

**FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE LOCAL ATTITUDES
TOWARDS REFUGEES IN KENYA //**

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

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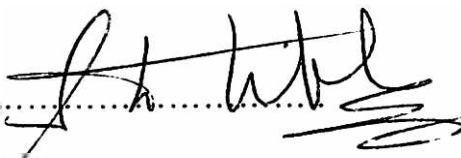
DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree award in any other University


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16/4/2004
DATE

This thesis has been submitted with my approval as the University supervisor


PROF. SIMIYU WANDIBBA

16/4/04
DATE

DEDICATION

In loving memory of my late father Dominic Ikanda

And

My late mother Euphemia Nafula

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on the factors that influence local attitudes towards refugees in Kenya. The study was carried out on two sites: Dadaab refugee camp in Garissa District in North Eastern Province, and the former Thika Reception Centre for Refugees in Central Province. Specifically, the study focused on economic and social factors that have been influencing the attitudes of Kenyans towards refugees.

This was a cross-sectional study that adopted both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. Three methods were used to collect the qualitative data: key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and simple observation. For quantitative data, a questionnaire was used at the two sites. Because of the nomadic nature of respondents at Dadaab, purposive sampling was used to identify the respondents. Data analysis for quantitative data was done using the statistical package for social scientists (SPSS), and the results presented using percentages and frequency tables. For the qualitative method, data was thematically coded to indicate consistency in information on various topics. Direct quotations have been used to present this information.

The findings suggest that the attitudes of Kenyans towards refugees are being negatively influenced by a combination of social and economic factors. On the economic side, competition for the meagre resources in the already impoverished semi-arid camp areas has created hostility between the locals and the refugees. The local hosting communities also seem to hate refugees because they perceive them as being more economically better off. This is due to the more business enterprises that are owned by refugees as compared to the locals, the free food and services that refugees are provided with, the more job opportunities that refugees are preferentially given by the agencies as opposed to the locals, and the assistance that is given to the refugees in the Kenyan camps by their relatives resettled in developed countries.

Socially, the locals' hatred for refugees seems to be emanating from the fact that refugees outnumber the local population at Dadaab by far. The large number of refugees has exceeded the carrying capacity of local resources and has also led to displacement of the locals from their prime grazing land. In addition, the protracted refugee situations at the Kenyan camps also result

in public fatigue about refugees. Lastly, the Kenya government and the locals at both Dadaab and the closed Thika Reception Centre hate refugees because they associate them with insecurity.

On the basis of the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- ❖ UNHCR and other agencies dealing with refugees should review their policies to include the locals in their assistance programmes. This will reduce the locals' hatred for refugees since the locals will start feeling that they are also benefiting from the refugee presence in their area.
- ❖ The Kenya Government should improve the infrastructure in the semi-arid regions where refugees are hosted. This will help to improve the economic position of the local inhabitants in these regions that will, in turn, make them self-reliant.
- ❖ The refugee population at Dadaab should be reduced to make it manageable by, for instance, resettling refugees in other areas with adequate resources. This will reduce the current environmental degradation that is being caused by the huge refugee numbers.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CARE	Carry American Relief Everywhere
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
DO	District Officer
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GTZ	<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft Fur Technische Zusammenarbeit</i>
HIV	Human Immune Virus
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRR	Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction (Model)
KANU	Kenya African National Union
K-Rep	Kenya Rural Enterprise Programme
LAP	Local Assistance Programme
MSF-B	<i>Medecines-Sans-Frontieres- Belgium</i>
NARC	National Rainbow Coalition
NGO	Non -Governmental Organization
OAU	Organization of African Unity
RAP	Refugee Assistance Programme
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendant
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Scientists
TERA	Turkana Environmental Resource Association
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Human existence has been characterized by wars and religious or political persecutions, coupled with natural disasters like droughts, famines, floods and earthquakes, that have all led to displacement of people in the history of men and women. Development programmes have also caused immense displacements of people around the world. It is estimated that globally, some 200 million people were involuntarily displaced during the last two decades as a result of development programmes (Cernea, 2000). Development programmes arise from the need to build infrastructure for new industries, irrigation, transportation highways, power generation, game parks and other development projects like hospitals and schools. These programmes improve many people's lives, provide employment and supply better services. However, the involuntary displacements caused by such programmes create major impositions on some population segments (ibid.). Most people who are displaced by development programmes fall in the category of the internally displaced and are not considered refugees. This study focused on displaced persons who cross international borders, popularly known as refugees.

According to the 1967 United Nations (UN) Protocol on Refugees, which was revised from the 1951 Refugee Convention on the refugee status, a refugee is defined as any person who, "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his or her nationality..."(Chida, 2002). Today, there is no greater symbol of the challenges that confront the United Nations in its efforts to promote peace, shared prosperity and mutual respect than the plight of the world's displaced people (Ghali, 1995 cited by Gathungu, 1998).

Wars and other forms of internal strifes are by far the major generators of refugees around the world. The Second World War alone led to the displacement of 1.5 million people around the world. It also prompted the formation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to care for the displaced people. The UN General Assembly Resolution 428 (V) established UNHCR on 14 December 1950, with a mandate to provide international protection for refugees under the auspices of the UN, and to seek permanent solutions to the refugee

problem (Chida, 2002). It was originally hoped that UNHCR would be dissolved upon finding a permanent solution to the massive refugee victims of World War II. This has, however, not been the case. In fact, the number of refugees has been rising relentlessly by each passing decade since World War II. By 1975, their number had reached 2.4 million, which increased further to 10.5 million by 1985 and, by 1995, the number of people receiving protection and assistance from UNHCR had soared to a staggering 27.4 million (UNHCR, 1995). UNHCR's involvement with refugees has, therefore, been getting more and more complex.

In Africa, the refugee crisis has become chronic, especially in the region South of the Sahara. The protracted civil wars in African countries like Angola, Uganda, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Rwanda, and Burundi, account for the massive number of African refugees. The refugee populations generated by these countries constitute over 54.2% of the refugee stock in Sub-Saharan Africa (Ayiemba and Oucho, 1995). Moreover, of all the officially registered refugees worldwide, 43.9% are on the African continent (UNHCR, 1995). Ethnic animosities and the drawing of the African boundaries by Europeans unaware of such hostilities have been cited as some of the reasons for the many civil wars in Africa (Gathungu, 1998). As the number of refugees continues to increase, international support for them has been declining rapidly. The refugee settlement has been such a sensitive issue in Africa that the refugees have been settled in semi-arid areas or near national parks or forest reserves, as in the case of the Rwandese in the former Zaire (Shepherd, 1995).

Kenya and Tanzania, vis-à-vis neighbouring countries, have enjoyed relative peace and stability since they attained their independence. As a result, there has been a huge influx of refugees from the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa who seek asylum in these two countries. Since the 1970s, Kenya has hosted refugees from the Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. The collapse of the military dictatorships of Siyad Barre (Somalia) and Mengistu Haile Mariam (Ethiopia) in 1991 also saw a tremendous influx of refugees into Kenya, compounded with those from Sudan (Montclos and Kangwanja, 2000). This was accompanied by a shift in government policy in favour of confining asylum seekers in camps in the semi-arid areas of Northern Kenya away from the main economic activities in urban centres (Montclos and Kangwanja, 2000). Of the 17 refugee camps that UNHCR had established in Kenya in the early 1990s (Ohta, 2002), only two-

Kakuma and Dadaab- are now operational. This is due to the government's restrictive refugee policy, coupled with the negative local attitudes towards refugees. Kakuma camp in Turkana District, Northwest Kenya, has Sudanese refugees as the majority, together with others from Ethiopia, Somalia, Rwanda, and Burundi. It was established in 1992 and has a population of more than 84,000 (Ohta, 2002). Dadaab has three camps: Ifo, Dagahaley and Hagadera, having a population of 130, 000 refugees (Kenya Government, 2002a). Established in 1991, it has about 97% of refugees from Somalia (UNHCR, 2001b), while the remaining are from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Uganda and Congo (Musau, 2001). Some 8,400 refugees reside in urban areas in various parts of Kenya and are granted refugee status by the government (UNHCR, 2001b).

This study was carried out on two research sites: the former Thika Reception Centre for refugees (which was closed in 1995), and the Dadaab complex, which is the largest operational refugee camp in Kenya today. When the Thika Reception Centre was closed, the place was converted into a rehabilitation centre for delinquent children and was renamed Thika Approved School. This name was changed to Thika Rehabilitation School in the year 2002. The Gikuyu ethnic group inhabits the area neighbouring the school although the Akamba are also present in significant numbers. Most of these people are squatters who have been staying in the area since Kenya's independence in 1963. Dadaab is inhabited by the Somali populations who have traditionally occupied the North Eastern Province as part of their travelling over large areas in search of water and grazing for their livestock. According to UNHCR (2001b), the political border between Kenya and Somalia has largely been irrelevant to the Somali nomads who occupy the North Eastern Province of Kenya. This porous border and the ethnic similarities between refugees and locals make it difficult to differentiate between them.

The Somali, who are traditionally nomadic and predominantly pastoral, are a patrilineal group who are divided into six clans that are further subdivided into sub-clans and lineages. The dominant clan around Dadaab is Ogadeni, but other clans such as Marahen and Harti are also present in small numbers. They speak Somali language though with minor differences in dialect. Primary data was obtained from these local groups. The study investigated how economic and social factors have influenced local attitudes towards refugees. As recent press reports have indicated, local politicians have been calling for the expulsion of refugees, meaning that political

and other factors have also influenced local attitudes towards refugees. This study, however, focused only on economic and social factors and their role in shaping local attitudes towards refugees as these seemed to be the major factors that determined and characterized the relationship between locals and refugees.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The most important reason that has been put forward to explain the closure of Thika and Mombasa camps has been the resentment of refugees by the local people due to competition in business between them. Kenyan traders find it difficult to compete with their Somali and Ethiopian rivals, as the latter are not subjected to taxation, leading to unfair competition. Such an intense business rivalry led powerful segments of the Mombasa business community to pressurize the government to close the camps (Verdirame, 1999; Crisp 2000a). In the only remaining camps of Kakuma and Dadaab, the same feeling persists. The ethnic affinities between the Kenyan Somali and Somali refugees have, for instance, not always been reflected in good commercial relations, leading instead to quarrels over business matters between them (Montclos and Kangwanja, 2000).

The potential for further conflict between the refugees and the local people is exacerbated by the fact that refugees outnumber by far the indigenous populations around the two camps and the refugee population is still growing. UNHCR has been seeking additional land for refugees in an area already dominated by what the locals perceive as foreigners, which also offers prime grazing land for the pastoral communities around the camps. Competition for meagre resources in the already impoverished semi-arid regions of the refugee camps has intensified the hostility of the local people towards refugees. Firewood has been depleted up to a radius of 5 kilometres around the camps (UNHCR, 2001a). Water acquisition has also been a source of conflicts between refugees and the local people, who need it both for their own use and for their livestock. Because of their low levels of education, the locals are outnumbered in the scarce job and business opportunities offered by UNHCR and its implementing partners. Also, due to poverty inherent around the camps, refugees lead higher standards of living than locals do, as they have access to better health, food and education. This has bred further hostilities towards refugees by locals.

The positive aspects of the refugee presence include their attraction of humanitarian aid that has led to improvement in infrastructure like roads, communication networks, health facilities, schools and sports facilities in the otherwise backward semi-arid environments. Local economies have also improved due to trade and creation of jobs by UNHCR in these regions, and the food rations by UNHCR have been beneficial to the locals. Some scholars have as a result argued that the net impact of refugees upon the regions they inhabit in Kenya is positive (Jamal, 2000; Crisp, 2002).

Therefore, in the quest to understand this intricate relationship between the local people and refugees, the study focused on two broad issues. First was the area of business and economic matters. According to UNHCR, Dadaab area has generally improved both in infrastructure and in economic status since the camps were established there. It is thought that the area and its people are still immensely benefiting from the refugee presence. The locals do not share this view and the majority of them are, in fact, eager to see refugees expelled from their vicinity. But some of them also admit, albeit reluctantly, that they have benefited from the refugee presence. This study, therefore, sought to establish why despite the obvious economic advantages of the refugee presence, there is such resentment for refugees by their hosts. Is it because the economic disadvantages of the refugee presence outweigh advantages or there are other economic factors that are influencing the negative attitudes that the local people have towards refugees? Could the same economic factors have played a part in the closure of Thika and the other camps in Kenya?

The second question had to do with the social aspects of the refugee presence. Here, the social relationship between refugees and locals was analyzed in detail. The study also attempted to establish the social positive and negative sides of the refugee presence and whether these had any role in influencing local attitudes towards refugees. Why were there animosities between the local Somali and Somali refugees despite their ethnic similarities? Was it because one group was socially benefiting more than the other or there were other social reasons besides this? Do ethnic similarities or dissimilarities affect the social relationship between refugees and locals and did this play any role in the closure of Thika and other camps in Kenya? This study, therefore, sought to establish the relationship, if any, between the factors that caused the closure of Thika

Reception Centre and those that have led to negative attitudes of locals towards refugees at Dadaab. Specifically, the study attempted to answer the following questions:

- To what extent has rivalry in business and related economic factors been responsible for influencing the local people's attitudes towards refugees?
- Have social factors such as the refugees' perceived better living conditions and their security and stability risks contributed to the attitudes the locals have towards refugees?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.3.1 Overall Objective

The general objective of this study was to determine the factors that shape the attitudes of Kenyans towards refugees in their vicinity.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

1. To investigate economic factors that have influenced the negative attitudes that Kenyans harbour towards refugees.
2. To find out the social factors that influence local attitudes towards refugees in Kenya.

1.4 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

According to *The Social Science Encyclopedia*, the reality of refugees and their forced flight has existed since Adam left Eden. This implies that the refugee problem is persistent and cannot be ignored. Africa is the hardest hit continent in the refugee menace. Kenya is among the African countries that are most burdened with the refugee crisis. It was, therefore, imperative to undertake a study that, for practical reasons, may help improve the relationship between Kenyan hosting communities and the refugees. This is in line with UNHCR's advocacy call for the sensitization of the local population to the plight of refugees.

This study was also intended to provide useful insights into theory formulation, especially in relation to the fear and dislike that many countries around the world seem to harbour towards refugees. In addition, the findings that the study has generated should be useful to both UNHCR and the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) charged with helping refugees in the sense that they may positively influence refugee policy. This is because policies and public opinion seem to be drifting further away from the humanitarian responsibility of those forced to flee (Crisp,

2000b). Since so many refugee camps have been closed in Kenya, a study of this nature was warranted in an attempt to establish the reasons behind the closures.

1.5 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

This study is anthropological in nature and content, and was mainly structured around the relationship between the refugees and the Kenyan communities residing around the refugee camps. Because of its involvement with refugees, there has been an obvious integration of the study into UNHCR's issues. But contrary to what one would expect from a study related to UNHCR, the study focused mainly on the local hosting communities and had little to do with the refugees themselves. In fact, only six refugee leaders were interviewed as key informants as opposed to the over 200 local respondents that were interviewed for the whole study. There was, therefore, no attempt to push the study into domains such as those concerned with UNHCR's roles and objectives. However, discussions were held with the officials of both UNHCR and its implementing partners like CARE in a bid to understand the nature of the relationship between these bodies and the locals at the camps, which are in their charge.

It was neither feasible nor practical to empirically study all the 15 closed camps and the two current operational camps in Kenya due to lack of time and money. As a result, two camps- one closed and the other open, were studied, to come up with the findings that have been used in making generalizations about the local Kenyans' attitudes towards the refugees.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The problem of human displacement in the world is large, and possibly growing in scale. In Africa, the scale of human movement has been awesome. A World Bank study estimated in 1990 that the African continent contains some 35 million migrants- fully half of the world's total (Russel et al. 1990, cited by Cernea, 1997). Warfare, famine, and natural ecological distresses have all played their part in forcing African populations to abandon their homes. Displacement has also been caused by development projects like dams. Kenya has a sizeable internally displaced population, caused mainly by ethnic clashes over disputed land. Beginning in 1991, ethnic violence produced 300,000 internally displaced people, with 1500 people losing their lives (Veney, 1996). Development projects like the Kiambere and Sondu-Miriu hydropower projects also caused massive displacements and reduced production capacity of the people involved. Currently, however, Africa's most important forced displacements are those not caused by development programmes, but those triggered by social and political causes such as civil wars, ethnic, racial and/or religious persecutions, or by natural causes such as droughts and famines (Cernea, 1997).

2.1.1 THE NATURE AND MAGNITUDE OF AFRICA'S REFUGEE PROBLEM

Africa produces a disproportionate number of the world's refugees in relation to its overall population and is home to nine of the twenty 'top-producing' countries around the world (Crisp, 2000b). While Africans constitute only 12% of the global population, 3.2 million of the world's 11.5 million refugees and 9.5 million of the world's 20 million internally displaced persons are to be found in Africa (ibid.).

According to Okoth-Obbo (1995), armed conflict and civil strife are the principal causes of refugee flows in Africa. Other causes of refugee flows in Africa include ethnic intolerance, abuse of human rights, monopolization of political and economic power, and refusal to respect democracy (Rutinwa, 1999). There are four major refugee-generating regions in Africa: the Horn of Africa, Southern Africa, the Great Lakes Region, and West Africa (ibid.). Somali refugees (who constitute 97% of the refugee population at the study's site of Dadaab) are the third major

group of refugees in the East and Horn of Africa region and the fourth greatest in number among African refugees (Chida 2002). With their approximate figure of 440,000, about 170,000 are hosted in Kenya at Dadaab and Kakuma camps. The rest are hosted in other countries such as Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Tanzania (ibid.).

2.1.2 TRENDS IN PERCEPTIONS OF HOSTS TOWARDS REFUGEES

From the 1960s to the 1980s, Africa earned a largely well-deserved reputation as a continent that treated refugees in a relatively generous manner (Crisp, 2000b). The newly independent states of Africa readily acceded to the main international instruments, and in 1969 established a regional refugee convention, which introduced a more inclusive definition of the refugee concept than the 1951 UN Refugee Convention (ibid.). Through the “open door policy” (Rutinwa, 1999:1), where governments allowed large numbers of refugees to enter and remain on their territory, many refugees enjoyed reasonably secure living conditions and were able to benefit from a range of legal, social and economic rights (Crisp, 2000b). In some states, refugees were allowed to settle permanently and to become naturalized citizens. In Tanzania, for instance, some 36,000 refugees were offered land and naturalization in 1983 (Rutinwa, 1999). Uganda also offered refugees full access to social welfare, education system as well as jobs and land to farm (Kaiser, 2000). Kenya too accepted refugees from all parts of the continent, including the victims of the apartheid regime from South Africa (Crisp, 2000b). The Thika camp, located just outside Nairobi, served as a reception centre for asylum seekers until its closure in 1995 (Verdirame, 2000). In fact, the period 1960s to 1980s has been labelled “the golden age of asylum in Africa” (Rutinwa, 1999:4).

These conditions no longer prevail. Indeed, refugee protection principles are now being challenged and undermined. Rutinwa (1999) observes that African states now “seem to prefer repatriation at the earliest opportunity, regardless of the situation in the countries of origin” (p.1). According to Crisp (2000b) and Rutinwa (1999), the support for refugees has diminished because of various reasons. From the early 1960s to the late 1970s, many of Africa’s refugees were the products of independent struggles. Ideologies of Pan-Africanism and anti-colonialism prevalent at this time played an important role in upholding the continent’s “tradition of hospitality” (Crisp, 2000b: 3).

There was also relative prosperity at that time which enabled African countries to shoulder the economic burden imposed by the presence of refugees from neighbouring states. International aid was non-restricted unlike now where the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank are imposing structural measures. The sheer increase in refugee numbers has also contributed to the dismantling of the “tradition of hospitality”. With virtually all of today’s refugees coming from independent African countries, the justification for granting them asylum is entirely absent in the eyes of the locals. Refugees are no longer perceived in political terms. In addition, industrialized states supposed to set a good example took the lead in eroding measures on the refugees’ legal status. This set a dangerous precedence for Africa and other continents. Also, now, unlike the 1960s or 1970s, many African countries are in multi-party democracies and are increasingly accountable to public opinion. The adverse environmental impact of refugee presence has also contributed to the negative change in attitude of African governments. Lastly, granting asylum creates friction between the refugees’ countries of origin and host states. The relationship between the new regime in Rwanda after the genocide and the then Zaire which had hosted Rwandese refugees, including those suspected of having participated in the genocide, for instance, resulted in the overthrow of the Mobutu regime (Rutinwa, 1999).

It is thus fair to conclude that the institution of asylum is on the decline in Africa. Yet, the need for it is great, if not greater than it was during the “open door” era (Rutinwa, 1999:21). Indeed, tension and conflict between refugees and local residents would appear to be on the rise (Crisp, 2002). Some commentators like Frelick (1997) have, in fact, argued that it is now not appropriate to use the word ‘asylum’ to describe the situation of the refugees. Instead the word ‘pseudo-asylum’ should be adopted (cited in Rutinwa, 1999).

2.1.3 REFUGEE SITUATION IN KENYA

In Kenya, refugees mainly live in two areas: Dadaab in Garissa District in North Eastern Kenya, about 75 kilometres from the Somali border; and Kakuma in Turkana, some 130 kilometres from the Kenya- Sudan border (UNHCR, 2001b). In the early 1990s, UNHCR had established 17 refugee camps in Kenya but most have now been closed, leaving Dadaab and Kakuma as the only refugee camps. Both camps are located in semi-arid areas that are populated by pastoral nomads with whom refugees have to share the meagre natural resources available. Some scholars

like Ohta (2002) have hypothesized that the Kenyan government selected the dry and remote areas for refugee camps because it wanted to isolate the problematic refugee camps away from densely populated areas. In addition, it is easier to monitor the refugees' movement in these areas. For security reasons, including the need to separate rival groups, both camps host refugees of different nationalities. As a result, Somalis dominate Dadaab while the Sudanese mainly inhabit Kakuma.

While Kenya has signed UN protocols on refugees and granting of asylum, the presence of a large number of Somali refugees in Kenya is generally not viewed as very desirable, and UNHCR has several times had to intercede with the government to prevent Kenya making the decision to oust the refugees from Kenyan soil (UNHCR, 2001b). Kangwanja (1999) has argued that "Kenya's long-standing apprehension with regard to large refugee influx is the result of several factors: a chronic shortage of arable land, which comprises only three per cent of the country's territory; a particular fear of ethnic Somalis, who, in the 1960s fought for the North-East of the country to be incorporated into a greater Somali state; and a more general concern that the arrival of refugees will lead to the spread of firearms, increased levels of crime and social unrest" (quoted in UNHCR, 2001b: 58). The right to seek asylum and the existence of a category of persons to whom protection is due, and for whom the international community should find solutions, must continue to be recognized (UNHCR, 2001a). In Kenya, local attitudes towards refugees are mostly influenced by economic and social factors.

2.1.4 ECONOMIC FACTORS

Business competition seems to have intensified hatred for refugees by locals. In Dadaab, refugees own almost all the private means of transportation in the area (UNHCR 2001a). Somali and Ethiopian refugees similarly dominate in business at Kakuma (Crisp, 2000a). The NGOs also hire more refugees than locals in both camps, and the intense competition for business opportunities and the few available jobs in marginal areas where refugee camps are located has bred hostility towards refugees by locals (Montclos and Kangwanja, 2000). The Kenya coastal camps' closure was, in fact, attributed to the business competition between the locals and refugees who had a tax free status (Crisp, 2000a; Verdirame, 1999).

As a matter of policy, UNHCR does not buy or rent land, which the country of asylum is expected to provide (UNHCR, 2001b). Natural resources are also affected by refugee presence, who destroy forests for construction and firewood needs and compete with the local population for other resources like natural water sources. In Kenya, such effects are immense owing to the large sizes of Kakuma and Dadaab camps, which have a population of 84,000 and 130,000, respectively. UNHCR recommends smaller camps of below 20,000 people (Ohta, 2002) to minimize on environmental impacts of refugee presence. Both the local people and the government perceive refugees in Kenya as a burden because of their effect on existing local resources and services and their environmental impact (Verdirame, 1999).

In Kenya, where the land issue is sensitive, the government opted to settle refugees in semi-arid areas in North and Eastern Kenya (Montclos and Kangwanja, 2000). Pastoral nomads, the Turkana and the Somali, occupy the semi-arid environments around the camps, and the refugees have to share with them the meagre natural resources available (UNHCR, 2001a). The local communities are opposed to the presence of the refugees' livestock because of the competition for water and grazing land (Verdirame, 1999). The refugees are formally prohibited from keeping livestock at the two camps but they do keep them. Kenyan police and administration officers turn a blind eye to this practice (Ohta, 2002). At Dadaab, conflicts arising from grazing land are common because some refugees own more goats than the locals and some even own cattle and camels. And at Kakuma, the Turkana bearing arms steal livestock from refugees, telling them blatantly that the animals do not belong to them since their refugee status prohibits them from keeping animals (Crisp, 2000a). The potential for further clashes is mounting due to the steady expansion of refugee camps in prime grazing lands of the pastoralists (ibid.).

Firewood has been another source of conflict at Kakuma and Dadaab where refugees have depleted it up to a radius of 5 kilometres (UNHCR, 2001a). Kakuma camp, for instance, requires 70 metric tons of firewood every month (*East African Standard*, 15th July 2002). Conflicts commonly occur over firewood between UNHCR, the locals and the refugees. Recently, two locals at Kakuma were shot dead in a row pitting UNHCR against the Turkana Environmental and Resource Association (TERA) over firewood (ibid). Politicians and young elites of the Turkana community formed this organization to enable them acquire all tendering and bidding of

firewood that is supplied to the camp (Ohta, 2002). At Dadaab, the diminishing availability of firewood and other resources has also resulted in tensions between the local Somali and the Somali refugees. In an effort to reduce these conflicts, UNHCR started a firewood project at the camps (UNHCR, 2001b).

The Somali at Dadaab mainly rely on livestock for their livelihood. Persistent droughts that have led to loss of livestock, coupled with social and economic neglect of the region by the government of Kenya, have left the inhabitants of Dadaab economically vulnerable (UNHCR, 2001b). As a result, many view refugees as being better off economically. This has prompted some locals to register as refugees in the three camps at Dadaab (UNHCR, 2001a). The border context of violence and insecurity around Dadaab area has its roots in a history of political struggles. The Kenyan government labelled the Kenyan Somali as "bandits" at the time of independence and confiscated most of their livestock (UNHCR, 2001b). The government also imposed restrictions on commerce and the nomadic movement of these people, further weakening them economically. Conflicts over resources between a number of local Ogadeni clans were a feature of the area prior to the arrival of the refugees in the 1990s (ibid.). The potential for violent conflict was increased upon the arrival of members of a great number of other clans and sub-clans who increased the competition for the available meagre natural resources (UNHCR 2001b).

Despite the many negative economic aspects of the refugee presence, economic advantages of their presence also exist. Local businessmen benefit from UNHCR's contracts to supply firewood and other services to refugee camps. The Kenya government charges a cess tax on these items (UNHCR, 2001 b). Infrastructure in form of roads, trading centres and schools, has developed in remote areas due to the refugee presence (Jamal, 2000). Also, employment and commercial opportunities are available to the locals due to the presence of UNHCR and its implementing partners. Lastly, locals who were formerly nomads have learned from refugees about petty trading and small- scale business activities (Montclos and Kagwanja, 2000; UNHCR, 2001b). According to UNHCR (2001b), the benefits accruing from the refugee presence outweigh the costs to the local population. However, given the generalized poverty of Dadaab and Kakuma areas, local Kenyans may continue to feel that they are worse off than the refugees.

2.1.5 SOCIAL FACTORS

Poverty, both of the refugees and the local population, has been the main cause of insecurity affecting the refugee areas. In the two Kenyan refugee camps, refugees are said to lead a higher standard of living than locals due to the poverty in these regions. Some Turkana are even said to take up prostitution out of necessity, whereas it is usually refugees who are reckoned as sex workers (Montclos and Kangwanja, 2000). In addition, Somali and Ethiopian refugees employ Turkana children as domestic servants. This has made locals resent refugees whom they perceive as “foreigners” but who are better off economically (ibid.). In the three refugee camps at Dadaab, the refugees with their guaranteed food rations and other assistance are also viewed as being socially better off than some local people living at barest subsistence levels (UNHCR, 2001a). This situation has created a range of incentives for local Kenyans to register as refugees in the Dadaab camps (ibid.). The local populations resent refugees because they feel refugees receive preferential treatment from the international community (Crisp, 2000a).

In both Kakuma and Dadaab, refugees easily outnumber the indigenous populations. In Kakuma, Kenyan citizens represent well under a half the total population (Crisp, 2000a). At the time when the refugee camps were set up near Dadaab, the local established population in the community was thought to be about only 10,000 people (UNHCR, 2001b). The local population at Dadaab is presently thought to be merely about one-tenth of the refugee population (ibid.). The sheer number of refugees has therefore made them the majority in areas where refugee camps are located. Naturally, the local people must feel threatened by these huge refugee numbers, especially when they perceive the refugees to be leading better social lives than they themselves (UNHCR, 2001b). Social conflicts between the refugees and locals have therefore become inevitable (Crisp, 2001a). This seems to be a normal trend because historically, when large numbers of refugees are present, the populations may show great hostility towards them (UNHCR 2001b).

The sudden presence of large numbers of people in the early 1990s in both Kakuma and Dadaab, which were hitherto sparsely populated, affected the former social lifestyles and interactions and reduced the nomadic social space. The locals, whose nomadic lifestyle allowed free movement could no more roam around, at least not in the camps where refugees were hosted. This,

compounded with the protracted refugee situation in Kenya where refugees have been staying for over 10 years, has increased social tensions between refugees and locals. Refugees can be regarded as being in a protracted situation when they have lived in exile for more than five years, and when they still have no immediate prospect of finding a durable solution to their plight by means of local integration, voluntary repatriation, or resettlement (Crisp, 2002). In Kenya, this situation has resulted in what some leaders in North Eastern Province call “public fatigue about refugees” (*Daily Nation*, 24 June 2002:5). The local people had not invited refugees in the first place and, to worsen the situation, the refugees’ return to their countries of origin seems not to be forthcoming. This has made the locals resent them and, according to the North Eastern Provincial Commissioner, “there is a general feeling that they (refugees) have been here too long” (ibid.).

There is also a general consensus by locals that social stability is being undermined by the presence of refugees (Rutinwa, 1999). In the Dadaab Refugee Camp, the Ogadeni inter-clan rivalries that had been in existence before the refugees came, were increased upon the arrival of other clans and sub-clans, who brought to the area and the refugee camps a history of clan rivalries from Somalia (UNHCR, 2001b). Small arms and automatic weapons, militia groups as well as banditry spill over from across the Kenya- Somali border (ibid.). If two clans fight in Somalia or elsewhere in Kenya, tension will build up between members of the same clans in refugee camps and even the locals (UNHCR, 2001b). It has been suggested that bandits outnumber the Kenyan police in Dadaab and win in most skirmishes with the police (ibid.). The establishment of Kakuma and Dadaab camps, therefore, appears to have led to a geographical concentration of violence. There are simply more items to steal, more people to rob, and more women to rape in and around the camps. This is compounded by abductions and fighting between refugees and members of the local population (Crisp, 2000a). Perhaps this is why the government of Kenya has had a strong determination to resist the integration of refugees in the social life of the country, apart from imposing restrictions on their movement (UNHCR, 2001b). It must, however, also be noted that there has been obvious prejudice (racial and ethnic) within dominant Kenyan populations against the minority Kenyan citizens of Somali origin and Somali refugees (ibid.).

The social positive aspects of refugee presence include establishment of social facilities like playgrounds, availability of social services like health care and the presence of learning facilities due to humanitarian aid by UNHCR (Jamal, 2000). Many of these facilities and services are, however, dominated by refugees and this advantage has therefore not been significant in reducing hostilities that locals have towards refugees.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was based on the impoverishment risks and reconstruction (IRR) model for resettling displaced populations, which is illustrated in the works of the anthropologist Michael M. Cernea (2000). The central thrust of this model is that in the absence of countervailing remedial measures, impoverishment is intrinsic in forced displacement (Kibreab, 2002). According to this perspective, the very definition of the concept of risk should prompt us to think of what is likely to happen (Cernea, 2002). This model highlights risks specificity and multidimensionality. In the practice of resettlement, Cernea (2002) argues that most resettlers end up worse off and impoverished, despite compensation being paid to them in cash or in kind. This is because, by definition, compensation only returns to the displaced people something that was taken away from them and does not provide them with anything above what they had before. The model explains what happens during massive forced displacements and provides a tool for guiding policy, planning and implementation of development programmes, in order to counteract the adverse effects of forced displacements. Because of commonalities between refugee and resettlement situations, this resettlement framework was applied to this study.

The impoverishment risks and reconstruction model has three fundamental concepts: risks, impoverishment and reconstruction, which Cernea (2000) describes as its “building blocks” (p. 29). Giddens (1990) uses the sociological concept of risk to indicate the possibility that a certain course of action will trigger future injurious effects such as losses and destructions (cited in Cernea 2000). An example of such an action is a war that causes people to flee to other countries where they become refugees. The concept of risk is posited as a counter-concept to security (Luhman, 1993, cited by Cernea, 2000): The higher the risks, the lower the security of displaced populations. The modelling of displacement risks results from factors such as landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, food insecurity, increased morbidity, loss of access to common property resources and community disarticulation (ibid.). Most refugees in the

Kenyan refugee camps are faced with all these problems, which have determined the way they are treated and perceived by the locals.

Attempts at developing frameworks in refugee studies started with earlier works such as Emmanuel Marx's. Marx (1990) developed a model that was grounded in the sociological theory of networks, which was centred on "the social world of refugees" (cited by Cernea, 2000:29). Cernea's model was built on models such as Marx's as well as others dealing with voluntary and involuntary displacements. People displaced by development projects and refugees who flee violence are both involuntarily resettled. These two groups are the largest subsets of displaced populations worldwide (ibid.).

The framework can be employed in general policy formulation as well as in informing all the social actors in resettlement the best way to go about it (Cernea, 2000). To avoid the extreme negative attitudes that the Kenyan hosting communities have towards refugees, it would have been better if the locals were consulted first before the refugees were resettled. This would ensure that both hosts and refugees are not adversely affected in the resettlement process.

2.2.1 Relevance of the Model to the Study

The impoverishment risks and reconstruction model is of relevance to this study because it is risky to be a refugee. Involuntary settlers like refugees are confronted with social and economic problems. The displaced refugees both lose natural and man-made capital such as land, jobs and homes. Refugees lose their group's cultural space when they enter into another country. They simultaneously interfere with their hosts' social and cultural spaces, which affects the locals' attitudes towards them.

The IRR model's relevance to this study is even more appropriate when applied to the local hosting communities. Cernea's model appears to be perfectly capturing the current state of affairs at Dadaab. Despite the agencies' widely held belief that the refugee presence has brought to the camp areas more benefits than harm, the local- refugee relationship has, over the years, become more and more strained. In fact, more than a half of the respondents opined that the refugee presence at Dadaab has caused more harm than good. It, therefore, appears that the perceived refugee benefits are inadequately compensating the locals for the displacement they

have undergone since the refugees were settled in their area, which appears to have made them more impoverished than their previous status. The displacement of locals by refugees has been on various fronts. The unprecedented massive refugee number that is about ten times the local population has caused the first form of displacement. Locals have been forced to move from their former lands in the face of the ever-increasing refugee settlements. The places currently occupied by refugee camps were previously serving the locals as grazing and residential areas. Refugee presence has, therefore, caused displacement of the locals from their former homes and grazing fields, which has not been adequately compensated for. In fact, the refugee population has kept on expanding since refugees were first settled in Dadaab in 1991. With this steady increase in refugee population, there has been a corresponding continuous expansion of refugee shelters in the areas occupied or used as grazing grounds by the locals. This has led to a slow but unrelenting displacement process at Dadaab.

The GTZ greenbelt project is also causing a significant displacement process of locals from their grazing land. Under this project, large tracts of land have been fenced to allow regeneration of the forests that have been destroyed by both refugees and locals due to construction and firewood needs. Several refugees employed by GTZ guard these areas (popularly known as greenbelts) to keep off intruders (mostly locals). At the same time, the refugees guarding such areas do graze their animals while doing so, and more than a half of the respondents felt this was a case of double standards, where only locals are being prohibited from using their land. Some locals have, in fact, interpreted the whole GTZ project as a ploy to let refugees take over their land. Therefore, although this idea was noble, it has not been as appealing to the locals as it might have been intended because many who are unwilling to venture deep into the forest to graze their livestock have had to cut down on the number of their animals to make it manageable. Consequently, this sort of displacement occurring due to conservation has impoverished some locals who rely mainly on livestock for their livelihood. Loss of natural resources due to refugee presence has, therefore, engendered both social conflicts (between refugees and locals) and furthered environmental degradation. This has contributed to the locals' negative attitudes towards refugees at Dadaab.

The locals at Dadaab are in addition, being displaced from their traditional economic mode of pastoralism, which has been the only form of earning a livelihood for the better parts of their lives. Both the Kenya Government and the NGOs dealing with refugees are encouraging this displacement. The government's branding of the Somali as bandits (UNHCR, 2001) and the reality of the *shifita* (banditry) menace in the North Eastern region of Kenya has led to harassment of many innocent herders who are mistaken for *shiftas*. The Kenyan security personnel have also been accusing pastoralists of being in possession of illegal arms. These people bear arms out of necessity, as they have to defend their animals in the forests against the real *shiftas* and the other hostile groups. For a long time, they stuck to pastoralism perhaps for lack of an alternative economic mode. With the coming of refugees and the agencies dealing with them, however, other options became available to them, as they could now do business or get employed to avoid being branded as *shiftas*. This has relegated pastoralism to being subordinate to other economic means that are considered legal both by the government and the agencies dealing with refugees.

These alternative economic means are not necessarily better than pastoralism because the locals have yet to adapt to them. Many locals are, for instance, not employed by the agencies because of their low educational standards. Compared to refugees, many are also poor in business because they are still learning about it. The locals also have a cultural attachment to livestock and many still prefer to concentrate more on it as compared to the newer economic modes like business. The attachment to livestock has, in fact, made some locals either remain pastoralists or else resort to dual economic activities such as engaging in business or wage employment alongside pastoralism. Consequently, the locals at Dadaab appear to be in a dilemma as to whether they should forget pastoralism and look for job opportunities or embrace petty trade in items such as *miraa* (leaves of a certain plant that are widely used by Somali men as a mild stimulant) or continue practising nomadism and forego the benefits that have been brought by the refugee presence such as education and job opportunities from the agencies. The new economic modes seem to be making locals poorer than before because refugees and other Kenyans from outside Dadaab are better equipped for the available jobs and business opportunities.

Many scholars have argued that the refugee presence in Kenya has more benefits than harm (see for example Jamal, 2000; Crisp, 2002). The argument put forward to support their suppositions is that refugee camp areas were not developed prior to refugee settlement and that agencies have attracted trade and employment opportunities which have even attracted other Kenyans from outside these areas. But the hosting communities in Kenya, it would seem, are getting little compensation in the form of job or business opportunities that have been introduced at Dadaab by the refugee presence. This, in our view, has impoverished rather than benefited the locals, and is perhaps the single most important reason for the current local negative attitudes towards refugees. The argument that the net impact of refugees upon the areas they inhabit in Kenya is positive seems plausible enough, but fails to consider the reasons for the obvious strained relationships between refugees and their hosts. The scholars propounding these arguments never, in our view, highlight the specific risks that hosts are exposed to due to hosting refugees and that is why it is practical to apply the IRR model even to the locals. This is because the risks that the locals are exposed to due to hosting refugees play an instrumental role in influencing the local attitudes towards refugees. Our contention is that before resettling refugees, governments should be consulting their people first. If locals are educated on the humanitarian importance and responsibility of hosting refugees, they might countenance the refugee stay based on their consent and would therefore have a friendlier attitude towards them. The locals should not be perceived as being poor beneficiaries of refugee presence, because they are actually not benefiting as much as it is being widely perceived in the UNHCR circles.

2.3 ASSUMPTIONS

1. Competition in business and related economic factors has a negative influence on the attitudes of Kenyans towards refugees.
2. Social factors such as the security threat posed by refugees and their perceived better living standards shape the Kenyan attitudes towards refugees.

2.4 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

1. Attitudes

The term “Attitudes” as used in this study represents the opinions and feelings that the local people in Kenya have formed about the refugees and their continued presence in their

immediate vicinity. More often than not, the Kenyan attitudes towards refugees have in recent times been negative.

2. Local People (or Locals)

As used in this study, the words “Local people” or “locals” refer to the Kenyans who were living around the closed refugee camps or who now reside around the open camps in Kenya, who have to be differentiated from the refugees. In this case they are the Agikuyu at Thika and the Somali in Dadaab. It thus follows that the words “local attitudes” refers to the opinions and feelings that these locals hold towards refugees whom they were hosting or who they are currently hosting.

3. Economic Factors

In this study, “Economic factors” represent the job and business opportunities available at the Kenyan closed or open refugee camps, in addition to the natural resources like land, water and firewood that are competed for by both refugees and the locals at the semi-arid refugee camp areas.

4. Social factors

These include the security threat posed by the refugee presence, the protracted refugee situation in Kenya, the higher refugee population as opposed to the local Kenyan population at the refugee camps and the perceived better living standards of refugees as compared to the locals.

5. Perception

The way people regard something and have belief about what it is like. This term is closely related to the word “attitudes” and the two terms are interchangeably used in this study.

6. *Shifita*

A word commonly used in Kenyan circles to describe banditry- related activities, especially those that occur in the North Eastern Province of Kenya.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This study focused on two research sites: Dadaab in Garissa, North Eastern Kenya, and Thika in Central Province of Kenya. Primary data was collected from the local people residing around the two research sites. The purpose of choosing an open and a closed refugee camp as study areas was to come up with a comparison in attitudes at the two camps and also to assess the refugee status at an actual and a closed camp. Analysis of the data collected by the study has provided useful insights into both the reasons behind the closure of the many refugee camps in Kenya and the causes for current negative attitudes of locals towards refugees.

3.1.1 DADAAB RESEARCH SITE

Garissa is among the four districts that form North Eastern Province. The district borders Isiolo District to the northwest, Wajir to the north, Tana River to the west, the Republic of Somalia to the east, and the newly created Ijara District to the south (Kenya Government, 2002a). Garissa lies approximately between latitudes 0° 58" North and 1° 30" South, and longitudes 38° 34" East and 41° 05" West. It covers an area of 33,620 square kilometres and is administratively divided into 11 divisions, 42 locations, and 60 sub-locations. The divisions include Benane, Dadaab, Javajilla, Shantaabak, Balambala, Liboi, Modogashe, Sankuri, Bura, Danyere, and Central. Dadaab division, which is the area of this study, is 3,536 square kilometres and is the second largest division after Bura (ibid.).

3.1.1.1 Topography, Soils and Climate

Garissa is low lying and has an altitude that ranges from 70 metres to 400 metres above sea level. River Tana, which is the only permanent river in the district, has tremendous influence on climate, settlement patterns and economic activities of the district. Most settlements are found along the river. Mountains, hills or valleys are absent in Garissa. Except for some unreliable torrential rains that occur in March to April and October to December, the district is normally hot and dry throughout the year. The mean rainfall ranges between 23.6 mm and 34.2mm from 1991 to 1995. Given the arid nature of the district and its low altitude, the district's temperatures are generally high most of the year, and range between 20°C and 38° C (Kenya Government, 2002a).

3.1.1.2 Soils and Landuse

The district is semi-arid with soils ranging from sandstones, dark clays in some patches to alluvial soils along the River Tana. Frequent droughts and unreliable rains do not favour the growth of pasture for livestock and agricultural activities. The inhabitants are therefore nomadic pastoralists, who constantly move with their animals in search of water and pastures. Garissa District has 385,500 hectares of forests, which provide firewood and construction materials to both refugees and locals. Due to heavy reliance on the forests by refugees and locals, more than 113,140 hectares of land has been exposed to soil erosion (Kenya Government, 2002a).

3.1.1.3 Population Size and Composition

According to the 1999 census, the district had 392,510 persons, with a total number of 48,141 households (Kenya Government, 2001). The number of males is higher than that of females, that is 206,117 and 186,393, respectively. Age group 0-9 constitutes 32 per cent of the district's population while age group 10-19 constitutes 27 per cent. The population therefore comprises more young than old people (ibid.).

3.1.2 THIKA RESEARCH SITE

Thika District is one of the 7 districts that form Central Province. It is located in the southern parts of Central Province. It borders Nairobi City to the south, Kiambu District to the west, Maragwa District to the north and Machakos District to the east. It lies between latitudes 3° 53" and 1° 45" south of the Equator and longitudes 36° 35" and 37° 25" east. Thika district was carved out of Kiambu and Murang'a Districts in 1994. It covers an area of 1960.2 square kilometres, and is subdivided into six administrative divisions: Thika Municipality, Gatanga, Kakuzi, Ruiru, Gatundu and Kamwangi. Ruiru division, with 526.6 square kilometers, is the largest (Kenya Government, 2002b).

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3.1.2.1 Topography, Soils and Climate

The district has a diverse topography, with an altitude that ranges from 1,060 metres to 3,550 metres above sea level. The highland forms the water catchment and watersheds of most of the rivers, which drain to the lowland; and the terrain is dissected, creating a menace of landslides and gully erosion. All the rivers flow from the Nyandarua Ranges to the west and flow towards the southeast to join River Tana. The prevailing climatic conditions in the district are determined

by altitude. The annual rainfall in the district varies from one place to another, which is from 500 mm in the low lands to 2500 mm in the highlands. The district generally experiences low temperatures, with a mean annual temperature of about 20^o C (Kenya Government, 2002b).

3.1.2.2 Soils and Landuse

The wide variation in altitude has produced a variety of soil types in the district. Rich agricultural soils derived from volcanic activity are found in the higher altitudes. The slopes of the Nyandaruas and the higher altitudes are particularly suitable for tea growing and forestry activities. On the other hand, the lowland areas in the eastern part of the district are generally semi-arid and receive low rainfall. These cover Kakuzi, Thika Municipality and Ruiru divisions and are suitable for beef cattle rearing as well as irrigation, coffee and pineapple production. Maize, sisal, beans and potatoes are also grown in the upper midlands while barley is grown in lower areas (Kenya Government, 2002b).

3.1.2.3 Population Size and Composition

In 1999, the population of Thika district was 645,713 people (Kenya Government, 2001). The number of males is slightly higher than that of females- 323, 479 and 322,234, respectively. With a growth rate of 2.8 percent, this population was expected to have increased to 701,664 by the year 2002 (Kenya Government, 2002b). About 66.2 percent of the population in the district is aged below 25 years. This high population has created pressure on available land, as average density is 358 persons per square kilometre. Population pressure and the agricultural productivity of Thika might have contributed to the pressure that saw refugees being vacated from this area in 1995.

3.2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH SITES

The government has largely ignored Dadaab since independence in infrastructural development due to a combination of political and economic factors. It is not economically productive, for instance, due to semi-arid conditions and it is remotely located-114 kilometres away from Garissa town. Dadaab and Javajilla Divisions accommodate refugees in three camps with a population of 130,000 people, forming a temporary settlement within a radius of 13 kilometres from Dadaab market (Kenya Government, 2002a). The refugee population comprises 35% of the

district total and has had a negative impact on the environment and the available resources (ibid.). The infrastructural development being witnessed now is largely due to UNHCR's efforts. The only natural resources available are forests, which are being depleted due to refugee presence, and sand that is mined for construction. Thika is a high agriculturally productive area producing both cash and food crops. Besides undertaking agricultural activities, Thika is one of the leading industrial districts in Kenya (Kenya Government, 2002b). It has also got better infrastructure as compared to Dadaab due to its agricultural and industrial importance. Forests also contribute to its importance economically. The importance of Thika as an agricultural and industrial area might have played an important role in relocating refugees from this area to the least developed semi-arid areas in Dadaab and Kakuma.

3.3 STUDY DESIGN

This was a cross-sectional study that was designed to collect primary data on the local people's attitudes towards refugees. Two research sites were considered: Dadaab, which is currently the largest in refugee population in Kenya and the closed Thika Reception Centre. The aim of the study was to generate both qualitative and quantitative data. This is because human behaviour is explained best using qualitative research, but quantitative data on various issues such as respondent's economic status and their basic demographic characteristics were also collected. The findings have been used to make generalizations on the Kenyan attitudes towards refugees.

3.3.1 Study Population and Unit of Analysis

The local people who were involved in the study at the closed Thika Reception Centre were those who had interacted with refugees in the past. The population/universe, therefore, consisted of the elderly people who could recollect the events before the closure of the Centre. At Dadaab, the research subjects included the local people around the three camps of Ifo, Hagadera, and Dagahaley, together with the refugee leaders (sectional and block leaders). The population, therefore, consisted of the local people residing around the Dadaab Refugee Camp and the refugee leaders. The study's unit of analysis was the elderly individuals within the homesteads.

3.3.2 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

A group of 170 respondents was sampled at Dadaab and 60 respondents were sampled at Thika. This means that a total of 230 respondents were interviewed at the two research sites. Since the study was concerned with only knowledgeable respondents, purposive sampling was used. The most knowledgeable among the respondents at the two sites were again interviewed through focus group discussions (FGDs). Random sampling was not suitable at Dadaab due to the nomadic way of life of the study subjects. At Thika, random sampling was also not feasible because of the unavailability of a sampling frame of persons who were old enough when the camps were last in operation in 1995. This is why purposive sampling was adopted for the study.

3.4 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

A multiplicity of data collection methods aimed at generating both qualitative and quantitative data were used at each site.

3.4.1 Structured Interviews

A semi-structured questionnaire (Appendix 1) was used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. At Dadaab, 150 of these semi-structured questionnaires were administered. This questionnaire was slightly modified at Thika as most of the questions had to be asked in past tense. Primary data was collected from 50 respondents at Thika using the semi-structured questionnaire. The number of questions, their sequence and their wording remained identical for all respondents, as no question rewording or re-sequencing was encouraged. This ensured that any variation between responses was attributable to the actual differences between the respondents and not to variations in the interviews. The advantage of using this method was that both quantitative and qualitative data was obtained. In addition, there was greater control over the interview situation and the exact time and place of the interview was also recorded. This allowed for interpretation of the answers more accurately. The method also had a higher response rate and was suitable because the majority of the respondents did not know how to read and write. The disadvantage of this method was that it involved a high cost in selecting, training, and paying interviewers.

3.4.2 Key Informant Interviews

This method was used to collect qualitative data from 20 respondents at Dadaab and 10 at Thika. It was appropriate because it enabled the understanding of rationale, motivations and attitudes that direct people's actions and behaviours. The advantage with this method was that key informant interviews were carried out quickly. This is because of the small number of interviews (involving knowledgeable informants) that were conducted at the two sites. They therefore took shorter periods (about 2 to 3 weeks) and saved on time and money. The key informant interviews were also flexible and took into account responses on individual differences, situational changes and allowed for exploration of newly emerging ideas. They also provided in-depth, inside information as they came directly from knowledgeable informants. The limitation with this method was that they did not generate quantitative data.

3.4.3 Simple Observation

This method was mainly used at Dadaab where refugees and the locals were observed in their daily interactions. This was through activities such as trade, social functions and meetings called by political and administrative leaders such as chiefs and UNHCR officials. In-depth information on both social and economic activities was captured using this method in cases where respondents were reluctant to give information they considered sensitive. The various types of economic activities that are dominated by either refugees or locals were, for instance, established using this method in conjunction with the other methods that the study adopted. This eliminated biases that might otherwise have been introduced if the other methods had solely been used. The disadvantage was that the recorded observation might not have represented a wide enough population, thus limiting the scope for generalization. This disadvantage was, however, overcome through using a combination of various methods.

3.4.4 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

At Thika, two group discussions consisting of 7-10 persons were conducted while at Dadaab, only one such discussion was conducted. It had originally been hoped that at each research site, two FGDs, based on gender were to be conducted. This was, however, not possible because at Dadaab, women do not freely interact with non-Muslim men due to religious and cultural reasons that I shall discuss in chapter six. As a result, only men participated in a focus group discussion at Dadaab. These discussions were moderated by the author and were tape-recorded

before being transcribed. In cases where the words were spoken in vernacular, field assistants at the two sites helped in translating from the local languages to English. This method was used towards the end of the study. The method was particularly useful because it captured personal reactions on the refugee issue. In addition, the crosschecking of different local refugee perceptions was possible through this method. The FGD method provided an opportunity to elicit, confront and mutually check different perceptions and opinions regarding refugees. The homogeneous group composition (based on gender) stimulated a more open attitude and active participation among the interviewees.

3.4.5 Secondary Data

The study also used secondary data from the records that were found at the former Thika Reception Centre, which has now been converted into the Thika Rehabilitation School. These included letters, handing over notes and minutes of meetings that were held before the Centre was closed. In addition, current records on population and economic activities of refugees and locals at Dadaab and Thika from UNHCR, CARE and the Kenya government have also been used. These, and other library sources, helped in coming up with what the situation at the closed Thika Reception Centre was like, in addition to establishing the refugee and the locals' populations at Dadaab. These secondary sources have been helpful in shaping the arguments and general direction of this study.

3.5 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND THEIR SOLUTIONS

At Dadaab, transport means were scarce and far between. In the initial stages of the study, we used to wait for long durations before getting the transport means to take us from Dadaab market to the three camps and sometimes even missed the means altogether. This problem was solved once we created rapport with police officers who provided us with lifts to the camps in the course of their daily routine duty of escorting the agencies' vehicles. In addition, the culture of the locals and their religious beliefs prohibits free interaction of Muslim women with non-Muslim men. It was therefore difficult for me to interview the local women there. Using field assistants from the area solved this problem as they could interact with the local women more freely. There was also a very high rate of illiteracy at Dadaab. Getting an educated person to employ as a field assistant was problematic and it took some effort and time before the field assistants were identified and recruited.

Language barrier presented another problem at the two sites. Recruiting field assistants from the study sites, who helped in translation and data collection, solved this problem. At Thika, most of the respondents were illegal squatters who are being threatened with eviction. It was difficult to have free flowing interviews because respondents kept on talking about the impending eviction in the hope that we would petition the government on their behalf about the land issue. Most of the interviews therefore took longer, as constant persuasion was required.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

This study was designed to collect both qualitative and quantitative data and it followed therefore that qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods were employed. Data analysis went hand in hand with data collection so that as the field research progressed, categories, themes and patterns were created as they emerged. Codes were assigned manually as accessing a computer in the field was difficult. Thus, data coding started in the field and was done as data was being collected. The data was thematically coded to indicate consistency in information on topics such as the definition of a refugee by locals, positive and negative aspects of refugee presence and what should be done about the refugee presence in Kenya. Direct field quotations have been used to represent qualitative information. For quantitative data, the statistical package for social scientists (SPSS) was used for analysis. The emerging categories have been presented by using frequency tables and percentages. The percentages and categories in the frequency tables are mutually exclusive because the respondents were limited to one main response. From these, theories and generalizations have been formulated on factors responsible for influencing the local people's attitudes towards refugees in Kenya.

3.7 ETHICAL ISSUES

Gauging the local people's attitudes about refugees was a sensitive topic. The respondents sometimes thought that revealing such information could get them into trouble with the government or international authorities like UNHCR. At Thika particularly, some respondents were very suspicious, thinking that the government was using us to spy on them. At Dadaab however, there was open discontent about the presence of the refugees and most respondents gave their responses with a lot of emotions, perhaps in the hope that their views would be taken seriously by both the government and UNHCR. This was despite our assurances that the information being sought was to be used for academic purposes and would be kept confidential

Pseudonyms were sometimes given to respondents, especially at Thika to safeguard their anonymity. For the purposes of guarding against violating the individual's rights, this study was performed with the informed consent of all those who took part in it. As participants at both sites were generally aware of the objectives of the study, simple observation as a data collection method did not seriously undermine their freedom and right of self-determination.

CHAPTER FOUR: ECONOMIC FACTORS SHAPING LOCAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS REFUGEES

UNHCR REFUGEE COLLECTION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the study's findings on how economic factors have influenced the attitudes of the local people towards refugees at both Dadaab and the closed Thika Reception Centre. The economic factors at the two sites have been analyzed in the context of how they impact negatively or positively on the relationship between refugees and locals. At Dadaab, these factors seem to emanate from the intense competition between the locals and refugees, both in business and in the few available job opportunities that are offered by the UNHCR and its implementing partners. This has prompted locals to resent the refugees at Dadaab.

The economic situation at Thika during the refugees' stay seems to have been different from the current state of affairs at Dadaab. To begin with, the refugee population at Thika was much smaller compared to that at Dadaab where refugees outnumber the locals. At Thika, therefore, the refugee's dominance in business was not as prominent as it is at Dadaab. In addition, refugees at Thika were only allowed to operate business enterprises inside their camp and their small population ensured easier tracking of their activities. Lastly, conflicts arising from competition in business and employment opportunities between locals and refugees appear to have been very minimal at Thika as compared to the current situation at Dadaab, where such conflicts seem to be the norm. This chapter is, therefore, divided into two sections: an analysis of the economic factors at Dadaab and that at Thika.

4.2 REFUGEES' VERSUS THE LOCALS' ECONOMIC STATUS AT DADAAB

Studies undertaken at the two Kenyan refugee camps have suggested that many locals perceive refugees to be leading higher standards of living than they, due to the poverty inherent in the semi-arid areas where the camps are located (Montclos and Kangwanja, 2000; UNHCR, 2001a). Absolute poverty in Garissa district stands at 68 percent -73% in rural areas and 65% in urban areas (Kenya Government, 2002a). The differentials in economic status between refugees and locals would have the effect of increasing economic inequalities, which would in turn increase the potential for conflicts and tensions between the two groups. This study attempted to assess

the economic situation of refugees, vis-à-vis that of the locals, by asking the respondents who between the two was better off economically. Table 4.1 summarizes the results.

Table 4.1: The locals' perception of refugee versus their own economic status

Economic status	Frequency	Percentage
Locals are better off	69	46
Refugees are better off	81	54
Total	150	100

It follows from the above results that only 69 (46%) of the locals think that they are better off economically than refugees. More than a half of the respondents-81 (54%)- perceive refugees to be better off economically as compared to them. This group supported their view with various reasons. Thirty-five (43.2%) of them thought this situation was as a result of the assistance in form of food rations, and other “free things” that refugees get from the agencies. These were followed by 20 other respondents (24.69%), who attributed the situation to the fact that refugees are more enterprising in business and were more hard-working than the locals. A further 16 (19.75%) attributed the better economic status of refugees to the “dollars” and other assistance that the refugees have been receiving from their relatives back home or those resettled in third countries like America and Canada. Only 5 (6.17%) said that refugees enjoy a tax-free status that gives them an edge over the locals in business. The remaining 5 (6.17%) thought that refugees had the ability to get goods at cheaper prices through “*haramu*”(illegal and improper means) from back home in Somalia, and added that the current situation where refugees were “grabbing” their land and livestock was also contributing to the refugees’ rich status (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Local perception on why refugees are rich

Why are refugees economically better off?	Frequency	Percentage
Because they get free things from agencies, e.g., free food, education, and medical care	35	43.21
Because they are more enterprising in business and are more hard- working than the locals	20	24.69
Because of the assistance they get from their relatives back home or those resettled in third countries, e.g., America and Canada	16	19.76
Because of their tax-free status	5	6.17
Because they use illegal business means (<i>haramu</i>) and grab the locals' land and livestock	5	6.17
Total	81	100

These results are not surprising for a number of reasons. First, the locals have blamed the agencies for perpetuating the current perceived economic inequality between them and refugees. The refugees and locals share similar hardships, as they inhabit a similar environment. Most argue that they now experience droughts because of the cutting of forests and other environmental interferences that the refugee presence has brought to their area. These droughts have made them lose their animals and reduced them to be “just like refugees because the droughts have internally displaced us”, as many put it. They now have to roam far off into the forests to look for pastures for their remaining livestock. The locals do not, therefore, understand why refugees have to be given preferential treatment. According to them, the agencies dealing with refugees should not ignore the locals simply because they are not refugees, as they too are just as vulnerable as the refugees. They reason that if UNHCR does not want to assist them on the basis that they are locals, then they should be assisted because they are hosting the refugees (as compensation sort of). In the course of our daily interaction with the locals at Dadaab, many expressed the opinion that they hate refugees because of the discrimination that the agencies subject them to. It would, therefore, appear that this discrimination has bred the conditions

necessary for the locals to register as refugees at the three camps in Dadaab. One of their leaders summarized these sentiments thus:

The pain we have is that we see all the good things being given to refugees while we get nothing. We have given these people accommodation but we see them eat while we go hungry. If people are staying together, you cannot give food to only one person while the other is also hungry. We can only inhale the dust created by their (agencies) vehicles but we can never ride in them.

The second category of the respondents who attributed the refugees' better economic position to their being more enterprising in business and more hardworking than they, have to be understood in terms of the local Somali nomadic way of life. Most of these people have known livestock as their only economic mode for the better part of their lives and only knew about business when they started interacting with refugees in the early 1990s. Many are reluctant to abandon the nomadic way of life, or find it hard to practise it side by side with business. It is also likely that the resilience in business exuded by many refugees would come naturally- since many were businessmen back home, coupled with the feeling that they lack a government to rely on and a place they can call a home, as opposed to the locals who feel they are at home and are not as desperate as refugees. Refugees also do business out of necessity because many of those who rear livestock are not free to graze them deep into the forest for fear of retribution from the locals who are against their keeping of animals. They, therefore, keep fewer animals and supplement livestock keeping with business in order to survive, as the food rations given to them are hardly enough. At the end of the day, therefore, the locals are no match for refugees in business matters, especially the Ethiopian and Somali refugees who were formerly staying in urban centres and doing business as their source of earning a livelihood before they were displaced.

For those who attributed the better refugee economic status to the financial assistance that refugees get from relatives resettled in third countries, being a refugee is synonymous with getting "dollars" at the end of every month. Quite a number of people in Dadaab often assert that most of the rich people in the area are refugees who had established themselves businesswise through the "dollars" sent to them by relatives in America and Canada. For some of the locals, the greatest symbol of success is to have a close relative who is resettled as a refugee in places such as America, Europe, Australia or Canada. This factor has also provided an incentive for

some locals to register as refugees inside the camps. Moreover, it has made them perceive refugees negatively, despite the fact that very few refugees actually get the much sought- third country resettlement. The locals' sentiments concur with those expressed by Crisp (2002), that the Somali living abroad do transfer money to refugees in Kenya and other countries through the *hawilaad* system, which is an informal system of value transfer. Crisp further argues that refugees invest the remittance money in small business, thus fuelling the camp economy, which increases socio-economic inequalities that result in tension and conflict between the rich and the poor (ibid.).

Only 5% of the respondents who said that refugees are better off economically when compared to locals attributed this to the unfair business competition between refugees and locals due to the tax-free status of the refugees. Thus, conditions at Dadaab seem to be dissimilar to those at the Kenyan coast, where the closure of the Coastal camps was attributed to the unfair business competition between locals and refugees (Verdirame, 1999; Crisp, 2000a).

The 69 (46%) respondents who opined that locals were better- off economically also supported their view with various reasons. Most of them-48 (69.57%)- said that locals were better-off economically because they are in their own country, are owners of the land around Dadaab, and can move freely and conduct business in any part of the country, unlike refugees whose movements are restricted. The remaining 21 (30.43%) gave various reasons for their responses. One was that locals have freer access to and the use of natural resources, which they can utilize to get an upper hand in business as opposed to refugees who mainly rely on UNHCR and its implementing partners for everything. Another of their reasons was that locals have an edge in business because they know the area better than the refugees do, as they have always been around. There are also those who felt that locals are better- off because they had never lost their property through war, as had the refugees. Lastly, some respondents felt that since locals keep livestock freely while supplementing it with business activities, it goes without saying that they are the ones who are better-off economically than the refugees.

4.3 BUSINESS COMPETITION BETWEEN LOCALS AND REFUGEES AT DADAAB

Respondents at both Thika and Dadaab were agreed that Somali and Ethiopian refugees are generally good in business. Common business activities at Dadaab include trade in animal and animal products such as milk and hides, shop and hotel businesses, trade in *miraa*, selling of new and second-hand clothes and shoes, and selling of electronic goods such as radios and cameras. Refugees dominate in almost all the above businesses except in the sell of milk, firewood, and *miraa*, where local women seem to have an upper hand. Locals dominate milk and firewood production because the grazing of milk animals such as camels and the harvesting of firewood both require one to have free access to forests, which refugees lack.

The three camps at Dadaab are located within a radius of 13 kilometres from Dadaab market (Kenya Government, 2002a). Dadaab itself is growing into the size of a small town due to the expansion in infrastructure and the big population of both refugees and locals. Apart from the indigenous inhabitants of Dadaab, other Kenyans from other regions have also been attracted to the area due to the business and employment opportunities available there. As a result, many structures such business premises, government offices, UNHCR offices and those of the other agencies dealing with refugees such as CARE, GTZ, and MSF-B, have been put up. There are also two banks, Post Bank and K-Rep, and a post office at the Dadaab market. These facilities and the services they offer easily qualify Dadaab to be a town.

The availability of such facilities and services at Dadaab, and its centrality in relation to the three refugee camps would, appear to favour more commercial activities there than at any of the three camps. This has not been the case, however, as business seems to flourish more at the actual camps than at Dadaab market. The main reason for this trend seems to be the fact that there are more people inside the camps than at Dadaab market. Refugees are not restricted in their movements around Dadaab, but many cannot afford to travel frequently from the camps to Dadaab market due to limited means of transport and the accompanying high travel costs. To travel from Dadaab to Ifo or Hagadera by police escorts, one has to pay 50 Kenyan shillings and from Dadaab to Dagahaley, the fare is 100 shillings. Public transport vehicles are few and are equally expensive. The police are officially not allowed to carry or charge people for giving them lifts, but they argue that they are poorly paid and they do provide their passengers with more

security than the few public vehicles available in this insecure area, so why not get something in return? As a result, many refugees opt to remain in the camps and only go to Dadaab when they have pressing issues with either the UNHCR and its implementing partners, or the government.

The camps, therefore, register more business activities than Dadaab market. The busiest camp in commercial activities is Hagadera, followed by Dagahaley. At Ifo, the interaction between refugees and the locals is not as intense as it is at Hagadera or at Dagahaley, as there are few settlements of locals outside the immediate vicinity of the camp. Commercially, therefore, Ifo is also not very active as opposed to Hagadera or Dagahaley. In fact, the locals who wish to buy goods at cheaper prices at Dadaab are often forced to travel to Hagadera camp. Apart from the cheap goods, the camps are also a convenient place for the locals to buy foodstuffs at relatively cheaper prices. Because of the enormous human traffic, comprising both refugees and the locals at the camps, many business activities that were previously carried out at Dadaab market have been transferred to the camps where market forces of demand and supply are in play.

One crucial business that has been most affected by this transformation is the animal market, which has been relocated from Dadaab market to the camps. Before the advent of refugee settlement in Dadaab, most local Somali were solely relying on livestock for their livelihoods, although there was no ready market for both their animals and the animal products. Refugee presence has helped to create a ready market for the animals and the animal products, but anyone around Dadaab intending to sell or buy an animal is often forced to do so inside the camps. This situation has annoyed many local leaders who interpret it to mean that they are at the mercy of refugees. For one to understand and appreciate the sentiments being aired by the local Somali concerning the relocation of the animal market to the camps, one first needs to understand the Somali people's way of life. These people are nomadic pastoralists whose economy is based on livestock. Livestock itself has cultural attachments among the Somali and many of these pastoralists prefer to do everything possible in ensuring that their livestock is well taken care of, including risking their lives to graze the animals deep inside the *shifita* infested forests. Ownership of many animals is also a measure of respect among the Somali, and that is why these people are finding it hard to accept the current position, which is slowly but surely making them lose control of their very source of livelihood that is being transferred to refugees inside the

camp. This is well captured in the words of a local Somali chief, who told us “ The locals are currently refugees because they have to get everything, including the animals that used to belong to them from the camps”.

Closely related to this was the question of who owns the business enterprises around Dadaab. There seemed to be a general feeling among the local Somali that refugees had more business enterprises than they. The study, therefore, deemed it pertinent to ask who, between the locals and refugees, had more business enterprises. Out of the 150 respondents, 96 said that refugees had more business enterprises as compared to locals, while 46 were of the opinion that locals owned more business enterprises than refugees. The remaining 8 respondents argued that it depended on the specific group of refugees that one was referring to, as the Sudanese were very poor in business matters while the Somali and Ethiopian refugees were very good and had more enterprises than locals.

The 96 (64%) respondents for the idea that refugees had more enterprises than locals supported their views with various arguments. The highest number among them-29 (30.2%) out of the 96-asserted that refugees are generally more enterprising in business matters. Twenty-eight others (29.16%) claimed that the unfair competition between local businessmen and the refugees accounts for the current situation where the latter have more enterprises than the former. The unfairness, according to them, accrued from the cheaper untaxed merchandise that refugees smuggle in from Somalia, coupled with the tax-free status of the refugees, which elevates them in business as opposed to the local businessmen who get their goods in Kenya at a relatively higher price. Only 5 out of the 28 respondents who mentioned unfair competition also specifically referred to the tax-free status of refugees. Probably, the tax-free status of refugees did not feature prominently because most respondents were not businessmen but pastoralists.

In addition, 22 (22.9%) respondents linked the more business enterprises owned by refugees to the higher capital that refugees have access to as a result of having relatives in other parts of the world who sent them money to start businesses. The most common countries mentioned in this regard were America, Australia and Canada, where it was thought that the refugees resettled there usually became rich to the extent that they remitted monthly payments to their relatives in

the Kenyan camps. The remaining 17 (17.7%) respondents proposed various reasons for their postulation that refugees had more business enterprises than the locals. One was that refugees usually plough back most of the profit they get from their business activities to open more enterprises, as they do not have to spend their money on basic needs such as buying food or paying for medical or educational bills, which are provided to them free by the agencies. As locals have no access to these privileges, they unfairly compete with refugees and are not as prosperous as their business counterparts in the camps. The second reason that was advanced to account for the more refugee enterprises as compared to locals was that refugees had more customers in the camps due to the huge refugee population there. Lastly, refugees were accused of having taken over the animal market, an idea that supposedly provided them with an impetus to expand their enterprises, subsequently elevating them in business above the locals.

Those holding the view that locals had more business enterprises as opposed to refugees based their arguments on various premises. The highest number among them- 17 (36.95%), out of the 46- said that locals are free to operate anywhere in Kenya and are given first priority in business matters by the government, as opposed to refugees whose movements are, more often than not, curtailed due to their refugee status. Twelve (26%) other respondents argued that being Kenyan is simply advantageous in the sense that the locals are more versed with their area, having stayed there longer than refugees. Some other 10 (21.73%) respondents claimed that locals had more capital than refugees, while the remaining 7 (15.2%) stated that locals have freer access to natural resources, which they could exploit to expand the number and size of their enterprises.

Competition in business was said to have been the major driving force that propelled the locals to call for the closure of the coastal camps in Kenyan (Verdirame, 1999; Crisp, 2000a). To assess whether competition in business was having the same effect at Dadaab as it did at Mombasa, the locals' opinion on whether it was justified or not for refugees to own business enterprises was sought. The findings are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Local perception on refugees' ownership of business enterprises

Is it justified for refugees to own business enterprises?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	99	66
No	35	23.34
No response/ undecided/ it depends	16	10.66
Total	150	100

The above results reveal that a very high number of the local people at Dadaab (99 respondents, representing 66% of the sample) are not opposed to refugees running business enterprises in their area. The respondents gave various reasons for their approval. Forty-two (42.42%) were of the opinion that the refugees were not given enough food rations by UNHCR, yet they had to survive. It was therefore vital that refugees engage in business to supplement the inadequate rations in order for them to survive. About a quarter (24.24%) of the respondents felt that refugees were just humans like they and it was only fair that such people be allowed to own business enterprises so that they can get a source of income. Twenty others (20.2%) supported refugee engagement in trade on the basis that their presence had boosted the local economy through expansion in business volume, and had also contributed to reduction in the prices of goods and foodstuffs. The remaining 13 (13.1%) thought that refugees were justified to engage in trade for various reasons. One of these reasons was that the refugees were using their own resources to engage in trade and there was therefore no reason to exclude them from trading. Another was that refugees' exclusion from business would lead them to engage in illegal activities such as robbery. Lastly, there are those who felt that as long as the refugees were doing legal business, there was no reason why they should not engage in business.

Those who voiced opposition to the idea of allowing refugees to engage in business represented only 23 percent (35 respondents out the total 150). For about a half of them (16 or 45.7%), refugees are supposed to be hosted only temporarily on humanitarian grounds. Any view that significantly departs from this basic refugee tenet (such as allowing them to engage in business) is, in the eyes of this group, an infringement not only on the basic refugee principles, but also an abuse to the hosts' hospitality and rights. They argue that such an initiative would be tantamount to choking concerted efforts to repatriate the refugees by both UNHCR and the refugees

themselves. Only 11 (31.4%) cited the unfair business competition between the two groups as their reason for opposing the refugees' participation in local trade. The remaining 8 (22.85%) said that it was wrong for refugees to do business in Dadaab because it was against UN and Kenyan laws, and that if refugees are allowed to trade freely, they may eventually take over their land. More than a half of those who said it depends or who were undecided asserted that they would have no problem with refugees engaging in business as long as their business activities were restricted to the actual camps.

Competition in business is obviously playing a part in shaping local attitudes towards refugees. However, the question of unfair competition due to the refugees' tax-free status seems to be only peripheral at Dadaab, as these results have indicated; yet local negative attitudes towards refugees are persistent in this area. This means that other factors such as competition for jobs or natural resources are probably more important in influencing these attitudes than competition in business.

4.4 COMPETITION FOR THE JOB OPPORTUNITIES AT DADAAB

Competition for the scarce job opportunities that are provided by the agencies dealing with refugees has been proposed as another source of friction between refugees and their host communities. Unemployment rate is very high in Garissa district, as only 8.75 percent of the district's population is engaged in wage employment, while 38,187 of the people are unemployed (Kenya government, 2002a). Some authors have argued that the locals at the Kenyan refugee camps have low levels of education, and are consequently outnumbered in the few available job opportunities (Montclos and Kangwanja, 2000). Our findings on the educational status of the respondents (Table 4.4) seem to concur with this analysis.

Table 4.4: Educational levels of the locals at Dadaab

Locals' level of education	Frequency	Percentage
Post- secondary	12	8
Secondary	25	16.67
Primary	21	14
Other, e.g., <i>Madarasa</i>	20	13.33
None	72	48
Total	150	100

These results show that illiteracy is quite high among the locals at Dadaab, as 48 percent of the respondents indicated that they had no formal education at all. Those with at least some secondary school level of education were the second highest in number at 16.67 percent. Those who had attained some primary school education closely followed them at 14 percent. In the category of “others”, *madarasa* topped the list. This is a basic form of Islamic knowledge that teaches Muslims how to read the Koran. The 13.33 percent in this category can therefore be said to be semi- illiterate. The post- secondary level of education as used in the table above stands for any formal educational training that respondents attended after finishing their secondary school education. The respondents in this group therefore included those who had completed university education, those who had been in various colleges such as teachers colleges, and those who had attended polytechnics, among others. This category represented the respondents with the highest level of education and had the least number of people at 8 percent.

The high rate of illiteracy appears to be as a result of the low number of primary and secondary schools. Despite the immense size of Garissa district (33,620 square kilometres), there are only 47 primary schools, 9 secondary schools, 1 teachers college, 1 polytechnic, 3 commercial colleges, and 1 institute of technology (Kenya Government, 2002a). Dadaab is served with only one primary school and one secondary school- Dadaab primary and Dadaab secondary, respectively. This is compounded with low enrolment rates in the primary schools at Garissa at 12% (11% for boys and 8% for girls), high dropout rates –81% for boys and 43% for girls, and a 1:40 teacher to pupil ratio (*ibid.*), which have all contributed to low educational levels for the district’s residents.

This study also established that the agencies had very few local employees at Dadaab. In addition, those employed are in low, unskilled jobs, such as security guards. Perhaps this is so because of the low level of formal education among these people. The results of the respondents' occupations at Dadaab are shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: The occupations of the locals at Dadaab

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Pastoral nomads (herders)	32	21.33
Small scale business, e.g., selling milk, <i>miraa</i> , and firewood	53	35.33
Government employees, e.g., teachers	13	08.67
Agency employees, e.g., security guards at UNHCR	28	18.67
House wives	08	05.33
Unemployed	16	10.67
Total	150	100

As the above results show, most people at Dadaab seem to be earning their livelihood from petty business activities such as selling of *miraa*, milk and hawking of items such as clothes. Women dominated most of these petty business activities. It is, for instance, rare to come across a man selling milk at Dadaab. Change seems to be coming at this place at a slow rate, but it surely is coming, and the 35.33 percent that are involved in business are a testimony to this unfolding change. However, nomadic pastoralism is still playing an important role in the lives of these people, despite the alternative means of earning a livelihood such as getting employed or engaging in business, which have been introduced by the agencies due to the presence of refugees. The further one moves away from Dadaab, the more entrenched pastoralism seems to be. Nearer Dadaab and the camps, however, it is second after business at 21.33 percent. The herders are mostly men.

The agencies have employed only about 19% of the respondents who participated in this study. Moreover, most of those employed by the agencies are in low category jobs such as security guards. Very few respondents indicated that they were employed in jobs requiring training and skill, except the few local women nurses working for the agencies. Teachers and policemen

represented the bulk of government employees at Dadaab. Most of them do not hail from Dadaab, but from other parts of the country. According to the above results, they seem to represent only 8.67 percent of the employment status at Dadaab. Housewives represented only 5.33 percent of the sample. This could be another indicator that women at Dadaab are moving away from their traditional roles, or are at least combining them with other activities like selling milk and *miraa*. Those who said that they were unemployed were mainly men. At Dadaab, men seem to be idler than women, as majority of the men either spend their time chewing *miraa* or sleeping, be it day or night. The unemployment rate seems to be higher than the 10.67 percent shown in the study, especially among the youth. This is because some respondents mentioned doing business, although there were no visible business premises to confirm this.

The above results seem to corroborate the view that most of the agencies at Dadaab either employ Kenyans who are not of local Somali origin, or else employ refugees. In fact, the majority of our respondents constantly complained that neither the government nor UNHCR was doing enough for them, and that the agencies always gave refugees first priority in employment opportunities over them, despite their hosting efforts. These allegations led the study to inquire from the agencies' officials their criteria for employing staff. It emerged that the agencies did not advertise most of their jobs. According to senior officials at CARE, GTZ, MSF-B, and UNHCR itself, most of the available jobs at the agencies are usually given to incentive workers. Incentive workers are people working for the agencies on a voluntary basis. Most refugees enroll as volunteers because it seems to be the only avenue for ensuring future employment prospects for them. Although they work as volunteers, they are paid small amounts of money (called incentives), in most cases not exceeding 3,000 Kenya shillings per month. The agencies' officials argue that it is only fair to fill any vacancies that arise within their organizations with incentive workers, which is supposed to be one way of appreciating the refugees' efforts.

For the locals, getting incentive workers' positions is not easy for various reasons, whether they are qualified or not. First, it is very difficult for a local to gain access into the agencies' compounds. The locals cannot, therefore, get an opportunity of talking to concerned officials about these positions. The security guards, especially at the UNHCR compound in Dadaab, are in the habit of harassing visitors who do not come in vehicles, and will not even listen as to why

one has come there in the first place. This was our experience when we repeatedly sought key informant interviews with UNHCR officials. Two other young men in search of the incentive workers' positions were similarly turned away in full view of senior UNHCR staff and the other visitors at the gate. It is, therefore, highly unlikely that many locals get an opportunity to present themselves for the positions of incentive workers. The second reason is associated with UNHCR's policy, which encourages giving most of the available jobs to refugees as a way of capacity building among them. A CARE official, for instance, pointed out that nearly all of their 400 teachers for the schools they have built at the Dadaab camps are refugees, who are only paid between 2,000 and 3,000 Kenyan shillings per month as an "incentive". Only 5 locals have been employed as primary school teachers, and are paid "a much higher salary" (which was not stated), according to this official.

Therefore, locals, whether they are qualified or not, have lower chances of getting employment with the agencies as compared to refugees due to budgetary constraints that force agencies to consider employing refugees over the locals, as the former are remunerated relatively lower than the latter for the same job done. The argument that locals lose out in the scarce job opportunities because of their low educational levels seems to have some merit, considering that even the government has few locals in its rank of the civil servants based at Dadaab. However, this argument is being unfairly exploited by the agencies to sideline the locals, as even the few qualified ones rarely get the jobs.

Some studies have hypothesized that poverty is so inherent among the locals at the Kenyan refugee camps that some of them opt to be employed by refugees as domestic servants (Montclos and Kangwanja, 2000). Considering that the majority of both refugees and locals seemed to be in an economically vulnerable position, it was considered worthwhile to ascertain from the respondents at Dadaab who, between refugees and locals, provides the other with some form of employment. The results are summarized in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Refugees' versus locals' employment potential at Dadaab

Have you ever hired a refugee?	Frequency	Percentage	Has a refugee ever hired you?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	109	72.67	Yes	64	42.67
No	41	27.33	No	86	57.33
Totals	150	100		150	100

On the whole, locals seem to hire refugees on a more frequent basis than the other way round. This is demonstrated by the high number of respondents (109 or 72.67 %), who claimed that they had ever hired the services of a refugee(s) as opposed to the 41 (27.33%) who had not. On the contrary, only 64 (42.67 %) of the respondents admitted that they had ever been hired to do some work by a refugee(s). The disparity between the 72.67 percent who had ever hired a refugee to work for them and the 42.67 percent who had done some work for a refugee, can be accounted for by the fact that some locals, even though poor, do hire poorer refugees, but are in turn hired by refugees who are richer. More than a half the respondents (57.33%) said they had never worked for the refugees. These results, in my view, depict the nature of the study subjects. The Somali are a proud people, and the majority would rather remain poor than subject themselves to a subordinate position in relation to the refugees, especially those from Sudan or the Somali Bantu. Among the refugees, the Somali Bantu and the Sudanese seem to be widely perceived as the groups that are subordinate to the Somali. The Somali Bantu are the descendants of the Africans who were forcibly taken from their homes in other African countries to become slaves in Mogadishu during the slave trade several generations back. In Dadaab, this group performs most menial duties such as the construction of business stalls or traditional dwellings called *tukulus*.

The emerging assessment from the study tends to suggest that more locals at Dadaab do employ refugees than the reverse of this. This seems to be a pointer that, on the average, locals are richer than the refugees. But other factors might also be in play to account for this trend. One such factor is that since the refugee population is higher than that of the locals, the probability of finding more refugees in any category of work, including working for the locals in unskilled jobs, would also be higher. Otherwise, if the number of local employers was as high as it is being

depicted, then the issue of the locals feeling sidelined in the few job opportunities available at Dadaab would not arise. This study's submission is that, on the whole, most of both locals and refugees are generally poor. This assumption is supported by the following field findings on the average monthly incomes of the study subjects (Table 4.7)

Table 4.7: Average monthly incomes of study subjects

Earnings per month in Kenya shillings	Frequency	Percentage
Below 1000	16	10.67
From 1001-2000	08	05.33
From 2001-3000	35	23.33
From 3001-5000	30	20.00
From 5001-7000	36	24.00
7001 and above	25	16.67
Total	150	100

It is obvious, according to these quantitative results, that most locals are generally poor. Only 25 (16.67%) of the respondents earn more than 7,000 Kenya shillings from their economic activities. The highest number of the study sample (36 or 24%) indicated that they earn between 5,001 and 7,000 shillings. Thirty-five (23.33%) other respondents said that their average monthly income was between 2,001 and 3,000 shillings. Incomes between 3,001 and 5,000 shillings had 30 (20%) of the respondents, while those in the cluster 1,001–2,000 shillings comprised 8 (5.33%) respondents only. As these results show, there are even people earning below 1,000 Kenya shillings per month. This category had 16 (10.67%) respondents, and suggests that some people at Dadaab live in extremely poor conditions.

These results suggest that above 50% of the people at Dadaab earn below 5,000 shillings per month which, according to current economic trends, are generally low incomes. This can be attributed to the high unemployment rate in this region. Despite the presence of the many agencies that deal with refugees, locals at Dadaab, it appears, have not benefited much in the area of employment. In addition, the poverty in this area appears to be aggravated by the fact that even those employed by the agencies seem to be lowly paid, as most of them tend to find

openings only in unskilled jobs such as guarding the agencies' compounds or cooking. Many locals, therefore, end up blaming the agencies for their economic woes because of the affluence they associate with these organizations and their contrasting poor condition. Their expectations are that these agencies should alleviate their poverty through providing them with jobs. On their part, the agencies think that this is the Kenya government's responsibility, not theirs, and they had rather provide the few available jobs to refugees at lower pay than indulge in helping the locals who are not in their domain. Over a half of the agencies' representatives that we spoke to also said that it was their policy to make refugees self-reliant through giving them most of the available jobs. According to them, therefore, it is needless to appease the locals with the few available jobs since the locals are unqualified for them, both policywise and academically.

The situation at Dadaab is such that the locals think they are losing out more than gaining from their relationship with refugees. The few refugees we spoke to and the agencies' officials seem to have a different view when it comes to assessing whether the refugee presence has been of benefit to the locals or not. Whereas the locals accuse refugees and the agencies of being responsible for opening the Pandora's box to their current economic woes, the refugees and the agencies refute this and assert that their presence has been of great benefit in uplifting the locals' economic status.

Despite the many disadvantages cited by the locals regarding the refugee presence, economic advantages were also acknowledged. Some locals pointed out that the growth of Dadaab as a trading centre and a small town, and the improvement in transport and communication was due to the presence of the refuge camps and the infrastructure built by UNHCR and its implementing partners. Many locals also admitted that the business and job opportunities now available at Dadaab are due to the presence of refugees. Some businessmen even attributed their success in business to the refugees whom they gave credit for having taught them how to do business, and some women asserted that they too could now earn money just like men due to the refugee presence. The wealthy locals and the schools for the locals have access to electricity from UNHCR generators. Others cited the cheap food and goods that they now have access to, as the greatest benefit that the refugee presence has brought to their area and, lastly, a few others, especially the female respondents, opined that the refugee presence had uplifted the living

standards of many poor locals who can now register as refugees and get a ration card that guarantees an occasional food provision. On the whole, however, most of the locals were of the opinion that the refugee presence had brought more harm than good, and were eager to see the refugees' problems resolved, which would prompt their repatriation.

4.5 ECONOMIC FACTORS AT THE CLOSED THIKA RECEPTION CENTRE

The economic situation at the closed Thika Reception Centre in the 1980s and 1990s during the refugees' stay there seems to have been fundamentally different from the current situation at Dadaab. The hostilities between locals and refugees at Dadaab that are caused by competition for the job and business opportunities appear to have largely been non-existent at Thika.

According to the trace records that were made available to this study at the Thika Rehabilitation School, which was the then Reception Centre, the refugees' stay at Thika began in 1981. A lady from Swaziland was the first to sign the visitor's book on 24th of November 1981 and it appears that the Centre was opened on or around that time. The Centre's objective was to host refugees while they awaited determination of their status. There were, however, many refugees who stayed there from the time the Centre was opened to the 27th of July 1995, when the then Kenyan minister for Home Affairs and National Heritage officially closed the Centre. A brief description of how the Centre was run might give an insight into the difference between the situation at Thika and the current state of affairs at Dadaab.

According to the handing over notes by the then camp manager, dated 18th February 1991, which the study accessed at the Thika Rehabilitation School, the Thika Reception Centre was established in 1981. It was located on a 22-hectare plot within the Thika Municipality and was by then defined as a transit camp. Its main objective was to provide asylum seekers with temporary shelter, food, and other basics while they were being processed for refugee status. With time, however, the notes state that the role of the centre changed to longer-term needs due to an increase in the number of refugees and the humanitarian responsibility that had to be taken to save the situation. The manager described this need thus:

Our contribution towards the welfare of refugees derives not just from our traditional African beliefs, but we are also bound by the United Nations

Conventions on Refugees and the O.A.U Charter, both of which Kenya is a signatory.

The Thika Reception Centre was, unlike Dadaab and Kakuma that are run by UNHCR, under the Kenya government. It was placed under the Ministry of Home Affairs and National Heritage. The role of UNHCR was that of providing funds for the running of the Centre through an annual project agreement between the government and UNHCR itself. Despite this important contribution by UNHCR, the camp officials were in no way answerable to it. In fact, according to the handing over notes by the then manager, it was a prerequisite for any UNHCR official to seek clearance from the ministry headquarters before being allowed inside the Centre. This also applied to the other organizations that wished to visit or donate anything to the refugees there. According to the minutes of a meeting dated 29-1-93 that was chaired by the then camp manager, the salaries for the Centre's staff were paid for by the government, although the meeting was for the idea that they should be paid under the UNHCR structure. Thika Reception Centre seems to have been of its own kind in Africa- in its roles, objectives, and the way it was organized. This view is reflected in the words of those who visited the Centre. An official from the UNHCR headquarters in Geneva, for instance, wrote in the visitor's book on 13-12-84 "I wish we could have such centres everywhere in Africa". Another visitor from the same organization echoed these sentiments when he wrote in the visitor's book on 14-3-86 "This is an excellent project. The only one of its kind in Africa. I am very pleased with the progress".

Whereas Dadaab camp is run by CARE, which has been contracted to provide services and generally administer the camp by UNHCR, the Thika Reception Centre was during its operation run by a manager who was assisted by a staff that was divided into eight departments. According to the handing over notes by the outgoing to the incoming manager dated 18-2-91, the departments were as follows: The office and support department was headed by the deputy manager and was responsible for opening and maintaining all records; The social services department, headed by a social worker, was responsible for counseling and the provision of social activities meant to reduce idleness. Catering was headed by a cateress who had six cooks. A store man headed the store, with duties of procurement, storage, and issuing of goods when ordered to do so by the manager. An accounts assistant, who prepared payment vouchers in liaison with the ministry headquarters, headed the accounts department. The security

department's role was the provision of security for all the refugees and the staff at the Centre. An Administration Police corporal, who was assisted by six constables, headed it. Another department was that of health which had a senior clinical officer at the top. Two nurses, one clerical officer and a cleaner assisted him/her. The last department was the Refugee Committee, which was established to represent the refugees' interests. It was formed through elections by the refugees themselves and acted as a link between the management and the refugees of the various nationalities. The various departments seem to have had different sponsors. According to trace records at the Thika Rehabilitation Centre, a Japanese NGO called Tenrikyo was, for instance, responsible for funding the health department until 1991 when it withdrew its sponsorship.

There were few locals around the immediate area surrounding the Thika Reception Centre when the refugees were being hosted there. To the southeast of the Centre, just across the Thika-Mwingi road, there is an army camp-the Engineering Battalion- that was the only neighbour of the Centre on that side due to the bulk of the land it occupies. On the other sides of the Centre, the land belonged to industries or was classified as government. All the locals who were interacting with refugees resided both at Gichagi village to the northwest of the Centre, and the nearby Makongeni market. Because they were staying on government land, most of these people were illegal squatters who have been staying there since Kenya's independence in 1963.

The economy of most of these squatters was based on a combination of small agricultural activities, small business enterprises, and the brewing of illicit local brews such as *chang'aa* or *mung'aro*, as it is locally called. These activities still dominate the area up to today. The economic position of the locals vis-à-vis that of the refugees seemed not to have been characterized by significant disparities, as both groups appear to have been generally poor. The only exceptions to this general trend of poverty seem to have been the Somali and Ethiopian refugees and the locals who were staying at Makongeni market. These groups are said to have been relatively richer as opposed to the locals at Gichagi and the refugees from Uganda, the then Zaire, Burundi, and Sudan. This is because most of them were at that time engaging in some business activities. Table 4.8 gives the general picture of the current average monthly incomes of the locals who were interacting with refugees at the Reception Centre.

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Table 4.8: Current monthly incomes of respondents at Gichagi and Makongeni

Monthly income in Kenya shillings	Frequency	Percentage
Below 1,000	10	20
From 1001-2,000	11	22
From 2001-3,000	08	16
From 3001-5,000	11	22
From 5001-7,000	06	12
7001 and above	04	08
Totals	50	100

All the respondents with average monthly incomes of over 5,000 shillings are those who do some business at Makongeni market. The rest are the generally poor folk at Gichagi who are illegal squatters surviving on either brewing and selling illicit brews or engaging in petty business or agriculture. Most of the men at Gichagi are unemployed, and many seem to survive on doing casual jobs either at the various nearby industries, such as Del Monte, or else work on the farms of other well-off people across the nearby Chania river. They usually spent most of the money they earn on drinking the locally brewed beer that is always abundantly available in the village. Women also work on other people's farms to supplement what they get from petty business and agriculture. This is in addition to brewing and selling of the locally brewed beer, which is predominantly done by them. The respondents' low incomes are not surprising, since there was no respondent that was employed in the formal sector (government or working for the nearby industries), other than the three employees at Thika Rehabilitation School, the local chief, nominated councilor and one driver that the study came across. Apart from indicating the poor economic position of these people, the low-income levels also reflect the low educational standards at this place, where 46% of the respondents were primary school dropouts, 20% indicated they were illiterate, and 30% had some secondary school education.

Given the humble economic state of most of those who were interacting with refugees at Thika, the refugees seem to have been more economically well off than them. This view is reflected in the findings. When they were asked to give their opinion on who between the refugees and the locals was more economically well off, the highest percentage of the respondents settled on

refugees. On the whole, about a third (32%) of the respondents were of the opinion that refugees were generally better- off economically than the locals, while 14 (28%) thought that the locals were economically better off as compared to the refugees. Eleven others (22%) were specific in stressing that only Somali and Ethiopian refugees were richer than locals, but compared to Ugandan or the other remaining groups of refugees, the locals were economically better- off. The remaining 9 (18%) said that both the refugees and locals were at the same economic level. Ethiopian and Somali refugees were thought to have been richer because they were engaged in business. Because the locals never understood where the refugees got the capital to start their business activities, they suspected that Somali and Ethiopian refugees were getting financial assistance from back home. According to about a half of the respondents, there was little rivalry in business between the refugee and the local traders because the locals had more business enterprises and seemed to benefit from the refugee presence, most of whom were their customers for essential items like charcoal. In addition, most of the refugees' trade was limited to inside their camp, meaning that competition between them and the locals was non- existent.

Ugandan refugees were said to have been the major customers of the local women brewers at Gichagi village. Somali and Ethiopian refugees were thought to have largely remained aloof from the local population's activities throughout their entire stay at Thika. Slightly more than a half of the respondents (52%) said that male Ugandan refugees used to sell their food rations, or sometimes exchanged the rations for the local brew. On the other hand, most of the female refugees from Uganda and a few of their men were, according to the respondents, the main casual workers on their small plots. Consequently, the Ugandan refugees were generally considered poor, as even the underprivileged local squatters could afford to employ them. The emerging conclusion from the findings so far seems to point at a general trend of poverty at the places where refugees have previously or are currently being hosted in Kenya. Whereas the poverty at Dadaab seems to have mainly resulted from the semi- desert conditions present there, that at Thika seems to be as a result of lack of land, where most of the locals were and are still squatters.

Because Somali and Ethiopian refugees were not freely mixing with the locals, there seems to have been minimal business interaction between them and the locals, especially those at Gichagi.

It appears that these two groups concentrated their business efforts mostly inside the Reception Centre's compound. They are said to have had a booming business, as they owned shops, small kiosks, hotels and bars inside their compounds where they sold goods to fellow refugees. There were some, however, who bought charcoal and pineapples from the locals at wholesale prices and retailed these inside the Centre. There was, therefore, some degree of business interaction between Somali and Ethiopian refugees and some locals who were selling to them goods on a wholesale basis and others who were selling charcoal and pineapples to them. In turn, a few of these refugees also hawked goods like clothes and radios to the locals, which seem to have originated from Somalia and Nairobi.

The real site of business interaction, however, seems to have been that between locals and Ugandan refugees at Gichagi. Here, locals described vivid incidents of how they used to exchange countless goods and services with the Ugandan refugees. Some had fond memories of these interactions, while others had bitter memories of them. The women population in the camp seems to have been less than that of men, and many Ugandan refugees are said to have frequented the village mainly to look for local women to make up for this deficit. Some respondents showed us a few children at the village, who the Ugandans supposedly got with the local women but forsook them when they left the place. The parents of the ladies that were impregnated by the refugees and the husbands whose wives eloped with some refugees were very reluctant to discuss with us any issues concerning refugees, especially those of Ugandan origin. On the other hand, many women respondents had regrets that the refugees were no longer around. This is because the refugees were their main customers for the cheap locally brewed beer, and were sometimes exchanging their food rations with sexual services from the local women. When the refugees did sell to the locals the food rations, it was usually at cheap prices. The more desperate ones are said to have even sold their personal clothing, cooking utensils, bedding and the canvas that they had been provided with, to the locals, all at throw-away prices. Ugandan women refugees are also said to have been of economic benefit to the locals as they offered cheap services, such as weeding, to them. As a result of the cheap goods and services that the locals used to get due to the refugee presence, about a third of them (30%) said they would not mind Ugandan refugees being brought back to their area.

Employment opportunities at Thika were never a source of rivalry between refugees and locals, unlike the current situation at Dadaab. This is because the refugees at Thika were under the Kenya government, which gave all the available jobs at the Centre to the locals. Many of the locals had been employed at the Thika Reception Centre as cooks, nurses, clerks, and so on. Some of the former employees are still working at the Thika Rehabilitation School, and are housed there. There is even a retired cook who still occupies the staff houses despite the fact that refugees are no longer there. The locals with no education and skills also benefited at Thika because some used to do petty jobs, such as cooking and washing utensils and clothes for the affluent Somali and Ethiopian refugees. There are still Ethiopian and Somali refugees who sneaked back after they were relocated and are now operating some business activities at Makongeni market. The fact that there were minimal hostilities between refugees and locals at Thika is therefore confirmed by the fact that the locals have not threatened the few refugees who remained behind with expulsions. Some have even taken up Gikuyu names and seem to have fully been integrated into the Gikuyu community.

Considering that most locals at the former Thika Reception Centre are poor, the study attempted to assess whether there had been any economic benefit or harm that could be attributed to the refugee presence. Most of the respondents-30 (60%)- were of the opinion that the refugee presence had little to offer in uplifting the economic status of the area. If anything, their presence had a negative economic impact as it led to insecurity due to the presence of firearms that some refugees had, which discouraged investment. In addition, other respondents felt that trade between them and refugees was disadvantageous as it encouraged the theft of items such as tents, foodstuffs, and cooking utensils from the Centre, which were being sold to the villagers by the refugees. The refugee presence was, therefore, associated with illegal activities and, hence, many locals feel their presence did not contribute to economic growth.

It also seems that the rich refugees were avoiding to stay inside the centre, as they were renting houses at Makongeni market. Many locals at Thika blame the refugee presence for the skyrocketing of rents at Makongeni and the rising in prices of other commodities in general. According to about a quarter of the respondents, refugees paid any price asked for in exchange for goods or services, as they did not know the actual prices. This encouraged unscrupulous

traders to double the price of goods and services. There were, however, a few locals who attributed the growth of Makongeni into a big market centre that it is today to the refugee presence. This was in addition to the cheap goods and services that they used to have access to, courtesy of the presence of refugees, and the market for their own goods that the refugee presence used to provide.

On the whole, economic factors that led to the closure of Thika Reception Centre seem to have emanated from the government's feeling that Thika was too agriculturally and industrially sensitive to have permitted a refugee settlement. The sheer increase in refugee numbers in the early 1990s also seems to have favoured their relocation to less densely populated areas, as the little available land would hardly have supported the nearly 90,000 and the 130,000 refugees that are hosted at Kakuma and Dadaab, respectively. In addition, it is hard to expect a government to settle refugees, who are foreigners, in a place where the local inhabitants themselves have no land and only stay as squatters even after occupying the place for the last 40 or more years. From the locals' point of view, economic factors were not strong enough to have warranted them to demand that refugees be expelled from their area. The relationship between refugees and locals was, however, affected by some social factors, which seem to have generated hostilities between the two groups. Some of these social factors (discussed in chapter six) might have contributed to the relocation of refugees from Thika to other parts of Kenya.

CHAPTER FIVE: COMPETITION FOR NATURAL RESOURCES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Competition for the scarce natural resources in the semi-arid regions where the Kenyan refugee camps are located has been another source of friction between refugees and their host communities. These resources include land, firewood and water sources, whose access and use appears to generate perpetual rivalries between locals and the refugees at the Dadaab refugee camp. At Thika, competition for natural resources was not significant, as water and firewood seem to have been abundant during the entire period of the refugee stay there. In addition, the refugee population at the former Thika Reception Centre never exceeded 5,000, and the refugees did not raise any livestock, as they were enclosed inside a 22-hectare compound. Consequently, there was no environmental degradation at Thika as the one being witnessed at Dadaab, which has resulted from the huge refugee population and the enormous herds of livestock that is owned by the refugees. Natural resource-based hostilities between the refugees and their hosts were, therefore, non-existent at Thika, unlike the current situation at Dadaab.

5.2 COMPETITION FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AT DADAAB

The natural resources competed for by refugees and the locals at Dadaab include forests, land and water sources. Both the Kenya government and the local people perceive refugees as a burden because of their negative environmental impacts and their effects on existing local resources (Verdirame, 1999). The refugees as well as the locals use forests as a source of pasture for their livestock. In addition, the forests provide the trees that are used for construction and firewood needs. These resources are meagre because of the semi-arid conditions prevalent around Dadaab. As a result, the utilization of these natural resources seems to generate hostilities and conflicts between the locals and refugees. The importance of livestock for the pastoral nomads at Dadaab means that pasture and water for the livestock are of paramount importance. Four main species of animals are raised by the pastoral nomads in this area, including cattle (Borana type), camels (Dromedary one-humped type), goats (Galla type) and sheep (Black Head Persian type). In the whole of Garissa district, there are a total of 396,500 cattle, 71,800 camels, and 306,600 goats (Kenya Government, 2002).

At Dadaab, locals raise all of the above four types of livestock, while refugees mainly concentrate on goats. There are various reasons for this trend. Goats provide both milk and meat, and have low pasture requirements as opposed to cattle and camels. Sheep provide only meat that is not as crucial for refugees as the milk that the goats provide. Refugees would love to own cattle and camels that provide more milk than goats, but these are heavy feeders that would require going far away from camps into the forests, where the refugees are likely to encounter hostile locals opposed to their owning animals. As a result, refugees have to be contented with keeping mainly goats as these have less pasture requirements and are grazed nearer the camps. Some refugees do buy camels and cattle from the locals, but these are mainly slaughtered for meat in the butcheries at the camps, as maintaining them is too hard for the refugees. Since the locals can graze anywhere in the area, they keep all of the four species of animals, including milk animals such as cattle, camels and goats. This is one reason why locals dominate in the business of selling milk. In an attempt to determine how the competition for the pastures and water sources between refugees' animals and the locals' was affecting the refugee-local relationship, the study enquired from the study subjects whether they thought it was right or wrong for the refugees to be also owning livestock. Table 5.1 shows the number of the locals who are agreed or opposed to the issue of refugee ownership of livestock at Dadaab.

Table 5.1: Locals' perception on whether or not refugees should own livestock

Should refugees be allowed to own livestock in your area?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	32	21.33
No	105	70
Undecided	13	8.67
Total	150	100

The figures in Table 5.1 indicate that most of the locals (105 respondents, representing 70%) are opposed to the idea of refugees being allowed to rear livestock at Dadaab. Only 32 (21.33%) of the respondents consented to the idea that refugees should be allowed to keep livestock. The remaining 13 (8.67%) were either undecided or thought it was up to the government or UNHCR to make such a decision. Of those opposed to the issue of refugee ownership of livestock, 40

(38.1%) of them said they are against the idea because refugees have many animals that have caused environmental degradation. These were followed by 38 (36.19%) others who opposed the idea on the grounds that the available grazing fields were not enough for them and the refugees, and that since it is the locals who are owners of the land while refugees are “outsiders”, the locals should not be made to compete with refugees for water sources and grazing fields for their animals. The remaining 27 (25%) gave two reasons. About a half of them voiced opposition on the basis that UNHCR provides for all refugees’ needs, which renders their indulgence in livestock raising irrelevant as they could leave the country at any time. The other half felt that allowing refugees to own animals was tantamount to telling refugees that the land is theirs. This, they said, could create future conflicts if refugees claimed a stake in some of their land.

The few respondents (32 or 21.33% of the sample) who argued for the idea that refugees could raise livestock in their area had three main reasons to support their stand. The highest number among them-14 (43.75%)- said that they sympathize with Somali refugees who, like themselves, are nomadic pastoralists with an intense attachment to animals. The environmental condition of the area, they added, was only suited to pastoralism, meaning that refugees had few other opportunities besides pastoralism. The other reason advanced was that UNHCR does not provide enough assistance to the refugees. For this group, keeping animals by the refugees arises out of necessity, because people require milk, which UNHCR does not provide. In addition to this, there was also the view that refugees sell their animals at a relatively cheaper price, and allowing them to own animals was a good idea, as it would contribute to making life more bearable for the locals. Many of those who support refugee ownership of animals were also quick to add that refugees should not raise camels or cattle, as these have heavy feeding requirements that would impact negatively on the environment. They recommended the raising of goats only for the refugees and some even suggested that such goats should be restricted to the refugee camps.

The water problem for both the animals and human use is chronic at Dadaab, due to the semi-arid conditions prevalent in the area. In Garissa, there are a total of 12 wells, 27 boreholes, 41 dams, and the average distance to the nearest portable water point is 30 kilometres (Kenya Government, 2002a). UNHCR and its implementing partners sank boreholes for the locals outside each camp, apart from those they have sunk inside the camps for the refugee use. These

boreholes have been very useful to the local population, but they have not helped to reduce hostilities between the refugees and the locals. This is because the maintenance of the refugees' boreholes inside the camps is done by the agencies while the locals have been left to do the maintenance of theirs on their own. The locals therefore pay 2 Kenya shillings for every container of water that they draw from the boreholes. This money is used to pay for the fuel needed to pump the water and some is saved to buy generating sets and other forms of maintenance, in case need arises. Because refugees do not pay for water, many locals feel they are discriminated against by the agencies. It is very hard to make the locals understand that they are not "buying" water but simply helping to maintain the boreholes they are using. One of the local leaders told us that, according to the international law, all the underground water belongs to the locals. In his view, therefore, UNHCR should be paying the locals for using their underground water instead of the locals having to pay for using their own water. Therefore, although the sinking of boreholes for the locals was a noble idea, it has increased rather than reduced the rivalries and conflicts between locals and refugees.

At Dadaab, many locals seem to oppose the issue of the refugee ownership of animals because of the water and pasture shortages, coupled with a feeling that refugees have more animals than theirs, which would deplete these resources and leave nothing for their animals. This feeling probably arises because many of the refugees' animals (mainly goats) at the three camps in Dadaab are herded together in one group. Refugees from the same camp usually entrust the herding of their animals to one or two people (usually of Somali origin), who herd the goats for them at a fee of twenty shillings per month for every goat. This idea, though feasible and safe for the non-Somali refugees who can be attacked by the locals if seen herding goats, is disadvantageous in the sense that the lumping of the many animals together swells the herds and attracts envy from the locals who do not own big herds of goats as those of the refugees combined together. It is not uncommon to see the refugees' big herds of goats in the morning and evening on their way to and from grazing areas around Dadaab. When they are being led along, these huge herds of goats raise the dust that can, from afar, be easily mistaken for a lorry being driven on the sandy roads. This has led to a sense of envy towards refugees by the locals.

Officially, refugees are prohibited from keeping animals at Dadaab but, in practice, both the Kenyan authorities and the agencies have largely remained passive in enforcing this decree. Many of the agencies' officials are in a dilemma as to what to do about the issue of refugee ownership of animals. They know it is a prohibited practice, yet the milk being generated from the animals is crucial for the refugees. Most of them thought the situation was not serious enough to cause immense environmental degradation, as the average number of goats that each refugee family owns, according to their estimates, is only 5. The refugees' practice of raising animals seems to be arising out of necessity. Although the number of goats owned by individual refugees might be small, the government and UNHCR need to provide some guidelines on the limit of animals that a refugee can own, as some refugees are keeping goats in excess of what the environment can support. The continued practice of keeping a blind eye by both the government and UNHCR in the face of the refugees' excess livestock ownership might, in future, provide a recipe for potential chaos between the refugees and their hosts.

Firewood has also remained a contentious issue at the Kenyan refugee camps. At Dadaab, conflicts arising from firewood and building poles are a common feature. Many locals oppose the issue of refugees cutting down trees in their forests for either firewood or construction needs. This has led some of them to patrol the forests and confiscate any poles or firewood that they intercept from refugees in retaliation for what they perceive as interference of their natural resources by outsiders. The refugee leaders, for instance, complained that they fear going in the forests to look for firewood because locals would not allow them to gather firewood or cut down the trees. According to them, locals forcibly take any firewood or poles that they find refugees with in the forest and sometimes even molest or rape women refugees.

When we put the rape allegation to the locals, they claimed that the refugees are themselves to blame for the rape incidents. From the locals' point of view, rape cases never existed in their area prior to the coming of refugees, and the fact that these cases became rampant thereafter implies that the refugees themselves are the real culprits. Most of the locals, in fact, argued that many of the rape cases usually reported in Dadaab are fictitious and are meant to hoodwink UNHCR into resettling the claimants in third countries such as Canada, America and Australia. They described ways in which some refugees stage-manage these false rape incidences, such as women

arranging to be “raped” in advance, or faking rape that never occurred. It is highly probable that some refugees would take advantage of the third country resettlement that is offered to rape victims to fake rape so that they could also benefit from the same. In a bid to reduce rape cases and the conflicts between refugees and the locals that arise from firewood and building materials at Dadaab, UNHCR started a firewood project where refugees are supplied with firewood occasionally (UNHCR, 2001b). Most of UNHCR’s contracts to supply firewood to the camps are usually awarded to the locals, but many complain that it takes a long time (sometimes up to 6 months) before they are paid. Since this project was started, rape incidences seem to have drastically been reduced. With the diminishing justification for one to be raped while collecting firewood in the forests, UNHCR has of late been very reluctant to grant third country resettlement. Although the firewood supplied to the refugees under the UNHCR programme is inadequate, the shortfall is again filled by other locals who gather the firewood themselves and sell it to the refugees at 5 shillings per piece of firewood. The business of selling firewood in the camps is, therefore, entirely run by locals.

Most locals cited environmental degradation as the reason that has prompted them to prohibit refugees from using their trees for firewood or construction needs. From the locals’ point of view, the huge refugee numbers are a strain on their resources. To minimize the harm being done to their surroundings, many of them were of the opinion that some refugees should be relocated to other parts of the country, and that those remaining should be completely restricted to the camps. There were also those who felt that it was UNHCR’s responsibility to provide building materials and firewood to the refugees. Others reasoned that refugees have nothing to lose for not practising conservation, as they knew they were only temporarily accommodated and will eventually go back to their various homes after “destroying everything”. The locals have, however, also been contributing to environmental degradation just as much as the refugees. It is, for instance, very hard for the local women to transport firewood to the camps without tying the firewood into a bundle. Ropes for tying the firewood are scarce in this area. The women, as a result, resolve to tie the firewood using barks stripped from other trees, which end up trying, further enhancing environmental degradation.

Through GTZ, UNHCR has been trying to resolve the problem of environmental degradation (caused by the huge refugee population) by starting conservation zones of forests around Dadaab, which are popularly known as “green belts”. This programme is a concerted effort by GTZ to hive off depleted forested areas, which have a potential to regenerate. According to the GTZ official in charge of this programme, there are different sizes of greenbelts around Dadaab, with the largest being 6 hectares in size, while the smallest covers an area of 2 hectares. Some trees are planted during the rainy seasons in April and November, but the backbone of the programme is dependent on fencing off areas of forests that are likely to regenerate.

The green belt conservation project, despite its apparent good intentions, has not been well received by many locals, who see it as a far cry from what it was meant to accomplish. This is due to several reasons. To begin with, GTZ uses plant material that is cut from the same forests at Dadaab to fence other areas that are most affected by forest destruction. A specific species of thorny tree (*Commiphora africana*) is utilized for the fencing and, usually, many of such trees are required for the job, as no space is left in between the dead trees that are closely sunk into the ground. From the locals’ perspective, it is illogical for GTZ to cut the very trees that it is purporting to protect, for the purpose of fencing off already depleted areas. Instead of alleviating the problem, GTZ may well be aggravating it, especially if regeneration is unsuccessful due to persistent droughts that are characteristic of the area. Even if regeneration of the cut trees succeeds as it often does, the skeptical locals argue that little conservation is actually being achieved because refugees, who are given the responsibility of guarding the green belts against intruders (commonly known as caretakers), do so while grazing their goats there or discreetly gathering firewood. In addition, some refugees have also fenced off areas similar to the ones of GTZ, where they do their own conservation so that they can sell forage to fellow refugees or locals who come to graze in these areas with preserved pastures. At the end of the day, the process of destruction would still occur and the cycle would repeat itself. Some locals have therefore interpreted the green belt project either as a farce or else as a scheme to take their land and keep them from grazing in such areas so that refugees might have exclusive grazing rights there. Most say they are never involved in the GTZ plans, and that UNHCR and GTZ officials consult only the D.O. and the chiefs. Therefore, however well intended this project is, it is bound to generate further hostilities between the locals and refugees if the refugees acting as guards are

not kept out of the green belts altogether and those fencing off greenbelts of their own stopped. In addition, dialogue involving the locals is necessary for the success of any future projects that UNHCR might want to initiate at Dadaab.

As regards land issues, all the 150 respondents were unanimously agreed that refugees should never be allowed to own it. This can be understood in the light of Somali tradition. Being nomadic pastoralists, these people own land communally, where the grazing land is under common usufruct regimes. Legal property rights are therefore neither formalized nor individualized at Dadaab. As it is, the land, which the three camps occupy, seems to have already created volatile situations. The locals, whose movements were largely unrestricted before the advent of refugee settlements, are no longer free to move or graze wherever they wish, at least not inside the camps or the green belts. They now have to obtain permission before going into the agencies' compounds or, sometimes, when going in the camps to see relatives if they are suspected to be non-refugees. The concept of private ownership has slowly been introduced among a people that knew it not, albeit in different forms. They are grappling with such like realities while continuing with their traditional communal land ownership away from the areas where the camps are not located, at market centres and government offices and schools. The conservatives (who would wish to maintain the *status quo*) seem to have retreated deeper into the forests where they can freely spill all over in their nomadic practice. Those who opted to remain at Dadaab have to go with the times and some have even given up pastoralism for other economic activities like trade or employment.

There seems to be a dilemma concerning whether one should elect to remain near Dadaab and cut down on the number of animals to fit available pastures or whether one should retreat further into the forest where there are no restrictions in movement as before. Most locals seem to be settling for the former option and are increasingly adopting new methods of earning a living. One woman, when asked how she had benefited from the refugee presence, remarked that she had "never thought that even a woman could engage in business and also just earn or have money the way I am doing".

Although the locals seem to have reluctantly accepted the reality of co-existing with the refugees in their midst, they are also eager and optimistic that refugees will one day leave their land and return home. Some perceive refugees as brothers as they share a religion or sometimes even a clan, and are therefore reluctant to recommend that refugees be forcibly expelled from their land. Most, however, assert that refugees destroyed their own motherlands and allowing them to continue staying on their land would be courting trouble such as that being experienced in the refugees' homelands. When they were asked whether refugees should be allowed to own land in their area, all said no, and gave various reasons for their refusal. Many said that such a move would encourage refugees to stay indefinitely. Others said that the land belongs only to locals, while the rest argued that such a move would be against both international and Kenyan laws, as refugees should essentially be in areas where they are hosted only for protection.

Another source of land-related conflicts between the locals and refugees at Dadaab has been on the issue of refugees engaging in petty agricultural activities. A small number of refugees have begun to cultivate millet and vegetables through simple irrigation at the Dadaab camps. Squabbles sometimes occur between these refugees and some locals who question the refugees' actions, as the agricultural plots are outside the camps and create a potential of limiting the locals' grazing areas. The refugees, according to the locals, assert that UNHCR bought the land they are settled on from the Kenya government and that is why they are using the land for agriculture. This agricultural practice by the refugees seems to have also contributed to the suspicions and hostilities between the two, as the local Somali seem to interpret it as another move to reduce their grazing land.

Despite the many resource-based conflicts between the refugees and the locals at Dadaab, the refugee presence has also had some advantages. The contracts awarded by UNHCR to the locals to supply firewood to the camps have helped to improve their economic status. In addition, many locals have access to water, courtesy of UNHCR. This water advantage has not been helpful in reducing local negative attitudes towards refugees because the locals are required to pay 2 Kenyan shillings for every container of water, while refugees get the water without paying for it.

5.3 THE SITUATION AT THIKA

The Kenya government might have deliberately settled refugees in the northern parts of Kenya because of the high population density in places such as Thika and others where former refugee camps were located. Because of the high industrial and agricultural potential of Thika, the Centre where refugees were hosted occupied only 22 hectares of land. Refugees at the Centre therefore had very minimal economic activities to engage in. All the respondents at Thika were agreed that no refugee owned any kind of livestock during the entire period they stayed there. Neither did they engage in agricultural activities like crop farming. It is not hard to understand why the refugees were not given any land to farm or raise animals, given that nearly all the locals around were themselves squatters in their own country. In fact, most locals characterized their former refugee neighbours as “people who stayed like prisoners”. This was because the refugees were enclosed inside their compound and only a few of them did some form of business, which seems to have been the only economic option that was open to them at that time. The bulk of the refugee population had no economic activity to engage in, and that is probably why most of them sold their rations to get the money needed to take the local brews in the village.

Apart from land, other natural resources appear to have been abundant at Thika. Firewood was not a source of rivalry, unlike at Dadaab where it is considered one of the main sources of conflict between the refugees and the locals. At Thika, firewood appears to have been very minimally used, as the main source of fuel there was charcoal. This charcoal was usually brought to the Centre by some locals who were tendered to do so. Cooks employed from the local population usually cooked food for the refugees, and only those with special cases were allowed to do the cooking themselves. According to one of the former cooks at the Centre, refugees only ate two meals, breakfast and one other meal that served as lunch-cum-supper. Water was also abundantly available, as there was a big overhead water tank that met all the refugees’ water needs, which is still operational to date.

Due to the adequacy of natural resources at Thika, the issue of competition for resources between locals and the refugees did not arise. If anything, these natural resources influenced local attitudes positively at Thika because the locals could sell charcoal to the Centre and get some income. There is land scarcity at the former Thika Reception Centre because of the steady

expansion into the area where the locals are staying by a person who the locals say is a white man. Locals are being reminded by each passing day that they are staying in the area illegally and that they will be forcibly evicted if they do not move out voluntarily. It was, in fact, hard to conduct the study freely because respondents constantly deviated from the topic in discussion to complain about their impending eviction, in the hope that we would make their pleas reach the government's ears. Most locals at Thika, therefore, argue that the relocation of refugees from their area to the northern parts of Kenya was inevitable, due to the chronic land shortage around the former Reception Centre.

CHAPTER SIX: SOCIAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS REFUGEES

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the study's findings on how social factors have shaped the locals' attitudes towards refugees at both Dadaab and the closed Thika Reception Centre. In Kenya, the refugee presence has socially impacted on the local populations both in positive and negative ways. However, negative social effects seem to be more profound than the positive ones. At the current operational camps in Kenya, the refugees outnumber the locals by far. These massive refugee numbers exceed the carrying capacity of local resources. This, coupled with the protracted refugee situation in Kenya, has resulted in endless social conflicts between refugees and their hosts due to public fatigue about refugees. The Kenya government has on many occasions, also blamed the refugees for the current social instability and insecurity that abound around the refugee camps.

Another issue that seems to be causing negative social attitudes towards refugees in Kenya is the discriminatory assistance by the agencies dealing with refugees. Despite the fact that the locals are as vulnerable as the refugees, these agencies seem to concentrate on assisting only refugees, which has, in turn, resulted in social inequalities between the refugees and their hosting communities. This appears to have equipped the locals with the requisite motivation to hate the refugees. On the positive side, the refugee presence has contributed to a wide range of interaction between the Kenyan hosting communities and the refugees. This interaction has resulted in the cementing of social ties between the two groups through alliances such as those resulting from intermarriages. In addition, social amenities and services have been made available to the locals, courtesy of the refugee presence. In this chapter, social aspects of the refugee presence will be outlined in detail and an analysis will be provided on how they affect the locals' attitudes towards refugees.

6.2 SOCIAL ASPECTS OF THE LOCAL-REFUGEE INTERACTION AT DADAAB

6.2.1 Negative Social Factors

At Dadaab, negative social factors appear to be predominating the refugee-local relationship as compared to the positive ones. The protracted refugee situation at Dadaab has resulted in a hosting fatigue. This seems to have largely contributed to the current hatred of refugees by locals. Refugees have been staying at Dadaab for over 10 years now.

Ifo, the earliest camp at Dadaab, was established in September 1991, followed by Dagahaley and Hagadera that were established in March 1992 and June 1992, respectively (UNHCR, 1994). A half of the study's sample opined that the long refugee stay in their area had a negative impact because it gave the refugees a feeling that UNHCR had settled them permanently on their land. Some of them, in fact, wanted to know from us whether or not the land that the refugees are settled on is still theirs. This is because they felt that the refugees have been around for too long, and had even started to raise livestock without the slightest interference either from the government or UNHCR. Many leaders from the North Eastern region have also of late been very opposed to the continued refugee stay at Dadaab as recent press reports have indicated. Some have even been calling for the expulsion of the refugees due to public fatigue that has been occasioned by a feeling that "refugees have been here too long" (*Daily Nation*, 24 June 2002: 5).

Matters have been worsened by the poverty that is prevalent in the semi-arid Dadaab region. The agencies give preferential treatment to the refugees as opposed to the locals. This is in areas such as food aid, education, medical care, and other services. Whereas the locals pay for most of these social services, they are provided to the refugees free of charge by the agencies. As a result, refugees have been said to be leading higher standards of living than the locals (UNHCR, 2001a; Montclos and Kangwanja, 2000). The UNHCR's officials whom we spoke to said that their mandate only covers refugees, and they only assist the locals in extreme circumstances. They therefore cannot provide the local population with food rations and social services such as medical care and education due to budgetary constraints. As regards education, only one primary school and one secondary school serve the whole area around Dadaab and its environs. Because of the poverty in the area, parents cannot afford to pay fees and related school expenses such as uniforms and stationery. The area is sparsely populated and the children have to walk for average

distances of about 10 kilometres before accessing these schools. The means of transport are scarce and expensive. In addition, this is an insecure area where the *shifita* menace is rampant. Many parents, therefore, have decided to keep their children out of school for fear of the insecurity in the region. Girls are the hardest hit, as rape is also widespread. Many girls end up doing odd jobs such as being employed as house helps or engaging in petty trade at a tender age.

In fact, the local primary school has got only 235 girls and 420 boys, despite the fact that it is serving an area approximately 13 kilometres in radius (from Dadaab to the three camps around it and even beyond). Many parents also cited lack of food as a reason for not taking their children to school. According to their line of reasoning, children cannot go to school on empty stomachs. As opposed to the locals, the refugees at Dadaab have a total of 16 primary schools and 3 secondary schools. Hagadera camp has 6 primary schools and one secondary school, while Dagahaley and Ifo have 5 primary schools and one secondary school each. The schools for refugees have more teachers and better teaching equipment. The refugees, therefore, do not have to walk for long to get to school; neither do they need to make any education related payments as everything is provided for by CARE, which has been contracted to provide these necessary services to the camps. Security is also better inside the camps and children have no fear of walking to the schools. There is therefore a much higher enrolment rate of refugee girls as opposed to the local girls, as the former are not threatened with rape and other security related incidents. These are some of the reasons why the locals feel that the refugees are a more privileged lot when it comes to educational matters, thus prompting them to envy the refugees.

As for medical care, there is no local public health institution at Dadaab or in the surrounding area. The same applies to the areas around the camps. Generally speaking, there are few health facilities in Garissa District, with one government hospital, 5 health centres and 15 dispensaries (Kenya Government, 2002a). The average distance to a health facility in Garissa is 50 kilometres (ibid.). When they fall ill, most locals have to travel all the way to Garissa Provincial Hospital for treatment. This is a distance of 120 kilometres, but because of the poor state of the Garissa-Dadaab road, the journey usually lasts three to eight hours, depending on the weather conditions (the roads are usually rough during rainy seasons). The fare from Dadaab to Garissa is 400 Kenya shillings and is too expensive for most locals at Dadaab. According to a senior MSF-B

official (the NGO that has been contracted by UNHCR to provide health care to the refugees), locals do benefit from the MSF-B's medical care because nobody scrutinizes the patients going to seek such treatment. This argument is doubtful because many locals know they are prohibited from being in the camps. They, therefore, go there under the guise of being refugees, or else avoid the camps and miss these essential services altogether. Refugees, on their part, have unlimited access to medical care through the health facilities that are in their camps. Many who have serious medical conditions are usually referred to Nairobi, with their travel expenses and treatment costs being paid for by the agencies. Refugees also have access to social amenities like play grounds that are lacking in areas where locals reside. This has made the locals perceive refugees negatively, because they are ignored in the provision of services while they are as economically vulnerable as the refugees, and cannot afford to pay for these services.

These are some of the factors that have made the locals at Dadaab perceive refugees as leading better social lives than they themselves. The perceived better living standards of refugees have, in fact, motivated quite a number of locals to register as refugees at the three camps at Dadaab. The study came across some three such cases where locals had registered as refugees. However, not all locals succeed in this endeavour. This is because the camps are divided into sections and blocks that are administered by sectional and block refugee leaders. The refugee leaders we spoke to said they know all the people residing within their sections and a stranger cannot just come and settle in their area if they do not know him/her. This is for security reasons. These sentiments were also echoed by a senior official from CARE who said that "refugees know themselves and can therefore not allow an outsider, posing as one of them, to stay among them". Consequently, most of the locals are cut off from the food rations and the social services that refugees enjoy free of charge. Most of them vent their frustrations on the agencies whom they blame for perpetuating the social inequalities that exist between them and the refugees. According to the local leaders, it is the locals who have been turned into refugees because refugees lead higher living standards and the locals have to beg for everything whereas refugees are given everything. This situation is wholly blamed on the agencies. As one local chief put it:

Our problem here is not with the refugees, but with the NGOs dealing with refugees, as they have completely neglected us even though we gave the refugees the land they are settled on. They exploit us in all forms; yet give nothing in return,

so how do you expect us to feel when they discriminate against us and assist only refugees?

If the refugees and locals are to co-exist in a more cordial manner, it will be more logical for the NGOs dealing with refugees to also accord the locals some of the social and economic benefits that only refugees are currently enjoying at Dadaab. They cannot continue to hide behind their current gimmick that locals are the responsibility of their government because, as one local put it, "it is wrong for you to eat alone while your neighbour is hungry". These sentiments concur with those of other scholars like Gebre (2002), who argue that resettlements should be planned in a manner that would fully compensate hosts for losses, guarantee their access to benefits and services available to settlers, and promote area development.

It also appears that the refugees have more hope than the locals. According to some of the locals, the refugees know that one day peace will be established in their home countries, and then they will go back. For the locals, on the other hand, things will always remain the way they are, as even their own government seems to have forgotten them. The sense of hopelessness among the locals is compounded by the fact that the refugees' return to their own countries seems an uphill task due to the long duration that the refugees have stayed in their area. Almost all the local leaders were optimistic that life would be more bearable at Dadaab once refugees are repatriated, although they could not forecast when this would be.

The local perception that refugees are socially better off due to assistance from the agencies has been reinforced by the fact that some refugees are also richer due to other factors. Some refugees engage in business, and own big shops, food stores, and wholesales. Others are rich because their relatives who are resettled in industrialized countries such as America always remit money to them on a monthly basis. Commenting on the Somali money transfer through the *hawilaad* system, Crisp (2002) argues that such monthly remittances have the effect of increasing the socio-economic inequalities that are found among refugees (and between refugees in question and locals, if the latter happen to be poor). This increases the potential for tension and social conflict between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' (pp. 20-21). Still, there are other refugees who are considered rich because of the enormous herds of livestock they own. Although the number of rich refugees is not very high, it is significant, and the locals have always pointed to this rich

refugee status as a blanket reference that applies to all refugees. The differentials in economic status between refugees and locals have resulted in social inequalities that have, in turn, led to the locals' negative feelings towards refugees.

The relative higher refugee population as compared to the locals has been another contentious issue at Dadaab. According to the figures that were made available to this study by CARE officials, the latest refugee population (as by December 2002) was 136,504. The camp with the highest population was Hagadera with 51,820 people, followed by Ifo at 50,743 and, lastly Dagahaley, which had a total of 33,941 refugees. Although there could be double registration cases and a few chances that some of those counted might have been locals registered as refugees, this refugee population is too high when compared to the local population that is approximated to be only about 15,000 people by CARE. It also contradicts the UNHCR recommendation that large camps of over 20,000 people should be avoided (Ohta, 2002). The refugee population at Dadaab comprises 35% of the whole of Garissa District's total population (Kenya Government, 2002a). Indeed, some locals were of the opinion that the huge refugee number may in future permanently displace them from their lands. This feeling may have the potential of increasing social tensions between refugees and their hosts.

Matters have again been worsened by the fact that the refugee population has ever been expanding since refugees were first settled at Dadaab. When Ifo was established in 1991, its total population was 32,421, while Dagahaley and Hagadera established in 1992, had 38,123 and 41,245 as starting populations, respectively (UNHCR, 1994). The steady increase in refugee population to the current 136,504 has been accompanied by a continuous expansion of refugee shelters in areas used for grazing by the locals. Originally, Ifo was zoned into 67 sections of living quarters that occupied a total of 350 hectares, while Dagahaley and Hagadera occupied 400 hectares and 480 hectares, respectively, with 7 zones of living quarters for Dagahaley and 9 zones of living quarters for Hagadera (UNHCR, 1994). With the ever-increasing refugee population, however, the area occupied by the camps has steadily been expanding. This has led to a situation where refugee settlements are being put up regularly at Dadaab such that fences are no longer surrounding the newer structures. They are only recognized as refugee settlements by virtue of the scanty UNHCR polythene materials that are used to put them up. Of the three

camp, Hagadera seems to be the most affected by this refugee expansion. This has led to an incessant displacement process of the locals from their prime grazing fields, making them to hate the refugees.

The huge refugee population has also prompted a situation where refugees own large herds of goats that compete for pastures with the locals' animals. Then there is the question of environmental degradation that has come up due to the huge refugee numbers that have exceeded the carrying capacity of the local resources such as firewood, building materials, and water for the animals. The refugee numbers at Dadaab are simply unmanageable, in terms of the available resources. Some scholars, such as Gebre (2002), have recommended that governments planning for resettlement should determine a reasonable and acceptable settler-host population ratio to avoid situations where settlers would overwhelm the hosts and exceed the carrying capacity of resources. If the Kenya Government had taken such measures, the social tensions between refugees and hosts being currently experienced at Dadaab would have been minimized. The locals complain that they are helpless in halting the ever-increasing refugee occupation of their land. According to some of them, there have been reversed statuses between refugees and the locals, on the one hand, and the Kenya government and UNHCR, on the other. This, in their view, has come about due to UNHCR usurping all the powers that their government is supposed to be having (such as expanding refugee settlements in their areas). It appears to them that UNHCR is the only body that is calling the shots around Dadaab, a situation that has turned them into refugees while refugees have become like the owners of land, given that they can graze their animals anywhere without the government raising an eyebrow. According to one of the local leaders, their only hope is that refugees will one day be repatriated. As he put it:

We have been keeping quiet because we know that one day peace will be restored back in their home countries and then they will go. If anyone suggested that they are being settled permanently, all the hostilities that we have been suppressing will explode.

At Dadaab, all social ills, ranging from insecurity, prostitution, to deterioration in cultural norms, are blamed on refugees. Insecurity and social instability has always been a problem that has characterized the North- Eastern part of Kenya since the 1960s when Kenya attained her independence. With the settlement of refugees in the region in the early 1990s, however, the

insecurity problem seems to have tremendously increased. The Kenya government has always attributed the insecurity problem to the *shifita* menace. This is a term that is used to describe Somali banditry groups that are thought to reside in and around the vast forests in North Eastern Province (Garissa alone has 385,500 hectares of forests). Due to the fluid Kenya-Somalia border and the insecurity in the collapsed Somalia state, Somali refugees have commonly been accused by the government of perpetrating most of the *shifita*-related crimes around Dadaab, as they have reportedly been responsible for the proliferation of small arms that are common in the region.

According to Crisp (2000, 2002), the problem of violence is epitomized by the Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps, where incidents involving death and serious injury take place on a daily basis, and where outbreaks of violence and unrest occur without warning. Such violence assumes forms such as domestic and community violence, sexual abuse, armed robbery, violence within national refugee groups, violence between national refugee groups, and violence between refugees and local populations (ibid.). Some locals at Dadaab do admit that some of their own might be among those committing the crimes around the area, but they argue that their actions have been prompted by the insecurity around them. Consequently, those having guns have been forced to do so out of self-defence. According to their argument, banditry is rampant due to the refugee presence. Therefore, if bandits are in the habit of stealing your animals, you have to seek ways of countering them in order to survive, hence the need for them to purchase firearms from the refugees. The local people seem to have picked the cue of blaming the insecurity in their area to refugees from the government, as almost all were agreed that, indeed, it was the refugees who are wholly responsible for the social instability and insecurity in their area. Of the 150 respondents that were interviewed, 138 (92%) attributed the insecurity in their region to the refugee presence. Many said that they did not know any firearms before the refugees introduced them in their area. Others argued that even though there had been insecurity before refugees were settled in the region, incidences such as rape only became frequent with the coming of the refugees.

The Dadaab camps are widely believed to be hiding dens for criminals. The locals commonly accuse UNHCR of over-protecting refugees even when they know fully well that they do commit crimes. Many of them say that refugees usually commit crimes such as theft, rape, and murder,

and then retreat into the camps. This seems to echo UNHCR's observation that "residents of the camp have a tendency to feel they are above the law, or outside the law, due to their refugee status" (2001b: 21). When the police come to investigate such crimes, they usually harass the locals (because the crimes have been committed outside the camps), as UNHCR cannot allow them to enter the camps and interrogate the refugees. Most banditry-related incidents seem to be actually emanating from the camps, which are providing excellent hideouts for criminals. A local chief alleged that most of the Somali warlords have their families inside the camps, and that they usually come at night to see their wives and children and go back to fight during the day. It simply is too difficult to keep track of refugees' movements at Dadaab, due to their huge population and the closeness in similarity between the Somali refugees and the local Somali. Consequently, some of the locals' allegations could actually be well founded.

The most common insecurity-related incidents at Dadaab are rape cases, cattle thefts, fighting and murder. Initially, UNHCR used to offer third country resettlement to most of the refugees who were rape victims at Dadaab. With the introduction of the firewood project, however, most of the rape cases that used to occur whenever women went to look for firewood in the forests reduced drastically. This selective helping of rape victims seems to have irked most locals, many of whom argue that whereas refugees are responsible for the escalation of rape cases around Dadaab, it is their women who benefit at the end of the day as they usually are resettled in America, Australia, or Canada. The local rape victims are, on the other hand, never recognized or assisted in any way by either the Kenya government or UNHCR. This issue, it appears, has also contributed to the intense feeling of hatred that locals seem to have towards refugees at Dadaab.

Most of the insecurity in North Eastern Province appears to be instigated for business reasons. According to some locals and the police officers we interacted with, it is usually businessmen who encourage banditry in the region in the course of protecting their business interests. These businessmen, it appears, buy most of their goods from Somalia and transport them through the banditry-infested areas where there are no policemen in sight. Most of their goods are those that are illegally smuggled into Kenya. To guard their convoy from police checks or bandits, the businessmen hire armed bandits who accompany their vehicles to ensure the safety of their goods. This rewarding of illegal activities seems to have enticed many idle refugees and locals

into purchasing firearms and enrolling as paid bandits at a good fee. This might be one of the reasons why it is difficult to eradicate banditry in this region. When not on hire, such groups seem to target any other person or vehicle in their sight. According to agency officials, most of these incidents have reduced since security was beefed up in the late 1990s. Prior to this period, agency vehicles used to be commonly attacked and looted by bandits in the course of their travelling to or from Garissa or between the camps. This prompted the agencies to support the creation of more police posts and police escorts for all the agencies' vehicles travelling in the area. At present, there are two police posts at every refugee camp. And at Dadaab market, there is a police headquarters and an administration police camp near the DO's office. Even the locals are agreed that the current security situation is much better than the one in the 1990s, during which a day would hardly pass without one hearing gunshots.

Deterioration in the local Somali cultural norms is also commonly blamed on the refugee presence. There seems to be a fear among the locals that the refugee presence is contributing to loss of their cultural heritage. Culture is dynamic and whenever two cultures come into contact, borrowing from each other's culture of some cultural elements always takes place. The change in the local cultural norms is being witnessed in various forms at Dadaab. The Somali people are Muslims, and apart from being a religion, Islam is also a way of life. Islam prohibits, among other things, drinking of alcohol, loud music or dancing and wearing of short dresses by women. These practices are considered immoral in the Islamic culture. Before the advent of refugees at Dadaab, there were no drinking places such as bars. At the moment, however, there are social places in almost all the agencies' compounds where beer is sold to agency workers, government officials such as police officers, and others like business people and visitors. Secular music, which is also prohibited by Islam, is played in these places. Many local leaders vehemently oppose the establishment of such social places, and have been trying to urge the UNHCR to abolish them, arguing that their operations are contrary to Islamic teaching.

So far, there are no drinking places outside the agencies' compounds, but all indications are that it will not be long before they will be established in places such as police posts. About a half of the Somali agency workers also come to these places, although they mostly take sodas as opposed to beer. In addition, some Somali women do visit these social places at night, an issue

that the locals associate with prostitution, which again is contrary to Islam. A good number of these women take beer and even put on long trousers. During the day, however, they revert to their *buibuis* (the long dresses put on by Muslim women) and cover their heads as required by their religion. Many local elders have equated this behaviour with prostitution, and have held the refugees as being wholly responsible for this immorality. Because it is mostly educated women who freely interact with men, both Muslims and non-Muslims alike, at such places, some locals, especially the elderly ones, said that they are reluctant to educate their girls out of the fear that they will get spoiled. When he was asked why he had not taken any of his female children to school, a local chief remarked that:

The agencies' officials are always urging our girls to go to school because they want the girls to be clean so that they can fuck them. They are always after our women, and have spoiled most of them. When you look at their women, you can even see the breasts because they wear very scanty clothing and our women are aping this disgusting practice.

Somali men are always over-protective of their women. It is difficult for a non-Muslim man to freely speak to any Somali woman at Dadaab, as this is usually interpreted to be an immoral act. The Somali know that the social changes that are currently sweeping across their region are inevitable, but they seem determined in putting up resistance to the changes all the same.

Churches for non-Muslim refugees and agency workers have also been springing up inside the camps, effectively challenging the idea that the area is predominantly Muslim. The local population, spearheaded by the older generation, has fiercely been trying to resist this "pollution of their culture" as some put it, but all indications are that some of the introduced changes are there to last. This is because some of the cultural elements that are most affected by this change seem to be moribund. Consequently, the displacement of such customs by those being introduced appears to be unstoppable.

Closely related to this perceived immorality is the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) pandemic. Garissa has one of the highest divorce rates in the country (Kenya Government, 2002a). Most of the women divorcees engage in selling *miraa* and other forms of trade, putting them at the risk of contracting AIDS. The introduction of this disease at Dadaab is

also blamed on the refugees. Many locals attribute the disease to prostitution that was supposedly introduced by the refugees.

Conflict resolution at Dadaab between refugees and locals and among the refugees themselves, has offered another bone of contention between the two groups. Most conflicts between refugees and the locals at Dadaab are resolved through clan elders from both the refugee and the local sides. The local chiefs and refugee leaders, including sectional and block leaders, are usually involved in the resolution of such conflicts. If the case is too sensitive, it is usually referred to the police who assess its merit and sometimes refer it to a visiting magistrate who comes to Dadaab once per week to hear cases. Some locals complain that, of late, far too many cases are being referred to the police who usually do not resolve them according to the Somali tradition. In their view, police usually harass their people and should as such not be allowed to meddle in conflict resolution as they do not understand their culture. These sentiments were also echoed by the Somali refugee leaders who thought that their role in resolving conflicts was increasingly becoming insignificant, as every case nowadays is being referred to “tango five” (a police communication code that is widely used by refugees to mean police officers).

According to local leaders at Dadaab, all cases between refugees and locals should either be referred to the *Kadhi's* court at Garissa, or else be dealt with by the locals themselves. The traditional Somali conflict resolution mechanism where bandits and other wrongdoers tend to be protected by other members of the same clan or community, and where individuals are allowed to buy exemption from criminal acts through the notion of *mashlaha* or blood money (UNHCR, 2001b), inevitably clashes with the formal legal system. But from the locals' perspective, it is the refugee presence that is to blame, both for making the Islamic way of resolving conflicts redundant and for ignoring the Somali culture. The issue is controversial because the few Sudanese refugee leaders we interacted with were opposed to it.

Local clan rivalries appear to have become more pronounced with the coming of refugees at Dadaab. Most locals are of the Ogadeni clan and share clan relations with the refugees, a majority of who are also of Ogadeni clan. There are, however, other clans that are hated by some locals due to political and social reasons. According to some local leaders, the former KANU

government had always concentrated their efforts on uplifting the living standards of only one Somali clan at the expense of others. Promotions in government positions and development projects are also said to have targeted one particular region where the “right” clan resided. The Dujis clan is locally cited as being the favoured one in this connection. There is a general feeling around Dadaab that the former KANU government was discouraging the agencies from developing the Dadaab area because its people are in the wrong clan, and that some of the agencies’ assistance that was meant for the locals was often diverted to areas where the Dujis reside. This hate for some clans is sometimes shifted to the refugees of those particular clans in the camps. Accordingly, many locals now want the NARC government to compel the NGOs dealing with refugees to assist them and not marginalize them the way KANU did.

The relationship between the locals and the Sudanese and other non-Somali refugees is even more strained. At all the three camps, Sudanese, Ethiopian and Somali refugees are housed in different sections according to nationality because of the rivalries that exist between the refugees of different nationalities. The locals also seem to prefer Somali refugees to the others. This is mainly due to cultural differences. Most locals consider non-Muslims as *kafir*s or non-believers and have a very low opinion of them. Since most Sudanese are of the Christian faith, they have never been on good terms with either the locals or the Somali refugees. Female circumcision or female genital mutilation (FGM) has been another cultural issue that has made the locals and the Somali refugees hate the other refugees of non-Somali origin. The Somali, both refugees and locals, practise FGM. The Somali FGM is the most serious and detrimental form of circumcision, which involves the entire removal of the female genital organ with only a small hole left for urination and menstruation after stitching (Chida, 2002). In 1996, UNHCR issued a policy on culturally harmful practices among refugees, including female genital mutilation, which is considered as an indigenous practice among mainly Muslim females in some parts of African and Arabic countries (ibid.). The Kenya government also outlawed FGM around 1976 (Chida, 2002). The FGM practice in the camps at Dadaab, therefore, contravenes both the UNHCR policy and the Kenyan law. In the Somali tradition, it is difficult for an uncircumcised female to get a husband. The FGM is usually performed inside the camps, perhaps because of the fear of reprisal from government officials if it is done outside the camps.

When respondents were asked to give their reasons for visiting the camps, a significant 36% of the female respondents cited taking their daughters or relatives for FGM as one of their reasons for visiting the camps. This supports Chida's observation that "almost 100% of Somali adult female refugees are circumcised in the camps" (2002: 8). According to the Sudanese refugee leaders, Sudanese women usually suffer humiliation when Somali midwives deliver them at the health centres inside the camps, as the latter usually make fun of the former's uncircumcised status instead of assisting them to deliver. It is, in fact, the Somali women traditional birth attendants (TBAs) that seem to be the ones carrying out the FGM operation (ibid.) because, acting as TBAs, appears to be a way of compensating them for the lost income that might be resulting from prohibiting FGM. The agencies' officials seem to be aware of such practices, but they have largely elected to remain passive in the face of these obvious vices. Many are only contented with putting on T-shirts with writings opposed to female genital cutting, but this has not been effective in campaigning against the practice. This is because such T-shirts are usually put on mostly in the evenings after work when the officials go for a drink in social places. These would be the last places that one would expect to find a Somali audience. In addition, most local Somali and Somali refugees are illiterate, and it is doubtful that they ever understand the messages that are displayed on the agency officials' T-shirts. Chida (2002) comments that it is hard to eradicate FGM in the camps because women who are thought to be the victims are actually the ones that resist the change more than men.

The presence of refugees also seems to have caused serious racial and ethnic discriminations at Dadaab. Many Somali children habitually refer to black non-Somali as people of "*nywele ngumu*" (hard hair). It is not uncommon to see a Somali wash a water tap that was previously being used by a Sudanese refugee at the three camps in Dadaab. This is because many Somali regard Sudanese and other non-Somali Africans as dirty people. In an attempt to find out the ways that locals use to identify refugees, this study asked the respondents whether they could recognize a refugee by just looking at him/her. A hundred and three respondents (68.67%) said they could not, 27 (18%) said they could do so if the refugees in question were either Sudanese or Ethiopian, while the remaining 20 (13.33%) of the respondents said they could easily tell a refugee from a local. Those who specifically singled out the Sudanese and Ethiopians used skin colour as their differentiating yardstick. This is understandable given that the physical features

between the Somali or the Ethiopians and the Sudanese are markedly different (most Somali and Ethiopians have a brown skin colour while a majority of the Sudanese are outstandingly black). The disadvantage that emerged from using physical features as differentiation benchmarks was that the Sudanese were chauvinistically described as very black people who look like “animals” or “criminals” reflecting, in my opinion, an element of skin-based hate towards Sudanese refugees by both locals and Somali refugees.

It is also a common practice in Dadaab to hear the Somali children utter a contemptuous sound of “*uf uf*”, accompanied by the blocking of the noses using their fingers whenever a Sudanese refugee is passing by. This is an offensive gesture that is meant to inform those it is directed at that they smell badly. Sometimes, fights erupt between the Sudanese and Somali because of the use of such crude gestures. The Sudanese interpret the children’s actions as being representative of their parents’ feelings towards them, and there are therefore continued hostilities between the two groups because of such skin-based discriminations. Therefore, although a high percentage of respondents indicated that they could not identify a refugee by just looking at him/her, skin colour discriminations seem to be rife at Dadaab. These sorts of prejudices have forced the agencies to separate the Sudanese from the Somali refugees in the Dadaab camps, as the latter seem to find it hard to share social services or co-exist with the former. The agencies have also been trying to encourage the Sudanese to voluntarily accept to be relocated to Kakuma camp.

6.2.2 Positive Social Factors

There are, however, also positive social aspects of the refugee presence at Dadaab. Some scholars have observed that in most of the refugee camps that have been established near international borders in Africa, the refugees and hosts had, before the camps were established, been maintaining some close relationships (Horst, 2001; Ohta, 2002). This argument perfectly describes the locals and refugees at Dadaab who, apart from having shared a common boundary before the refugees were displaced, also shared ethnic and religious backgrounds. Like locals, most refugees at Dadaab are Muslims of Somali ethnic group who belong to the Ogadeni clan, and both are pastoral nomads. In fact, in the 1960s, the Kenyan Somali fought for the North East of the country to be incorporated into a greater Somali state because the political border between Kenya and Somalia has always largely remained irrelevant to these two groups (UNHCR,

2001b). The coming of the Somali refugees would, therefore, appear to have been a blessing in disguise for the locals, as it brought their fellow brothers closer to them, hence strengthening the relationship between these two groups that share ethnic and cultural backgrounds. This view is reflected in the research findings. Only 5 out of the total 150 respondents (3.33%) denied ever having been inside the camps around Dadaab. Most respondents cited five main reasons for regularly going into the camps at Dadaab: they have refugee relatives whom they go to see, have intermarried with refugees, for business related matters such as selling their animals, to work for agencies or go to look for such work, and for other socio-cultural matters such as taking their daughters for FGM. Respondents were asked to state the purpose of their most recent visit to the camps, and were, therefore, only limited to one response. Consequently, the responses are mutually exclusive. These findings are shown in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Why locals visit the refugee camps at Dadaab.

Common reasons for visiting the camps	Frequency	Percentage
Business reasons, e.g., selling goats or buying foodstuffs	50	34.48
Visiting refugee relatives or friends	40	27.59
Other socio-cultural matters, e.g., FGM	20	13.79
To seek job opportunities or those working for the agencies	31	21.38
Other reasons	04	2.76
Total	145	100

The high percentage rate reflected in business and job opportunities is understandable, given that people need to look for their daily bread in order to survive. Out of the total 145 respondents that have ever been to the camps, 34.48% indicated that they frequent the camps for business reasons while 21.38% stated that they go there to either work or look for employment at the agencies. This seems to suggest that over 50% of the local inhabitants directly or indirectly earn a livelihood from the presence of the camps. This might, however, be misleading, given that only a very small percentage of those who go to look for the jobs do actually secure them. The 27.59%

who go to the camps primarily to visit friends or relatives attest to the fact that refugees and the locals do actually have strong bonds. This fact is made even stronger by the significant percentage of those who go to the camps for socio-cultural reasons such as taking their daughters for FGM or having a meeting with agencies' officials or refugees. It is important to stress here that it was only women respondents who mentioned FGM, indicating that men have a minimal role in the perpetuation of this practice. The locals at Dadaab and the Somali refugees seem to be very cohesive because ethnic, cultural, religious, social and marital ties unite them. Were it not for the discrimination in assistance that the agencies subject the locals to, it is highly probable that the majority Somali refugees and the locals would be having fewer hostilities than what the situation is at the moment. This sentiment was repeatedly echoed by over a half of the respondents who said that their problem was with the NGOs dealing with refugees, and not the refugees themselves.

The continuation in social relationships and the intermarriages between the locals and the Somali refugees despite the many complaints about the refugees' perceived harmful effects significantly reveals how close the two groups are. A considerable number of locals have intermarried with the refugees and are currently staying inside the camps where most of their needs are being taken care of by the agencies. Others have permanently settled both around the camps and at Dadaab market, and now engage in a wide range of earning livelihoods such as petty business, instead of relying on livestock alone. Another refugee advantage at Dadaab therefore is the more permanent settlements by the locals who were previously nomads. The locals seem to have a dislike for the Sudanese and other refugee groups, and I never came across a case of intermarriages between these groups. Consequently, almost all the intermarriages between refugees and locals are restricted to the Somali. Still, these intermarriages have been important in minimizing tensions and hostilities between the locals and the Somali refugees who are the majority at Dadaab.

UNHCR authors like Jamal (2000) have also argued that the net impact of refugees upon the regions they inhabit in Kenya is positive. This is because of the humanitarian aid in form of social services such as medical care and education that the local populations at the camps have access to due to the agencies' presence. However, at Dadaab, these services are mainly restricted to the camps and there is little direct benefit to the locals. Only those registered as refugees do

actually enjoy free education and medical care. There have, in fact, been various complaints from the locals that the agencies have only been concentrating on the refugees while totally ignoring the local population. Because of such complaints, CARE has begun a programme that is designed to offer some assistance to the local community called Local Assistance Programme (LAP). This programme is similar to another one, also initiated by CARE known as Refugee Assistance Programme (RAP), which was meant to make refugees self-reliant. The objective of LAP is to help the indigenous people in the whole of North Eastern Province in diverse areas, including food aid and micro-irrigation agriculture, promoting the locals' educational standards, improving sanitation standards through building latrines, providing drinking water to the locals, and helping them in marketing their livestock and its products. This is in collaboration with the local community. Although it is in its formative stages, the programme has started a micro-irrigation system where refugees are provided with water to manually irrigate crops such as millet and vegetables that seem to be doing well at the camps.

LAP has actually offered little or no assistance to the local community despite its name that has obvious connotations of promoting the locals' interests. This is because all of the programmes' activities are a duplication of the RAP, which are geared towards the assistance of the refugees. Micro-irrigation is, for instance, not offered to the locals because, according to the officials in charge, the locals are naturally lazy and cannot do anything else apart from keeping livestock. This sentiment might be correct, but it fails to take into consideration the cultural aspect of the people it is intended for. It is difficult for the local women to engage in the micro-irrigation project, for instance, because they have never handled agricultural implements like *jembes*. It is also hard to imagine weeding in such hot conditions with the type of clothing that women are permitted to wear-long *buibuis* with all body parts, including the head covered. My own judgment of the LAP is that it is a total mockery. This is because its name suggests it is solely for the locals' welfare but, in reality, it is directed at the refugees just like the RAP.

The agencies are also trying to assist the local community through a local NGO called *Aspect Dadaab*. This NGO was started by a small section of elite locals in 1995, though it was officially registered in 1998. The broad objective of this NGO was to act as a forum for demanding for assistance to the locals from the agencies. The NGO also wanted to raise local awareness on

environmental degradation that was being caused by the refugee presence. With time, the NGO started liaising with CARE, which it lobbied into drilling boreholes for the locals. The water efforts by CARE have, however, not been significant in reducing local negative attitudes towards refugees because the locals have to pay Ksh. 2 for every container of water as maintenance fee, while refugees are not required to make any water-related payment.

At present Aspect Dadaab offers training to some locals in areas such as animal health (it has various veterinary shops), tailoring, refuse recycling, making mats, and training traditional birth attendants using funds that are provided by CARE. In addition, Aspect Dadaab also liaises with GTZ in its environmental conservation programmes. To reduce illiteracy, the NGO started the Donkey Cart project where poor parents are given a cart that they use to supply firewood to refugees. In return, the parents have to use the profit accruing from the firewood supply to take children, especially girls, to school. Although this NGO appears to be benefiting only a few locals and mostly those with the right connections to its officials, it seems to be the only one that is providing practical assistance to the locals with the help of the agencies.

6.3 SOCIAL REFUGEE-LOCAL ASPECTS AT THE CLOSED THIKA RECEPTION CENTRE

6.3.1 Negative Factors

Refugees stayed at Thika for a total of 14 years (1981-1995). This means that the Thika refugees were in a protracted situation, just like their counterparts at Dadaab. The reception nature of the Centre meant that refugees were supposed to stay there for only about six months while they were waiting for their status determination interviews. In reality, however, the Thika refugees appear to have stayed indefinitely at the Centre until the date of its closure. This departure from the Centre's original purpose appears to have been occasioned by the slow speed at which the government was doing status determination. This was demonstrated in the 1991 handing-over notes from the out going Centre's manager to his successor:

These interviews (for refugees) have been suspended for almost a year now. This has inconvenienced refugees because they cannot be considered for resettlement until they are accepted in the first status determination interviews. Please exert pressure to have them resumed.

The slowness in conducting these interviews seems to have been prompted by lack of an agreeable formula on how to go about with the process between the concerned stakeholders, including the refugees themselves, UNHCR, and the Kenya government. This became evident in a copy of a letter dated 10 August, 1994 from the National Refugee Secretariat to the UNHCR representative in Kenya, which stated in part:

...in our letter of 5/1/94, we called off the proposed interviews at Ruiru and Thika camps by J.V.A. for the Somali resettlement applicants due to feuding among the community members over the method used in identifying those to be interviewed....

The refugees' long stay at Thika seems to have had profound social impacts on the local population.

First, it emerged that the refugee population kept on swelling such that, with time, it surpassed the Centre's capacity of adequately hosting them. When the Centre was established in 1981, it was intended to accommodate only about 300 refugees. In his handing-over notes to the incoming Centre's manager dated 18 February, 1991, the outgoing manager noted that the facility had originally been intended to host only 320 people, which appears to have been the Centre's original population. At the time of writing the handing-over notes in 1991, a total of 1,800 refugees had been registered as being officially hosted at the Centre, way above the originally targeted capacity of 320. The outgoing manager, in his last instructions, appeared to be urging his successor to push for relocation of refugees to a different location in Ndeiya where, according to him, a ministerial proposal had directed that a 50-acre plot was available for the purpose. This proposal never materialized as refugees were relocated from the Centre in 1995 to other places in Kenya. The 1991 collapse of military dictatorships of Siyad Barre and Mengistu Haile Mariam in Somalia and Ethiopia, respectively, seems to have further swollen the refugee population at Thika. A former Head Cook at the Centre told us that by the time the Centre was being considered for closure in 1995, its approximate population had climbed to about 5,000. According to him, the Centre's food preparation was based on this figure. This gradual increase in refugee population appears to have defeated the Centre's original purpose of acting only as a reception centre.

The vast increase in the refugee population appears to have simultaneously been accompanied by insecurity. The 1991 handing-over notes mentioned above, indicate that the majority of the refugees at the Centre were Ethiopians, followed by Ugandans, Somali, Zaireans, Sudanese, and Burundians, in that order. The study could not access the annex that was mentioned to have accompanied these notes, which would have given the specific figures by nationality. However, it is reasonable to assume that Ugandans were there in significant numbers, since they were the pioneer group at the Centre, according to almost all the respondents. As already mentioned elsewhere in this study, the Ugandans played a major role in influencing the local attitudes towards refugees because they interacted most intimately with locals at Gichagi village as opposed to other groups such as Ethiopian or Somali refugees who were said to have kept to themselves throughout the entire period that they stayed at Thika.

According to the study's findings, 24 (48%) of the respondents thought that insecurity became a problem at Thika only with the coming of refugees. Twenty two (44%) denied this while the remaining 4 (8%) said that they were not sure. It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude from these results that the increase in refugee numbers probably led to a corresponding increase in insecurity at Thika, since almost a half of the respondents were of this opinion. Many respondents also claimed that during the refugees' stay in their area, there was a high incidence of firearms. A former Ethiopian refugee at the Centre who now resides illegally at Makongeni Market and two former employees at the Centre, for instance, separately narrated to us various occurrences that pointed to the fact that refugees at the Centre were in possession of firearms. One such incident involved two Ethiopian refugees who had been senior figures in the government that had collapsed. These people were, according to the three respondents, shot at Thika during the night by suspected spies from Ethiopia who had infiltrated the camp. They both died at a Nairobi hospital while undergoing treatment.

Trace records at Thika support the respondents' claim that spies were infiltrating the camps. In the 1991 handing-over notes, the outgoing manager warned his successor to guard against such infiltration and urged him to speed up interviews for the Ethiopians who sensed that their lives were in danger. He wrote:

(There are) Ethiopian Ex-army men officers and senior government officials who were involved in the coup attempt in Ethiopia in May 1989. The highest ranking is a Lieutenant-Colonel, and there are Majors, Captains, Lieutenants, and junior N.C.O.s and men. The group maintains a respectable behaviour but feels threatened and would wish to go through interviews as fast as possible. Their main fear is infiltration into the camp by government spies from Ethiopia under the guise of refugees....

The presence of these senior military men at the Centre might have led to the presence of firearms at Thika. If somebody is threatened by death, it is normal for such a person to look for ways of protecting himself. Such self-protective means might have led the refugees in question to look for ways of acquiring firearms. Many of our key informants also claimed that some refugees were using the guns under their possession to commit crimes such as robbery. A village elder even claimed that a certain Ugandan refugee named Mandevu, was selling guns at the nearby Chania River. Away from the firearms, there were also claims that the refugees were in the habit of stealing sugarcane and green maize from the locals' fields. The Ugandan refugees were the group that was commonly associated with this theft. For most of the locals, therefore, it was a relief when the refugees were relocated from their area to other Kenyan parts since their presence posed a security problem.

Closely related to the insecurity issue was the refugee-associated violence. Most refugees at Thika appear to have been very violent people. This is reflected in the 1991 outgoing manager's handing-over notes, where certain violent groups were singled out for the incoming manager's attention. One of this was the so-called Lakwena group from Uganda, about which the manager warned thus:

This group (Lakwena) consists of followers of Alice Lakwena and are ardent followers of the Holy Spirit movement. They are all young Ugandans and have a military background. In fact although they elected one Kenneth Kaunda as their representative in the refugee committee, their real leader is Edward Okot Opoka (code named "de Santos") who was their field commander back in Uganda.... The group does not mix freely with the rest of the refugees and still believe as a group that one day they will be united with Lakwena the spirit to go back to Uganda and liberate the country. This group is potentially violent.

Although other groups were also mentioned in violent-related incidents in the notes, the Lakwena group seems to have represented a perpetual and real threat to both the locals and fellow refugees. This was further established in a letter dated 31 October, 1994, in which a cross-section of Ugandan refugees notified the Kenya Government that the Lakwena group was threatening them with death. The letter read in part thus:

Please refer to our letter to you dated 24/10/94 in which we drew your attention to the fact that we were being threatened by Alice Lakwena to be forcibly repatriated to Uganda en masse.... Alice Lakwena has continued to harass us (and has) threatened us with death.... She first collected our rosaries and 250 of our bibles and burnt them. We are opposed to her for ordering the shaving of all our heads and burning the shaved hair for sorcery on 2/9/94 to 8/9/94....

The respondents who associated refugees with violence also singled out this group as having been the most dangerous. Whenever there were food shortages at the Centre, this group is said to have constantly raided the nearby Gichagi village for food and other items they thought were of value. According to one of the villagers, the Ugandan refugees were always threatening them that they "could do something bad and go back to Uganda if the villagers joked around with them". A former employee at the Centre echoed these sentiments when she said that the manager always bore the brunt of refugees' hostilities in cases where there were food shortages, as the refugees could vent their anger either by threatening to beat up staff or else by destroying the Centre's property. This was despite the fact that 6 Administration Police officers were permanently based at the Centre for the purposes of maintaining law and order. It appears that these officers were either incompetent or else were too few to have effectively contained the violence that was sometimes generated by refugees. According to some locals, most of the violence related incidents they reported to the police either went unheeded or were only lightly punished by making the culprits slash the Centre's compound or requiring them to pay a small fine that would not deter the refugees in question from engaging in future violent acts.

The refugees were fenced off inside the Centre's compound and were required to go out only with permission, but the perimeter fence was said to have been cut in several places by refugees so that they could sneak in and out whenever they wanted. Security at the gate also seems to have been very lax and in most cases ambiguous, as refugees could walk in and out by illegal

means that had been devised by the camp's manager. This ambiguity is reflected in the 1991 handing-over notes, in which the outgoing manager wrote:

I devised a pass to enable refugees attend their problems outside the Centre. The pass has no legal backing and actually contravenes the Immigration Act, but is an administrative convenience. You should be very discreet when issuing it.

It appears that most refugees either took advantage of the pass issue to go and "attend to their problems" that were more often than not in or around the village, or else sneaked through the fences. For the Ugandans, many visits were made to the nearby Gichagi village for the purposes of socializing with locals while taking the local *mung'aro* brew. After taking the local beer, Ugandan refugees were said to have been very violent people. This is because they would approach the local women in full view of their husbands or parents, which would then result in fights, with Ugandan refugees ganging up against the locals.

In his analysis of the various forms of violence at the Dadaab and Kakuma camps, Crisp (2000, 2002) observes that such violence occurs within national refugee groups, between national groups and between refugees and local populations. This was the precise nature of the violence at Thika. There was violence between refugees belonging to the same country, but ascribing to different causes. The Ugandan case discussed above, where the Lakwena group was terrorizing the other Ugandan refugees, elaborates this. There was also violence between various clans from the same country at Thika. A letter by a Somali refugee dated 16 March, 1995, which was addressed to the Regional Protection Officer of UNHCR asking for third country resettlement, elaborates such rivalries. The author claimed that his life and that of his family were in danger due to clan rivalries. This was because he belonged to the minority Sak clan while the majority of the other Somali refugees at Thika were of the Darod clan. According to him, the Darod had been responsible for his displacement from Somalia and had killed some of his family members at both Dadaab and Kakuma. Consequently, he felt unsafe in Kenya and wanted to be considered for third country resettlement. Such rivalries and tensions that were hitherto absent at Thika seem to have contributed to the locals' negative feelings towards the presence of refugees in their area because, as some put it, "we had never heard the noise made by gunshots until refugees came".

The refugees from different countries also perpetrated violence based on nationality. According to a former refugee at the Centre who now resides at Makongeni Market, the refugees stayed in the same compound but were housed according to nationality. Fights used to erupt constantly at the Centre between refugees of the various nationalities. Children, according to one of the former staffers at the Centre, caused many of such fights. As she put it:

Children would call each other names, and would then engage in fights. The women would then join in support of their children, followed by their husbands. Eventually, the entire refugee population would get involved, with each supporting his or her own compatriots.

There was a police post within the Centre to check these conflicts, but the small number of police officers based there appears to have been inadequate to contain such conflicts and ensure that the refugees did not go out of the camps without good reason.

A more probable reason that might also have contributed to the closure of the Thika Reception Centre was the apparent closeness of the camp to the Engineering Battalion, which is a military barracks that is just across the road from the former Centre. Tension seems to have existed between the refugees and the members of this military barracks. According to the former employees at the Centre, refugees were always colliding with senior officers at the barracks, who suspected them of tapping the telephone lines that were being used by the army. This suspicion arose when it was discovered that some refugees had connected their own wires to the telephone lines that were serving the Engineering Battalion so that they could communicate free of charge with their friends and relatives back home. This claim seems to have had some basis because senior officers from the Barracks sometimes visited the Centre for unknown reasons. One such visit occurred on 6 August, 1991. According to the Visitors' Book, a high-powered delegation, led by the Barrack's brigadier, the then Central Provincial Commissioner, and the Provincial Police Officer, Central Province, visited the Centre. The reasons for the visit were not indicated in the Visitors' Book, but what a senior army man had come to do at a refugee facility is anybody's guess. The former employees at the Centre also informed the study that refugees were regularly colliding with the Centre's management because the former were illegally tapping electricity from the Centre's offices to their own houses. Whenever new refugee shelters (mainly tents) were constructed, the Centre's management would, according to our respondents, discover

electric lights shining from the new shelters even when electricity had not been officially connected to such shelters. These claims tend to portray the Thika refugees as people who knew too much to be allowed to stay close to such a sensitive place like the military establishment.

Closely related to this was the nearness of the former Reception Centre to Kenya's capital city of Nairobi. The former Centre lay just outside Nairobi, as the distance from Nairobi to Thika is only 50 kilometres. The insecurity, violence and other tricks that were associated with the refugees might have motivated the government to consider sheltering refugees as far away from its capital city as possible. The many refugee letters to UNHCR and the Kenya Government, which stated that the refugees were going to resist any move that would take them away from Thika, demonstrated some of the refugee-associated violence. Some of the locals at the study site told the study that on the material day they were evicted, there was a fight between the refugees who were resisting relocation and the security personnel. A letter dated 25 April, 1995 from UNHCR to the head of the National Refugee Secretariat corroborated this. This letter read in part:

A reasonable number of armed officers should be deployed at Thika camp on Thursday evening. Their duty is to ensure that the packing of belongings proceeds as arranged and that there is no destruction/looting or theft of property. It is necessary to take these measures in view of the fact that the refugees have already declared through their representatives, their unwillingness to relocate from Thika.... You will recall that early last year, a busload of refugees was commandeered by the refugees who were unwilling to go to Kakuma, hence the precaution.

The seriousness of the violence and insecurity that the government and UNHCR associated the refugees with, are perhaps best reflected in the above quoted letter. These people even had the audacity to commandeer a whole bus that was being escorted by armed security personnel. It is, therefore, no wonder that the government relocated them to remote places, far away from its capital city, perhaps because the government wanted refugees to be as far away as possible from its nerve centre.

Refugees were also perceived negatively at Thika for supposedly being "dirty minded". It was claimed by 5 respondents at the Gichagi village that the Somali disliked using the toilets at the Centre. As a result, they were always going to the bushes neighbouring the village for their long calls, carrying small containers of water. Muslims are forbidden to use toilet paper, preferring

water instead. This appears to have been interpreted as a strange practice by the local Christians who were used to toilet paper or leaves from some plants as toilet paper. Ethiopians were also perceived as having been dirty but for different reasons. According to a former cleaner at the Centre, the Ethiopians were fond of throwing used toilet paper on the floor instead of disposing it inside the toilets. This also seems to have greatly infuriated the local workers at the Centre who sometimes shared such facilities with refugees. This practice appears to have been prompted by sheer carelessness that seems to characterize most camps. Chida (2002) reports similar carelessness among the refugees at Dadaab when she visited the camp in 1998. She describes incidences of refugees deliberately leaving dead animals such as chickens and goats in the middle of the roads in the camp so that CARE would do the cleaning. "This is a clear beginning of the so-called 'dependency syndrome'", she observed (p.6). Refugees seem to have adopted the "don't care" attitude because they believe that there are people who are paid to do everything for them. At Thika, this attitude led to their being resented by the locals.

Some locals also blame refugees for having interfered with people's marriages, and for having increased the rate of cases where children were born out of wedlock. This is because of the many sexual relationships that Ugandan refugees are said to have had with the local girls and even married women. These relationships were also blamed for the introduction of the AIDS pandemic at Thika. Ten respondents, representing 20% of the sample, mentioned the AIDS issue. This observation seems to have been true because in the 1980s, AIDS was not prevalent in most parts of the country. Three of the former workers at the Centre also claimed that many refugees were overstaying at Thika because they were "failing" the AIDS test. It appears that the refugees who wanted to be considered for third country resettlement in Western countries underwent the AIDS test while staying at the Thika Reception Centre, and those who were found with the HIV virus were considered to have "failed" the AIDS test by the former Centre's employees. The argument that refugees might have introduced AIDS at Thika is further augmented by the 1991 handing over notes by the then outgoing manager to his successor:

You have a duty to protect the single girls from the majority of male population. I reserve one dormitory for them. There is a high incidence of AIDS in the camp.

As regards sexual relationships at Thika, the Ugandan refugees appear to have posed a constant headache to the locals because they never seemed to have differentiated between people's wives

and the single ladies. At the village, a common expression whenever we were introducing our study's objective and ourselves was: "those people spoiled many young girls and ruined people's marriages. We do not want to talk about them". It, therefore, appears that refugees at Thika were widely perceived in negative terms because of the above combination of social factors. The many negative social impacts elaborated above might have been responsible for their relocation from the Centre.

6.3.2. Positive Factors

Despite the many negative impacts that were associated with the refugee presence at Thika, their social advantages also existed. To begin with, the Centre has now been turned into a school for children with special needs. According to the manager of the school (Thika Rehabilitation School), 140 children are currently being hosted there. These children are considered to be special cases because they are under the Ministry of Home Affairs and National Heritage, not the Ministry of Education, and are all brought there following a court order. As a rule, all the children at the school are aged 18 and below. This, according to the Kenyan law, is the requisite age for one to be considered as a child. The children who are referred to the Centre are socially unfit to enroll in the ordinary learning institutions due to various problems such as indiscipline or mental handicap. Of late, however, children without parents have increasingly been gaining entry into the school.

This school, a social amenity with such noble goals, is where it is because of the infrastructure that was left behind when the refugees were relocated from Thika. The locals have, therefore, benefited by inheriting the social infrastructure from the former refugee home. This advantage seemed unpopular among the respondents probably because most had no children admitted at the school. In addition, the low level of education among the respondents (20% were illiterate, 46% had some primary school education and 30% had attained some secondary school education) seems to suggest that the locals at Thika place little value on education. The many children we came across who either never attend school, or else drop from the schools at a very early age, appear to justify this observation.

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Drinking the local brew together also seems to have built and strengthened social ties between the refugees and the locals. Despite the many complaints that were made about the former refugee presence at Thika, some respondents expressed their regrets about the refugee departure from their area. These ties were mainly as result of sexual relationships between Ugandan male refugees and the local women, and not vice versa. Although we came across various cases where the Ugandans had impregnated the local women, we were not told of any incidence where a local man had either married or made a refugee pregnant. One of these sexual social ties involves a village elder's daughter who has a teenage son she got with a Ugandan refugee. Two other local ladies had also conceived with refugees, but the children died before age five. Another case involved a local lady who married a Ugandan refugee and even moved with him to the Kakuma camp when the Thika Centre was closed. Eventually, they moved to Uganda when the country became peaceful and stayed for five years before they divorced after the lady became ill. According to her mother, she died some time ago but left behind two children, whom she is taking care of. The parents whose daughters were involved in such relationships are bitter people and hate refugees for having "spoilt their children". Some of the women respondents, on the other hand, were of the opinion that these relationships were good. Such relationships, therefore, created some lasting memories (both good and bad) and left a social mark that makes locals always remember refugees.

The locals and their former refugee neighbours seem to have depended on one another. This is because the refugees offered to the locals cheap foodstuffs, cheap labour (the Ugandans working on the locals' plots were particularly cited in this connection), and were the major customers for the women brewers. On their part, the locals also offered to the refugees goods and services that they could not get at the Centre. These included cheap locally brewed beer, sexual services (women seem to have been fewer than men at the Centre), and other cheap services such as washing clothes, ironing, and so on, which the poor locals did for rich Somali and Ethiopian refugees. Many local business people also regretted the departure of refugees because as they put it "business was booming during the refugee stay". The relationship between the two, therefore, seems to have been symbiotic. In fact, when the respondents were asked how they would feel if refugees were to be brought back to their area, 15 (30%) of them said they saw nothing wrong

with that, while more than a half, 29 (58%), said such a move would be a bad one. The remaining 6 (12%) preferred to let the government decide any refugee- related matters.

These responses were based on the advantages and disadvantages of the former refugee presence within the locals' vicinity. Although only 30% of the respondents consented to the idea of allowing refugees to return to their area, it is, in my opinion, an amazingly high figure to represent people willing to host refugees again after having previously hosted them for 14 years. This is because many people around the world of late appear to associate refugees with only negative aspects, a reason that seems to have made them develop xenophobic tendencies towards refugees. Perhaps the Thika refugee perception case is a good enough consolation because the African refugee problem seems to be ever increasing, and the humanitarian responsibility to the displaced people should correspondingly also be ever present.

CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

DATE: _____
PAGE: _____

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarizes the study's findings and draws conclusions. On the basis of the conclusions, recommendations for policy implications are then made. The chapter also suggests areas for further research.

7.2 SUMMARY

According to our findings, the presence of refugees in Kenya has had both positive and negative impacts on the local hosting communities. On the whole, negative impacts seem more profound as compared to positive ones, which is the most likely reason for the locals' negative attitudes towards refugees in Kenya. The positive impacts of the refugee presence include the cheap foodstuffs that the locals have access to due to the food rations that are given to refugees by the agencies, improvement in infrastructure in the otherwise remote semi-arid regions where refugees are hosted, and the introduction of the alternative economic means of earning a livelihood such as engaging in trade. On the negative side, the locals seem to blame refugees for almost all their current problems.

At both Dadaab and Thika, the study found that competition in business was only peripherally affecting the local people's attitudes towards the refugees. This is contrary to earlier studies that attributed the hostilities between locals and refugees to competition in business due to the tax-free status of refugees (see for example, Crisp, 2000; Verdirame, 1999). At Dadaab, for instance, only 23% of the study sample voiced opposition to the issue of refugees engaging in business. Of those opposed to the refugees' engagement in trade, less than a third (31%) specifically brought up the refugees' tax-free status issue, which is thought to be giving them a business leeway as opposed to the locals.

The pastoral nature of the study subjects at Dadaab probably explains why they seem to attach little significance to competition in business between them and the refugees. The Somali are nomadic pastoralists who are more concerned with livestock than business. They have learned about business as an economic activity from refugees and some have even abandoned their

traditional nomadic lifestyles for alternative economic activities like trade and wage employment, but livestock is still playing an important role in the lives of most of them. Those who are now entirely engaging in business as their main economic activity seem not to begrudge refugees because many attribute their business success to the presence of refugees who, apart from having “taught” them business, also provide a constant market for their goods. Another probable explanation as to why there are few complaints on the refugee tax-free status at Dadaab is that it might simply be non-existent. Of the six refugee leaders we interviewed, two were businessmen and both mentioned that they pay a regular fee to the Garissa County Council officers. The local livestock traders also revealed that anybody selling or buying an animal has to pay a tax of 20 Kenyan shillings per animal at Dadaab, whether they are refugees or locals. Assuming that the refugees’ animal fee to the Garissa County Council’s officers has not been bribery, it is reasonable to conclude that refugees are also paying taxes, which then does not give them any special status in business.

Clearly, therefore, the hostilities between the two groups at Dadaab are being engendered by a combination of other economic and social factors. One of these economic reasons is the fear that refugees might displace the locals from their land due to the refugees’ numerical strength. This feeling probably arises from the steady expansion that the refugee camps have been making into the locals’ prime grazing lands. This is evident from the unanimous rejection by all the 150 respondents on the question relating to the refugee ownership of land at Dadaab. Other economic reasons established by the study as being responsible for negatively influencing local attitudes towards refugees are the job opportunities being given preferentially to refugees as opposed to locals, the competition for the meagre natural resources such as firewood and water sources between the two groups, and the perceived higher economic status of refugees. One of the most important sources of refugee wealth commonly cited by the locals is the third country resettlement that is associated with dollars. The dollars that are monthly remitted to some refugees in the camps at Dadaab by their relatives resettled in countries such as Canada, the U.S.A., and Australia, are thought to be making some refugees better off than locals. This seems to have resulted in blanket acrimonious feelings towards refugees by the locals at Dadaab.

On the social side, the massive refugee numbers seem to be a constant threat to the locals that their relatively smaller number may make them subordinate to the higher number of the refugee foreigners. In addition, the insecurity associated with the refugee presence, the generalized poverty of the locals that makes them perceive refugees as leading better social lives than themselves due to food rations and other social benefits that the refugees get from the agencies, and the real or imagined change of social norms being blamed on the refugee presence, have all contributed to the negative social feelings towards refugees by the locals. Lastly, the protracted refugee situation at Dadaab seems to have also generated immense local hostility towards the refugees because there seems to be no immediate permanent solution to the refugee problem, which has led to a sense of hopelessness among the locals with each passing day.

The economic factors that are playing a crucial role in shaping the local-refugee relationship at Dadaab seem to have been non-existent at Thika due to the abundance in firewood, water and other natural resources when refugees were residing there. In addition, the government, not UNHCR, was in charge of running the Thika Reception Centre. This ensured that jobs and other economic benefits were directly going to the locals, contrary to the current situation at Dadaab where refugees are the main beneficiaries of such economic opportunities.

Some social factors currently causing negative local attitudes towards the refugees at Dadaab were, however, just as important in influencing local attitudes at Thika. At Thika, for instance, the refugees' stay lasted 14 years, meaning that they, just like their equals at Dadaab, were also in a protracted situation. The locals at Thika, just like those at Dadaab, also associated the refugee presence to insecurity. At Thika, unlike at Dadaab, however, the local population was more than the refugee population. In fact, the refugee population at Thika rarely exceeded 5,000, and the threat to the locals of being overwhelmed by the refugees, therefore, did not exist. The adverse environmental impact due to the huge refugee numbers was consequently absent at Thika, which appears to have led to a sense of tolerance for refugees among the locals there as opposed to the current situation at Dadaab. Almost a third (30%) of the respondents at Thika actually indicated that they are still willing to host the refugees if they were to be brought back in their region. The favourable environmental conditions and the better refugee treatment at Thika, therefore, contributed to making the refugee status at Thika better than the current situation at

Dadaab. That is probably why refugees were reluctant to leave Thika in 1995, and had to be forcibly relocated. It must, however, be remembered that during the Thika Reception Camp's operation, many African countries were treating refugees in a relatively more humanitarian way than the current situation, and that the institution of asylum is generally on the decline in Africa (Rutinwa, 1999).

7.3 CONCLUSION

According to the study's findings (see chapter four), economic factors have been imperative in determining the attitudes of locals towards the refugees at Dadaab. This is due to the prevailing economic circumstances in the whole of the northern parts of Kenya where semi-arid conditions are prevalent. The semi-arid conditions that are associated with few economic opportunities, coupled with poor infrastructure that has come about due to the government's economic neglect of the northern region of Kenya, explain the poverty that abounds at the Dadaab refugee camp. The refugee settlement at Dadaab occurred in this scarcity backdrop. Basically, therefore, both refugees and their hosts are poor, and have to fiercely compete for the scarce economic prospects at Dadaab. The element of competition for both natural resources and the few available job and business opportunities between refugees and the locals seems to be impoverishing the locals even more, given the enormous refugee number that has exceeded the carrying capacity of the local resources at Dadaab. Since there has been little or no compensation for the adverse environmental impacts and the displacement that the huge refugee presence has caused, many locals at Dadaab generally feel that the refugee presence has more disadvantages than advantages. This has prompted the local population to perceive refugees in broad negative terms.

Furthermore, UNHCR and its implementing partners have largely been concerned with assisting only refugees, despite the fact that at Dadaab, hosts are just as vulnerable as the refugees. This has resulted in economic inequalities between the refugees and their hosts, with the former increasingly emerging the stronger of the two. Interestingly, it appears that many locals do not begrudge refugees as individuals. This was evident from the declaration by most of them that they had nothing against refugees, but with the agencies, which have created the current inequalities between the two groups [slightly more than a half (54%) of the respondents believe that refugees are economically more powerful than them]. In addition, most respondents (66%)

supported the issue of allowing refugees to engage in local trade, effectively countering the popular belief among the agencies' circles that competition in business is the most important factor that causes negative local attitudes towards refugees.

It follows then that the anger that is usually directed at the refugees might actually be intended for the agencies due to their discriminative predispositions. If this is the case, then it is reasonable to conclude that the local negative attitudes towards the refugees in Kenya are being caused by the refugee agencies, not the presence of refugees per se. Comparing the current situation at Dadaab (run by the agencies) with that at the closed Thika Reception Centre that was being run by the Kenya government further proves this hypothesis. At the closed Thika Reception Centre, locals appear to have been on friendlier terms with refugees than at Dadaab. In fact, about a third of the respondents at Thika stated that they would still welcome refugees if they were to be brought back in their area. This is despite the fact that they shared no ethnic or other relationship with refugees unlike the current situation at Dadaab where the locals share clans with the Somali refugees who constitute 97% of the refugee population there. If UNHCR and its implementing partners had been allowed to run the Centre at Thika, perhaps the locals there would have hated refugees just like their compatriots at Dadaab. This study, therefore, concludes that the locals are using refugees as conduits for the hate that is actually meant for the agencies' officials whom the locals have little interaction with.

As has been shown in chapter six, social factors have also been of immense influence on the attitudes of Kenyans towards the refugees that they are hosting. This was evident at both Dadaab and the closed Thika Reception Centre where the protracted refugee situations appear to have resulted in a hosting fatigue. The insecurity associated with refugees also emerged as an important point in the locals' negative perception towards refugees. At both sites, most locals stated that they are opposed to the refugee presence in their immediate vicinity because of the criminal activities that are associated with the refugees. Given that insecurity is a problem that has endured for long in the North Eastern Province of Kenya, this idea has enjoyed wide currency among politicians and the Kenya government, which has, in turn, contributed to the local animosities against the refugees at Dadaab. The massive refugee population also seems to

have instilled fear among the locals that refugees might permanently displace them, and this has, in turn, created a sense of distrust and suspicion against refugees.

The refugee presence has had some positive contributions to the areas where refugee camps are located. Socio-economic infrastructure has, for instance, been improved in the otherwise remote areas due to the refugee presence, and the locals have also adopted alternative economic means that seem to have slightly improved their welfare. The advantages associated with the refugees have, however, benefited refugees and agency officials more than the locals, and have, therefore, not been significant in reducing local negative feelings towards the refugees. There is, in fact, a general feeling at Dadaab that “the refugee presence has had more harm than good”.

This study’s findings suggest that, on the whole, Kenyan’s attitudes towards refugees are on a declining trend. The refugee perception at Thika was, for instance, better than that at Dadaab where some refugees were even described as “animals”. The population at Thika also rarely exceeded 5,000 people unlike the current situation at Dadaab where more than 130,000 people have been heaped in three camps. Lastly, the relocation of refugees in Kenya seems to follow a similar pattern where the refugee camps are moved from productive parts of the country to the less productive ones. This pattern has, in fact, resulted in a situation where all refugee camps in Kenya are now located in semi-arid areas. It is hoped that the study’s recommendations will help to reverse the deteriorating trend in the locals’ perceptions towards refugees.

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the study findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. UNHCR and other agencies dealing with refugees should review their policies to include the locals in their assistance programmes. This will reduce the locals’ hatred for refugees since the locals will start feeling that they are also benefiting from the refugee presence in their area.
2. The Kenya Government should improve the infrastructure in the semi-arid regions where refugees are hosted. This will help to improve the economic status of the local inhabitants in these regions that will, in turn, make them self-reliant.

3. The refugee population at Dadaab should be reduced to make it manageable by, for instance, resettling refugees in other areas with adequate resources. This will reduce the current environmental degradation that is being caused by the huge refugee numbers.

7.5 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- ❖ This study was only concerned with social and economic factors that are influencing local attitudes towards refugees. There may, however, be other factors such as political ones that are also contributing to the negative attitudes that many locals in Kenya seem to have towards refugees. There is, therefore, need to carry out a study on the role that other factors are playing in influencing local attitudes towards refugees, besides the economic and social ones.
- ❖ There is also need to carry out a study of this nature at the other only remaining camp of Kakuma in Kenya to corroborate these findings with those at Dadaab before generalizations can be made on the Kenyan attitudes towards refugees.
- ❖ Finally, there is need to carry out a study on the relationship between the locals and the agencies dealing with refugees in Kenya. This would be in response to many of the locals' opinion that their feeling towards refugees had nothing to do with the refugees themselves, but everything to do with the agencies. This feeling seems mutual, as most of the agencies' officials we had interviews with, also rated the locals very dismally.

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APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

Informed Consent

Hello. My name is _____ from the University of Nairobi. I am conducting a survey on the local people's attitudes towards refugees. This study is for academic purposes, but it may also be used by the government, UNHCR, and other NGOs charged with helping refugees in improving the relationship between Kenyan hosting communities and the refugees. You may withdraw from the study at any time, but it would be helpful to me if you could participate fully. I will be grateful if you could spare some time to answer a few questions that I shall ask you. Do you agree to participate in this study? Yes/ No (Tick what applies).

Questionnaire number _____

Research site _____

Location _____ Sub-Location _____

Village _____

Time interview starts _____ End _____

A: BACKGROUND

1. Name of respondent (optional) _____
2. Gender _____
3. Marital Status: (i) Married (ii) Single (iii) Divorced (iv) Separated (v) Widowed
4. Level of education: (i) Primary (ii) Secondary (iii) Post secondary (iv) None
(v) Other (specify) _____

B. REFUGEE PERCEPTION

5. Were you born in this area? Yes / No.
6. If no, how long have you been staying in this area? _____

7. In your opinion, who is a refugee? _____

8. Can you recognize a refugee by just looking at him/her? Yes /No.

9. If yes, how? _____

10. Have you ever interacted with a refugee/refugees? Yes/ No.

11. If yes, in which capacity?

- (i) As a friend or relative (ii) In business relations (iii) Inside the refugee camp
(iv) In social functions (specify) (v) other (specify)

12. Have you ever been in the refugee camp that is in your area? Yes/No

13. If yes, why had you gone there during your last visit? _____

14. How do you communicate with refugees?

- (i) In Swahili (ii) In English (iii) In Somali dialects (iv) Other (specify)

15. How do you personally feel about the refugees' in your area? _____

C. ECONOMIC INFORMATION

16. What is your occupation? _____

17. What is your monthly income from the economic activities you engage in?

- (i) Below Kshs. 1,000 (iii) Kshs. 2,001-3,000
(ii) Kshs 1,001-2000 (iv) Kshs. 3,001-5,000
(v) Kshs. 5,001-7,000 (vi) 7001 and above.

18. Do you have any other source of income apart from the above? _____

19. Who is the breadwinner in your family?

- (i) Husband (ii) Wife (iii) Children (iv) Other _____ (tick all that apply).

20. (a) Between refugees and locals, who is better off economically? _____

(b) Why? _____

21. (a). Do you often interact with refugees in business matters? Yes/ No.

(b). If yes, in which activities? _____

22. (a) Between refugees and locals, who owns more business enterprises? _____

(b). Why? _____

23. (a). Have you ever employed a refugee to work for you? Yes /No.

(b) Do refugees employ the local people? Yes/ No.

24. (a). Do you think it is justified for refugees to own business enterprises? Yes/ No

(b) Why? _____

25. (a). Do you think it is justified for refugees to raise livestock in your area? Yes /No.

(b). Why? _____

26. (a) Should refugees have equal access to natural resources such as firewood and water sources? Yes / No

(b) Why? _____

27. (a). Should refugees be allowed to own land in your area? Yes /No

(b). Why? _____

28. (a). Has refugee presence brought any economic benefits to your area? Yes/ No

(b) If yes, which ones? _____

(c) Has refugee presence brought any harmful effects to your area? Yes/ No

(d) Which ones? _____

D. SOCIAL INFORMATION

29. What is your religion? _____

30. (a). Are most of the refugees around of your religion? Yes / No

(b) Does this affect the way you relate with them? If yes, in which way? _____

31. Do you consider ethnic affiliations important in this area?

(i) Very strong (ii) Strong (iii) Not very strong (iv) Weak

(b). Do you consider clan affiliations important around here? Yes /No.

32. (a). Do you share any tribal/clan/sub-clan relations with some refugees? Yes/ No

(b). If yes, which ones? _____

(c). Does this affect the way you relate with those particular refugees? How? _____

33. (a). Do you ever attend tribal/clan/or sub-clan meetings? Yes/No

(b) If yes what is their frequency? _____

34. (a) Do you mind refugees staying in your area? Yes/No.

(b) Why? _____

35. When you have a conflict with a refugee, how do you resolve it? _____

36. Is it easy to make friends with refugees?

37. (a) Has refugee presence contributed to social insecurity or instability? Yes/ No.

(b) Why? _____

38. Would you be comfortable staying with a refugee in your house? _____

APPENDIX II: KEY INFORMANT GUIDE

Name of respondent (optional): _____

Age _____

Gender _____

Position/occupation _____

Location _____ Sub-Location _____

1. How long did you/have you interacted with refugees?
2. Has refugee presence brought any benefits or harm in this area?
3. Do you share any cultural links with some refugees? If yes, which ones?
4. Has this affected the way you relate with them?
5. Has refugee presence brought any positive or negative economic benefits? Which ones?
6. Between refugees and locals, who are better off economically? Why?
7. Is UNHCR doing anything for the locals or it assisting only refugees?
8. What should be done about the refugees in this area?
9. Generally, how would you describe the relationship between refugees and the locals?

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