

# Refugee Camps

As urbanising settings and durable solutions



*Zaatari Refugee Camp in Jordan*

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***'If Dadaab were actually counted as a city, it would be Kenya's third or fourth most populous. Yet it's not counted'.***

*(Payne, 2013: 1)*

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## Abstract

The recent years have been characterised by a worsening of the refugee crisis, which has reached a level unseen in the previous decade. There are more refugees than ever and refugee camps are crowded. The average of major refugee situations has increased from nine years in 1993 to 17 years at the end of 2003. People are making their living inside the camps, societies and economies have arisen and different developments are taking place. This impacts on the temporary character of refugee camps.

This thesis provides insight in the urbanisation process of refugee camps, and considers whether the urbanisation of camps can be a solution to the refugee issue, next to the three existing ones; voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement to a third country. Through integration with the local community, the rise of camp societies and economies and an adapted policy of the UNHCR, changes have taken place in the existing livelihood strategies of refugees. Contemporary policy have created situations where refugees can become more self-reliant and increase their access to sustainable livelihood activities. An urbanised refugee camp is not an enclosed and secluded place, but a place full of social and economic life, where refugees use their networks, talents and create their own facilities to make a living. Through the alternatives to camps policy of the UNHCR and the contemporary structure, it is possible for the refugees to create agency and to develop sustainable livelihood strategies. Nowadays, refugee camps are already recognised as possible sustainable settlements by the UNHCR. This is why camps also should be considered as a potential additional and durable fourth solution to solve the worldwide refugee problem.

## List of Abbreviations

<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNRWA</b>	United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine refugees in the near East

## 1. Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to provide insight in the urbanisation process of refugee camps and to explore if camps can be a valuable additional solution to the three existing ones: voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement to a third country, –according to the UNHCR (UNHCR, 2012: 17). Today, refugees are spending longer periods in exile, it is estimated that ‘the average of major refugee situations had increased from nine years in 1993 to 17 years at the end of 2003’ (UNHCR, 2006: 109). This affects the temporary character of the camps. With this thesis I want to discover if it is imaginable to see camps as potential cities, by analysing the social and economic situations of protracted refugees in camps. Through the rising camp economies, adapted policy of the UNHCR and provided facilities in camps, changes take place in the existing livelihoods of refugees. It is important to acknowledge that camps are often seen as miserable temporary set ups without any positive vision of the future. The framing of refugees is often focused on the down side of refugee life. With this thesis I want to elaborate that for a lot of people refugee camps *create opportunities*. It becomes an economic and social place, where they can find education, health care, work opportunities and further facilities. To do so this thesis focuses on the one hand on the way refugees are framed as victims by local authorities and the UNHCR, and on the other hand on the urbanisation process, considered from an economic and livelihoods perspective.

### *Brief introduction on refugees and refugee camps*

Before analysing changing situations in refugee camps it is important to have some knowledge on the contemporary statistics and situation of refugees. The last recent years are marked by a refugee crisis reaching levels unseen in the previous decade: five times more people per day became refugees in 2012 compared to the year 2010 (UNHCR, 2015: 1). Conflicts like those in the Syrian Arab Republic, at the border between Sudan and South Sudan, in Mali and in Democratic Republic of the Congo forced a lot of people to flee to neighbouring countries. During the years, conflict and persecution forced an average of 23.000 persons per day to leave their homes and seek protection elsewhere, either within the borders of their countries or in other countries (UNHCR, 2012: 2).

The convention of the United Nations in 1951 in Geneva, relating to the status of refugees define that a ‘refugee is someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion’ (UNHCR, 2014a: 14). The latest statistics of 2013 show that there are currently 15.2 million refugees: 10.4 million refugees registered by the UNHCR and another 4.8 by the UNRWA (UNHCR, 2015: 1). UNHCR stands for United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, an agency established in 1950 by the United Nations

General Assembly and 'mandated to lead and co-ordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide' (UNHCR, 2015: 1). UNRWA stands for United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine refugees and is committed to increase human development of Palestine refugees by helping them to acquire knowledge and skills, lead longer and healthy lives, achieve decent standards of living and enjoy human right to the fullest possible extent (UNRWA, 2015: 1). According to the global trends report of the UNHCR (2012: 3), more than half of all refugees come from Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq, Syria and Sudan. Where do they go? Pakistan is host to the largest number of refugees, followed by Iran, Germany and Kenya. When people need to flee their homes and enter the adjacent or another country, they can register themselves for a refugee camp.

A refugee camp is a temporary set up for sheltering and protecting refugees. It is created when needed and established for a temporary period of time. The aim of the UNHCR with a refugee camp is to provide suitable sites and shelter, in order to accommodate people who are in state of emergency. The UNHCR follows a *Handbook for emergencies*, which includes a planning strategy for housing refugees and the set up for refugee camps. According to this handbook of emergencies (UNHCR, 2007: 108), it is an obligation of the camp administration to secure the land and occupancy rights for *a temporary settlement*. The handbook also mentions that 'in addition to meeting the immediate needs, planning should take into consideration the long-term provision of services even if the situation is expected to be temporary'. As mentioned before, refugees are spending nowadays-longer periods in exile, which modifies the temporary character of refugee camps.

UNHCR strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another state and return home voluntarily (UNHCR, 2007: XI). According to the mandate of the UNHCR there are three solutions recognised for refugees (UNHCR, 2012: 17). The first one is voluntary repatriation, the second one is local integration and the last one is resettlement to a third country.

### *Focus of thesis*

This thesis is focused on protracted refugee camps. The UNHCR defines 'a protracted refugee situation as one in which 25.000 or more refugees of the same nationality have been in exile for five years or longer in any asylum country' (UNHCR, 2012: 12). When a situation becomes protracted, changes in the livelihoods of refugees will take place. The reason to focus on protracted refugee camps is that when the camp becomes less temporary than expected, changes occur in the existing society, economy and governance of the camp. A less temporary set up of refugee camps may amount to an urbanisation process, which in turn can result in the fact that camps itself can become an additional durable solution to solve the refugee problem. '*Even if we have to be satisfied with statistical approximations, we can maintain that camps are indeed the fourth solution of the UNHCR for resolving the refugee problem - a massive and lasting solution and clearly the preferred one in Africa and Asia (Agier 2011)*

### *Research questions*

To find out if it is possible to concern refugee camps as potential cities, and how this could result into a durable additional fourth solution, I have formulated a research question:

*Can we see refugee camps as urbanising settings and consider them as a durable solution?*

To provide an elaborated answer to my research question, a theoretical framework will first be set out and three sub questions will be used.

In chapter two, a theoretical framework will be set out based on analysing the way the UNHCR and other local authorities frame refugees. This is important to acknowledge as it influences the image people get, the way people look at refugee camps and thereby also the possible developments people allocate to camps. The other approach analysed in this theoretical framework is the urbanisation process, seen from an economic and livelihoods perspective. This plays also an important role for considering refugee camps as potential cities.

Chapter three, four and five will consider the following sub questions:

1. How does an urbanising refugee camp look like?
2. Do the contemporary structure and governance of camps enable the urbanisation process?
3. What aspects can make refugee camps more sustainable?

### *Content*

This report starts with setting out a theoretical framework in chapter two. By analysing first the way refugees are framed by the UNHCR and other local authorities. In what way are refugees framed and why? I shall then analyse the urbanisation process, seen from an economic and livelihoods perspective. To start with elaborating the concept livelihood and the related theory, and how is it applicable to the living situations of refugees. After that I will look at camp economies, and the way they are organised. Is it possible to certify the urbanisation process of camps by analysing it from an economic and livelihoods perspective? This theoretical framework supports an answer to this question.

Chapter three will describe the actual characteristics of urbanising refugee camps. The different aspects in refugee camps which, make them possible cities. The theory of Agier will be used to analyse the social side of urban life, –the terms symbolic of space, social differentiation and identity change will be elaborated upon. Other aspects, such as the relation with the surrounding area and the integration with the local community, which influence also the urbanisation process, will be taken into account. This part is important to understand the existing urban characteristics of refugee camps. A refugee camp is not a secluded place but a social and economic place where refugees can find different opportunities.

Chapter four will show how the existing structure and the existing governance in the camps can contribute to this urbanisation process. How is the structure organised?

Who is in charge? What facilities in camps are provided by which authorities? Are the refugees as dependent as they are often framed? It is important to look at the existing relationship between structure and agency and the contemporary policy of the UNHCR in order to understand if a process as urbanisation can take place in refugee camps.

Chapter five will consider the possible sustainability in refugee camps. It will focus on the different aspects which, can increase social sustainability in camps. When it is possible to talk about an urbanisation process in camps and thereby the related option to see camps as an additional fourth solution, I think that as a student of Wageningen University, it is needed for the future to take sustainability into account. As a social scientist I will focus on social sustainability in refugee camps.

Chapter six will offer a conclusion on the overall research question of this study: should we see refugee camps as urbanising settings? I will end this thesis with a theoretical claim on why and in which way refugee camps can be seen as an additional fourth solution.

### *Methodology*

The content of this thesis is based on a literature study. I have used both statistical information and policy papers from the UNHCR. Further information will be gained from reading and analysing the studies and papers of other academics that did previous research on refugee camps.

## 2. Theoretical framework

This chapter provides the theoretical framework of this thesis, which consists of the concepts that support the theory for this study. It introduces and describes on the one hand the theories that explain why refugee camps are still seen as temporary settings, and on the other hand why they should be considered as a possible fourth solution to solve the refugee problem. To do so, I will start with analysing the way refugees are framed by the UNHCR and other local authorities, local governments and academics. Secondly, by analysing the urbanisation process, seen from an economic and livelihood perspective. Both are important to acknowledge because it influences the way the UNHCR and other authorities proceed in refugee camps but also the possible developments they allocate to camps.

### *Framing*

As mentioned in the previous chapter, a refugee camp is a temporary set up for the sheltering and protecting of refugees. It is created when needed and established for a temporary period of time in order to accommodate people who are in state of emergency. But this study provides insight on the fact that camps should be considered as urbanising settings. For this it is important to consider the ways in which refugees are framed. It provides insights in the ways refugees are perceived, and why, according to some academics, refugee camps should be considered as an additional and durable fourth solution. The way refugees are framed and perceived by the UNHCR and other authorities do not always reflect reality.

### *UNHCR and other authorities*

The UNHCR takes care of the refugees when they need to flee their home countries. The handbook on procedures and criteria for determining refugee status of the UNHCR (2011) states that a person is a refugee within the meaning of the 1951 convention as soon as he or she fulfils the criteria contained in the definition (UNHCR, 2011: 9). As mentioned earlier, a refugee, according to the UN Convention in 1951, is someone *who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion*' (UNHCR, 2014a: 14). The policy of the UNHCR is based on neutrality; it is an entirely non-political organization (UNHCR, 2008: 6). Other NGO's are supposed to be involved at an early stage of an emergency phase to help and collaborate with other NGO's and the UNHCR (UNHCR, 2011). The UNHCR's ambition is that emergency assistance will lead to long-term development and recovery (UNHCR, 2011) however, as stated in UNHCR Standing Committee paper of 2008, the UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies are *not* the principal actors when it comes to 'unlocking' refugee situations that have persisted for years (UNHCR, 2008: 6). The UNHCR is the leading agency in refugee camps when it comes to coordinating and providing facilities, such as shelter, food education and health care in refugee camps. *'Although UNHCR states*

*that it cannot be considered as a substitute for government responsibility, in many refugee camps it has become this substitute (Jansen, 2011: 45). Crisp (2002) states that the UNHCR and other NGO's rather chose to implement long-term 'care-and-maintenance' programmes, which did little or nothing to promote self-reliance amongst refugees or to facilitate positive interactions between the exiled and local population, than responding to solutions for refugees in innovative ways (Crisp, 2002: 3).*

*'I like it here. The Camp Commander is bringing me food. There is no other place I could go to. I am just like a child now. I don't know where I am, I don't know where to go. I am like a blind person who doesn't know what will happen in the future. We refugees are like small children, we only follow what the Camp Commander says and orders. As I am under the umbrella of UNHCR it is impossible for me to move of my own accord. It is up to them. They choose our life' (Smith, 2004:42).*

According to this care-and-maintenance model of the UNHCR, refugees don't have any control over their own lives; they are admitted to host countries and housed in camps on land provided by the authorities (UNHCR, 2008:13). In this way, refugee camps remain protracted while hosting refugees is still seen as a temporary situation by the UNHCR and other NGO's.

#### *Local government*

When refugees do arrive in a country of asylum, they bring their knowledge, skills, qualifications and life experiences with them. As well as this social capital, some also bring valuable productive assets, such as tools, transportation and working animals (UNHCR, 2008: 14). Through the eyes of the local governments, refugee camps can be seen as a problem. It puts pressure on the local economy, refugees compete with locals for jobs but also for natural resources. Sometimes local governments are afraid that the refugees are looking for a permanent place to stay (Smith, 2004: 42). Smith also stated that countries, which place refugees in a refugee camp, receive more money than when the refugees are integrated in the local community (Smith, 2004: 43). Under what conditions can local integration be acceptable for the local governments? Jacobsen writes that 'a flexible approach must be developed – one that addresses the needs and concerns of the host government and local population as well as refugees. In some situations, local integration may not be feasible for the host country. Local integration should only be pursued when it promote the human security of everyone living in the hosting area' (Jacobsen, 2001: 3). Refugees in camps are not allowed to move around the camp freely, there is not much contact between the groups, which lead to tensions. Refugee camps are seen as temporary settings by most host governments, it is not recognized as a permanent place to stay. Crisp (2002: 25) mentioned four potential situations for local integration:

- When refugees have moved into an area which is populated by people of the same ethnic origin
- When refugees have moved into an area where there is a surplus of agricultural land or where other economic opportunities exist
- When refugees have been able to establish sustainable livelihoods but where their legal status and residence rights remain unresolved

- When a 'residual caseload' of refugees has established strong social and economic links to their country of asylum.

*'In many parts of Africa, large number of refugees have settled amongst their local hosts, and have managed to support themselves without international assistance. This suggests that the potential for local integration is somewhat greater than is often assumed (Crisp, 2002:26).* The tensions that occur between refugees and the local community can be reduced by more interaction between the two groups. There are some positive examples of local integration, which will be elaborated later in this thesis.

### *Academics*

Even though the UNHCR has taken a number of steps to move away from the care-and-maintenance model (UNHCR, 2008:14), refugees in protracted situations find themselves still trapped in a *state of limbo*: they cannot go back to their homeland, they are unable to settle permanently in their country of first asylum and they do not have the option of moving on, as no third country had agreed to admit them and to provide them with permanent residence rights (Crisp, 2002: 1). How do scholars, who did previous research on refugee camps, frame refugees and what do they think of the situations in camps? Jansen named the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya an '*accidental city*', an institutional arrangement meant to be temporary but has taken on characteristics of settlement and habitation, while this was never intended (Jansen, 2011: 2). Herz states that 'refugee camps are indispensable and essential, as they often represented the last life-saving sanctuary of protection. Often though, it is the spatial strategies and decisions made for a temporarily intended emergency support that become the permanent solution' (Herz, 2008: 2). Harrel-Bond does also consider the temporary character of refugee camps: 'despite their apparent temporary nature, refugee camps have become the main living environment for many refugees for many years' (Harrel-Bond, 1999: 137). For Smith a refugee camp is comparable with a 'warehouse' (Smith, 2004:38). 'Warehousing is the practice of keeping refugees in protracted situations of restricted mobility, enforced idleness and dependency, in violation of their basic rights under de 1951 UN Refugee Convention' (Smith, 2004; 38). Smith is critical about refugee camps in this contemporary setting, he states that warehousing creates dependency amongst refugees and it turns them into people who are not able to take action (Smith, 2004: 38-39). Turner also writes about this 'standby' status of refugees. 'The whole point with refugee camps is that they are temporary, exceptional spaces that act as a parenthesis in time and space, where refugees are kept on 'standby', neither in one nation nor the other, until a 'durable solution' can be found and they can be reintegrated in the national order of things' (Turner, 2001: 67). But, as opposed to the liminal space in refugee camps, there is no time limit on the state of limbo. Through this many academics do not take temporary status of refugee camps for granted, and this reinforced the idea that refugee camps should be considered as urbanising settings.

### *Economic & livelihood perspective*

As elaborated in the previous section of this chapter, the way refugees and refugee camps are framed and perceived by the UNHCR and other authorities, do not always reflect reality. Taken into account, in what way should the urbanisation process (from economic and livelihood perspective) be analysed then? Camps are not just the temporary set-ups without any hope for refugees for a good future. The UNHCR states that due to the remote location of refugee camps, there is often limited economic activity and little development (UNHCR, 2008:6). However, in some cases are the situations in camps better than the living situations of the local people in the surrounding area (Obura, 2002). It becomes an economic and social place, where refugees can find education, health care, work opportunities and further facilities. Camps create opportunities, in this section analysed from an economic and livelihood perspective.

First, what is a livelihood? And how is it applicable to the living situations in refugee camps? I use livelihood as a concept to give a better understanding on how refugees shape their lives in camps. 'A livelihood comprises the assets (natural, physical, human, financial and social capital) the activities and the access to these (mediated by institutions and social relations) that together determine the living gained by individual or households' (Ellis, 2000:9–10). Not only the access to different assets plays a role. Access to public services, such as health care, education and infrastructure can improve assets. Thus, a refugee's livelihood refers to their means of securing the basic necessities of life. As mentioned before, when refugees arrive in a refugee camp, they bring their knowledge, skills, qualifications and life experiences with them. They not only bring social capital but also valuable productive assets. UNHCR considers it essential to capitalize upon these assets, to support the efforts that refugees invariably make to establish their own livelihoods and to enable them to become self-reliant' (UNHCR, 2008: 14). 'As recognized by the Agenda for Protection, this strategy has a number of important advantages:

- It enables refugees to contribute to the economic life of the countries and communities in which they live.
- It reduces the need for long-term and costly international relief programmes.
- It promotes positive interaction between refugees and their local hosts and averts the protection problems, including sexual and economic exploitation, that plague many protracted refugee situations.
- It enables refugees to maintain their dignity, to make use of their talents and to prepare them for durable solutions (UNHCR, 2008:14).

Self-reliance is not in itself a durable livelihood strategy for refugees but it can be a precursor to the additional fourth or any one of the three currently recognized durable solutions. As the UNHCR has also stated: 'promoting of self-reliance of refugees from the outset will enhance the sustainability of any future durable solution' (UNHCR, 2008:14). Will the possibility for refugees to become self-reliant increase when a refugee camp shows signs of an urbanisation process? While the notion of refugee self-reliance has important cultural and social dimensions, it is

primarily an economic concept, 'rooted in the principle that exiled populations should be able to meet a progressively greater proportion of their own needs and enjoy a steadily growing level of prosperity and human security' (UNHCR, 2008: 15). When borders are open between camps and the neighbouring area, refugees get more possibilities for their livelihood strategies. 'Even though refugees were not allowed to leave the camp and work outside, there were still refugees who did and who were employed by the locals' (Berry, 2008: 13). In the Domiz camp in northern Iraq, a Syrian man named Shareef Sulaiman opened a bakery inside the camp, he now is selling more than 24.000 breads per day and Iraqis people from neighbouring cities come to buy their bread in there' (Refugee Republic, 2014: 1). Refugees often interact with the local community at common markets, and sharing facilities like medical services that are provided in camps, can also increase the interaction between refugees and locals (Berry, 2008). 'Social relation and cultural exchange between refugees and host communities can reduce the competition, isolation and segregation between the two groups' (Berry, 2008: 14). When this will be the case, it is possible to imagine a more urbanised environment in refugee camps.

What about the camp economy? The amount of local integration and thereby the possible livelihood strategies for refugees is, as mentioned before, primarily an economic concept. Camp economies are influenced by host country policies, such as restrictions on refugees' movement and work, as well as by the physical and economic isolation of the site (Werker, 2007). 'Market outcomes interact with the nature of humanitarian assistance and the special demographic composition of the refugees to determine the prices and quantities that characterize the market' (Werker, 2007:461). Werker states also that refugee camps are more like cities and that the primary economic actors are the refugees, many of whom come with productive capabilities, access to commercial networks and capital of some sort (Werker, 2007: 462). How do markets develop in camps? 'No refugee camp is closed to traffic in goods, capital and people. In this way, the markets are connected with domestic markets through refugee and national traders' (Werker, 2007:462). Thereby, the movement of people in and out of the camp indicates that although the refugee camps exists for a temporary period, its population fluctuates and renews itself continuously as people go home, leave for third countries or return, often invisibly and without knowledge of the UNHCR (Loescher, Milner et al. 2008). Jansen talks about this movement of people as a space of flows. 'This is a reference to the camp as an urbanity in that it has become a nodal point in a network connecting people, a portal of some sort, which provides access to other parts of the network and is made up of multiple social forms and populations. The camp was inhabited by people of various backgrounds, for various motives and for different and sometimes repeated durations' (Jansen, 2011: 24). The camps as a network, which connects people, can results in a space of flows, where the existing economy can be rich and varied.

As showed in this chapter, refugee camps are not just temporary set-ups without any chance for a better future. Analysed from a livelihood and economic perspective,

it is possible to see refugee camps as urbanising settings. The more integration there is between refugees and the local community, the more possibilities refugees get to create a (self-reliant) livelihood strategy and to become part of an extended camp economy. Urbanisation in refugee camps is happening, according to academics and previous studies mentioned in this theoretical framework. To explain this urbanisation process, we should consider it from an economic and livelihood perspective. The way refugees and refugee camps are framed do create certain images and developments people allocate to camps. This thesis elaborates the way refugee camps should be considered as urbanising settings and in what way it is possible to see camps as an additional and durable fourth solution.

### 3. How does an urbanising refugee camp look like?

This chapter shows that, in contrast with what has been said by some actors in chapter two, refugees camps create opportunities. In this case explained by analysing the aspects, which can make refugee camps urbanising settings. The theory of Agier will be used to analyse the social side of urban life, the terms symbolic of space, social differentiation and identity change will be elaborated. The relation with the surrounding area is also an influencing factor, which will be focused on in this chapter. A refugee camp is not a secluded place but a social and economic place where refugees use their networks and provided facilities to make a living.

#### *Urban life according to Agier*

What is urbanisation? Is it possible to define urban life? Agier explored during his own ethnographic fieldwork in the camps of Dadaab in northeast Kenya in the year 2000 that there are three outlines for possible urban life:

1. Symbolic of space
2. Social differentiation
3. Identity change

#### *Symbolic of Space*

Symbolic of space refers to the fact that 'certain anonymous spaces have been given names by the inhabitants'. Agier (2002: 329) wrote about the Hagadera camp of Dadaab, the market area at the entrance to the camp has become 'town' and the most travelled street has become the 'main street'. People give anonymous spaces a certain name to give meaning to it. In Kakuma camp (Kenya), people talk about the 'kakuma highway', there are many 'churches' and some houses are decorated with paintings that are specific for Nuer houses, animals or figures like tribal tattoos (Jansen, 2011: 76). According to Jansen, there are also several market area's known as 'Markets', and for example the shop of the bicycle repairman is called 'Jua Kali', which means work under a strong sun.

The fact that certain anonymous spaces have been given names by the refugees does not only refer to 'words' but also to the fact that people, by giving names to certain areas, are making 'sense of place'. Agnew (1987: 1) stated that 'sense of place' refers to the subjective and emotional attachments people have to a place. The relationship between people and place is important for individual and community identity (Convery, Corsane, Davis, 2012; 2). 'Place provides a profound centre of human existence to which people have deep emotional and psychological ties and is part of the complex processes through which individuals and groups define themselves' (Convery, Corsane, Davis, 2012; 2). In addition to this, Hay (1998: 6) suggests that 'if a person resides in a place for many years, particularly if that person is raised there, then he or she often develops a sense of place, feeling at home and secure there, with feelings or belongings for the place being one anchor for his or her identity'. Noticing that 46 percent of the refugee population in 2012

where children below 18 years (UNHCR, 2012) and an enormous amount of refugees stay in a particular place for many years, refugee camps are areas where people do create a sense of place.

*Social Differentiation*

NGO's operating in camps employ and pay some refugees as 'voluntary community workers'; they receive unofficial wages, which create the option of social differentiation (Agier, 2002: 331). 'This income not only enables refugees to supplement their food ration but sometimes also to pay others people to build dwellings more solid than the basic UNHCR tent, or to employ others to provide services for them (cooking for example), to invest in small businesses (selling vegetables) or to help them to run various profitable services (photo studios)' (Agier, 2002: 332). When there is in an option of earning money available in the camp, social differentiation gets a better chance. People are starting their own businesses, start working for an NGO or find another way to earn some money. For example, in the Domiz camp in Iraq, people are earning money in a lot of different ways: running (portable) shops, bars or restaurants, try to sell air conditioners or other electronic devices, birds, construction materials, suitcases, wedding dresses, owning the only bakery in the camp, working as a hairdresser, a circumciser, a tuktuk driver, a teacher, or by working as an employee in the commercial centre just outside the camp (Refugee Republic, 2014: 1). Is it possible to categorise refugees in different levels of stratification? Agier (2002: 331) differentiates four levels of social stratification in the Dadaab camps during his research:

<b>Somali 'notables'</b>	'A small group at the top, containing traders, pastoralists and head of clans of high status. Their incomes are difficult to assess (some 75 euros a month or more). Their position is also measured by their membership in the higher clans of the Darood clan confederation, which gives them a legitimate priority in performing functions of representation, as 'elders' in the blocks and sections of the camps'.
<b>Voluntary community workers</b>	'This second group represent a second locally dominant social category. This group is fairly close to the former as regards income, but less significant in volume (they comprise under 2 percent of the camp population). Their position of propinquity to the representatives of the UN and humanitarian organizations gives the 'community workers' prestige and power in the internal relationships at the camp. Indeed, some of them are or have been block 'leaders' rivalling the 'elders'.
<b>Small traders</b>	'The group made up of the small traders, occasional craftsmen and unofficial employees forms a third category, dependent on the two previous groups but dependent also on aid and the

	'follow-up' action of NGOs. For example, the wives or daughters of the NGO voluntary workers are among the traders in the market of the camps; but, among the craftsmen supported by the humanitarian organizations, one also finds groups that are marginalized within the ethnic relations internal to the camps (non-Somali minorities or lower-caste Somalis)'.
<b>Recipients of basic minimum aid</b>	'The last hierarchical level is made up of the recipients of basic minimum aid (food, health care, water, firewood, shelter), in some cases supplemented by intermittent assistance from the categories above them and from relatives living outside the camps. This destitute group, which has no resources of its own, is by far the largest'.

*Figure one: Different levels of social stratification in the Dadaab refugee camps (Agier, 2002: 331–332).*

Is it possible to adapt these four different levels to multiple refugee camps? Are those groups representative enough? According to Jansen (2011: 142), those categories are too narrow to describe the stratification of Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. For reason he gave the fact that the two did their researches in different camps, so it can be camp-dependent. Another reason could be the five-year gap between their periods of research. In the following figure, the levels of social stratification in the Kakuma camp according to Jansen are showed.

<b>Businesspeople</b>	Independent business owners of shops, restaurants and bars, those engaged in trade activities or services requiring some degree of material organization and investment.
<b>Incentive workers</b>	“Civil servants” of the aid regime; covering a wide range of types of work as well income scales and secondary benefits.
<b>Employees</b>	Unregulated private sector employment, albeit of a more or less regular nature: waiters, shop workers, tailors, mechanics, <i>bodaboda</i> drivers, cleaners, cooks, etc.
<b>Remittance receivers</b>	People who receive remittances from abroad from relatives, husbands or wives, friends, or other through networks.
<b>Shifters</b>	People who secure an income or other opportunities from Kenyan cities such as Nairobi or Nakuru, who partly shift between their homelands, other locations in Kenya and the camp, in varying family compositions.
<b>The poor</b>	Refugees whose only source of income is aid hand-outs, and who constitute a type of poor “underclass,” analogous to the

	“urban poor.” Trading rations or other assets may be way for this group to gain limited amounts of cash on an irregular basis.
<b>Entrepreneurs</b>	Occasional craftsmen and women who run small home-based grocery shops or prepare food for road-side tuck shops, or who are engaged in weavery, cloth making, stamp making, and so on.
<b>Refugee “elites”</b>	People who are able to obtain assets and cash from other sources due to their status or position of power in the camp; many of whom were already elites in their home countries; while others have positions in the camp in the (unpaid) refugee administration system that allow them certain privileges.
<b>Hustlers, crooks and petty thieves</b>	People surviving on small criminal activity such as theft, stealing, drug trading and gambling schemes.
<b>The dependants</b>	Family members and offspring in the camp that benefit from the resources of their providers. This means that it is important to focus on households, or even extended households, and not only on individuals.
<b>The targeted</b>	People who are able to make use of schemes, funding and other arrangements designated specifically for them on the basis of vulnerability or another social label, such as the handicapped, illiterate women, the elderly, those who become eligible for micro-credit after completing vocational training programs, the insecure who are given special protection arrangements, or those who are eligible for scholarships.
<b>The unrecognized</b>	People who are unrecognized in the camp, whose refugee status is denied and are excluded from basic minimum aid. They have the status of <i>sans papiers</i> or illegal residents in the camp.

Figure two: Livelihood categories in Kakuma refugee camp (Jansen, 2011: 143)

The levels of income are very diverse and also very time dependent. ‘Employment itself is characterized by a high rate of turnover due its unregulated nature in the camp, which lead to swift firing of staff, but also because of the on-going resettlement processes and active recruitment of camp employees for jobs in Sudan, continuously leaving gaps in the labour market that need to be filled’ (Jansen, 2011:143). It is maybe thinkable that the refugees work themselves ‘up’ when their stay is extended. This is an interesting question for further research to look at the

possible relation between the 'lifetime' of refugee camps and the increase of different levels of social stratification. However it is important to take social stratification into account by analysing the urbanisation process of refugee camps because it can explain things about the social structure in camps and the existing economy, which will be elaborated later in this thesis.

### *Identity Change*

Identity change is about the fact that camps create identity, both ethnic and non-ethnic (Agier, 2002: 332). 'From this point of view, camps are just as relational and dynamic an experiment on and with identity as that which marks the fate of refugees who are not 'processed' by humanitarian agencies but self-settled on the edges of urban centres' (Agier, 2002: 332). According to Agier, this proposition can be 'nuanced' in several ways:

#### 1. The bricolage of novel identities

This indicates the fact that for example one refugee camp contains refugees from a certain country, belonging to a dozen different tribes, but all of them are identified simply as 'citizens from that specific country'. An additional example from one of the camps in Dadaab:

*'in the Sudanese refugee block stands another place of worship also built as a large mud house. It belongs to a quite new 'United Church of Christ', invented by the refugees a few years ago. It brings together followers of the Anglican, Pentecostal and Orthodox churches and of the African Inland Church, who, separately, were not sufficiently numerous to constitute a church. This pragmatic accommodation to constraints of space and number leads to a coming together and, at the very least, the formation of a new religious label' (Agier, 2002: 333).*

#### 2. The strengthening of particularisms

The strategy behind the strengthening of particularism is potentially to challenge existing ethnic dominations. Refugee camps do not reinforce ethnicity but, on the contrary, clashes with it by putting it in the context of relativizing alternatives.

*'Those who, in the Dadaab camps, are called Somali Bantuus are outcasts, in other words stigmatized minorities of non-Somali origin, immigrant farmers regarded as serfs or slaves of the superior group. Now, on the ethnic chessboard of the camp as a whole, they have gradually achieved autonomous recognition, as apparently separate from the Somali grouping. The camp thus enables them to shed a devalued and devaluing intra-ethnic position' (Agier, 2002: 334).*

#### 3. Anti-ethnic behaviours and inter-ethnic exchanges

This third outline of identity change is focussing on the fact that although UNHCR policy is to separate persons according to their ethnic provenance, this really applies only for the distribution of shelters and much the refugees' daily lives. *'At the market, around the well, at the food distribution outlet and the health centre, interactions take place which before the camp would have been unthinkable inter-ethnic encounters' (Agier, 2002: 336).*

Taken these three outlines of urban life, mentioned by Agier, into account, it is possible to state that refugee camps are areas where people are required to adjust to

a new and different living situation and other ethnic groups in the camp. Instead of reproduce, reinforce or maintain, *camps create identity*. They need to create their place on the social ladder again and they need to create a 'sense of place' in their new environment. This will continuously change over time, by the fluctuating character of refugee camps. The longer families are situated in refugee camps, the more they create a new adapted identity, based on their own sense of place, the existing social differentiation in the camp and the people around them. As part of the answer to what urbanisation looks like in refugee camps, these three outlines can be useful indicators.

### *Relation with surrounding area*

As stated in the previous chapter, integration between the refugees and the local people is needed to create a more developed and urbanised setting. When refugee camps establish, the goal of the UNHCR is to 'develop a comprehensive master plan with a layout based on open community forms and community services, such as water points, latrines, showers, cloth washing facilities and garbage collection to promote ownership and maintenance of the services. Homes, in safety and dignity, or be provided with shelter that conforms to minimum standards' (UNHCR, 2007: 206). An area enclosure by barriers where people can make their living based on standard needs and aid. But are camps still enclosure areas? An example of blurred barriers is Rafah camp, situated in the Gaza strip. *'One year after Rafah Camp was created, thousands of refugees moved from the camp to a nearby housing project at Tel El-Sultan, making the camp almost indistinguishable from the adjacent city'* (UNRWA, 2015: 1). When borders between the camp and adjacent city are blurred, it is also possible to imagine that the amount of social differentiation will increase by the growing possibilities of work opportunities in the area. As stated earlier in chapter two, with integration between the local people and refugees, the social differentiation will increase by the growth of livelihood strategies and a growing economy. In the Domiz camp in northern Iraq, nowadays the refugee bakery is delivering bread to the relief organizations rather than the other way around. Within six months the bakery had become the camp's social hub (Refugee Republic, 2014: 1). As mentioned before, social differentiation is one of the three outlines according to Agier for urban life in refugee camps. This will be fostered by the increase of work opportunities in both the camp itself and the surrounding area, but also by the increase of integration between those two. Because refugees compete with the local community for the same jobs and natural resources, local people can experience that it puts pressure on the local economy. However, larger markets allow people to specialize in the trades that they are the best at instead of creating two markets with the same supply (Werker, 2007). 'Isolating a market is effectively equivalent to making it smaller. And if the market is poor and capital-starved to begin with, which reduces overall productivity and purchasing power' (Werker, 2007: 468). This is why the relation with the surrounding area is another important indicator for urban life in refugee camps. A more urbanised refugee camps, which show signs of local integration will support the economy for both the refugees and the local people. In many situations, the presence of refugees has stimulated local economies and

development (UNHCR, 2014d). 'Moreover, community-based protection activities and livelihoods and education programmes that also involve local people can promote social cohesion, reduce xenophobic attitudes and create a better protection environment. Where people work, study and play together, they are better equipped to resolve differences and live peacefully' (UNHCR, 2014d: 5).

Focussing on the outlines for urban life according to Agier and the integration between the refugees and the local people, how does an urbanised refugee camp look like? Concluding from this chapter, it will show signs of different ethnic groups that are adjust to their new and different living situations and the fact that they are living together. Refugees will have created a 'sense of place' and social differentiation will be visible. This will be fostered by integration with the local community. An urbanised refugee camps provides facilities, such as health care and education. The local people and the refugees share facilities together and there is trade noticeable between the two groups. The refugees are not dependent on the care and maintain system of the UNHCR anymore. Their livelihood strategies have the potential to become self-reliant. An urbanised refugee camp is not a secluded place but a social and economic place where refugees use their networks, their talents and provided facilities to make a living.

#### 4. Do the contemporary structure and governance of camps enable the urbanisation process?

This chapter shows how the existing structure and the existing governance in refugee camps can contribute to the urbanisation process. It will elaborate the way the structure and the contemporary governance of camps are organized and who is responsible for different facilities. Are the refugees as dependent as they, showed in chapter two, are often framed? It is important to look at the existing structure and the contemporary policy of the UNHCR to understand if it provides a situation, which is needed to enable an urbanisation process.

##### *Contemporary structure & power division*

In what way is a refugee camp structured? How is the power divided and who is responsible for what? It is important to understand that there are differences and similarities between the power structures of refugee's home societies before they were forced to flee and the power structures that developed when the same society inhabited a refugee camp (McLean, 1999: 3). For example, in Kakuma refugee camp, the Kenyan Government is responsible for the police duties (Jansen, 2011; 44). Their main goal is to provide security in the camp: 'Kenyan police aimed to keep the refugees within the virtual walls of the refugee camp and to maintain the rule of law and order' (Jansen, 2011: 44). Another big responsibility is in the hands of the UNHCR and other NGO's: the camp administration. This determines the social ordering process of refugees (Jansen, 2011). 'This ordering partly takes place in negotiating the meaning and discourses of vulnerabilities, sexual violence, and insecurities, in an environment that simultaneously shapes these discourses and tries to prevent them' (Jansen, 2011; 45).

As the most 'important' agency determining, coordinating and funding humanitarian aid to refugees, UNHCR has a big executive power over refugees. According to Jansen, in the absence of a Kenyan refugee law, UNHCR's authority to run refugee operations in the camps and in Nairobi has impacted on Kenyan state matters in important ways. This became very visible on the local level in Kakuma, where executive power relegated to UNHCR has begun to resemble power normally accorded to governments (Jansen, 2011: 45). Although the UNHCR states that it cannot be seen as a substitute for government responsibility, research has shown that in many refugee camps, it has nevertheless become the substitute (Turner, 2004 & Jansen, 2011).

The UNHCR is responsible for providing a lot of services in the camp like shelter, food, health-care, education, the environment but also things like stimulation of the rights of women and children, democracy, respect for the elderly and disabled, and so on (Jansen, 2011: 47). For this the UNHCR makes use of a 'conceptual framework that integrates the norms, standards and principles of the international human rights system into the policies, programs and processes of development and humanitarian actors' (UNHCR, 2007: 6-16). For the power structure within refugee camps it is

important to notice that when someone become a refugee, the normal law is not applicable anymore. It is the executive power, the UNHCR who decides the division of power. Between refugees themselves there is also a certain division of power. It must be acknowledged that power structures do develop in camps: after an individual has, however, been accorded refugee status and granted a refugee identity card there is the possibility that the refugee holds a position of power and is able to use and misuse that power. Power structures should be fostered and encouraged, and changes in this power structure should be understood in terms of society being dynamic in its adaptation to a new environment (McLean, 1999: 14). This is important to mention because the power structure within camps can determine the refugee's access to equitable shares of resources, decision-making process, and the level of politicisation in the camps' (McLean, 1999: 1).

Through the fact that the UNHCR is determining, coordinating and funding humanitarian aid to refugees, it has a big executive power over refugees. So, it is plausible to say that the UNHCR is, by being the executive power, the one who is responsible for providing most of the services, and the one who organises the structure in camps. On the other hand, the refugee regime is at the same time engaged in everyday politics by responding and reacting to the agency employed by the refugees and other NGO's (Jansen, 2011: 26). According to Jansen, 'the refugee-hosting structure is not a static bureaucratic grid of governance, but subject to change and policy shifts, managed by people that occupy diverse positions in that management' (2011: 26). When refugees are contributing to the provided facilities, existing camp economy and network flows, they will create more agency. As showed in the previous chapter, this contribution will be more developed in camps where forms of urban life are visible. Turner viewed that particular refugees, in the nowadays closed Lukole camp in Tanzania, were knowledgeable about the workings of the refugee regime, and to a certain extend able to renegotiate political identities instead of being victims of what appears to be a top-down camp governance structure (Turner, 2001). The existing structure in refugee camps is thus expanded by the UNHCR as executive power, but influenced by the refugees when they create agency.

### *Contemporary governance*

'While the Tanzanian authorities govern the camp through control and restriction, international relief agencies, led by the UNHCR, govern the camp by trying to foster life'. As a result, the camp became a state within a state where the UNHCR was like a 'near-sovereign' handing out something comparable to citizenship (Turner, 2004: 69-104). Refugee camps are governed by the UNHCR because they are often the substitute for local governments. Although the UNHCR substitutes in most cases the work of the local government, the primarily role of the UNHCR is to protect refugees (UNHCR, 2007:4). The original approach of the UNHCR is a top-down approach. They use strict guidelines for the setting up of refugee camps (UNHCR, 2007). However, the UNHCR wants to make their care and maintenance models as mentioned earlier, increasingly rare exceptions (UNHCR, 2014d: 4). Taking this into account, what is the

contemporary policy of the UNHCR? And what policy enables an urbanisation process?

*Policy on Alternatives to Camps*

This section provides insight in the UNHCR policy on ‘alternatives to camps’, which is published in 2014. The aim of this policy is to remove restrictions for refugees, such as their limitations on their rights and freedom and their ability to make meaningful choices about their lives (UNHCR. 2014d: 4). They want to create the possibility to live in greater dignity, independence and normality as members of the community, either from the beginning of displacement or as soon as possible thereafter. According to this policy paper, the UNHCR wants to build upon national development planning’s, by contributing to local infrastructure and bringing refugees within national structures, such as education and healthcare (UNHCR, 2014d: 5). This will also have positive impact on host communities. ‘UNHCR’s policy is to avoid the establishment of refugee camps, wherever possible. And where camps must be established or where they already exist, UNHCR will plan and implement the operational response in a way that enables camps to be phased out at the earliest possible stage’ (UNHCR, 2014d: 6). However, the UNHCR does recognise that this is in a lot of cases not possible or practical. In this situation, the UNHCR will pursue the progressive removal of restrictions on the ability of refugees to exercise their rights and seek to build linkages between the camp and host communities and anchor the camp within the local economy, infrastructure and national social protection and service delivery systems, in order to transform them into sustainable settlements (UNHC, 2014d: 6). In the following figure, the action points of the UNHCR for implementing this policy are showed:

<p><b>1. Consulting with refugees and host communities</b></p>	<p>‘Consulting with refugees and host communities and taking the time needed to understand their intentions, aspirations, conditions and concerns through continuing, direct interaction and structured participatory assessments using the age, gender and diversity approach, adapted as necessary to overcome the challenges that arise when people are not consolidated in camps’.</p>
<p><b>2. Promoting an enabling protection environment</b></p>	<p>‘Promoting an enabling protection environment where the legal, policy and administrative framework of the host country provide refugees with freedom of movement and residence, permission to work and access to basic services and social “safety nets” as members of the communities where they are living’.</p>
<p><b>3. Developing advocacy strategies</b></p>	<p>‘Developing advocacy strategies that respond to the perspectives and concerns of host governments and communities and complement appeals to state responsibility and a rights-based approach with policy arguments, based upon research, data and evidence, that alternatives to camps produce better outcomes for both refugees and the host communities’.</p>
<p><b>4. Reinforcing contingency planning and</b></p>	<p>‘Reinforcing contingency planning and</p>

<p><b>emergency preparedness</b></p>	<p>emergency preparedness to facilitate alternatives to camps, including an assessment of national legal and policy frameworks, the capacity of communities and the local economy, infrastructure, administrative structures, service delivery systems, housing, land, water and the key interventions that will be needed to absorb a refugee influx, working together with government authorities at all levels and the potential of host communities’.</p>
<p><b>5. Achieving synergies with national development planning</b></p>	<p>‘Achieving synergies with national development planning and international development cooperation, through such processes as Delivering as One, the UN Development Assistance Framework and Common Country Assessments, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and Joint Programmes, in order to achieve efficiencies and greater lasting impact for refugees and host communities, including in areas such as education, healthcare, nutrition, water, sanitation, housing, energy and employment’.</p>
<p><b>6. Planning on the basis of data, information and analysis</b></p>	<p>‘Planning on the basis of data, information and analysis related to refugees and host communities obtained through protection monitoring, profiling exercises, registration, including the systematic use of biometrics, and vulnerability assessment, as well as monitoring and surveillance of public health, nutrition and sanitation conditions, supported by effective information management systems, and the better use of available macro-economic and community-level data’.</p>
<p><b>7. Updating protection and programme Management</b></p>	<p>‘Updating protection and programme management policies, operational guidance and tools to meet the challenges of assessment and targeting assistance and establishing standards and indicators for monitoring, measuring progress and reporting on results when populations are not consolidated in camps, as well as parameters for UNHCR support to host communities and frameworks for implementing multi-year strategies and area-based approaches, where outcomes depend not only on UNHCR but, importantly, upon the contributions of host government and development partners’.</p>
<p><b>8. Strengthening community-based protection</b></p>	<p>‘Strengthening community-based protection, monitoring, outreach and case management, including increased direct engagement with refugee and host communities, through mobile monitoring teams, community centres, the co-location of government, UNHCR and partner services (“one-stop shops”) and the use of virtual platforms to facilitate information sharing and two-way communication, in order to overcome the challenges that arise when refugees are not consolidated in camps and to ensure that refugees with specific needs and vulnerabilities, child protection risks and SGBV issues do not remain</p>

	hidden’.
<b>9. Adapting service delivery</b>	‘Adapting service delivery in areas such as education, public health, nutrition, water and sanitation to support alternatives to camps and needs of refugees living in host communities through mainstreaming within national, local and community-based systems and structures and the further development of new models and approaches, such as the use of mobile teams, enhanced referral mechanisms, enrolment of refugees in health insurance schemes, expanded access to distance learning programmes and the greater use of cash-based interventions’.
<b>10. Enabling refugees to build sustainable livelihoods</b>	‘Enabling refugees to build sustainable livelihoods and achieve self-reliance, including food security, through programmes that promote access to land and agricultural production, and relevant education, training and support that enable refugees to access employment and self-employment opportunities through market-based livelihoods strategies that are informed by professional assessments and analysis of the economy, markets and the skills, assets and potential of refugees’.
<b>11. Maximizing mobility</b>	‘Maximizing mobility to allow refugees greater access to employment and education and possibilities to build their livelihoods assets and skills and to send remittances, including through regional frameworks that facilitate the movement of labour, in order to promote dignity, the enjoyment of basic rights and to ensure that refugees are better prepared to achieve durable solutions’.
<b>12. Developing settlement and shelter responses</b>	‘Developing settlement and shelter responses that enable refugees to settle in communities or facilitate the transformation of camps into sustainable settlements that are anchored within the framework of national development planning and housing, land and property laws and are linked to host communities and the local economy, markets, infrastructure and service delivery systems, such that they require only limited humanitarian support’.
<b>13. Engaging with national authorities</b>	‘Engaging with national authorities at all levels to ensure that legitimate security issues can be addressed effectively through alternatives to camps and that protection concerns are addressed in a manner that respects the specific status and rights of refugees, as distinct from other non-nationals, while also working closely with refugees to reinforce understanding of their rights, responsibilities and obligation to respect the laws of the host country’.
<b>14. Creating adapted partnership models</b>	‘Creating adapted partnership models that expand collaboration with relevant national line ministries, municipal and local government authorities,

	<p>national and international NGOs, community-based organizations and other civil society actors and the private sector, as well as with development-oriented UN agencies and other, including UNDP, WFP UNICE F, WHO, ILO , FAO, IFAD and the World Bank, both globally and through their national programmes, within the framework of UNHCR 's Refugee coordination Model and with the objective of complementing, reinforcing and creating synergies with UNHCR 's humanitarian programmes'.</p>
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*Figure three: Several action points to implement the alternatives to camps-policy (UNHCR, 2014d: 9-11).*

As showed in figure three, the cornerstone of this policy is to create camp situations where refugees can become more self-reliant and increase their access to sustainable livelihood activities (UNHCR, 2014d: 8). This policy enables the integration with the local community, which will have positive effects on an urbanisation process. When refugees do get a chance to become self-reliant and get access to sustainable livelihood activities, there is a more room for the earlier mentioned outlines for urban life according to Agier. The 'sense of place', social differentiation and identity change will be fostered by integration with the local community, by maximizing the mobility, by expanding the economy and the development of sustainable livelihood strategies. As mentioned in chapter three, an urbanised refugee camps provides facilities, such as health care and education. The local people and the refugees share these facilities together and there is trade noticeable between both parties. In the contemporary structure of refugee camps, where there is room for refugees to create agency, and with this alternatives to camps policy of the UNHCR, the livelihood strategies of refugees have indeed the potential to become self-reliant and more sustainable. That is why the contemporary structure and governance of refugee camps both contributes to an urbanisation process.

## 5. What aspects can make refugee camps more sustainable?

This chapter shows different aspects that make refugee camps more sustainable. It focuses on different aspects, which can increase social sustainability in camps, especially in durable livelihood strategies. It also elaborated a program, called ‘the green towns program’ which is an example of involving refugees in developing their own environment. This results in a more bottom-up approach instead of the preferred top-down one of the UNHCR. When it is an option to see refugee camps as urbanised settings, it is also interesting to consider them as an additional and durable fourth solution to solve the worldwide refugee problem. *‘If Dadaab were actually counted as a city, it would be Kenya’s third or fourth most populous. Yet it’s not counted’* (Payne, 2013: 1). If it is possible to do so, what aspects can make refugee camps more sustainable?

### *What is sustainability?*

Sustainability is not a concept, which always means the same to multiple people. That is why I like to elaborate this first. What do I mean with the concept sustainability? This study is not in depth enough to focus on sustainability in relation with the climate, ecological and environmental consciousness. In this case, this study focuses on sustainability in the durable sense of the word, a provided fourth solution for solving the refugee problem, the ‘social’ side of sustainability. Environmental sustainability concerns the external impacts of livelihoods while social sustainability concerns the internal capacity to withstand outside pressure (Chambers and Conway, 1991: 9). ‘In the livelihood context, we can use sustainability in a more focused manner to mean the ability to maintain and improve livelihoods while maintaining or enhancing the local and global assets and capabilities on which livelihoods depend, and had net beneficial effects on other livelihoods’ (Chambers and Conway, 1991: 1). Thus, social sustainability in camps ensures durable living situations for contemporary refugees and further generations.

### *Sustainable livelihoods*

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, the concept livelihoods means that a person support her or his existence, as in compromising people’s capabilities, assets and the activities required to make a living (Chambers and Conway, 1991 and Ellis, 2008). The term “sustainable livelihood” was coined by the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID) and has largely been used in agriculture, poverty reduction, and rural livelihood projects, but also adapted to refugee livelihood research (1991). ‘A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks to maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation’ (Chambers and Conway, 1991: 5). The livelihood strategy of a refugee can be a bit different from that of rural people in developing countries: in communities facing conflict and displacement, livelihoods comprise how people access and mobilize resources enabling them to increase their economic security, thereby reducing the vulnerability created and exacerbated by conflict, and how they pursue goals necessary for survival and

possible return. (Chambers and Conway, 1991). According to Chambers and Conway, there are three aspects, which can increase the development in livelihood strategies of refugees:

1. Enhancing capability

*'Livelihood capability in a context of change and unpredictability requires being adaptable, versatile, quick to change, well informed and able to exploit diverse, complicating and changing resources and opportunities. There are practical implications for the provision of infrastructure and services like:*

- *Education for livelihood-linked capability*
- *Health, both preventive and curative to prevent permanent disability*
- *Bigger and better baskets of choices for agriculture, and support for farmer's experiments*
- *Transport, communication and information services (about rights, markets, prices..)*
- *Flexible credit for new small enterprises'*

2. Improving equity

*'Giving priority to the capabilities, assets and access of the poorer, including minorities and women. Practical implications include:*

- *Redistribution of land*
- *Secure rights to land, water, trees and other resources and secure inheritance for children*
- *Protection and management of common property resources and equitable rights of access*
- *Enhancing the intensity and productivity of resource use, and exploiting small-scale economic synergy*
- *Rights and effective asses to services like education and health'*

3. Increasing social sustainability

*'Reducing vulnerability by restraining external stress, minimizing shocks and providing safety nets, so that poor people do not become poorer. Practical measures are many:*

- *Peace and equitable law and order*
- *Disaster prevention*
- *Counter seasonal strategies to provide food, income and work*
- *Health services*
- *Conditions for lower fertility*

These three aspects of developing livelihood strategies are mainly focusing on areas in which the possibility exists to be to a certain extend self-sufficient by using agriculture. A former Landscape-architect student of the Wageningen University, Robert Kruijt, recently did research on the possibility to make refugee camps more green. There is a special program developed, named 'The Green Towns Program', which is a method of landscape design in which the residents of an area (in his research, refugees of the Zaatari camp in Jordan) are involved right from the start in plans for it design. In the beginning it is more focusing on the environmental

sustainability, but as a result the process itself, the social side of sustainability, was far more important to the refugees. 'The fact that they got to contribute to the discussion, that they were listened to, that they could influence policy and engage in dialogue with the authorities' (Kruijt, 2014: 12–15). According to Kruijt, the UNHCR has responded to his project very positively. There are concrete plans for expanding it across the whole camp, so Zaatari may soon be graced with a lot of gardens'. The gardens are a start, but who knows what kind of development will follow; is (urban) agriculture in a few years something which need to be considered when looking at sustainable livelihood strategies for refugees? Sustainable livelihood security is a precondition for a stable human population (Chambers & Conway, 1991: 10). By enhancing capability, improving equity and increasing social (and maybe in a later stadium also environmental) sustainability it is possible to create better livelihood strategy options for refugees and thereby also a possible durable urban setting. As mentioned already in chapter four: 'building refugee self-reliance and access to sustainable livelihoods activities is a cornerstone of the policy on alternatives to camps and will be a key factor in successful implementation' (UNHCRd, 2014: 8).

#### *Durable fourth solution*

The three solutions suggested by the UNHCR to solve the worldwide refugee problem are voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement to a third country (UNHCR, 2012: 17). But is it really possible to combine camp life with local integration? As showed earlier in this thesis, it is. For example in the Domiz camp in northern Iraq, people from outside the camp come from miles away to get their bread at the bakery in the camp because the quality is very high (refugee republic, 2014: 1). Local integration will be a side effect when camps develop into urban spaces. However, when it is a possibility to create better livelihood strategy options in camps, the refugees themselves need to consider the camp as a permanent setting as well. The original approach of the UNHCR, elaborated in chapter four, is a top-down approach. The UNHCR uses strict guidelines for the setting up of refugee camps, which state exactly how things should be done. Per refugees per day, 2100 calories of food and 35 litres of water should be available (Kruijt, 2014: 12–15). The provided facilities are in proportion to the number of residents. According to Kruijt, 'this kind of approach works fine when you have to set up a temporary refugee camp at great speed, but these kind of camps are rarely temporary, so it is better to try to steer the developments by looking into what the residents want and need' (Kruijt, 2014: 12–15). As mentioned before, Kruijt did involve the refugees of the Zaatari camp from the beginning of the design: 'to find out what the refugees themselves wanted, I got the refugees to use a photoshop programme to edit an image of the camp to make it how they would like it. This generated a lot of different images, but they all had a couple of key things in common: away with the open sewer, and more vegetation' (Kruijt, 2014: 12–15). This example of Kruijt is important because it shows how it is possible to use a more bottom-up approach instead of a top-down one, by involving the refugees in the development of their own environment. This is also contained in the alternatives to camp policy of the UNHCR: 'consulting with refugees and taking the time needed to understand their intentions, aspirations,

concerns and conditions when people are not consolidated in camps' (UNHCR, 2014d: 9).

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, Agier did write in his book that camps are the fourth solution of the UNHCR for resolving the refugee problem (Agier 2011). In the UNHCR policy on alternatives to camps is written down that 'when refugees are protected and assisted effectively and are able to achieve solutions without resorting to the establishment of camps and when existing camps are *phases out or transformed into sustainable settlements*' their alternative to camps policy is achieved. (UNHCR, 2014d: 12). This shows that to a certain extent, the UNHCR also considers refugee camps as a sustainable fourth solution.

Concluding out of this chapter, we can say that with some further changes in the approach of the UNHCR, the possible livelihood strategies of refugees, it is worth it to consider camps as possible sustainable urban settings. When the UNHCR will expand their top-down approach into a more bottom-up approach, for example by using the green town program and elaborating their alternatives to camps policy, the refugees will get more involved in the creation of their own environment. This will also have a positive effect on their possibilities to create a living by develop the possibility to become more self-reliant. By enhancing capability, improving equity and increasing sustainability it is possible to create better livelihood strategy options for refugees and thereby also a possible sustainable (urban) setting. When the UNHCR keeps recognizing camps as possible sustainable settlements, refugee camps can be a potential additional and durable fourth solution to solve the refugee problem.

## 5. Conclusion

With this thesis, I have tried to give some insight into the urbanisation process of refugee camps, and explored whether camps can be an additional and sustainable fourth solution to solve the worldwide refugee problem. The previous chapters elaborated some specific aspects of this urbanisation process, the way in which the structure and governance of camps contributes to it, and how sustainable livelihood strategies for refugees can be developed.

According to Agier, there are three outlines for urban life: symbolic of space, social differentiation and identity change. These outlines will be fostered by integration between refugees and the local community, by maximizing the mobility and expanding the economy. When a camp is included in the adjacent community with both economic and social ties, there are more (shared) services available, more job opportunities are created and other developments become possible for both the refugees as for the local community. An urbanised refugee camp will show signs of different ethnic groups that are adjusted to their new and different living situations and the fact that they are living together. An urbanised refugee camp provides facilities, such as health care and education, and it is possible to share this with the local community. In urbanised camps, refugees are no longer dependent on the original care and maintain system of the UNHCR anymore. The existing structure in refugee camps produce room for refugees to create agency, and the alternatives to camps policy of the UNHCR develops camp situations where refugees can become more self-reliant and increase their access to sustainable livelihood activities. A refugee camp is not an enclosed and secluded place, but a place full of social and economic activities. Refugees are able to use their networks, talents and the provided facilities to develop their livelihood strategies. By enhancing capability, improving equity and increasing sustainability it is possible to create more sustainable livelihood strategies. Through this, it is worth it to consider camps as possible sustainable urban settings. The UNHCR is already recognising the contemporary change in the temporary character of refugee camps by identifying camps as sustainable settlements. When the UNHCR will further develop their top-down approach into a more bottom-up approach by elaborating their alternatives to camps policy and for example by using the green towns program, refugees will get more involved in the creation of their own environment. This will increase their 'sense of place' but will also have a positive effect on their possibilities to become more self-reliant. This, together with the development of sustainable livelihood strategies for refugees and further recognition of camps as possible sustainable settlements by different actors, refugee camps can be seen as sustainable urban settings.

Based on my findings I argue that refugee camps *create opportunities* and that they can be seen as an additional and sustainable fourth solution to solve the worldwide refugee problem.

## Discussion

The discussion part of this thesis is a personal chapter based on the evaluation of the results, my own experiences with the research and the limitations of this study and thereby the associated recommendations for further research on this topic.

### *Evaluation of results*

The results of this research are based on a literature study. It was not difficult to find scientific articles written about refugee camps. I was surprised by the fact that not only social scientist are interested in the developments within refugee camps, but also a lot of architects, who chose this topic to do further research on. The database of the UNHCR is not very well organised which made it a challenge to find useful articles. At the end of my writing process, I did encounter more and more useful articles, but you need to stop somewhere. I think that when you go further on the same topic for a while, there never will be a moment when you are sure that you came across all the articles and studies, which are interesting, for your own research. I think that after all I can be satisfied with the results I obtained based on literature research, but for a better overview and inside information you need to collect your own data. I can imagine how things do look like in a refugee camp, based on stories, articles, pictures and other studies but it is quite different when you did not see it with your own eyes. The results are based on multiple people's outlines of their created reality. So my imagination, my own reality and my personal ideas are based on other's explanations of their view on the situations in refugee camps. My results are based on the articles I read. This maybe could have been different if I would have read different articles from different authors with another opinion. How do I know that the results I gathered are based on the one and only truth? Something dissimilar can also be true. The fact that my results are not based on my own data made the results harder to proof.

### *Own experiences*

Besides the fact that this study is based on literature research, the way I interpreted things is also an important element. My own interpretation did also influence my results and my way of thinking. Who am I to decide for other people that 'we' or the UNHCR must see camps as a possible fourth solution to solve the refugee problem? Who am I to make the distinction between 'we' and 'them'? I don't like the distinction of 'we' and 'them' at all. Who am I to decide for other people that their temporary way of living must change into a permanent one? Sometimes during the writing I felt confused about the idea that I was deciding for other people that their living situations in camps can be a permanent setting were they could build new lives and promising futures. That felt strange, when you see movies and read stories about the bad conditions refugees can be in, it did not feel correct that I wanted to 'change' our way of thinking about the temporary character of camps. But at the end I know that this bachelor thesis will not make any difference, and that the main idea of this change in character of the camp is just to develop a better environment and improved livelihood strategies for refugees in camps where this is doable. In the

future I would like to do further research on this topic so that I will be able to collect my own data and shape my own vision. I think it will be interesting to expand the sustainability possibilities in camps with environmental concerns. I think that, in the end, when we are considering refugee camps in some cases as permanent settings and as durable solutions, we must also consider urban agriculture and other urban environmental sustainable developments. When the climate and soil is useful, urban agriculture can be very additional for the environment, the livelihood strategies of refugees and the spatial use of the area. My interest in both social and environmental sustainability comes from the fact that after I will graduate for my bachelor degree in International Development studies, I will start with the Master Urban Environmental Management with a specialization in Land Use Planning. This thesis was for me in some way already a start in this direction, this explains maybe also my interest in sustainable urban settings.

### *Recommendations*

As mentioned earlier in this thesis it is an interesting question for further research to look at the possible relation between the 'lifetime' of refugee camps and the increase of different levels of social stratification. Apart from that, what is the opinion of refugees themselves about the current shift that is taking place? And besides that, there are multiple interesting topics to research on the refugee issue. For example, how doable are the three aspects that are needed for the creation of sustainable livelihood strategies? And if we reach in the future a different level of social sustainability, it is an option to create environmental sustainability as well? What about the possibility to expand the green towns program? And what about urban agriculture? What about developments that focuses on integration between refugee camps and the local area for further developments for both of them? What about more possibilities to get university level-education in camps? What kind of consequences could have the recognition of permanent settings on further developments in refugee camps at large? There are a lot of perspectives from different scientific angles that can and must provide more knowledge to create a better (vision on the) future for refugees, and the vision 'we' and 'they' have of refugee camps.

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