce kept for domestic use, 2) produce sold from within the compound, 3) produce sold at the local market, 4) produce sold in the urban centre, or 5) produce sold to middlemen (such as development agencies) to be sold in urban centres.

This research identified two types of horticultural production. Firstly, there are household gardens which are usually attached to the household/ compound and produce is mainly for domestic use. Each member (usually women) of the household will have small plots within the garden to grow produce of choice. Figure 7.14 shows a refugee garden. This garden is used by the entire compound and produces various fruit and vegetable products. Each person has a dedicated plot and grows items such as chilli, okra, banana and bitter tomato. It was explained that if produce was not sold then it would be shared in the compound during meal times. At the same time, this

specific image is quite unusual given the size of the plot and indicates the wealth and/or status of this particular refugee family.



**Figure 7.14:** Individual refugee garden in the village of Bulok.  
**Source:** Author

Secondly, there are communal village gardens where women are allocated a plot to grow produce (Figure 7.15). This is usually a plot located in the centre of the village which has been allocated by humanitarian organisations or by the village Alkalo. Focus groups explained that in theory every woman in the community including refugees had had the opportunity to cultivate a plot in the garden if they wanted to. There was also no data collected to suggest that there were separate host and refugee communal gardens. However, this can create problems due to the limited size of some communal gardens. This gave each woman a relatively small size plot to cultivate. One host woman explained:

“I have a plot in the community garden. It is small as there are lots of other women from the village who also grow here. I also grow produce at the back of my compound as this means I can

sell more at the market.” (Bulok Livelihood Survey 4: Host: Bulok: June 2010)

This allocation is also determined by social networks within the village. Results suggested that women who tended community gardens were mainly older and usually belonged to formal and informal cooperatives to collectively grow produce.

Refugee participation within these communal gardens was mixed. At times, it was not clear whether refugee women had access to these communal gardens and some refugee women explained that they were not always able to use the community garden because of the additional food supplies they received through their rations (Chapter Six). The refugee focus group in Bulok stated:

“There was a community garden (before it was abandoned due to poor fencing) but it was full. There were no more plots left for refugee women.” (Bulok Refugee Focus Group: December 2009)

CR: “Were refugees not allowed to use the community garden?”

Response: “No, refugees could use it if they wanted to. Our hosts have been very kind to us. The garden was full and so many women could not grow any produce. Some have in their compounds but you have to be near a water point if it is going to be successful. It is very hard for us here.” (ibid).

As this discussion shows, refugee women were given access to local community gardens but additional constraints such as the small size of gardens, lack of fencing, water and seeds prevented consistent production by refugees and ultimately hosts. One host elder complained that she could no longer rely on the community garden for

her produce and as a result herself, and other women within the community were using their seeds to create smaller plots within the compound as these were easier to maintain.

In terms of marketing horticultural produce and in comparison to other livelihood strategies investigated in this study, some refugees claimed that they did give money back to their host. It was explained that most of this was by means of produce and the reasons given were for their hospitality. One refugee explained:

“My host has been very kind to let me and my family stay when we came into The Gambia. I do not have to give them any money but I do give some of my produce to them as a way to say thank you. This produce varies depending on what I can grow but it is appreciated no matter what it is.” (Petty Trading Livelihood Survey 4: Refugee: Bulok: August 2010)



**Figure 7.15:** An example of a communal garden in the village of Bulok  
**Source:** Author

### 7.2.6. Livestock and Poultry

The utilisation of livestock and poultry is also considered important within these rural communities. Not only is livestock such as oxen vital for agriculture, livestock are also considered an important status symbol of wealth. In addition, livestock are used by households in times of financial hardship.

#### *Livestock*

Cows and bulls are considered a status symbol in the villages surveyed as in other rural African societies and signify wealth. Not all Gambian households had ownership of livestock which was an indicator of the hierarchy within communities. The added refugee population did little to alter this hierarchy. Some refugee families did bring livestock across the border but the majority left Casamance with few resources. Some refugee households have been able to acquire livestock since their settlement but it can be suggested that they are considered of high status within traditional community structures.

Those who own cattle usually put them in the care of a village herder. Traditionally the Fula<sup>62</sup> tribe are herdsman and although Western Region is mainly considered “Jola country”, those Fula who reside there are still primary herdsman (Figure 7.16). Herders are sometimes paid by cattle owners (both host and refugee) but usually they will keep any profits made from the production of sour milk.

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<sup>62</sup> The ethnic Fula Tribe traditionally herd cattle, goats and sheep across dry hinterlands. They have traditionally kept away from the local agricultural populations but this is less common within these rural Gambian communities.





**Figure 7.16:** Fula herdsman with cattle  
**Source:** Author

In terms of cattle grazing, there are clear geographical boundaries within each community within which cattle are herded (Figure 7.17). These boundaries are known and negotiated primarily between village herders and village Alkalo's of neighbouring communities. This is because inadequate fencing and crop failure have been attributed to cattle roaming.

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**Figure 7.17:** Cattle Paddock in the village of Kabakorr.

In comparison to cows or bulls, goats mainly have a ceremonial function whereby they will be used as a sacrifice on occasions such as weddings, religious ceremonies and naming ceremonies<sup>63</sup>. They are also used in times of hardship and can be sold to gain additional income for the household.

### *Poultry*

Poultry are also commonly kept within households. Chickens are more regularly eaten in comparison to goats. Similar to cattle, some refugees were able to bring poultry across the border when they fled but many have resulted to buying them when in The Gambia.

## **7.3. Natural Capital: The Impact on Self-Settled Integration**

### **7.3.1. Access to natural resources and the implementation of livelihood strategies**

Agriculture, fuelwood collection and petty trading were identified as the three main livelihood strategies in the communities surveyed. The research also identified that the same natural resources were available in all villages by both hosts and refugees. Although efforts were made to identify any differences between host and refugee groups, evidence suggested that there were few. As a result, neither group has had to radically adapt their livelihoods as a result of self-settlement. The use of these resources has in turn created additional community development and support for existing livelihoods.

Data revealed that host and refugee groups travel together to collect resources such as fuelwood and bush products and that it was not uncommon for both hosts and refugees to assist with the clearing of agricultural land and even cultivation. Focus group discussions revealed that the sharing of farming equipment was common

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<sup>63</sup> A naming of a newborn child that would usually take place seven days after a birth.

practice but this did sometimes incur charges from all households that did not own such equipment. In terms of fuelwood, it is fair to suggest that refugee communities that straddle the international border have greater access to fuelwood and forest resources in Casamance but hosts have also been able to utilise immediate cross border resources and use of this border may help to explain why conflict has not escalated. At the same time, data suggested that refugees were able to immediately access land and many have been able to build shelter and become *de-facto* independent from their hosts. The shared heritage between hosts and refugees (as explained in Chapter Five and Chapter Six) and access to social networks (Chapter Six) has enhanced access to environmental resources and resulted in fewer tensions between hosts and refugees.

Although there was relatively equal availability of resources, data suggested that at times, there was differential access to these resources between and within refugee groups. For example, refugee focus groups explained that because they arrived in communities later, they at times had less access to quality resources such as land. To confirm this, one refugee farmer explained:

“My host has 5 plots of land to farm. Because I am a refugee I only have 2. I am happy that I have help from my host but they are a small family and could only give me small plots of land”  
(Refugee Farmer Interview 3: Kusamai: June 2010)

This is in line with some testimonies from refugee women who did not have access to the community garden. The refugee president in the village of Bulok also explained that refugees had less access to cattle. He stated:

“We left all our cattle behind in Casamance. As a result, it has been more difficult for refugees to access or own cattle as a refugee. This makes the farming process more difficult as many have to borrow or rent cattle from neighbours to ensure they can farm their land properly.” (Refugee President Interview: Bulok: November 2009)

One of the important findings from this research suggested that this differential access was not necessarily because refugees were excluded by the host community. Different access was the product of history, namely that the first lands cleared for settlement were done so by host families. These lands will also be those of greatest productivity.

### 7.3.2. Competition and Pressure on Natural Resources

Although hosts and refugees access the same environmental resources to implement the same livelihood strategies, there was evidence to suggest that there was additional competition for resources and that pressure could result in tensions between and within host and refugee groups.

Findings from this research did suggest that there was a potential lack of knowledge in regards to natural resource management and conservation. The National Environment Agency (NEA) had previously claimed that these rural communities had little knowledge of how to preserve resources for future generations which ultimately would impact on sustainability of the natural environment (NEA 2007).

These communities depend on natural capital. Assets such as fuelwood are beginning to deplete due to increased competition, additional population numbers and the need to diversify livelihoods but this is not occurring at a rate that impacted on host/refugee relations. At the same time, many households explained that there were no formal laws for the collection of natural resources such as bush products or fuelwood and people could travel anywhere. At the same time, there are many individuals, both host and refugee, that knew what this best practice was but as one host woman explained:

“We know we should only pick dead wood that is already on the ground but there are too many people” (Female Host Fuelwood Interview 2: Upert: August 2010)

The only consistent understanding of woodland best practice was in regards to community forest projects that are designated for community use. This can help to explain why natural resource degradation is occurring at a faster rate. The immediate need to create and sustain household income meant that communities did not always regard environmental law in reference to the testimony above. Both host and refugee households would use all resources necessary even if they know they should not.

At the same time, short-term views of terms such as 'risk' suggest that communities are unable to understand how various factors can affect livelihood strategies and their sustainability (Forsyth 2007). There is evidence to suggest that hosts and refugees have a basic understanding of natural resource management but this knowledge is limited, especially when there is additional pressure on resources. This limited understanding was of growing concern to humanitarian agencies and the Gambian Forestry Department. However, this can be attributed to the lack of top-down communication to communities to highlight these concerns and the exit strategies put in place.

Tensions were observed within households over natural resources. For example, one farmer stated that there was small-scale conflict between hosts and refugee women as a result of crop distribution within the compound. This was mainly due to the competition for greater quantity and better quality of produce in order to feed individual households. He explained:

“Women bicker all the time over quality of produce in the compound. It is mainly because they want to cook the best food. Women are always trying to take the best rice or cous or groundnuts so they can show how good they are within the compound. This does occur between hosts and refugees but usually if they live within the same compound. These arguments are not because the person with the best food is either a host or a refugee, it is just friendly competition within the village”  
(Refugee Focus Group: Kusamai: October 2009)

The same host farmer continued to explain that this competition was between all households in the community and was not something that occurred as a result of the refugee influx. At the same time, This i stated:

“There are conflicts over bush products here in the village. Sometimes it is between host and refugee and other times can be between host and host or refugee and refugee. However, we have a system here in the village where if conflicts are so bad they are taken to the village Alkalo and other village elders and they will solve the problem. They will hear both sides of the story and then make up their mind on who they think is right. Hosts and refugees use this if there is a big problem that they cannot resolve between themselves” i  
: Bulok: October 2009). has been removed

The examples presented represent individual cases and much of the open confrontation over resources was between women of the community. These tensions were not widespread at all times and were effectively dealt with by existing community structures. If such tensions were not resolved individual or by the household head, the village Alkalo would intervene and mediate. He would then make an informed decision on the outcome of disputes and all involved parties would accept the decision made by the Alkalo.

### 7.3.3. Size and quality of land between host and refugees

In terms of land ownership, all refugee farmers interviewed did not consider the land they farmed as their own. In their opinion, it belonged to the community (perhaps, surprisingly farmers stated this rather than stating it belonged to their host). The area and quality of host land is based on pre-existing lineage networks and this largely dictates the allocation of land for both hosts and refugees. However, there is evidence to suggest that there is differential access to agricultural land allocated to refugees

which can cause tensions between host and refugee groups. One refugee explained that after harvesting groundnuts, the nut is removed from the soil and put into mounds to dry. These mounds can highlight a farmer's wealth and there have been instances where refugees have smaller size mounds in comparison to their host (figure 7.18). Given that the mounds in Figure 7.18 were cultivated on adjacent plots, it is unlikely that the difference in groundnut cultivation is due to difference in soil quality. The smaller plot can be a reflection of overuse of the refugee plot and exhaustion of nutrients.

Although refugees said that this difference had not escalated into conflict, they explained that difference in area and sometimes quality of land reduced production, especially if the rains had been bad. At the same time, one host farmer in Kusamai explained that he knows of many refugees in surrounding villages that have greater access to agricultural land in comparison to his household and this allocation has much to do with the access to social networks and status within traditional community structures.



**Figure 7.18:** Refugee (left) and Host (right) Groundnut mounds dry prior to sale. (Kusamai October 2009)

**Source:** Author

There is no evidence to suggest that hosts purposely give refugees land of poorer quality, it is simply the case that the most fertile land has already been taken by the host community through historic land tenure arrangements. This, however, raises questions on the long term sustainability of agricultural livelihoods. Also, access to communal land for agricultural purposes makes land ownership a less severe problem for farmers (Sackey 2005). This raises questions about tenure security (especially in regards to gender) where men often have customary rights to land and it is generally held under some form of tenure whereby people cannot buy or sell the land freely (Andersson 1999; Potts 2000). In these communities however, there does not appear to be legal ownership of land for hosts or refugees. Refugees do not view they “own” land because it was given to them by their hosts. In reality, hosts do not “own” this land either and formal documentation is unusual to have. It suggests that refugees have similar rights to land entitlement in comparison to Gambian hosts and these rights are secured through traditional community structures.

#### 7.3.4. Differential Access to Natural resources

Although there are examples where refugees are more vulnerable, there are also examples where refugees have greater access to resources in comparison to their host. In terms of horticultural produce, the majority of host women interviewed stated that they sold horticultural produce every day whereas refugee women stated that they only sold this type of produce 2-3 times a week when it was available. In terms of local bush produce, refugee women claimed that they sold baobab, monkey bread and mint almost every day whilst host women sold this produce less frequently. This maybe because refugee compounds were located further away from the village centre and closer to the international border where there is greater availability and accessibility to bush products. In addition, it can be suggested that refugees travel across the international border more frequently to tend to farms, visit family or for social occasions and therefore have more frequent opportunities to collect bush produce



more frequently than host women. Sulayman, a refugee in Upert explained that his wife regularly collected bush products from across the border:

“There is more Baobab, Monkey Bread, Cashews and Maad in Casamance. If we are visiting friends or family my wife will always bring them back across. The produce is much better in Casamance but there are better opportunities to sell it in The Gambia.” (Refugee Individual Interview: Upert: April 2010)

It was unclear whether host women were prohibited from crossing the international border for these products but it was more common by women living in border communities.

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**Figure 7.19:** Refugee Personal Story

An example of potential different access to resources during the research was the use of the international border, especially for fuelwood collection. It was commonly “known” that refugees frequently cross the border which initially suggested different fuelwood access between hosts and refugees. In addition, out of all those interviewed in the village of Upert, only two host men stated that they crossed the border in order to collect fuelwood. The main reason given for not crossing the border was the volatility of the border area and sporadic violence. In order to verify this, as part of

livelihood surveys conducted in Upert, both hosts and refugees (male and female) were asked to identify the areas where they go to collect fuelwood. The map presented purposely highlighted the international border (in yellow) to see if this would influence the decisions made by participants. Figures 7.20 and 7.21 would indicate that the border is not crossed in order to access fuelwood resources and that hosts and refugees travel to similar areas in order to collect fuelwood. The figures also indicate red and black lines which represent the areas separate gender groups travel to (red line indicates women and black line indicates men).

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**Figure 7.20:** Host fuelwood collection map one: Upert

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**Figure 7.21:** Refugee fuelwood collection map one: Upert

The differences in the outputs from GPS and satellite images were fewer when the international border was displayed on the photomaps, highlighting that tensions were not necessarily escalating and were resolved as a result of fuelwood utilisation across the international border by hosts and refugees. It was common knowledge that fuelwood resources were utilised across the border and the majority of fuelwood sold *en masse* had been collected and transported from Casamance (Personal Communication with RA 2010).

As a result of the first mapping exercise, the community mapping was conducted again and the international border was superimposed. This made a considerable difference to the areas hosts and refugees indicated where they collected fuelwood. Figure 7.22 identifies the host community annotated map. As above, the yellow line indicates the international border and the red shapes represent the main areas fuelwood is collected from by host groups. It is clearly identifiable that there is constant use of fuelwood resources across the international border. Figure 7.23 identifies the refugee annotated map and again highlights the use of the resources across the border but more interestingly, highlights alternative areas within the village that were not identified by the host community. Upert is a community with a refugee population that outnumbers the local Gambian population (see Chapter Four) and there are larger numbers of refugees living in the smaller settlement of Nyambolong which is considered part of Upert. The results suggest that the technique used to map access to forest resources influences the locations that are identified. Not only did individuals previously tracked by GPS avoid crossing the border but the inclusion of the border on the photomap acted as a barrier in participant's honesty of crossing the border. The utilisation of fuelwood resources in some border communities and across the border can in some cases be advantageous for refugee groups in comparison to their hosts as they are able to access resources both sides of the border. These maps more importantly identify the use of Casamance as a vital supply of fuelwood resources and that hosts are also able to utilise them.

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the thesis can be found in the Lancaster Library, Coventry University.

**Figure 7.22:** Host fuelwood collection map two: Upert

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thesis can be found in the Lancaster Library, Coventry University.

**Figure 7.23:** Refugee fuelwood collection map two: Upert

#### **7.4. Summary**

Given the nature of rural development, natural capital is vital for not only livelihood sustainability but also the survival strategies of households. Communities rely on the natural environment in order to allow them to implement livelihoods and sustain them. Both groups access the same environmental resources and implement the same livelihood strategies based on agriculture, fuelwood and selling of resources such as baobab. However, there is growing pressure for these resources due to increasing population and a lack of replenishment. This affects both host and refugee groups. At the same time, some differences were identified between hosts and refugees which has led to tensions in communities. However, these tensions have not been overwhelming at a community level and were mainly identified between women at individual and household level. It is also important to emphasise that these conflicts were not necessarily primarily between host and refugee groups but were also within groups.

In terms of the Capital Assets Model, we still ultimately work with policy terminology and this gives little credence to academic research and analytical terminology (Black 2001; Bakewell 2008). Therefore, the model needs to be adapted in order to account for characteristics such as ethnicity and caste, and traditional community structures in the access of socio-economic and environmental resources. Finally, data suggested that humanitarian intervention needs to be re-developed to accurately support these communities given that tensions exist between and within host and refugee groups. Chapter Eight will ultimately discuss these findings in relation to three key concepts; 1) self-settlement 2) the Capital Assets Model and 3) policy.

## **8. Integration, Livelihood Strategies and Policy: The Way Forward for Self-Settlement**

### **8.1. Introduction**

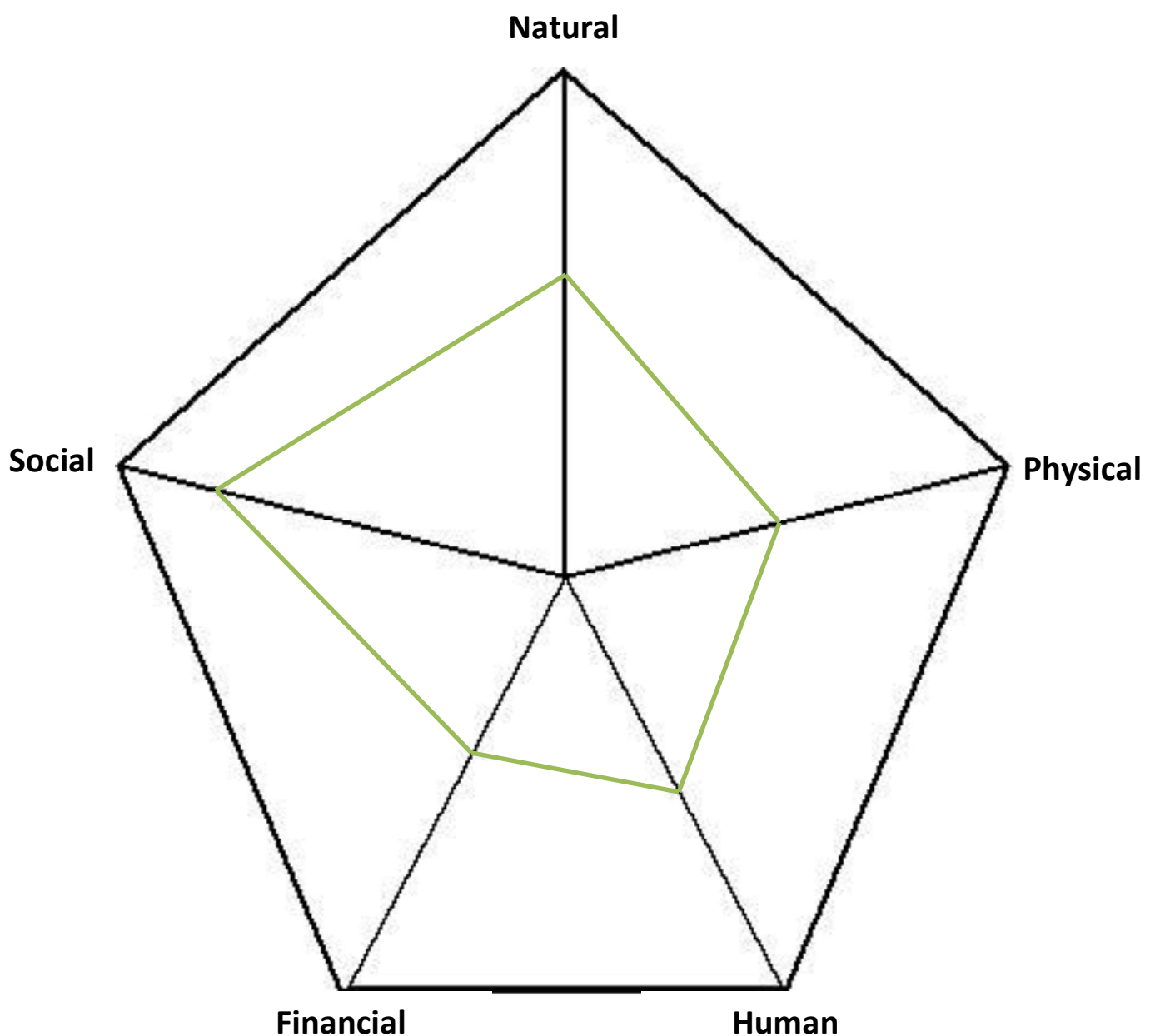
The aim of this research was to examine the integration, livelihood strategies and policy implications of “self-settled” refugees within host communities in Sub-Saharan Africa. The integration and livelihood strategies of Casamance refugees in The Gambia has been understood, investigated and analysed in Chapter’s Six and Seven. Results suggested that Casamance refugees have been able to integrate into Gambian communities given factors such as shared cultural heritage, ethnicity and traditional community structures. At the same time, a number of commonalities were identified suggesting that refugees were able to access the same resources as hosts. There were also subtle differences between hosts and refugees when accessing resources ranging from quality and area of land, geographical location and market opportunities. These differences however, were not a source of major tension and can be resolved by community structures such as the Alkalo and community elders, which helps to explain why such tensions within communities has not necessarily escalated beyond that of everyday disputes.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the three main themes highlighted in the research aim in regards to integration livelihood strategies and policy implications. Firstly, this chapter will re-visit the conceptual framework as introduced in Chapter Three to understand the complexities of self-settlement for Casamance refugees in The Gambia. The chapter will then discuss what the results from this research tell us about self-settlement and how they impact on the wider literature. The Capital Assets Model will be discussed in relation to cultural factors that this research found to be integral to self-settled integration and the access to livelihood resources. This section will adapt the model to enhance its applicability in other self-settled and displacement situations. Finally, this chapter will explore the bottom-up and top-down

interpretations of self-settlement and how policy makers and NGOs can provide better support for self-settled communities.

### 8.2. Capital Assets Model of Casamance Refugees in The Gambia

Based on results presented in Chapters Six and Seven it was possible to populate the Capital Assets Model based on the livelihood strategies of Casamance refugees in The Gambia (Figure 8.1).



**Figure 8.1:** Access to Capital Assets for hosts and refugees in The Gambia



As discussed in Chapter Three the Capital Assets Model underpins the development of the conceptual framework for this research. Figure 8.1 demonstrates high levels of access to social capital and natural capital, moderate level of access to human capital and lower levels of access to physical and financial capital.

Previous studies have applied the Capital Assets Model to either compare regions, communities' or sub-communities access to assets (Motsholapheko et al. 2011; FAO 2005; Islam et al. 2011; Erenstein et al. 2010), monitor changes in a community's access of assets over a period of time (Chen et al. 2013), or postulate on the assets that would accrue to a community under different development policies (Cherni et al. 2007). This research has added to these studies by demonstrating the successful application of the Capital Assets Model to study the integration of a displaced community of refugees into a host community.

### **8.3. Re-visiting the Conceptual Framework**

Chapter Three conceptualised self-settlement in regards to this research (Figure 3.4). It made suggestions on how self-settlement impacted on integration and the subsequent access to capital assets. This research highlighted that there are a range of commonalities, differences and complexities that affect integration and the access to socio-economic and environmental resources for hosts and refugees. As a result, these characteristics have been readdressed so that the conceptual framework is more applicable in self-settled refugee situations (Figure 8.2).

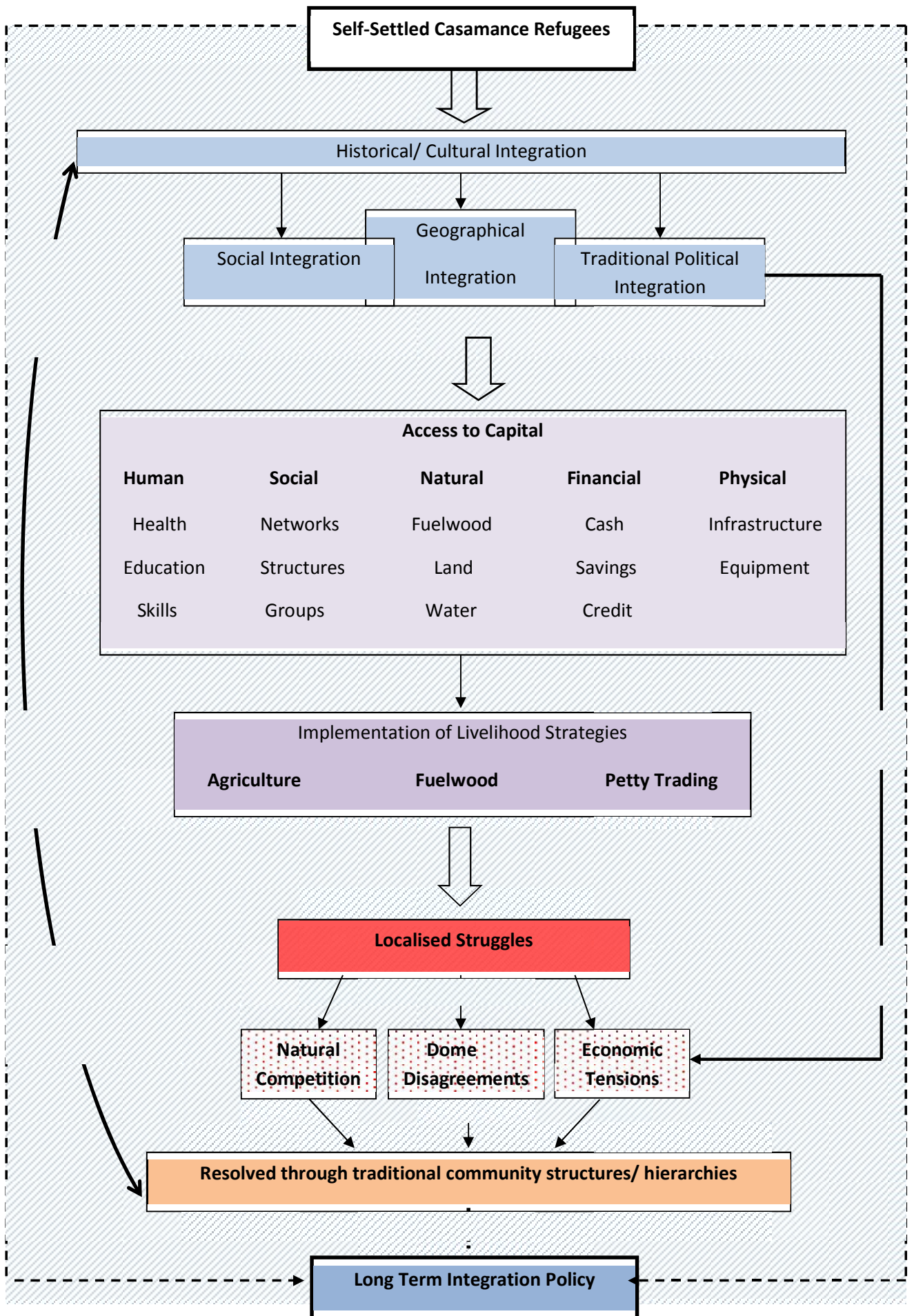


Figure 3.4 suggested that Casamance refugees 'integrate' into host communities. Results have suggested that there are varying strands of this integration that allow Casamance refugees to settle. One of the overriding reasons for integration is a result of the historical ties between The Gambia and Senegal and the shared cultural heritage between hosts and refugees. Chapter Five explained the reasons why Casamance refugees chose to self-settle in Gambian communities and results suggested that the shared cultural heritage between hosts and refugees facilitated self-settled integration. There were also other factors that enhanced the integration process. Social integration, for example, stems from the variety of social networks, groups and community structures that both hosts and refugees have access to which was a contributing factor on the access to resources. At the same time, geographical integration relates to the access of cross-border resources that has enabled both groups to access resources and implement livelihoods. Access to resources across the international may explain why there are few conflicts between hosts and refugees. In addition, traditional political integration allows Casamance refugees to integrate as a result to adhering to the same traditional, hierarchical, community structures as Gambian communities. In addition, Casamance refugees have been recognised by official policy channels such as the Gambian Government and UNHCR allowing self-settlement to freely take place. These varying levels of integration impact on the access to resources.

These integration characteristics determine the access to capital assets and the access to resources for hosts and refugees to implement livelihood strategies. As this research demonstrated, the access of socio-economic and environmental resources determined the livelihood strategies of both groups. Agriculture, fuelwood and petty trading were the three main livelihood strategies implemented within these communities. However, there are additional factors to consider prior to the achievement of sustainable livelihoods that figure 3.4 did not originally consider. The implementation of livelihoods led to some localised struggles between and within host and refugee groups. These struggles are mainly evident in three areas. Firstly, there is increased

competition for natural resources as all three livelihood strategies are in some way reliant on the natural environment. Secondly, if struggles did occur, they were usually domestic disagreements between women in the compound competing for the best resources to either sell or for family consumption. Economic tensions, however, did at times distinguish between host and refugee groups. Some hosts had access to land of better quality and greater market access. This has caused tensions between hosts and refugees. There were testimonies from both groups who explained that they at times felt disadvantaged. This was mainly in reference to refugee access to food aid from hosts and market access from refugees. These tensions feed back to the traditional political integration process and it suggests that some refugees have limited involvement in political decisions made in communities.

Although these localised struggles did exist, it was clear that most were successfully resolved through existing community structures, in which many refugees have a status. This process represents the structures, institutions and processes that were originally identified in figure 3.4. The resolution of these struggles directly links with the historical/ cultural integration. The shared heritage and adherence to the same community structures suggests localised struggles are able to be resolved without escalating. Finally, this links to the long-term integration of Casamance refugees. This relates to issues such as sustainable livelihood approaches, local integration incentives or a shift in status. As will be discussed in 8.5 there are gaps in formal policy to advocate a long-term integration strategy to support self-settled communities and explains why it is represented as a dotted line in figure 8.2. Figure 8.2 ultimately highlights that self-settlement is a fluid process whereby hosts and refugees use a variety of resources to integrate and implement livelihood strategies.

#### **8.4. Considering Self-Settlement as a Durable Solution**

##### **8.4.1. How do the results from this research relate back to wider literature on self-settlement?**

As Chapter Two highlighted, literature on self-settlement is limited. This research aimed to better understand how self-settled refugees integrate into host communities and implement livelihood strategies. Similar to academic literature on self-settlement (Bakewell 2000, 2002, 2008; Hovil 2007; Crisp 2003, 2004; Polzer 2005, 2009), the findings from this research suggest that self-settlement is possible when there are similarities (including cultural) between both hosts and refugees allowing refugees to better negotiate the terms of their settlement with the host community. Casamance refugees have, unusually, been recognised by formal policy channels (including the Gambian Government) as they have crossed an international border, are in fear of persecution and are unable/ unwilling to return. They are therefore protected under the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Protocol enabling UNHCR protection. In other examples of self-settlement such as Bakewell (2000, 2002), those outside of formal settlements are not entitled to support or legal status, thus increasing their vulnerability. Self-settlement of Casamance refugees has been highly dependent on the informal arrangements made between themselves and host communities. Therefore refugees have negotiated their integration in adherence to traditional community structures allowing self-settlement to take place.

This research supports the assumption that self-settlement can be a temporary and durable solution<sup>64</sup>. Casamance refugees have been able to negotiate the terms of their settlement with Gambian communities which has allowed them to settle temporarily as the conflict continues. At the same time, data suggested that even if the conflict ends, many will not return to Casamance and as a result, due to factors such as shared cultural ties and better prospects in The Gambia. Testimonies suggested that the thought of returning to destroyed communities in Casamance where they would have to “start again” was a deciding factor for permanent settlement in The Gambia. As

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<sup>64</sup> Also refer to Sturridge 2011 who considers self-settlement as the interim process prior to durable solutions.

refugee situations become further protracted, this has meant that the distinction between interim and durable solutions has become less clear suggesting self-settlement can be considered as a viable solution over an extended period of time if refugees can be formalised into communities at a political and socio-cultural level. This research thus confirms the positive and beneficial impacts refugees and displaced groups have on local communities in social and economic terms (Jacobsen 2001; Crisp 2004).

In relation to the wider literature however, self-settled refugees are placed outside the norms of aid interventions and any practical protection provided by host governments (Bakewell 2008) make such situations hard to assess and policy implementation difficult to analyse. At the same time, local integration initiatives have also been avoided by many humanitarian agencies and host governments in favour of the cost saving mechanism of refugee camps and eventual repatriation. Slaughter and Crisp (2009: 11) have tried to counter the arguments against refugee camps suggesting that some refugees are “averse to forging closer connections with the local population” and so refugee camps can be a “safety net” for some refugees, especially those who are more vulnerable. They suggest that refugee camps are a way to monitor refugees from a humanitarian and nation state perspective, leaving the refugee community with little freedom to interact with the local community or exercise self-reliance. The long-term impacts of camps may divide host and refugee groups instead of facilitating any level of integration.

Further understanding self-settlement within this research has helped to inform the wider literature on local integration and how it can be used to compliment self-settlement. The broader academic literature on local integration is something that is becoming more popular, especially within the UNHCR mandate (Fielden and Crisp 2008). It is still not largely practised, especially in the African context, because limiting opportunities for local integration helps to promote early repatriation (Rutinwa 1999). Results from this study are in agreement with this. Casamance refugees are unlikely to

repatriate due to wide-ranging opportunities such as livelihood practice and inter-marriage that is available. In addition, there is a sense of confusion over the term self-settlement. The problem encountered is that the term is often blurred within the vast literature on local integration and it is through such an initiative that refugee communities are entitled to legal rights and humanitarian aid. This research found that Casamance refugees do not necessarily encounter these specific problems as they have to an extent been recognised by formal policy channels as self-settled. Therefore, they have been able to register and receive basic food aid and benefit from humanitarian assistance. However, there have been difficulties accurately targeting aid in self-settled communities because there is a lack of understanding of such terms and how to implement them in practical situations.

This research has highlighted the desire by hosts and refugees to promote economic development, as well as a show of good will, solidarity and burden sharing (Fielden 2008) to enhance overall community development initiatives. In Zambia, Bakewell (2000, 2002, 2007, 2008, and 2011) observed Angolan refugee integration in local communities had been facilitated by shared livelihood practices, ethnicity and social interactions between both populations. This enhanced self-settlement despite the Zambian Government's attempts to put all refugees within formal settlements. Similarly, self-settlement is also becoming a popular option in urban areas given the "hardships and restrictions associated with living in settlements" (Hovil 2007: 601). In the case of Uganda, self-settled refugees were denied protection and humanitarian rights if they were outside of a settlement which made their legal status, integration and livelihood more vulnerable. However, it was found that many refugees who had opted for self-settlement had managed to work around the system using social networks to provide economic security through self-sufficiency (ibid). Self-Settlement was a preferred option for Congolese refugees living in Gabon where there were no formal refugee camps (Stone and De Vriese 2004) and where ethnic similarities facilitated integration and encouraged refugees to adopt local livelihood strategies.

Long (2009) argued that using the terms of labour migrants in situations of self-settlement can help to evolve a long-term solution. Those who have established livelihoods and market availability could potentially make the transition to labour migrant, which, more than anything, would clarify their legal status<sup>65</sup>. However, in many predominantly rural areas where self-settlement occurs such terms would not necessarily apply given few employment opportunities. Labour migration may often mean groups relocating, which may be greeted by a negative response from self-settled communities who have negotiated settlement into local communities.

Although this case study advocates self-settlement through host and refugee commonalities, the findings from this case study found that tensions did exist between and within host and refugee groups in terms of accessing resources. In terms of refugee integration and durable solution literature that was identified in chapter Two, Harrell-Bond's (1986) definition on integration best explains the integration of self-settled populations. It describes integration as a situation where:

“Host and refugee communities are able to co-exist, sharing the same resources - both economic and social - with no greater mutual conflict than that which exists within the host community.” (1986: 7)

This research also found that host and refugee groups also shared the same environmental resources. In addition, Harrell-Bond is correct in highlighting that conflict may exist between host and refugee groups but did not try to quantify or explain to what extent conflict occurs. The localised struggles that were identified in this research are not uncommon in the wider literature on self-settlement and local integration. For example, Polzer (2004) identified tensions between self-settled Mozambican refugees in rural South African communities especially where hosts and refugees had different ethnic affiliations. Her findings suggest that there was no “conflict” in villages where both host and refugee shared ethnicity but it was clear

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<sup>65</sup> This leads to a further debate around legal status and transition from one status to another in displacement situations.



there was “conflict” where this difference occurred. In other examples, self-settlement has led to negative integration including denial of resources, education, and healthcare (bid; Hovil 2007). These examples also indicate that conflict between refugees and local communities has occurred as a result of refugees being outside the formal system. At the same time however, these conflicts between self-settled and host groups highlighted the importance of social networks and cultural factors to successfully mediate and resolve conflicts (Hovil 2002, Bakewell 2000; 2002, Evans and Ray 2012). This was evident in this research due to the use of the same traditional community structures to resolve conflict. What this research has also identified, in comparison to other literature is that these localised struggles do exist but not purely between host and refugee groups. Therefore the scope of self-settled integration needs to be refocused at a community level to consider all types of conflict that exist between and within host and refugee groups in order to find solutions and facilitate integration (as will be discussed below).

The case study of Casamance refugees in The Gambia is unusual given the sporadic nature of the conflict, the shift in temporary-permanent migration patterns and the self-settlement of refugee populations. As yet, there is no end in sight for the Casamance conflict which will negate the need to find a long-term integration strategy for Casamance refugees. The continuation of the conflict will, if anything, continue to encourage unofficial, informal integration. The nature of self-settlement can allow for greater flexibility in livelihood strategies for self-settled populations therefore accelerating the rate of recovery caused by displacement given that they may not necessarily need to relocate, move into camps or radically alter livelihood patterns.

#### 8.4.2. The Wider Applicability of Self-Settlement

##### *Common Characteristics*

In terms of its wider applicability, this thesis has identified why self-settlement has been successful within this case study. This thesis is also timely with respect to current discussions within UNHCR on the issue of self-settlement (Bakewell Pers. Comm.

2012). Results from this research suggest that self-settlement can be recommended in situations of conflict. It could also, however, be recommended in post-conflict situations where refugees choose not to repatriate. This has similarities to the case of Angolan refugees in Zambia, where since the end of the conflict some did voluntarily repatriate to Angola but many chose to stay self-settle regardless of repatriation or resettlement initiatives (Bakewell 2011).

As Crisp (2003: 26) remarks, there are scenarios which can be justified for local integration and these scenarios need to include common factors for both host and refugee groups. In cases where refugees with the same ethnic origin have moved into an area, where there are economic opportunities or they have been able to establish sustainable livelihoods, there are justifications for local integration. In line with this thinking, results from this research indicate that a basic checklist should be applied in self-settled refugee communities in an attempt to assess the potential impact of self-settlement for both host and refugee groups. Exploring issues such as livelihood practices, ethnicity, social networks and local/informal political structures are an attempt to gain an understanding of integration dynamics. In areas with arbitrary borders, where there are similar pre-colonial cultural/ ethnic ties and the communities practice similar livelihood strategies, a self-settlement approach would work best.

Table 8.1 highlights certain characteristics that can facilitate self-settlement and can be used as a tool to initially assess whether self-settlement could be a success. The red italic font has been used as an example taken from this case study to understand how it would be applied practically. This is a generic table which in no way tries to simplify what is a complex and somewhat misunderstood situation. It simply highlights that certain characteristics can facilitate self-settlement and in cases where they are present is an indicator of its potential success at the local level. At the same time, there is the potential to suggest that the self-settlement strategy, based on characteristics such as ethnicity, social networks and shared culture can be incorporated with local integration strategies in a post-conflict setting. In this sense,

with the support of UNHCR, local agencies and even national government, groups of refugees could be settled into communities where they share characteristics with the host population. This is one such way to address the self-settled nature of urban refugees for example, who often become invisible, without legal status, without support networks, and suffer as victims of xenophobia (Dryden-Peterson 2006: 381-2).

<b>Host Community Characteristics</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Applicable to Self-Settled Refugee Groups (Y)</b>	<b>Not Applicable to Self-Settled Refugee Groups (N)</b>
<b>Ethnicity</b>	<i>Jola</i>	<i>Y</i>	
<b>Religion</b>	<i>Muslim/ Roman Catholic</i>	<i>Y</i>	
<b>Shared Cultural History</b>	<i>Pre-colonial Shared Local Language Historical cross-border mobility</i>	<i>Y</i>	
<b>Social Networks</b>	<i>Social Networks Livelihood groupings Extended Family gender groupings Inter-marriage</i>	<i>Y</i>	
<b>Livelihood Strategies</b>	<i>Agriculture Forestry Petty Trading</i>	<i>Y</i>	
<b>Local/Informal Political Structures</b>	<i>Based on Caste Village Alkalo Village Elders</i>	<i>Y</i>	

**Table 8.1:** Common characteristics between host and refugee groups in self-settled situations: The case of Casamance Refugees in The Gambia

**Source:** Author

It is important to argue that there is evidence to support the characteristics in Table 8.1 in order to advocate the plight of self-settlement and that it can be used in a variety of socio-economic and geographical contexts (Table 8.2). While local integration is a durable solution (refer to work by Crisp 2003, 2004), self-settlement

offers the flexibility of a short-term incentive to temporarily provide for displaced populations prior to repatriation or resettlement. It can, as this case study and the case study of Angolans in Zambia has shown, also be a long-term durable solution given common characteristics, acceptance and a degree of self-sufficiency from both host and refugee groups.

Self-Settlement Characteristic	Pre-existing Evidence
Ethnicity	Polzer 2004; Schatz 2009; Hovil 2002; Van Damme 1995, 1909; Refugee Law Project 2005; Connor 1989; Stone and De Vriese 2004; Malkki (1995); Leach 1992
Social Networks	Ferris 1996 ; Hovil: 2002, 2007 ;Malkki 1995 ;Refugee Law Project 2005; Polzer 2004; Bakewell 2000, 2002, 2008; Van Damme 1995, 1999; Leach1992
Livelihood Practices	Bakewell 2000, 2002, 2008 Refugee Law Project 2005; Stone and De Vriese 2004 ; Gale 2006
Shared Cultural Heritage	Van Damme 1999; Gale 2006; Polzer 2004
Local/Informal Political Structures	Dryden-Peterson and Hovil 2004; Hovil 2002; Polzer 2004, 2005, 2009

**Table 8.2:** Characteristics of self-settlement. Examples of its applicability in a wider literary context

Ethnicity has been identified as important throughout this research and has facilitated the rate of integration of Casamance refugees into Gambian communities. At the same time, there is an abundance of wider literature that suggests that ethnicity is

important in the integration process. Connor (1989) identified that ethnographic ties such as ethnicity, social interactions and networks were effective in promoting residential settlement, associations and disassociations. This study indicated that ethnicity was a significant reason for the self-settlement of Afghan refugees in Pakistan in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Malkki (1995) argued that refugee culture and identity was reinforced in refugee camps amongst Hutu refugees, but also argued that given the trend of ethno-graphic wars, ethnic identity and ties can be upheld and strengthened if refugees are settled in host communities that share similar values. Similarly, self-settlement was deemed as difficult for Sudanese refugees in Uganda but similar ethnic ties between host and refugee groups facilitated integration and provided a positive relationship (Refugee Law Project 2005). Van Damme (1995, 1999) demonstrated that early Sierra Leonean refugee waves settled in areas of Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea where similar ethnicity was shared (the Mano tribe). This contributed to the access to housing and led to the expansion of and growth of integrated communities. In addition, during apartheid, Mozambique refugees in South Africa were not granted refugee status but were granted settlement by local tribal leaders on the grounds of ethnic solidarity (Schatz 2009).

Shared cultural history such as the sharing of local language and culture has been something that has facilitated integration for Casamance refugees in The Gambia. The shared Jola language has enabled refugees to further integrate into host communities and has facilitated the notion of obligation of hosts to accept refugee arrivals due to this common language and the shared historical culture between both groups. Polzer (2004) also identifies that Mozambican refugees were able to self-settle into rural South African communities as a result of the shared Shangaan language and culture between host and refugee groups. Shared cultural history has also facilitated social interactions between host and refugee groups allowing many to access social networks which have in turn led to greater access to livelihood resources. Many of these social interactions can be based on pre-displacement mobility where host and refugee groups were able to integrate and interact. Gale (2006: 69, 2008) highlights this

characteristic stating that “pre-war mobility continues during displacement and sustains crucial social connections”. Social relations of the Fula refugees from Sierra Leone who settled in Guinea have used pre-war linkages to facilitate integration and pursue livelihood strategies and were able to continually cross the international border to try and safeguard homes, businesses and cattle (ibid). This very much falls in line with the work of Leach who argues that “self-settlement... [was] an inevitable and well-precedented way of dealing with events” (1992: 2) in regards to Liberian refugees who fled into host Mende communities in Sierra Leone in 1991-92. She argues that international borders have previously cut through ethno-linguistic groups and sub-regional identity has meant that host and refugee groups share important socio-political and cultural resources. This is very similar to Casamance refugees in The Gambia who draw on cultural ties, kinship affiliations and ethnicity in order to access resources and further integrate into host communities. Polzer (2004) also suggests that access to social networks through extended family and intermarriage can facilitate refugee integration into local communities but these channels are also used as ways of avoiding formal policy. Van Damme (1995, 1999) highlighted how Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees in the Forest Region in Guinea were able to self-settle across the borderlands as they were hosted by relatives. In addition, Ferris (1996) states that intermarriage between host and refugee groups facilitates the process of self-settlement using the example of 5,000 Mozambicans who stayed in Malawi after a million Mozambicans had repatriated. This was mainly because Mozambicans had married Malawians or had other family ties in the country. In addition, in the case of Angolan refugees, Zambia allowed refugees to be accepted and supported partly on the basis of pre-existing social ties which emerged on a ‘bottom-up’ rather than a ‘top-down basis’ (Bakewell 2000). This extensive work by Bakewell highlighted how long-term mobility between Angola and Zambia facilitated interaction and integration, effectively negating concepts such as ‘host’ and ‘refugee’.

As the work of Bakewell (1999 2000, 2002, 2008), has indicated, one of the reasons for the success of self-settlement is due to common livelihood practices for both host and

refugee groups. In these cases, it has been thought to facilitate integration into local communities because households can build on existing social networks in order to implement livelihoods. Important livelihood resources such as land were under the control of local chiefs and therefore refugees were able to implement similar livelihood strategies. This traditional village hierarchy will directly relate to many rural African communities as well as to this research. At the same time, less pressure for refugees to adopt new livelihood strategies can help to increase income generation and food security especially in situations where assistance by outside agencies is unavailable. Self-Settlement has indicated that there are greater levels of competition between host and refugee groups given the increased pressure on natural resources and this indicates potential long-term sustainability issues. However, given that self-settled groups can be located in places over larger geographical areas, it can minimise the risk of rapid depletion of local food and livelihood resources (Refugee Participation Network 1991). Livelihood practices can be seen as important for integration as:

“Refugees who could integrate in local communities enjoyed a higher degree of self-sufficiency. Their means of livelihood were intertwined with those of the host community. They shared the lives of the Guineans, worked on their farms and participated fully in the rural subsistence economy” Van Damme (1999: 51-2).

In addition, results from this research suggested that there had been previous investment by humanitarian agencies to enhance social resource such as education and healthcare in order to target livelihood practices of refugee communities.

Local/informal political structures have provided security and sustainability for self-settled refugees (Dryden-Peterson and Hovil 2004). Refugees who operate within these structures (paying local taxes and contributing to the local economy) have improved the integration process (ibid). The case study from this research as well as

the wider literature, has noted that if self-settled communities are able to integrate themselves and be accepted within local political structures (whether it be through formal or informal channels), they are able to facilitate integration and successfully implement livelihoods. Polzer (2004, 2005, and 2009) argues the importance of local political structures in the integration process. She argues:

“Locally, [integration] need not arise from a position of host strength, security, and therefore tolerance of others; it can be fed by identity vulnerability, the need for allies and the contestation of social boundaries in relation to a state which is almost as distant for “locals” as for newcomers..... we have learned the lesson that national policy change is only part of the story.” (2004)

This research has demonstrated that adhering to traditional community structures has meant that, although limited, some refugees have been able to influence local politics and mediate tensions that occur within communities. This is mainly through the elder system based on traditional caste systems and although some refugees are limited on political rights (especially in relation to environmental resources), they are still able to integrate and access resources. In addition, evidence from refugees self-settled in Uganda highlighted that refugees maintained peaceful co-existence with their hosts and were often appointed leaders and mediated any community issues (Refugee Law Project 2005). At the same time, adherence to and acceptance of formal political structures can ease tensions and facilitate integration. As has been demonstrated in South Africa, ambiguous refugee policy and the right for refugees to live and work in cities have subjected many to discrimination, exclusion and harassment by host communities. Self-Settlement in places like South Africa, which has failed refugee policies and human rights mandates, would not necessarily be successful as it has a history of vilifying its migrants who try to integrate, enter the local economy and become self-sufficient (Landau 2006; Ramcharan 2004). Places where self-settled



refugees adhere to and are accepted on the political spectrum can indicate a successful integration strategy.

### *Drawbacks of Self-Settlement*

This thesis has very much maintained the positive outcomes of self-settlement and although Table's 8.1 and 8.2 identify key characteristics of self-settlement there are also potential problems that emerge. For example, the use of one characteristic from Table 8.1 in isolation does not necessarily guarantee integration. For example, ethnicity in many cases has granted acceptance of settlement but not integration as Schatz (2009) and Polzer (2004, 2007) demonstrate with Mozambique refugees in South Africa. At the same time, it cannot be ignored that there are also situations where self-settlement may not necessarily work and can mean a denial of legal and humanitarian rights. This ultimately refers back to the formal definitions and boundaries that we as researchers work within and how a lack of understanding of self-settlement can prevent it being a viable option. This research did highlight localised struggles between and within host and refugee groups that were effectively mediated by local communities.

Another area of contention for self-settlement (although not in this research) lies with host communities who have been hostile or do not want refugees to self-settle or locally integrate. Napier-Moore (2005) suggests that in Kenya, communities are resistant to refugee integration for a variety of socio-economic reasons. In these cases, self-settled groups would integrate slower, if at all in such hostile conditions. At the same time, other cases on self-settlement have highlighted how groups have felt greater insecurity as a result of self-settled status (Kibreab 1989). This was demonstrated in Malkki's (1995) comparative study on Hutu refugees in Tanzania whereby there was a greater degree of ethnic and national identity within refugee camps in comparison to those who had settled outside and constructed identities based on the practicalities of everyday life. Some host communities resist self-settlement and local integration initiatives given stark differences between host and

refugee/displaced groups. For example, self-settled Afghan refugees provoked resistance from local Pakistani communities on grounds of demographic and ethnic differences in certain geographical areas (Azhar 1990; Sturridge 2011).

At the same time, as the literature identifies, there are difficulties in advocating self-settlement programmes and successfully implementing them in the field with the acceptance from all stakeholders. At this level, an incoherent national policy can also discourage self-settlement. There are some case studies whereby negative state policy has isolated self-settled refugee groups and created hostile host environments which have made self-settled groups vulnerable and unable to access basic resources (Okello et al 2005; Kok 1989; Kibreab 1999; Holborn 1975; Malkki 1995; Crisp 2003; UNHCR 2007). It can also emphasise, however, that it is crucial to understand the context in which self-settlement takes place and the need to apply a framework that identifies any common characteristics between hosts and refugees that can either facilitate or inhibit the integration process. Harrell-Bond (2002) highlighted the case of Liberians in Ivory Coast where the government opposed settlement of refugees in camps and allowed them to settle freely among the local population which continues to promote the success of self-settlement. In this circumstance, The Gambia can be considered an unusual case study given that, although there is no active national policy towards self-settlement, self-settlement is accepted by the Gambian Government and therefore Casamance refugees have been able to register with UN authorities and have been entitled to humanitarian support. This is unusual given that many case-studies, even Bakewell's work on Angolan refugees in Zambia, have highlighted that self-settled refugees are mainly outside the parameters of support and therefore not entitled to aid or rights in their country of Asylum.

There are both positive and negative aspects to un-registered/ un-documented self-settled displaced groups. Firstly, many purposely choose to remain away from the authorities in order "to avoid harassment and expulsion [by authorities]" (Evans 2007: 60, Mann 2002, Sommers 2001) or for fear of being put in camps or formal

settlements. For example, Kaiser (2000) demonstrates how self-settled refugees in Uganda resisted local authorities taking over refugee settlements for fear of loss of protection and assistance. In these cases, displaced groups have been able to negotiate their own terms of settlement with local communities and are able to settle and integrate without formal protection or rights. An example of this is highlighted with self-settled refugees in Uganda who have been able to bypass formal policy structures and fully integrate into Ugandan communities and participate in many activities (Kaiser 2006; Kaiser, Hovil and Lomo 2005; Okello 2005). Connor (1989) also highlights that self-settlement is an indication that refugees do not want assistance, protection, regulation of formal settlements or formal recognition by humanitarian and government agencies. At the same time, unrecognised self-settled groups are prone to greater vulnerability especially if there is a removal of humanitarian support or shift in national policy. For example, self-settled Burundian refugees in Tanzania who had arrived during the 1970s, and were initially accepted and integrated, felt the impacts of restrictions imposed on them by the Tanzanian government in the 1990s with arrests and expulsions for those living outside of refugee camps (Centre for the Study of Forced Migration, International Refugee Rights Initiative and Social Science Research Council 2008).

The self-settled situation in The Gambia is unusual. Shared cultural heritage has facilitated integration, national state recognition and subsequent access to humanitarian support. This however, highlights that such a situation may be hard to replicate in other protracted displacement situations. It has also been suggested that Casamance refugees in Guinea-Bissau are unable to integrate in the same way as Casamance refugees in The Gambia given differences in host and refugee groups. It is for this reason that the direct applicability of Casamance refugees in The Gambia is limited in developing generic policy recommendations. However, it has provided vital information on the concept of self-settlement and the characteristics needed for it to be advocated in displacement situations. Even though this case study investigates self-settlement through a formally recognised refugee group, results have indicated that

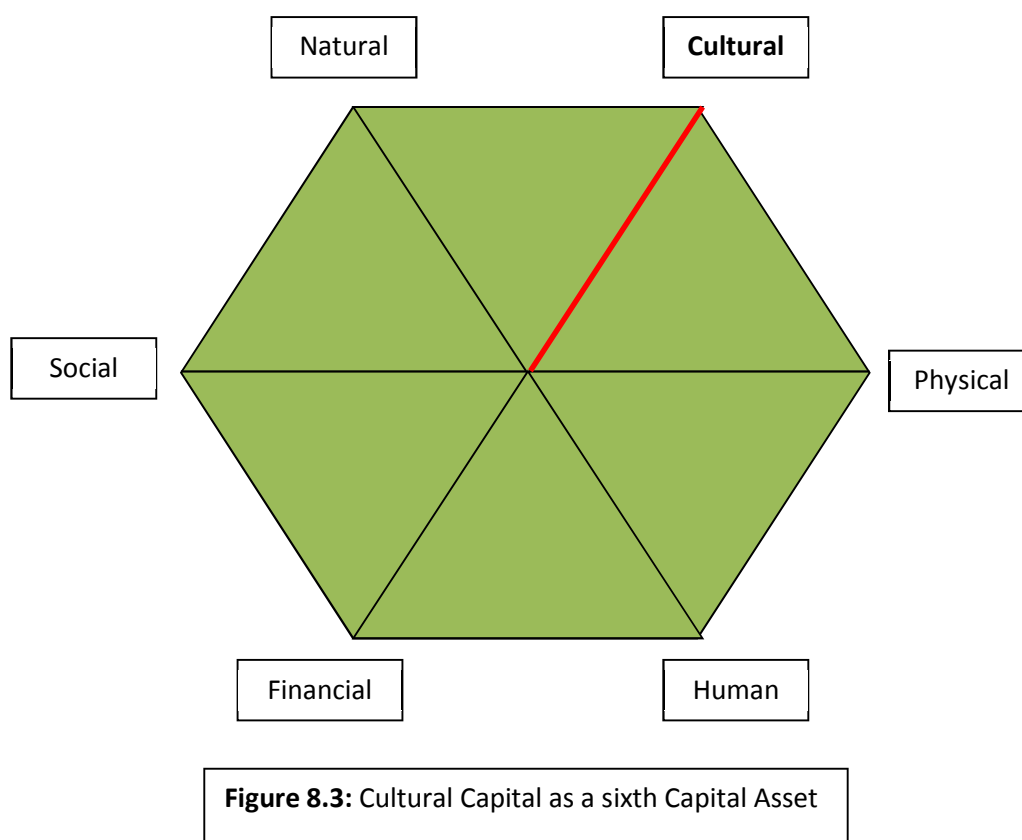
self-settlement can be advocated as a temporary or long-term solution. It has been argued that self-settlement is difficult to distinguish, calculate and analyse given that many are outside of formal intervention channels (Schmidt 2003; Meyer 2008; Jacobsen and Landau 2003; Harrell-Bond 2002). This is especially true in cases where cross-border migration forms part of a broader mobility which occurred prior to displacement. In these cases, statistics can often be inaccurate and not capture migratory movements, which can blur the boundaries of self-settlement (Gale 2006; Van Damme 1999). However, one of the main aspects in the wider self-settlement literature recognises that even without formal rights and humanitarian support, self-settled refugees are able to facilitate their own integration, implement livelihoods and become self-reliant (Bakewell 2000, 2008; Jacobsen 2001; Hovil 2002, 2009; Blucher 1988). It is important to create a balance between self-settlement and policy whereby self-settled groups are able to integrate within local communities but are better monitored by humanitarian agencies to provide support, especially in terms of negative state policy.

## **8.5. Re-engaging with the Sustainable Rural Livelihoods Framework**

### **8.5.1. Adapting the Capital Assets Model for Self-Settled Situations**

In order for the Capital Asset Model to be useful in other self-settled/ displaced situations, there is a need to adapt the model so that it includes key characteristics/ resources that currently inhibit its overall ability to analyse rural livelihoods. It should be a hybrid that can be used for both groups at the community, household and individual level. As results have suggested, one way to adapt this model would be to include a separate 'cultural' capital asset (Figure 8.3). This asset would incorporate the traditional community structures, shared cultural heritage, and ethnicity that was found within this research as well as help outside agencies better understand how to secure political rights for refugees if they are at all inhibited by such cultural structures

Cultural capital is not a new concept and its importance has been advocated within development studies and livelihood frameworks. There are varying ways to interpret 'cultural' capital. Firstly, it can be introduced as a separate sixth asset in other displacement situations and has been referred to as an additional asset within the literature (Bourdieu 1986, 2008; Bebbington 1999; Daskon 2012; Daskon and McGregor 2012; Adato and Meinzen-Dick 2002; Moore 2001; Tacoli 1999; Cochrane 2006).

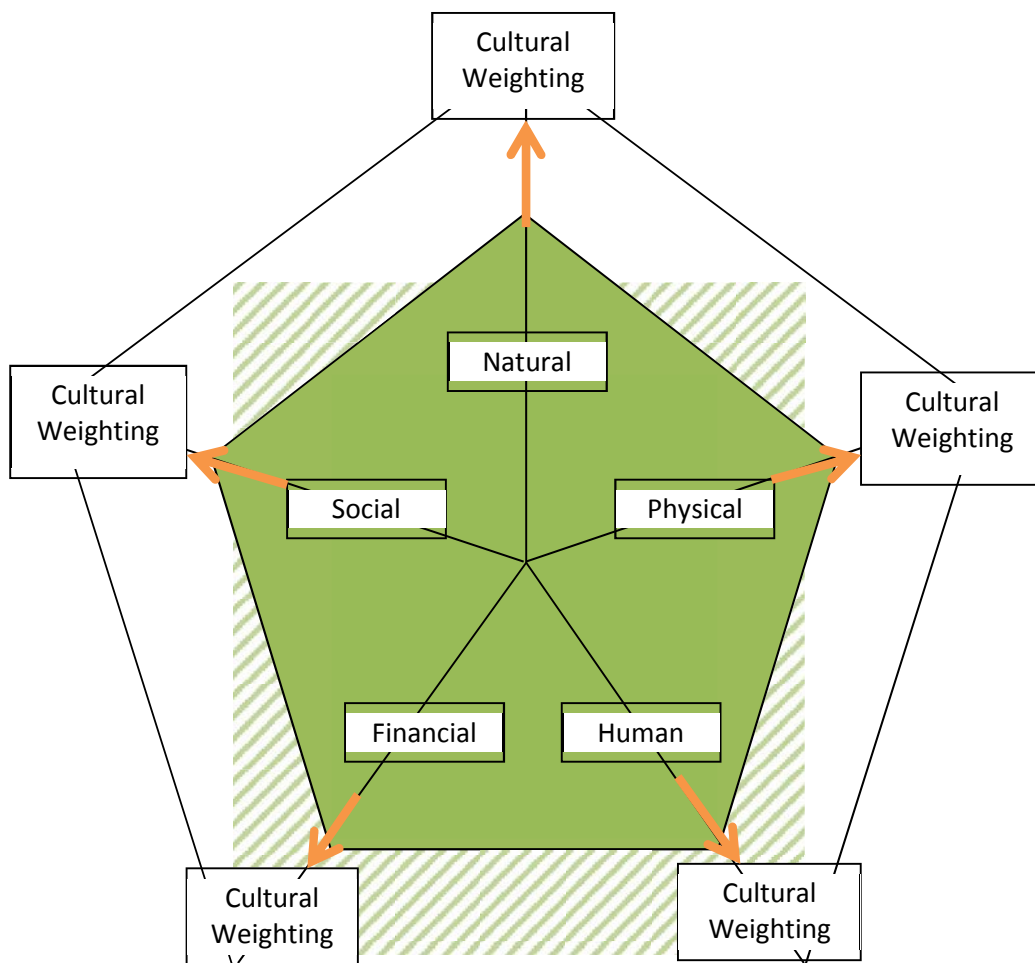


This interpretation of cultural capital suggests that cultural factors are important especially in terms of livelihoods but they should be considered as part of the existing five assets (Potts 2008). At the same time, cultural capital is very closely linked with social capital and there is room to suggest that they could be incorporated together as one asset. However, results from this research and the wider literature suggest that because all assets are linked, they should not be used in isolation.

In terms of incorporating cultural capital as a result of this study and subsequent self-settled situations, it could be considered as an asset that inter-links the existing five assets (figure 8.4). In this case, cultural capital dictates the rate of integration and the subsequent access to resources. For example, cultural obligations meant refugee groups had access to natural resources such as land and in turn both groups were able to access fuelwood resources across the international border. At the same time, these cultural ties allowed refugees to access physical assets such as farming equipment and use of community infrastructure, such as seed stores or mosques. Also, cultural capital incorporates the need to bring traditional informal political structures back into livelihoods perspectives (Scoones 2009). As Unsworth argues (2001), poverty reduction requires a longer term strategic understanding of the social and political realities of power and, in order to enrich livelihood perspectives further there is a need to be more informed regarding the way themes such as caste, gender and political relations operate (O’Laughlin 2004). This adaptation to include informal political structures is in contrast to Carney (1998: 8) who downplays the role of informal political structures within rural communities rather relying on “organisation, from layers of government through to the private sector...”

Figure 8.4 is a modification of the Capital Assets Model to be applied in other self-settled situations. The level of cultural capital however, will vary in relation to the existing five assets as a result of factors such as community dynamics and host-refugee relations. These interactions can be described as a series of weightings applied to each of the capital assets. As an example, figure 8.5 applies the Culturally Weighted Capital Asset Model (CW-CAM) to the case study. The weightings, in rank order, were determined by the level of interaction between cultural capital and each of the original assets (Table 8.3). This allowed us to represent both the level of integration of hosts and refugees and access to resources for Casamance refugees in The Gambia as a result of cultural factors.

Based on data collection, cultural capital determines access to a plethora of social networks that exist and as a result Casamance refugees have been able to access networks they may not necessarily have access to if they did not share cultural factors with Gambian hosts. Also, as frequently suggested in these results, there is a heavy reliance on natural resources for household consumption and livelihood strategies. Although these resources are used by both groups, which questions the long term sustainability of livelihood strategies, pre-existing pre-war mobility, kinship affiliations and shared ethnicity allowed refugee groups to access natural resources in a variety of locations and it also allowed both groups to utilise natural resources across the international border. The impact of cultural capital in relation to human, physical and financial capital is much less in this case but still has varying influence. In terms of human capital, refugee groups have not had to change livelihood strategies as a result of their flight and therefore are able to implement, learn and develop skills for existing livelihood strategies. In addition refugee children have been able to integrate into Gambian school and refugees have been able to take part in community literacy classes as they are conducted in the same local dialect. In addition, cultural factors such as kinship, lineage ties and traditional community structures have also enabled refugees and hosts to access infrastructure such as farming equipment and transport links. Finally, cultural capital in this case has had less impact on the availability of and access to financial capital. Host and refugee households had little capability to have cash, savings or access to micro-finance institutions and therefore cultural capital did little to impact on this. At the same time, there were many communities that had access to community savings which would be used to build/ buy assets for community use. These funds were based on traditional community structures which are highly dependent on cultural capital. The shared cultural heritage has therefore enabled both hosts and refugees to access capital assets.

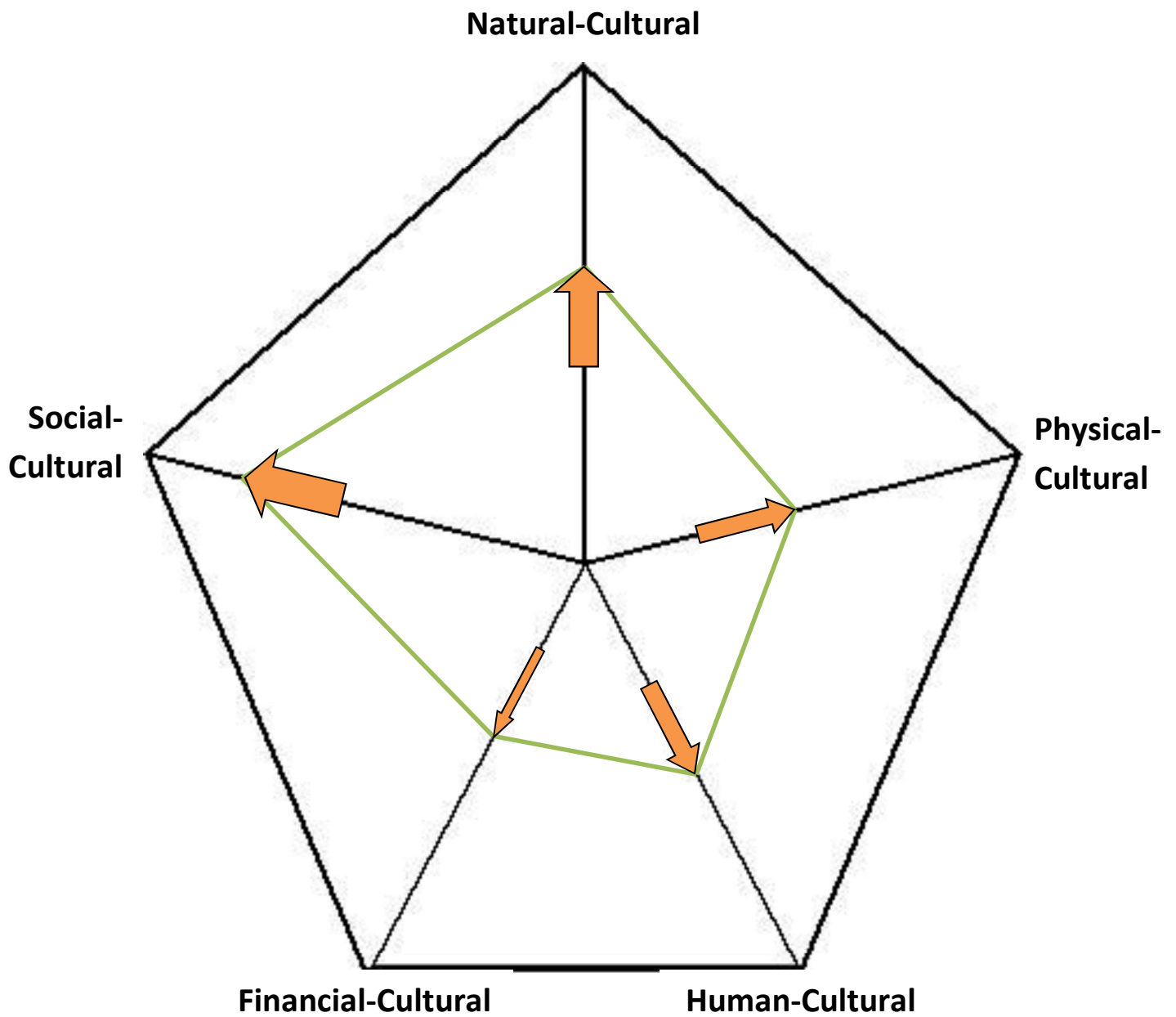


**Figure 8.4:** Modification of Capital Assets Model showing Cultural Weighting

Capital Asset	Rank of level of interaction with Cultural Capital
Social	1
Natural	2
Human	= 3
Physical	= 3
Financial	5

**Table 8.3:** Cultural Weightings of Capital Assets applied to the Casamance case study





**Figure 8.5:** Capital Asset Model showing the Cultural Weightings

*Wider Applicability of the Capital Assets Model*

In terms of livelihood terminology, there is an emerging shift where concepts such as livelihoods, sustainability and development are all evolving with differing, deepening meanings that the framework has not been able to keep up with. The changing

contexts have meant that the SRL Framework has evolved into a prototype for the development of varying sustainable livelihood approaches which encompass extensive literature including theoretical and practical elements. The adapted capital asset model as highlighted in Figure 8.4 becomes a hybrid model to adapt in displaced situations given the complexities of refugee host relations and the plethora of resources that are engaged securing sustainable rural livelihoods.

As Carney (2003) explained, there were shortcomings with the SRL framework and it is one of many analytical tools to be employed when analysing livelihoods. What is more important here that, although given Carney's bias, she is right in defending the approach as helpful to users who have been able to modify it to specific case studies and themes. This encourages a deeper and more critical reflection of SL approaches and a need to keep up with changing policy agendas and emerging themes (Scoones and Wolmer 2003). Continuous shifts in development discourse mean that the framework has been side-lined in favour of other concepts and methodological approaches. It is important to add that since its framework status in 1998, livelihood approaches have been applied in various sectors of society and have highlighted the difference in interpretation and application. It is still a driving force for developing frameworks and approaches to sustainable livelihoods (Scoones 2009). However, there is still a need to secure sustainable rural livelihoods for household survival and poverty alleviation and for this reason it is important to continue to adapt the SRL framework and re-engage in its application. This research has identified that understanding the access to cultural capital, especially at a community level allows a greater understanding of the geo-political context, therefore allowing for greater flexibility to analyse the access to capital for host and refugee groups.

When re-assessing the Capital Assets Model for self-settled refugees, it is initially important to question whether this was the appropriate model to use with refugee groups. Similarly to this research, Bakewell (2008) questioned whether a refugee lens would be appropriate to analyse this situation given the 'invisible' nature of self-

settled refugees. This research identified that the Capital Assets Model was ideal to analyse the livelihoods of self-settled populations because it could capture the access to existing assets for both hosts and refugees. It further verified commonalities and differences between both groups that highlighted the need to incorporate cultural factors in such a model. In terms of the future for sustainable livelihood approaches, there is a need to continue to develop the Capital Assets Model in order to understand the control over assets between “men and women; commercial and political actors; and community organisations and local governance structures” (IDS 2011: 8).

## **8.6. Policy Implications of Integrating Casamance Refugees into Gambian Communities.**

### **8.6.1. Bottom-Up Understanding of Self-Settlement**

#### *Understanding the Concept of ‘Host’ and ‘Refugee’*

It was important to differentiate between ‘host’ and ‘refugee’ in order to understand the integration process and to compare any commonalities and differences in accessing resources. Although this distinction was considered necessary in order to identify any conflicts, competition, or tensions, it was soon realised that in order to fully understand and analyse integration, the use of and distinction of these terms during data collection did not determine access to resources. Similar to the results from Bakewell’s study on self-settlement, results suggested that both hosts and refugees consider themselves one group of people given shared cultural heritage and continuous cross border mobility<sup>66</sup>. On the ground, these terms are considered meaningless as they relate to formal definition’s “as a means for aid and food rations” as stated by the refugee president (Colley 2010). They are not generally applied within communities, households or individually. There were some cases where there were subtle uses of these terms, especially in communities with low refugee numbers but it was not used to isolate either group and had more to do with social networks and structures that operated in the communities. It is also important here to understand

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<sup>66</sup> Also refer to work by Bakewell (2000, 2002, 2008) and Gale (2006, 2008).

that the positionality of the researcher may create these distinctions given the academic/ development discourse that is naturally applied in refugee situations.

Bakewell (2000, 2008), has suggested that to use the terms such as 'host' and 'refugee' would be unrealistic and presumes there is a divide between the groups in refugee communities. This in turn could affect interpretation of results when investigating host/refugee relations. It was clear from these results that individuals were able to identify between host and refugee but, they are not referred to in these terms and are able to utilise the same networks and institutions, hierarchical structures and resources. It was for these reasons that this research not only understood host and refugee dynamics but also community dynamics in order to further understand self-settlement. It was also important to draw on a variety of other networks so that participants would feel comfortable in the environment they were answering questions in. This is similar to Baker (1995) who identifies that the setting for women's discussions were important to collect accurate data. In this sense, discussions would take place in social meeting places such as markets, or under a bantaba. In relation to this research, this would also not necessarily be limited to host or refugee participants. In terms of understanding how Casamance refugees are integrated within Gambian communities, there was no need to purposely create divides between groups given that it was not a pre-requisite for integration or access to resources.

Although the use of these terms is largely unnecessary in terms of integrating Casamance refugees into Gambian communities, there is still a need for these concepts especially in terms of implementing livelihoods and accessing political rights within Gambian communities. First, as the refugee leader stated, the term is used as a formal definition for aid and food rations. This suggests that the use of these terms is important and is used to differentiate between host and refugee groups. It was evident that hosts and refugees would purposely apply these terms if it meant additional assistance or food aid within these communities. This highlighted that the rigid use of such terms from humanitarian actors was an inaccurate interpretation on how these

terms impact on daily routine and prevented a coherent form of community development from taking place. At the same time, these terms were also important in regards to informal political structures in these communities. Community decisions are imposed by the host community through the village Alkalo and community elders and although some refugees have village elder status, they will not solely contribute to political decisions that are made. Results from this research also suggested that refugees alone would not be able to make decisions regarding the community or larger disputes, without a Gambian elder present. It is also the case, that based on this and traditional caste systems, refugees would never be able to achieve the status of village Alkalo. It is in this instance, that the concept of host and refugee remains relevant not only for local communities but also at an academic and policy level in order to understand the access to political platforms for refugee groups. These terms are also still important especially when identifying vulnerable populations that are in need of aid and support. Results from this study demonstrated that humanitarian policy targeted aid mainly to refugee groups (although short-term assistance was eventually provided for hosts). There were, however, few assessments to re-evaluate refugee self-sufficiency and differentiate between refugee households who were able to access resources and implement livelihoods on par with their hosts and those refugee households who were still vulnerable and unable to access such resources.

There is evidence to suggest that Casamance refugees, who have fled south into neighbouring Guinea Bissau and are also self-settled, are subject to these clear refugee/ host distinctions on the basis of ethnic and lingual barriers that may have hindered Casamance refugees integrating into Guinean communities (Procas, APRAN 2010). In relation to wider literature, the case of Burundian refugees in Tanzania highlighted that self-settled refugees did not regard themselves as refugees given their self-settled status yet “they referred to themselves as guests” (Centre for the Study of Forced Migration, International Refugee Rights Initiative and Social Science Research Council 2008). Similar to other case studies on self-settlement, Burundian refugees were able to exercise a greater degree of freedom in comparison to refugees in camps

but they were excluded from local politics and needed permission from the village chairman in order to leave the village (ibid). However, this research has highlighted that Casamance refugees have been able to integrate within Gambian communities in terms of ethnic, linguistic and cultural attributes. The traditional ethnic, socio-economic and historical ties between The Gambia and Senegal as well as the shared Jola/ Diola ethnicity has meant that the two groups are inextricably linked and an outsider would struggle to differentiate between host and refugee. The use of terms such as host and refugee are not needed in this instance as the resources drawn on to facilitate integration are used by all members of the community. Many studies (Porter et. Al. 2008; Jacobson 2002a; Whitaker 2002; Orach and de Brouwere 2005) within local integration literature, regard 'host' and 'refugee' as two separate categories and this study has shown that to make those distinctions can unnecessarily divide host and refugee communities.

It is also important to understand that this situation is continually blurred on local regional, sub-regional and international platforms. On the surface there are few differences between both groups and characteristics such as heritage and traditions bind them together. It is also this heritage that dictates the rate of integration, access to resources and the implementation of livelihoods. In this instance, the need for such labels can be discouraging and unnecessary. However, refugees will have limited access to political power highlighting the relevance of these concepts in academic terms. It is important to look beyond stereo-typical host/refugee relations suggesting that in situations where refugees live in close proximity to their hosts and have similar characteristics, they need to be treated in an equal manner so the researcher can understand the community as a whole and use these concepts when appropriate (Guerin and Guerin 2007: 154). This relates back to a wide range of anthropological literature in regards to 'stranger-host relations'. Bauman (1988, 1995) has previously defined the stranger as someone who is temporary within a host society. At the same time strangers are also viewed and defined in relation to their host (Wood 1934; Schuetz 1944; Gudykunst 1983) on the basis on them seeking acceptance into

communities. In relation to this research, the concept of host and refugee very much falls within this line of thinking as the terms are used suggest a political dominance by the host community.<sup>67</sup> It is important to understand that the concept of 'host' and 'refugee' is interpreted within other academic disciplines such as anthropology but for the purpose of this research it is used within a geographical discipline.

#### *Local Policy Implications*

Formal policy, has not affected the rate of integration or access to resources for self-settled groups. The refugee influx has done little to alter the pre-existing hierarchical structures within local communities and the local political forum in place highlights the need to move away from concepts such as host and refugee in terms of community development. Both groups adhere to these political structures as a result of traditional caste systems and therefore they are able to effectively resolve local conflicts between and within host and refugee groups.

This research has highlighted that localised struggles do occur and that some refugee groups are unable to access political platforms in order to access resources or gain greater legal rights especially in terms of a permanent integration strategy. First, given traditional community structures, the weighing of political power still favours the host community, although some refugees are village elders or have greater power as a result of geographical location. This complicates matters further especially when dealing with second or third generation refugees who were born and raised in The Gambia but are still regarded as refugees. Secondly, the traditional community structures in place within these communities dictate political power for both hosts and refugees who are lower within this caste system. The importance of caste within these communities challenges humanitarian intervention because this lies within the community structures and not between host and refugee groups. Therefore, humanitarian policy needs to work together with local governance (Polzer 2009) in order to effectively target aid to individuals and households that are most vulnerable

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<sup>67</sup> Other works include M.A. Alexander (2003).

while not separating host and refugee populations. Ultimately, as this research and that of Betts (2009) has suggested, there is a need to involve assistance as an integrated community development approach which benefits both host and refugee groups incorporating local governance structures.

#### 8.6.2. Top-Down Understanding of Self-Settlement

At the same time, the concept of self-settlement and the understanding of a self-settled refugee is further blurred by an ambiguous national and regional policy challenging local and international parameters of refugee integration.

##### *National Policy Implications*

Gambian national policy regarding the Casamance conflict and the influx of refugees has been very much determined by the relationship between Banjul and Dakar and the wishes of President Wade<sup>68</sup> to support Gambian involvement within the peace process. The late 2000s highlighted the deepening stagnation of the Casamance peace process and the difficult relations between The Gambia and Senegal as a result of the failed 2004 peace accord and a shift from temporary to long-term integration as a result of the 2006 refugee influx. Gambian foreign policy has ultimately avoided the Casamance question unless approached or asked by the Senegalese government, given the previous anger and tensions that this has caused (Gambian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2007).

The Gambian Government, however, does to an extent acknowledge the unusual situation of self-settlement, as refugees can enjoy the same benefits and advantages as the local population and have the freedom to live, farm, travel and work within the country. As a result, there has been mutual consensus between UN agencies and national ministries to accept Casamance refugees as self-settled. This situation has caused debate on whether this group should indeed have refugee status or whether this should be shifted to that of an economic migrant, (also refer to Long (2009) on

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<sup>68</sup> In March 2012, President Wade was defeated in the Senegalese national Presidential elections to Macky Sall who was sworn in on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2012.



labour migrants) or resettled migrants as many have been permanently settled in The Gambia since 2006 with no desire for repatriation (even if the conflict does come to an end). At the same time, the unusual situation of Casamance refugees can affect the protection and the securing of legal right which directly stems from an ambiguous national policy.

The 2008 Gambia Refugee Act, however, states that if refugees are seen to enjoy the same benefits as the Gambia population then they ultimately cease to be a refugee. This suggests that it is merely a political tool in order to attempt to ease suspicion and tensions between The Gambia and Senegal, officially stating that there is a policy in place to treat all refugees in the country as equal. Given the intense political sensitivity of the Casamance conflict in The Gambia, no clarification could be sought during this research to further understand the aim of the Refugee Act. However, in practice, this Act did not affect Casamance refugees and the majority of both host and refugee populations did not know it existed, suggesting it is meaningless in a practical context. Therefore, national policy in regards to self-settlement can be suggested non-existent as there is greater focus on priorities such as foreign policy and bi-lateral relations with Senegal.

### *Regional Policy Implications*

The effectiveness of policy at the national level has been somewhat exacerbated in this situation as a result of regional policy in West Africa. First, the 'free movement protocols'<sup>69</sup> adopted by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which although not a refugee document provides "secure residence and work entitlements while allowing [refugees] to retain their original nationality" (Boulton 2009: 33). This increases the ambiguity of understanding refugees and migrants in West Africa but also further blurs the boundaries of self-settlement. This protocol can

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<sup>69</sup> The 1979 Protocol A/P.1/5/79 relating to free movement of persons, residence and establishment is available at <http://www.comm.ecowas.int/sec/index.php?id=ap010579&lang=en>. There are four supplementary Protocol's: A/SP.1/6/89, A/SP.1/7/85, A/SP.1/7/86, and A/SP.2/5/90 which make up the 'free movement protocols'

also ignore those individuals who are vulnerable (including refugees) who are in need of humanitarian support but do not necessarily receive it. Secondly, as Gale (2008: 358) points out, the residence status of refugees within West Africa has been a topic of debate and was evident within the “Equality of Treatment for Refugees memorandum” drafted by ECOWAS in 2007. This claimed that refugees remained entitled to the benefits of community citizenship, including residence and work rights (Adepoju et al. 2007: 6). This to an extent contradicts The Gambia Refugee Act and can explain why it was ambiguously drafted in the way given the misunderstanding of terms such as self-settlement and a lack of coherent policy in regards to refugee protection standards. Wider literature does note the success of the ECOWAS protocols in dealing with protracted refugee situations (Boulton 2009; Long 2009) but it also recognises that such protocols are not widely understood at government level. Data collection also indicated that both rural host and refugee groups were not aware of such policies and they did not know how to access certain rights within them. This research highlights a lack of policy harmonisation at the international, regional and national level which does not necessarily affect the local level at which self-settlement is operating. As long as there is resource availability (especially natural resources) and both groups have access to them, there will be no alteration of policy to investigate the long-term integration of Casamance refugees.

Given the spill-over effect of the Casamance conflict, and inconsistent Senegalese policy, there is little that The Gambia can do to further its assistance for Casamance refugees. However, uprisings along the Gambian border including the kidnap of five Senegalese soldiers in December 2011 are a stark reminder that the conflict is on-going and is very much focused along the Gambian/ Senegalese border with no indication of a ceasefire. In addition, although the MFDC is factioned, one clear mandate between all groups is a clear mistrust of the Senegalese and other African governments with a need for some sort of international intervention (Evans 2012: Personal Communication). Therefore, there needs to be greater transparency and

understanding of legal status and a closer involvement with humanitarian actors and local communities in order to oversee the effects of self-settlement.

As this thesis has suggested, the external political environment is important in understanding the context and complexities of self-settled refugee situations. The re-election of President Jammeh in 2011 will no doubt continue to fuel Senegal's suspicions of The Gambia's involvement within the conflict and the suspected hiding of Senegal's most wanted man, Salif Sadjo. In addition the growing uncertainty in Guinea-Bissau with the death of President Sanneh and yet another military coup suggests a need to continue to monitor the situation across the borderlands. The election of Macky Sall as the new Senegalese President in 2012 distinctly changed the rhetoric from the Wade administration. A promise to involve The Gambia and Guinea-Bissau with talks regarding the Casamance conflict can be seen as a positive addition to this already strained conflict. It is somewhat surprising however, that there has been little action in regards to the conflict given that it was high on President Wade's agenda when he was first sworn into office in 2000.

#### *International Policy Implications: The Role of Humanitarian Aid Agencies*

Chartrand (1975) argued that even with the drafting of the OAU in the late 1960s, it was recognised that the "permanent solution of refugee problems requires something more than material assistance or relief, no matter how generous that may be". However, in regards to the Casamance conflict these principles seem to have become lost within humanitarian policy and have in many ways exacerbated the effectiveness of aid. Ambiguous national policy and regional humanitarian offices in West Africa have left many NGOs struggling to effectively target refugee communities and provide sufficient programmes to promote local integration, voluntary repatriation or long term residence. This may explain why only a few NGOs in The Gambia have consistently targeted these self-settled refugee communities.

The closing of the UNHCR field office in December 2001 has had a lasting effect. The suspicion that the present office is temporary does little to promote the protection of refugees and displaced persons in the area. Findings from this research suggest that that UNHCR policy at the local field level is ineffective and inconsistent. Self-settlement is understood to be the desired solution in this case. However, regional policies dictated by Dakar, and a lack of communication with sister agencies or local partners, are ineffective on the ground. Findings from this study concluded that UNHCR aid did not necessarily reach all beneficiaries and that the policy on distribution of aid was inconsistent and often difficult for communities to understand. In addition, the failure of livelihood policies to effectively target both host and refugee groups in the same manner has reinforced the use of rigid terminology such as 'host' and 'refugee' which is directly applied on the ground and therefore ineffective in targeting community development for self-settled communities. In a recent report commissioned by UNHCR, Hopkins (2011) fails to critically report on the mission UNHCR have conducted regarding the Casamance refugee situation. Although providing a comprehensive field study, it does little to critique its current mission and the effectiveness of its policies. Although their livelihood mission is the newest incentive to emerge from its field office, the reality on the ground paints a similar picture to UNHCR's previous programmes where they were not delivered on time or effectively in places. There was little knowledge by refugee communities that such incentives were taking place. Perhaps the inclusion of agencies such as the ICRC instead of GRCS will bring a greater level of policy consistency.

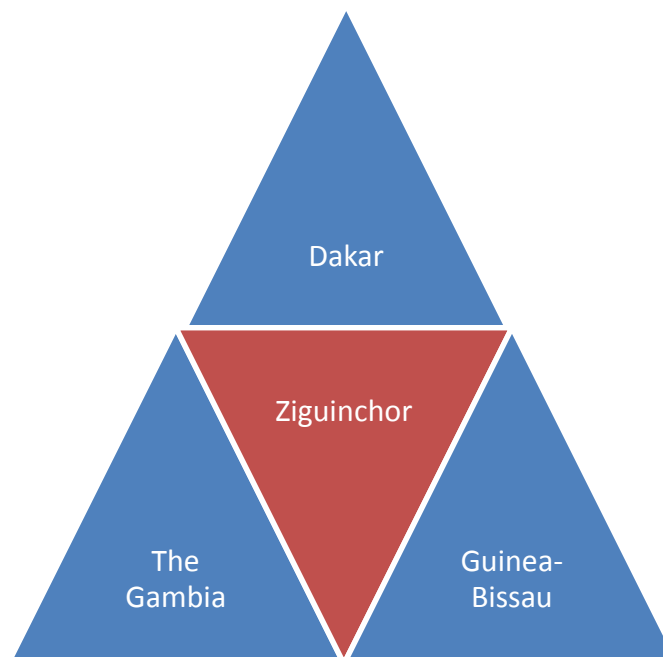
The termination of food-aid in 2010 by WFP was partly on the basis that they were unable to secure donor funding for these communities (Duthie 2010) given the attention the Western world has paid to larger displacements. This is supported by Bakewell (2002, 2008) who argues that the rights and protection of smaller displaced groups and the self-settled population go ignored in comparison to these larger situations. It also begs the questions, if donor funding were readily available, would these refugee communities still be receiving food aid thus promoting the notion of

dependency. The delivery of food aid became somewhat confused as agencies were unable to verify those who were most vulnerable and in need of food aid or to track such food rations as it was known to travel back to urban areas as well as across the international border. Previous Joint Assessment Missions (JAM) by UNHCR and WFP concluded that they still needed to target those most vulnerable and a mass refugee registration in 2010 encouraged mass re-registration rather than identification of those most vulnerable. As a result, there has been a lack of coherent exit strategies put in place to effectively allow communities to provide for themselves and become self-sufficient. This sensitisation is crucial in order to communicate with local communities regarding the options they have and the support they would receive. It was verified during data collection that as a result of this consistent food aid, many refugee (and host) groups would generalise the need of aid and would try to receive aid, in any form, from any donors, therefore not prioritising community needs and ignoring those most vulnerable.

At the same time, Refugee Participation Network (1991) highlighted that a change in humanitarian policy towards self-settled Mozambique refugees in Swaziland borderlands inhibited the relationship between hosts and refugees. Some refugees had been self-settled since 1984, engaging in local initiatives, livelihoods and community integration but an attempt to stop local feeding programmes and move refugees into camps meant that refugees no longer used their hosts to report tensions, registration or day-to-day movements for fear of being moved. This put strain on local relations and also the relationship between host, refugee and humanitarian agencies. There is a need to understand the ground situation and adapt humanitarian policy so not to severely disrupt day-to-day life in these communities. It is important for humanitarian actors to maintain a positive relationship with local communities who are at the forefront of self-settlement.

Self-settled Casamance refugees will continue to be classified as refugees under the 1951 Geneva Convention as the conflict has not ended, yet there are no provisions in

place to 1) re-assess refugee status for some individuals and households or; 2) assist with legal rights such as ownership of land or access to political platforms. More importantly, the rigid structure of international law may deter humanitarian intervention and national policy, seeking for and protecting those refugees who are increasingly vulnerable and are unable to return to Casamance or denied rights by local community structures in The Gambia. So, how can policy adapt to better target self-settled communities? Firstly, as this thesis has maintained, there has been a distinct lack of in-country and cross border communication between national governments, regional/international agencies and NGOs. It is clear that there should be a triangulation process between agencies and governments in order to harmonise policy (Figure 8.6). This will give greater understanding of the concept of self-settlement within international law as well ensure that self-settled groups are not ignored and are entitled to state and humanitarian protection.



**Figure 8.6:** Triangulation of policy between The Gambia, Senegal and Guinea-Bissau

At the same time, the findings from this research also link closely with the work of Leach who states:

“Outside agencies more accustomed to dealing with refugees isolated from local communities in specially built camps, found this situation of ‘hospitality’ and ‘integration’ unusual” (Leach 1992:2)

Refugee policies are increasingly difficult to implement. However, this research has highlighted the positive aspects of refugee integration. Policy needs to target host and refugee groups as one to deliver its programmes. This will ensure greater integration and also target the demographic and resource pressures that are exacerbated by the influx of refugees. There are two potential ways that this can be implemented. First, in terms of policy, one of the biggest failings at the local level has been as a result of development projects not engaging with all community participants in the decision making process or identifying their own community needs (Korten 1990, Young 1993, Chambers 1995, Perez 2005). This stresses the importance of training and developing local partners that are familiar and accepted within these communities to identify the needs and support both groups should be receiving. It is important for Alkalo's, village elders and newly appointed refugee representatives (Hopkins 2011) to fully engage in order to maximise the benefits of humanitarian aid and development. This can be seen through community development initiatives where both host and refugee groups are targeted to meet the demands of the community. This also takes pressure from humanitarian agencies and allows alternative agencies such as NGOs and state actors to target community development. At the same time, there are still many refugee households and individuals who are vulnerable in The Gambia, unable to access resources or political rights and are unable to repatriate. It is important that humanitarian actors such as UNHCR and WFP continue their presence in these communities to truly target refugees who are in need of assistance and support. There is a need to develop current programmes to distinguish between self-sufficient and vulnerable.

## 8.7. Summary

This chapter has identified three main findings from this research project. Data collection identified that self-settlement can be considered a durable solution if there are common characteristics between host and refugee groups such as livelihood practices, ethnicity, and local political structures. Self-settlement is further facilitated if there is willingness by national governments and humanitarian stakeholders for this co-existence to take place. In the context of rigid international law, the definition of self-settlement is blurred and the benefits and legal rights of self-settled groups can easily be neglected. As a result, more research is needed to further understand self-settlement in both temporary and long-term situations. The analysis of the capital assets model re-affirmed that its rigid structure was unable to determine best practice and sustainability of rural livelihoods as it overlooks key components such as ethnicity and caste. As a result of shared cultural heritage between hosts and refugees, 'cultural' capital was incorporated within the adapted capital assets model. This research suggests that cultural factors override the existing five capital assets and give greater access to resources for both hosts and refugees. Finally, it was determined that much more is needed at policy level. Ambiguous national policy can be attributed to confusion in regional and international policy in regards to refugee protection. However, the political sensitivity of the Casamance conflict is reason for the implementation of ambiguous policy. Repeated uprisings along the Gambian border will continue to fuel tensions. As a result, this has led to regressive humanitarian activity on both sides of the border and has undermined the effectiveness of aid<sup>70</sup>. Policy therefore needs to target hosts and refugees as one group in attempts to implement effective humanitarian relief followed by long-term development.

Finally, in order to conclude this research, it is important to present further research, contribution to knowledge and research assumptions.

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<sup>70</sup> For more information please refer to Evans and Ray (2012).



## **9. Concluding Self-Settlement of Casamance Refugees in The Gambia**

### **9.1. Introduction**

This thesis has identified that the integration of self-settled refugee groups is a complex process whereby understanding factors such as the external political context, and shared cultural heritage is crucial in order to justify self-settlement as a temporary and long-term solution. In the literature, research by key authors such as Bakewell (2000, 2002, 2008), Polzer(2004, 2009) and Hovil (2007) suggest that self-settlement is under-researched but advocate it as a settlement option especially when there are similarities with the host community. This research is in agreement with this and has argued, and maintained, that in situations where hosts and refugees share similarities such as livelihood strategies and more importantly cultural factors such as ethnicity, self-settlement can be advocated.

In addition, shared livelihood practices has allowed this research to investigate the availability of and access to resources allowing a direct comparison to be made between host and refugee groups. The Capital Assets Model was used in relation to the access of socio-economic and environmental resources for both groups. This was a relevant framework to use given the extensive use of the SRL Framework and the need to adapt it in emerging situations, especially based around conflict (Collinson 2003). In addition, although the framework has been extensively critiqued, it is still widely used in livelihood approaches and should not necessarily be dismissed (Scoones 1998, 2003, 2009). This research demonstrated that hosts and refugees accessed the same resources in all communities investigated to implement livelihood strategies. There were subtle differences between and within host and refugee groups and this had previously led to tensions between hosts and refugees. This research has maintained, however, that these tensions rarely escalated beyond localised struggles. These struggles, however, were found to be effectively resolved by pre-existing community structures and hierarchies which are primarily based on traditional caste systems. At

the same time, access to livelihood resources (especially natural resources) across the porous international border, for both groups, has been as a result of the shared cultural heritage between hosts and refugees and can also explain why tensions conflict have not escalated. The implementation of the Capital Assets Model identified that cultural factors should be considered as it was highly influential in the access to livelihood resources. This research has therefore suggested adapting the model to incorporate cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986, 2008; Bebbington 1999; Daskon 2012) as an asset that determines the access to the other five capital assets. In contrast to previous reference to cultural capital, this research suggests that in other situations of self-settlement cultural capital should override the existing five assets rather than an additional sixth capital asset.

Ultimately, this provides further understanding of self-settlement and how policy makers can better provide support for communities. In situations of self-settlement, initial integration may be achieved but it is important for stakeholders to understand that how to provide long-term integration into communities and provide them with greater political rights/ especially given the context surrounding the term 'refugee' (Bakewell 2008). Therefore humanitarian actors, international organisations and national 'host' governments need to provide adequate humanitarian support but then follow this with effective community development programmes that target host and refugee groups as one. The unusual case study of this research, however, draws on ineffective humanitarian/ development policy as a result of wider political implications of self-settled Casamance refugees in The Gambia, the sensitivity of the Casamance conflict and bi-lateral relations between The Gambia and Senegal (Baker 2002; Evans 2003, 2004, 2007; Evans and Ray 2012).

## **9.2. Research Assumptions**

This thesis has successfully investigated literature from many academic disciplines such as geography, law, migration, livelihoods, anthropology and social science. More

literature may have been consulted, however, this study is within a geographical discipline and it is beyond the scope of this study to fully understand critique and analyse concepts and research outside of the research aim and objectives.

In terms of methodological limitations, greater time and resources would have allowed for a larger sample size to be included within the study. Casamance refugees reside within 56 rural communities in Western Region and only six were sampled within this study. However, the selection criteria for each sample village (Chapter Four) allowed for a demographic contrast in population changes between hosts and refugees. This study was also unable to capture Casamance refugees who are no longer residing within Western Region and have migrated to urban areas or live within the coastal fishing villages. At the same time, whereas this study took one livelihood strategy as a case study within one community, greater logistical measures such as time and multiple stipends would have allowed for each livelihood strategy to be investigated within each village giving a larger data set in order to compare and contrast. Although this was not completed, the method adopted was sufficient to understand the access and availability of resources in order to implement livelihood strategies for both host and refugee groups.

Finally, the political limitations of this research meant that issues of the conflict, rebels, MFDC and national policy were unable to be investigated in any thorough detail. The sensitivity of the Casamance conflict in The Gambia and Senegal<sup>71</sup> meant that national policies (or lack of) could not be critiqued, questioned or analysed in any great detail. It was with great caution that research within these communities did little to encourage political talk or interest. This was mainly because of the suspicion that Gambian National Intelligence Agency (NIA) officers were secretly located within these communities and could relay information back to central government. However, the political nature of the conflict and its consequent impacts cannot be avoided within this research project. To not include such an issue has negative implications on the

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<sup>71</sup> The political sensitivity in Senegal's capital, Dakar, is that intense that it was strongly advised not to approach national government representatives regarding the issue.

outcome of the research project. However, politics was not the driving force for this project and it was the livelihood impacts and integration process that was the main concern and whether it was sustainable for both Gambian hosts and self-settled Casamance refugees.

### **9.3. Contribution to Knowledge and Understanding**

The integration of self-settled refugees into host communities is complex and requires a greater understanding of the external environment that affects the plight, settlement and settlement options for refugees. This thesis has identified that the settlement of Casamance refugees in The Gambia is unusual but results have indicated that self-settlement can be applied as a temporary and long-term solution in a variety of displacement settings.

As chapter Four highlighted, grounded theory (Glaser and Straus 1967; Corbin and Straus 2008) was applied to this research in order to collect qualitative empirical data whereby the findings from this research would inform the theoretical underpinnings that were identified in Chapters One and Two. A multi-method approach was adopted in order to collect a variety of data from participants during the data collection period. This approach was effective in working with all stakeholders including semi-structured interviews for key informants such as government and International/ NGOs but more importantly this approach allowed participants to actively engage in the data collection process and as a result, the researcher was able greater understand the integration process by becoming part of communities (Cook 2005; Baker 1995). Participatory methods also encouraged greater engagement from all sections of society, including gender groups and were able to delegate methods for participants to complete on their own empowering these refugee communities to fully understand and willingly participate (Billinge et. Al 1984; McKendrick 1999; Dunn 2007). These methods are transferable to not only other self-settled scenarios but other displacement situations

where engagement with and an understanding of those displaced are of vital importance to analyse the impact of displacement.

This research has provided empirical findings and additional knowledge to what was an under-reported and relatively unknown refugee situation. The Casamance conflict is West Africa's longest running civil conflict now in its thirtieth year (Evans 2002, 2004, 2007; Foucher 2002, 2003, 2004, 2011; Marut 1999, 2002). This case study has highlighted how this conflict has affected displacement patterns and the reasons for integration into The Gambia. This case is unusual given that these refugees are self-settled rather than in refugee camps and has highlighted that in comparison to other self-settled situations, refugees are able to negotiate the terms of their settlement, integrate into local communities and contribute to household survival and the local economy by implementing and sustaining livelihoods. In line with the corresponding literature (Bakewell 2000, 2002, 2008; Polzer 2004, 2009; Hovil 2007), this case study has reinforced that similar situations of self-settlement are avoided and often dismissed by national policy and humanitarian actors thus not being able to draw on the advantageous benefits that refugees can have on host communities. This research demonstrated that factors such as shared cultural heritage, ethnicity, livelihoods and social interactions facilitated integration into Gambian communities and were reasons why this plight has been successful. However, there are complications. The Casamance conflict is still on-going and until peace talks/ negotiations are actively brought back to the political table, it will continue to confuse the status of refugee integration. At the same time, the researcher only found few participants who would return to Casamance after the conflict with many hoping to stay in The Gambia and the opportunity to return to Casamance to implement livelihoods where possible. This has highlighted that in cases like the Casamance situation, integration and self-reliance are possible<sup>72</sup>.

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<sup>72</sup> Also refer to research by Crisp (2003, 2004) on settlement, self-reliance and protracted refugee situations.

Not only has this research investigated, understood and analysed Casamance refugees in The Gambia, which until recently has been relatively unknown, this research has contributed to a variety of concepts within academia. Firstly, this research has contributed to the limited but growing literature on self-settlement (Bakewell 2000, 2002, 2008; Polzer 2004, 2009; Hovil 2007; Meyer 2008; Schmidt 2003) which advocates that this can be sought as a durable solution, but also as an interim process and compliments research in regards to aspects of local integration (Porter et. 2008; Jacobson 2002a, 2002b; Crisp 2003, 2004). It has been demonstrated that self-settlement could work in a variety of regional and global settings where refugee groups share characteristics with host communities. Pre-existing literature has also confirmed such similarities between host and refugee groups facilitate the integration process for refugee groups (ibid).

This thesis has also re-engaged with the SRL framework (Scoones 1998, 2003, 2007, 2009; Collinson 2003) which continues to be active within development practice on livelihoods, however has been side-lined in favour of other concepts and methodological approaches. This research used the Capital Assets Model in order to investigate and analyse the access to socio-economic and environmental livelihood resources. In addition, using a refugee perspective, this research took the model and sought to understand its applicability within displacement scenario's such as self-settlement. As a result, the rigid structure and concepts used within the framework were unsuccessful in accurately understanding shared cultural heritage between hosts and refugees and informal community structures on which self-settlement is based on. Therefore, the model has been adapted in order to account for these cultural factors in the form of 'cultural' capital which incorporates important characteristics such as ethnicity, caste, traditional community structures, all which are key in understanding how individuals are able to access resources in order to sustain livelihood strategies.

Finally, this thesis has highlighted that policy implementation in any displacement situation can be difficult, especially given the rigid terminology and structures that

need to be taken into consideration. At the same time, this thesis has highlighted that the wider literature, national policy or humanitarian actors are uncertain in regards to the definition of self-settlement and as a result, policy implementation becomes further complicated. There are challenges to self-settlement and this thesis has recognised that it may not be applicable in every situation. However, this thesis has demonstrated that initial acknowledgment of self-settlement eases the process of policy coordination as well as refugee integration into local communities who are the most affected in these situations. At the same time, results highlighted that directing humanitarian support purely at one group (either host or refugee) can lead to community tensions and can discourage self-settlement. Support needs to initially target the emergency needs of the displaced, gradually shifting to a programme of community development whereby both host and refugee groups will be targeted in order to try and address community issues such as natural resources management. More importantly, the plight of community development also gives refugees an additional political platform in order to become politically integrated into communities.

#### **9.4. Further Research**

##### *Casamance Refugees in Guinea-Bissau*

This research highlighted a number of additional research avenues that can be further explored in relation to self-settlement. First, it is important to continue to empirically research other self-settled groups in the global south in order to further understand the nature of self-settlement and whether it can be advocated as a temporary or long-term solution. More importantly, a direct comparison study is needed on the integration and livelihood strategies of Casamance refugees in Guinea-Bissau to address this process in comparison to Casamance refugees in The Gambia (as has been briefly identified as being remarkably different). This will further enhance the literature on self-settlement. Secondly, the mixed method approach within this study can be expanded and applied in other livelihood, displacement and ethnographic

assessments. The use of participatory methods to fully engage participants has been a positive example of community development and empowerment. Thirdly, this thesis has attempted to use critique and analyse academic literature within a development environment and these theoretical underpinnings have had a direct impact on methodology, results and analysis. If similar criteria are adopted in future situations, it bridges the gap between academic research and development and can be utilised to complement each other.

### *Self-Settled Urban Refugees*

Although this study has concentrated on self-settled refugees integrated into rural communities, it can also be applied to wider situations, including urban refugees. Urban refugees usually self-settle (Dryden-Peterson 2006). In addition to Casamance refugees in rural communities, this study has also identified around 1,000 Casamance refugees who are self-settled in urban communities but there is a lack of academic literature or humanitarian policy aimed at understanding this group (Hopkins 2011). Similarly, many urban refugees do not have access to assistance in comparison to those in camps such as food aid and there are few assistance programmes supported by national government agencies (Jacobsen 2006; Campbell 2005). The choice of self-settlement in urban areas for refugees is appealing because of the greater access to social networks and ethnic enclaves that can facilitate integration (Balbo and Marconi 2005). Urban refugees, however, can sometimes find it more difficult to access basic resources and their legal status makes it difficult to integrate and implement livelihoods (Jacobson 2006). In cases where legal status and protection is uncertain, self-settlement can be an ideal opportunity as a temporary solution. At the same time, as case studies in Uganda have demonstrated, the use of characteristics such as social networks and ethnicity have facilitated long-term integration for some self-settled urban groups who use these means to access legal documents and status (Hovil 2007).

### *Self-Settlement and Internal Displacement*



At the same time, self-settlement is applicable in cases of internal displacement whereby individuals have not crossed an international border and are not necessarily protected by their national government or humanitarian agencies. The nature of the Casamance conflict has enabled both hosts and refugees to utilise both sides of the porous international border to implement livelihood strategies and it is important to expand on Evans (2003, 2005, 2009) work on the sustainability of livelihood strategies amongst IDPs in Casamance. It is in these cases where IDPs can seek protection amongst local communities and host groups who share characteristics as mentioned above. Ferris and Halff (2011) demonstrate that IDPs in southern Sudan, adapted livelihoods to the local setting and therefore their displacement was not a barrier to participating in public life. They also suggest that the relationship between IDPs and the host community is vital especially in local integration situations. In situations where hosts welcomed and kept friendly relations with IDPs, integration was facilitated. Integration was also facilitated in places such as Burundi and Georgia where social interactions such as inter-marriage were common occurrences (ibid).

#### *Regional Applicability of Self-Settlement*

Much of the work on self-settlement has been as a result of protracted refugee situations notably situated in Sub-Saharan Africa. As much of the literature has drawn on, African displacement situations are much more fluid in comparison to other global contexts whereby mobility and integration existed prior to displacement and can continue post-displacement. There is limited existing literature on self-settlement and there are even fewer examples in other regional contexts such as Latin America and Asia. As Chapter Two identified, Northern states such as Europe have stricter asylum policies and rigid refugee guidelines to contain such situations. As a result of the Cartagena Declaration, there is also a large UNHCR presence in Latin America where there are extensive resettlement programmes limiting self-settlement (although its short term applicability has been considered). Cheng and Chudoba (2003) argue that self-settlement could have been an option for Guatemalan refugees, especially those who have fled to Mexico but there needs to be the presence and coherent structures

put in place by agencies such as UNHCR that brings services directly to refugees meaning they are able to integrate more easily into host communities without losing access to essential services such as healthcare or education. At the same time, it has been highlighted that in cases in South America, even when forced displacement is present, individuals choose destinations for various reasons, some of which is based on social interactions and cultural connections (ibid). As a broader example, self-settlement can also be used as a deeper understanding of migration patterns especially in places such as the Caribbean in understanding where people migrate to and why (African, Caribbean, and Pacific Observatory on Migration 2012). In addition, the Free Movement Protocol has promoted intra-regional migration but there are still many undocumented migrants who are unable to integrate into local communities as they face ethnic, lingual and social differences with local populations (ibid).

Therefore, this research has demonstrated that as the number of displacement situations continues to rise (as a result of factors other than conflict) and refugee situations become further protracted, self-settlement can be advocated in some places as a temporary and long-term solution for policy makers. This allows local integration initiatives to take place at a much earlier stage in the displacement cycle (Chapter One). Similar characteristics such as ethnicity, caste and livelihood strategies between host and refugee groups also allow self-settlement to take place at a much earlier stage. This research has vitally found that policy makers need to be aware of cultural factors, especially in rural communities, that operate in communities and how it can be a determining factor on the availability of and access to resources.

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## *Appendix 1*

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<u>1984 Cartagena Declaration Cartagena</u>	<u>1966/2001 Asian –African Legal Consultative Committee Bangkok Principles</u>
A need in Central America to address the escalating displacement crisis (Shoyele 2004: 553).	Added two addenda on the right of refugees to return and the norm of burden sharing (Shoyele 2004: 554)
It was the first document within Central America to address the problems that States faced with large numbers of refugees and was the first Declaration recognising that victims of generalized violence, internal conflicts and human rights violations were entitled to refugee status (Arboleda 1995: 94).	An attempt to provide a legally non-binding document concerning the treatment of refugees (Kourula 1997:154).
Directly refers to IDPs and calls for the support of both national authorities and international organizations (Kourula 1997: 152).	Was viewed as promising in 1966 and 2001 but the expected development did not occur (De Andrade 1998: 392).
Non-Legally Binding but widely adhered to.	Non-Legally Binding and not widely adhered to.

## *Appendix 2*

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# INFORMED CONSENT FORM (Key Informants)

COVENTRY UNIVERSITY,  
FACULTY OF BUSINESS, ENVIRONMENT & SOCIETY  
UNITED KINGDOM

NAME OF STUDENT: *Charlotte Ray*  
NAME OF UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR: Professor Hazel Barrett  
COURSE TITLE: PhD  
TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: *The Challenges and Policy Implications of  
Hosting refugees in Western Region of The Gambia*

## PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of the research is to identify key socio-economic, environmental and livelihood impacts for both host and refugee populations in the Foni Districts of Western Region. It is also to inform policy makers and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) of the challenges of integrating these refugees into Gambian communities

## PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH

Participation in this research will consist of face to face, semi-structured individual interviews which can last from 10 minutes up to one hour. Participation may involve recording of the interview but this is at the discretion of the participant and all information will be completely confidential and anonymous.

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOUR DATA

This research is an academic study. I will use information received as part of my PhD thesis submitted in fulfilment of Coventry University's requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

**If you have any questions or queries *Charlotte Ray* will be happy to answer them. If she cannot help you, you can contact *Ebou NJie*, *Concern Universal*, [ebou.njie@concern-universal.org](mailto:ebou.njie@concern-universal.org), Ousman Dan Fodio Street, Fajara, The Gambia.**

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant or feel you have been placed at risk you can contact Professor Hazel Barrett, Department of Geography, Environment and Disaster Management, Faculty of Business, Environment and Society, Coventry University, Priory Street, Coventry, CV1 5FB, 024 7688 7690, [h.barrett@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:h.barrett@coventry.ac.uk).

I confirm that I understand the above information. The nature, demands and risks of the project have been explained to me.

I have been informed that there will be no benefits/payments to me for participation

I understand that I may withdraw my consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty and without having to give any reason.

Participants signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**The signed copy of this form is retained by the student, and at the end of the project passed on to the supervisor. A second copy of the consent form should be given to the participant for them to keep for their own reference.**

# INFORMED CONSENT FORM (Village Participants - Host)

COVENTRY UNIVERSITY,  
FACULTY OF BUSINESS, ENVIRONMENT & SOCIETY  
UNITED KINGDOM

NAME OF STUDENT: *Charlotte Ray*  
NAME OF UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR: Professor Hazel Barrett  
COURSE TITLE: PhD  
TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: *The Challenges and Policy Implications of  
Hosting refugees in Western Region of The Gambia*

## PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

- The aim of the research is to identify the impacts for host populations of hosting refugee populations in the Foni Districts of The Gambia and the challenges of integrating them into Gambian communities.

## PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH MAY INVOLVE

- Focus Groups including male and female host family representatives
- Narrative Studies – asking you to provide detailed accounts of integrating within the community
- Face to face, semi-structured individual interviews with primary researcher and translator
- It can have any time scale ranging from 10 minutes up to one hour
- Participation **MAY** involve recording of the interview, note taking or photography. This is at the discretion of the participant and all information will be completely confidential and anonymous.

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOUR DATA

- This research is an academic study. I will use information received as part of my PhD thesis submitted in fulfilment of Coventry University's requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

**If you have any questions or queries *Charlotte Ray* will be happy to answer them. If she cannot help you, you can contact *Ebou NJie, Concern Universal*, [ebou.njie@concern-universal.org](mailto:ebou.njie@concern-universal.org), Ousman Dan Fodio Street, Fajara, The Gambia.**

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant or feel you have been placed at risk you can contact Professor Hazel Barrett, Department of Geography, Environment and Disaster Management, Faculty of Business, Environment and Society, Coventry University, Priory Street, Coventry, CV1 5FB, 024 7688 7690, [h.barrett@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:h.barrett@coventry.ac.uk).

I confirm that I understand the above information. The nature, demands and risks of the project have been explained to me.

I have been informed that there will be no benefits/payments to me for participation

I understand that I may withdraw my consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty and without having to give any reason.

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**The signed copy of this form is retained by the student, and at the end of the project passed on to the supervisor. A second copy of the consent form should be given to the participant for them to keep for their own reference.**

# INFORMED CONSENT FORM (Village Participants - Refugee)

COVENTRY UNIVERSITY,  
FACULTY OF BUSINESS, ENVIRONMENT & SOCIETY  
UNITED KINGDOM

NAME OF STUDENT: *Charlotte Ray*  
NAME OF UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR: Professor Hazel Barrett  
COURSE TITLE: PhD  
TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: *The Challenges and Policy Implications of  
Hosting refugees in Western Region of The Gambia*

## PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

- The aim of the research is to identify the impacts of refugee populations in the Foni Districts of The Gambia and the challenges of integrating into communities.

## PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH MAY INVOLVE

- Focus Groups including male and female refugees
- Narrative Studies – asking you to provide detailed accounts of integrating within the community
- Face to face, semi-structured individual interviews with primary researcher and translator
- It can have any time scale ranging from 10 minutes up to one hour
- Participation **MAY** involve recording of the interview, note taking or photography. This is at the discretion of the participant and all information will be completely confidential and anonymous.

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOUR DATA

- This research is an academic study. I will use information received as part of my PhD thesis submitted in fulfilment of Coventry University's requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

**If you have any questions or queries *Charlotte Ray* will be happy to answer them. If she cannot help you, you can contact *Ebou NJie, Concern Universal*, [ebou.njie@concern-universal.org](mailto:ebou.njie@concern-universal.org), Ousman Dan Fodio Street, Fajara, The Gambia.**

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant or feel you have been placed at risk you can contact Professor Hazel Barrett, Department of Geography, Environment and Disaster Management, Faculty of Business, Environment and Society, Coventry University, Priory Street, Coventry, CV1 5FB, 024 7688 7690, [h.barrett@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:h.barrett@coventry.ac.uk).

I confirm that I understand the above information. The nature, demands and risks of the project have been explained to me.

I have been informed that there will be no benefits/payments to me for participation

I understand that I may withdraw my consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty and without having to give any reason.

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**The signed copy of this form is retained by the student, and at the end of the project passed on to the supervisor. A second copy of the consent form should be given to the participant for them to keep for their own reference.**

## *Appendix 3*

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## **Participant Information Sheet**

### **Study Title**

The Challenges and Policy Implications of Hosting Refugees in Western Region of The Gambia.

### **What is the purpose of this study?**

The aim of this study is to identify the key challenges of hosting and integrating refugees into Gambian communities.

### **Why have I been chosen?**

For the purpose of the study I need to recruit adult participants who are:

1. Refugees within Gambian communities
2. Members of Gambian communities who host refugees
3. Community Leaders
4. Representatives of the Gambian Government and Non-Governmental Organisations who have in depth knowledge of the refugee situation in Western region of The Gambia.
5. A mix of male and female participants

### **Do I have to take part?**

No. Participation is entirely voluntary. If you change your mind about taking part in the study you can withdraw at any point. If you decide to withdraw all your data will be destroyed and will not be used in the study. There are no consequences to deciding that you no longer wish to participate in the study.

If you do decide to take part, you will be required to give your full consent by signing a consent form (attached)

### **What will happen to me if I take part?**

Participation in this research may involve:

1. Informal focus groups: Within a group of 8-12 other people, discussions will be held on various themes such as education, food and shelter.
2. Narrative studies: Asking 2-3 people from each village to give detailed accounts of hosting refugees and integrating as a refugee within the community.
3. Face to face semi-structured interviews with primary researcher and translator. It can have any time scale ranging from 10 minutes up to one hour. Participation may involve recording of the interview, note taking or photography. This is at the discretion of the participant and all information will be completely confidential and anonymous.

All interviews will be conducted in Jola and your answers to my questions and discussion topics will be translated into English to enable me to understand.

### *Payments*

You will not need to pay to take part in this research nor will you be paid for taking part.

### **What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

There are no foreseeable disadvantages or risks of taking part in this study.

### **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

The benefit of this study is to achieve a greater understanding of hosting Casamance refugees within Gambian communities.

### **What if something goes wrong?**

Participation is entirely voluntary. If you change your mind about taking part in the study you can withdraw at any point. If you decide to withdraw all your data will be destroyed and will not be used in the study. There are no consequences to deciding that you no longer wish to participate in the study.

### **Will my taking part be kept confidential?**

All information will be kept strictly anonymous (by primary researcher) whilst data will be kept on a password-secured computer only accessible to the principal investigator. All participants will sign an informed consent form and know their rights for joining or opting out of the intended research. A full explanation of the research will be given prior to data collection. All participants will be over the age of 18.

### **What will happen to the results of the research study?**

This research is an academic study. I will use information received as part of my PhD thesis submitted in fulfilment of Coventry University's requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Your identity will not be disclosed in the finished work.

### **Who is organising the research?**

The research is organised by Charlotte Ray, who is a PhD student at Coventry University, United Kingdom.

### **Who has reviewed the study?**

The study has been reviewed by the Applied Research Committee of Coventry University prior to being approved.



### **Contact for further information**

For more information you can contact me on

+220 747 2652

[rayc@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:rayc@coventry.ac.uk)

Coventry University

Tel: +44 (0)2476 88 7688

### **Making a complaint**

If you are unhappy with any aspect of this research then you should contact the Principal Investigator:

Charlotte Ray  
Research Student – Department of GED  
George Eliot Building – GE 436  
Coventry University,  
Priory Street,  
Coventry, CV1 5FB.  
England  
UK

E-mail: [rayc@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:rayc@coventry.ac.uk)

If you are still have concerns and wish to make a formal complaint about the conduct of this research then please contact:

Prof Ian M Marshall  
Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research)  
Coventry University  
Priory Street  
Coventry, CV1 5FB  
England  
UK

Thank you for taking the time to read through this sheet and considering taking part in this study. You will be given a copy of the information sheet to keep.