Contested transnationalism
among Mauritanian Deportees in Senegal

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1 Introduction

In what ways do transnationalism represent a durable solution to refugees in a situation of protracted exile? The international community and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) today operate with three 'durable solutions' to solve the so-called international refugee problem. Through these solutions, the refugees are assisted to enter under the legal protection either of the home country (repatriation), the country of first asylum (naturalisation) or a third country (resettlement). For many refugees in Africa none of these solutions are in immediate sight, and a large number of refugee populations see their exile as ever more protracted (Crisp 2003). An evident cause of this is the prolongation of conflicts in their home countries, something that often prevents repatriation. Another is the difficulty of finding solutions that the involved states agree upon. The latter excludes the possibility of naturalisation or resettlement.

Due to the protraction of refugee situations worldwide, researchers and practitioners are trying to better understand how the durable solutions appear to the refugees, as well as defining alternative solutions. One alternative that has been suggested during the last couple of years is transnationalism. Through the option of transnationalism, members of refugee families settle at several localities in two or more countries, maintaining cross-border activities (cf. Van Hear 2002, Stepputat 2004a). This thesis sets out to shed light upon and problematise transnationalism as a durable solution to the 'refugee problem', by answering the following two questions.

First, how can transnational adaptation and aspirations be seen as a challenge to the traditionally established durable solutions?

This question contains two elements that I will explore in this thesis. One is to establish how refugees make use of transnational strategies on an international border by maintaining contact with networks in area of origin and exile simultaneously.

The other element is an investigation of how refugees relate to transnationalism through participation in third-country resettlement programmes, and the effects this has on achieving durable solutions.

Second, how can transnationalism be considered a contested strategy?

This question sets out to describe how transnational activities and aspirations can be subject to deep disagreements among the refugees; both leading to the under- and over-communicating of the refugee label as well as contributing in the formation of refugee identity and shaping of social interaction.

The empirical material is drawn from four months of fieldwork in a Mauritanian refugee settlement in the border town of Dagana, Northern Senegal. The thirteen refugees that took part in the investigation are all young men. This segment was selected mainly because I expected young men to be potentially more mobile than other parts of the population.

The so-called refugee problem can be defined as 'the political and institutional challenge that the continued presence of refugee populations pose for governments and international agencies' (Wilson and Nunes 1994: 173). On the other, "refugees' problems" refers to 'the difficulties and struggles of refugees to construct a better and more meaningful present and future life' (*ibid.*). There has been a tendency towards a top-down approach, focusing mainly on the first of these two defined problems. Addressing only the first question has on occasion led to the offering of inappropriate durable solutions to the refugees.

Most of all, refugees are often thought of as a problem *per se*, and their presence in foreign states has been associated with, for instance, conflict spillover effects, smuggling, organised crime, competition on the job market or pressure on the environment or on the local economy (cf. Jacobsen 2001). These threats are often associated with the negative effects of population mobility across permeable borders (Wilson and Donnan 1998). At times, it seems that the durable solutions are developed to solve the problem of burden-sharing between states, rather than the problems of the refugees. For instance, the UNHCR in the latest issue of their *Resettlement Handbook* explicitly refers to burden-sharing as one of the primary motives behind resettlement programmes (2004b).

At other times, the top-down approach implies presuppositions of the refugees' challenges and needs – for instance, that the refugees chronically suffer emotionally from staying away from home or that they suffer from lack of integration (Bakewell 2002a). This means that when solutions have been offered to refugees, they are not necessarily designed to solve their problems. On occasion, solutions have been imposed on refugees against their will, solutions that do not correspond to the refugees' own needs and preferred solutions. At worst, refugees have been forcefully repatriated to their own conflict-ridden area of origin. This has

produced tragic consequences, for instance on the Ugandan-Sudanese border (Harrell-Bond 1995). What is considered a preferred or durable solution by the international community does not necessarily appear as such to the refugees, and imposing solutions on refugees cannot be seen as particularly durable. This thesis looks at the different solutions – as they are lived and desired – from the perspective of the refugees themselves.

A key issue in defining the refugees' problems is to understand the causes behind the protraction of exile. In Dagana, this prolongation is maintained through a social segregation process that grows out of a fundamental insistence by some refugees on the temporariness of exile. The refugees disagree profoundly as to whether the stay should be permanent or not and this disagreement is expressed – among other – through different opinions on transnational strategies and aspirations.

In refugee literature, a line has traditionally been drawn between 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' (or 'forced') migrants, the first migrating due to economic, the latter due to political reasons. Few populations can claim to be more forcefully displaced than the Mauritanian deportee population in Senegal. Deportations of a state's own citizens have only taken place on a few occasions in recent history. Apart from the deportation of Mauritanians in 1989, Idi Amin's expulsion of Asian Ugandans could be mentioned, or the deportation of Nepali populations from Bhutan (Van Hear 1998). Without entering into the ever-ending debate over the difference between voluntary and involuntary (or forced) migrants, it is easy to establish that these kinds of deportee populations are perhaps the ultimate example of the latter: a population displaying a total lack of agency when they left the country of origin. Despite the uniquely forceful way that such populations have been deported, there are few reasons to argue that deportee populations should be considered analytically different from other kinds of refugees. Legally speaking they fall into the same refugee category, complying with the UN Convention Relating to the Refugees of 1951 and other instruments relevant to refugee law. It is also likely that the distrust a deportee population displays towards the authorities of the country of origin, the strategies they follow and the identities they develop are of more or less the same character as the ones seen among many other exiled refugee populations. I will therefore use the words 'deportees' and 'refugees' interchangeably.

Although being 'forced' migrants, the Mauritanian refugees in Senegal now display a large degree of agency in finding their own solutions. The humanitarian assistance ended several years ago, and the refugees are now fully self-reliant. As has been thoroughly proved elsewhere, in a situation of protracted exile refugees often or normally find ways to creatively

adapt to their situation without assistance from governmental schemes or international non-governmental organisations. In fact, only a minority of the world's forced migrants receive sufficiently national or international assistance. It can not be expected that the lack of durable options prevents the young Mauritanian men from finding solutions on their own. Similarly, it can not be expected that if a wanted solution is in sight, the refugee will not consider planning for its realisation.

The three established alternatives – local integration, repatriation and resettlement – are built on the premises of three spatially distinct solutions. But, as I will come back to later, people are not necessarily spatially rooted. And if no migratory offers are made, the refugees can either wait or explore different spatial alternatives on their own. Refugees, like other forced migrants and voluntary migrants, use mobility and networks as valuable resources. Multilocal households and transnational strategies are ways that are made use of and developed whether durable solutions are achieved or not.

There is now extensive demonstrable support for the extremely complicated economic, legal, social and psychological situations that resettled refugees must adapt to in Western countries (cf. Stein 1979, Huyck and Fields 1981, Neuwirth 1988, Black 1994, Valtonen 1994). A relatively good understanding is also developing regarding the legal, financial and other practical aspects of the UNHCR-assisted resettlement programmes, as well as on governmental policies towards them (cf. Lanphier 1983, Waxman 1998). More recently has research been also carried out that tries to evaluate the resettlement programmes in a transnational perspective. Some investigate the transnational communities between refugee diaspora and the home country (Al-Ali 2002, Koser 2002). Other studies focus on the resettled refugees' contact with their relatives in the country of first asylum. These latter studies have normally been done by looking at flows of remittances, either from the point of view of the resettled refugees (Riak Akuei 2005) or other aspects of the transnational spaces between the country of sending and receipt of remittances (Van Hear 2002, Horst 2004). There appears to be, however, a lacuna when it comes to research on the social, political and economic effects that such refugee resettlement programmes have on the camp refugees who are *not* part of these transnational networks. This thesis will treat the way that refugees' desires for finding a durable solution are affected by such programmes.

It has been of particular interest to identify the adaptation of the Mauritanian Wolof refugee population. This ethnic group constitutes only a small minority in Mauritania but is the biggest and most influential group in Senegal, and their language is rapidly turning into a *de facto* national language in the country. In contrast to the Halpulaar refugees, no research has so far been done on the Wolof refugee population. The Dagana refugee settlement contains the biggest concentration of Mauritanian Wolof refugees is in Senegal.

1.1 THE MAURITANIAN DEPORTEES –VICTIMS OF A FRAGILE PEACE

In 1989, Mauritania and Senegal were on the verge of war and small military clashes took place on the border between the two states. For several years, the diplomatic relations were put on hold, and the border crossings were only opened in 1992. Although the conflict is formally over, the tension has still not been fully settled, with occasional diplomatic crises.

Many ascribe the reasons for the outbreak of the conflict to ethno-political problems within Mauritania, a country that has been ridden with ethnic and regional north-south divides, similar to what has been the case in a few other Arab-African states along the Sahel belt. Some years prior to what is called 'the events' in 1989, the Mauritanian government had introduced new land laws, thus rendering invalid the traditional forms of land ownership that until then were common among the African, or 'black', populations in Southern Mauritania. During a few months in 1989, a total of 371 black villages along the Senegal River were partially or totally emptied of people by the Mauritanian army or police (Santoir 1998). The inhabitants had their identity papers confiscated and were then deported to Senegal and Mali, where they were settled in UNHCR-assisted refugee camps. The bulk of the lucrative farming land along the Senegal River was then expropriated by the Mauritanian State and later taken over by businessmen from the capital (Magistro 1993, Schmitz 1994). Several of the villages were burnt down and their names were changed.

Also targeted for deportation were black Mauritanians in the major cities in the country, the majority of Halpulaar ethnic origin. These were of various professions, such as army officials, mechanics, or state employees. Many were members of the banned opposition party FLAM, or accused of being so. While the rural Southern Mauritanians were forced to cross the Senegal River, the urban population was deported by plane to Dakar, Senegal. It is

estimated that a total of 65,000 Mauritanian citizens were expelled in the process. The deportee population in the Dagana refugee settlement today consists of a mixed population of Halpulaar ex-city dwellers and South Mauritanian Wolof farmer-fishermen, lumped together in the same neighbourhood.
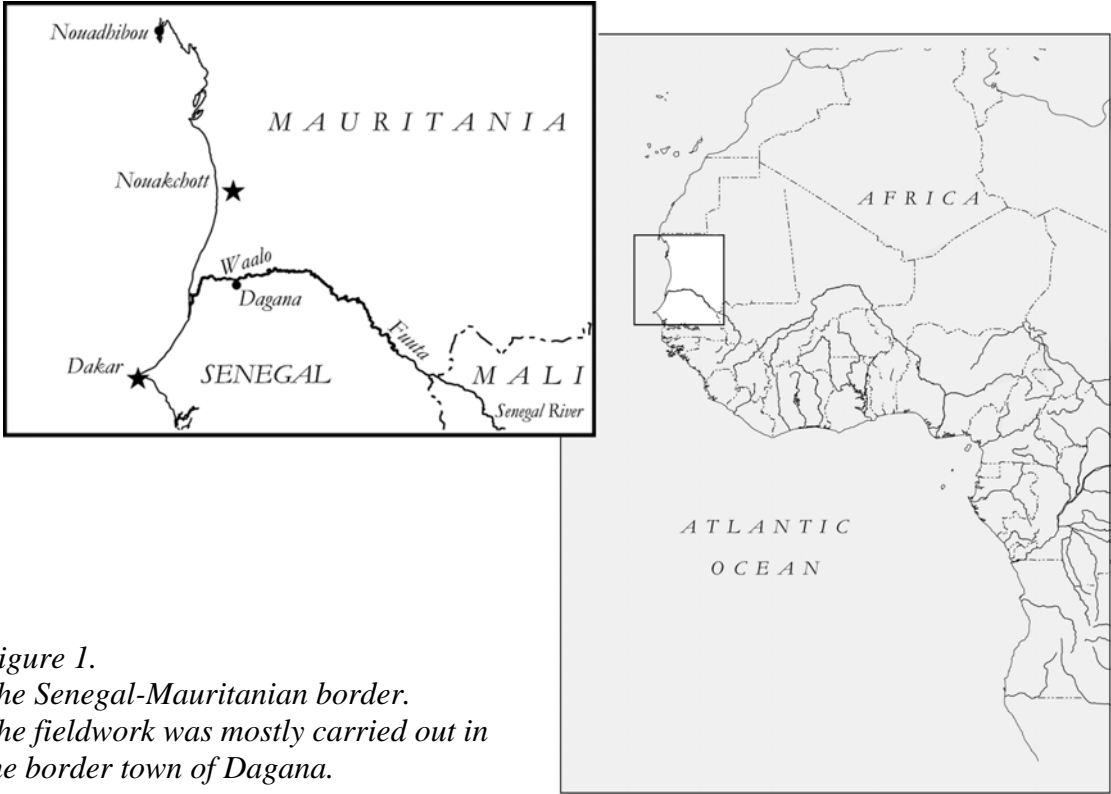
Figure 1.
The Senegal-Mauritanian border.
The fieldwork was mostly carried out in
the border town of Dagana.

No concessions have yet been made by Mauritanian authorities, who since 1989 have consistently denied the existence of Mauritanian refugees abroad. None of the perpetrators of the killings and expulsions have been convicted, as an amnesty has been given to all crimes committed by the armed and security forces for the period in question. None of the deportees in Senegal have officially been compensated by the Mauritanian state for their losses. The country remains known for its poor human rights record, fraudulent elections and remnants of traditional slavery. The same president, who came to power through a coup two decades ago, Maaouiya Ould Taya, is still in power.

The international community today rarely raises the issue of the deportees with Mauritanian authorities. The World Bank, who gave loans to Mauritania all through the 1990s

(Santoir 1998) decided to cut the giant debt in half in 2004, praising the country for its democratic reforms. Similarly, the 'refugee problem' is never mentioned in talks between Senegal and Mauritania. Nouakchott has even supposedly managed to make the Senegalese government stop the UNHCR from issuing refugee ID papers to the Mauritanians in the country, and pressured the UNHCR to provide aid to the refugees in the mid 1990s (Kinne 2001). The refugees remain victims of the fragile peace between the two reconciling neighbouring states. The two involved states now view the problem as solved on a bilateral level (Santoir 1998).

The case of the Mauritanian refugees in Senegal is no longer on the international agenda. UNHCR is offering them legal protection, but not humanitarian aid. The refugees have therefore been forced to find different ways to adapt to this protracted situation. One part of the population repatriated to Mauritania as a result of a UNHCR-sponsored programme in the 1990s. This was particularly the case for the agriculturalist refugees who hoped to regain their farming land (Santoir 1998). However, the tense political situation in Mauritania has made many refugees very reluctant to repatriate. A few hundred have managed to resettle in third countries, mostly the United States, while others have obtained Senegalese citizenship and prefer to be referred to as Senegalese. All of these options have been used by different families in the Dagana refugee settlement. In addition, youths from several families have migrated to other places in Senegal or Mauritania while remaining refugees. This means that the population in the settlement has slowly decreased over the years. Today it counts, at maximum, 700 people.

1.2 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

Chapter 2 offers an explanation of how refugee situations become protracted, and in what ways transnationalism can serve as a meaningful solution to the problem. Chapter 3 gives an account of the method used in the collection and analysis of fieldwork material. The presentation of the empirical findings begins with the Chapter 4 introduction to the fieldwork site in Dagana and to the heterogeneous refugee settlement. As we will see, the population is divided into two very distinct neighbourhoods. This division will remain central throughout the subsequent chapters. Chapter 5 gives a presentation of how the young refugee men view the different spatial alternatives as derived from the durable solutions: staying in Senegal, returning to Mauritania and resettling abroad. These spatially distinct options are

problematised in Chapter 6. Here we see that, on the one hand, some of the refugees have adapted transnational strategies that cannot be classified to represent any of the three solutions. On the other, we see how transnationalism can also be a solution that, instead of offering a durable way out of refugee marginalisation, can protract the situation. In Chapter 7, and in the concluding Chapter 8, these contested transnational strategies and aspirations become intertwined with identity issues, triggering a process of social segregation that shapes both social life and the achievement of durable solutions for the refugees.

2 Transnationalism as a durable solution

Before embarking upon the issue of transnationalism as a possible solution to the 'refugee problem', a few things need to be clarified. First, what is the problem and what does a 'solution' entail. In a setting where all of the established, legal durable solutions are missing, the refugee still has room to manoeuvre in. The refugees' choice is not one of selecting a legal option, but a place to stay. The main dilemma is relating to whether to stay temporarily or permanently.

2.1 PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

'Refugee' is defined in the famous and well-debated Article 1 of the 1951 convention as a person who 'owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country' (UNHCR 1951). From this legal definition, three alternatives can be logically deduced when searching for 'durable solutions' to the problem: repatriation to the home country, naturalisation in the country of first asylum, and resettlement to a third country. UNHCR's mandate is to temporarily offer legal protection to the refugees while a more durable solution is searched for in collaboration with involved governments. All three 'durable solutions' are currently promoted by the organisation.

The way 'durable solutions' is defined depends on a number of factors. Particularly relevant, are the understanding one has of the 'problem', and what time perspective one has. A long term solution for the refugee will, for instance, require a different definition of the solution than a donor institution with tight annual budgets. A useful definition of the concept is 'the integration of refugees into a society' (Stein 1986: 265). With such an understanding, it is clear that we have moved away from the purely legal approach to the solution, into a form of extended definition taking more of the refugees' needs into account. Actually, the UNHCR's durable solutions are normally described as containing two aspects of integration. First, it implies a legal integration, whereby the refugee regains some kind of permanent

protection by one of the involved states through residence permit or citizenship. Second, it is a socio-economic and cultural integration that enables the refugee to be self-reliant.

In addition to these two layers of the durable solutions, I believe that there is one more aspect that is important to emphasise. This will remain relevant to the remainder of this thesis: the spatial or migratory aspect. The states involved, together with the refugees, define a final place of residence for the intended refugees. If the states are not able to offer any viable migratory solution, the refugees will necessarily search for, or opt for, solutions themselves. This kind of analysis constitutes a shift in forced migration research, attributing a lot more agency, creativity and abilities to the forced migrants, than what has been the tradition (cf. Warner 1994, Bakewell 1996, 2000, 2002a, Hammond 1999, Long and Oxfeld 2004).

Table 1. Layers of a 'durable solution'

As a legal alternative	As a socio-economic or cultural process	As a migratory choice
Naturalisation (obtaining residence permit or citizenship in host country)	*Local integration* (including self-reliance/ self-sufficiency) *Assimilation*	*To stay*
Repatriation (regaining citizenship in country of origin)	*Repatriation* or, synonymously, return/reintegration	*To repatriate* (or to return)
Resettlement (obtaining residence permit or citizenship in third-country)	*Resettlement* or, synonymously, integration in third-country	*To resettle*

The question is then which of these aspects the durable solution are meant to address. Of course, the three layers are highly interrelated. What I see from the Mauritanian young men in Senegal, is that the unresolved situation is much more viewed in terms of a migratory decision rather than the any of the two other aspects. For instance, the migratory adaptation on an international border can offer a whole lot of security to the refugee: even to the extent that legal protection through the obtaining of residence permit or citizenship passes undebated.

What has been considered the most suitable solution by the UNHCR and the international community has changed substantially over the years. During the Cold War, resettlement was considered the optimal. At that time, resettlement to Western countries had perhaps more political or economic motives than humanitarian. Large numbers of refugees from, for instance, Eastern European states were offered protection in the West (Neuwirth

1988). At the time, resettlement was given to refugee populations on a blanket basis, such as for the 'boat refugees' from Vietnam.

Since the 1980s, it has been increasingly difficult for third-countries to mobilise the political will and finances to support large-scale resettlement programmes based on solely humanitarian motives. The blanket entries have to a larger degree than earlier been replaced by individual entries and the admissions have only been granted through the fulfilment of strict selection criteria. These are, for instance, refugees who have particular needs that can not be met in the country of first asylum, refugees who are at particular risk, refugees who cannot or will not return to the country of origin, and finally, refugees without prospects for future local integration (UNHCR 2004b). Experience shows that a majority of the participants is from well-educated, higher social strata of the refugee populations.

With the world order radically changed since the early 1980s, so has the international community's perception of the preferred solution. During the 1990s, return to the country of origin was considered to be the best and most sustainable alternative, as a last step of the 'refugee cycle'. The UNHCR Executive Committee even explicitly stated repatriation to be 'the most preferred solution' (quoted in Crisp 2004: 5). Several million refugees returned during the decade that UNHCR labelled 'the decade of repatriation' (Preston 2003, Chimni 2004). However, repatriation has also been shown to be a problematic solution as the conflicts at home are protracted. During the last few years, the research and policy makers have been searching for new alternatives for durable solutions (cf. Rutinwa 1996). Now, for instance research is revitalising local integration in the country of first asylum as a 'the forgotten solution' (Jacobsen 2001).

When it is so difficult to reach a durable legal solution, the new research explores how the socio-economic or cultural processes, or the migratory considerations, take place in a situation of protracted exile, where the legal outlooks are rather poor. It is in this context that transnationalism has entered the field of research. Van Hear argues that transnationalism in some cases "might be considered in itself as an 'enduring' if not a 'durable' solution to displacement" (2002: 233).

2.1.1 Some become refugees

From the Refugee Convention it follows that when a person is forced to cross an international border due to persecution, the person becomes a refugee. But this is not to say that the refugee necessarily identifies as a one. It is a 'process of becoming', writes Malkki, 'a gradual

transformation, not an automatic result of the crossing of a national border' (1995a: 114). This thesis uses a definition of 'refugee' that surpasses the purely legal but also includes wider sociological aspects.

In addition to the obvious legal status, 'refugee' is a bureaucratic label. According to Zetter, who has studied the Cypriot bureaucracy's use of the 'refugee' category, a refugee is someone who 'conforms to institutional requirements' (1991: 51). When aid is distributed to a refugee population, their needs are seen as detached from the context of the needs of the host populations. This 'refugee-centred' (Chambers 1986) assistance often leads to an artificial boundary between refugees and hosts (Zetter 1991, Sørensen and Stepputat 2000, Sorensen 2001). The imposition of the refugee label, Zetter claims, can radically alter the behaviour of refugee societies. Harrell-Bond (1999) demonstrates how the label becomes a category that is mobilised vis-à-vis the international humanitarian regime. This use value of the refugee label can be mobilised both on a group level, as well as in personal interaction.

The bureaucratic label forms and transforms the refugees' identities (Zetter 1991). It is important to observe that categories such as 'refugee' are normally used contextually by the refugees themselves and can be mobilised tactically according to the person's needs (Stepputat 2004a). Experience from several organised refugee settlements shows that people of different backgrounds lumped together in a common camp have a tendency to develop a shared language of collective history and identity (Torres 1999, Hammond 2004, Kirkerud 2004). This identity is often shaped in the refugees' encounter with the physical camp environment, the humanitarian regime or political factors.

The formation and erosion of refugee identity are extensively illustrated in the two now classic empirical studies of the Hutu refugees in Tanzania by Liisa Malkki (1992, 1995a) and of the Angolan refugees in Zambia by Art Hansen (1981, 1982, 1990, 1992). Hansen's key question, which can be applied to Malkki's study as well, is 'when does a person stop being a refugee, and why?' (Hansen 1992: 101).

The case of the Angolan refugees shows in what ways refugee populations can adapt in different manners to exile over time. One part of the refugees self-settled in villages right on the other side of the border. There they were given agricultural land and material support by distant relatives, until they were able to achieve self-reliance. They were never registered as refugees by the Zambian authorities – as the law required – nor did they receive support from aid agencies. Instead, they blended with the locals in a familiar environment. Nearly two decades after his first fieldwork, Hansen makes the following remark:

> In fact, the 1989 research made me question whether the 'refugee' label had been applied correctly in the first place. The people who fled Angola because of the war were refugees by international legal definitions since they had fled from a war across an interstate border. To the people themselves, however, that act of flight had not made them refugees. They were continuing to travel within their own ethnic territory and to utilize long-established sociocultural patterns of mobility to escape a threat. I had made a mistake in my earlier research by simply accepting a legal and state-oriented definition of refugee. (Hansen 1992: 103)

The other part of the Zambian refugee population was settled in government-sponsored refugee camps further inland. There, they received humanitarian aid and lived in materially better conditions than their self-settled countrymen. However, these refugees remained relatively poorly integrated socially and economically in the host society. In contrast to the self-settled refugees, they had developed a strong refugee identity. A majority desired to return to Angola once the conflict were to stop.

Malkki's (1992, 1995a) study of Hutu refugees in Tanzania share many characteristics with the Angolan case. Malkki describes on the one hand how a group of town refugees have successfully adopted a strategy of blending anonymously into the local setting, gaining a large degree of self-reliance. These refugees did not identify themselves in daily interaction as 'Hutus', 'refugees' or 'Burundians' but used situational identities, 'rootlessly' downplaying their past. On the other hand, the population in the isolated Kigoma refugee camp developed a shared understanding of their history of suffering and of their present political situation as well as a desire to return and regain their homeland. In this way, the refugee identity was not only preserved but also enforced over time, and it shaped social interaction. Important to the camp refugees was the maintenance of their 'refugee-ness', insisting upon *not* getting too rooted in Tanzanian society. They defined themselves in relation to the integrated town refugees, whom they perceived as a threat to their purity as refugees. As 'pure refugees', they became stronger as exiled Hutus. The Angolan and Hutu cases give important lessons as to why certain refugee situations are protracted.

2.1.2 Protraction of refugee situations

The protraction of refugee situations in the world today can usefully be explained on two interrelated levels. First, it can be explained at a macro level, taking for instance governmental policies, UNHCR practice and state insecurity as a point of departure. Crisp (2003) argues for instance that many of the armed conflicts in Africa that forced refugees to exile have still not been solved. Others focus on how governments in the country of first asylum often only show

an interest in offering temporary protection to refugees, instead of permanent integration. This they do even though there is demonstrable support for the argument that refugees in African rural contexts entail important development potentials (cf. Hansen 1990). However, host governments prefer protracting the refugees' temporary stay, by 'warehousing' the refugees in organised settlements. A common concern is that if permanent residence is given, the country will receive a further influx of refugees. Explanations at this level are useful but often presuppose that the refugees prefer either to repatriate or to integrate.

Second, the protraction can be explained by decision-making at the individual level – this thesis has such a focus. These decisions can be understood through an absence of *desire to repatriate*. Lack of confidence in the regime at home remains probably the single most important reason for this desire of non-repatriation. For many refugees who aspire for return, a durable solution to the 'refugee problem' therefore implies mainly the solving of the root cause of their exodus: through a political change or an improved security situation at home. Another explanation as to why the refugee situation is protracted is through the absence of *desire to integrate*. A lack of desire to integrate is often assumed to be a function of a wish to repatriate. Diaspora studies, I believe, often see the two explanations as functions of each other.

The refugees own *will* to integrate is a precondition for successful integration into a society (Jacobsen 2001). For some populations – even among voluntary migrants – this will is missing. Faist (2000a) argues for instance that the desire of diaspora immigrants to return to the home country is sometimes too dominant for them to establish links to the host society. In certain cases this 'nostalgia' for home entails such a profound segregation from host society that it is even impossible to talk of transnational communities.

Although neither Malkki nor Hansen uses the diaspora concept, both the Hutu and the Angolan camp refugees seem to have developed a high degree of 'diasporic consciousness' (Cohen 1996: 517). Zetter (1991) shows how Greek-Cypriot refugees in South Cyprus insist on maintaining their identity as refugees, still hoping for repatriation. Diasporas often display a lack of will to integrate, since the entire project of exile is to one day return. The lack of integration demonstrates the temporariness of exile, and this might be a moral question of political correctness (Malkki 1995a). Safran states that the myth of return

does not – and is not intended to – lead its members to prepare for the actual departure for the homeland. The 'return' of most diasporas […] can thus be seen as a largely eschatological concept: it is used to make life more tolerable by holding out a utopia – or eutopia – that stands in contrast to the perceived *dystopia* in which actual life is lived (Safran 1991: 94; orig. emphasis).

The alternatives of integration and repatriation are both seen as complex and multifaceted processes, dependent on a number of conditions both at home and in exile, as well as on long-term strategies and considerations by the involved refugees. Most of all, as mentioned, integration and repatriation are often seen as functions of each other. But there can also be *other* reasons as to why the refugee resists integration and insists on the temporariness of exile. This thesis argues for the importance of resettlement.

When it comes to understanding the importance of resettlement in relation to the other available solutions, there seems to be a large research gap. Refugees as participants in third-country resettlement programmes seem to be treated primarily as statistics. When challenges and aspirations of refugees are addressed vis-à-vis resettlement programmes, it is normally only for those who already have participated in such a programme and arrived in a third-country. But how is the resettlement lottery perceived by the potential participants in the country of first asylum? What aspirations, preparations and choices have been carried out and imagined until the day when the refugee is selected to participate?

2.1.3 The choice –temporariness versus permanency

Once the three layers are analytically separated, it is clear that the choice is not one of integration, repatriation and resettlement, but rather one of staying, repatriating and resettlement. The main difference is thus between *to integrate* versus *to stay*.

The UNHCR draws up a distinction between two different ways of staying in the country of first asylum: through local integration and self-reliance. The latter refers to the refugees' ability to 'meet essential needs in a sustainable manner and with dignity' (UNHCR 2004b: II/8). Achieving self-reliance, or self-sufficiency, is important according to the UNHCR, since it permits the refugees to acquire experiences and skills that they will need as a basis no matter which of the three durable solutions they end up with. Local integration, on the other side, is defined by the UNHCR (2004b) as a process with three dimensions: a legal one, an economic and a socio-cultural. This definition means that the refugees can obtain a high degree of local integration without becoming citizens of the host country (cf. Crisp 2004). The analytical problem is that all these aspects of local integration are the same as

those that develop in a process of becoming self-reliant. Actually, self-sufficient self-settled refugees in many cases come to be *de facto* integrated into the local society (Jacobsen 2001). So exactly where the temporary self-reliance ends and local the integration begins remains somewhat obscure. Seen in a spatial or migratory point of view, the distinction that the UNHCR propagates between local self-reliance and local integration is non-existing. The UNHCR (2004b) admits that the difference between the two is more of a continuum. At the same time, it claims there is a central difference: '*self-reliance* provides the basis for all three durable solutions, and *as such it does not in itself constitute local integration nor does it preclude resettlement*' (UNHCR 2004b: II/12; orig. emphasis).

The way I see it, refugees can be said to have two main alternative strategies to follow regarding their stay in a self-reliant settlement. Either they plan for the stay to be temporary, or they plan for it to be permanent. Of course, the refugees can claim in different contexts to be following one strategy or the other and, as far as possible, strategically keep all alternatives open. The insistence on remaining refugees can also vary according to changes at home and in exile. But at a certain point a choice must be made whether to fully integrate or not. A fully naturalised refugee cannot, for instance, claim refugee-centred assistance, resettlement or participation in a UNHCR-sponsored repatriation programme. The Mauritanian refugees' choice between temporariness and permanency is highly debated among them.

Several studies have observed the inadequacy of the legal focus of the three 'durable solutions'. A central critique is that the solutions in different ways do not sufficiently take into account the refugees' locally created and envisaged strategies and choices (cf. Sommers 2001, Vincent 2001, Bakewell 2002b, Van Hear 2002, Phillips 2004). Such studies not only question the durable solutions but also challenge our definitions of what a refugee is, and what their problems consist of. Particularly relevant in this case, is the criticism against the sedentary bias that has existed both among scholars, aid agencies and public opinion when it comes to the understanding of refugees and the durable solutions (cf. Malkki 1992). It is here that a migratory approach to the durable solutions can be valuable. It is only through attributing the forced migrants with the ability to choose, that protracted refugee situations can be understood.

The complexities of staying are particularly present in the important debate regarding the difference between camp and self-settled refugees (cf. Kuhlman 1994, Jacobsen 2001, Stepputat 2004a). Following their own choices, self-settling in a known environment, Williams (1993) calls 'conservative strategies'. Instead of settling in an unfamiliar camp, far

away from home, the refugees often choose the easiest and safest: to settle with kinsfolk right across the border.

The settling of refugees in camps has several positive implications for the refugees, normally guaranteeing both important protection and assistance. But, on the other hand, it might lead to dependence and prevent integration (Kuhlman 1994). The refugees' own self-settlement, it is shown, might have the adverse effect, leading to independence and integration (Connor 1989, Kuhlman 1994). This has for instance taken place in both the Hutu and the Angolan cases. Sometimes the displaced have ended up showing little will to fulfil their own needs. Taking initiatives themselves has been seen as inappropriate or unjust, because the reason for their misery lays in structural, external factors. In some cases, the displaced demanded that it be the responsibility of the government and other actors to contribute humanitarian assistance (Sorensen and Vincent 2001).

From the moment the refugees are received in exile and settled in camps, they are categorised as 'refugees' and placed in the humanitarian discourse of the aid organisations. This use of the refugee category can have important disempowering effects on the refugees (Malkki 1995a, 1997, Hyndman 2000). Malkki (1997) argues that through the humanitarian intervention and discourse, refugees cease to be individuals and become dehistoricised victims with universal qualities, such as poor and deprived. In the camp, the refugees are counted, registered, administered, coordinated and calculated, as objects to knowledge, assistance and management (Hyndman 2000).

It seems to me that segregation through insisting on temporariness is necessary in order not to endanger the 'purity' of their 'refugee label' – and thus their project of resettlement. In this thesis, I want to explore what use value the refugees find in the latter strategy, that of 'staying refugee'.

2.2 RISK-MINIMIZING TRANSNATIONALISM

Both internationalisation of labour and capital and modern time- and space-shrinking technologies have had a major impact on today's migration movements. These global changes have required new theoretical approaches in studies of global migration.

Through transnational analysis, migrants are viewed as spatially attached to several localities simultaneously. These localities are linked through various practices that take

different forms. In transnational studies, the focus is thus more on the mobility between these localities, rather than on each of the two societies. Rather than an event with a beginning and an end that is completed upon the migrant's arrival in or integration into the receiving society, migration is now considered a continuous, long-lasting and two-way process. Some of the transnational literature also focuses on the formation of transnational identities. These studies show how some migrants have attachments to both localities to such an extent that they do not have any concrete plans to settle permanently in either of the two places (Koser 2002)

Several kinds of transnational social spaces can be identified (cf. Faist 2000a, 2000b). Most important to this thesis are the spaces defined as 'transnational communities'. These are characterised by two or more societies intimately linked together 'through reciprocity and solidarity to achieve a high degree of social cohesion, and a common repertoire of symbolic and collective representations' (Faist 2000b: 196). Faist (2000b) identifies different types of such communities, of which two are particularly relevant in the case of Mauritanian refugees in Dagana. The first constitutes the populations situated in frontier regions, and the second diaspora populations.

Transnational research has proven very useful in shedding light upon individual strategies and cross-border activities at a micro-level, in the context of larger, global politico-economic processes. So far, transnational analyses have been used in relation to 'voluntary migration' in a context of internationalisation of labour and capital. As Portes puts it, 'the emergence of transnational communities is tied to the logic of capitalism itself' (quoted in Al-Ali 2002: 100). More recently transnational activities[1] and social spaces have also been explored in other contexts (cf. Al-Ali and Koser 2002). Al-Ali (2002) looks for instance at Bosnian refugees in the EU and argues that transnationalism must be seen in relation to and motivated by other historical factors than solely the economic. Some Bosnian refugees, she shows, maintain a large degree of involvement in their country of origin while staying in exile. The emergence of these fields, she explains with factors ranging from political involvement to geographic distance and migration history

During the 1990s, several shifts took place in refugee research that had direct parallels to the transnational shift in migration studies. An important turn came with the critique of the entire language that until then had prevalently been used by refugee researchers and practitioners (Malkki 1992, 1995a, 1995b, 1997, Hammond 1999). First, Malkki propagates

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[1] Portes defines transnational activities as 'those that take place on a recurrent basis across national borders and require a regular and significant commitment of time by participants' (1999: 464).

the desedentarisation of the refugee discourse by questioning 'what it means to be rooted in a place' (1992: 26). Malkki argues that there has been a tendency to view people (particularly refugees), identities and culture as spatially territorialised or 'rooted'. When a person seeks refuge outside his or her nation-state, there has been an assumption that the natural link between person and the place of belonging is broken. This 'uprootedness' or *displace*ment has been characterised as leading to a loss of identity, and the refugee as becoming 'matter out of place' (Douglas quoted in Malkki 1992: 34). Malkki shows how repatriation often is used in a way that presupposes that the refugees have an *a priori* wish to 'return' to or 'reintegrate' at 'home'. This home has often been perceived as synonymous with the nation-state of origin. Through the de-essentialising of people's roots in the home places, Malkki questions the assumption that repatriation naturally restores normality in the refugees' life, putting an end to the abnormal exile.

Black and Koser (1999) follow Malkki's argument of de-linking people from place, and question the traditional assumption that repatriation is the optimal solution. They illustrate that it is not evident that refugees prefer to return home. Through their problematisation of the concept 'home', they show that the return often constitutes an entirely new beginning for the returnees. Since 'home', the refugees' idea of 'home' and the refugees themselves often change during exile, repatriation can be just as difficult as fleeing was in the first place. In this way, return does not necessarily imply 'the end of the refugee cycle', but rather can mark the beginning of an entirely new one. So instead of returning, the refugees might choose to get involved in home affairs while remaining abroad.

Black and Koser emphasise the importance of understanding what 'home' means in order to deal with repatriation. Few notions are more subjectively and contextually understood than 'home', and this is particularly so in a post-conflict border area like the one between Mauritania and Senegal. 'Home' refers not only to the physical environment in the place or nation of origin or birth or childhood but is perhaps even more the expression of a social or cultural environment or even an emotional condition. For many, 'home' is identified by the place where the family lives. One Mauritanian refugee told me that home 'is where I celebrate Tabaski'. The Muslim celebration of Tabaski is of course done at the place where the parents are. In a context of displacement and conflict particular care must be taken not to take for granted the 'home' or the repatriation desires of the displaced. The concept of home is therefore also widely dealt with in forced migration and diaspora studies.

The critizised sedentarist view, furthermore, obfuscates the refugees' appreciation of multilocal households (or 'mobile livelihoods' ref. Stepputat 2004a, 2004b). Often, displaced

persons choose to maintain networks at both the place of home and refuge (Sørensen and Stepputat 2000, Bakewell 2002a, Van Hear 2002). Although topics such as multilocal refugee households, 'de-territorialisation' of refugees through the problematisation of 'home' or maintenance of networks at the place of home and refuge have been treated for many years, it is only during recent years that transnationalism as a research topic and analytical tool has entered the field of refugee studies (cf. Al-Ali et al 2001a, 2001b, Al-Ali and Koser 2002, Van Hear 2002). Al-Ali (2001b) shows, for instance, how refugees engage in political, economic, social and cultural activities through transnational social spaces.

There has been a heavy critique against the argument that there exists a 'refugee identity' or 'refugee experience' universal to all refugees (cf. Malkki 1997). However, some phenomena are still recurrent in refugee or diaspora research; for instance the myth of return, the feeling of alienness, social discrimination or suffering. Many of these aspects are also common to voluntary migrants. Still, there is one important difference between voluntary and refugee experiences with regard to identity formation: the bureaucratic 'refugee label' (Zetter 1991). This often entails a whole range of assets and restrictions. In some social settings, the refugee label implies extra stigmatisation, while in others it can have important use value and be a platform for political mobilisation. Transnationalism may therefore appear as even more lucrative or feasible for refugees than for other migrant groups.

What causes the politization of the refugee label and the formation of a refugee identity is naturally a complex process. What I find important is to see how transnationalism in a refugee context can be intimately interrelated with identity issues. The refugees that take part in the transnational communities either participate *in the capacity of refugees* or deliberately downplay their refugee background.

2.2.1 Transnationalism, risk-minimizing and weak nation-states

> Some are described as having 'one foot in Zambia and the other in Angola' and their weight shifts from foot to foot all the time […]. There is no clearly defined time when they have finished their migration. It is a process with no clear beginning nor end, rather than an event. For households it is even more drawn out as different members move and others may follow in future months or years […] [A]ny repatriation of self-settled refugees from Zambia to Angola will be mixed with and largely indistinguishable from the 'normal' movement of Luanda people across their land. (Bakewell 2000: 366).

The colonial history of Africa has imposed state borders on the continent which crosscut ethnic territories and groups. When the states are weak, and the border controls often inexistent, peoples on the edges of the countries continue their cross-border contact and trade as they have always done, despite of the formation of the state structures and frontiers.

International border areas offer both opportunities and limitations to the peoples who inhabit them. According to Wilson and Donnan (1998), they can be both used and abused, for instance through legal and illegal trade. Their 'border anthropology' investigates how identity, movements and communication have been influenced due to the creation of international borders crosscutting their original place of living.

Use of social spaces and maintenance of activities between localities across international borders constitute a well-adapted strategy for improving life conditions and minimizing risk. The mobility and multilocal households of people living on borders of course is not new. But what is interesting is to see how such transnational fields are used *by refugees*, based upon their migratory experience, and can become elaborate strategies that guarantee a high degree of security (Stepputat 2004a). McSpadden, for instance, shows how foreign citizenship is viewed by exiled Eritrean refugees as a means to minimise risk when they plan for repatriation. 'Being a refugee also means having a keen awareness of the unpredictability of political events' (2004: 45).

This kind of border adaptation is probably even more feasible among populations who have traditionally lived in border areas of countries in conflict. Some researchers have argued that there is reason to believe that national identities in many post-colonial states are weaker in rural areas, and particularly in border areas (Roberts 1998). In some settings in Africa, these refugee populations have closer ties to people and places in exile than they have to the central government or nation-state of the country they fled from (cf. Bakewell 2002a, Hammond 1999, Englund 2002). Normally, this is relevant both to the cross-border peoples' economic and social activities, as well as to their identity. Cross-border peoples have in

certain cases a rather distanced relation to the national identity. Englund (2002) shows how refugees of a Mozambican border people identify as refugees, while at the same time claiming not to belong to a particular nation-state. At first sight this of course seems paradoxical, since the refugee as a legal and sociological category is defined in relation to national belonging. In fact, the entire refugee regime is built up on the division of the world into separate states, and peoples' belonging to these territories. As Hernández Castillo writes: 'border identities challenge any criterion of authenticity and cultural purity and remind us that nothing is static […]. Borderlands are spaces for encounter and contradiction, for multiple identity formation' (Hernández Castillo 2001: 6).

Wilson and Donnan (1998) argue that factors such as citizenship and state nationalism have a tendency to draw the state's inhabitants toward the power and culture centres within the state, but that '[b]orderlanders are often simultaneously pulled across the border by similar ties of ethnic and national unity' (Wilson and Donnan 1998: 13). While this is true, there is an obvious danger of essentialising border peoples' identities and their belonging to an 'anational' post-colonial border space. Similarly, as Englund puts it: 'the studies of refugees and borderlands face the […] danger of exaggerating fluidity' (2002: 24).

The question is then in what ways transnationalism can constitute a durable solution. Most importantly, again, that depends on how the 'problem' is defined. If legal protection constitutes the refugees' problem, then transnationalism can difficultly be the solution, only but in combination with the protection of at least one of the states involved. Finding a state that can guarantee legal protection for the refugee population is of major concern, and simple 'warehousing' of refugees must only be considered to be of a very temporary nature. Temporary warehousing in combination with transnationalism can

The interesting, then, is that the Mauritanian refugees themselves describe transnational livelihood strategies in terms of security and protection. It even constitutes, in many ways, a solution to their socio-economic marginalisation and instability. The flight has often led to great economic losses for the refugees. However, the social networks that the refugees gain through displacement can be used as a resource through transnational adaptation (cf. Montclos and Kagwanja 2000). In this manner, transnationalism can serve in combination with other legal measures as a solution that might be considered durable – even to the relevant authorities. What is important here, is to see how transnationalism is viewed by the refugees themselves.

Reaching a clear understanding of the notion of transnationalism – or even concepts such as refugee, nationality or repatriation – in a conflict-ridden post-colonial African setting is difficult. Many of these concepts have been developed in a different context than the one found on the Mauritanian-Senegalese border. What happens, for instance, to the 'transnational' when the people it concerns have 'trivialized the necessity of living by radical nationalisms'? (Malkki 1992: 36). This trivilialization is an important source for dispute in the refugee settlement in Dagana.

3 Methodology and fieldwork

Initially, this thesis was intended to address only the topic of repatriation. Once in the field, my interest in whether the refugees looked upon returning the household to Mauritania proved to neither correspond to the reality nor to address the problems facing the refugees. First of all, repatriation presupposes a 'home' and an 'away'. However, half of the refugees, the 'Waalo-waalos', already claimed to be at 'home' although in exile according to international law. The other side of the border where they originated from was so close, and their adaptation so transnational, that my initial question on repatriation gave little value. Secondly, the repatriation project of the other half of the refugees, the Halpulaars, was so full of infeasible conditions that it appeared more interesting to find out what the alternative to repatriation was.

Due to this, I had to discard parts of my prepared interview guide and change the thematic focus during fieldwork. The interview guide was redesigned several times to new realities that appeared to me during the fieldwork. These adjustments were only possible due to the long duration of the fieldwork. During the three months in the settlement, I managed to carry out a large number of conversations with each of the informants, and the result is that the research topic to a high degree reflects the young men's aspirations and realities. The fact that the topic of the thesis is induced from the material collected constitutes a clear strength.

The choice of location for carrying out the fieldwork came as a result of a long process of group discussions with Mauritanian refugees all around Senegal, both in rural and urban areas. After visiting seven settlements along the river valley, I was quickly intrigued by the demographic composition and history of the Dagana settlement. In fact, Dagana was historically two – and not one – refugee camp, and already in the initial group interview, I understood that the settlement was socially still divided. It was very clear that this division was based on a disagreement over refugee identity and how the informants viewed their history, present and future. I therefore chose to settle down for the next months close to the Dagana settlement and started carrying out conversations with the different families.

One of the things that saved me from being considered as taking part in any conflict was that I from the beginning decided not to use the 'snowball method', as I had originally planned. This would have entailed both ethical and methodological difficulties. Instead, during the first few weeks in the settlement, I presented myself at the yard of each of the

households in the settlement, explaining my mission. This, without any prior introduction by people I had already met.

3.1 SELECTION OF INFORMANTS

There are several reasons why only young men were selected as informants. Most importantly, I presumed that young men would expel a large degree of flexibility and possibilities of migration, probably more than any other segment of the refugee population. This, I hoped, would imply that the young men showed clear ideas whether and in which manner they would like to migrate or, in other words, which spatial option they preferred as a durable solution to their 'refugee problem'. The high level of out-migration had been confirmed from statistics from the Senegal River Valley, showing that for certain populations more than 25 % of adult males are absent from their households for a long period each year, having migrated either to other Senegalese cities or abroad (Santoir 1993b).

Originally, I had also planned to interview other segments of the refugee population. But once in the settlement, I discovered such an interesting diversity of backgrounds within the group of young men itself, that I found it sufficient to concentrate on this segment only. Limiting the selection of informants to one specific social segment facilitates the analysis and makes it easier to say something solid concerning the variation within the group. The selected informants are of course not meant to be representative for the Mauritanian refugee population, and I will not make any generalisations of the refugee population as a whole. Neither is it representative for the population in Dagana.

Only selecting young men as informants inevitably produces in some ways a limited fieldwork material, and a broader selection, for instance including women, heads of household or children, would of course give different results. As is shown from other African refugee situations (e.g. Spring 1982), the exceptional conditions of exile, sometimes make women assimilate more easily to exile than men. Occasionally, women have found new spaces for improving gender balance within refugee populations or for improving own living standards by divorcing their refugee husbands, remarrying into wealthier families in the host population. What I did see in Dagana is that the young women tended to follow the virilocal traditions and settle at the home place of their husband. This means that a majority of the

young women from the settlement were now married and living outside of the settlement, either in Mauritania or in Senegal, mostly along the Senegal River. A few unmarried women had also left the settlement, in search for employment elsewhere. This level of labour migration, however, did not match the frequency of the men. The marriage-related migration was to a lesser degree a choice of the women themselves and rather a social obligation to their own and the in-law's family.

It is furthermore through studying a young population that it is easiest to see how refugee identity is reproduced in a population. My supposition, which later showed to be partly true, is that the young men have weaker attachments economically, socially and emotionally to the home country than older parts of the population. In general, if the young men have no aspirations to return whatsoever, it gives a good indication of whether the refugee population as a whole will ever repatriate in the future.

The selection of young men also had a few aspects of a more practical nature. Most importantly, in the highly gender-divided, traditionally based and religiously orientated settlement in Dagana, it would be less socially acceptable for the (male) interpreter and me to do three months of fieldwork among the young ladies than among the young men.

After deciding upon only interviewing young men, I chose to make a sample that would give a maximum variation in the migration practices and aspirations. I did this by carefully selecting informants of different backgrounds (family's background in Mauritania, family's history of forced and voluntary migration, personal post-1989 migration history) and current socio-economic situation (marriage status, profession, household structure, family's and personal financial situation, networks in Senegal, Mauritania and Western countries, political activism). I also included young men of different ages, the youngest being 18 years old, not remembering the events in 1989, and the oldest 32 years. I specifically tried to have represented among my informants people who were preparing to leave for Mauritania and abroad, and informants who had no aspirations to migrate. All of the informants were young men who spent a lot of time in Dagana and who claimed it to be part of their home. I therefore interviewed also Dagana refugees who were no longer living in the settlement. Interviews were made with one young labour migrant and two students in Dakar, as well as with a young man who had returned to Mauritania some years back, all of them still frequenting the settlement. For an overview of the thirteen informants, see Appendix 2.

To understand the background of the young men's life in the settlement, I also had loose conversations with other family members, as well as with the bulk of the adult population in the settlement.

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The first weeks of the fieldwork were carried out in Dakar and in several refugee settlements along the Senegal River Valley. In Dakar, representatives of different refugee organisations, as well as international and local NGOs and researchers at the University of Dakar were interviewed.

3.2 THE INTERVIEW

In order to make the informants provide elaborated answers, it was important for me to create a comfortable and informal setting for the interviews. The most natural interview situation in the settlement was group discussions. Some of these interviews, especially among the politically conscious Halpulaar refugees, gave spectacular results. When discussing the conditions in Mauritania, their problems in the settlement and future plans, the different men outdid each other, like in a competition, in giving the most depressing picture of camp life or in trying to characterise the oppressive Mauritanian regime with the most brutal images. The group interviews with Waalo-waalo informants also provoked such occasionally shared 'excitement', but always during debates on different topics, such as marriage rules or Senegalese football.

Sometimes, the presence of an older relative severely limited what the young men expressed in group discussions, or could make them say nothing at all. As it was difficult to conduct interviews without older relatives coming by, I therefore tried to isolate the informants from their older kinsfolk. After four weeks of group discussions, I had a good picture of which young men were most talkative or could contribute information through individual interviews. I selected thirteen, with whom I started to carry out a series of semi-structured interviews, based on an interview guide as attached in Appendix 1.

It was difficult, however, to find a setting to do these one-to-one conversations, particularly with the fishermen or farmer-fishermen, who would often be sitting in large groups in the shade of a tree during the afternoons, repairing fishing nets. Most attempts to get a quiet talk with any of them were disturbed by friends or older brothers. After some weeks, I discovered the only way to perfectly isolate the conversations from the informants' friends and family: by asking for a ride in a dugout canoe out on the Senegal River. This technique I used with the fishermen and the farmer-fishermen who often went out paddling alone in the evening, attaching bait to a fishing line or going downstream to look for firewood. Not only

were the very enjoyable afternoon boat trips a good way to get away from interference from relatives, they also gave an extraordinarily concrete setting for the topic that we discussed. Literally on the international border between Senegal and Mauritania, the informants could point to the one side or the other when they explained where they came from, where they preferred to stay, where they hoped to live in the future, etc.

I also made six journeys to Mauritania during the fieldwork. Doing interviews in Mauritania with refugees on day-visits evoked some of the same concrete and necessary touches to the interviews.

Although I took part in many of the social and professional activities in the settlement, I never used participant observation as a major research method. Visiting the settlement daily over such a long period of time still made observation an important source for supplementing the material I acquired through interviews.

Comparing the fieldwork notes from the beginning and the end has given several interesting findings. On some occasions, informants seem to have initially exaggerated or downplayed certain characteristics. After some time, a few of them nuanced the initial description of their daily activities or aspirations. For instance, those who said in the beginning that they were eager to repatriate to Mauritania in the end turned out to be not so sure after all.

On other occasions, the informants have used the exact same phrasing in the end as in the beginning, as if they had memorised certain life stories. Different informants have also used the same wording. Aspects such as these could only be discovered due to the long fieldwork period.

All interviews were carried out by me in French, and translated by a Wolof and Pulaar speaking interpreter. Having a rudimentary knowledge of Wolof, I was able to partly follow the conversations and could double-check the correctness of its interpretation. This helped both during the interviews and transcription. The interpreter joined me at all activities, trips and conversations, except on the occasions when the informants were sufficiently fluent in French. All interviews were recorded and discussed and transcribed the following morning together with the interpreter. This has guaranteed a high level of precision in the translation and transcription of all the conversations. It also gave a possibility for the interpreter and me to evaluate our interview techniques and discuss and agree upon adequate ways to express ourselves.

Being a doctorate student in history, with detailed historical knowledge of the Senegal River Valley, the interpreter had many academic remarks on both the research methods and the findings. After the evening fieldwork, we would discuss our observations together, and this was the point of departure for my fieldwork diary. These notes turned later out to be a very valuable resource. The interpreter also proved to be important in the observation, giving explanations of social phenomena I would not otherwise have been able to interpret. He also gave useful explanations of all the cultural taboos I continuously and unknowingly broke.

3.3   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It would be a problem of research ethics to place the informants in some sort of risk vis-à-vis the relevant authorities or other actors in Senegal or Mauritania. This could be the case if I reveal identities or other facts from Dagana that should otherwise have been kept unofficial. I have *not* been able to interview any relevant authorities in this issue. This means that I do not know specifically what kind of information they have on the refugees in general or the Dagana refugees in particular

Consequently, I describe in this thesis only what I *expect* to be already known to the authorities. Either it is information that the informants themselves have claimed to have told their authorities, or it is information that is so open and normal to the populations in the area that it can be presupposed that all relevant authorities already know it.

All main informants agreed to take part in the study, and they were all, on several occasions during the fieldwork, reminded that all the information they gave me would be anonymised. During the stay in the settlement over three months, and particularly in day-to-day conversations, I obtained important material without it being possible to request consent for using the information. This poses some ethical challenges when writing the thesis. In general, when I have been in doubt whether to include information or not, I have chosen to omit. In this way, I made sure not to jeopardise their security situation or their plans for future ways of living. This has led to a significant loss of relevant and interesting information in this thesis, and much of what is being presented – and that does not directly influence the main findings and analysis – has been altered. All names are fictive.

Extra ethical considerations were taken during fieldwork visits in Mauritania. The events in 1989 are a highly sensitive issue in Mauritania, and some people who got expelled and later returned do not like to mention it in public. I therefore made no journeys to the

informants' families in Mauritania without a clear invitation from the refugees themselves, and all conversations done on the Mauritanian bank of the river were done in complete absence of listeners, *écouteurs*.

From studies such as those of Knudsen (1991) and Clinton-Davis and Fassil (1992), I had the presumption that many informants would be reluctant to share their own stories with me, due to a fear of implications it might have on them if the information was to be passed on to involved authorities or aid agencies. Although none of the refugees actually admitted such a preoccupation during the fieldwork, I have myself been very conscious of the possibility that they could have felt it this way, and I have to a large extent had to take this into consideration during both the fieldwork and the writing process.

It has been documented to be a normal strategy for refugees to try to unnoticed blend in with the local hosts when arriving in a country of first asylum (cf. Bakewell 2002a). This, I expected, could be the case in the Senegalese-Mauritanian setting. When arriving to Senegal in 1989, it was for instance common that many Mauritanians registered as 'expelled Senegalese'. This has probably led to a substantial underreporting of the actual number of refugee arrivals. Going through the registry of people who were deported from Mauritania, arriving in the Senegalese town of Rosso, showed that among the 733 persons who claimed to be Senegalese during a given period in 1989, 129 were actually born in Mauritania. According to the president of the association for the Senegalese nationals who were expelled from Mauritania to Rosso, this was due to fear of them being deported back to Mauritania. I have the impression that issues regarding nationality are still somewhat sensitive to some refugees. If such a desire to blend in locally was still common, it would necessarily have consequences for the role I could play during the fieldwork. Such a strategy of not being identified as refugee vis-à-vis their Senegalese neighbours in Dagana town I supposed could be particularly true for the Waalo-waalo (Wolof) refugee population, who I expected to be better integrated than the Halpulaars. I therefore had to be careful about how I presented my mission in Dagana both to refugees and autochthones and consistently explained that my studies mainly centred on migration strategies and aspirations of youth. This was not only an ethical dilemma, but also posed several methodological challenges throughout the fieldwork. It meant neither presupposing their identity as refugee, their nationality as Mauritanian nor their future desire to repatriate. My language had to be adapted to theirs, not mentioning terms such as 'refugee', 'camp', 'return', 'repatriation' or not even talk about 1989 until I was sure that they had raised the topic or used the words themselves. It was important to me to let the

informants guide the discourse I was meant to use, in order to limit my influence over the information I received. On the other hand, another part of the settlement insisted strongly on being called 'refugees' and the area they inhabited being called a 'camp'. Always manoeuvring the right discourse with the right informant posed a lot of challenges all through the fieldwork, particularly getting the nuances right via the interpreter.

A recurrent ethical dilemma was to interview the young men about their previous deportation, contemporary problems and future strategies without being able to offer them any assistance in return. On several occasions, they would frustratingly explain that a large number of whites had passed through the camp over the past decade to identify their needs, but this had led to almost no improvement in their life. Discussing migration with informants living under marginalisation and poverty posed several of these kinds of dilemmas. I kept receiving questions on how I could help to make their situation improve, and I often got the impression that the young men gave answers that they thought would help them in their efforts to get out of their difficult life in poverty, rather than giving me their true opinions on migration. Some of the answers that were obviously biased were filtered out through my selection of informants: I mainly talked with those who seemed to give the most elaborated and well-reasoned explanations. I also cross-checked some of the answers by asking the initial questions towards the end of the fieldwork. And I clearly and repeatedly insisted on my mission in the settlement. However, there is still a possibility that these ethico-methodological difficulties have affected the reliability of my findings and that I have unintentionally produced expectations of some kind of assistance.

Knowing that the events in 1989 were very violent, and expecting it to be a traumatic experience to many of the refugees, I assumed for a long time that the refugees did not want to talk about the deportation. But for many refugees, the experience did not turn out to be as taboo in daily conversations as I had expected, and each and all of the refugees were very eager to tell me what happened. Actually, if I did not bring up the topic during the initial conversation with them, they would, before I left, insist that I let them talk about the way they were deported, and thanked me repeatedly for my interest in their situation. The stories of the 1989 tragedy would often be mingled with laughter and jokes.

It was more difficult getting information from the UNHCR, who has always worked under very difficult conditions, based on goodwill from the two involved states. In the 1990s, the UNHCR in Dakar carried out a range of repatriation projects but are today unable to

provide any information whatsoever on these projects, with the explanation that all the documentation has been destroyed.

3.4 ANALYSIS

All the interviews were transcribed in full text, and literally. This has made it possible to revise the written material several times, discovering new important nuances in the text. On the other hand, it meant that the amount of text to analyse quickly mounted up to a level that could only be handled through qualitative data analysis software.

To facilitate the systematisation and analysis of the text, I used the *NVivo* programme. The transcribed text was first imported into *NVivo*. Then, while going through the material sentence by sentence, I categorised the different text segments under relevant labels, or 'nodes', that I had elaborated beforehand. The categories that I used for labelling the text fragments were mainly selected on the basis of the analysing process that led up to the fieldwork interview guide. The bulk of the categories are directly linked to the different strategies as they were discussed with the informants.

Through the careful reading and systematizing of text segments, new aspects slowly appeared important in the data material. This necessitated including new categories in the coding process. I therefore went through the data material twice to make sure that the total coding was complete and coherent. See Appendix 3 for a list of nodes used in the process.

After the coding had been completed, the *NVivo* software permitted the production of reports on each node, which I then summarised, and systematised. The empirical findings in Chapters 4 to 7 derive directly from these summarised node reports.

4 The divided Dagana refugee settlement

In Northern Senegal, on the left riverbank of the Senegal River and 80 miles northeast of the city of Saint Louis, one finds the pleasant town of Dagana.

Dagana is the commercial centre for people on both sides of the border and a centre for cross-border trade between the two neighbouring countries. Although located in the arid, semi-desertic Sahel belt, the water from the Senegal River guarantees a year-round agricultural production in the area.

There is a general scarcity of formal job opportunities for the town's 30,000 inhabitants. Many are agriculturalists producing onions, rice, maize or tomatoes, for subsistence and sale. A large number of Dagana residents also work in the local tomato or sugar factories.

The Senegal River Valley has been an area for extensive out-migration for decades. It has particularly been the young men who have migrated to other regions of the country or abroad (Lericollais 1975, Lericollais and Vernière 1975, Direction de la Prévision et de la Statistique 1992). It is evident that remittances constitute an important source of income for many families in town.

The entire region is in rapid change, ecologically, economically, culturally and socially. This has to a large degree been the result of an agricultural revolution that has taken place in the valley since the 1980s. At that time, both Mauritania and Senegal introduced modern land ownership systems, based on new property right legislation and administrative reforms (cf. Boutillier 1989, Crousse 1991, Seck 1991). This replaced the traditional land tenure regime that was common among the riverine populations. Simultaneously, the Senegal River changed its nature through the building of hydroelectric dams further upstream and downstream. The regulation of the river meant that the traditional flood recession farming has been replaced by irrigation. A combination of commercialisation of farming land, increased population pressure, sedentarisation of nomadic groups, climatic changes, deforestation and desertification seem to have led to an increased competition for arable land in the valley (cf. Midtvåge 1993, Maïga 1995). All these planned and unplanned changes have had important social and cultural effects on the valley populations. In fact, the 1989 crisis between Senegal and Mauritania has by many been interpreted as a direct consequence of this *mise en valeur* of the river (cf. Boutillier 1989, Crousse *et al.* 1991, Parker 1991, Magistro 1993, Schmitz 1993, 1994, Maïga 1995).
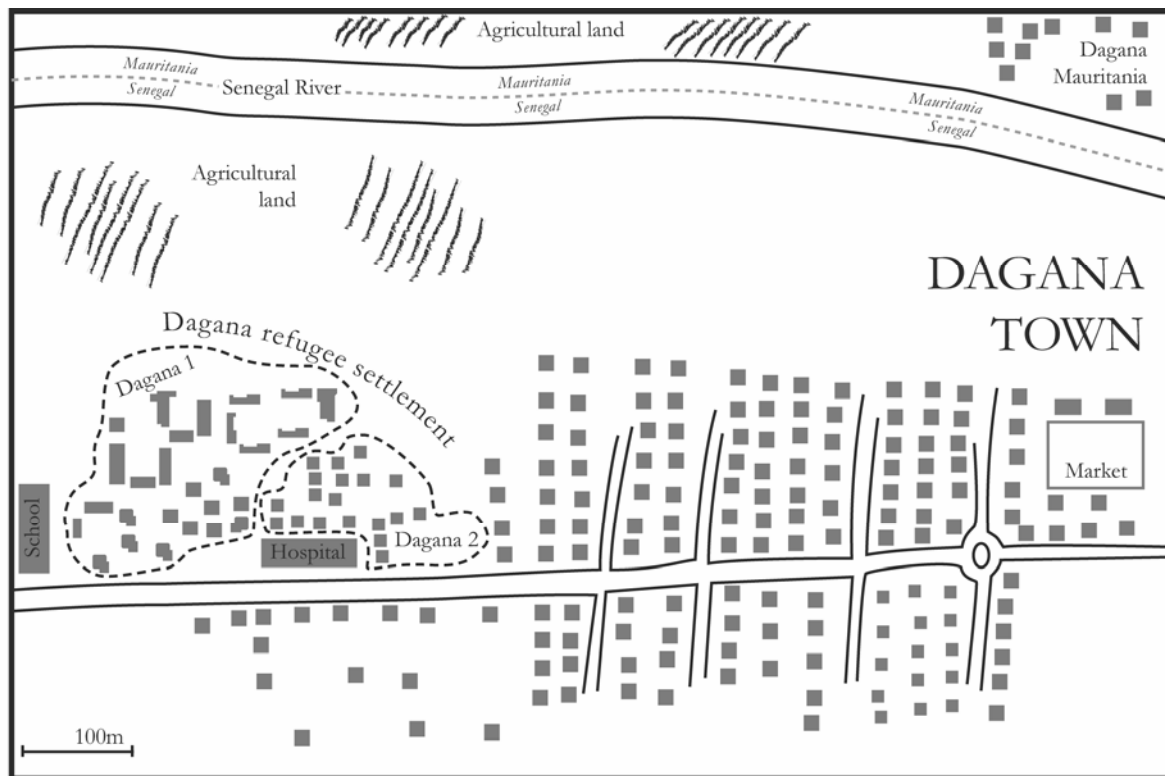
Figure 2. Dagana refugee settlement and Dagana town.
The refugee settlement is divided into two parts. Dagana 1 is inhabited by Waalo-waalos,
Dagana 2 by Halpulaars.

The Dagana refugee settlement is situated in the outskirts of Dagana town, between the local hospital and the high school. With its approximately 700 inhabitants, it is one of the biggest settlements of Mauritanian refugees in Senegal. This part of Dagana town has a relatively poorer housing standard than other parts of town. The houses are primarily made of sun-dried clay, with roofs of corrugated iron. Houses such as these are not particularly well appreciated, sometimes falling apart during the rainy season. Some of the worse-off families have no doors to their house or have poorly made grass roofs mixed with plastic sheets handed out by the UNHCR some ten years ago, as the last visible remains of the time they received humanitarian aid. There is no tapped water, but the children, running around in the T-shirts of the Senegalese national football team, are waiting for their turn by the common well. After dark, each household lights its oil lamps. The settlement is not connected to the town's electricity network.

What I choose to call the 'Dagana refugee settlement'[2] is divided into two main parts, or 'camps'. This division dates from the establishing of the settlement in late 1989. The two camps were supposedly treated by the UNHCR as administratively separate units, first distributing food aid in one camp, then in the other. Each camp was headed by a village chief. The camps were given the names 'Dagana 1' and 'Dagana 2', and to a certain extent this naming is still in use, although the UNHCR has stopped providing food, and the two neighbourhoods have now become fully self-reliant.

When the Mauritanian settlements were first established, they were made in a model of 'paired villages'. Each settlement was made close to an existing local town or village. The name that was given to each settlement was the name of the local Senegalese town, plus the word 'camp' (cf. Van Damme 1999). Some refugees did not settle in these organised settlements or register with the UNHCR. This was particularly true for the semi-nomadic pastoralists. It is said that as many as 40 % of all the deportees were never registered (Santoir 1993). These pastoralists are considered by locals, and consider themselves, as substantially poorer than the refugees settled in town.

As we shall see during the remainder of the thesis, since 1989, a painful and agonizing disagreement, or conflict, has developed between the two parts of the Dagana settlement that have developed to be more and more homogeneous internally. Today, an omnipresent spatial, social, political and identity boundary exists within the settlement among the neighbours who all originate from Mauritania. Although it might be an exaggeration, some people in Dagana town even use the word 'racism' to describe the relationship between the two refugee groups. Below is a schematic overview of different characteristics that the two groups display regarding local integration and the effects of deportation on their situation today. I will then go further into depth on this division beginning with the Waalo-waalos.

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[2] A distinction has generally been drawn between 'settlements' and 'camps', with the first referring to a higher degree of self-reliance than the latter (Malkki 1995, Jacobsen 2001). With the Dagana refugee settlement being completely independent from humanitarian aid, it would be misleading to name the area a 'camp'. More importantly, however, is that some of the inhabitants in Dagana 1 do not identify themselves as refugees. A 'camp' presupposes that the inhabitants are refugees.

Table 2. The two neighbourhoods in the Dagana refugee settlement

	Waalo-waalos in Dagana 1	Halpulaars in Dagana 2
Ethnic group	Wolof.	Halpulaar.
Identify themselves mainly as	'Waalo-waalo' ('local').	Halpulaar, refugee, Mauritanian.
Originate from	Southern Mauritania, right on the other side of the Senegal River.	Major Mauritanian cities. Many of the families moved from the Senegal River Valley in the 1970s.
Profession of heads of household before 1989	Farmers, fishermen.	State employees, army officials, nurses, car mechanics etc.
Education level	Normally a few years at Koranic school. Do not speak French.	Normally completed French school. Speak French.
ID papers	Temporary refugee ID papers. A few think about obtaining Senegalese ID papers.	Temporary refugee ID papers.
Political activity	Little. A few follow local Senegalese politics.	Inactive in Senegalese politics. Many are militant in FLAM (political Mauritanian resistance movement banned in the home country).
The effect of 1989 on social networks	Limited. Most of the refugees knew the area from before.	Had to reinvent their social networks in exile, where they knew no one from before.
The effect of 1989 on household economy	A few managed to save parts of their valuables during deportation. A majority lost all their farming land, but a few have been able to recuperate parts of it. Are now continuing life as from before 1989.	All families lost all possessions in 1989. Social descent: they have had to learn rural trades, such as farming or collecting firewood for sale.

Source: Fieldwork.

4.1 THE LOCAL WAALO-WAALOS

The inhabitants of the so-called 'Dagana 1' camp refer to themselves and are referred to by their neighbours, as 'Waalo-waalos'. After arriving in Senegal in late 1989, the larger Waalo-waalo families managed to maintain their traditional spatial organisation. Today, three to four long-houses surround a big common courtyard, for the whole household to use. The biggest household consists of approximately 70 people, all sharing the same lunch and evening meals[3]. Some families have invested in livestock, and some courtyards are crowded with

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[3] It is difficult to clearly establish a useful analytical distinction between households and families in the Dagana settlement. I define 'household' as a group of people that shares the daily principal meals and living quarters. In

ducks, sheep or bulls. In the afternoon, groups of men normally sit under a shady acacia leaf tree in the yard, repairing their fishing equipment. At times, they produce nets for sale. The women prepare the evening meal under open fire in the kitchen stove, which the men and women consume from their separate bowls after dark. Visiting some parts of the refugee settlement is like walking into a rural village, although actually being within Dagana town.

The word 'Waalo-waalo' derives from the old, local Waalo kingdom that had its centre in the lower part of the Senegal River Valley until the second half of the 18th century, on both sides of what today constitutes the Senegal-Mauritanian border (Schmitz 1990). The 'Waalo' also refers to the areas close to the river which used to be inundated during the rainy season, and where the local farmers would do their flood recession farming. Although the 1988 construction of a hydroelectric dam further upstream has limited the outreach of the past decade's floodings, 'the Waalo' is still the common name for the areas closest to the river (Crousse 1991). The 'Waalo-waalo' social category does not reflect any particular ethnic group, but is rather an identity, used synonymously with 'a local' or 'indigenous'. Normally it is used in relational terms, as in opposition to someone who has moved into the area, or, alternatively, to express traditional values and qualities as opposed to what is modern. This Waalo-waalo identity is also (self-)ascribed to the local Senegalese inhabitants in Dagana town, as well as to the black Mauritanians living on the other side of the Senegal border river. Almost the entire Waalo-waalo population in the settlement is of the ethnic group Wolof.

Until the events in 1989, a majority of the Waalo-waalos in Dagana 1 lived in villages right on the other side of the Senegal River, in visible distance from the refugee settlement where they live today. The riverine community on the other side bears the same name as the one in Senegal: Dagana or 'Dagana Mauritania'.

A majority of the Waalo-waalo deportees who today live in Dagana 1 were forced by the Mauritanian army to cross the river directly. Some of them were also deported via the border city of Rosso. Only a few families were able to flee by their own means, in that way managing to save their valuable fishing nets and dug-out canoes. All families lost most of their property during deportation, such as cattle, houses, farm lands, seeds and jewellery.

Roughly half of the Waalo-waalo refugee families are farmers, while the other half is farmer-fishermen. The combination of farming and fishing is particularly profitable but also labour intensive. While all the households in the settlement carry out farming, only a few

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the following, I will use the terms somewhat interchangeably. The notion 'household' is mainly used with reference to economic aspects of family life.

have the equipment, the skills and sufficient labour force to carry out both. The most profitable fishing households are those that can mobilise most men – fishing is a profession for men only. With many people, the family can make use of bigger and more effective nets. The largest fishing teams consist of up to ten fishermen working together. This constant need for male labour means that boys are included in full-time fishing activities already from a very young age. It also means that particularly men in the twenties are expected to stay in the family to help out with the fishing.

Each Waalo-waalo man marries or plans to marry several wives, and each woman has many children: six to eight is normal. The children start at a young age to help their family in carrying out the daily duties on a full-time basis. Although things are about to change, few Waalo-waalo children still attend school. Some of them follow a few years of traditional Koranic education, while only a small minority attends the *école française*. The illiteracy rate is therefore high, and not many Waalo-waalos master French.

4.1.1 Successfully adapted

Socially, politically and economically, the Waalo-waalos have managed to adapt well to their new place of living in Senegal. Their social networks did not suffer a major loss as a consequence of the events of 1989.

A majority of the Waalo-waalo families had relatives in this part of Senegal already before 1989. When arriving in 1989, they temporarily settled down with their kinspeople for some months until the UNHCR assisted in the construction of the settlement. These family relations with the local Dagana residents are still active and very important to the population. Most of the expelled Waalo-waalo families knew each other already from before the expulsion and have maintained the same alliances and struggle with the same conflicts between them as they did in Mauritania. Their society is caste-based, some families being nobles, others slaves. The high-caste refugee families enjoy extensive respect among the local Senegalese in Dagana town.

All families are hiring farming land in Senegal. This is an expensive way of carrying out agriculture and is new compared with pre-89 when they had the proprietary right of farming land in Mauritania. Although most families suffered a substantial loss of their Mauritanian farming lands as a consequence of the expulsion, a few families were able to get back smaller portions of the Mauritanian fields during the 1990s. These are now actually being farmed by refugees who still have not repatriated to Mauritania.

The fishermen continue fishing as they have done for generations, on the same fishing spots along the Senegalese and Mauritanian riverbanks. They sell the fish at the same market in Dagana town as they have always done. It is, however, slowly getting less profitable to fish on the Mauritanian side of the border, as the local police now demands a part of the catch before it is transported to Senegal for sale. The fishermen also blame the 1986 construction of the Diama dam further downstream for a serious decline in the amount of fish. This reduction has, however, been compensated by a manifold price increase.

Their social network has not only been maintained since before the deportation; it has even expanded to other parts of Senegal. This has permitted them to maintain their petty trade. Some families control the fish trade at the local Dagana market, whether it is fish caught in the river or fish brought in daily from the coastal city of Saint Louis. Other families control parts of the cross-border trade and river transport. Some of the girls work as housemaids for wealthier inhabitants of Dagana town. The fishermen-farmer families have been able to diversify their income since the deportation.

A few of the Waalo-waalo refugees have obtained Senegalese ID papers and are thus *de facto* Senegalese citizens. Some even voted during the latest Senegalese presidential and municipal elections, and today some actually consider themselves Senegalese, not Mauritanian. This does not stop them, however, from *also* claiming to be refugees.

The Waalo-waalos are devoted Muslims, and their religious ceremonies still receive visitors from all over Senegal and southern Mauritania. Just as they have always done, the imams in Dagana 1 are consulted for advice by local Senegalese. Their world view, which is a syncretism of traditional African beliefs and Islam, contains furthermore a whole repertoire of explanations of phenomena relevant to the Dagana region, particularly knowledge about dangers and spirits in the river, which is useful for the fishermen. Much of this secret religious knowledge about the river is passed on from one generation to the other. Since the refugees still live in the same area as before 1989, this highly place-specific knowledge has maintained its relevance.

4.1.2 Omar, 21 years old, Waalo-waalo

Omar was one of my main Waalo-waalo informants. He has lived in exile most of his life and this is now where he plans to stay. He even calls the settlement for his 'home'. When he married a local Senegalese a couple of years ago, they moved into a small room in one of his father's long-houses, following the strict virilocal traditions in the region. They have two

sons, 1 and 3 years old. Every morning before dawn, Omar leaves the settlement with his brothers, and walks down to the river. Then they paddle out to their traditional fishing spots that the family has used for generations. They come home around noon, tired, and hand the fish over to their wives who finish the lunch preparations.

Omar has never applied for a job. All his life, he has fished in the river. At harvest time, he helps out his brother for the onion harvesting on the field they have rented. They've had the field for six years now. The onions are sold at the market. Omar is thinking of obtaining Senegalese ID papers but will still call himself a refugee.

His sons' births were registered at the local Senegalese hospital, and Omar has no immediate plans to register them in the UNHCR files in Dakar. Omar says that when the son gets old enough, he will learn how to fish. His family members are scattered around the Senegal River Valley, mostly on the Senegalese bank.

In the evenings, he practises wrestling – Senegalese national sport – or football. He frequently listens to the radio broadcasts from Dakar with his brothers and friends from Dagana town. He makes sure to mot miss the major wrestling events, or his favourite *mbalax* (Wolof) music.

4.2   THE ALIEN HALPULAARS

The 'Dagana 2' camp is approximately half the size of 'Dagana 1'. It is a quieter part of the settlement. Some of the young men have left the camp, and it is rare to see groups of more than two or three of them together, except during the evening football matches. Almost all of them are of the ethnic group Halpulaar.

The majority of the inhabitants in Dagana 2 were expelled by airplane from the Mauritanian cities of Nouakchott or Nouadhibou to Dakar and Thies in Senegal. In Thies they were placed in a refugee reception centre until they were resettled to Dagana a few months after their first arrival. They arrived Senegal as nuclear families, and in most cases, their nearest kin is today living in distant Mauritanian cities.

Although the Dagana 2 families were urban dwellers when expelled, they are not urban by origin. During the decades before and after the Mauritanian independence in 1960, many of the Halpulaar families who today inhabit Dagana 2 migrated from the Mauritanian countryside into the big cities in Mauritania. Several of the families in Dagana 2 have thus

their origin and a few kinsfolk somewhere further upstream the Senegal River, in a transnational area referred to as Fuuta. Although they are originally from the Senegal River Valley, they do not refer to themselves with place-bound labels such as 'Waalo-waalo' or the related 'Fuutaanke'. Rather, they tend to identify themselves as Halpulaars, Mauritanians, or 'refugees'.

Young Halpulaars marry at an older age than the Dagana 1 Waalo-waalos. Each man has fewer wives and each woman fewer children. The educational level is far higher than among their Waalo-waalo age-mates. Although only a few have managed to reach university level, most of the young refugees have followed at least some years in the French schools and thus speak good French.

Earlier, in the years after arrival, the Halpulaars worked on other peoples' fields. Now, they often rent their own, and some even employ other people to do parts of the work. There are substantial differences between the families whether they rent themselves, rent collectively or work on other peoples' fields. This reflects a relatively large difference in living conditions among the various Halpulaar families.

4.2.1 Poorly integrated

The Halpulaar refugees claim to have experienced a serious decline in living standards since prior to 1989. Before the expulsion, the heads of households worked in the Mauritanian administration or the military, or they had different urban service jobs, such as car mechanics, electricians or nurses. Among the heads of households today living in the camp, almost none are employed according to their perceived social status, qualifications and previous work experience. Most Halpulaars have been forced to learn new trades in exile. Many of the families make a living as agriculturalists, and the young men normally help out on the field. Others make bricks of sun-dried clay, collect firewood for sale at the local market place, or have other poorly paid job opportunities in the local informal economy.

The young men would often explain their lack of economic integration by referring to their missing social networks in town. Without the right connections and without sufficient family ties to the area, it has proved to be difficult, or impossible, for the Halpulaars to get decent and paid work. When asked what a refugee is, one young Halpulaar man put it this way: 'A refugee? To me, a refugee is someone who is left on his own. He has no father, no mother. He is left alone like a beggar'. The lack of family ties to the area, being 'left on our own', thus explains why he has had to carry out a number of low-status activities to secure

some income for his family. This lack of local networks that constitutes this informants very definition of a refugee, is a central difference between the Halpulaars and the Waalo-waalos. A good indicator of the Halpulaars' inability to mobilise networks and funds can be found in the number of wives per young man. Without the financial support of an extensive social network, it is difficult for the Halpulaars to marry more than one woman. None of the Halpulaar informants had more than one, although a few of them would prefer more. The Waalo-waalos could have up to three.

Another important obstacle for the Halpulaars' integration in Dagana is identified as lack of ID papers. This leads to constant problems getting a regular job in town and gives difficulties vis-à-vis the local education authorities. None of these issues are urgent for the rural Waalo-waalos. After the expulsion, the UNHCR issued temporary ID cards, deposit slips *(récépissés de dépôts)*. These cards served originally to identify recipients of humanitarian aid in the camps in the early 1990s. The cards were valid for three months, and they were meant to be renewed regularly, until standard refugee cards are issued. None of the refugees have documents that are still valid. In the year 2000, the UNHCR finally initiated a process of issuing standard refugee ID cards, with ten years' validity. The organisation began making cards to refugees in the cities of Dakar and Saint Louis. After having started the process of issuing the documents in Dagana, the process came to an end, and none of the Dagana refugees have proper ID papers.

4.2.2 Adama, 26 years old, Halpulaar

Adama is one of the young men in Dagana 2, and one of my main informants. He sometimes spends his entire day in the camp, sitting in his small house. Now, he feels that the camp is abandoned by the UNHCR, by the Senegalese state and by the international community. Sometimes he goes out to cut firewood in the bush, which he takes to the market to sell. In that way he can earn the equivalent to one euro a day. He admits that if he had acquired Senegalese ID papers, his chances of getting a paid job would increase. But in stead, he considers himself unemployed, a term never used by the traditional Waalo-waalos.

Adama is grateful that the Senegalese state has received him and that the Dagana municipality has given all the refugees the property right over the land they inhabit in the camp. But he still thinks that Senegal could be more active in opposing the incumbent regime in Mauritania. Apart from that, Senegalese politics do not interest him very much. He is very

active in the FLAM[4] movement, a banned Mauritanian opposition party, and participates in their meetings whenever there is one.

Adama has been one of the few to maintain the contact with his childhood friends in Mauritania. He has no family members in Dagana town. He has himself quite good connections with age mates in the local Dagana town, but for the parents from Nouakchott it was very difficult to adapt. His father died during my fieldwork, and all he wants now is for his mother, is to lead a better life, out of poverty. One of the most important incomes for the family, is money remitted from the oldest son, living in a distant Senegalese city.

4.3   THE SOCIAL SETTING FOR MIGRATION DECISIONS

The young men from both the Dagana 1 and 2 camps have in common that they were deported together with the rest of their households. The few households that were split up during deportation managed to reunite in exile shortly after. This means that deportation probably did not rupture the normal decision-making procedures in the different households. Through his study of 'angry young men' in a Hutu refugee camp in Tanzania, Turner (1999) shows how refugee life altered the normal social structures, and the effects this had for the young men. Most importantly, camp life gave them new opportunities for social escalation and political positions. This does not seem to be the case here. Instead, the refugee households display a large extent of internal social continuity.

4.3.1 Young men as decision-makers

First, grasping the households' decision-making level is necessary in order to understand the motives behind the young men's migration practices and aspirations, as well as the ability to realise their desire to migrate. For the young Halpulaars, migration is a somewhat individual enterprise. 'If I want to leave this place, I just have to inform my parents', says one of them. This way of only 'informing' the parents about personal decisions applies to many other parts of the young men's lives, for instance when it comes to choice of wife or career. The Waalo-waalos, on the other hand, migrate more as a result of a decision the household leader has made. The few Waalo-waalo men who have settled outside of the settlement, in towns nearby,

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[4] FLAM: *Les Forces de Libération Africaines de Mauritanie.*

have normally had to leave as a result of the decision of someone further up in the family's decision hierarchy. Marriage rules show the same characteristics: although the Waalo-waalo men can feel free to ask their parents if they could have the permission to marry their beloved, it is the parents who have the final word. Some informants were subject to arranged marriages with women they had not chosen themselves. It even happened that a young couple was subject to 'arranged divorce' against their own will. When a Waalo-waalo man thus *wants* to leave the settlement, it does not necessarily mean that he is able to do so, since social duties and virilocal traditions oblige him to stay in the settlement. Some of them have in fact an intense desire to leave but are not able to because of restrictions imposed on them by their fathers. The consequences of not complying with the fathers' decisions can be crucial, leading to exclusion from the family. The Waalo-waalo Abdelaye, for instance, is not in a hurry to leave Dagana. Instead he often underlines the problematic aspects of leaving, and the social obligations he has to fulfil, even to his late father:

> We cannot just leave like that, because we are used to this country. […] We are Muslims and our wish is to stay here in order to pray on our father's grave every Friday. That is what we want.

4.3.2 Finding their role

In addition to complying with the household's decision hierarchy, there are also a large number of other social expectations that rest upon the young men. Many of these are related to gender issues, and are very relevant to migration. Traditionally, it is the young men's mission in life to take care of and provide for their parents. This is common for both the Halpulaars and the Waalo-waalos. All of the young Halpulaars explained a deep frustration of not being able to fulfil that obligation. Some of them were dependent upon remittances from siblings in other towns of Senegal; others would somewhat shamefully admit that the family's income was totally provided by the parents. As refugees, they had no possibility of obtaining paid work, sometimes even in the informal sector.

When asked about their own situation in the camp, Adama and his friends would often refer to the poverty of the parents. One obvious reason is of course the social decline that the older Halpulaar generation has had to go through in relation to prior to the expulsion. But another, perhaps more important, is that the young Halpulaar men are not able to comply with their culturally expected social role as family providers. During the last few years, a generation shift has been taking place among the Halpulaars, with a majority of the heads of

households passing away due to the hardships in the camp. The young men have witnessed this but have been unable to contribute to the family economy the way they would like. Now, they are expected to take over the responsibility of their households but are frustrated about how to do this. They come from urban, modern nuclear families but live in a rural setting. Their individual aspirations of future careers and success collide with their day-to-day urgent need to provide for their families in a harsh camp reality of refugee life. These aspirations can be very tough to handle in the reality of marginalisation that they are living today. While they are privileged with the power to make their own decisions concerning their future, their repertoire of available choices is frustratingly small. One of the few alternatives they have, is the one of migrating.

While the Halpulaars are concerned by the lack of options and of possibilities to provide for their families, the Waalo-waalo men naturally fit into their traditional social setting, carrying out their socially expected role as fishermen, farmers and family providers.

Carrying out their traditional agriculture and fishing activities, the boys are given tasks that correspond to their age. The age hierarchy is particularly visible in the fishing teams. Through these economically important and culturally very prestigious activities, the young Waalo-waalo boys climb in the hierarchy to become men. The fishing techniques are highly labour intensive, and when a few men are missing, the fishing team is not able to set out. This makes every boy needed, and the boys often start joining the teams when they are ten or eleven years old. The more experience the boys get, the more important task they are given in the team. As they become older, secret knowledge from their parents on how to communicate with the spirits in the river is also passed on to them. The most experienced member of the team becomes the leader of the crew and decides where in the river to set the nets. There is a strict gender division in the household, through all kinds of daily activities, and the fishing is exclusively for men. On the daily excursions downstream they whisper their men's talk, where the young boys are told fishing stories from years back, how the river has changed, the size of the catches in the eighties etc, but also about national football matches, wrestling heroes, Islam or neighbouring girls.

Their relative financial security makes it possible to marry early and to quickly take on the expected gendered roles, such as husbands, fathers and breadwinners. The wives are not chosen by them, but by the parents, at an age when the couple is considered old enough.

In contrast to the Halpulaars, the Waalo-waalos never mentioned the poverty of their parents, although their living conditions of the two groups do not differ substantially.

4.4 DISTINCT DEVELOPMENTS

The host society that the Mauritanian refugees settled in has been characterised by peace, and no conflicts have threatened their security. During the first years after the dramatic events in 1989, a well-functioning international apparatus was at work for their assistance. Since the total deportee population was relatively small, it was also quite easy for families who were separated during the deportation to track down and reunite with their relatives in exile.

Now, 15 years after settling down in Dagana, a majority of the refugees have succeeded in adapting relatively well to their new life, but this varies a lot between the different families. In some Mauritanian refugee settlements, there have been rather unstable relationships with the host populations (cf. Marty 2003). This is not the case in Dagana, where the young refugee men in various ways are included in the town's social life. Since their arrival, they have always participated in the summer holiday football tournament and in other activities carried out by local authorities. However, they do feel discriminated. Particularly the Halpulaars claim that the 'refugee' label clearly leads to social and economic marginalisation.

The two populations have had significantly distinct flight histories. As we have seen above, the Waalo-waalos are a rural population, which has suffered much less than the Halpulaars from the events in 1989. The fact that the Waalo-waalos have been deported from one place to another within their previous 'home area' meant that they have socially, politically and economically adapted quite easily to refugee life. The young men hesitate when they are asked whether they today consider themselves to be more Senegalese or Mauritanian. The Halpulaars, on the other hand, consist of an originally urban population. They are very involved in Mauritanian political life, insist on being referred to as Mauritanian refugees, and are relatively poorly integrated.

The division that has developed in the settlement, reminds us of the Hutu and Angolan cases. It has been shown how a central aspect in these cases, is that refugee populations living in different localities find ways to survive and interact that are neatly adapted to or influenced by their environment. The formation of refugee identity is for instance closely interrelated to camp life and being subjected to humanitarian regime. Useful comparisons can easily be drawn to Dagana.

First, the Waalo-waalo population in Dagana shares a large number of characteristics with the Angolan locally integrated 'self-settled refugees' or the Hutu 'town refugees'. As

will be elaborated on later, what today constitutes the international border between Senegal and Mauritania had for generations been more or less irrelevant to the local populations. Both sides of the river are still used by the Waalo-waalos. The fact that the Waalo-waalo refugees were deported from one place to another within their previous 'home area' has been crucial to their successful social, political and economic adaptation to life in Senegal. All Waalo-waalo refugee families were initially received by relatives, and most of the families were very familiar with the area before 1989. The identity as refugee is therefore not mobilised in daily interaction with the locals, and the local residents do not think of them as such.

The Waalo-waalo refugees lost all their belongings in 1989 and have had to rebuild what was lost in the settlement. But it gives little meaning to view their adaptation to Dagana town as a process of integration. 'Integration', I believe, expresses a social relation that implies that the new arrivals are in some way socially different from the autochthonous population and unfamiliar with the new environment. Just as with the Angolan self-settled border refugees, I believe that the Waalo-waalos are not well 'integrated' but perfectly well 'adapted'.

Second, the diasporic and poorly integrated Halpulaar refugees in Dagana share evident similarities with the camp populations in the two mentioned studies. The knowledge that used to be relevant in their daily life in Mauritania is today irrelevant. The Mauritanian city dwellers have had to learn new professions, a new language, constructing new social networks and getting used to a new social identity. Eisenstadt calls this process 'desocialisation': 'Though an adult, the person is socially reduced to the level of a child' (Eisenstadt quoted in Hansen 1981: 191). Such a desocialisation would necessarily only be relevant to the older generation, and not my informants, who were between three and fifteen years old in 1989 and have mostly grown up in exile. They show an ardent lack of will for permanent integration, a normal characteristic of refugee diasporas worldwide.

The interesting empirical situation in Dagana, and in contrast to the case in the above studies, is that the two populations live side by side, in the same settlement, in the same physical environment and with the same Senegalese neighbours. And these populations today display remarkably distinct identities and coping strategies. As we will see, central in this disagreement over identity and strategy is a difference in understanding how to relate to present and future transnational options.

5 The durable solutions

According to the legal interpretation of the 'refugee problem', the solutions consist of naturalisation, repatriation or resettlement. This chapter explains the durable solutions as seen from below, understanding the real choices as they appear to the Mauritanian refugees in Senegal. Their choices consist of staying in Dagana, repatriating to Mauritania or resettling abroad. The first alternative is particularly complicated, as it can be done in several ways; the second is contradictory to many refugees due to political reasons; while the third is particularly desired but only hypothetical.

Although I did not expect the different alternative to be equally feasible, I did imagine in the beginning of the fieldwork that the refugees could indeed opt for and plan for three separate alternatives. Before examining how the refugees make use of and dream of several solutions simultaneously in Chapter 6, I will now present how the refugee informants indeed relate to the three standard durable solutions, if viewed spatially and separately.

5.1 STAYING IN SENEGAL – 'CAMP' ALIAS 'QUARTIER'

Self-reliance and local integration are difficult to distinguish. In a migratory perspective, they are of course equal. For fully self-reliant refugees, as is the case for the Mauritanians, the distinction seems primarily to be one of temporariness versus permanency of their stay in Dagana. Maintaining the refugee label and identity implies an insistence on a temporary nature of exile, in the wait for other solutions better than local integration. Local integration, on the other hand, entails an acceptance of permanency of the stay and the downplaying of refugee identity. The option of staying permanently seems to be a practicably achievable solution, as obtaining Senegalese ID papers is a relatively easy affair. The Senegalese state has on several occasions offered Senegalese citizenship to the refugees, and a few of the Waalo-waalo informants consider acquiring such papers.

It is easy to identify whether the informants opt for staying temporarily or permanently through the different ways they insist on labelling the area in which they live. A few years ago, members of Dagana 1 decided that their place of residence shall not longer be called a 'camp', but a 'quartier': an integrated and permanent part of Dagana town. A name was

carefully chosen to represent it. Through a religious ceremony, the area was inaugurated as 'Quartier Daarusalaam' (Arabic: 'Daarusalaam' = 'House of peace'). A metal sign was erected by the main road, by the entry to the settlement, as a visible sign of their wish to permanently settle in town. But the idea of formally turning the camp into a *quartier* only proved meaningful for the Waalo-waalo part of the population. The Halpulaars still find it problematic. Adama, for instance, insists that the area be called a 'refugee camp', that he himself be called a 'refugee', and that no one should change that. This obvious terminological conflict between Dagana 1 and 2 reflects a deeper disagreement over strategies for a future place of living. Says Adama:

> When the Waalo-waalos have been to the market, and they take the horse-and-carriage back here, they ask to be taken back to 'Quartier Daarusalaam'. But when the driver then asks "Oh, you mean 'the camp'?", then they get furious.

The Waalo-waalo claim to inhabit a natural part of town does not correspond to Adama's refugee friend, who one night secretly tore down the sign in protest. The contested road sign, only a few hundred meters from his doorstep, apparently did not correspond to his impression of the temporary nature of his exile. The sign was immediately re-erected, this time secured with cement.

The difference in discourse is not absolute, and on occasions the Waalo-waalos would refer to the settlement as 'a camp'. While the two terms seemed to be quite complementary to some of the Waalo-waalos, it was rather mutually exclusive to the Halpulaars.

It is not evident that the refugee identity comes to an end even if a legal solution has been found. A few informants actually define themselves both as Senegalese and as Mauritanian refugees, all depending on the situation.

The refugees have very diverse opinions regarding the durability of staying in Dagana. The young Waalo-waalos would unisonally identify Dagana as their preferred place of residence. Some of them have taken Senegalese wives, and they are in all possible ways well integrated in town. Dagana is, after all, a place of opportunities to many of the Waalo-waalos. Many are proud of the progress they have made since they came as young children in 1989, and some have now started lobbying politically to obtain electricity, tapped water and improved health care services.

> All that you see around you is the result of hard work. If we had stayed in Dagana Mauritania, we would have been lagging behind by now. Since we first came here, we have worked and we have earned a lot of money. We have peace and a good health. That is what I see. You probably know that when we came here, each one of us only came with a pair of pants and a shirt. But after our arrival… you now see that each one of us has at least one wife. We have built a home, we garden, we eat, we have no debt, and if we have any needs, we just spend some of our savings. These things were much more difficult when we lived over there [in Mauritania], if we managed to do it at all. If I look at the peace we live in now, and the success we have achieved, I think that we actually arrived late. (Omar's brother Abda).

Completely in contrast to the Waalo-waalos' optimism, the young Halpulaar men in Dagana 2 express a strong aversion towards camp life. The camp is a place where they live only in lack of other alternatives. Some of the men are relatively mobile. In periods, a couple of them work in Dakar, and sometimes they go on short trips to relatives in Mauritania. But still they claim to be 'stuck' in the camp. A few of the Halpulaar men are left in the camp in order to take care of their family and the house, while their brothers and sisters have left in search for paid work.

The difference in the degree of optimism among the various refugees is striking. To Adama and his Halpulaar friends, the camp is associated with poverty and is viewed as a very unattractive place to spend the future. Their identity as refugees is closely attached to camp life, and finding a way out of the camp is also an escape from poverty.

> we just stay here, we're not doing anything. It is difficult… Imagine you were a refugee like us! That is suffering! […] Our future is lost in the air… Our children and our small brothers who are growing up, they will follow the same paths as us. And the girls. Have you seen those children there?… This one… she is born here. Her too. […] Even my niece, she has grown up here.

While talking about the living conditions in the camp, Adama's neighbour, Ali, would often emphasise how their life in poverty has not changed since childhood.

> Everything is just too difficult. From the moment we came here in 1989 to 2004, the situation has not improved. We grow up without any profession. Without work. Without anything. I think it just gets more and more difficult for us.

Life in the camp gives few possibilities for work, education, careers or experiences, and is simply not an attractive option to them. This is how the informants often described their unsatisfactory economic outlook when they talked about leaving Dagana for other places.

In other situations, Ali would be proud of the progress they have made so far, which has materialised in an improved housing standard and a long education for several of the young men.

No matter what time perspective the different refugees have on the length of the transitory legal status as refugees, all informants had the same answer as to where it was most likely they would spend the future: Senegal. There has actually been a certain inflow of Mauritanians to the settlement after 1989. Some of the people inhabiting the refugee camp today are themselves not deportees but Mauritanians who have later reunited with their relatives who got expelled. This movement of family reunification has continued on a small scale to this day.

But perhaps the most illustrating indicator of Dagana as a future place of living is that during my fieldwork roughly two-thirds of the households in the settlement were about to build new and improved houses, replacing their low quality sun-dried brick houses with expensive cement constructions. The households not in the actual process of building were saving money to construct, or expressed a desire to do so. Such a housing investment quickly constitutes several annual salaries and is only carried out after very careful consideration. Considering the important dilemma of temporariness versus permanency of the settlement, the house constructions also entail important symbolic investments.

Interestingly, as will be demonstrated later, even some of the Dagana refugees who now live abroad have recently invested their savings in the camp, instead of at their home place in Mauritania. This is also true for many of the refugee families who have relatives in Mauritania and *all* of the refugees who have a source of income in their country of origin. In only one case did I hear of a refugee working in Dagana, while making investments at the home place in Mauritania. I shall return to the importance of housing investments as an indicator of future place of living in Chapter 6.

5.2 REPATRIATING –'THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN THEM REMAIN'

The second option that the refugee can ideally opt for is the one of repatriating permanently to Mauritania. In 1993, the UNHCR carried out a survey among the refugees in the major refugee settlements along the river to map the wish for repatriation. The survey showed that 74 % of the refugees in Dagana wanted to return (Santoir 1998). This initial desire among the

refugees in the Dagana area was also reported by a survey carried out in 1990 by Médecins Sans Frontières (Ritmeijer 1991).

Santoir explains that this could be due to the farmers' desire to recuperate their attractive floodplain recession farm lands on the right riverbank. According to Santoir (1998), somewhere between 7,000 and 15,000 of the 18,800 Wolof and Toucouleur[5] refugees had repatriated without the support of the UNHCR by 1996. The economic incentive for return has thus probably been important during the first years after the expulsion, when housing conditions in exile were poorer than today, social networks still partly undeveloped and the chances of regaining lost property were still present. This is stated explicitly by several informants.

The results of the mentioned UNHCR and MSF surveys were in stark contrast to the situation in the settlement in 2004. From the first conversation I had, what struck me was the complete absence of talk about repatriation, both among my main informants and in the settlement in general. 'It can go many months between every time I think about Mauritania. It is almost forgotten', said one Halpulaar informant. Actually, only *one* of my informants wanted to repatriate. He was the youngest of them all, so young that he could not himself recall the 1989 events. He had never been to Mauritania since.

This radical change of opinion in Dagana can be explained in two ways. First, a demographic change has taken place in the settlement. A majority of those who probably wanted most to return – that is, the heads of households, farmers and most politically active families – have either passed away, returned to Mauritania or left Dagana. These have been replaced by a relatively young population, who have lived most of their lives in Dagana. The second is that the ones who are left behind now consider the option of repatriation as less attractive than other opportunities. I will return to this later.

The young men's knowledge about the conditions in Mauritania and at the place of origin, and their view on repatriation is saturated by contradictions. A central characteristic is the difference between the political discourse and the day-to-day reality. On the one hand, a majority of the Halpulaars are politically active in the FLAM movement. The bulk of the Halpulaar refugees has been strongly influenced by this organisation, which opposes repatriation and propagates the impossibility of return. On the other hand, the refugees receive contrary information directly or indirectly from Mauritania, either by their own means or via

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[5] *Toucouleur:* Traditionally agriculturalist Halpulaar.

the returnee population. As I will come back to later, although the returnee population has not obtained all their lost property and still suffer from discrimination, the return in itself has indeed been proved possible to carry out. Actually, no informants actually mention the *impossibility* of return. They all state it would be unwanted, complicated or economically irrational, but never impossible.

5.2.1 The return that turned political

For many years, the most influential source in the settlement concerning the conditions in Mauritania was the FLAM movement. The organisation, which fights against the current *beydane*[6] regime in Mauritania, is legally banned at home and has in fact a stronghold of active support in Dagana. FLAM is above all a Halpulaar movement (Marty 2003).

Some of the leading *flamists* in Dakar go on regular tours along the Senegal River Valley, including to the Halpulaars in Dagana 2. Particularly during the first years of exile, the FLAM movement was active in the camp and contributed in the organizing of the settlement. Several of the refugee camps in Senegal mobilised militarily, until the Senegalese government disarmed the camps as part of the reconciliation with Mauritania. Until the international border opened in 1992, there was practically no contact across the river, and the situation at the time could be described as an 'information vacuum' (Koser 1997). When the border reopened, a conflict escalated in Dagana and in several other camps, between FLAM and their rival organisation FRUIDEM[7]. FRUIDEM insisted on repatriating to Mauritania in order to reclaim what the refugees had lost and to fight the regime of President Maaouiya from within the country's borders. FLAM, however, insisted on not repatriating until the refugees had received compensation from the Mauritanian state, and that the battle be fought from exile. Through this conflict between the two exile organisations, repatriation turned political, becoming an expression of resistance: a political statement that 'shows the world' what the regime has done:

> The way they returned to Mauritania was very bad. We have several times heard Maaouiya say that 'those people [all the refugees] fled by themselves', that 'they were afraid'. And when the fruidemists return like that, one could say that Maaouiya had right! Couldn't one? That was a mistake those people made. […] We will always stay here. We will show to the entire world that President Maaouiya has actually

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[6] *Beydane:* Mauritanian of Arab descent. Also called 'White', 'Maure' or 'Arab'.
[7] *FRUIDEM*: Front Uni pour l'Indépendance et la Démocratie en Mauritanie. Mauritanian opposition party.

expelled us. That's why we will not go back under these conditions. There is no security in Mauritania. That's why we will not go back. (Adama)

The tense political situation in the camp calmed down when a majority of the FRUIDEM families returned to Mauritania[8]. However, FLAM still demands the same conditions for return. These conditions are, basically, that no repatriation should be made without prior compensation for what was lost, and that the repatriation should be carried out *en masse*, with the returnees' security guaranteed under the auspices of the UNHCR. In the meantime, while waiting to repatriate, FLAM discourages both repatriation of households and shorter return visits. One Dakar flamist told me laughingly that returning on short visits would of course be impossible. If there was a possibility of returning to Mauritania, he said, it would necessarily mean that they had no reason to stay in exile, and that they would no longer comply with the UN Convention Relating to the Refugees. Another leading flamist in Dakar explained the dangers of returning:

> You know, the refugees who go back to Mauritania, they do not have ID papers. So [the Mauritanian authorities] claim that they are Senegalese. Some of them have been tortured, others killed…Many of them have returned to Senegal.

The fact that politically active refugees and exiled opposition movements in this way discourage repatriation and oppose UNHCR repatriation programmes is known from several contexts internationally, such as among the Ethiopians in Djibouti (Stein 1986). Kinne (2001) documents that FLAM leaders in Dagana in 2000 explicitly claimed that in order for the organisation to maintain its relevance as an opposition movement, it was necessary that the refugees neither return to Mauritania nor integrate into the local community. FLAM's political project has received a lot of sympathy among the young Halpulaars in Dagana 2. Two of my main informants were active in the movement and participated regularly in their meetings in the camp:

> [Ali] When there is racism, there will always be more deportations. If the racism continues… for instance if the Maures say that they should always have privileges, there will always be deportations. Yes. The blacks[9] will not accept that the Maures shit on their heads [laughs].
> [Ali] It is a country where the Maures…they will not share the country with the blacks. They say that they want to whiten Mauritania, and chase everyone away. But Mauritania is a country where there are Wolofs, Halpulaars, Sarakollés, Maures. So

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[8] This also happened in the neighbouring camp, Ndioum (Fresia 2001).
[9] It is normal for Senegalese and Mauritanians to refer themselves as 'blacks' (noirs) or 'negros' (nègres/negros) as opposed to 'whites'.

Mauritania should be united, shouldn't it? Everyone being equal… Without distinction. But the Maures, they say that Mauritania should be white. They wanted to whiten the country. […] Then they started deporting people. What they had planned was to kill all the blacks. But they didn't succeed then. If you return to Mauritania now, you see that there are *many* blacks. […] When will the Maure learn French? He only knows the desert.
[Mustafa] And his tiny *thiaya*[10] [laughs].
[Ali] Their thiaya. [laughs] And the camel herders! They don't know how to read or write. They are analphabetic! You see? They know nothing. Before, Mauritania was only inhabited by blacks, well-educated blacks.
[Mustafa] And when they came, they only met Halpulaars. They were very educated.
[Ali] Blacks!
[Mustafa] Yes, the blacks are very intelligent. More intelligent than they are. And when they came, they wanted to make their own government. Even this year, they make their own government, while the blacks are more numerous than the Maures. Now, the Maures want to chase the blacks away so that their race develops.

We see how Mustafa and Ali in the discussion above see themselves as victims of a politically motivated deportation, as well as identifying themselves as 'blacks', in resistance to the Mauritanian regime. The young Halpulaar refugees keep referring to Mauritania as a state where slavery, oppression and censorship are put into system, under the rule of a brutal dictator. They commonly compare Mauritania with the Apartheid regime in South Africa, and the 1989-1991 killings in Mauritania with the Rwandan genocide. The rhetoric of some of the Dagana 2 flamist refugees is like taken directly out of the FLAM manifestoes.

Minutes after the heated discussion above, when asked about the wish to return to Mauritania, twenty-year-old Ali, without any further elaboration, gives a Sartre-inspired quotation. 'There is a French expression saying 'The paths to freedom are difficult. Only those who believe in them remain'[11]. In a brilliantly twofold sense, the ones who remain on the path to freedom, also literally remain in exile.

Adama and his family have been active in FLAM as long as he can recall. He does not want to return until a regime change has taken place in Mauritania. Actually, he is quite anxious about what the Mauritanian authorities might do to him if he returns and they find out he's a *flamist*. Adama, just like all the other informants, shows an ardent lack of confidence in the home country. Some of the Halpulaars say that they really would prefer to return, because Mauritania is their place of origin. However, very few imagine that they will end up doing so, at least while the sitting president is in power. Today's president is the same that governed in Mauritania 1989. Several are confident the events would happen again. 'With [President]

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[10] Traditional Maure pants.
[11] « *Les chemins de la liberté sont difficiles. Seuls ceux qui y croient resteront* ».

Maaouiya in power, every day is 1989', says Adama. He has made no claims of reimbursement from the Mauritanian state but trusts that FLAM will make their demands.

5.2.2 The returnee reality

FLAM's argument of the impossibility of return is evidently in opposition to the reality of the conditions in Mauritania that the refugees obtain from other sources. Most importantly are the experiences that the refugees get from the population that has already returned. Many of these returnee families still nurture close contact with Dagana town and the refugee settlement. This is particularly true for the Waalo-waalo returnee families who settled right on the other side of the river, almost within visible distance from the settlement. While I will return to the nature of the current cross-border contact in Chapter 6, I will here shortly outline the past return movement and how it has been viewed by the informants.

Very little, if any, research has so far been done on the Mauritanian refugees who returned to Mauritania. Some literature mentions that they have been poorly integrated. For instance, it is claimed that the goods and privileges that were lost in 1989 have not yet been reimbursed to the returnees, such as occupational positions, farming lands, houses or ID papers (Leservoisier 1999, Lindstrøm 2002, Marty 2003). These investigations, however, appear to have been done on secondary sources only. Apart from a few interviews carried out by Lindstrøm (2002) in Nouakchott, there seems to be no other firsthand research on the Mauritanian returnees.

During the years following the reopening of the international border, some eight or nine refugee households returned from Dagana to Mauritania, equally distributed between the two camps. According to my calculations, this constituted approximately a quarter of the original population in the settlement. Since then, only very little permanent repatriation has taken place, except in the case of single individuals, mostly due to marriages and separations.

In the interviews I carried out with Mauritanian returnees in both countries, they underlined that the racial discrimination they experienced from before 1989 continues to this day. However, none of the informants had faced any security problems whatsoever. Although Mauritanian authorities have been somewhat slow to reissue ID papers to returnees, in most cases the returnees I talked to had actually received them. Only in a very few cases had anyone been compensated for what was lost in 1989. Most importantly, some families have indeed managed to get back a minor part of their lost farming land. One man was also

reported to have been reimbursed for a lost house in Nouakchott; another had been granted lost pension rights, while a third had been given back his previous job. Mauritania does, however, still not admit having deported any Mauritanian citizens in 1989, and reimbursements are clearly more the exception than the rule. In addition to the FLAM activist and representatives of organisations for Mauritanian refugees in Dakar, independent studies have also argued that many returnees have fallen victim to serious human rights violations upon arrival in Mauritania. This has supposedly made several return to exile (Kinne 2001, Lindstrøm 2002, Voets 2002). But during the entire fieldwork, talking to refugees in seven settlements along the river, I never met anyone who had heard of such severe security problems for returnees, nor of any second wave of refugees[12].

The mere presence of returned refugees in Mauritania is in clear opposition to FLAM's agenda. The Halpulaars consider the returnees either as traitors, running the errands of President Maaouiya (as they do with the fruidemists), or they claim that those who have returned are not 'pure Mauritanian' but only borderland Waalo-waalos. Some of the returnees are 'excused' by the fact that they were in fact double-crossed into repatriation by the UNHCR who have allegedly falsely promised them financial assistance.

One of the younger refugees complained bitterly that his family should have repatriated long time ago, when the border to Mauritania reopened in 1992. But now, it is too late, as his father is dead and the family's social network in Nouakchott has eroded. His family, he says, should not have asked for a compensation but tried to get at least some of it back by their own means upon an early return. He claims that his misery in the camp today is thus due to FLAM who convinced his father to stay in the camp, waiting for compensation. Ironically, the very same FLAM leaders who convinced his parents to stay, have themselves now been fortunate enough to be resettled in the United States.

It is probable that the most visibly active flamists indeed have a great need for protection. The possibility that they could face grave security problems if they repatriate, can not be excluded. But the day-to-day Mauritanian reality as experienced by the border refugees is quite different. This means that the refugees relate to two different – even contradictory – realities simultaneously. On a few occasions, for instance, I remarked that informants changed opinion

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[12] The only case of second-wave refugees I heard of is certain Mauritanian semi-nomadic herder families who only during the past year have started to return to their former place of exile in Senegal, according to some informants. This is not due to state persecution but because they faced increasing problems in finding pastures, as their traditional areas in Southern Mauritania have been transformed to agricultural land.

during fieldwork. During my first conversations with one informant, he stated that he had never been in Mauritania since 1989. Towards the end of the fieldwork, however, he started talking about the visits he had carried out to Mauritania over the past year. Similarly, another informant claimed that he would never dream of ever going to Mauritania, due to security reasons. Later, he admitted that his father goes to Mauritania on average once a month, without ever having faced any problems. And after having talked about both the FLAM movement and Adama's own visits to Mauritania, I asked him if he knew anyone who had faced security problems with Mauritanian authorities upon repatriation. His answer: '… to be honest?… No. '

As demonstrated, the concept of home is highly problematic, and normally subject to very subjective and situational definitions. In many cases, it is difficult to suppose that 'home' equals 'nation-state'. For the Waalo-waalos, home constitutes the transnational Waalo area. When a population in this manner refer to exile as home, it becomes absurd to even suggest the option of repatriation as a prescribed solution. For the Waalo-waalos, repatriation to Mauritania is hardly seen to have any economic, social, political or emotional value, either in the long or the short term.

For the Halpulaars too, 'home' and the nation-state of Mauritania correspond only difficultly. In one way, they have deep emotional attachments to the area that constitutes Mauritania. But simultaneously, they oppose the 'Arabizised' Mauritanian nation-state of today. In other words, 'home' is different from what they want 'home' to be. The root cause of their exodus – the political situation in Mauritania – must thus be solved before they repatriate. This political way of defining their place of origin, means that the option of returning to Mauritania becomes a contested strategy.

5.3   RESETTLING –'IN THEIR HEADS'

The third and last option that the refugee can opt for is to migrate abroad through a resettlement programme.

The intense conflict between flamists and fruidemists calmed down during the end of the 1990s. Those who still adhered to FLAM's rival organisation FRUIDEM were no longer propagating return but seemed to have accepted settling in the camp. Then, in 2000, an event

took place that turned the settlement politically and emotionally upside down: it was made known that two hundred of the Mauritanian refugees in Senegal were to be resettled to the United States. The programme was initiated by the UNHCR and the International Organisation for Migration as a means to guarantee the security of the most politically active Mauritanian refugees. The two hundred who were to be part of the programme were already selected, and they were all politically active in the FLAM movement. It was central FLAM activists in Dakar who coordinated the picking out of refugees to take part in the US-sponsored programme, and four of the selected families lived in Dagana 2. On at least one other occasion in the same period, resettlement was granted on an individual basis for others of the most politically active refugees. This must be seen in the light of the Senegalese ban on visible political activities by FLAM activists (Voets 2002).

From the time resettlement was known as an option to the Mauritanian refugees in Senegal, and the selection of participants was made public, all the Halpulaar men in Dagana have had only one evident preferred option for their future place of living. The keen interest in being resettled increased even more after the four resettled families started to invest in big houses in the camp. On a few occasions they have come home to the refugee camp on visits. This has probably influenced the way that resettlement is today almost exclusively explained as based on a need for material improvement and as a way out of the camp for the young Halpulaar men.

> I so much want to go abroad, to work, to earn money, make a family, have kids. And if I return here to Senegal [sic], I could buy a very big villa. I would do business or something else. But here, if I stay in Dagana, how could that suit me? I don't know how to do agriculture. I don't know how to fish. What shall I do here? Eh? (Ali)

The relatively poor material standard that the Halpulaar refugees are living under today, the social decline they have experienced since 1989, the poverty attached to camp life and the pessimism for the future make the option of resettlement a particularly tempting one. It is interesting that the refugees seldom explain the need to go abroad on the basis of the impossibility of return to Mauritania but normally through lack of possibility for future local integration.

For the Waalo-waalos, the possibility of resettlement is not a question of probability or desirability but rather one of destiny and the will of God. And, even more important, it depends on the decision-makers in the family. Whether the young Waalo-waalo men should

stay or go depends mostly on whether the fathers believe that labour is needed in the family and not on personal needs or aspirations. On one occasion, a Waalo-waalo informant was offered a trip to Italy by a distant relative, but he had to turn it down. His father thought he should work on the field, as the harvest was approaching. Kalidu, for instance, wants very much to go abroad. He dreams of going to France to fish. But at the same time, he has to accept staying.

> [*Kalidu*] We will never leave this place. It's only death that awaits us here. Even if the UNHCR wants to take us abroad, we will refuse.
> [*Q*] Why refuse?
> [*Kalidu*] Which person could accept to be forced to leave his country?

The 'we will refuse' is Kalidu's own subtle and diplomatic way of saying 'my father will not let me'. The social implications of resettling also include other aspects. Abdelaye is worried about what to do with his wife and children. 'She might find another man while you are away', says Abdelaye. He excludes the possibility of bringing her with him, as she might end up learning Western non-Muslim values and start speaking English. Furthermore, it can be difficult finding a job abroad, he says. He also claims it is too expensive to live there and not particularly peaceful.

The pessimism among several of the Waalo-waalos connected with certain aspects of migration, and the need to comply with the old men's decisions, makes resettlement a more or less unthinkable option. It is only the Halpulaars who have resettlement as a priority alternative for the future. 'They have that resettlement in their heads', says one Waalo-waalo.

It is matter of much discussion, rumours and speculations in the settlement whether a future resettlement programme will take place at all, and, in that case, who will be eligible to participate. All the Halpulaars have filed resettlement applications at the UNHCR office in Dakar, and this application is something that is referred to incessantly. In the meantime, the political landscape in the Dagana 2 camp has changed significantly as a result of the programme in 2000. Now, all Halpulaars have supposedly started to adhere to FLAM, even those few who used to belong to the rival organisation FRUIDEM. In addition, it has become important for the young men to 'prove' that they are worthy of a resettlement, that they deserve it more than others, due to their unfortunate past and their poor local integration. Says Mustafa:

The fishermen, for instance… they have lived their lives here. Now […] I could say that they are almost Senegalese.[…] So that is different from us. But everyone that is in *our* camp, *us*, in *our camp* […] deserve to be resettled abroad.

Deserving to be resettled is something that preoccupies the refugees a lot. Many of the Halpulaars feel betrayed and think that they also deserved being included in the group who departed for the United States. The talks around the resettlement process are therefore to a great extent characterised by dissatisfaction, jealousy, rumours and conflicts. Picking out altogether twenty persons from four Dagana families was unfair, all the informants concur. Instead, they could have selected one person from twenty different families. And then, those who were selected could remit money for the family members who were left behind.

The informants claim that their former neighbours in Dagana, who are now living in the United States, are lobbying for a new programme. Moreover, the flamists in Dakar at times pay visits to Dagana, supposedly claiming that FLAM is working for the resettlement of more refugees. The informants also claim that representatives of several foreign countries have visited the settlement, promising to resettle the entire camp.

Some of the young refugee men are more active than others in acquiring knowledge about third-country resettlement. Furthermore, some of the refugees admit that they do not have equal possibilities of being resettled. Omar, who is illiterate and non-French-speaking refugee, mentions that he would have less possibility of being resettled than, for instance, Ibrahima. Omar has no real opinions on how the people were resettled in 2000. He does not even know which year they left. Ibrahima, however, is a refugee from Dagana, currently working in Dakar. He has ten years of education and speaks French. On the wall in his apartment, he has posters from France. He has a few friends in Europe and good knowledge of the world abroad. Now, Ibrahima is carrying out his own investigations on how to proceed to get resettled. He has recently heard from a FLAM leader that a new resettlement programme is about to be planned by the UNHCR. He also has an idea of who did the picking out of refugees the last time, and a clear picture of how it was done.

As this chapter shows, the refugees have developed clear thoughts regarding the desirability of the different options, and each of them are in some way contested. A common trait, is that the value of the durable solutions is seldom expressed in isolation, but rather in function of each other. For instance, when discussing the topic of repatriation, one view it in terms of the value of local integration in Senegal. One Halpulaar informant says for instance: 'I could not get more in Mauritania than what I have here now'. Now, the refugees have established

functioning households in exile and gained ownership over the house and piece of land they inhabit. During the first years of exile the refugees lived under much worse conditions than today, and they feel proud of the progress they have made as a result of many years of hard work in the settlement. A similar answer gives the Halpulaar Yusuf. His father lives in Dagana, and returns on a bimonthly basis to Nouakchott to visit some of his children. When asked if his father sometimes talks about the possibility of leaving Dagana in order to move permanently to Nouakchott, Yusuf looks surprised at me and replies: 'No! We have a house in Dagana! How could we leave the house in Dagana?' It is understandable that repatriating to an uncertain future in Mauritania is not a preferred option as long as the daily life in Senegal offers security.

This same way of seeing the alternatives in light of each other we will find in the following chapter.

6 Transnationalism as a means and a myth

The three durable solutions to the 'refugee problem' emerge from the point of view of the host country, third countries and the international humanitarian regime, and do not necessarily serve as a useful tool when analysing the refugees' options in daily life. The refugees cannot, of course, choose from the three 'durable solutions'. Normally, these are either desired but infeasible, or feasible but not desired. The question is rather how to temporally maintain a self-reliant household, while opting for a more permanent and appropriate future solution. During this period of self-reliance, nothing prevents the refugees from planning for or exploring several of the solutions simultaneously, although they might appear mutually exclusive on paper.

Today, as we will see, several of the Waalo-waalo households have developed cross-border livelihood strategies. These fit in as a natural continuation of the history of transnational risk-minimizing strategies in the area. In this way, the Waalo-waalo refugees find ways to create their own solution to their difficult situation, by staying and returning at the same time.

On the other hand, the Halpulaars remain in the settlement, aspiring for the establishment of transnational households through their own participation in resettlement programmes. What I do here is not to criticise the resettlement programmes in general or present an alternative to them. Such programmes have often obvious advantages for the refugees involved. Rather, I want to give an example of how such programmes can have problematic effects on a camp population.

6.1 TRANSNATIONAL EMERGENCY EXIT

> You see, the daytime I spend here [in Mauritania], but it is over there [in Senegal] that I go to sleep. It was those people who made that [state border] division, but for me, there are no problems. In Senegal, no one can ask me about an ID paper. Even if they demand it from me, I will tell that I don't have it, and they can do nothing to me. The same in Mauritania. Because I live in Mauritania, I live in Senegal, and I know how it works. (Bamba)

The inhabitants of Dagana 1, the Waalo-waalos, live next to Senegalese citizens of the same ethnic group in Dagana town. Many of the local town residents are even distant relatives. This is a result of the post-colonial border between the two states, which does not correspond to the ethnic lines in the area. So, although many of the Waalo-waalo families are recognised as refugees according to international law, they never in fact left their own original neighbourhood. With this in mind, it seems that the idea of repatriation itself gives no real meaning to many of the refugees, who already feels at home, although in exile according to international law.

As we will see, the Waalo-waalo community expands across an international border, but does that make it a 'transnational community'? Faist (2000b) operates with frontier regions as one example of transnational communities. The communities he explores are of a North-South nature, in the prism of internationalisation of labour and capital. The transnationalism à la Waalo can only with a difficulty be said to pertain to the process of globalisation and is definitively not new of nature. Instead, this thesis employs, as Al-Ali (2002), transnationalism in another context than the pure economic.

I see no reason why South-South communities should not be analysed in the same perspective. A large part of the Waalo-waalo community in Dagana 1 is at home both in Mauritania and in Senegal. In this case, the populations on both sides of the one hundred meter wide river have been crossing it for ages, and it is not very useful to speak of sending and receiving areas of migration. It is also difficult to make use of other analytical concepts relevant to migration theory, such as acculturation, assimilation or cultural recognition. What is special in this case is that this cross-border society is culturally homogeneous on a local level. The Waalo-waalos have relatives in both countries; some have houses both 'here and there'. They speak the local language, which is the same on both sides of the border: Wolof. But simultaneously the members of the community are highly aware of the very disparate economic and political situations on a national level between the two states, and the possibilities and limitations it entails. Thus, living on the border between the weak nation-states of Senegal and Mauritania produces a seemingly contradictory situation. On the one hand, the Waalo-waalos from both sides of the river carry out highly transnational and informal activities in relation to the disparities between the two different states. On the other, with the obvious fear of being perceived as essentialising their Waalo-waalo 'border identity', I claim that this identity is per definition of a local and transnational nature, located to the

Senegal River Valley, and that this identity is more important to the Waalo-waalos than pertaining to any of the two nation-states.

Waalo-waalo kinsfolk on both sides of the international border regularly remit and receive economic favours, labour force, parties or religious ceremonies. The long-term integration of Waalo-waalo refugees in Senegalese society in some cases seems to be complementary to cross-border contact and repatriation. I will in the following draw some historical lines to show how transnationalism for generations, even from before the independence of the two border states, has constituted an opportunity for the populations in the Senegal River Valley.

First, I would like to emphasise that a line must be drawn between 'repatriation' on the one hand, and 'return' on the other. In the literature the two terms are somewhat vaguely defined or used synonymously. The difference, as I see it, is one of formality, modality, temporariness and identity. First, 'repatriation' is often used to describe the formal or legal process of a refugee moving to the country of origin, entering under the legal protection of the home state. Secondly, repatriation is often done in an organised, or at least registered, manner, sometimes accompanied by the UNHCR and with the participation of the home and host state. The refugees then repatriate voluntarily, after having carefully considered the economic opportunities for the household in the home country, the political stability in the country and so forth. Repatriation is often done *en masse*, with the entire household, camp or village. Thirdly, it is expected to be a permanent, durable move, as a final step of the debated 'refugee cycle'. Lastly, partly as a consequence of the three others, repatriation is often described as involving important emotional, political and social aspects, all strongly influencing personal or shared identities among the refugees.

Returns, on the other hand, can be different in all these ways. First of all, a returnee can travel on an informal level, not registering with any authorities. There are few reasons to do just that, as returnees often do not return with plans to settle for good, but with other motives. These are normally of social or economic origin, but can also be for instance political, religious or military. Return trips can be of shorter duration, often on a regular basis. They often take the form of so-called 'scouting missions', checking out the situation at home, and are sometimes a first step towards a permanent repatriation.

In other words, repatriation is indeed a return movement, but return does not imply repatriation.

6.1.1 Transnational tradition

Until the second half of the 18th century, the area that today constitutes Senegal and Mauritania consisted of several kingdoms. What today is Dagana Mauritania and Dagana Senegal was part of the kingdom called Waalo. The different kingdoms traded with, protected and fought each other for centuries. By the 19th century, the Arab-Berber nomadic populations in the north gained control of the slave and rubber trade and carried out numerous raids against the river populations. A majority of the Waalo-waalos was then forced to abandon the river area, particularly the right bank, and settled further south. It was with these population movements that the Waalo-waalo language, Wolof, spread further south and developed to be a *de facto* national language in what is today Senegal. Many families continued farming on the Mauritanian banks of the Senegal River, while living in Senegal (Schmitz 1990).

In 1905 the French colonial power drew a border between Senegal and Mauritania, areas that until then had been treated by the colonial power as one single administrative unit. Inhabitants of Senegal were to pay taxes to the French, while the inhabitants of the newly declared protectorate of Mauritania were only to a lesser degree taxed by local Mauritanian authorities. This led to substantial migration to Mauritania from northern Senegal by people trying to escape heavy taxation (Leservoisier 1994, Santoir 1993c). The villages that were abandoned a century before, were now rebuilt, many of them by the descendants of the very same families that originally lived there (Schmitz 1990). The French responded to the massive cross-border migration by giving permission to free movement across the border but demanding French taxes from 'all people of black race' even in Mauritania (Leservoisier 1994). The attachment of the Southern Mauritanian blacks to Senegal made some declare that Southern Mauritania should be included in Senegal at the time that the two territories gained independence from France (Marty 2003).

During the decades after independence, the border remained more or less permeable and uncontrolled to the local Waalo-waalo riverine population. In the Dagana area it was normal for Senegalese citizens to use farming land in Mauritania. In 1973, 21 % of the farmers on the Mauritanian side of the river were Senegalese, while 4 % of the farmers on the Senegalese side were Mauritanians. Several households had close family members and farming lands in several villages along both banks of the river. This risk-minimizing strategy guaranteed that at least some of their lands received flood water during the rainy season (Seck 1991).

Similarly, it was common for Mauritanian pastoralists to take their cattle to grazing land in Senegal during the dry season (Santoir 1993a), while Mauritanian shopkeepers accounted for a substantial share of Senegal's small retail trade (Magistro 1993). These traditional cross-border strategies stopped temporarily with the events in 1989, and many of them were reactivated when the border reopened. Since the reopening of the border, the value of the transnational activities has regained its previous importance.

An area further upstream from the Waalo, what the locals call Fuuta, shares many of the same qualities as the Waalo. Fuuta is a space with a long history for transnational identity and activities. 'When the refugees speak about Mauritania and their Mauritanian identity, they speak about the border in a European sense of the word. But when they speak about Fuuta, they conceive the border as open' (Marty 2003: 508; my translation). Marty also claims that the border is imagined differently in different contexts, and that the refugees experience it as more significant than those who are not refugees, or, as Seck puts it, 'in the Senegal River Valley, where the river has been considered a hyphen [between the two countries], a border was erected amidst the river populations, who is attached to each other through common history and blood' (1991: 312; my translation).

The entire river area has always constituted one socio-economic unity of fishermen, farmers and pastoralists, with different castes of the Halpulaars and Wolofs occupying the various occupational groups. The fishermen and the flood recession farmers were settled closest to the river. Further away from the river, dryland farmers and pastoralist herders had their permanent or semi-nomadic settlements. A majority of these populations lived on what is today the Senegalese side of the river. When following the customary rules for distribution of farming lands to households, the different ethnic groups did not use nationality or ethnicity as a criterion. What was more relevant was which caste each family belonged to. High castes, for instance, received more and better land than the slaves (Maïga 1995).

It was only in 1989, as a consequence of the conflict between the two neighbouring states, that the border between Mauritania and Senegal really turned visible to the local populations. For a few years the border was closed and dangerous to navigate due to Mauritanian army snipers on the right bank. Border police patrols increased, and immigration and customs officials became more frequent.

It is in this light that we now must see the Waalo-waalo transnational adaptation of today. When the refugees claim to be staying in exile in Senegal, it is natural that many of them also travel to Mauritania on a regular basis.

6.1.2 Border benefits

The border appears today to the Waalo-waalo informants as one of opportunities and lately also of restrictions (cf. Wilson and Donnan 1998). Just like previous generations have done before them, several of the Waalo-waalo households have adapted cross-border practices, with one part in Senegal, another in Mauritania. The border offers economic opportunities and constitutes a possibility for minimizing risk.

The border guards know the cross-border population well and let them cross relatively freely. 'I am a crosser. I cross this river all the time', says Bamba, 'the police officers are tired of me'. This is now slowly changing, and the border controls are being intensified. It is not evident how this will affect the way of life for the border populations. The border is still more of an opportunity than a restriction to the transnational families. Some of them to a large extent control the traffic of goods and people across the border in Dagana.

Both of the two countries have their advantages which the cross-border families can profit from. Mauritania is particularly appreciated for different employment opportunities, either in the distant cities or right on the other side of the river.

All the farmer families have members working on fields in Mauritania, only forty minutes away from their house in exile, either on their own field or as paid workers. Close to the river, an American business man has recently initiated large-scale farming of fruits and vegetables for export. No identity papers are needed to be employed, so some of the young men work there from time to time. The working conditions are harsh, and the low salary is equivalent to one euro a day.

'Over there, we thank God, because the Mauritanians help us. Before, we didn't used to have electricity there. Now they have made us (*defal nañu*) a power line all the way to our house'. Interestingly, Abdelaye refers to Mauritanians as 'they' (*nañu*), as opposed to 'us'. This indicates that many of the Waalo-waalos view the Mauritanian state and even Mauritanian identity as something distant. The households with farming lands in Mauritania also receive different forms of economic aid from the Mauritanian government, such as credits or subsidised seeds. Southern Mauritania also has good fishing grounds for the fishermen.

A few of the young Waalo-waalo men are also tempted to migrate to friends or family that some of them have in Mauritanian cities for a few months at a time. This offers many possibilities for quick money, and in some professions the payment is quite lucrative, but

insecure. These seasonal migration movements are normally part of a household decision. The fathers occasionally order a young son to travel to Nouakchott after the harvest and send for him when there is new need for male labour in the family. Still, although profitable, remaining in Mauritania is not lucrative. It seems that the visits in Mauritania should be as short as possible. Hassan would like to work there, together with his wife and children, for a short period, but not live there:

> [Q] Do you believe that you will go to Nouakchott one day?
> [Hassan] Yes, I believe. […]
> [Q] To stay for good?
> [Hassan] Perhaps a few months.
> [Q] Why return here?
> [Hassan] Because this is where we are from… You know… Mauritania… it is a lack of other options that I go there. It is not my best choice. […] It is due to God that our great grandfathers who originated from Senegal, had to go to Mauritania. God has made it such a way that we were born there, and raised there and we started to work there. But it was the Maures who made our spirits and behaving turn Senegalese. That is why we no longer have the confidence to live over there. We just try to work there. But all of us, our hearts and spirits are on the Senegalese side. Because when it is difficult, we come back to Senegal. The Maures don't even consider us as Mauritanians, but as Senegalese. They consider all blacks… especially the Wolofs… to be Senegalese and not Mauritanians. The work we do over there, if we had found it here, we would have left and returned here.

While Mauritania offers many opportunities for employment, Senegal also has its evident advantages to the local populations. The refugees emphasise the importance of Senegal as a stable and secure country. As has been shown, this has made the Mauritanian populations in Southern Mauritania to always nurture close contact with Senegal, even before the events 1989. This contact has continued to this day, especially among the refugees who returned.

In addition, Senegal has always been a lucrative place to sell Mauritanian fish and agricultural products. The substantial price discrepancy on various products has stimulated an intensive cross-border trade for decades (cf. Covu 1971), and the lively market in Dagana every day attracts people from the Mauritanian riverbank.

Some aspects of remaining refugees in Senegal have been profitable, and this has led refugees to maintain the refugee status and identity, even after finding what can be perceived as a durable solution. Some people who repatriated to Mauritania in the early 1990s left their temporary refugee papers with their kin remaining in the settlement. When the humanitarian aid came monthly, their friends or family would show the cards to the UNHCR officials, saying that they were away for the day. The assistance was distributed in relation to the number of refugee cards in each family, not in relation to how many people were present in

the settlement on the day of distribution. That way the returnees in Mauritania received humanitarian aid in the settlement. In the same way, some of the returnees have also managed to take part in a programme for distributing lots of land in Dagana town in the year 2000. The refugees in the settlement would then call for their relatives in Mauritania to come and join the distribution. Several returnees also tried to receive formal refugee ID papers in 2002. Still, the Dagana hospital in Senegal and the refugee nurse are still frequently visited by returnees.

6.1.3 Fresh tomato remittances

Some refugees have since 1989 developed transnational split households, with one branch at their original home place in Mauritania and a second in exile, while a son or two keep criss-crossing the international border. The Dial family displays such characteristics.

Aliu, Bubacar, Cisse and Djibi are four brothers who carry out farming and fishing in a split Waalo-waalo household. They are 18, 26, 29 and 32 years old, and the three oldest are married with children. The two youngest of the quartet were among my main informants. They were both living in the settlement, together with their grandmother and two younger sisters. This is also where their parents used to live until they passed away recently, and this is the place they refer to as home. In addition to the fish, the family produces rice, tomatoes and onion for their own use and for sale at the local market. They also have a few other income-generating activities, such as transport services on the river.

The family is divided in three units, each unit on separate locations. While most of the family members live in the settlement, they also have two smaller houses in Mauritania. The two oldest brothers, Cisse and Djibi, live there and are heads of their own small households.

All the land that the family used to own in Mauritania was confiscated in 1989, but they later managed to rescue a small part in negotiations with the local Mauritanian authorities. Djibi has been cultivating this land since he returned in 1994. Building up the house and the field in Mauritania was a demanding task and took nearly a year. He then used to work on their new house in Mauritania all day, before returning home to the settlement every evening. Now, he lives permanently in Mauritania together with his Mauritanian wife and their four children.

Cisse, the second oldest brother, is farming tomatoes on a field in Mauritania that the family is renting. There he lives in a temporary and poorly built house of sun-dried clay together with his wife. Most of his earnings he sends to the family in the settlement. Normally, when he pays the family a visit, he brings a box of fresh tomatoes or a pile of

maize. In Mauritania he also owns his own plot, where he wants to build a house in the future. Cisse is sending more money home than Djibi. With all their children, Djibi and his wife are finding it more and more difficult to provide the family in Senegal with cash and products. Every time something interesting is happening in Senegal, the two brothers return for a visit. They also come if there is an important football match on TV. Senegal is always their favourite team, even if they play against Mauritania. Djibi's children love to visit their relatives in Senegal and are now old enough to cross the river alone, in order to do errands in Dagana town.

The youngest brother, Aliu, still lives in the settlement but shuttles between the three locations and gives a hand where it is needed most. He often goes to Mauritania in the morning, returning to the settlement in the afternoon.

Bubacar is the only one of the four brothers who remains permanently in Senegal. He farms a rented field in Senegal, and heads the household in the settlement. Bubacar estimates that approximately one third of the household's income originates from the production at Cisse's and Djibi's fields in Mauritania. The money that Bubacar receives in the settlement permits the constructing of a solid cement house.

A few years back, the family managed to receive a small loan from a local NGO to purchase a fishing boat. The different members of the family in the two countries share the boat. The fish they catch together is sold at the market in Dagana town. The families also exchange gifts in forms of agricultural produce.

The different brothers refer to themselves as Senegalese and Mauritanians in different contexts. During interviews in Dagana town, they claim to be Senegalese, and in Mauritania, they claim to be Mauritanians. In this way they make sure to be well integrated in Senegal, while not jeopardizing their security in Mauritania. At the same time, they refer to themselves as refugees – even Djibi, who has lived in Mauritania more or less continuously since 1994.

The family is very clear about the multilocal strategy being a means to risk-minimizing and flexibility:

> We have relatives who were killed in 1989, and we lost a lot of our lands and mango trees. It was all taken by the Maures. That is why we no longer have any confidence [in Mauritania]. And that is what explains how come all that we earn over there [in Mauritania], we bring here [to Senegal]. There, we go only to work. That is why we have only made clay houses there, and cement houses here. (Bubacar)

Households like that of the Dial family are quite frequently found in the settlement. Common to them all is the very strong social network that surpasses the international border. On special

occasions the entire Dagana 1 neighbourhood is close to empty of young Waalo-waalos, who are all attending social or religious events at their kin's place in Mauritania. Families on the two sides of the river also regularly exchange labour force during harvest periods. Intermarriage across the border is very common. Some of the young men had previously even attended the French school in Senegal and the Koranic school in Mauritania simultaneously.

This way of cross-border adaptation will easily develop between two states with porous borders. It is possible that, with increased border control and perhaps a more stable political situation in Mauritania, the need and opportunities for split households will diminish, so that the different branches of the family on each side of the river will become increasingly independent social and economic units. In this light, 'repatriation' is more the result of a long 'return process' lasting for a generation, rather than a simple physical move of the household from one place to the other. At the moment, at least, this manner of adaptation is a natural way of risk-minimizing that constitutes a continuation of how things have been done in the area for generations. Their lack of confidence in Mauritania has always made household repatriation a little-desired option. The partly return to Mauritania has constituted an opening for economic opportunities and has given the possibility to make secure investments in Senegal. If new violent events were to take place in Mauritania again, these families have a natural 'emergency exit' in the settlement in Dagana.

6.2 THE MYTH OF TRANSNATIONALISM

There is a deep frustration among some of the informants due to the lack of durable solutions in sight. A majority of the Halpulaars prefer not to return, nor to repatriate nor to acquire Senegalese citizenship but to remain refugees in Dagana, protracting the temporariness of their stay. This insistence on temporariness has one major reason: the desire to establish a transnational way of living through participation in a resettlement programme.

Resettlement programmes are obviously vital for those whom they concern. Resettlement remains an important tool to ensure the permanent protection of refugees and often guarantees freedom of expression and political activism that might otherwise not be possible in the country of first asylum. But what happens to those left behind – those who are *not* resettled?

In transnational refugee studies, there has been a general focus either on the migrants in the North or on the non-migrants in the South who take part most actively in transnational social fields. A third group affected by migration in general is those who stay behind and do *not* take part in or benefit from these transnational spaces.

Very little research has been done on the consequences of resettlement programmes for the non-participating refugees remaining in the country of first asylum. Without elaborating further, Kuhlman mentions that when the local, well-educated leaders manage to get resettled, the option of resettlement may 'frustrate rather than enhance the success of local integration' (1994: 117). This frustration I will elaborate in the following.

6.2.1 Resettlement as a primary option

The UNHCR increasingly acknowledges that refugee movements need to be seen in the light of migration in general (Crisp and Dessalegne 2002). In the same manner, both local integration and resettlement is increasingly seen as complex, multifaceted and long-term processes. But when it comes to resettlement, there seems to be a lack of understanding of what roles the programmes play for the societies that are affected by them. It is usually described as en event that is completed upon the refugees' arrival and integration in the West, just like traditional migration approaches did until the transnational turn in migration studies. Stein writes, for instance:

> There are only three durable solutions […]. Both political will and capacity are necessary to their achievement, and many obstacles stand in the way of all three solutions. Indeed, the obstacles are such that *for refugees from developing countries third country resettlement is not a primary option.* Historically only a small percentage of refugees are resettled (Stein 1986: 268; my emphasis).

In the context of the refugees in Dagana, particularly for the Halpulaars, this is an erroneous statement. For a young Mauritanian refugee man in Senegal, whose age mates are now living in the United States, resettlement is indeed a very desired and primary option. Of course, statistically the chance for the refugee to be resettled is only minuscule[13]. But these statistics are not necessarily available to the refugees.

The three alternative durable solutions are incomparable to many of the refugees, one of them, resettlement, being qualitatively different from the two others. In the Senegal River

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[13] In 2003, while the UNHCR counted 17 million 'persons of concern' worldwide (UNHCR 2004c), the organisation assisted only 28,255 resettlement departures (2004a). 'Person of concern' includes mainly refugees, internally displaced, returned refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons.

Valley, where migration to the West for decades has been considered by young men an important means for social and economic escalation, the option of resettlement is particularly tempting. Whenever conditions for return or local integration are mentioned, the topic of resettlement is brought up.

> [Q] Previously, FLAM and many others talked about returning *en masse*, reclaiming their rights.
> [Mustafa] Nobody talks about that anymore. How can Mauritania manage to compensate for everything they have done to us? How can they compensate for everything we lost in 1989? And for everything that we have lost during the 15 years since? It is impossible. Impossible, I tell you… We will never go home. Never. We don't even think about it anymore.
> [Ali] It is too late for us to return now. All we want now is to be resettled.
> [Q] But the refugee organisations and FLAM say so all the time…that they claim…
> [Ali] Ah!! Politicians! It is just empty words. It means nothing to us anymore. What we want is resettlement.
> [Mustafa] What we want is resettlement.

Voets (2002: 71) calls this 'myth of resettlement' (*de mythe van hervestiging*) and argues that this is common among the Mauritanian refugees in Senegal. This phenomenon is also found in other contexts but has only been poorly documented. Hassanen (personal communication) describes the situation for Eritrean refugees in the Sudanese town of Kassala, which is somewhat similar to the one in Dagana. Hoping for resettlement in third countries, the town refugees in Kassala maintain their status and identity as refugees and refuse to repatriate to their home country. Several of the refugees who previously lived in Kassala have already managed to be resettled, and remittances have now become one of the main sources of income in town.

The Halpulaar families that were expelled in 1989 arrived in Senegal mostly as distinct nuclear families. To a very small extent are they interrelated through family ties. This means that the families who managed to get resettled in the United States are not related to any of the refugees remaining in the settlement. Consequently, the refugees who today live in Dagana have no chance to join their old neighbours overseas through family reunification. The weak link also means that they do not benefit from remittances.

Labelling this phenomenon 'myth of resettlement' shows only half the truth. What they aspire for is something more. The Halpulaars evidently dream of households that are *transnational*, with one or a few men settled abroad, and the rest of the family, such as the aging parents, staying behind in the settlement. In this way, the young men can remit funds home to the household in the settlement, in the same manner as their Waalo-waalo returnee

neighbours remit their fresh tomatoes. This 'myth of transnationalism' they dream of carrying out in a more transnational way than those who left in 2000. Their age mates in the United States have supposedly still not remitted money to the settlement in a manner that has permitted the rest of the refugee population any material improvements. If the Halpulaars are to be resettled, they explicitly say that they will not let down those who remain but maintain contact and serve as breadwinners for their family and friends.

It is a common characteristic among migrants who are able to resettle in the West that those who make use of such opportunities are primarily from a certain segment of the population. Bypassing strict immigration policies requires a certain capacity such as connections, capital and knowledge. In a transnational community, I suppose that the 'involuntary non-migrants' (Carling 2002) normally have an awareness of this social capital they are lacking in order to take part in such communities.

In a refugee context, the case might be somewhat different from that of other migration populations. The causal chain leading to the participation in a refugee resettlement programme might be more difficult to grasp for the applicants to the programme. This is due to the important use value that is associated with the refugee label.

Refugees who objectively or according to the applicants themselves comply with the eligibility criteria for third-country resettlement naturally await their participation in the programme. This does not prevent the resettlement programme from *de facto* including first of all the well-connected, highly educated, French-speaking families, as was the case with the resettlement of Mauritanians in Senegal. But still, the official reason as to why these elite refugees were selected was not due to their capacity to manoeuvre the system. Rather, it was because *they were refugees*. Thus the involuntary immobility of the remaining camp refugees is perceived to be very unfair, since they fall under the same legal category, come from the same background and live under the same conditions. The refugees in Dagana can easily be viewed as having the same right to resettlement as those who already departed. They have handed in their application for resettlement and now they wait.

6.2.2 Use value of the refugee label

'Having the right to' resettlement follows from resources and values inherent in the refugee label. When demands of resettlement are made, it is a natural continuation of ways that the category has been mobilised previously. I will now draw some short lines back in history to illustrate this.

In general terms, it is evident that great losses and injustice often are inflicted upon refugees. In many cases they live in poor material conditions and, being refugees, normally have great limitations on their political and socio-economic opportunities. This places clear restrictions on their ability to be self-reliant. This does not imply, however, that being a refugee is only negative. The refugee status in itself offers important protection to people who have fled a country, as well as a few other benefits. Analysing the 'use value' of the refugee label is a contested exercise. Harrell-Bond calls some of this research 'cynicism' (Harrell-Bond 1995: 9). I believe that looking at how extremely marginalised people transform the social category of 'refugee' into a resource is not necessarily a sign of cynicism. It rather shows how people, in certain contexts, manage to beneficially make use of the few resources they have available. This use value of the refugee label is necessarily seen by the refugees in relation to the value of the durable solutions available.

The Dagana refugees seem to have gradually acquired knowledge about their legal rights as refugees, benefits one can be entitled to receive and meanings of what it entails to be a refugee. The value has gone through various changes since the Mauritanian refugees first arrived in Senegal, and this label only came as a result of their encounter with the international community through the humanitarian aid that was offered the years after arrival. As one of the Waalo-waalos says, "A refugee is someone who was forced to leave Mauritania by the Maures. You see, 'refugee' is a white man's word. In Wolof, we say *Mooy ñi Naar yi daq* ('those who were chased by the Maures'). […] When we came, we didn't know that we were refugees."

The refugee label involves both economic and political resources that are highly appreciated. I will first look into the economic aspect.

UNHCR diminished the food aid repeatedly already from shortly after the refugees' arrival (Santoir 1998). In 1990, one year after settling in Dagana, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF; Ritmeijer 1991) states that the food aid was below what is considered necessary for survival. In addition to low level of aid, the UNHCR initially had serious logistical

distribution problems. MSF carried out a nutritional survey in the Dagana region in mid-1990, and found that the refugee children – despite the temporary lack of aid – in fact did not have an alarming level of malnutrition in comparison with the host population. This, MSF explains as resulting from the refugees' high level of socio-economic integration in the area, and that the refugees were given food from local stocks. MSF actually states that if the UNHCR had succeeded in isolating the populations in camps separate from the Senegalese villages, as was their initial strategy, the situation for the refugees would have been 'quite a bit more worrisome, if not catastrophic' (Ritmeijer 1991: 6). Although the aid was not sufficient, it was an important contribution to the refugee families. The food aid was terminated by the end of 1995, while health and education assistance was phased out in 1998 (Santoir 1998, Fresia 2004).

In order to receive food aid, the refugees had to show their temporary refugee paper. These were issued during the first months in Dagana. Unless travelling around in Senegal, there was not much need for these identity papers. The direct link that existed between food distribution and refugee papers has probably had an important effect on many peoples' ideas of what it entails being a refugee. Still, the temporary refugee papers are identified by many Waalo-waalos as a 'food ticket' that has now lost its value. Says Abdelaye:

> In the beginning, staying refugee was good, because they came with foods. But now… staying refugee is… is nothing. It's just a name that people are used to say. Until present. But now the quarter has changed. In the beginning, we said 'refugee camp', now the name has changed and we say 'Quartier Daarusalaam'… Still there are a few people who cannot stop using that word… But there is no point to…

As Kalidu shows, the value of the refugee label decreased as a consequence of the cessation of humanitarian assistance. It is difficult to establish whether this is the reason why young men both among the Halpulaars and the Waalo-waalos left the settlement in the end of the 1990s. In the neighbouring camp of Ndioum, it is argued that there was a direct causal link between the end of assistance and out-migration from the camp (Fresia 2001).

In 2000 the refugees received donations from the mayor of Dagana; most importantly, they obtained property rights over the lots they inhabit in the settlement. But today there are not many financial benefits to gain from staying a refugee. The few remaining refugee-centred assistance programmes have very limited target groups and are not available to a majority of the young men. For instance, a local NGO distributes micro-credits for refugee women to carry out small projects. A handful of refugee students on a national level in

Senegal receive annual scholarships for university-level studies, but few of the young men ever get that far in the education system.

In addition to the economic resources that can be mobilised from the refugee label, being 'refugee' entails certain political resources. Remaining refugees and protracting the exile give a profound sense of meaning to the Halpulaar refugees as a way of expressing political force. The young and politically conscious flamist youths know that they remain a challenge to the Mauritanian regime. This force is not only on the level of national politics in Mauritania but also gives the refugees a certain negotiating power from which they hope to get some kind of personal compensation for their losses caused by the deportation in 1989. At least, this was important in the 1990s. As Midtvåge states a few years after the expulsion: 'If they go back little by little anonymously, they would lose all their rights and possibilities of being given back what was taken away by the Mauritanian regime' (1993:112).

When the four Halpulaar families in Dagana were resettled to the United States in 2000, the life of the camp suddenly changed greatly. The programme had a tremendous effect on the young men. Since that episode, no one has supposedly been talking about repatriation or compensation. Even some refugees' desire for permanent integration decreased. The refugee label was suddenly worth a ticket abroad.

According to the refugees, the benefits that they have accrued from the international community and the local authorities – particularly the resettlement programme – have led to jealousy among their host neighbours. There seems to be no disruptive competition, however, for resources such as arable land, employment or economic aid. Now, as the refugee-centred economic and humanitarian aid programmes are being phased out, we have seen that many of the Waalo-waalo refugees insist on downplaying their refugee identity. Today, remaining a refugee has in certain contexts negative economic consequences, not receiving the same benefits as the autochthonous Senegalese. This means that people are very ambiguous whether the refugee identity should be over- or under-communicated.

7 A contested strategy

Transnationalism is a highly contested strategy. It is the central element in the segregation process in the settlement, between those who claim to be 'pure refugees' and those who don't.

For more than a decade the young men of the two camps participated in a common football team. Now the team is divided in two: one for the Halpulaars and another for the Waalo-waalos. They even do the training on separate fields. The agricultural cooperatives are now strictly segregated. This was not the case previously. And now, although the two groups belong to the same Muslim brotherhood, most of the religious ceremonies are to a larger degree than earlier attended exclusively by only one of the two groups. The neighbourhoods are building their separate mosques. The process of social segregation within the Dagana settlement seems to be expanding into new arenas of the young men's social lives.

Segregation can be understood as a process by which a group 'makes out a separate entity in contrast to the surrounding society' (Gilen *et al.* 1994: 11). In the examples from the Hutu refugees in Tanzania, we see how this process develops in parallel to the formation of refugee identity. Malkki shows how this identity formation occurs in the encounter with the humanitarian aid regime and with the host populations. Refugee identity is also often explained in relation to the physical environment that surrounds the refugees. The Hutu refugees are living spatially segregated from the autochthonous population and from the rest of the refugees. This camp life, as we have seen with some of the Halpulaar refugees, constitutes an important aspect of the Hutus' self-ascription as refugees. On Cyprus, the refugees' housing environment has contributed to developing a 'refugee consciousness' (Zetter 1991: 53). The particular and inferior physical setting has contributed to producing substantial differences in identities between refugees and non-refugees, and the schemes that were elaborated to help the refugees have tended to marginalise the refugees and limit integration in host populations. Such material standards can be the point of departure for political mobilisation among the refugees. In Cyprus, the joint demands for improved housing assistance were a central part of the refugee identity. We see the same politisation among the Hutu refugees; here the demands are formed around claims to the Burundi nation. The self-settled refugees, on the other hand, as described in both the Angolan and Hutu cases display completely different characteristics. Although remaining refugees legally speaking, the self-settled refugees show a total lack of political awareness centred on the refugee category.

The connection between humanitarian discourse and socio-physical setting on the one side and the development of a refugee identity on the other is much less clear-cut in Dagana than in cases such as the Cypriot, Hutu or Angolan.

Both Dagana 1 and Dagana 2 have been subjected to the same deportation and physical environment and have received the same privileges from the humanitarian regime. But still, there is no collective identity that unites all the refugees. The Dagana 1 and Dagana 2 neighbourhoods have developed their separate stories, identities and strategies and have become very distinct, although surprisingly homogeneous internally. When the informants say 'we' or 'here', they consistently refer to their own part of the refugee settlement. Simultaneoulsy, all youths claim in one way or another to be refugees. But there is a clear difference in how they define themselves as such, and the degree to which it is relevant in social interaction or political mobilisation. As we have seen, the Halpulaars show an 'essential' diasporic refugee identity, while the Waalo-waalos' refugee identity is rather 'pragmatic' and 'situational'. Bakewell would call the difference between the two kinds of identity as 'hand-held' and 'heartfelt' (2002a: 52). Malkki (1992) makes a similar, useful distinction between creolised, changing or situational identities on one hand, and essential or moral on the other. This difference is maintained through the formation of a social boundary. Paasi writes that "collective identities are typically produced through boundaries and the social construction of demarcations, since identity is typically defined in terms of a difference between 'us' and 'them' (or the Other), rather than being something essentialist of intrinsic to a certain group of people" (1996: 10). It is therefore necessary to establish what exactly this 'difference' entails for the informants. This is where the emic concept of 'pure refugees', *les purs réfugiés,* is so important. There has developed a common understanding among many refugees as to what this concept entails. It is only the Halpulaars who use this notion, but the division is a bit more complicated than to say that all the Halpulaars define themselves as 'pure refugees' and the Waalo-waalos do not.

This self-ascribed 'pure refugee' identity evolves around three main themes: transnationalism as a contested strategy, Mauritanian national identity and the discourse of suffering. These, I will explore here.

7.1   TRANSNATIONAL STRATEGIES

The most important aspect in the boundary formation between the pure and not-so-pure refugees is based on a rejection of openly transnational livelihood strategies. The disagreement over these strategies evolves around the understanding of the border crossings, and of the meaning of the border.

There seems to be a general understanding among those who label themselves as 'pure refugees' that claiming international protection in Senegal is incompatible with incessant return visits to Mauritania. Therefore, remaining 'pure refugee' implies not returning to Mauritania more than absolutely necessary and, in particular, not maintaining transnational livelihoods. The pragmatic and partial *return* of the Waalo-waalos is therefore in stark contrast to the conditional *repatriation* of the Halpulaars.

For the Waalo-waalos, crossing the border has traditionally been an uncomplicated affair, with the two riverbanks pertaining more or less to the same 'home area'. It is illustrative that the Waalo-waalos, among whom a few claim to be Senegalese, now are the ones who spend the most time in Mauritania for work or visits. Actually, one of the Waalo-waalo youths said it would be a lot safer to live in Mauritania than in many places of Senegal. Another mentioned on several occasions that Mauritanian authorities had welcomed home those who left in 1989. Therefore, he sees no problems connected with carrying out return visits. This completely apolitical way of considering return is reflected in how certain Waalo-waalo informants talk about Mauritania and even the way they refer to the events of 1989.

The river that the Waalo-waalos more or less undisturbed cross daily is to the Halpulaars a dangerous frontier saturated with meaning. As Paasi writes, '[e]ven if boundaries are always more or less arbitrary lines between territorial entities, they may have deep symbolic and historical meanings for social communities' (1996:3). The Halpulaars see their national identity as based on an essential belonging to the nation-state of Mauritania, more than the Waalo-waalos do to any of the two. Their national identity is constructed upon, or 'imagined' through, the very border they were forced to cross.

The transnational activities of some refugees are therefore highly contested. And the Halpulaars, when they carry out such return visits, if at all, make sure that they do it in a way that complies with the expectations attached to the 'pure refugee' label. Some Halpulaars do have very political arguments for not returning or repatriating. Mustafa, for instance, has himself thought of going to Mauritania to work, in order to earn some money for his parents

in the camp. His brother recently left and is supposedly planning to come home within a few months. But neither he nor his brother would ever imagine settling there for good, while President Maaouiya is still in power. A new regime is a precondition for permanently settling in Mauritania. If he goes there to work, it could be for a short period of time, nothing more. But if he does that, he would have to obtain a Mauritanian ID card. He would not like that, he says, because that would mean he is no longer a refugee.

The border was perceived as particularly dangerous during the years of the conflict. The Halpulaar refugees often talk about the time prior to 1992, when the international border was closed. Sometimes, the Mauritanian military would fire their arms from the Mauritanian riverbank, so that the settlement was hit. On a few occasions people who navigated the river during the daytime were shot by snipers. Adama's brother often tells long stories of how, during the dark, he would cross the river in a canoe, sneak his way through the barbed wire and past the mined Mauritanian police controls. The Halpulaars' return visit discourse continues to this day to evolve around how to trick the stupid, illiterate and racist Mauritanian police officers, getting into the country without Mauritanian ID papers.

The border remains a place of resistance to the Mauritanian regime. This is particularly easy to see at the times when friends and family in Mauritania pay a visit to the camp, on the occasion of important social happenings. During these encounters lengthy political discussions evolve around topics related to identity and nationality issues. The visitors express their relief at being away from the fundamentalist, racist and controlling regime and declare their joy over a short vacation in the liberal beer-drinking Senegalese society. The visitors carry with them new stories to the refugees, about the violations committed by the government, and the surveillance some of them have been subjected to.

The difference between the meanings that the Halpulaars and the Waalo-waalos attribute to the Senegal-Mauritanian border is striking. The transnational adaptation that the Waalo-waalos have developed with the regard to the border, while still claiming to be refugee as well as Senegalese, provokes dissatisfaction among some Halpulaars. To the Halpulaars, the Senegal River is not only the demarcation line between the two states but also a border that defines their identities as refugees and as oppositional Mauritanians. It is a continuous reminder of the unjust events that changed their lives and caused their miserable present. Crossing it through permanent repatriation, return visits or transnational split household strategies are political statements, as concessions to a regime that forced them out of their homeland. These concessions threaten the refugee purity.

It can also endanger the possibility of other options in the future. Al-Ali shows how a group of refugees show a reluctance of carrying out return visits, since this could jeopardise their possibility for obtaining citizenship in the country of refuge. 'The sense of security or anxiety which arises in relation to the question of legal status of refugees plays a very significant role in creating or hindering the space from which transnational spaces can occur' (Al-Ali 2002: 113).

7.2 ESSENTIAL NATIONAL IDENTITY

The second building brick of the 'pure refugee' self-ascribed identity is the essential and territorially rooted understanding of national identity. This is also much linked to the topic of non-transnationalism but in a historical perspective. Being a refugee is understood as presupposing to be a pure Mauritanian, in other words, *not* Senegalese. This overlapping between national and refugee identities, and the need for a strong national identity in order to the refugee identity to develop, is also known from several other refugee situations.

As accounted for, there has traditionally been an intensive migration between the two areas that today constitute Senegal and Mauritania. The idea of pure refugees implies, according to the Halpulaars at least, that the refugees' family historically originates from what today is called Mauritania. This also means that until the events in 1989, the family had only a limited contact with Senegal. Several Halpulaars claim that the Waalo-waalos are not as Mauritanian as themselves, since they before 1989 already had one foot in Senegal. A majority of the Halpulaars, however, claim not to have known anything of either Dagana or the rest of Senegal before arrival.

The conflict in 1989 was in many ways a conflict over national identity and citizenship, in a larger process of post-colonial nation-building. According to the Mauritanian authorities, those who left Mauritania were either Senegalese citizens, or Mauritanians who departed voluntarily. Due to the sensitivity of issues of citizenship it is important for the victims of 1989 to have the 'right' nationality. For instance, it appears to be particularly important for the returnees to show that they are pure Mauritanians. This insistence is entirely new to the region. There is no tradition in the Senegal River Valley for identifying oneself according to national identity. Even ethnic belonging, as it is used today, has formerly been of limited relevance. In these border areas, caste- or place-based identities have been more

important in social interaction (Schmitz 1994). The 'Waalo-waalo' identity is, as mentioned, no ethnic group *per se* but a particular situational identity that people of several ethnic groups can claim to belong to as long as they are indigenous to the area. Their attachment or loyalty to either of the two nation-states must be seen as very weak.

As with the transnational Dial family, many other of the Waalo-waalos in the settlement can be said to have a very pragmatic relation to national identity. The same is noted by Leservoisier (1999) on refugees further upstream. National identity is not something his informants are born with but rather a logical consequence of the fact that they have formal property right on fields in Mauritania. Bakewell accounts from the border refugees in Zambia that 'for the people of the border areas […] lack of respect for their nationality is normal' (2000: 364).

While the Waalo-waalos have a 'pragmatic' relation to national identity, the Halpulaars express themselves more in an essentialist way: they feel 'pure Mauritanians', referring to Mauritania as their 'natal land', 'ancestral land' or 'homeland'. Often they tell stories from their fathers' participation in the construction of the country since independence or in the Sahara war in the 1970s. This Mauritanian Halpulaar nationalism is particularly expressed through the FLAM organisation.

For the Hutus in Kigoma camp, the same concept of 'refugee purity' is very much linked to a question of ethnic identity. Remaining refugee meant insisting on the Hutu claim to the Burundi nation. It would be wrong to say that the Halpulaars have similar claims to Mauritania. However, the Mauritanian Halpulaar refugees do have a very nationalist agenda and political demands of regime change in Mauritania. The FLAM movement that is almost exclusively Halpulaar claims that the Halpulaars have played a historically important role in the nation-building process of Mauritania. The local Waalo-waalos are, on the other hand, of the ethnic group Wolof. In Mauritania, 'Wolof' is considered more and more to be synonymous with 'Senegalese'. In the settlement, the disagreement over national identity can also be said to become one of ethnicity. So when the young refugee men ask their younger brothers to speak their native language Pulaar, and not Wolof, within the compound of their household, it seems to be not only a question of ethnicity but one of national and refugee identity.

7.3 THE DISCOURSE OF SUFFERING

The third and last aspect of the 'pure refugee' label is the discourse of suffering, centred on accounts of the past (life prior to 1989 and the expulsion) and the present (misery, injustice etc).

Most importantly, those who lost the most property in the flight process are the purest refugees. Certain Waalo-waalos managed to save some of their belongings. This is being generalised by the Halpulaars to apply to the whole Waalo-waalo refugee population by crossing the river before the Mauritanian arrived their house. A lot of suffering is also attached to the accounts of the first months and years of exile. The Halpulaars claim to be the ones who cleared the area of bushes during the erection of the camp, when the youths were still children. These months of hard work are a very central element in the collective history of the Halpulaars. The Waalo-waalos, on the other hand, came to the settlement a few months afterwards, allegedly when the toughest work was done. Therefore, one Halpulaar informant questions why the Halpulaars' camp is labelled 'Dagana 2', and the Waalo-waalos' camp 'Dagana 1', while the numbering should in fact have been the opposite.

The discourse of suffering also includes accounts of loss of status and the desocialisation of the refugees after arrival. Those who were forced to adapt to a completely unfamiliar environment and new trades are seen as purer refugees than the others. This also has to do with today's lack of local integration. Pure refugees are viewed as being relatively poorly integrated in terms of job offers, economic opportunities, housing standard, social networks and in terms of identity papers.

These three aspects that together constitute the 'pure refugee' identity are mentioned incessantly by the Halpulaars. The entire repertoire of qualities is almost like a manual to boundary formation between the Halpulaars and the Waalo-waalos. None of the refugees, however, state explicitly that the Halpulaars are pure refugees, and the Waalo-waalos are not. Two small remarks must be made.

First, apparently a few Waalo-waalos also have similar ideas of the 'pure refugees', although they do not use the pure refugee terminology themselves. Some Waalo-waalos would at times mention, without me asking, that they also are refugees, because they were not among those who managed to save some of the belongings in 1989. Or they would emphasise that they did not have as many contacts in Dagana town prior to the expulsion as the rest of

the Waalo-waalos. Second, the 'pure refugee' qualities are also applied to define who among the Halpulaars most fit the category. Some Halpulaar refugees claim to be purer than others.

> [Ali] There are true refugees here. But then we have the [Halpulaar] refugees who are *masked*. They live among us, but they are not refugees. They profit from the UNHCR, from Caritas, from everyone. Here, if you count the *pure refugees*, you will see that it is not even ten families.
> [Q] Ten families?
> [Ali] Ten Halpulaar families. Like our family, the family next to us. The family of [X], the family of [Y]. And then there is the family of [Z]. These people are true Mauritanians. They don't know anyone here. They always work, they eat poorly. Sometimes it can go a day between each time they eat. These people are true refugees. But the rest! Every now and then, they take their bag, they say, 'I go to greet my relatives', they leave, they collect some money and they come back.

8 Conclusions

The needs and rights of states to protect their borders are on the agenda to a larger degree than earlier, particularly since 9-11. Since 2004, the United States has for instance aided Mauritania with technical and financial assistance for intensified border controls. Stepputat (2004a) argues that there are changes taking place on an international level today that has not only consequences for stricter immigration policies but also for resettlement programmes and the refugees' right to protection. Together with stronger state structures, it is possible that these changes will challenge African border peoples' and refugees' ways of transnational adaptation. Permeable borders and cross-border populations are still a part of today's reality in Africa. The transnational adaptation that the Waalo-waalo refugees have developed is a natural continuation of the contact that has been normal in the Senegal River Valley for generations.

During the last four years the refugees in the settlement have obtained property rights over the lot in the settlement, and are now starting to invest in new and improved houses. None of the refugees would like to leave these assets. As a consequence, many of the young refugees, do not see the future as a question of whether they should live *here or there*, but always *in what ways they can live here and there*.

Most importantly, living in a settlement carrying out informal transnational activities does not in itself solve the problem of legal protection. In fact, the legal protection that UNHCR or Senegal offers is not their main preoccupation. Still *all* the informants agree that transnationalism entails security. And quite a few of the Mauritanian refugees who have applied for participation in the resettlement programme, does identifies this as a means to achieve legal protection, but rather as a means for economic improvement. For all the refugees, transnationalism constitutes a highly valuable solution that in some ways might be considered as a challenge to the solutions already established, although addressing other problems than the legal.

8.1.1 Resettlement as obstacle

Today, one can say that the dream of transnational households has become an 'obstacle' for Halpulaars to return to Mauritania or to integrate into Senegalese society. Many informants repeated statements such as Adama's: 'We cannot go home. What shall we do there? We

don't want to stay here in Senegal, either. […] We want a durable solution'. The Halpulaars express a clear link between non-repatriation and the desire to resettle abroad. The possibility of resettlement prevents them from return and further integration in Senegal. Adama could not have put it more clearly: 'I prefer to keep staying a refugee, with the possibility of resettlement, rather than becoming a Senegalese with the possibility of getting a job'. On this background, one must presuppose that the insistence on remaining refugee must have negative consequences for their economic situation. When the UNHCR states that 'there is no hierarchy of durable solutions' (2004b: II/1), it is evidently with a top-down approach to the solving of the 'refugee problem', and does not grasp the points of view of the refugees.

Although the Halpulaar community in Dagana in fact has a very limited regular contact with the Mauritanian diaspora in Western countries, it is clear that the young men often emphasise their bonds to their friends abroad, and talk about their shared history as deportees they have in common with their friends overseas. Their diasporic consciousness that used to make the refugees insist upon return to Mauritania in the 1990s has today changed into an insistence on third-country resettlement. The political impossibility of return and the undesired possibility of integration necessitate resettlement as the only remaining available option. But how to achieve resettlement? One of the things that makes resettlement unique is that the decision whether to resettle or not is to a large degree beyond the control of the refugees themselves. The decision whether the refugee shall be resettled or not depends primarily on immigration authorities in some distant Western countries. No matter how much the refugees want to be resettled, there is a natural limit as to how much they can contribute to accelerate the process of taking part in a resettlement programme. The most logical strategy to follow in order to remain eligible for resettlement is to resist integration in Senegalese society and conform to Zetter's mentioned institutional requirements. This is where the formation of social boundary is so relevant. Transnational adaptations and aspirations are key factor in shaping social life in the settlement.

8.1.2 Contested transnationalism and the formation of social boundary

In Chapter 7 we saw how cross-border activity is a central and controversial strategy, and constitutes a central building brick in the formation of a refugee identity among the Halpulaars. And simultaneously, the transnational livelihoods of the Waalo-waalos necessitate the under-communication of the label.

In daily life, the young men's different understandings of transnational strategies, national identity and suffering are continuously reproduced and negotiated through social interaction between the young men. In this way, '[r]efugee is not a title earned upon displacement but what one becomes through a lifetime of struggle' (Hadjiyanni 2002: 9-10). The boundary formation and identity construction takes place on a daily basis between the two groups. One way that this is done, is through the labelling of the settlement as explained in Chapter 5. Another is in the way that certain young men from each part of the settlement refer to each other. There is an obvious disagreement on whether the young men fulfil their social expectations or not. While the young Waalo-waalo men look upon themselves as active, productive, hard-working family people, adhering to traditional values, they would claim that Halpulaar men do not have those same qualities. 'They only sit there, with their hands crossed…', says one of them, 'and they complain too much'.

Being a 'pure refugee' is being a victim. A debated part of refugee identity formation is about *not* being able to survive on one's own but to remain dependent upon foreign assistance, for instance through resettlement. When they insist upon the refugee label, it implies thus a devaluation of all the values normally attached to being a breadwinner in both the Waalo-waalo and the Halpulaar societies. The Halpulaars explain elaborately that they are not *meant to* do agriculture, collect firewood or lead a rural life in poverty. They claim to be strangers, only living in the camp temporarily.

This is different from the Waalo-waalos who never use the word 'refugee' between them or in conversations with local residents. Only when asked specifically, would they confirm that they are refugees. The way they display a 'pragmatic identity', is very compatible with a vision of staying permanently in Dagana. For instance, the youngest brother of the Dial family, the one who lives just as much in Mauritania as in Senegal, says he prefers not to be called a 'refugee'. He does 'not look like a refugee', he says, and points to his apparently new jacket. While he does not like to be referred to as a refugee in social interaction, he still considers himself as one, and says he will always remain one, due to the expulsion in 1989. Staying refugees 'is only politics', he admits. "If someone with money comes looking for refugees, we will benefit in that way […] so the name 'refugee', we consider it, but it doesn't mean that we rest refugees all our lives". Being refugee while criss-crossing the river is something that is unproblematic to the Waalo-waalos. To the Halpulaars it is of course highly contested. This opposition between refugee as active and refugee as victim is very much present in the local understanding of the refugee label. Furthermore, it

reflects the young men's fulfilment and non-fulfilment of the social expectations resting upon them.

Another important point is that the different visions of the length of the stay in Senegal have important consequences for integration of the refugees in Senegalese society. While the 'pragmatic' identity permits a high degree of local and permanent integration, the insistence on 'pure refugee' does not. The emic idea of the 'pure refugee' is clearly developed from a need to preserve the temporariness of their exile.

Jacobsen (2001) notes that the refugees' own interest in integration is a key variable when it comes to successful integration. In Dagana this desire of integration is not equally evident to all the refugees. The Waalo-waalo refugees clearly see their stay as permanent, and they have successfully adapted to the life in Dagana town. However, the Halpulaars, although they are investing or planning to invest in housing in the settlement, express that their stay is only temporary. This view of temporariness is reflected in their intense desire to be resettled.

The Halpulaars' desocialisation and 'alienness' towards the settlement is particularly visible due to the sharp contrast to the culturally, economically, politically and socially well-adopted Waalo-waalo refugee countrymen. In fact, the Waalo-waalos' claim of being *both* refugees *and* transnational locals is a paradox according to the Halpulaars' definition of refugee as alien. The fact that their Waalo-waalo neighbours have adapted so well to the transnational Waalo area means that the Halpulaars themselves, necessarily, must be strangers not only to their place of residence but also to the Waalo-waalos. So while the young Waalo-waalo men to a large degree *make* their own durable solution through the adaptation of well-functioning transnational households, the Halpulaars in the settlement *wait* for a solution of the same model, 'with their hands crossed'.

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Appendices

APPENDIX 1 –INTERVIEW GUIDE[14]

The information you give me will be treated totally anonymously. This means that when I write my thesis, I will never make reference to your name, nor refer to our conversation in a manner that can be connected to your person. If there are any questions that you do not want to answer, you do not have to.

Contact with Mauritania

1. Do you sometimes travel to other places in Senegal, like Saint Louis or Dakar? What do you do there?
2. Do you also go to Mauritania sometimes? Why? How often?
3. Where in Mauritania does your family reside?
4. Do you have any close family who was deported in 1989, and who afterwards have moved back to Mauritania? Is there anyone in your close family who has carried out long working visits in Mauritania?
5. Do you have close family who works in other parts of Senegal?
6. Do you have any family members who live outside Senegal and Mauritania?

Economic importance of transnationalism

7. Your relatives in Mauritania, do they often pay you a visit?
8. Do they bring anything with them when they come? What?
9. Is it possible to say that they contribute to the family economy here in Dagana? Is the contribution important?
10. How would the family here have managed if it hadn't been for the relatives who work in Mauritania?

Meaning of 'refugee'. Integration

11. Some people say that this is a refugee camp. Is that true?
12. If people call you 'refugee' on the street, what is your reaction? Are you a refugee?
13. What is a refugee?

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[14] This is an English translation of the original French interview guide.

14. Do you think that people in Dagana town treat you differently because of your past?

15. Do you think that you should be called a Senegalese or a Mauritanian?

16. If Senegal plays against Mauritania in football, which team do you support? Why?

17. In general, what are the advantages of obtaining Senegalese nationality rather than staying Mauritanian?

18. Staying a refugee, how can that benefit you?

Repatriation

19. Do your parents talk about returning to Mauritania? Why (not)?

20. Do you imagine one day living in Mauritania with your wife and children?

21. And going there for a shorter time to work?

22. What would your parents say if you went to Mauritania to work for some time?

23. And what would they say if you decided to move there for good?

24. If you wanted to go, would you need the permission from anyone in your family? Who? Could you go even if they said 'no'?

Mauritania

25. Do you think that the *events* will repeat themselves one day in the future?

26. If someone says, 'it is important that the refugees stay refugees, and do not become Senegalese', what do you say?

27. Are you active in any Mauritanian organisation? And your parents?

28. What is your education?

International migration

29. Have you applied to the UNHCR for resettlement? Why would you like to be resettled?

30. According to you, is it easier for a refugee to travel abroad than for a non-refugee?

31. Does everyone here have the same opportunity to be resettled?

Identity papers

32. What identity paper is the most important: the Senegalese, the Mauritanian or the temporary refugee papers? Why?

33. What advantages do the Senegalese ID papers bring?

34. How would your situation have been if you had had a Senegalese/Mauritanian/permanent refugee card?

Visits to Mauritania

35. What kinds of problems can one encounter when crossing the river?
36. Do you know the border police?

Home

37. What do you think about life in Dagana?
39. During the 15 years that you have lived in Dagana, big changes have taken place here. According to you, how will this place change the coming 15 years?
40. What place do you call your home?

Household and decisions

41. If you choose to work in Nouakchott or Nouadhibou, how often would you then visit Dagana? Why?
42. What kind of work do you do now?
43. Is it you who made the decision to do that work?
44. How old are you?
45. Do your parents want you to marry soon?
46. When you find someone you would like to marry, do you have to ask your parents first?
47. Is your voice heard when decisions are being made in your family?
48. Are there many decisions that concern you here in Dagana that affect your life but that you have not been able to participate in?

APPENDIX 2 –INTERVIEWEES

I used 13 main informants during the fieldwork. All the young men lived in or regularly frequented the settlement. Four of them were living somewhere else. All names are fictive.

	Adama	Ali	Mustafa	Yusuf	Ibrahima	Issaga	Bamba	Bubacar	Aliu	Omar	Kalidu	Abdelaye	Hassan
	Unmarried	*Unmarried*	*Married*	*Unmarried*	*Unmarried*	*Unmarried*	*Married*	*Married*	*Unmarried*	*Married*	*Married*	*Married*	*Married*
Age	*26*	*21*	*32*	*32*	*24*	*18*	*28*	*26*	*18*	*23*	*23*	*28*	*25*
Halpulaar vs. Waalo-waalo	*Halpulaar*	*Halpulaar*	*Halpulaar*	*Halpulaar*	*Halpulaar*	*Halpulaar*	*W-W*	*W-W*	*W-W*	*W-W*	*W-W*	*W-W*	*W-W*
Source of income for head of household prior to 1989	*State employed*	*Car mechanic*	*Petty trade*	*State employed and petty trade*	*Army official*	*State employed*	*Farmer*	*Farmer*	*Farmer*	*Farmer-fisherman*	*Farmer-fisherman*	*Farmer-fisherman*	*Farmer-fisherman*
Change of social status of household since deportation in 1989	*Down*	*Down*	*Down*	*Down*	*Down*	*Down*	*Down*	*Same*	*Same*	*Up*	*Same*	*Up*	*Same*
Degree of political activism or interest in Mauritanian politics	*High*	*Very high*	*Very High*	*Very High*	*High*	*High*	*Some*	*No*	*Limited*	*No*	*No*	*Limited*	*No*
Degree of integration in Senegalese society (socio-economic, ID papers, identity)	*Limited*	*Limited*	*Limited*		*Limited*	*Limited*	*---*	*Very high*	*High*	*Very high*	*High*	*Very high*	*High*
Own migration experience or visits in Mauritania after 1989	*None (a very few short visits)*	*None (a very few short visits)*	*None*	*None*	*None (one visit)*	*None*	*Living in Mauritania*	*Frequent shorter visits*	*Carry out almost daily visits to Mauritania*	*Two long stays*	*Returns every day*	*Little*	*One long stay*
Migration experience in close family to Western country or distant Senegalese city	*No*	*Yes, relative in Europe*	*No*	*No*	*Living in Dakar most of the year*	*No*	*No*	*No*	*No*	*No*	*No*	*No*	*Yes, relative in Europe*
Members of family having permanently repatriated	*Yes, one aunt divorced and repatriated*	*No*	*No*	*No*	*No*	*No*	*Entire household repatriated*	*Yes, brother repatriated. Split household*	*Yes, brother has repatriated*	*No*	*Yes, large part of family*	*Yes, small part of family*	*Yes, small part of family repatriated*
Wish to repatriate	*Only under certain conditions*	*No*	*No*	*No*	*Only under certain conditions*	*Yes*	*---*	*No*	*No*	*Only under certain conditions*	*No*	*No*	*No*
Wish to permanently stay in Senegal	*No*	*No*	*No*	*No*	*No*	*No*	*Wants to maintain links to Senegal*	*Yes*	*Wants to maintain links to Senegal*	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*
Wish to participate in third-country resettlement	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Under certain conditions*	*No*	*Under certain conditions*	*Yes*	*Yes, but not possible due to father*	*Yes, but not possible due to father*	*No*

APPENDIX 3 –NODES

When the *NVivo* qualitative data analysis software is used, text segments from the data material are linked to pre-defined categories, or 'nodes'. Defining these nodes is an important part of the analysis process. The nodes I defined are listed below (in italic), and each node contains a number of topics that I have paid attention to during fieldwork and analysis. The node 'integration in Dagana' contains for instance information on social, economic, political, legal integration.

Situation today

Integration in Dagana

Identity

       Place identity

       Personal identity

'Refugee'

The conflict

Decision level in family

Gender/masculinity

History

Background in Mauritania

Flight history, 1989

Building the settlement

UNHCR

Method

Ethical considerations

Problems encountered

Interpretation problems

Strategies

Repatriation

       Conditions for repatriation

       Repatriation history

       Contact between repatriates and settlement

Resettlement

       Desirability of resettlement

       The event in 2000

       Friends abroad

Staying in Dagana

       Desirability of staying

       Use value of refugee label

Transnationalism Senegal-Mauritania

       Work in Mauritania

       Various temporary visits to Mauritania

       Split households

       Importance of transnationalism

       Obstacles to transnational adaptation

       Return versus repatriation

Migration in Senegal

Prioritizing the durable solutions