

Being a refugee in Morocco

Analysing the livelihoods of refugees in Morocco and the relation to geographical and social mobility



Dorinda ten Brinke
Radboud University
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Author

Dorinda ten Brinke

Master thesis

Nijmegen School of Management

Human Geography, specialization: Globalization, Migration & Development

Radboud University Nijmegen

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Thesis supervisor Radboud University

Dr. Lothar Smith

Internship supervisor UNHCR

Johannes van der Klaauw



**Radboud
Universiteit
Nijmegen**



Prologue

The human in geography...This thesis deals with the complex problems and challenges of refugees who live in Morocco in the urban areas of Rabat-Salé and Casablanca in Morocco. There are some who try to make the best of it in the Moroccan society and others who dream of going home or to a country with better opportunities for building up a livelihood. Having fled from the home country due to life threatening situations, violence, war or torture it is hard for refugees to build up a new life in a different cultural environment, especially in a society that is not quite welcoming towards refugees. Often refugees flee without taking legal documents like a passport or birth certificate. This makes it hard to enter into Morocco's formal society and receive a residence card which is mandatory when wanting to work or study. Without a national structure for refugee assistance in Morocco it can be a battle to continue with a career, process traumas, have sufficient food and to make sure rent and electricity bills are paid.

In this Master thesis, while presenting the results of the research on livelihoods and mobility of refugees, I wish to contribute to the awareness of situations of refugees worldwide who live under rough and often degrading circumstances. I was frequently asked by the person I interviewed or met during my internship with UNHCR whether it would be possible to help with money, paying for the electricity bill, food, arranging a passport and visa, resettlement or just simply by taking them back with me to the Netherlands to give them an opportunity to end the misery and depressing situation they are living in. I could not meet their requests, but as an anthropological geographer I can provide an insight into the difficult and complex livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco in order to create awareness for the need for access to protection and livelihood rights. In this research, conducted within the discipline of Human Geography I find it important to give a voice to the people and recognize their story within the theoretical framework and academic context of this study. I seek to place this thesis within the political debate on the mixed flows of migration in which irregular migrants and refugees migrate using the same routes and networks. Furthermore this thesis contributes to the discussion about executing asylum procedures by host countries and the need for granting refugee rights set out in the Refugee Convention to enable refugees to build up a sustainable livelihood. This thesis focuses strongly on the humanitarian side of this political debate and the need for a humanitarian approach above a protection focussed approach that is nowadays the centre of attention in many political discussions about migration management. Although the

research for this thesis was conducted during an internship with UNHCR, this thesis does not represent any official views of UNHCR and the author is responsible for the content.

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This research could not have been done without the support and cooperation of many people and I am grateful to every person who took the time, energy and interest to discuss the topic of this thesis with me.

First of all I am greatly indebted to all the people I met in Morocco who were willing to share their life story of how they lived in Morocco as a refugee. It was not easy for many to be reminded of traumatic events and the situation without much prospect they live in. My great respect and appreciation go out to all who nevertheless shared their story with me.

Joris Schapendonk has been very valuable in the design process of this research, for thinking along and encouraging me to try to go out in the field as much as possible. Out in the field Koen Bogaert challenged me to be critical and not automatically use the paved roads.

At UNHCR I want to thank the staff and fellow-interns who provided a very inspiring and warm atmosphere for me to do my internship and research. Thanks to Marc Fawe for sharing his cheerfulness and Belgian jokes. Thanks to my internship supervisor Johannes van der Klaauw for his inspiring outlook and thoughts and for giving me the opportunity to do my research at UNHCR in Rabat and supporting me whenever possible. His vast knowledge and experience gave me much inspiration. I am grateful to all the staff from the Moroccan and international organisations I visited in Rabat and Oujda. These interviews gave me new perspectives and motivated me to go into detail into specific topics.

Dr. Lothar Smith has encouraged me to use every opportunity in the field to see ‘the other side of the story’. Furthermore his motivating and inspiring supervision during the research process kept me going.

Jantina’s encouragement and enthusiasm for and in Morocco made my fieldwork a true cultural experience. It was a joy to share a part with you.

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Summary

The geographical position of Morocco on the border of North-Africa with Europe makes Morocco an attractive country for irregular migrants who wish to go to Europe. Within the flows of migration there are refugees from West- and Central-Africa and the Middle East who seek to find a safe haven in Morocco. The status of Morocco as a middle income country and being a constitutional monarchy supplemented with the close vicinity of Europe attracts a relatively small number of refugees to Morocco. Some refugees come to Morocco because of existing ties with Moroccans through student exchange programs. UNHCR's Office in Rabat has recognized around 800 refugees under the Refugee Convention and the AU Convention.

The living conditions of refugees in Morocco are however problematic. Moroccan authorities neglect to recognize the presence of refugees on their territory and therefore do not execute the rights refugees are entitled to under the Refugee Convention. Morocco ratified this convention in 1957 and until 2004 the B.R.A. office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs processed asylum applications. However this office was closed down and so has the legal procedure to process asylum application and grant refugees a refugee status.

The aim of this research is to contribute to a deeper understanding of the livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco and the relation between livelihoods, social and geographical mobility. This research has a social and academic relevance. Through analyzing the livelihood situation of refugees, constraints and limitations can be analysed and addressed. Although mobility is mentioned in livelihood studies on refugees, this link is not often explicitly researched and I see an important task to provide a deeper insight in the relation between livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco and the social and geographical mobility. I argue that looking at the livelihood situation of refugees and their geographical and social mobility will provides more insight in, for example, the reasons why refugees move on to other countries. Looking at the livelihood situation and analysing the needs and shortcomings in the livelihood situations of refugees in Morocco will provide insights to help understand why refugees wish to be resettled.

The central Research Question discussed in this research is: *How is the livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco related to their geographical and social mobility?*

To respond to this Research Question a qualitative research has been conducted with three-month of fieldwork together with an internship at UNHCR's Office in Rabat, Morocco. To enable an in-depth understanding of the situation I chose a small-scale approach of comparative case study. This enabled a thorough understanding of the complexity of the relation between livelihoods and mobility. The case study is characterized by a small number of research units. In this research the livelihood situation of fourteen cases was studied using a labour-intensive approach through qualitative methods. A case consists of the livelihood of a refugee who lives in Morocco. These cases were strategically selected using the knowledge and experience of UNHCR staff in the selection procedure.

To be able to place the cases in a context I also used a wider view to make an analysis of the Moroccan society and the institutions and regulations in place that influence the livelihoods, social and geographical mobility of refugees. This enables a deeper understanding of the context of institutions and regulations in which refugees live. By not only using refugees as source to gather data but also informants I aimed through source triangulation to reach a profound level of analysis (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2007).

I argue that due to structural constraints in the Moroccan society of which the absence of a comprehensive asylum procedure is the most significant, it is not possible for refugees in Morocco to reach a sustainable level of livelihood. Currently UNHCR executes the asylum procedure through the Refugee Status Determination (RSD) procedure but refugees recognized by UNHCR are not recognized by the Moroccan state.

The perception in Morocco that all refugees are irregular migrants and the ignorance about the background and protection need of refugees makes it hard for refugees to integrate into the Moroccan society. Media often fail to distinguish between migrants and refugees. This is however important. Due to the background of persecution, violence and traumatic experiences refugees need specific assistance and protection. Within the mixed flows of migration, special attention needs to be directed at refugees. Also in the policy world migrants are often viewed from a static and exclusive perspective thinking that migrants can be categorized within set categories. This is often the way migrants are viewed in international migration management using the conceptual distinction between 'voluntarily' and 'forced' migration as mutually exclusive categories (van Hear, 2009). As explained above the point of departure of a refugee and migrant is different but in the following trajectory a refugee can change his motivation for movement, that started out as fleeing, into

movement to find a (better) job or improved living conditions. I would argue that categories of migrants and refugees are interchangeable. A refugee can become an economic migrant and a regular migrant can become an irregular or illegal migrant through for example overstaying when his or her visa has expired.

Refugees experience many constraints in the Moroccan society that disable them to build up a sustainable livelihood. The context of institutions and regulations is unfavourable for the livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco. This affects the social mobility of refugees in a negative way. Most refugees experience downward social mobility and experience they are 'stuck' within the Moroccan society. Although many refugees are highly educated they are unable to use social capital for their livelihood and to contribute to the Moroccan society in continuing with a profession. These constraints also cause that geographical mobility can be a strategy to enhance the livelihood situation, leaving Morocco in search for a country in which refugees are recognized and they can build up a sustainable livelihood. However geographical mobility and migration are also explanations why refugees experience difficulty in securing a livelihood and experience downward social mobility. Perceived as irregular migrants many refugees experience racism and xenophobia, which limits the integration into the Moroccan host society. Because of the fear of attracting more irregular migrants and refugees the Moroccan authorities do not acknowledge the presence of refugees on their soil.

Furthermore the wish for resettlement is high among refugees in Morocco. UNHCR offers two 'durable solutions'; voluntarily return and integration into the host society. Without recognition by the Moroccan government, integration into the Moroccan society is difficult. Return to the country of origin is often also out of the question. Therefore resettlement to a third country is a high priority to many refugees in Morocco. However on a yearly basis around 25-30 refugees are resettled from Morocco. The fear of being arrested and brought to the Algerian border is still present in the refugee community. Although in theory the refugee status should protect a refugee against expulsion, in practice this still happens and causes traumas and anxiety amongst many refugees. If the Moroccan government does not stop ignoring that there are refugees within the Moroccan territory then sustainable livelihoods for refugees in Morocco will remain without reach.

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Acronyms and glossary

AMAPPE	-	Association Marocaine d’Appui à la Promotion de la Petite Entreprise
AU	-	Action Urgence
B.R.A	-	Bureau des Refugies et Apatrides part of the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Carte de sejour	-	Residence permit
CEI	-	Committee entre Aid international
DFID	-	Department for International Development
Dirham	-	Moroccan currency, 1 Dirham is equivalent to 0.088 Euro.
DRC	-	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOWAS	-	Economic Community of West African states
FOO	-	Fondation Orient Occident
IDP	-	Internally Displaced Person
ILO	-	International Labour Organisation
AU Convention	-	African Unity Convention
OMDH	-	Marocain Droit d’Homme
Refoulement	-	Expulsion
Refugee Convention	-	1951 UN Convention relating to the status of refugees
Schengen Treaty	-	1985 Treaty regulating free movement of persons of participating Countries
UDHR	-	Universal Declaration on Human Rights
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	-	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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‘..everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution’...

-Universal Declaration on Human Rights article 14-

To Jantina

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The stories of Zody and Mohammed are a compilation of the life stories of the many people I met during my fieldwork in Morocco. These stories and combined with additional information provide an illustration of how livelihood, geographical and social mobility are incorporated into every refugees life. I start with the short live story of these two people because in this research the lives and agency of refugees is the core of this research.

Zody

In 2000 Zody¹ fled her home country, the Democratic Republic of Congo. Her husband was killed by rebels and it was not safe for her to stay in DRC. She was arrested and incarcerated but managed to escape through bribing the guards. Zody left her country and travelled for five year through Cameroon, Chad, Sudan and Algeria continuing her travels in search of better living conditions. After crossing the Moroccan border near Oujda, Zody travelled in Rabat.

In Congo Zody used to work as a paediatrician in the hospital of Kinshasa, now in Morocco she walks along the streets and knocks on doors to ask the people in the house whether there are any household chores she can do to earn some money. Zody does not succeed in finding work every day and it can be really depressing when it is not possible to pay the electricity bill and she needs to ask around and approach other people for money or beg with organisations.

Besides her daily battle to find enough money to survive, Zody is active in an association of Congolese refugees and migrants who have organized a school where refugee children can learn French, Maths and some History and Geography. She keeps in contact with different people around the world; people who live in the Netherlands, Congo, Spain, Sweden, France and Italy including refugees who were resettled to other countries and people she met in Morocco doing their research or work for an NGO or development organisation.

Mohammed

Mohammed fled from Iraq to Jordan by car. From Jordan he flew with his father and three sisters to Tunis, where they took the plane to Morocco. His father studied in Morocco when he was a young

¹ Because of confidentiality I use fictive names.

man and had some friends and connections there. When they had to leave the country due to problems with the government these friends helped them to organize the voyage to Morocco.

Having arrived here 6 years ago, things are tougher than expected. Mohammed cannot work, due to an absent work permit. Furthermore he could not continue his study. His sisters cannot complete their study and also his father is unable to find work due to legal constraints. They have passports but no residence card which is needed to work and study in Morocco. Due to insufficient food intake they suffer with health problems. With the five of them they live together in one room and share the kitchen and bathroom with the Moroccan family that owns the house. Mohammed feels a negative attitude when telling someone he is a refugee. In an interview he told me 'I lie to my small sister about our situation because I don't want her to know the negative thing.' Many Moroccans do not know the true meaning of a refugee.

Somehow Mohammed has managed to get into Mohammed V University and started studying for a Master degree in political science. He thinks that being an Arab is an advantage in some ways in Morocco: 'the language is quite different but often I can sort of understand Moroccans'. To pay for his study he teaches Standard Arabic three days a week to five Moroccan secondary school students. 'I cannot study if I don't work', he explains.

1.2 Migrants and refugees in Morocco

Zody and Mohammed are two of the around 200 million international migrants that each year cross the national border to establish a living in another country. About 16 million of them are officially recognized as refugees. Only a third of the 200 million international migrants, namely 70 million people, move from a developing country to a developed country, the other two third live within their own home region. Each year half a million refugees travel to developed countries to seek asylum, yet most refugees stay in the region of their home country whereas 80%, around 12,8 million of the refugees are hosted by the poorest countries in the world² (Castles & Miller 2009, WDR 2009). To get a clearer picture of how geographical mobile people in the global world are: only 3 % of the world population lives outside the country of birth, in this sense immobility, with 97 % of the people in the world still living in their country of birth. Immobility is the rule and mobility the exception when defining geographical mobility in terms of being able of crossing an international border

² http://www.unhcr.org/newsletter/june2011_newsletter.html Accessed June 30, 2011

(Schapendonk, 2008). However not all these people are voluntarily mobile, like many refugees in Morocco.

Morocco is a country that, although distant from contemporary conflict areas, observes a large number of migrants coming and going through their national territory. As a relatively stable middle-income country with a parliamentary monarchy, located in Northern Africa with Europe's border only fourteen kilometres away, Morocco is an attractive country to many forced and voluntarily migrants. Morocco used to be a land of emigration in the second half of the 20th century when European countries like Spain and Italy and later on the Netherlands and France were in need of temporal workers. Due to a more restrictive European immigration policy since 1990, Morocco increasingly became a land of transit- and immigration (de Haas, 2005 and Kreienbrink, 2005). However the European Union strongly inclines to protect the European hinterlands from 'unwanted' immigration or so-called 'fortune seekers' (van Houten & Pijpers, 2007, p. 292) and guards the coastlines and border areas through the European agency Frontex³. In the European Union member states there is a general 'fear of invasion' of sub-Saharan migrants coming to Europe (van Houten & Pijpers, 2007) and Morocco, situated on the border between Northern Africa and Europe is part of a migration route migrants take to go to Europe. The suggestive use of the term 'invasion' is strongly opposed by de Haas (2007) who speaks of the 'myth of invasion' based on the argument that not all migrants crossing the Sahara are 'in transit' to Europe as he expects that more sub-Saharan Africans live in North Africa than in Europe (de Haas, 2007). Furthermore there is an increasing irregular labour demand in Europe which also points to the underexposed added value of migrants for European societies.

Researchers and government sources estimate that there are around 10 000 sub-Saharan migrants, including refugees, in the Northern and North-Eastern parts of Morocco who live in scanty camps in the *forret* and on the university campus of Oujda. These migrants often entered Morocco via the border with Algeria, even though this border has formally been closed since 1994. According to Edogué Ntang and Peraldi (n.d.), researchers at Gaston Berger research centre in Rabat, the Moroccan authorities generally ignore the large number of migrants in their country and act as though the large number of Sub-Saharan African migrants do not exist in Morocco: 'les migrants subsahariens restent toujours confinés à un statut de non-existence dans la société marocaine'.

³ The EU agency based in Warsaw, was created as a specialized and independent body tasked to coordinate the operational cooperation between Member States in the field of border security. Retrieved from: www.frontex.europa.eu. Accessed on June 24, 2011

Within the international scene however Morocco does like the European Member states to 'assist' the country in migration management and migration related to development. The large flow of remittances that is send back to Morocco, by Moroccans outside Morocco, is quite important to the Moroccan government⁴. There is a diversity of migrants within the flow of migrants that come through Morocco. There are migrants from Chad, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Liberia, Ghana, Ivory Coast and several other countries. Some of whom have fled war, violence or persecution, others who are in search of finding a way to improve their living conditions.

1.3 The migrant vs refugee dichotomy

Within the migration-asylum nexus there is an increasing difficulty to differentiate between migrants who have fled their country due to war, violence and torture (often referred to as forced migrants) and migrants who are migrating due to bad economic living conditions in their country of origin (often referred to as economic migrants). Frequently the causes and the migratory process of these groups of migrants are closely related. However the common policy response from authorities lacks differentiation between migrants in irregular situations who seek asylum for reasons of life threatening circumstances in their land of origin, and people who migrate for primarily economic reasons (van Hear, 2009).

Although the dichotomy between refugee and migrant can be perceived as a social construction (Van Brabant, 2007) and the status of a migrant may change during the migration process (Schuster, 2005) in general the specific background of refugees; the fear of being persecuted or tortured in the land of origin, distinguishes a refugee from other migrants. Refugees are part of the worldwide group of migrants but their traumatic experiences make them more vulnerable and in need of specific support and protection. According to the definition of United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), a refugee is a person who:

'owing to 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, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it' (Article 1a, 1951 UN Convention relating to the status of refugees, p. 16).

⁴Statement by Ambassador Omar Zniber at the meeting of the Mediterranean Contact Group, April 23, 2010.

In Morocco there are 784⁵ people registered and recognized as refugee by UNHCR in Morocco under the UN Convention related to the status of refugees, hereafter referred to as the 'Refugee Convention' and UNHCR's *mandate elargie*. This stretched mandate consists of the Convention of the African Union (AU), hereafter referred to as the 'AU Convention' which is supplementary to the Refugee Convention and states the following:

'The term 'refugee' shall also apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality' (Article 2, AU Convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa).

The difference between the two conventions is that in order to be a refugee under the Refugee Convention one has to have personally experienced persecution whereby the state failed to protect the person. The AU Convention includes people who fled war or other violence in their home country, not specifically directed to a person or specific group of which the individual is a member.

Only about half the number of refugees that is now recognized as refugee by UNHCR would be officially recognized as refugee if only the Refugee Convention and the Protocol implemented in 1967 would be applied. However UNHCR in Morocco uses the AU convention as a supplementary to the Refugee Convention and therefore their mandate enables UNHCR to support refugees who fled because of war and conflict, not explicitly directed at them personally.

On the news, in policy documents and in academic literature there are many different definitions or statuses used for people that travel across borders to other countries. These people are called; migrants, immigrants, (il)legal migrants, refugees, asylum- seekers, economic migrants or economic refugee, documented or undocumented migrant or more recently 'boatpeople', referring to the large numbers of people who cross the Mediterranean Sea or the Indian Ocean and Timor Sea cramped in small boats to reach Europe or Australia. The media and the political debate colour the discourse of thinking about people on the move and cause a dichotomy between people who chose to voluntarily migrate in search of a better life and those who flee their home country due to conflict, war and persecution. There is also another dichotomy that can be observed in the public debate; the dichotomy between people who use legal and official canals for their migration and those who use irregular ways of migration. Categorizing migrants in this way would suggest that it is clear who fits in

⁵ Presentation note UNHCR Rabat, June 2011.

what category, but in reality this is much more complex and dynamic. In practice people often shift between 'statuses' along their migration route (Schuster, 2008). As Schapendonk (2008, p. 130) points out 'migration projects are influenced, changed and re-defined in 'the transit phase'. 'Migration must be understood as a process of continuous movements and temporal or semi-temporal settlements'; like migrants who are recognized by UNHCR as refugees and migrate on in search of a place that can offer better opportunities. As refugees they migrate on with additional socio-economic motives.

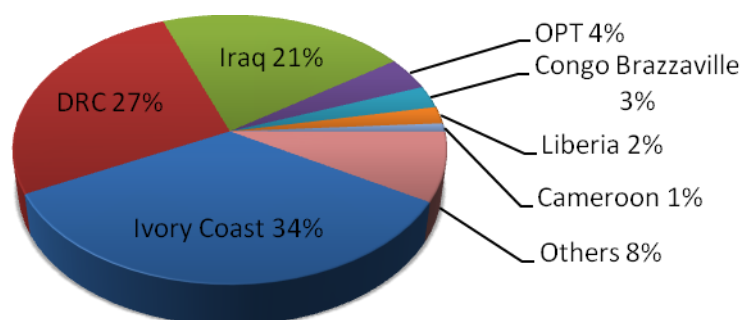
In this thesis I choose to use the wider definition of irregular and regular migration (de Haas, 2007) and not the popular definition of legal and illegal migration to try to avoid the negative connotation that is often linked to illegal migration. Like Jordan & Düvell (2002, p. 3) point out: 'More mobility plus more restrictions equals more breaches of migration law'. Motives to migrate to find better livelihood opportunities are legitimate and understandable but the framework of migration management worldwide forces people to use irregular means and ways to move. In using the terms regular and irregular migration I want to focus on the migration as trajectory, using regulated or unregulated ways and not so much on the legal normative side of migration. Some governments interpret using irregular ways as committing a crime. I will use the term migrant in this research for all people who have travelled across national borders. This includes all the above mentioned classifications. As I will point out in chapter two, in this thesis I will use the definition of geographical mobility as the capability and capacity for movement combined with a choice for movement.

1.4 Social relevance

Within the group of migrants this thesis focuses on refugees as migrants who fled the country due to persecution or violence. The dichotomy between migrants and refugees is much more polarized in the public debate than can be observed in the field. There are many ways to travel in a regular and irregular context and within the flows of migrants both ways are used by migrants and refugees. I argue that refugees are migrants but migrants with a specific background that singles them out due to their specific need for protection. Many have fled from life threatening situation and experienced traumatic events like torture, violence or murder. Often there was no preparation for the movements and they had to leave without passports and other legal documents. Because of this social background the difficulties in the ability to make a living, referred to as *livelihood* (Horst, 2006), this thesis puts refugees and their livelihood situation in Morocco in relation to geographical and social mobility at the centre of attention.

Of the total of almost 800 refugees officially registered in Morocco through UNHCR, 17% are women, and 26% are children. With 57% the largest group within the refugee population exist of adult men. The largest group of refugees comes from the conflict areas of Ivory Coast (34%) in West Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo (27%) in Central Africa and Iraq (21%). Especially the latter country might at first sight be a surprising source for this destination or transit country and contradictory to a common assumption that all migrants and refugees who wish to find a refuge in Europe will take the shortest way to achieve this. However there are certain well known routes that are used by various migrants on which extended networks of people smugglers operate. Quite a few Iraqis have studied in Morocco and have maintained contact with people they met during their studies, giving them many connections to Morocco. Most of the refugees in Morocco live concentrated in the urban areas of Rabat-Salé and Casablanca and the majority of the refugees come from francophone countries⁶.

Figure 1.1 Country of origin of refugees in Morocco



Source: UNHCR www.unhcr.org.ma

Refugees in Morocco have no access to the regular labour market, official education or health care and are often 'caught' in the Moroccan society without the freedom to work and enjoy education which is a significant limitation to the development of sustainable livelihoods. The Moroccan state does not provide any assistance in this matter because of the fear of attracting more irregular migrants and refugees (van der Klaauw, 2010). Refugees experience difficulty because of the absence of legal travel documents that either were lost or left behind because there was no time to collect them when they fled. Thus refugees in Morocco often find themselves living in the margins of society in precarious situations with little opportunities. The extent to which one can move within the hierarchy of a society is defined as social mobility and will be elaborated in chapter two. The

⁶ Presentation note UNHCR Rabat, June 2011.

livelihood situation has consequences for the social and geographical mobility refugees experience in a society. The level they can move in the Moroccan society depends on the financial, social, human and physical capital that together form the livelihood of a person.

The World Development Report (2009, p. 5) points out that migration can be a method of improving the livelihood situation and that migration can be 'a vital strategy for households and families seeking to diversify and improve their livelihoods, especially in developing countries'. This may possibly also be true for refugees, however many refugees flee because their lives are at stake and in the course of the migratory process can migrate to improve their livelihood situation. Many Sub-Saharan African migrants travel under marginal circumstances. The situation of refugees is even more precarious due to the fact that the traumatic events that have taken place in their home country sometimes even continue along their migration route (Laacher, 2010). Therefore specific protecting conditions are needed for refugees travelling in the mixed flows of migrants, which the UNHCR acknowledged in 2007 with the launching of the Ten Point Action Plan in which UNHCR points to ten areas to focus on concerning the protection of persons with specific protection and needs within the migration flows. This plan focuses on; cooperation among key partners, research, protection-sensitive entry systems and information strategy, reception arrangements, mechanisms for profiling and referral, differentiated processes and procedures, find solutions for refugees, addressing secondary movements, return arrangements for non-refugees and alternative migration options (UNHCR, 2007). With this plan UNHCR aims to provide adequate assistance to refugees and asylum seekers who migrate in mixed flows.

1.5 Academic relevance

The general idea in the international community is that refugees should be assisted to assist themselves and become self-reliant, but there are many issues in a host society that can prevent this ability to make a living referred to as *livelihood* (Horst, 2006). For refugees within the general migration flows it is challenging to reach a sustainable level of livelihood during their migration and in the host country. Research that highlights this has been conducted on livelihood situations of refugees (Horst, 2006) and specifically in certain countries like Somali refugees in Cairo (Al Sharmani, 2004) Congolese refugees in Gabon (Stone & De Vriese, 2004), urban refugees in Gambia (Conway, 2004), Mauritanian refugees in Senegal (Stone, 2005) and young urban refugees in Kenya (Strandberg, 2009). Another research of interest for the situation in Morocco is Van Brabant's (2007) research on livelihood strategies of female transit migrants in Rabat and Casablanca. Although mobility is mentioned in livelihood studies on refugees, this link is not often explicitly researched and

I see an important task to provide a deeper insight in the relation between livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco and the social and geographical mobility. In my opinion looking at the livelihood situation of refugees and their geographical and social mobility will provide more insight in, for instance, the reasons why refugees often try to move on to other countries despite the fact that they have just lodged their application for a refugee status in one country. Looking at the livelihood situation and analysing the needs and shortcomings in the livelihood situations of refugees in Morocco will provide insights to help understand why so many refugees prefer to be resettled in Northern- America, Europe, Canada or Australia.

For a thorough understanding of livelihoods of refugees, geographical mobility is in my view an unmistakable element to take into account. Andersson (1996) argues that geography is an added value within social mobility studies and vice versa. Kaufmann, Bergman & Joye (2004) point out that when looking at geographical and social mobility, social structures and dynamics are interdependent with the actual or potential capacity to displace goods, information and people. Not only can livelihoods be related to mobility in general, geographical and social mobility are also related. Migration can be a result of dire livelihood circumstances in the country of origin. However migration can also cause bad livelihood situations whereby migrants and refugees often live in the margins of society and experience difficulties with integration into the host society. Regarding social mobility, barriers within a society that hinder movement within the hierarchy of a society can have great consequences for livelihoods. Not being able to work or develop skills through an education, can harm ones position within society's hierarchy and push a person even further into the margins of the social order.

1.6 Research Aim, Question and Sub-questions

This research aims to gain an insight into the livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco and their geographical and social mobility. The objective of this research is to analyse the interrelatedness of the livelihoods of refugees in Morocco with their social and geographical mobility within the context of the Asylum-Migration nexus in Morocco. Metaphorically speaking this research aims to look at the livelihood situation of refugees who reside in Morocco through a mobility lens. The general Research Question in this thesis is: ***How is the livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco related to their geographical and social mobility?***

In line with the main Research Question two sub questions are formulated to answer the central question. These sub questions provide direction for the design of this thesis. In the first sub question

the focus is on analysing the livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco. Secondly the focus will be on the geographical and social mobility of refugees in Morocco. In the first sub-question the livelihood situation will be analysed by focussing on the financial situation and social context in which refugees live. Do they have an income, access to education and health care, do they have their own accommodation, is their social life embedded in a social network that provides services and assistance? In order to be able to analyse the livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco the physical, financial, human and social capital of refugees will be examined to get a clear picture of how these refugees make ends meet in the Moroccan society. Thus the first sub-question is:

1) What are the significant factors in the lives of refugees in Morocco that determines their livelihood situation?

The second sub-question is related to mobility, both geographically as socially. Can refugees in Morocco do the jobs they were used to do in their home country or are they restricted in their social movement within the Moroccan society? Refugees in Morocco have come from quite diverse destinations via various migration routes, why were they motivated to come to Morocco and are they mobile in their movement, according to the definition of mobility given in chapter 3? The second sub question is:

2) How mobile are refugees in Morocco in the geographical and social domain?

In my opinion livelihoods, geographical mobility and social mobility are interrelated. Going from A to B involves for example social networks and access to knowledge about migration routes. Furthermore this movement can be motivated by bad living conditions and livelihoods situation. The access to knowledge and networks is not the same for each person within the different layers of society. A farmer from the Eastern part of Congo has access to different social networks than a politician from Ivory Coast, whereas *en route* they may use the same migration networks and routes.

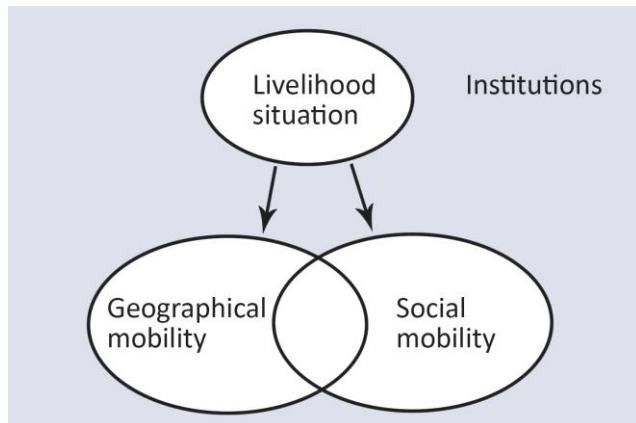
To be able to grasp a deep understanding of the livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco I thought it important to spend three months in Morocco carrying out fieldwork, observing and interviewing refugees about their situation. In these three months I worked at the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in Rabat as an intern at the management and external relations department. I conducted interviews with refugees who had received a refugee status from UNHCR. Many of them welcomed me in their homes which made it possible to include these observations of

the living conditions in my research. Alongside interviewing refugees, I also interviewed staff members of different non-profit and non-governmental organisations who work within the field of migration and human rights. Through these interviews I sought to get a better, more comprehensive insight into the context of the situation of refugees and in the work done by these organisations to assist and help migrants and refugees in Morocco. I will elaborate on the methods of research in chapter three.

1.7 Research model

In figure 1.2 I have set out what relation I want to analyse and how the research concepts are related to each other. The arrows point to an expected relation between livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco and the geographical and social mobility that refugee's experience. The grey colour around the concepts represents the context of institutions and regulations, shaping the way livelihoods are arranged and thereby social and geographical mobility. The starting point is the analysis of the livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco. Therefore the main focus of the research is in what way the livelihood situation is related to the mobility of refugees in Morocco. Mobility is set out in geographical and social mobility, two concepts that are partly interrelated to each other.

Figure 1.2: Research model



1.8 Structure of thesis

In chapter one the subject of this thesis, aim of this research and the Research Question have been set out. The next chapter will set out a theoretical framework on which this research is based and will discuss theory on refugee-ness, refugees in the urban context with specific attention to gender within this research. Furthermore the concepts of livelihood, geographical and social mobility will be operationalized. In chapter three the methodology used in this research will be discussed and the respondents will be introduced, who are the centre of attention in chapter five and six. To gain a

better understanding of the regulations and context of the refugee situation in Morocco, chapter four deals with legal rights of refugees, the asylum procedure in Morocco, the Moroccan civil society and different networks and associations that support refugees and try to alleviate and solve their complex situation. In Chapter five the livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco will be set out by discussing the physical, financial, human and social capital and the access to these forms of capital. Chapter six will deal with the geographical and social mobility of refugees. This includes the migration trajectory and whether refugees enjoy some degree of social mobility. In chapter seven the main research findings, a conclusion and answer to the Research Question will be set out followed by recommendations based on the research findings. References to literature and a list of respondents and informants can be found in the Bibliography and Appendix at the end of this thesis.

Chapter 2 Theory

2.1 Introduction

Having introduced the research question the aim of this chapter is to conceptualize theories on livelihood and mobility in the geographical and the social domain in relation to different views and opinions found in the academic field. However before these theories will be discussed this chapter starts with discussing the concept of 'refugee-ness' as a dynamic and controversial concept. The locality of refugees has influence on the livelihood, therefore the urban context of refugees will be discussed. Furthermore there will be attention for the gender aspect within the refugee situation because as research has shown especially women experience particular vulnerability related to their sexuality during their migration trajectory (Kastner, 2007; Laacher, 2010). This will be further elaborated in the chapters five and six of this thesis.

2.2 Conceptualizing 'refugee'

In the previous chapter it became clear that the distinction between 'migrant' and 'refugee' is a controversial one and are in the media often used as non-interchangeable concepts. The terms 'refugee' or 'migrant' are not clear cut static identities one can carry during ones live. As Al Sharmani (2004, p. 1) points out: 'Being a refugee is not a simple identity construct that emerges from one or several experiences of violence, war, persecution and displacement from the homeland'. A person becomes a refugee and an internally displaced person through unwanted and uncontrollable events that make it necessary to leave the home town or homeland and migrate elsewhere, becoming displaced, physically cut loose from their place often without even crossing a national border. These people who stay within the national borders of their country are categorized by UNHCR as 'internally displaced persons, 'IDP's.

When looking at the definition given by UNDP in the Human Development Report (2009, p. 15) that states that a migrant is 'an individual who has changed her place of residence either by crossing an international border or by moving within her country of origin to another region, district or municipality' it is clear that in geographical movement, a refugee is a migrant. However not all refugees are international migrants. 27,5 million people, about two third of the total refugee population is internally displaced within their home region.

Whilst one may become a migrant due to a variety of reasons effectuated by physically moving to another region, town or country, becoming a refugee is not simply related to geographical

movement but a 'process of becoming, a gradual transformation', that is not an automatic result of the crossing of a national border (Malkki, 1995b, p. 114). It is the 'well-founded' fear of persecution, and lack of protection of the government or the 'external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order' in the country, where the UN Convention relating to the status of refugees, hereafter Refugee Convention⁷ and the AU Convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa, hereafter AU Convention,⁸ relate to, that forces a person to become a migrant, a migrant in search of a refuge, a refugee. Furthermore becoming involuntary displaced points to a different point of departure compared to migrants who have an idea or a set place or idea where they want to migrate to whereas refugees flee to a safe haven. This can be sought in a refugee camp in the neighbouring country or a country on another continent, or somewhere where relatives or friends live.

In the policy world migrants are often viewed from a static and exclusive perspective thinking that migrants can be categorized within set categories. This is often the way migrants are viewed in international migration management using the conceptual distinction between 'voluntarily' and 'forced' migration as mutually exclusive categories (van Hear, 2009). As explained above the point of departure of a refugee and migrant is different but in the following trajectory a refugee can change his motivation for movement, that started out as fleeing, into movement to find a (better) job or improved living conditions.

I would argue that categories of migrants and refugees are interchangeable. A refugee can become an economic migrant and a regular migrant can become an irregular or illegal migrant through for example overstaying when his or her visa has expired. People carry multiple identities and an identity is composed of many different aspects. As Malkki (1995a, p. 37) points out, identity is mobile and processual, partly self-constructed, partly constructed by others, partly a condition, a status, a label, a weapon or a shield. When becoming displaced and being displaced, frequently refugees identify themselves foremost with their national identity rather than pointing to their refugee-ness. Becoming a refugee does not start with the recognition by UNHCR or host country that the migrant fits into the category set out by the Refugee Convention or the AU Convention. Nor does it start by receiving a blue laminated card from UNHCR that states that the individual is by UNHCR recognized as a refugee. The process of becoming a refugee starts when fleeing, away from persecution. The part of identity that expresses or incorporates being a refugee, the 'refugee-ness', manifest itself

⁷ Article 1a, 1951 UN Convention relating to the status of refugees, 16

⁸ Article 2, AU Convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa

from within, related and interwoven with other identities and experiences, related to the fact that the person has left the place he or she was rooted in, under force because they could not safely stay but had a great fear of being persecuted. The forced movement has consequences for a large part of a refugee's life and his or her identities.

In the trajectory of the migration route, migrants shift between so called 'statuses'. Schuster (2008) who conducted research on migrants in Italy, describes this form of movement between status' as *status mobility*, emphasizing the fluidity of mobility between different statuses when moving between physical places, liberating from prejudices that a refugee will stay a refugee and that an illegal migrant will stay illegal. Schuster points out that 'usually, when a status changed as a result of circumstances the migrant could not control, it was from a higher or more secure status to a lesser status' (Schuster, 2008, p. 764). This point is illustrated by the large number of refugees who have received a high education and held a well paid job and are unemployed and without work prospect in the country they fled to and furthermore illustrates the interrelatedness of geographical mobility with social mobility.

By using 'status' instead of 'category' I want to focus on fluidity and possibility for change whereas 'category' in my opinion relates to fixed and set static label. To illustrate the dynamic and fluidity of statuses; a person can flee his home country as a refugee, travelling by using regulated (with visa or passport through air, water or road) and unregulated routes (using people smugglers, coyotes, boat people) becoming a (ir)regular (forced) migrant, entering a country through a (ir)regular way, apply there for asylum, thus becoming an asylum seeker and afterwards, depending on the Refugee Status Determination-procedure, a recognized refugee or rejected asylum seeker. When the economic situation in the country is not sustainable to facilitate the creation a sufficient livelihood, the refugee can be motivated to continue his travels, becoming an economic migrant. Furthermore the asylum seeker can also move on to a country of which he has better hopes to be recognized and accepted as a refugee and given a (temporal) residence permit. In addition Schapendonk (2008, p. 31) explains that 'individuals can jump these static migration-asylum categories over time'.

Malkki (1995a) argues that people frequently think of themselves as if they are rooted in a place and associate meaning to this rootedness that forms part of their identity. From a transnational perspective however people can be rooted in different places, being mobile in a globalizing world through physical travel but also through multimedia; internet and telephone. Malkki (1995a) argues that refugees are uprooted migrants, implying that they have broken and dangling roots. This is a

significant difference to the context of migrants who 'pick up their roots in an orderly manner from the 'mother country,' the original culture-bed, and set about their 'acclimatization' in the 'foreign environment' or on 'foreign soil', in an orderly manner' like for example expatriates (Malkki, 1995a, p. 31).

As explained above, being recognized as a refugee by UNHCR or the host country does not change the identity of a person. However recognition or rejection by UNHCR or a host country has consequences for the livelihood situation. Acceptance by the host society can result in a (temporal) residence permit and (temporal) work permit and new identity documents whereas rejection and no recognition as a refugee can cut a person off from assistance and support, otherwise offered by UNHCR or the host state. Thus for good livelihood opportunities for refugees, being recognized as such does have great consequences and is of importance. However there are countries like Egypt (Al Sharmani, 2004; Salewski, 2010) and Morocco where there is no asylum application system or Refugee Status Determination implemented and where UNHCR's budget is financially limited to financially support merely very vulnerable refugees. In these countries the differences between recognized and rejected refugees are small. For some refugees who are not recognized as vulnerable, the difference can sometimes be non-existing.

2.2.1 The urban context

In thinking about refugees, the common assumption is that refugees live in refugee camps. But as the world is rapidly urbanising likewise more refugees live in cities and urban areas nowadays. About two third of the 16 million refugees lives in the urban areas, whereas one third lives in camps. Where formerly mostly young men who could face the challenges of living in a city would live in urban areas, there are increasingly more women, children and elderly people who prefer to live in the urban areas (UNHCR 2009). In Morocco, where there are no refugee camps, most refugees live in the metropolitan areas of the main cities; Rabat-Sale and Casablanca. They live in suburbs together with Moroccans and other migrants, often close to others from their home country with whom they share care and form extensive networks (Edogué Ntang & Peraldi, n.d.). The existence of the grey zone of the informal economy and the relative toleration of the Moroccan authorities of economic activities in the informal sector make it possible for refugees to try earning an income in the Moroccan society through alternative and sometimes unconventional ways (Edogué Ntang & Peraldi, n.d.). This, however, is not uncomplicated because of the large number of unemployed Moroccans who seek to do the same thing. Furthermore Conway (2004, p. 10) points out in his research in Gambia that 'urban livelihoods are more often adversely affected by the social and political entanglements and

macro-economic conditions of the city'. Thus refugees in urban areas face other challenges than refugees who live in a refugee camp.

Al-Sharmani (2004) found in his research on refugees in Egypt that refugees in Egypt's urban settings often do not live in refugee camps that are physically isolated from the host societies. They live in lower-class neighbourhoods where nationals from poor and working classes reside. On the one hand, this may imply more autonomy and mobility for refugees than would be possible in refugee camps, they can get involved in the formal or informal economy. On the other hand, living in urban residential areas among nationals often means that refugees have to fend for themselves in what are often economically depleted and politically corrupt areas. In such urban settings refugees wish to be 'invisible' for they are viewed as a temporal problem to be solved, not few times victim of racism or xenophobia. Hence, to cope with the insecurity and alienation that exist when living in an urban environment to deal with the insecurities and alienation that go along with the urban atmosphere refugees may look within their own networks for securing livelihood (Al Sharmani, 2004).

Malkki (1995a, p. 36) observes a difference between Hutu refugees in Tanzania who live in refugee camps and those who live in urban areas. In the refugee camp the refugees created a 'heroized national identity' by telling each other stories of their home country. In the urban areas however the Hutu refugees do not identify themselves as Hutu refugees, Tanzanians or Burundians but rather 'just broad persons' and in doing so present themselves as a world citizen creating a broad 'lively cosmopolitan identity' as a way of managing the displacement and rootless identities in urban life.

In comparative research on refugees who live in refugee camps and refugees who live in urban areas there appears to be a significant difference in coping mechanisms and livelihood opportunities. In Gambia the refugees who live in urban areas were hardly and minimal assisted by UNHCR and its partners. 'Therefore, negative or destructive coping mechanisms were more prevalent in the urban environment' because they needed to turn to alternative ways to be able to meet their needs. These negative or destructive coping mechanisms include; stealing, begging and prostitution (Conway, 2004) which were also observed by van Brabant (2010) in her research on transit migrant women in Rabat. The specific vulnerability of women refugees will be discussed in the next section.

In (the urban areas of) Rabat there are quite some refugee women who prostitute themselves in order to be able to pay the rent of their apartment; this will be discussed more in detail in chapter five and six. In the urban areas of Morocco, refugees are vulnerable and not protected against xenophobia or racism. Refugees are not protected against exploitation by for example Moroccan landlords who request higher rent prizes for apartments rented to refugees and do not offer official

lease contracts because the refugees are often in Morocco irregularly and thus have no legal ground to stand upon when wanting to file a complaint. These aspects of the urban context in which refugees in Morocco live are of importance to the livelihood situation.

2.2.2 Gender

When observing the place in front of the UNHCR building in Rabat I often noticed a group of sub-Saharan people. They were hanging around, sitting on the ground or standing, talking to each other or staring in the distance, possibly enjoying the nice view. Particularly on registration day, once every two weeks when asylum-seekers can register at UNHCR and apply for a refugee status, there were many people in front of the gate and in the waiting room inside the UNHCR building. More than once I noticed the absence of women there. On many days the group of people only consisted of, mostly young, men. On days that there were women present, their number would be low and they were often accompanied by small children. The explanation for this is that in Morocco the percentage of women and girls in the total refugee population is around 20%. On a global level this percentage is around 30%. In the interviews at UNHCR on registration day many horrific stories were told but what was striking was that so many women that I encountered were raped or sexually assaulted, often not just once.

In this research I want to take into account the aspect of gender in the livelihood situation and geographical and social mobility for a deep understanding of these processes. One must take into account that this can be different for women and men, due to their position within the family network, community or society and physical features. Women and men may experience differences in livelihood situation and mobility.

Being a female refugee causes specific challenges and problems in comparison to male refugees. Whereas many refugees can be seen as vulnerable, female refugees carry a specific vulnerability. As UNHCR formulates it on their website:

‘Stripped of the protection of their homes, their government and often their family structure, females are often particularly vulnerable. They face the rigours of long journeys into exile, official harassment or indifference and frequent sexual abuse - even after reaching an apparent place of safety’.⁹

⁹ <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c1d9.html> UNHCR retrieved 29 March 2010.

Research conducted by Medicines sans Frontiers (2010) in Morocco shows that one on every three migrant women that was treated between May 2009 and January 2010 had experienced sexual violence. In the interviews I conducted with refugee women in Rabat all six women had experiences some sort of sexual violence ranging from being raped (more than once), being forcefully undressed in public and becoming pregnant and delivering the child of the person who raped them. Although it is beyond the scope of this research to go deeply into this subject it is important to take gender aspects into account because it is of influence on the livelihood of women. For more information on sexual violence against women who clandestinely migrate to Morocco, (Algeria, France and Spain) I advise to read the excellent work of Laacher (2010).

Kastner (2007) points out in her research on Nigerian women migrating to Europe, that women experience a specific way of migration that is related to the female body. Successfully crossing borders, earning a living and avoiding deportation are intimately connected to a variety of tactics conferring a crucial role to the body. Being pregnant or travelling with children can be a hazardous situation. On the other hand this situation can also be used for acquiring help, assistance or protection. Their physical constitution makes women vulnerable but when given the 'proper' resources women can be proactive and agents for positive change and are capable of improving their lives and the lives of their children, families and communities.

Adepoju (2004) argues that different to men who migrate, migration of women can also point to emancipation of women who make their own decision to depart and in that way take their life into their own hands. However for refugee women who are forced to migrate the initial decision to flee is likely to be more related to finding safety. Nevertheless in the migratory movement women can be motivated to make their own decisions, especially when family networks of close relatives fall away or are missing. Van Brabant (2007) distinguishes in her research on female transit migrants in Rabat, six strategies of migrant women on surviving and making a living partly with specific use of their femininity. These strategies are; informal labour (begging on the street, micro projects), survival prostitution, extension of social capital, self-help organisations, applying for asylum or lastly, integration 'in limbo' meaning integrating into the Moroccan society without specific support of the Moroccan state. Like Kastner (2007), also Van Brabant (2007) mentions motherhood as a tool of fulfilling certain needs and used in these strategies.

UNHCR, their implementing partners and the other organisations that work with refugees and migrants like Medicines sans Frontiers and the CEI of the French Reformed church in Rabat, mark pregnant women or women with child(ren) as a person with specific needs in a vulnerable situation

and offer additional support in finances, baby food, and other baby materials. The CEI always accepts pregnant women or women with child to their Tuesday listening sessions and when they suspect a woman is prostituting herself extra care is taken to provide her with some financial assistance. However a bad livelihood situation can leave women without many other options.

2.3 Genre de vie, the way of life: refugee Livelihoods

Livelihood comprises the *genre de vie*, the way of life, the way that people generate an income to reach a sustainable level of life. People all over the world use different strategies for making a living. The first academic that looked at economy in a holistic and human-centred way was Karl Polanyi. He pointed out that 'people need a material base to satisfy their needs and wants' (Horst, 2006, p. 9). At Bangkok airport I encountered a Thai lady playing an instrument with besides her a small sign explaining that this instrument provides a livelihood for her and her family. Playing the instrument was for this lady, through the income she generated by playing her instrument, a means of making a living. People try to make a living all over the world and livelihood is a well used and popular concept within the academic world. However by no means a new concept. Anthropologist Evans-Pritchard used the concept of livelihood to describe the methods and strategies of making a living in his research on the Nuer people in the 1940s. The livelihood concept has developed over the years influenced by both the political and academic field. Since the 1980s the livelihood approach emerged in a format similar to the format we know today. After the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP's) in the 1980s the development of thinking about livelihood became more people centred with attention for bottom- up and actor-oriented approaches (Kaag, 2004). In the past few years one of the main keys in Sustainable Livelihood approaches is placing people and the priorities they define at the centre of analysis and objective-setting (Ashley & Carney, 1999).

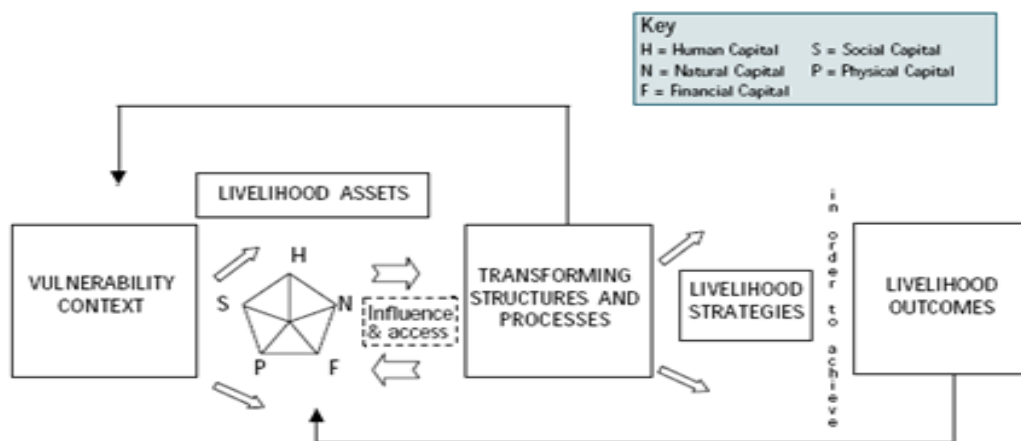
An often quoted and used definition in many academic researches on livelihood is the definition of Chambers and Conway. Chambers and Conway (1992) define livelihood as a concept that consist of capabilities, assets and activities that are required to make a living. With assets revering to; stores, resources, claims and access. In their opinion a livelihood is sustainable that can handle stress and recuperate from stress and shocks and uphold or improve the capabilities and assets. Furthermore a sustainable livelihood must provide opportunities for the next generation. Al-Sharmani (2004, p.2) uses a more narrow definition in his research on livelihood and diasporic identity constructions of Somali refugees in Cairo in defining livelihood 'as legal, economic, educational and social capital that refugees strive to secure and maximize in order to get by in Cairo and plan ahead for their future'. De Vriese (2006) found in her study on refugee livelihoods that members of a household use the

capabilities and assets they have in activities by which they gain their livelihood. With household assets revering to the resources that households own or have access to when acquiring a livelihood, combining skills, knowledge, state of health and ability to labour or command labour of a household when referring to capabilities.

2.3.1. Frameworks in livelihood research

In 1999 the British Department for International Development (DFID) developed a framework (figure 2.1) for sustainable livelihoods based on diverse forms of capital. As is shown in the DFID framework and argued by de Haan (2000) and Chambers and Conway (1992), in order to achieve a sustainable livelihood people need human, natural, physical, financial and social capital. Social capital relates to the membership of a group, how groups are organized, whether they are homogeneous and use a cost sharing systems and whether a community provides services to its members. Faist (1997) points in relation to social capital to the transactions between individuals that facilitate social action. This social action is again embedded in social networks. Social capital points to things like; job information networks, integration and support received from institutions like churches and NGO's. Financial capital relates to cash, money one owns, income and expenditures, services or products money is spent on and access to banks and bank accounts. An element of financial capital is also financial support from abroad like remittances send from the Diaspora. Skills, access to education and healthcare, language, literacy, obtained degrees, skills training and education all are human capital, sometimes referred to as educational capital. Physical capital points to belongings, ownership of a house or apartment or renting accommodation, possessions like for example; television, telephone. Physical capital also includes access to electricity, clean drinking water, clean clothes, personal hygiene and the use public transport or taxi. Faist (1997) defines holding local assets as economic capital. Being able to use a piece of land to build for example vegetable on is also related to livelihood and is classified as natural capital, but in the case of urban refugees this form of capital is not a relevant one and is therefore excluded in the analysis on the livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco.

Figure 2.1: Framework for sustainable livelihood



Source: Ashley & Carney, 1999 p. 55.

Important in the definition of Chambers and Conway is the 'access' to resources. One does not necessarily have to be in possession of capital but the access to capital is significant. People's agency is important. Access to or requiring capital does not stand in its own but is influenced by structures and processes in the society. These structures and processes can influence the strategies that refugees use and influence the outcome of livelihood situation. The point of departure in this research is to analyse the livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco by trying to understand the refugee's situated agency; how they actively shape their lives in their particular context through material and non-material assets and possibilities. A tool in this analysis is examining the access to different sorts of capital. In analysing the access of refugees to social, human, physical and financial capital it can be analysed whether and how refugees in Morocco are able to reach a sustainable livelihood situation.

Horst (2006) is critical about the DFID framework on sustainable livelihoods fearing that the strength of people is overemphasized, underestimating their structural vulnerabilities. Furthermore Horst (2006) analyses large differences between what choices people have and the power they have to choose. To reach a sustainable level of livelihood a person must have access to resources and a choice to use them. De Haan (2000) argues that a livelihood is sustainable when self-defined needs are adequate and satisfactory met and when the livelihood can cope with shocks and stresses. The same can be argued for social inclusion 'If livelihood is sustainable, it is synonymous with social inclusion; if not, it equates with social exclusion' (de Haan, 2000, p. 13). In my opinion agency of people is an indispensable element when discussing sustainable livelihood. People should be able to

choose action or reaction and to respond in a free way to events that happen in one's life, thus when talking about needs, it is important to look at the persons self-defined needs as de Haan mentioned.

In the situations of refugees, especially in countries that see refugees as a (temporal) problem or ignore the presence of refugees on their soil and do not execute the Refugee Convention, it is often the question whether living is purely a matter of day-to-day survival or whether there are livelihood possibilities that transcends pure survival. Bad livelihood situation in the host country can motivate refugees to move on to other countries in the hope to receive a regular status or refugee status that enables them to work or study and improve their livelihood. Thus geographical movement can be used as a mean to enhance the livelihood situation and social mobility.

The livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco is a point of attention to the UNHCR office in Rabat. UNHCR has seven key principles that underpin their approach to livelihoods programming in Morocco. Firstly UNHCR aims to enable self-reliance through livelihood activities empowering men and women of all ages to prepare them for local integration or voluntarily return to their home country, the so called 'durable solutions'.¹⁰ Secondly UNHCR believes that livelihood activities are vital for the integrated and inclusive promotion of dignity, psycho-social welfare, social structures, marketability and entrepreneurship of women and men of all ages and abilities during displacement. Thirdly UNHCR evaluates that without access to safe livelihood opportunities, child labour, economic and sexual exploitation, marginalization of older people and people with disabilities and other threats to personal security are heightened. Supporting livelihoods is an essential aspect of UNHCR's protection mandate. Fourthly in prolonged displacement situations, self-reliance of the displaced would relieve the pressure on countries of asylum with poor socio-economic conditions, where host communities are struggling to meet their own needs. UNHCR believes that care and maintenance is less costly when refugees achieve some degree of self-reliance. In the fifth place UNHCR considers that refugees can become attractive to their host community, as they stimulate social, economic and cultural exchanges, enhanced economic opportunities and promote peaceful coexistence between displaced and host communities. Following UNHCR believes that initiatives to protect and enhance refugee livelihoods should be informed by a comprehensive socio-economic and gender based assessment of both displaced and host population, as well as in the host or return area, in preparation for eventual local integration or reintegration. Finally UNHCR argues that preserving and enhancing refugee livelihoods to touch upon multiple sectors and requires multi-year planning: An

¹⁰ www.unhcr.org.ma accessed 24 May 2011

area-based approach, in partnership with development actors, is essential for an effective livelihoods response. UNHCR works with its implemented partners on the livelihood situation of refugees to enhance the social, financial and human, capital of refugees for a sustainable livelihood situation. However in chapter five it becomes clear that UNHCR's policy and approach on livelihoods of refugees does not always have the desired result.

2.4 Geographical Mobility

There are different ideas about mobility within the global society. When looking up 'mobility' through search engines on internet the term 'mobility' is linked to sociology, engineering, military, entertainment and science, generally meaning 'being in motion', whether this is of molecules, staff, cars or songs. Also within the Academic world 'mobility' is used in different disciplines like sociology, geography, biology and exact sciences. In this research I want to focus on mobility from a socio-geographical point of view and believe that 'mobility' is defined not only by 'being in motion' but is related to capability and possibilities for movement. Furthermore mobility can be related to life-events that often imply a change in life and status. At the end of this paragraph the definition of geographical mobility, used for this research, will be set out and discussed.

Geographical mobility is related to movement but geographical movement is not precisely the same as geographical mobility. Kaufmann (2009, p. 56) argues that we must take a holistic approach and integrate social and spatial aspects to understand more of mobility and being mobile. The time that academics in sociology and geography saw mobility as mere mechanical movement has changed and nowadays there is more attention to mobility as a dynamic multifaceted concept and disciplines are combined to come to a better insight into the phenomenon of mobility and migration (Brettell & Hollifield, 2000). Furthermore there is more attention for the dynamics within movement and recognition that migratory trajectories, for a large group of people, do not simply run from A to B but are 'influenced, changed and re-defined in 'the transit phase' (Schapendonk, 2008, p. 130). To have a better understanding of migration as part of mobility, migration must be understood as processes of continuous movements including temporal or semi-temporal settlements. 'Some migrants end up in perceived transit areas; others end up leaving desired destinations to migrate to other places'. In this there is no difference between regular and irregular migrants or refugees and asylum-seekers because as Schapendonk (2008) points out, all migrants can have a transit phase within their migratory process.

John Urry (2010, p. 7-9), a sociologist, defines four different elements of 'mobility' or being 'mobile'. Firstly he sees mobility as 'something that moves or is *capable* of movement', like the mobile (portable) phone, a mobile person, mobile home, mobile hospital, or a mobile kitchen. Secondly mobility can be seen 'as a *mob*, a rabble or an unruly crowd'. Because the mob, group or crowd is mobile and not entirely fixed within boundaries, the mob is perceived as disorderly and therefore the need arises for social regulation or monitoring. Thirdly, Urry points to mobility within mainstream sociology and social science, the upward or downward vertical social mobility. This form of mobility will be discussed later in this chapter. The fourth type of mobility is migration or some kind of semi-permanent geographical movement. This type of mobility is an event based movement and related to change. Urry explains geographical movement as a horizontal sense of being 'on the move' referring principally to moving to another region, across a national border or to another continent.

Kaufmann (2009) mentions three aspects that together likely would produce mobility. The first element is the field of possibilities. The second aspect is the capacity and capability for movement within the geographical, social and economic space. Together these capacities and capabilities are called *motility*, meaning in short the potential for movement or being mobile. The final element involves movement through space either with a point of departure and one or more destination points, or without one factual origin or destination. According to Kaufmann (2009) geographical movement can have more departures and destination points or none at all.

Kaufmann (2009) furthermore makes a distinction between event based movement, which he defines as mobility, and the routine movement of daily life which he defines as fluidity. Kaufmann describes mobility as an event based movement because it is characterized by the fact that it leaves its mark on the life history, identity, or social position of the individual. Kaufmann (2009, p. 49) also points out that mobility has a dual definition and that in general social change, understood as change in social status or role, corresponds to movement. We move around on a daily basis changing roles; we travel to confront otherness or to escape our daily routine; we move house when our lives are touched by change. In this sense social and geographical mobility are closely related.

Kaufmann, Bergman & Joye (2004, p. 746) point to geographical mobility as referring to 'geographic displacement, i.e. the movement of entities from an origin to a destination along a specific trajectory that can be described in terms of space and time'. Entities in this sense can be abstract, ideas, norms or information, or concrete, people, machinery or consumables. 'During this journey, entities may not only experience a change in status (e.g. value or importance), but the spatial mobility of entities

may also influence the points of departure, traversal or destination'. This definition of geographical mobility is in my opinion too narrow to use in small scale research on the livelihood situation of refugees and their mobility. Therefore I want to include agency of the person that is moving and changing status. Besides that there are prerequisites to enable movement, one needs transportation means, money to facilitate transportation, information on where to go, legal documents when crossing an international border, or access to irregular networks etc., it are the possibilities and freedom of choice where to move that really matter to geographical mobility, and that makes a person geographically mobile.

2.4.1. Defining geographical mobility

Like Schuster (2008) I associate mobility first of all with being able to make choices to move, opposed to being forced into movement. Therefore I consider refugees who were forced out of their home region not necessarily as mobile, but in the following migratory process they can become geographical mobile by choosing their migration route. Schuster (2008, p. 757) considers migrants as being mobile because they can make choices. They are mobile actors that 'make choices about where they go and under what title, but people whose choices are limited by a range of factors including migration regimes, social networks and social and economic capital'. Thus the 'migratory space' introduced by Faist (1997) which includes one or many spatial locations and politically, economically and culturally relevant ties and institutions, influences the choice migrants can make and will make. As Faist (1997, p. 247) explains:

'Migratory space is the sum total of personal projects, perceptions and images, on the one hand, and the structure of opportunities available to potential migrants, on the other, linked by intermediate mechanisms such as networks and collectives'.

Thus choice will never be unlimited without boundaries or influential elements, but the freedom of choice is related to the level of geographical mobility one experiences. For example member's part of the European Union and the Schengen¹¹ Agreement can travel without visa requirements solely carrying an id-card or passport to all the countries part to the Schengen Treaty. This is in stark contrast to people from African and most Asian countries, who need a visa to enter a Schengen country, often also when simply passing through in transit. Nationals of countries in North America,

¹¹ The Schengen treaty of 1985 regulates the free movement of persons of participating countries. There are no checkpoints at the internal borders of these countries any more. Nationals can freely travel across the borders of the countries party to the Schengen treaty. Nationals of EU-countries can travel without restrictions to other EU-countries. This also applies to citizens of countries who are not member of the EU but are part of the European Economic Space (EER) like Liechtenstein, Norway and Iceland. http://www.europa-nu.nl/id/vh1alz099lwi/schengen_en_visabeleid Accessed July 2, 2011.

some in South America, several Asian countries and Australia can travel to Schengen countries without needing a visa for a stay for a maximum of 90 days. Thus the freedom of choice where to go within Europe is limited or absent for many nationals from African or Asian countries. In West-Africa within the ECOWAS¹² countries the same principle applies. Nationals of member states party to ECOWAS can freely travel to other ECOWAS countries without visa restriction and other treaties and agreements exist in other parts of the world like for example the Pacific Island Forum¹³ in Oceania. Therefore the geographical mobility for nationals of European Member states within Europe is high when looking at the freedom of choice where to move to within the European Union as is the same for nationals of ECOWAS countries.

A second element in relation to geographical mobility is the capacity and capability for movement. The potential for movement or being mobile, the capacity and capability for movement within the geographical, social and economic space are together called *motility* (Kaufmann, 2009). This potential includes physical capacities, technical systems of transport and telecommunications and their accessibility, skills such as training, driving, international English for travel, revenue and aspirations for a sedentary or mobile lifestyle. As the World Development Report of 2009 (p. 5) explained: 'emigration is not an alternative to accelerated development efforts at home, but mobility can facilitate access to ideas, knowledge and resources that can complement and in some cases enhance progress'. Thus movement in the geographical domain can have all kinds of effects in the social domain. I want to use the concept of motility to analyse the capacity and capability of refugees in Morocco for movement and the level in which refugees in Morocco are mobile.

Aspiration of many refugees to migrate to another country with better opportunities to find work, health care and education is high, not necessarily having one specific country in mind. But the capability to do so is due to restricted resettlement programs, the absence of legal travel documents or money, quite low. Refugees and irregular migrants experience constraints in their movement constraints like; closed borders, legal document requirements or financial limitations; limited possibilities. When refugees move without having possibilities, without being able or capable to choose or to plan a route, are they then mobile? Kaufmann (2009) mentions that it is not necessarily the case that populations that move a great deal have a field of possibilities that is particularly favourable or predisposed to movement. There are other motivations to move without directly

¹² Economic Community of West-African states, regional group of 16 countries in West-Africa to promote economic development within the countries. <http://www.ecowas.int/> Accessed July 5, 2011.

¹³ <http://forum.forumsec.org/> Accessed 4 July, 2011

having the capabilities to do so and be mobile. These two elements of choice and motility form the basis of geographical mobility in this research. I define being geographically mobile as having the choice for and agency in movement, with agency meaning the ability of a person to choose action or reaction, beliefs or opinions, to respond in a free way to events that happen in a person's life. To be geographical mobile means to be able and have the capacity and capability for movement that transcends fluidity.

2.5 Social mobility

When analysing the social and financial capital of the livelihoods of refugees it becomes clear that social mobility has a link to the livelihood situation and vice versa. Social mobility implies a movement in status or position in the society for refugees by changing jobs, marriage or education. This change relates to the status or position of a person in a society. Change in the status or position of a person is seen as movement in the social space and is thus defined as social mobility. This movement can go upward or downward, relating to a setback in the status or position of a person when referring to downward social mobility and a rising status of position when referring to upward social mobility.

2.5.1 Changing position

An element that is often discussed in relation to social mobility is 'change'. Bassand and Brulhardt (1980, in Kaufmann, 2009) define mobility as 'any movement implying a change in the state of the player of system questioning question'. As Kaufmann, (2009, p. 57) points out: 'Movements in geographical space and social space are not of the same nature, and are not necessarily simultaneous. Movement in space alone is not to be mobile if mobility also implies a change in social position, and social mobility requires no physical movement'. To understand what 'changes' imply within social mobility we have to take a closer look at the social construction of mobility. Social mobility is a concept that relates to the social position and status of a person within their society. Through using the concept of social mobility it can be determined how 'open' or 'closed' a society is and how well a person can 'move' within that society. Movement can imply a change in social position in general when looking at the way many citizens in the global world live who change status during their movement. For example when coming from work as an employee, travelling home to be a husband and father or travelling to a supermarket to do some grocery shopping as a customer.

Pöntinen and Matras (in Anderson, 1996) define social mobility as 'a movement from one class or stratum to another either intragenerationally or intergenerationally'. When one's first and current

jobs are compared to each other one can analyse the intragenerational mobility. When the social origin of a person is compared to their current position within the society you can speak of intergenerational mobility (Ultee, Arts and Flap, 2003). In this research I define social mobility as the ability of individuals or groups to move within the social hierarchy of a society with changes in income, education, occupation, implying a change in position or status. Social mobility can go both ways. When the change of position in the social hierarchy implies an enhancement of income, higher education or a better paid job the movement is upward and is defined as upward mobility. If there is for example a decrease in income, loss of job or no income at all then there is downward mobility, resulting in a downward movement in the social hierarchy.

The position or status within a society can be influenced through marriage, education, occupation but also social networks, financial and social capital and migration are influential factors. These elements contribute to a change of status within the society and an upward- or downward mobility. For example through receiving an additional education one can acquire a job for which higher education is required, or after a few years of work experience apply for a job with more responsibilities and a higher income level and thus climb upward on the social ladder. Whereas geographical mobility can be seen as horizontal, social mobility has a vertical dimension.

2.5.2. Challenges in social mobility for refugees

The potential for refugees to be socially mobile in a society is related to different aspects. First of all it is important how refugees are received and accepted by a host society. When refugees are perceived as transit-migrants and therefore as a 'temporal problem' the emphasis of the society will be on local and temporal settlement and less on integration and facilitating durable solutions to the refugee population (Al Sharmani, 2004). Secondly related to the perception of refugees as transit migrants, a high education, an excellent work history or a good command of the language of the country are no prerequisites for social mobility when entering the country as a refugee. When refugees are not recognized and not treated according to the refugee rights set out in the Refugee Convention refugees can be limited to work or enjoy education. It is in that case not possible to use the social capital and refugees may experience a significant downward social mobility. Andersson (1996) who conducted research on diverse groups of (recognized) immigrants in Sweden in relation to their social mobility illustrates this in explaining:

'Many immigrants succeed, and not only well educated people, or those coming from industrial countries, or those who marry a national, or those who rapidly acquire a good command of the country's language. Although all these attributes (well educated, coming

from, marry national, language) seem to make a difference to integration processes and upward social mobility, they are neither a checklist for those who aspire guaranteed success nor do they always have to be fulfilled for a person to succeed. In fact, our knowledge about the modern immigrant's trajectories in social and geographical space is rather limited, probably even compared to our knowledge about the trajectories of those millions of people who left Europe for a new life in North America, Australia and other parts of the world a hundred years ago (Andersson, 1996, p. 4).

Social mobility is a dynamic concept and as discussed above one cannot simply cross off the prerequisites for social mobility on a checklist and experience upward mobility. The context is of great importance. When moving in geographical space one also moves within a social space which makes it possible to use these parallelisms for upward mobility (Kaufmann, 2009). However when the context of migration is unfavourable to the migrant which is the case of many refugees, it is possible that movement through social and geographical space does not result in upward but in downward mobility.

Political systems and regulations are significant to facilitate social mobility in a society. In particular for refugees the regulation within a society must be of such character that non-nationals in need of a refuge, support and assistance are welcomed and accepted and are provided with access to the labour market, schools, universities and social services. In general there are certain standards for a sustainable life situation that are written down in conventions like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that describes the rights that all human beings are inherently entitled to. Refugees who have fled their country or home region often find themselves in a vulnerable position. Therefore in 1951, the United Nations presented the Geneva Convention which sets out basic rights for refugees, enabling them to build up a new life in a safe and secure environment that facilitates a secure living. As Article 17 of the Convention relates that host countries should grant refugees 'a favourable treatment according to nationals of a foreign country in the same circumstances' regarding wage earning employment.

The context of a society and state regulations are important factors in social- and status mobility. Regulations change due to occurring events and political debates. Specifically the last twenty years, migration and asylum have become significant topics that worldwide regularly appear on the political agenda. In Morocco the halt of the work of the B.R.A, the organisation of the Moroccan government formerly in charge of asylum issues, meant a change in assistance and support to refugees. This has

significant ramifications for refugees, who without being able to acquire a residence card through the B.R.A cannot work or study in Morocco. An example in the political context are barriers to geographical mobility but also related to social mobility is the Dublin Convention in Europe which regulates that asylum applications must be lodged in the country where the person entered Europe, which makes it difficult to choose a country that has the best opportunities for work or integration and thus the best prospects for upward mobility.

Migrants may in their migration trajectory, change status and thus move between different categories, such as asylum-seeker, labour migrant, refugee or documented and undocumented migrant, what Schuster (2008) defines as status mobility. According to Schuster, status mobility is closely related to geographical mobility in the sense that there are factors like the reason why migrants move between or within countries, and why they continue their migration to other countries that influence the status of migrants and vice versa.

Besides denying a person to freely enter a country due to visa regulations or the obligation to carry a passport or legal travel documents, a person can also be 'denied' access to a host society through the exclusion from society by prejudices, racism and xenophobia. In Morocco where there are many Moroccans without employment, the existence of a small group of recognized refugees and a large group of irregular migrants, for Moroccans all the same, in search of an income creates tension between Moroccans and migrants.

2.6 Summary

This chapter started with discussing the controversial definition of 'refugee' that is by the media often interchangeable used with the term 'migrant'. However we have seen that the background of persecution, violence and traumatic experiences sets refugees apart from migrants. In their movement refugees are migrants, but migrants with a specific need for protection. In the migratory process however categories of migrants and refugees are interchangeable because during the migratory route a migrant can change status. A refugee can become an economic migrant when migrating further in search of better economic living conditions. The urban context in which refugees in Morocco live offers refugees access to the informal economy, this implies more autonomy than living in a refugee camp. However refugees in urban settings are more exposed to xenophobia and racism and have to fend for themselves. 20 % of the refugee population in Morocco is female. As is shown in research (Medicines sans Frontiers, 2010; Kastner, 2007; Van Brabant, 2007) women are vulnerable when migrating and experience specific challenges in migration due to their gender.

Many refugee women have experience sexual assaults. However femininity can also be used as a last survival strategy using prostitution as a way to gain an income, relating gender to livelihood that is in this chapter defined as 'making a living' the way that people generate an income to reach a sustainable level of life (Kaag, 2005). In order to achieve this people need to hold or have access to human, physical, financial and social capital. Furthermore the context of institutions and regulations is important to facilitated access to these different kinds of capital.

In this thesis the livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco is analysed related to mobility in the geographical and social domain. Geographical mobility is in this chapter defined as having the choice and agency in movement. With agency meaning the ability of a person to choose action or reaction, beliefs or opinion to respond in a free way to event that happen in a person's life, to have the capacity and capability for movement that transcends fluidity. Social mobility relates to the social position or status of a person within a society. A person is socially mobile when possible to move within the society and change status of position. This movement however can be upward or downward, referring respectively to an improved position and a deteriorated position. The position or status in the society can be influence by marriage, education, knowledge of language, occupation and social networks. Migration and geographical mobility also have an influence on social mobility. Many immigrants experience a downward social mobility when arriving in a country of which they do not know the language. Furthermore as with livelihoods and geographical mobility also for social mobility regulations and the context of the society are important influential factors.

To have a clear understanding of the context shaped by (inter)national regulations and factors that influence the life of refugees in Morocco, chapter four will set out the legal situation of refugees in Morocco, including refugee rights, the asylum procedure in Morocco, the work of UNHCR and the Moroccan Civil Society.

Chapter 3 Methods

3.1 Introduction

Having defined the research question and theoretical framework in the previous chapters, in this chapter the used research strategy and the motivation to use this strategy will be discussed. An adequate research strategy is important to gather data that will provide an answer to the research question. Furthermore I will elaborate on the sources I used to gather data including my search in finding willing respondents. Also I will discuss what has coloured my research finding together with the challenge of combining a field study with an internship at UNHCR.

3.2 Research focus

Deciding which research strategy to use in this research has taken me quite a while. When you have not yet visited the field in an exploratory visit, the challenge of going out in the field is that you never exactly know what you will found. The field of research, the refugee community in the Moroccan society, was a challenging in many ways. The relatively small number of refugees in Morocco and the relative large number of researchers that are interested in qualitative research among the refugees makes many refugees reluctant to work with again another researcher. Furthermore refugees are often heavily traumatized and burdened people, who in a host society as Morocco do not see a hopeful future. Building up a relationship of trust was necessary to be able to conduct a qualitative research. To achieve this I including some research methods from the anthropological discipline.

In the research process I needed to adjust my initial research focus. I started out with a research question that focused on the situation of female refugees in Morocco and the need for protection from UNCHR. I wanted to use the strategy of a survey to answer this question. However as I will discuss below it was difficult to find sufficient women willing and capable to talk to me about their living situation. This made the use of survey as a research strategy unsuccessful. Therefore I broadened my focus to both female and male refugees and concentrated my attention on an in depth analysis of the livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco.

3.3 Research strategy

Before being able to make the decision which research strategy to use, two questions must be asked. Firstly will a wide or narrow focus lead to an answer to the research question and secondly does the aim of the research require a quantitative or qualitative approach (Verschuren and Doorewaard, 2007). The aim of this research is to gain a profound understanding of the livelihood situation of

refugees in Morocco to unravel the influence livelihood and mobility have on each other and to understand the construction of the socio-political domain in which livelihoods are constructed and see what 'agency' refugees have.

To enable an in-depth understanding of the situation I chose a small-scale approach of comparative case study. This enabled a thorough understanding of the complexity of the relation between livelihoods and mobility. The case study is characterized by a small number of research units. In this research the livelihood situation of fourteen cases was studied using a labour-intensive approach through qualitative methods. A case consists of the livelihood of a refugee who lives in Morocco. These cases were strategically selected using the knowledge and experience of UNHCR staff in the selection procedure.

To be able to place the cases in a context I also used a wider view to make an analysis of the Moroccan society and the institutions and regulations in place that influence the livelihoods, social and geographical mobility of refugees. This enables a deeper understanding of the context of institutions and regulations in which refugees live. By not only using refugees as source to gather data but also informants I aimed through source triangulation to reach a profound level of analysis (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2007).

3.4 Research methods

With the methods I used in this research I aimed at method triangulation by selecting different labour-intensive methods to generate data (Verschuren & Doorewaard 2007). I decided to use semi-structured topic lists for semi-structured interviews because I wanted learn about the 'lived experience' of my respondents (Bernard, 2002). Furthermore I used observations wherever I went and jotted them down in my notebook that assisted me to make sense of situations I was in, write down what I had heard and reflect on what I had observed. Finally I used participant observation as one of the research strategies. Participant observation 'involves getting close to people and making them feel comfortable with your presence so that you can observe and record information about their lives' (Bernard, 2002, p. 322). This has proven to be a very valuable method in being able to talk to refugees and learn about their livelihood and mobility. In these different methods of making observations, doing participant observation and conducting semi-structured interviews I used different sources including people, documents, literature and reality (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2007).

3.4.1 Observations

I found it important to start my research and internship at UNHCR with unobtrusive observing, making observations of what happened around me at UNHCR and at different places where we met refugees. I wrote observations down and posed questions about what I did not understand. Later on in the fieldwork I used observations when visiting refugees in their homes to do an interview. Visiting refugees in their homes made it possible to observe and analyse the living conditions; how many people lived in the house, what facilities they have, is there electricity, access to water. All these observations could be taken along in my analysis of the livelihood situation and gave me more insight into the reality of their life.

3.4.2 Semi-structured Interviews

To achieve willingness and trust and build up initial rapport with people before moving on to more formal interviews unstructured interviewing is an excellent tool. It is an adequate method to interview people who would not tolerate a more formal interview (Bernard, 2002). In the initial phase where I met my respondents I used this unstructured interviewing. To enable a grounded analysis eventually I changed from unstructured interviewing to using a semi-structured method because with a semi-structured topic list I could in the analysis compare the answers to certain questions with each other. This facilitates the internal validity of the research and the level to which the conclusions of this research are applicable to the total research population. In every interview I asked questions about five different topics whereas the topic list was divided into five categories of questions. The first part consisted of questions about the legal context in which refugees are situated followed by questions about education, economic, health care and integration. Concerning the legal situation of refugees I asked questions about how the respondent had entered Morocco and what his or her legal status was and has been in Morocco and what effect the absence of a residence and work permit has on their lives. In the education part I asked questions about their education in their country of origin, whether their qualifications helped them to find some kind of employment in Morocco and whether they were enrolled in further education. In the economic part we discussed their income, where they received money from, how much they spent on rent, food and other things. In the health part we discussed what they do when they fall ill and need treatment and medicines and whether their health has influence on their income generating activities. Finally we discussed integration through talking about the living conditions, contact with the landlords, contact with other Moroccans, and other refugees and migrants. These five parts gave me an insight in the social mobility of the respondents through talking about their education, jobs, income generating activities,

access to health care and position within the Moroccan society. Furthermore I acquired more knowledge about their geographical mobility through discussing the way they entered Morocco; where they had come from and how easy or challenging it was to cross borders, with or without legal documents. This gave me insight into the migratory route. All five topics on the list are related to livelihood which includes financial, social, physical and human capital, thus through the interviews I acquired a deeper understanding of the livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco.

Many respondents invited me to come to their home to do the interview. With others who preferred another location, I went to a little café where we drank a cup of coffee. Because I knew many respondents do not have a lot to eat and often not enough money to make ends meet, I always took a few things, fruit juice, biscuits or rice, with me to give to them thanking them for their cooperation, time and energy. The interviews were done in French, except the interviews with refugees from the Middle East; they were done in English because they did not master the French language. Although I speak French at a reasonable level, the language is not my mother tongue. This made it at times quite challenging to discuss delicate topics where it is of great value to be able to use language in a sensitive and nuanced way.

3.4.3 Participant observation

Whenever possible I observed and participated in meetings with the focal points of the refugee community and staff members of UNHCR about important matters that were raised in the refugee community. Furthermore I observed and participated in the Refugee Status Determination interviews at UNHCR every two weeks, where asylum seekers can register their claim and explain why they left their home country and apply for asylum. In addition I spent a significant amount of time at the Foundation Orient Occident (FOO); one of UNHCR's implementing partners that provide a social meeting place for migrants and refugees. A couple of times I went to FOO just to socialize and talk to refugees and migrants. The 'celebration' of World Refugee Day on the 20th of June and the activities that were organized around that day were a great opportunity for me to learn more about the position of refugees and migrants within the Moroccan government and the attention within Morocco for Human Rights. I participated in UNHCR's distribution of food baskets in honour of World Refugee Day to all the approximately 800 recognized refugees, families and individuals.

3.4.4 Literature and documents

For a theoretical background and grounding of this research I used many academic books and articles, policy documents from diverse international organisations, governments and UNHCR and

conventions like the 1951 Refugee Convention, AU Convention and the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration for Human Rights. In particular the work of Vincent Kaufmann, Liza Schuster and Cindy Horst have inspired me in my research. Furthermore Dr. Lothar Smith and Joris Schapendonk have guided and directed me to specific relevant academic literature and theories that were especially relevant for this research.

3.5 Respondent and informants

To find respondents willing to work with me for my research has been quite a challenging task. Where my initial focus was on refugee women, I noticed in the beginning of my fieldwork that this was a difficult group to approach, due to their vulnerability context on which I will elaborate below. Thus I chose to enlarge the scope of the research and broaden it to refugees in general while keeping in mind the gender aspect. To enable access to the refugee community I applied for an internship with United High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Rabat, Morocco. From April until July 2010 I conducted fieldwork in the capital of Morocco, Rabat through an internship at the management and external relations unit of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Because I was not sure what to find in the field initially I intended to use snowball sampling in selecting respondents. This means selecting cases one by one depending on what is observed in the first case (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2007). However I changed to applying strategic sampling when I did not gain access to other respondents after interviewing my first respondent. Because I did not have access to all the refugees from the refugee population, the strategic sampling was in practice more complex.

3.5.1 Entering the field

On the first day of the internship I was introduced to the refugee population through assisting with the registration of people applying for a refugee status. This includes listen and writing down their story, what the reasons were they had fled their country and how they came to Morocco. A young man from Liberia told us his father was murdered and he had lost track of the rest of his family. He fled his country because his father's murderer is still walking around freely in Liberia. He showed his scars from the injuries he had received in Liberia. This first encounter made me realise that I would be dealing with heavy traumatized people in difficult situations and that I needed to take a special approach to find people willing and able to cooperate in my research.

To gain an understanding of UNHCR's work and get acquainted with the refugee community in Morocco I focused in the first month of my fieldwork period on making observations and

participating in meetings. These meetings were held between UNHCR and the focal points of the refugee community in Morocco whom the UNHCR had appointed to represent the refugee community. In my work for UNHCR I often visited the partner organisations. One of them was the Orient Occident Foundation (FOO), a place where many refugees and migrants came to take part in different courses. There was also a nursery where mothers could leave their young children when they took part in courses. This Foundation is a social place where about 350 of the around 800 registered refugees regularly comes, and I chose the Foundation as my starting point to find respondents to interview about their livelihood. The following comes from my field journal and relates to how I met my first respondent.

I had been to the Orient Occident Foundation once before, when I decided that it would be a good place to meet refugees and went back to find people who would be willing to cooperate and to be interviewed for my research. People are continually coming and going in the reception hall of the Foundation. Near the entrance I met Madame Alice, a 53 year old Congolese woman who came to the Foundation today to ask for money in order to be able to pay the electricity bill for her house. Four years ago Alice fled from the war, she has searched for her family whom she lost in the flight, but has not received any word from them until now and does not know where they are. Alice was talking to another Congolese lady and they included me in their conversation when they asked where I was from and what I was doing in Morocco. When I asked them whether they would be willing to help me in my research they answered that they are tired of people who come from all over the world to do their research on refugees in Morocco. *'They come from Italy, France, Monaco and Germany and pose questions and ask all kinds of things, but it gives me nothing'* Alice explained¹⁴. Both women tell me they have trouble to get enough money to get by. Mary, 35 years old, tells me that she prostitutes herself in order to get sufficient money. *'I earn 30 Dirham'¹⁵ each time, you can calculate with how many men I need to sleep to be able to pay my rent'*. Mary has no children and her parents were killed. She also fled Congo because of the war.

Another man entered the reception hall and starts talking Swahili to Alice and Mary. Alice asks him to speak French so that I can understand the conversation and that I would like to learn about their situation. The man, Francois, also from Congo tells the women he is frustrated with the Moroccan government. He would like to receive a 'carte de sejour' and

¹⁴ Field notes, 2 May 2010, Orient Occident Foundation.

¹⁵ 30 Dirham is €2,65

has written letters to the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Internal Affairs and Justice. However no public servant could help him. Moreover UNHCR could not help him to get the last papers he needs. He had a visa for Morocco but it has expired and therefore he cannot leave the country. Francois tells me he feels part of a 'jeu de pingpong' by the Moroccan government. Finally as I was leaving the Foundation, Alice is willing to help me with my research and invites me to come to her house the coming Sunday evening for a first interview and also offers to approach other women for an interview.

In this initial experience in approaching respondents it became clear that many refugees were quite reluctant to cooperate with yet another researcher and are primarily preoccupied with the daily struggle to make ends meet. However after a while unobtrusively sitting with Alice and Mary, taking time to listen and show empathy with their situation, their initial reluctance changed to willingness. This fragment from my field journal illustrated the difficulty and energy initially needed to gain access to the research population in this way of selecting respondents.

3.5.2 Selecting respondents ..After Madam Alice...

After a couple of visits to Madame Alice her home and very constructive interviews it became clear that unfortunately the people Alice approached and asked whether they would be willing to be interviewed for my research were not willing to without a payment of at least thirty Euro's. I had provided Alice with some rice and pasta and although I was willing to give my respondents something in return for the time and energy they had put into the interview, I could not meet these requests. Unfortunately the initially snowball sampling was thus not successful in this case.

In selecting respondents, I changed to using UNHCR and the staff of the Community Service department as gatekeepers. In the beginning of my fieldwork in Rabat I was reluctant to contact refugees through the channels of UNHCR because I wanted to approach people in a more independent way not directly linked to UNHCR. Being linked to UNHCR brings along certain expectations of the respondents and would influence the way they would approach me and the things they would say in the interview and the answers they would give to my questions. After a while I realised however that, although it is true that being linked to UNHCR 'colours' the data that I would gather in the interviews, UNHCR was also a very valuable and knowledgeable way to get into contact with people of the refugee community. Furthermore the people I would interview would sooner or later discover I was working with UNHCR and might feel betrayed if I did not mention this to them.

The staff-members of the Community Service department of UNHCR are regularly in contact with the refugee community because they monitor the needs and situation of many, especially vulnerable, refugees in Morocco. The Community Service staff members were helpful and cooperative in sharing their views on the process of selecting respondents for my research. The people that were selected were all well known to UNHCR and were almost all focal points. When I contacted the selected people, every single person was willing to be interviewed. This was in my opinion partly due to the fact that I was working for UNHCR and that they themselves relied on UNHCR for the money they received from UNHCR.

3.5.3 Respondents

In total I conducted interviews with fourteen respondents who were by UNHCR recognized as refugee. Of the fourteen respondents, four have been in Morocco between one and three years, eight respondents have been in Morocco between four and six years and two respondents have lived in Morocco for ten or more years.

Figure 3.1 Number of years refugees are in Morocco

Years in Morocco	Number of respondents
1-3	4
4-6	8
>10	2

Eight men and six women in different live situations; single, married, widowed, some with and some without children. Eight respondents came from Central Africa, three respondents West Africa, two from the Middle East and one from East-Africa. I decided to choose people from different countries in order to get a diverse picture of the lives of refugees in Morocco and to be able to analyse the possible differences that different cultural backgrounds bring along. These respondents are by no means a representable portion of the whole refugee population that lives in Morocco.

Figure 3.2 Region of origin and age respondents

Region of origin	Men			Women		
	20-40	>40	Total	20-40	>40	Total
West Africa	1	0	1	2	0	2
Central Africa	4	1	5	2	1	3
Middle East	0	1	1	1	0	1
East Africa	0	1	1	0	0	0
Total	5	3	8	5	1	6

Figure 3.3 Marital status respondents

Region of origin	Men				Women			
	Single	Married	Widowed	Total	Single	Married	Widowed	Total
West Africa	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	2
Central Africa	2	3	0	5	0	1	2	3
Middle East	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
East Africa	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Total	3	5	0	8	3	1	2	6

In this thesis I do not use the real names of the people I interviewed, although quite a few of them are well known within Morocco and internationally and regularly contribute to documentaries or participate in international meetings with their testimonies and life story. I wanted to provide confidentiality to my respondents so that they would feel free to tell their story, without it being possibly traced back to them with unforeseen negative consequences. As mentioned before the interviews were predominantly done in French, the majority of the refugees in Morocco are francophone, with the exception of the interviews with refugees from the Middle East, these interviews were conducted in English because they speak mostly Arabic and French is not a language they master yet.

3.5.4 Informants

To get a better perception of the context of the society refugees live in I interviewed people of many different organisations that work with migrants, refugees or destitute people. I used the experience and knowledge of many experts and interviewed staff members of UNHCR, Amnesty International, International Organisation Migration, Groupe antiraciste d'accompagnement et de défense des étrangers et migrants (GADEM), Foundation Orient Occidental (FOO), Marocaine d'Appui à la

Promotion de la Petite Entreprise (AMAPPE), Action Urgence (AU), Association Beni Znassen pour la Culture, le Développement et la Solidarité (ABCDS) and Medecins sans Frontiers (MSF) and Organisation Marocain Droit d'Homme (OMDH). The last two organisations I visited both in Rabat and Oujda. Furthermore I interviewed pastors of the French Reformed Church and the Rabat International Church and academics in Rabat and Oujda, to be able to analyse the support and assistance that is provide to refugees by churches. At a conference of the UN-EU Migration for Development initiative in Rabat I met a diplomat from the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs with whom I had an interesting discussion on the migrant situation in Morocco. He was willing to do an interview and we made an appointment for an interview. However, on the day we had arranged to meet, the diplomat was in Belgium and afterwards he unfortunately did not respond to the many phone calls and text messages and I was not able to do this interview. It would have been a valuable insight.

3.6 Position and challenges in the field

Although my first impression and thoughts when I entered the field where positive and it was relatively easy to find a first respondent, as I have mentioned, it later appeared to be quite hard to find refugees willing to cooperate in my research. When I discussed the situation of finding respondents with Madame Alice she told me she had approached different women but none was willing to cooperate without being paid money. First of all, Alice explained, many women have experienced many traumatic events and are reluctant to talk about their lives because it is very painful to have to think about it again.

When I started I wanted to focus on refugee women only but this setback caused me to broaden my focus to refugees in general with attention for the aspect of gender. I had experienced that the men that hang around at the Orient Occident Foundation are quite open and it was easy to have a chat with them, probably not completely unrelated to my gender and blond hair. Secondly the first reluctance I experienced is furthermore unmistakably one of the results of the many researchers that have come and gone over the last couple of years to do research on the relatively small group of refugees in Morocco. There is an understandable feeling among a large number of refugees of being used for academic research purposes without receiving anything in return or noticing anything different in their situation.

Working with UNHCR as an intern and conducting field research at the same time was quite challenging and at times quite difficult. Refugees have often experienced awful traumatic events and

it needs time, patience and a special approach to build up a relationship of trust in order to conduct in-depth interviews with them. Laacher (2010) who conducted research in Morocco, Algeria, France and Spain on violence against women during their clandestine journey, explains in his research that the most complex interviews were conducted in Morocco and elaborated furthermore that it is difficult that as an interviewer you cannot do anything about the living conditions the interviewees find themselves in and you have to deal with that every time. This is something I experienced as well when the frustration and helpless feeling became too much and it was at times difficult to continue with the interviews and the research.

I considered combining an internship at UNHCR and doing fieldwork a significant challenge for my research and of importance for the results of my research. I tried, especially in the beginning, quite hard not to be associated with UNHCR, to be as objective as possible. It needed time to build up a relationship of trust and in this, being an intern of UNHCR has helped me greatly because although not all refugees are always satisfied with the work UNHCR does, UNHCR is perceived as an organisation that is there to help refugees in need. The answers I received to my question might have been quite different would I have been an independent researcher. Nevertheless people in circumstances like refugees in Morocco would all try to convince researchers, NGO's and UNHCR-staff to improve their livelihood situation and contribute to this with some money, food or goods, thus I also on the other hand do not want to overemphasize the influence that working for UNHCR had on my research data. Bernard (2002, p. 232) points out that different effects may occur when interviewing a respondent, for example the 'deference effect' when people tell you what they think you want to know in order not to offend you. In my interviews I experienced that my respondents not necessarily gave social desirable answers but calculated answers, in order to gain something from the interview that would enhance their situation, for example some money or my influence to help their case to be resettled. I define this effect as the 'calculated effect'.

Chapter 4 Situation of refugees in Morocco

Being able to enjoy geographical mobility, apply for asylum and go through an adequate asylum procedure is not a given for everyone. There are many countries without a competent asylum system, making it difficult for refugees to be acknowledged as such and receive the proper protection and support set out in international conventions to be able to build up sustainable livelihoods. Especially for migrants moving from the Global South to the Global North, both forced and voluntarily, it is often a difficult undertaking. In this chapter I set out the context of the livelihood situation of refugees and the asylum situation in Morocco to facilitate a deeper understanding of the environment in which refugees in Morocco are situated. This chapter starts with legal rights to mobility, the asylum procedure in Morocco, the work of UNHCR and their implemented partners. Furthermore the Moroccan State in relation to UNHCR and the involvement of the Moroccan civil society with the refugee situation in Morocco will be discussed.

4.1 Legal rights of mobility

There are different international conventions that mention mobility in the form of rights and freedoms. According to Article 13 of the 1948 United Nation Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) everyone has the right to move: ‘Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country’. Article 14 states that ‘everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution’. In contrary to the other rights mentioned in the UDHR, the right to seek and enjoy asylum has not been formulated in any of the human rights treaties within the context of the United Nations. In fact a right to seek and enjoy asylum has not been formulated in any human rights treaty, except the Inter-American Human Rights Convention (Boeles a.o, 2009, p. 253). However the European Union Member States are working on a Common European Asylum System (CEAS) which will include the right to enjoy asylum (Boeles ea, 2009, Qualification Directive, 2004).

Concerning rights to a sustainable livelihood, in general, refugees in Morocco enjoy very limited rights that relate to livelihoods, even though there are numerous articles in the 1951 Refugee Convention that should provide refugees with the possibility to rebuild their livelihoods. In article 17 and 18 of the Refugee Convention it states that host countries should allow refugees to engage in wage-earning employment and in agriculture, industry, handicrafts and commerce. In articles 13, 19,

26, 28-30 and 34 of the Refugee Convention additional rights can be found related to livelihood, freedom of movement, settlement, property rights, transfer of assets and citizenship (Horst, 2006). Article 27 of the Refugee Convention concerning identity papers states that 'Contracting States shall issue identity papers to any refugee in their territory who does not possess a valid travel document'. Refugees struggle with this in Morocco, where the authorities, although having ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention in 1956, do not cooperate in this.

An important aspect of the Refugee Convention of 1951, formulated in Article 33, is that persons are protected against being sent back to their country of origin while still at risk of being persecuted or killed upon arrival. This is defined with the French term *refoulement*. Persons determined as refugees by UNHCR are under international law protected against *refoulement*. Although refugees and asylum seekers in Morocco receive a document from UNHCR stating that they are of concern to UNHCR, this document is not acknowledged by the government and does not provide official rights to residence, travel and access to the labour market or public services. This document does protect holders against being arrested and expelled because of irregular entry and residence in the country, which is a criminal offence. However from 2005 onward quite a number of people holding these UNHCR papers, including pregnant women, have been expelled to the Algerian border despite the prohibition of such actions, laid down in Morocco's own laws (Rossi & Ryan, 2010). The legitimacy of these actions of removing immigrants to the border was based on the fact that coming into Morocco without an entry stamp impressed in the passport means entering irregularly into the country which is in violation of Moroccan national law. On November 11, 2003 a law was adopted by the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors in Morocco regarding the entrance and stay of foreigners in Morocco, particularly dealing with illegal entry making the irregular stay on the national soil a crime (Edogué & Peraldi, n.d., Schapendonk, 2008). This law states specifically in article 3 that people who want to enter Morocco are obligated to carry legal entry documents in order to be permitted to cross the Moroccan border into Morocco:

'Tout étranger débarquant ou arrivant sur le territoire marocain est tenu de se présenter aux autorités compétentes, chargées du contrôle aux postes frontières, muni d'un passeport délivré par l'Etat dont il est ressortissant, ou de tout autre document en cours de validité reconnu par l'Etat marocain comme titre de voyage en cours de validité et assorti, le cas échéant, du visa exigible, délivré par l'administration' (Article 3 Dahir nr 1-02-196 du 16 Ramadan 1424)¹⁶.

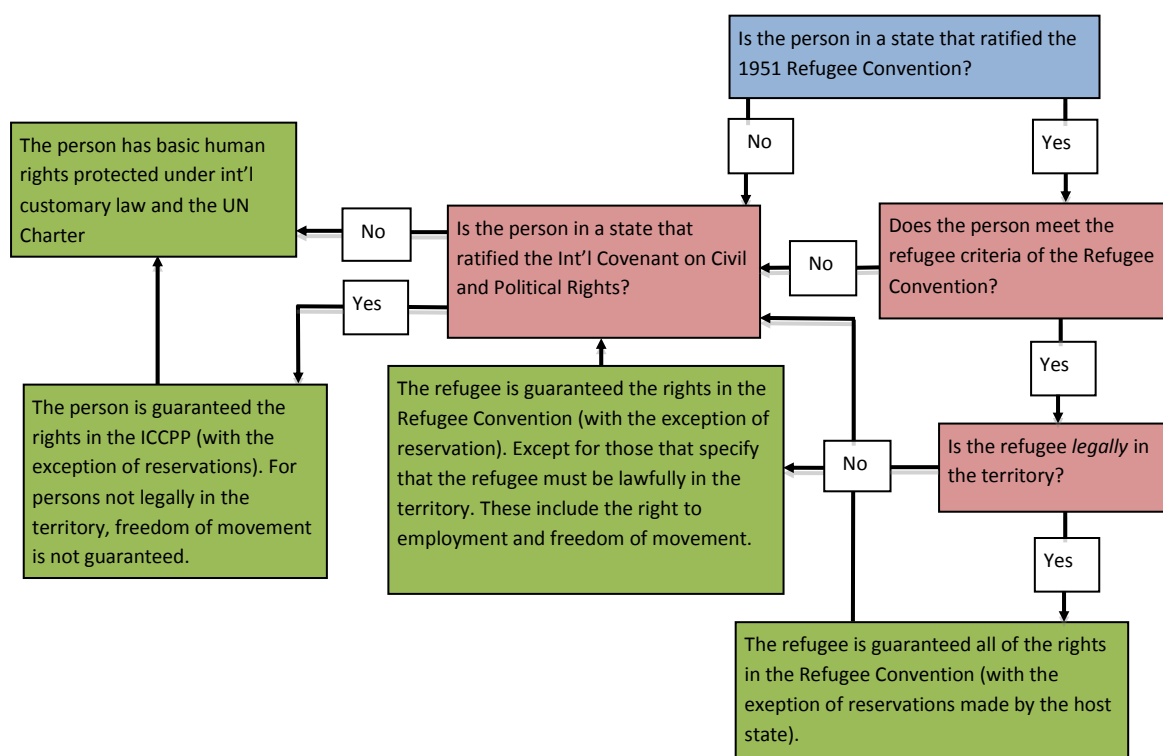
¹⁶ English translation: 'An alien landing or arriving on Moroccan territory is required to report to the authorities responsible for monitoring border crossings, presenting a passport issued by the State of nationality or any

Regarding refugees the law of 2003 states in article 16 (5) that refugees that are recognized as a refugee under the 1951 Refugee Convention will be cared for in a way that is written down in the 1951 Refugee Convention. This is applicable to:

‘à l'étranger qui a obtenu le statut de réfugié en application du décret du 2 safar 1377 (29 août 1957), fixant les modalités d'application de la convention relative au statut des réfugiés, signée à Genève le 28 juillet 1951, ainsi qu'à son conjoint et à ses enfants mineurs ou dans l'année qui suit leur majorité civile’¹⁷.

This part of the law is nonetheless not executed in Morocco and refugees who are recognized by UNHCR in Rabat but not by the Moroccan authorities. A general view of the legal protection that a refugee is entitled to under international law and conventions is illustrated in the following figure produced by Bailey (2004) for her research on the difference between refugees with and without legal status.

Figure 4.1: Legal protection under international law (Source: Baily (2004), p.17)



other valid document recognized by the Moroccan state as a travel document valid and accompanied, if applicable, with a visa issued by the administration'(Article 3 nr Dahir 1-02-03 of 16 Ramadan 1424).

¹⁷ English translation: ‘an alien who has obtained the refugee status under Decree 2 of Safar 1377 (August 29, 1957) laying down detailed rules for implementing the Convention on the Status of Refugees signed at Geneva on 28 July 1951, and the spouse and minor children and children who are in the year following their legal majority.’

As can be observed in figure 4.1 refugees who meet the criteria set out in the Refugee Convention in Morocco, a state that has ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention, are guaranteed the rights in the Refugee Convention. The illegal presence of many refugees on Moroccan territory makes recognition of refugees by the Moroccan authorities a sensitive issue.

4.2 Asylum procedure in Morocco

Since 1957 the Moroccan *Bureau des Refugies et Apatrides* (B.R.A.), a branch of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, handled the affairs of refugees and stateless persons in Morocco and was responsible for assistance and protection of refugee asylum applications (Keienbrink, 2005). This office dealt with assistance and protection of refugees, specifically with Algerian refugees who sought protection in Morocco (Keienbrink 2007; Van Brabant, 2007). In 2001 there were 2,105 recognized refugees, 1,600 of them had been granted refugee status according to the Refugee Convention of 1951 while 505 refugees have been recognized as refugee under the mandate of UNHCR according to its 1950 statute (Lindstrom, 2002; Coslovi, 2004 in Keienbrink, 2005). The B.R.A. claimed to recognize all refugees who were included under UNHCR's mandate, but in practice this was not always the case. However since 2004 the B.R.A. has suspended its activities and stopped processing applications for refugee status.

Although Morocco ratified the Geneva Convention on November 7, 1956 and the protocol on April 20, 1971 without making exception (UNHCR 2008), Morocco currently does not provide assistance to refugees to participate and integrate into the Moroccan society. For the Refugee Convention to be relevant it is important that the state, party to the Convention, has an implemented asylum system or a Refugee Status Determination program. Article 31 (1) of the Refugee Convention states that Contracting States shall not give penalties to refugees who have irregularly entered the state and came from a territory where their life or freedom was threatened. To be able to do this, a determination of whether one is a refugee is needed. Because refugees often come without legal (travel) documents they remain irregular residents in the country and are unable to enter the formal labour market, regular education and often experience trouble with access to ordinary health care. Although UNHCR is working on better education of legal officers and the police force in regard to refugee law, the lack of knowledge on refugee law and the Refugee Convention of officials in the Moroccan juridical system are troubling. Jacques¹⁸, a refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo explains:

¹⁸ Fictive name.

'Once I assisted with a court case of one of my friends. The prosecutor did not even know what the definition of a refugee was. A lawyer from OMDH¹⁹ had to explain the definition of a refugee, the prosecutor did not know!'²⁰

Arbaoui (2010) argues that Morocco cannot be considered a safe host country for asylum seekers and refugees for there are major deficiencies in legal, procedural and post-procedural asylum practices. These deficiencies include the absence of comprehensive asylum legislation, the failure of implementing the modest existing legal framework, the failure to respect procedural protection and the failure to respect post-procedural refugee rights such as access to work and education. Therefore Arbaoui (2010) argues that the asylum system in Morocco needs fundamental modifications and the asylum system should be applied with a humanitarian focus rather than a security focus to enable a successful asylum protection under international refugee and human rights law.²¹

4.3 Moroccan state and the UNHCR

Morocco was, with Tunisia, the first African country to receive UNHCR staff in 1959. On the 20th of July 2007 the Moroccan state signed an *accord de siege* with UNHCR signifying that UNHCR's representation is legally official in Morocco. UNHCR had been present in Morocco since 1965 residing in Casablanca until 2004 when the Office moved to Rabat. Because the B.R. A. has suspended to process applications for refugee status, UNHCR has taken care of asylum applications and refugee status determination (RSD). In January 2011 there were 1072 people of concern to UNHCR in Morocco of which 280 were asylum seekers who had filed an asylum application at UNHCR's office in Rabat and were awaiting the final decision, the other part are recognized refugees.²²

As a humanitarian international organisation UNHCR plays an important role in the lives of many refugees worldwide. As illustrated with the cases of refugee women in Nairobi, cited below, the UNHCR can play an important part in the empowerment and enhancement of the livelihood of refugees.

'In Nairobi, Kenya, UNHCR and community-based partners used participatory assessments to reach refugees, including refugee women who were domestic workers, who rarely came to

¹⁹ Organisation Marocain Droit d'Homme

²⁰ Interview with refugee from West-Africa, July 14, 2010.

²¹ For more information on the juridical side of the asylum procedure in Morocco and Morocco as a host country of asylum see Arbaoui (2010).

²² <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=49e4860d6> accessed July 26, 2011.

the Office. When assessments revealed these women lacked basic information about their rights and available services, the Office cooperated with a local NGO specialized in training domestic workers to provide training in cooking, cleaning and child care, along with literacy classes and rights awareness, to help empower them with skills and information and thereby enhance their protection' (Rossi & Ryan, 2010 International Protection 2009, p. 13).

Although not respected by all governments, the protection of civilians is primarily a responsibility of states. UNHCR argues that because they are a humanitarian agency there is only a limited capacity to provide physical security for persons of concern (UNHCR, 2009). Where the protection of civilians is lacking, UNHCR works, where possible, to support states in the protection of their citizens and tries to provide support and protection to refugees. However in Morocco, UNHCR does not receive much cooperation from the Moroccan state in supporting and assisting refugees on their national soil. Migrant processing centres and offices of UNHCR are often perceived by North African states as attracting and encouraging more immigration and settlement in their territory. This, in combination with xenophobic tendencies, creates a great opposition against recognition of the presence of thousands of sub-Saharan African migrants (de Haas, 2007).

North African countries generally have trouble with how to cope with the new status of former emigration countries to transit- and immigration countries. This change in status brings along a completely new set of legal and social issues related to immigration countries. Furthermore although expulsions of sub-Saharan immigrants do exist there is a reluctance to deport large numbers of sub-Saharan African migrants because of the high cost this entails but more important is the international embarrassment this causes for Morocco because recent raids and substantial expulsions. This behaviour of Moroccan authorities is in stark contrast with Morocco's attempts to develop the human rights in the country and causes much protest from migrant-, refugee organisations and Moroccan Human Rights organisations (de Haas, 2007).

4.4 Moroccan Civil Society

There is a variety of voluntary local and social organisations involved with issues in the Moroccan society engaged with the situation of migrants and refugees. Because the Moroccan authorities keep a close eye on what happens in Morocco, some organisations have to be careful and pay attention to what they do and say. There are different national and international organisations in Morocco working and fighting for human rights, assisting (vulnerable) migrants and refugees. To elaborate in details on the work every organisation does goes beyond the scope of this thesis. However for the

sake of sketching a context of the environment in which refugees in Morocco are situated and the access to assistance and support in enhancing their livelihood situation, I will briefly discuss a few significant organisations within the Moroccan civil society in the sections below along the lines of different key domains of interest.

4.4.1 Legal organisations

The first and largest of organisations that offer juridical assistance to refugees is UNHCR. UNHCR works to find durable solutions to the refugee situation in Morocco by assisting refugees to integrate into the Moroccan society, with assistance of UNHCR's four implementing partners or to voluntarily return to their home country.²³ As a humanitarian organisation UNHCR cannot physically protect refugees or intervene in the national politics of the Moroccan state. UNHCR provides legal papers to one who has applied for asylum, legally protecting the applicants against expulsion in the time that this claim is being assessed. Furthermore recognized refugees receive a laminated card which states their refugee status and also protects against 'refoulement', meaning expulsion. However expulsions do happen and in that case UHCR assists the expelled refugees, often through their implementing partner Organisation Marocain Droit d'Homme (OMDH) in Oujda to have the arrested refugee or asylum seeker released and assist the asylum-seeker or refugee with the return to their home²⁴.

The OMDH office in Ocean-Rabat was set up in partnership with UNHCR specific for assistance to refugees. At the OMDH office in Ocean-Rabat refugees can come to ask for (free) assistance in matters like birth certificates for their unregistered children and conflicts with landlords, which often occur because refugees cannot get a legal contract to rent an apartment therefore, this happens illegally which makes refugees vulnerable to the abusive behaviour of some landlords. The headquarters of OMDH is situated in Agdal-Rabat and works primarily on a political and policy level on general human rights in Morocco²⁵. Another international organisation working on Human Rights, including for refugees is Amnesty International who lobbies with the Moroccan government for better juridical circumstances and a system for protection so that refugees and asylum seekers will have the right to work and to go to school. Amnesty furthermore motivates and encourages other international organisations to contribute to help the difficult situation of refugees and asylum seekers in Morocco²⁶.

²³ For more information on UNHCR's 'durable solutions' in Morocco see www.unhcr.org.ma

²⁴ Interview with Y. Chemlal, OMDH Oujda, July 26, 2010.

²⁵ Interview with I. Lahlou, lawyer at OMDH, Rabat. July 9, 2010.

²⁶ Interview with S. Abdellaoui, Executive Director Amnesty International. July 6, 2010.

4.4.2 Economic organisations

The association *Marocaine d'Appui à la Promotion de la Petite Entreprise* (AMAPPE) is an organisation that originally started out helping economic disadvantaged people with setting up a small business that would help them to acquire a sustainable level of income. AMAPPE however changed to working with migrants and refugees and is since 2007 one of UNHCR's four implementing partners, currently working solely with refugees. AMAPPE is funded by UNHCR to provide guidance and assistance to refugees in setting up small businesses. When a viable business plan is developed AMAPPE provides the finances, provided by UNHCR, to set up and start a business.

Refugees cannot legally work in Morocco because the Moroccan authorities do not grant residence permits to the refugees recognized by UNHCR. There is however a grey zone of condoning small businesses that are run by refugees, migrants and Moroccans along the street. One of AMAPPE's staff members told me in an interview²⁷ about the ambiguity of the Moroccan society. About 40 – 50% of the economic activities in Morocco take place in the informal sector. There is a lively and large informal sector that is condoned. Moroccans, migrants and refugees work within this sector and all three groups run the same risks. He explained that if you don't have the (right) paperwork for your business when the police come to check, Moroccans, migrants and refugees will all be in trouble. This happens from time to time but a lot of projects do run well, despite running these risks.

Achmad²⁸, a refugee from Ivory Coast with always a broad smile on his face and an optimistic character, runs a shoe repairing business on the corner of two busy streets in a popular Quartier of Rabat. Every day he drags his stall, the shoes and his tools from his house just down the road to the corner and builds up his little workplace. All day people will come by to bring their worn shoes and he repairs them within two days. Even the fire fighters from the fire station just up the road bring their shoes to him. The finances to set up this business were contributed through AMAPPE, who approved his business plan and follow him in the process with advice when needed. However this success story is not the general story on how well refugees do when setting up a business.

AMAPPE has subsidised 113 projects until now in which 127 people were involved. Thus there are people who start up a project more than once. 23 of them are women; this corresponds to the 18% of the total population of refugees that is female. AMMAPPE has a quota of projects that is reserved for 'vulnerable cases'; 10% of the subsidies are reserved for these cases that cannot meet all the

²⁷ Interview Rachid Hsine, June 2, 2010.

²⁸ Fictive name

requirements in the regular procedure. These vulnerable cases include physical or mentally disabled people or women with children.

Of the twelve businesses, set up by refugees, that were analysed in an evaluation (Mejjati Alami & Denis, 2010) four were successful, where the other eight projects experienced difficulties due to vulnerable circumstance or where abandoned altogether. This means that only 34% of the analysed projects that were initiated by refugees were successful. Often refugees who start up a business end up with debts because the money that is supposed to be invested in the project ends up being used for daily needs; to buy food or to pay the rent or electricity bills. Many refugees I interviewed and asked about setting up a project with AMAPPE told me similar stories. Setting up a business could be successful if their livelihood situation was not so bad. Often the money for the business would be used to reach those daily basic human needs.

4.4.3 Medical organisations

The Medical coordinator of Medicines Sans Frontiers (MSF) in Rabat explained to me that because refugees and migrants do not have a 'carte de séjour', a residence permit, they do not have access to social services in Morocco²⁹. The means of existence in the medical domain are very marginal and limited for them. For that reason UNHCR started a partnership with Action Urgence (AU), so that refugees can have access to health care. AU is a medical clinic open for refugees in the morning on every weekday, and day and night for emergencies. 10 patients (with refugee status) can be treated daily at AU who do not need an appointment to come in. Every Thursday there are 17 appointment spaces for Moroccans³⁰. For migrants who entered Morocco irregularly however solutions have to be sought on an individual basis. MSF and Caritas often work together to achieve this. Furthermore MSF pleads for birth certificates on different levels in various structures within the Moroccan society for children of parents who have no papers; from the Ministry level down till the persons in charge at the hospital and also for reduction in healthcare costs.

MSF had projects in Casablanca and Rabat to facilitate access to health care for migrants. There were also refugees who come once in a while but MSF usually sends them through to UNHCR. MSF wants to facilitate access to healthcare to all migrants but the situation for the people 'sans papiers' is according to MSF very difficult. Firstly the absence of legal documents like *carte de sejour* and passports make access difficult, access is hard without such documents. The second barrier is that

²⁹ Interview with J. Martin, MSF, June 30, 2010.

³⁰ Interview with Dr. Acharki, Action Urgence. July 19, 2010.

the services are not free and people have to pay. When migrants need a medical service MSF pays for the service. However In December 2009 MSF stopped their project in Casablanca and Rabat because they only helped people with money problems and where primarily paying bills, which are also the same problems as poor Moroccans face, meaning this is not a situation MSF specifically can solve or help with. MSF does stay in Rabat to monitor the situation and to intervene when there are asylum seekers that do not get access to health care. The people that come into the office of MSF are foremost women who were violated, raped or have experienced sexual violence. MSF has now 2 or 3 cases each month with people who do not have access to health care and about 13 new cases each month of women, victim to sexual violence.

MSF provides a medical certificate to patients that come in. This certificate states that the person carrying it is a patient at MSF and it is clear the person is in need of help when they go to UNHCR or another organisation. There is regular contact with UNHCR, concerning the monitoring and follow up of violated migrant women who have been to MSF. The collaboration with UNHCR is good but not always easy. MSF deals allot with vulnerable cases of minors, and even minors are sometimes rejected by UNHCR which leaves them in a very vulnerable position. UNICEF puts the responsibility with UNHCR and that leaves the minor children without help. Those minors are 12, 13 or 14 years old and are easily exploited by other migrants, people smugglers and violators and suffer as a result with great psychological problems. The minors often don't even know where they are when they arrive in Morocco and become victims of exploitation by other migrants or organisations. 'We are on a 'chemin mort' according to the medical coordinator at MSF in Rabat, 'the situation does not look good and has been stagnating since 2008. It has been worse before when a larger number of migrants where arrested and send back. Is not that bad any more but there is no development'³¹.

4.4.4 Social organisations

About 350 refugees out of the almost 800 recognized refugees visit and are known to the Foundation Orient Occident (FOO). Half of these 350 people only come to the Foundation to collect medication or a food basket, which are usually distributed around World Refugee Day each year. The other half regularly participates in activities and courses that the Foundation offers and organizes. Since 2008, the Foundation has worked with UNHCR as an implementing partner in the social-economic field for refugees to help them with one of the so called 'durable solutions'; integration into the Moroccan society through language courses and professional training. Social workers and psychologist are available for refugees who struggle with the traumatic experiences or have trouble with coping in the

³¹ Interview with J. Martin, MSF, June 30, 2010

Moroccan society. 80% of the project funds the FOO receives comes from UNHCR and is for the work FOO does with refugees from Sub-Sahara Africa, the Maghreb and Arabic countries³².

FOO offers professional education in trades, language courses in Arabic and French, training to work in call centres, courses in health care, computer technology, CISCO, networking, and Marketing. The Foundation is able to find internships for refugees, to gain experience and use the knowledge they gained through the courses in the workforce, but when the education and internships are finished it is not possible to find a job without a residence permit. This is emphasized by a staff member of the Foundation when he says:

'70% of the problems refugees face is a result of the absence of a 'carte de sejour'. Otherwise some would work in call centres, go out on the Moroccan market because there is a lot of potential amongst the refugees, but the will of the Moroccan government is needed for that and that's currently a problematic point'.

Furthermore the courses given by the Foundation are not accredited, therefore the certificates the refugees receive after successfully finishing the course, will not be recognized. For some refugees this is such a setback that they do not even want to start the course, because as they see it, it does not contribute to anything. When the situation in their country of origin has normalized and they return, their certificates will be useless.

In cooperation with AMMAPE, the Foundation offers training for refugees who want to start a micro finance project with AMMAPE. In addition there are also courses for refugees who are minors. Furthermore there are two cooperatives at FOO run by women; one in jewellery making and the other in couture, making clothes and other artistic attributes. In the setting up of the cooperative the first step was to educate the women involved. After being trained, the women started to produce jewellery, clothing, bags and other attributes. The Foundation does sell the products that the women at the cooperation make but the real plan, to set up a permanent little shop to sell the material, has to be realized still. The problem however is that because the women are officially not permitted to work it is a risk for the Foundation to set up this cooperation officially with a shop run by the refugee women. The cooperations are thus limited to develop into successful and elaborate businesses. A staff-worker of the Foundation explains:

'It is the aim to rent a building somewhere in the city centre or in Agdal and exhibit and sell the products of the cooperatives there. In that way the cooperative can gain more income

³² Interview with A. Belhadad, FOO, July 14, 2010.

which can be put into the cooperative again. The current situation is not optimal and not having a fixed place for the cooperation limits the development of the cooperation. Now the Foundation is responsible for 'la caisse', the money; for the purchase of materials and equipment and to provide training. In the future the women should be able to do this themselves but it is difficult to achieve because the women need a 'carte de sejour' to make the cooperation successful. Now we cannot make contracts with the refugees and they cannot sign a contract to lease an exhibition place or shop space.³³

The Foundation aims to use the skills and qualities of refugees through integrating them in the staff of the Foundation. There are refugees who teach computer technology, hair dressing, jewellery making, French and literacy. The Foundation cannot give them an official contract and salary but does provide them with a kind of reward that they call 'transport costs'.

The Foundation distinctly separates migrants from refugees in the courses. There is a course in professional education where Moroccans, migrants and refugees are mixed into one class but generally the Foundation does not mix migrants with people with a refugee status. In a discussion about the difference between migrants and refugees a staff-worker at the Foundation explained the following:

To us the social situation of migrants and refugees is the same. Sub-Saharan Africans come to Morocco and it is hard to integrate. A refugee is not a migrant because a refugee is framed in juridical convention. Migrants leave their country in search of a better place to live. We cannot judge why a refugee has come to Morocco.

The Foundation is also involved with promoting the integration of refugees and migrants in the Moroccan society. One way they do this is through the yearly organized *festival Rabat Africa*, which introduces Moroccans with and displays different aspects of African culture through music, dance, workshops and exhibitions. Emphasizing to the Moroccans the value and richness of the culture Sub-Saharan African migrants and refugees bring with them to Morocco.

4.5 Churches and asylum seekers and refugees

As in any country, different churches in Morocco are involved in supporting people in need, including migrants and refugees. However the last few years the Moroccan authorities have come down upon

³³ Interview with Abdellatif Belhadad July 14, 2010

Christians and churches that were too much involved with evangelization so churches need to be careful to offer their help to the needy without too much emphasis on the religious context.

In Rabat I talked to a pastor of the French Protestant Church who was involved with assistance to migrants including refugees. The social arm of the French Protestant Church, the Comité entre Aide internationale (CEI), works predominantly with Sub-Saharan African migrants, with or without a refugee status. Since November 2009 the organisation has helped 737 persons, these persons have often come several times to the organisation. The CEI is connected to the official protestant church and works also in Casablanca. Every first three Tuesdays of the month CEI organizes 'listening' for a maximum of fifty people a day. People can talk about their problems which involve difficulties like not being able to pay the rent or experienced traumas or mental issues. 20 more people can come in for medical advice each day. They can get advice and assistance to get medicine and an explanation of how to use the medication. Everybody is welcome as long as they come from Sub-Saharan Africa and are in need, both refugees and migrants. The general aim is to help people that have not yet received help from other organisations. The 'listening' sessions are evaluated each Tuesday and about 20 very needy people with urgent needs are contacted to come back the next day to receive specific assistance like for example 200 Dirham to pay their rent, or a basket with food. Weekly home visits are done in the neighbourhoods to make sure people know about the work the CEI does and that they feel welcome.

The French protestant church also helps to set up micro-projects that enable people to set up businesses in for example; hair cutting, selling fish, or fixing shoes. I met a young man from Senegal who had received 1500 Dirham from the church with which he has bought all kinds of jewellery that he is selling on the streets now. He wrote an elaborate business plan with everything he needed. Because of budget restriction only 10 people can be helped with a micro-project each month. Furthermore the CEI helps Sub-Saharan African students with a scholarship. These students receive 750 Dirham's every month over a period of 10 months. The finances of the CEI are donated mostly by American and European churches.

The CEI has the same set up in Casablanca but with a specific focus on the medical side because the organisation in Casablanca has a qualified doctor from Chad in their team. Because the team in Casablanca is smaller they can only listen to 20 people and help 10 people with medical issues. The CEI tries to work together with Caritas or Terre des Hommes on sharing information. Usually the organisation does not like to help people that already receive support through other organisations

because their aim is particularly to help people that do not receive any support yet. In cooperation with Caritas the protestant Church has recently helped a migrant with food with Caritas supplementing the support by paying his rent.

The coordinator of CEI explained that he does not observe any differences between a migrant and a refugee. He does observe that particularly migrant and refugee women are very vulnerable and he meets a lot of women who have been sold for sex, mostly Nigerian women. 80% of the women prostitute themselves to be able to pay their rent. 'It is not that they like to do this but it is all they can do in some situations'. They sleep with 2 or 3 men a month which enables them to pay the rent. He and his team try to be sensitive about this when there are signs that a woman is involved in prostitution and try to give her some support in paying the rent, so she does not feel the need to prostitute herself.

Because of the restrictive measurements the Moroccan government was taking I did not have the opportunity to come along with home visits to do more research on this organisation. The week I was planning to go along, the pastor phoned me to let me know his family was being expelled from the country by the Moroccan authorities. For that reason I have limited my research and not included much on churches, also because it could be harmful for UNHCR to be somehow connected to organisations earmarked by the authorities as involved in evangelization.

4.6 Summary

Rights related to movement, freedom and seeking asylum from persecution are mentioned in various international declarations and conventions. Although international and refugee conventions set out legal rights for asylum seekers and refugees, these are not safeguarded and implemented by the Moroccan authorities. Morocco cannot be considered a safe host country for asylum seekers and refugees. In Morocco refugees enjoy very limited rights to be able to build up a sustainable livelihood. Therefore national and international organisations and the Moroccan civil society aim to assist refugees and migrants in different areas in building up a sustainable livelihood. There are different organisations in various fields that aim to help migrants and refugees in the Moroccan society. UNHCR, OMDH and Amnesty International focus on the legal situation, AMAPPE, FOO and different churches are involved with the social- economic domain and offer assistance and finances to learn a trade and to set up an own business. AU and MSF work in the medical field to assist and help migrants and refugees, but MSF refers migrants with a refugee status often to UNHCR as

refugees fall under their mandate. The work of all these organisations is often executed in the margins of society and within the grey zone of the informal economy.

Apparent is that the larger part of the organisations offers help to Sub Saharan migrants and some explicitly preferably work with Sub Saharan Africans only, like CEI. Furthermore there is a somewhat flexible line between assisting irregularly migrants and refugees. Some, like Caritas, claim to help only migrants without a refugee status because in their opinion that UNHCR is there to help refugees³⁴. Others like Amnesty International and OMDH provide juridical assistance and advice and work on the general issues of Human Rights and legal rights for both migrants as recognized refugees. Jean-Claude³⁵ a refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo illustrates the diverse fields of support and help that relate to one's 'status' as migrant or refugee by saying:

Before I was a refugee, I was a migrant. When I was a migrant my situation was not better. I did not receive any psychological or medical help. I have been a migrant for five months here in Morocco, now as a refugee I receive more support and have less fear because when I am 'refouled', HCR will help me to get back to Rabat.

Besides the organisations that offer assistance to refugees, there are also networks and organisations set up by refugees themselves to provide support amongst them and are vocally present to lobby and seek attention for the dire livelihood situation in which they live, thus creating a pool of social capital. These organisations are part of the social capital of refugees and will be discussed the following chapter.

³⁴ Personal correspondence with Mr. V. Sibout, Caritas, May 13, 2010.

³⁵ Fictive name.

Chapter 5 Livelihoods of refugees in Morocco

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the focus is on the livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco and different forms of, and access to, capital that influence the level of livelihood of refugees in Morocco will be analysed. An analysis of the livelihood situation will enable to give an answer on the second sub-question: What are the significant factors in the lives of refugees in Morocco that determine the access to physical, financial, human and social capital and thus their livelihood situation? This chapter sets out the opportunities, barriers and limitations for refugees in Morocco to reach a sustainable level of livelihood. As discussed in chapter three, in order for a livelihood to be sustainable one needs to have access to different kinds of capital. In this chapter these different kinds of capital will be discussed through using the DFID sustainable livelihood guidance sheet as a source of inspiration. This chapter will focus on the access to human, physical, financial and social capital of refugees in Morocco. The DFID sustainable livelihood guidance sheet also mentions natural capital but because refugees in Morocco live in urban settings this kind of capital is less relevant and will not be taken into account in the analysis. The social context of the different forms of capital and the vulnerability context will be discussed in chapter 6 together with the mobility of refugees.

5.2 Physical Capital

The economic domain within a human life is often referred to as physical capital involving elements like; possessions, commodities, access to services and essential needs. Furthermore physical capital relates to the ownership or rent of housing, owning a television, telephone and computer and having the finances to access services like electricity, clean drinking water, clean clothes and the necessary equipment to take care of personal hygiene. Moreover having the financial opportunity to be able to use public transport is also involved in physical capital. This paragraph will focus on the housing conditions of refugees in Morocco. Why only housing?

Observing the housing situation of many refugees I met in their home it becomes clear that they do not need a large space to stack their belongings. Besides clothes and a bed I often observed one or two chairs, some pictures of family members or special events and almost in every house I saw a television. When refugees welcomed me in their home I often noticed the unmistakable presence of a television, loudly broadcasting its programs into the room we were sitting in. One person related to me when talking about his possessions, that when people from assisting organisations come for a

home visit and see the television they think that the financial situation of the person must be alright, seeing he can afford a television. But the point was to this person the television was a way of coping with time that he has in abundance, too much really. Not being able to work and not having a purpose in his life made him distressed and he felt that he was going crazy. The television brings him distraction. Therefore a television does not point directly to a luxurious asset but can be related to coping with stress and difficult situations. Besides essentials like clothing, some furniture a television and some personal belongings, the refugees do not have many possessions.

5.2.1 Renting and living in a rented house

Because of the absence of a *carte de séjour*, a residence permit, it is difficult for refugees to rent housing in a formal way, but in Morocco the informal sector is thriving. There are small agencies that rent rooms and do not mind the absence of a residence permit; they argue that for a small room no contract is needed³⁶. Many refugees explained to me that a *contrat de baille*, a lease contract, does not exist for refugees and that this makes their legal position as renter vulnerable to the vagaries of landlords. Furthermore for people who cannot fall back on a legal framework, like refugees and irregular migrants, a higher rent is asked. As a refugee from the Middle East explains that for a small room she and her family pay 600 Dirham whereas Moroccans would only pay 200 Dirham.³⁷

The landlords are often Moroccans from the lower class in society who in order to gain extra income rent a room or story of the house they live in to refugees or migrants. In the interviews it was apparent that none of the refugees I spoke with had a positive relationship with their landlord. Often the landlord would threaten to throw them out when they could not pay rent in time, and because the landlord and the family of the landlord often live in the same house this often causes tension.

‘The Moroccans treat us as dogs, I have a very difficult relationship with the landlord, they insult me a lot and often throw our belongings out on the street’.³⁸

A refugee from Central-Africa³⁹ explained that in the Congolese community regularly the renters do not tell the landlord when someone moves out but ask around in the community whether someone is looking for a place to stay. Whenever the landlord enquires after this person that has moved out the other renters tell the landlord that he is traveling and that his brother is living in his room in the

³⁶ Interview with refugee from West-Africa. 5 July, 2010.

³⁷ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 13 July, 2010.

³⁸ Interview with refugee from West-Africa. 3 July, 2010.

³⁹ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 29 June, 2010.

meantime. The Congolese community forms a network through which many refugees who are new in town are able to find a place to stay as is illustrated by what a Congolese refugee told me:

‘In 2005 I came to Rabat and found Congolese friends here. There were Congolese friends in Oujda that gave me the phone numbers of 3 or 4 Congolese that lived in Rabat and I rang them and they picked me up from the train station and I stayed with them in the beginning, after that I went to look for work and another place to stay’.⁴⁰

Some refugees explained that they prefer to live with people from their own community and nationality because according to them that creates the least problems. They share the same culture and understand each other⁴¹. Churches also play a role in helping refugees to find accommodation. Through someone who he met and who also regularly came to the church to pray, Vincent, a refugee from DRC got introduced as a candidate to rent a shared room in a nice house in Salè. Vincent⁴² now shares his room, the salon, shower and toilet with four others who come from DRC and Togo.⁴³

Refugees very often share the house and even the room they rent with other people. People, other refugees, asylum seekers, rejected refugees, irregular migrants, often from the same country of origin, share the cost of the house or room to be able to afford a place to stay. Whole families live in a single room, while the other rooms are shared by single men or women, or a women with child(ren). One of the most precarious housing situation was the situation of a young refugee woman from Iraq who told me her family, that consists of a father, three daughters and a son, rents one room in a house of a Moroccan family, they share the kitchen and bathroom with the Moroccan family.⁴⁴ Sharing a room is however not an option for women who, when needing money, prostitute themselves. A refugee woman, who told me she sometimes sleeps with men to enable her to have enough money for her and her child to live, does not share a room but an apartment with another woman. Therefore sharing a room can be a means to share the cost but not sharing a room can for some people be a strategic option to gain some income.

Besides the crowdedness of the house and large number of people that use one kitchen and bathroom, the living close together creates friendship and networks in which help is given as is illustrated by a refugee woman:

⁴⁰ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 1 July, 2010.

⁴¹ Interview with refugee from West-Africa, 7 July, 2010.

⁴² Fictive name

⁴³ Interview with refugee from Central Africa, 28 June, 2010.

⁴⁴ Interview with refugee from the Middle-East, 14 July, 2010.

‘In the other room lives a woman who came when she was three months pregnant of her son. I have helped her as my daughter and I see her little son as my own child’.⁴⁵

5.3 Financial Capital

The income that refugees receive from (informal) work or through remittances sends from the Diaspora is related to as financial capital. Furthermore money, expenditure and the access to banks and bank accounts also correspond to financial capital. In this paragraph we will look at the income; where do refugees get money from, expenditures; what are the main costs for refugees, remittances; do refugees receive financial support from family or friends in their country of origin or other countries in the world. Lastly the problems with the ability to make use of banking services or bank accounts will be discussed.

5.3.1 Income

Many refugees spoke about the difficulty with earning an income. The income that is indicated in the interviews by the refugees has an average of 621 Dirham⁴⁶ a month and varies between having no incomes at all up to 1700 Dirham on a monthly basis as can be observed in figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1 Indicated income interviewed refugees in Morocco

Indicated income	
1.	No fixed income and sometimes some money from little jobs
2.	Monthly 700 Dirham for being Focal Point UNHCR
3.	Monthly 600 Dirham for being Focal Point UNHCR
4.	Monthly 600 Dirham for being Focal Point UNHCR
5.	Monthly 600 Dirham for being Focal Point UNHCR and sometimes money from good people or the church
6.	Monthly 800 Dirham from FOO to pay rent every month, plus 16 Dirham transport costs each day when I come for schooling to FOO.
7.	Monthly 700 Dirham from FOO; 600 Dirham for herself and 100 Dirham for her child. 16 Dirham transport costs every day when going to FOO
8.	Monthly 600 Dirham for being Focal Point for UNHCR plus additional 100 Dirham for transport for when as a Focal Point need to accompany someone to for example UNHCR or hospital
9.	Monthly 700 Dirham for being Focal Point for UNHCR
10.	No income
11.	As member of the Theatre group at FOO receive 1000 Dirham monthly for transport costs. As teacher Mathematic receives also a small compensation

⁴⁵ Interview with refugee from West-Africa, 3 July, 2010.

⁴⁶ 1 Dirham is equivalent to 0.088 Euro, so 600 Dirham is €52,80

Indicated income	
12.	Monthly 600 Dirham as a Focal Point for UNHCR and additional income as an Arabic's teacher to pay for study, when needed her father provides extra financial assistance
13.	Monthly 600 Dirham as a Focal Point for UNHCR
14.	Monthly 1100 Dirham for teaching women in the Jewellery Cooperation at FOO and 700 Dirham as a Focal Point for UNHCR

These incomes are quite low in comparison to the average income in Morocco which is 2500 Dirham.⁴⁷ The dilemmas and desperation that the low or non-existing income and the inability to find a normal paid job causes for many refugees is illustrated by the following:

'It is hypocrite; it is like the firemen that lighted the fire themselves. We continue to be hungry and I stay in my little corner. When I would steal bread it would be because of the hunger and I would go to prison. OMDH could help me to get out of prison but it cannot solve the real problem, that I am hungry and don't have food. Everybody suffers. We work illegally and there are people that work in the construction; constructing houses and buildings and they have to carry stones and cement all day long and at the end of that long and exhausting working day receive 50 Dirham.'^{48 49}

Earning a normal salary and finding an entrance to work in the informal or formal sector can mean a complete change in living conditions of a refugee as Rose,⁵⁰ a refugee from West-Africa explains:

'When I was doing a house keeping job I worked 5 days a week and earned 2000 Dirham every months. Since the baby I haven't worked anymore. My room costs 700 Dirham each month and I receive 700 Dirham from UNHCR monthly; 600 Dirham for myself and 100 Dirham for my child. That money is for food, because I am sick, but I first pay my rent from it because if I don't have a house what can I do then? Every day when I go to FOO I receive 16 Dirham and that is for food'.⁵¹

However not many refugees succeed in finding a normal or well paid job to acquire an income that helps to meet daily basic essential needs. Often it is only God and controversial survival strategies that a refugee can turn to explains Alice⁵², a refugee from West-Africa: 'C'est Dieu qui m'aide, I can

⁴⁷ 2500 Dirham is €221

⁴⁸ 50 Dirham is €4,-

⁴⁹ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 7 July, 2010.

⁵⁰ Fictive name

⁵¹ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 3 July, 2010.

⁵² Fictive name. Interview with refugee from West-Africa, 6 July, 2010.

wake up in the morning and have nothing, my neighbours can give me something but when I really need money I sleep with men who then give me 200 or 400 Dirham’.

5.3.2 Expenditures

In the interviews refugees mention that the largest part of their income first of all is spent on rent, followed by food, nappies and clothing for babies and electricity. There are some refugees who mention that besides rent the largest part of their income goes to access to the internet, access to drinking water, the church, transport and clothing. Cutting down the food intake is often a strategy to save money to be able to pay rent and electricity. A refugee from the Middle East explains that the health situation in her family is quite bad because they are not eating very well.⁵³ Asking or begging for food or assistance can be against one’s pride as a refugee man from DRC explains: ‘to get enough food is often hard and sometimes I don’t eat for two days. Sometimes people give me 100 Dirham but I do not like to ask, I want to keep my dignity’.⁵⁴

Especially mothers with small children and babies point out that in order to take proper care of their baby they need to buy nappies, milk and suitable food, this takes up a large part of their budget. Especially when a mother is sick, she has to be careful of not contaminating her child. They cannot share the food so she needs to take extra care of food.

‘Je n’arrive pas de subvenir à mes besoins’, explains a refugee woman. ‘The assistance that is given to me is very little and care for my daughter costs a lot: she grows and there are four seasons here in Morocco so I need different clothes for her and she needs food and pampers’.⁵⁵

Another example is a refugee mother from Ivory Coast who receives assistance of 800 Dirham from FOO to pay her rent which is 600 Dirham. That leaves her with 200 Dirham to buy nappies and from the 16 Dirham compensation for transport cost she receives when she goes to FOO, they can buy food.⁵⁶

The refugee who explained that most of his money besides rent goes to internet cost is involved in philosophy courses online.⁵⁷ Furthermore the internet enables him to be involved in politics of his home country and the Diaspora all over the world. Through forums on the internet he discusses the

⁵³ Interview with refugee from the Middle-East, 14 July, 2010.

⁵⁴ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 29 June, 2010.

⁵⁵ Interview with refugee from West-Africa, 5 July, 2010.

⁵⁶ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 29 June, 2010.

⁵⁷ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 28 June, 2010.

situation in his home country. The involvement in the church and transport cost to be able to participate in meetings of the church is also a high cost for this man.

The largest problem for refugees is paying rent and UNHCR and POO mainly receive assistance requests to help with this. The distribution of food baskets that are dispersed every year around World Refugee Day on the 20th of June was welcomed by many refugees but also evoked the question why this is done only once a year and not on a monthly basis.

5.3.3 Financial support and remittances

Asking whether people received financial assistance from family 'back home' or relatives in other parts of the world, the Diaspora, prompted different responses. For a large number of refugees contact with family members does not exist and it is even unknown where their family members are and whether they are still alive. Being confronted and thinking about that was difficult for many respondents. In some cases the women I spoke with had to leave their children behind and had not heard from them ever since they left the country. Many husbands and wives, fathers and mothers had been killed 'back home'. The question about financial support from family back home caused some emotional reactions and responses. This showed that they felt guilty like a refugee woman from Ivory Coast that felt she should remit some money to her family in the village but that she does not have anything she can give away.⁵⁸ One refugee from Iraq mentioned that her family had received financial support from Iraq in the beginning of their stay in Morocco but after a few years this stopped. The husband of a refugee from DRC had managed to travel from Morocco to the United Kingdom but she explained that receiving financial support from him was not yet possible because he had no papers up till now so he cannot work in the United Kingdom.⁵⁹

A refugee from West-Africa received 200 Dirham once in a while from a diplomat from West-Africa with whom he had good contact and who wanted to help him in his situation. But the diplomat has gone back to Ivory Coast and does not support him anymore⁶⁰. Two other refugees relate that the church gives them some financial support every now and again. A refugee from East-Africa explains; 'Sometimes I do receive some money from the church, but that is once in the 7 months that I receive 600 Dirham, but what can you do with that?'⁶¹ People who are involved with the bad situation for

⁵⁸ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 6 July, 2010.

⁵⁹ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 21 July, 2010.

⁶⁰ Interview with refugee from West-Africa, 6 July, 2010.

⁶¹ Interview with refugee from East-Africa, 1 July, 2010.

refugees and migrants in Morocco and want to help sometimes donate some money but this happens through individual relations they have with the person.⁶²

5.3.4 Access to labour market

Access to the formal labour market is hard for refugees who do not have a residency permit that allows them to work. However as discussed in chapter 4, in Morocco there is an informal economy in which informal labour is condoned. This means that there are possibilities and opportunities for those who are not in possession of legal documents. Still many refugees try to find a job in the regular labour market like Patrick⁶³ who wants to work in a call centre and followed training to do this at FOO. He has good qualifications and there are jobs available in that sector. Nevertheless he has received a negative response to all four job applications.

Legal papers are not the only restriction people can experience when searching for a job. Prejudices, racism and a high level of competition for jobs caused by the relative high unemployment rate make the Moroccan informal market a competitive one. Exploitation and bad wages are not uncommon. Furthermore social regulations concerning labour do not exist in the informal sector. This makes people that work in the informal sector vulnerable when for example becoming sick or pregnant as a man, refugee from West-Africa points out:

'In 2006 I worked as a painter but when I became ill I had to stop. I worked for 5 months. When I became sick I could not go to work anymore and there was an inspection after which they said I could not work there any longer.'⁶⁴

Although difficult, refugees are creative when searching for strategies to find work and employment, as is illustrated by a refugee from Central-Africa who had started playing the guitar in his home country. Here in Morocco he sometimes goes to a café or place to play and he would earn 250 Dirham every time he would perform. However he cannot play every day because he does not have a *carte de séjour* to be able to perform on a regular basis.⁶⁵

UNHCR's implementing partners FOO and AMAPPE and the CEI are also involved in offering some informal work to refugees or helping them set up their own business, as is discussed in chapter 4. FOO offers some compensation to refugees who, for example teach refugee children mathematics

⁶² Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 1 July, 2010.

⁶³ Fictive name

⁶⁴ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 1 July, 2010.

⁶⁵ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 7 July, 2010.

lessons, lead the bijoux cooperation or assist with little jobs around the place. AMAPPE stimulates the entrepreneurial skills of refugees by guiding them to set up a small business, but this is not successful for everyone as Pierre and Sylvia explain:

‘I talked with AMMAPE to start a micro project and I wanted to start a micro project as a photographer but my project was rejected because they said it would be too hard and I would not be able to benefit from it, I am now reflecting on what to do now as a micro project’.⁶⁶

Sylvia explains that she really needed work because she had debts and now that she has work at FOO she is able to pay for the rent and the electricity bill.

‘It is good what UNHCR’s partners do. I did a project in 2008 with AMAPPE but that did not work. I bought jewelry from Spain and tried to sell it here but because of the crisis people did not buy a lot of jewelry and I had already debt before. My husband did not work and we did not have a solid situation and income, so it did not work out’.⁶⁷

5.4 Human Capital

Humans develop skills and knowledge throughout life. These skills and knowledge are valuable assets, provided you can do something with them. The human capital of persons contains and is related to personal skills, the access to education and skills training, the access to healthcare, the language one speaks, the level of literacy and gained degrees.

5.4.1 Education

Most refugees do not have access to regular education and healthcare in Morocco. UNHCR works to provide refugees with courses and access to healthcare through their implementing partners FOO and AU. FOO offers many courses for adults and minors and is lobbying to get refugee children into regular Moroccan schools. This happens on a personal level where staff of FOO discuss the matter with the principal of the Moroccan primary school. Furthermore refugees themselves have set up a school to educate their own children, but the teachings are not regular because of limited financial means. However some refugees manage to enter regular education as the situation of a female refugee from Iraq shows. She could enter the Mohammed V University in Rabat and is now enrolled in a Master Political Science. However all other refugees I interviewed could only take courses at FOO.

⁶⁶ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 1 July, 2010.

⁶⁷ Interview with refugee from the Central-Africa, 21 July, 2010.

When analysing the level of education refugees I interviewed have reached, see figure 5.2, it becomes clear that all have enjoyed and finished secondary education referred to as the *baccalauréat*, in short *bac*. Therefore these refugees are educated and literate, although the refugee from Palestine, because of his wandering existence has received only a few years of schooling and is not very fluent in reading and writing. Furthermore most interviewed refugees have done additional studies ranging from 1 to 5 years of university or vocational education in various disciplines like Law, Commerce, Finance, Nursing, Humanities, Arts and Political Science.

Figure 5.2 Highest level of schooling in country of origin

Highest level of schooling in country of origin	
1.	Bac + 4 (Nursing)
2.	Bac + 3 years humanity/administrative/ commercial
3.	Gratuate in RDC, BTS in Morocco
4.	Bac + 2, BTS (law)
5.	Bac + 3 (Ecole superieure Commerce)
6.	High school (Bac)
7.	High school (Bac)
8.	Bac + 5
9.	Bac + 3
10.	Bac +3 Graduate Commercial and Finance Science
11.	Bac + 3 Education and Commerce
12.	University fine Arts. 4 years Communication & Journalism in Morocco now enrolled in Master Political Science.
13.	Went to UNWRA ⁶⁸ school 3 years. Learned to be a mechanic on the street.
14.	Bac +1 institut supérieur financier

The diplomas and received education however do not help a refugee in Morocco to find work that relates to their degree or level of education. In that sense the educational capital is present but cannot be put towards an enhancement of the livelihood situation to reach a sustainable level. People have to find other things to do like Clarice from West-Africa explains:

‘I have a lot of diplomas, a good CV but I still cannot work, so now I am involved with the bijou cooperative’.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ United Nations Relief and Works Agency.

5.4.2 Healthcare

Good health is essential to refugees who are trying to find work or creative ways to make ends meet on a daily basis. The refugees I interviewed suffer from various illnesses ranging from a brain tumor, Hepatitis B, back and digestion problems, to a broken foot and for them access to medical treatment is important. UNHCR's implementing partner concerning healthcare is Action Urgence (AU), a medical clinic situated in one of the suburbs from Rabat. Through AU, refugees have an entrance to healthcare and medicines when needed and many refugees benefit from their services. There are however some complaints among the refugees I interviewed. Besides the fact that AU does good work they are quite slow in processing data⁷⁰ and not always punctual in handling appointments. One refugee complained about a waiting list⁷¹ and therefore she visited the public medical centre closest to her home where general consults are free in the public centre, also for Moroccans. The refugee who suffers from cancer also orientated at MSF in order to receive medical assistance. For her the medical support AU provides was not enough. Some refugees find alternatives for their medical needs besides AU when needing medical assistance. This is illustrated by a man from Central-African:

'Normally I go straight to Action Urgence when I need help throughout the week but now it was a Saturday night and the sister of a friend who works in the hospital gave me something'.⁷²

When needing medicine many refugees go to AU that has an in-house pharmacy or prescribes medicine that the person can pick up for free at another pharmacy. When someone needs to go to the hospital, staff of AU go with them to make sure the refugee receives the proper treatment and AU takes care of the financial side of hospital treatment. Often when refugees knock on the door of Caritas or CEI they are referred to UNHCR and AU with their needs for treatment or health request.

Desperate strategies to gain money can end up in bad health and other related problems. This is illustrated by Louise⁷³, a refugee from West-Africa:

'I am not very healthy at the moment and I don't like asking for help, I want to be able to do everything on my own. But now I don't have the strength to look for a job. I do want to look for work but I am sick now and do not have a lot of energy. Before I had to prostitute myself

⁶⁹ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 6 July, 2010.

⁷⁰ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 1 July, 2010 and interview with refugee from West-Africa, 5 July, 2010.

⁷¹ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 13 July, 2010.

⁷² Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 28 June, 2010.

⁷³ Fictive name

to be able to have some money but I stopped doing that when I was together with my partner. But now he has left me because I did not want to have an abortion, he helped me one month when I was pregnant but after that he stopped supporting me. Now with a child I cannot do any prostitution anymore and I am sick. But money I receive from HCR is little and men often want to stay with me, but I do not want to experience what I have experienced with my daughter again'.⁷⁴

When you are sick your possible actions are limited. When a person is not healthy the opportunities to work are restricted. Health and access to healthcare are crucial for refugees in their living conditions and can be a real strain to many aspects in daily life from income earning activities to taking care of child(ren) as a refugee from Ivory Coast explained:

'I am sick and often tired but I keep myself going for the children. Because when I don't go to the FOO I don't have money to eat. I am sick but I really make an effort. When I am really sick, I leave my children with the neighbour and take myself to the clinic'.⁷⁵

5.5 Social Capital

Social networks that exist among the refugee population in Morocco relate to social capital. Social capital includes furthermore the membership of certain groups, how groups are organized, whether they are homogeneous and use a cost sharing systems and whether a community provide services to its members. Related to social capital is integration into the host society and support received from churches and NGO's and this will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

5.5.1 Refugee communities

When I asked about the relationship with other refugees and migrants many respondents mention that in the Moroccan society every nationality has its own community. Congolese mingle with Congolese and people from Ivory Coast with Ivoirians. These subgroups work as social networks and provide support, advice and information when someone is ill or is trouble. Members of a subgroup help each other.

5.5.1.1 Central African refugee community

The estimations are that the Congolese migrant community in Rabat consists of between 800 and 1000 people (Van Brabant, 2007). There are specific suburbs of Rabat where many Congolese live.

⁷⁴ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 1 July, 2010.

⁷⁵ Interview with refugee from West-Africa, 3 July, 2010.

The main suburb for Congolese is Ain Nahda I where many Congolese refugees and migrants live. Followed by Ain Nahda II where about twenty Congolese live. These Congolese live together and share information, news and problems. Everyone knows when someone is sick or has passed away. Furthermore people built up relations of friendship in the Congolese community.

The participation in the educational courses offered at FOO, has been the basis for many friendships and because some courses can be taken for about two years, participants have regularly contact and one respondent mentioned that he experienced the relationships with his fellow students as that of a tight family⁷⁶. However refugees from DRC point out that they are also friendly to migrants and refugees with other nationalities. They socialize with refugees from all different nationalities but the different nationalities stay more or less within their own group. In their own cultural group they share their problems and information and help each other.

As in many groups, not everything is peaceful. A refugee from Central-Africa explains that she experiences a great deal of jealousy within the refugee community, especially when fulfilling certain functions for UNHCR or partners or participating in an event that involves giving a testimony of her life. However, she feels her frustration that the main thing is that in their community everyone should support each other.⁷⁷ Furthermore one refugee explicitly emphasized that he makes no difference between the status of a refugee and that of an irregular migrant:

‘Je n’en ai pas des frontières! ‘refugee ‘ is a given status. Why create a difference between the two, migrant and refugee? I have friends from Nigeria, Madagascar, Morocco and other countries. I’m a ‘citoyen du monde’!’⁷⁸

5.5.1.2 West African refugee community

The refugees from Ivory Coast were very positive about the refugee community and experienced allot of support especially from their own community of Ivoirians. They explain there are associations and groups for Ivoirian women and Ivorian men where they can share their problems. Refugees from all different nationalities cross paths a lot especially at churches and at FOO. As long as there is respect for all different nationalities all goes well.

⁷⁶ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 14 July, 2010.

⁷⁷ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 21 July, 2010.

⁷⁸ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 7 July, 2010.

5.5.1.3 East African refugee community

The East African refugee community is not very large in Morocco but Ismail⁷⁹ a refugee from Chad whom explained that people in the Chadian community all know each other and he knows everyone inside the Chadian refugee community and has contact with every refugee from Chad.

5.5.1.4 Middle-East refugees

Not all refugees have created an extended and intense network as the Congolese, Ivoirians and Chadians. Not all refugees who come for example from Iraq are in contact with each other. Often the differences between Shiites and Sunnites and political tension stand in the way of creating a close community. There are some political refugees in Morocco and the relationship between the Iraqi refugees is poor. The Palestinian refugees who are in Morocco live all over the country and it is not easy to get into contact with them. Palestinian refugees move in different directions and live in diverse parts of Morocco. Sometimes they meet at UNHCR or FOO but there is no network of Palestinian refugees in Morocco.

5.5.2 Refugees community services

There are different groups, networks and associations that have been formed among asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. They have organized themselves in different organisations of which the *Association des refugies et demandeurs d'asile congolais au Maroc* (ARCOM), the Collectif des réfugiés and RTM are a few examples. These associations record and discuss problems and challenges the members face within their communities and discuss where possible what action to take to solve the problems. In Rabat I met many refugees involved with trying to improve their living situation and the situation of refugees in general in Morocco. Some refugees had been active in politics in their home country and still maintained active through social media. Within the refugee community different networks, structures and organisation have been created to sensitize and seek attention for the situation of refugees and migrants in Morocco.

The services that are provided in these associations vary from giving advice, distribute information, take care of sick people, provide goods or some money and extra care to refugees in need. Furthermore when needed assistance is provided to accompany refugees to the medical clinic, UNHCR or OMDH.

⁷⁹ Fictive name

5.5.2.1 Refugee organisations

ARCOM aims to help and assist refugees in Morocco, not only Congolese, but also people from Ivory Coast, Senegal and Liberia. This network helps refugees in need of assistance in for example going to the hospital, to UNHCR or when having difficulty with money. Furthermore ARCOM has organized a school for refugee children, but for the moment there is no money to rent a building, so the school has temporarily closed. ARCOM also supports refugees on a mental level to support them in their hardships through moral support and council. The vice president of ARCOM, a 54-year old lady from the Central Africa, explained that at the moment there is a lot of tension. Many refugees search for possibilities to have food and employment and experience great difficulties with paying their rent⁸⁰.

The vice president of the *collectif des réfugiés* explained that the *collectif des réfugiés* was created 'to defend the rights of refugees because integration is not possible because refugees cannot obtain a carte de séjour'. The committee of the collectif consist of 11 people with a secretary and 3 vice presidents who are all in charge of different things. The *collectif of refugees* does not present all refugees but about 200 up to 250 refugees. The collectif does not hold a meeting very often but comes together when there is need to. The most important issue that is discussed is protection of refugees. Often the collectif refers people to other aid organisations. Especially when refugees are *refouled* the collectif comes into action. Furthermore they have a lot of contact with the refugees amongst them. The collectif spreads a lot of messages around to ask attention for their situation⁸¹.

Another organisation set up by migrants, with and without a refugee status is the *rassablement des migrants* (RTM) that started out as an organisation of refugees from Ivory Coast but what has developed into a network for all migrants, also for people who do not have a refugee status. RTM aims to make the situation in Morocco well known through media attention.

A lady from Central Africa explained to me that she is the vice president of *Horizon Migrant*, an association consisting of all migrants and refugees of different nationalities; Chadians, Ivoirian and Congolese. They meet every month and discuss problems that have arisen in the refugee community and what they can do to help people to get out of their present bad situation. Furthermore the topics of how to help vulnerable people; sick people, pregnant women and children who need to go to school come up every time.⁸²

⁸⁰ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 2 May, 2010.

⁸¹ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 21 June, 2010.

⁸² Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 6 July, 2010.

The services that are provided in these associations vary from giving advice, distribute information, take care of sick people, provide goods or some money and extra care to refugees in need. Furthermore when needed assistance is provided to accompany refugees to the medical clinic, UNHCR or OMDH.

5.5.2.2 Focal points and leaders

In order to facilitate the mobilization of the community and to communicate messages quickly and effectively to a wide range of refugees, 20 refugees, women and men, have been selected by the UNHCR and the implementing partners in Rabat and Casablanca to act as spokes persons and social assistants. These Focal Points play a key role in the participatory approach and assistance to the refugee community and can act as intermediary between the UNHCR, its partners and the different refugee communities. Their responsibilities vis-à-vis refugees are to inform and involve the refugees in activities of UNHCR, FOO, AU, AMAPPE and OMDHD; to direct them towards the appropriate partner who can assist to the needs of refugees; when necessary accompany them (to hospital, schools, governments, partners); raise awareness on good hygiene and health conditions; assist in data collection and participate in bimonthly information and consultation meetings with the UNHCR. Furthermore the focal points are trained in community mobilization. The objective is ultimately to involve them in the program cycle and the orientation of assistance programs.⁸³

Not all refugees support the system of focal points that represent and support the refugee community. As a refugee from the Central-Africa firmly stated; 'the focal points are the Mafia'⁸⁴. Therefore within the refugee community there are certain wise and respected men and women who act as leaders and for them this works as a counter balance to the focal points, employed by UNHCR. Because the focal points receive 600 Dirham a month for their work from UNHCR, they are sometimes considered by other refugees to 'work for UNHCR' and carry out their policies. However the focal points are appointed to act in the best interest of the refugees and pick up problems that arise in the refugee's community.

5.5.3 Integration and contact with Moroccans

One of the topics in the interviews was integration and contact and relationships with Moroccans. The general tendency amongst the refugees is that contact with Moroccans is hard because of the

⁸³ Interview with Associate Community Service Officer UNHCR, 2 June, 2010.

⁸⁴ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 6 June, 2010

many existing prejudices that create barriers between Moroccans, Sub-Saharan African refugees and refugees from the Middle East. Racism is not uncommon either. For example a refugee related that Moroccans say that Sub-Saharan Africans have a lot of deceases, which they spread in Morocco.⁸⁵ The refugee feels Moroccans do this to give Sub-Sahara Africans a bad name. Furthermore insults and harassments cause refugees to feel unwelcome in the Moroccan society. Examples of these insults which refugees experienced were Moroccans throwing stones at them or refugees being hit on the backside. Another example is Moroccans who throw water inside the house of the sub-Saharan African refugee. Many refugees experience bullying as Ismail from Chad explains: 'It has happened three times to me that someone stopped me. One time men took my arm and bend it on my back and demanded my cell phone. I gave him my phone because what can you do, we are in their country and not at home'.⁸⁶

The Arabic language is for many refugees a barrier in contact with Moroccans. Many refugees from DRC, Ivory Coast and other West-African countries speak French but the main language of Moroccans is Darija. This Moroccan Arabic is hard to learn for Francophone and Anglophone people. Even refugees from the Middle-East who learnt Standard Arabic as a child have difficulties understanding Moroccans. Although there are similarities between Darija and Standard Arabic, there is significant difference which makes it hard to fully understand Moroccans. It is not solely the language that causes problems in contact with Moroccans as Aisha⁸⁷, a refugee from the Middle-East with her Arabic background does not automatically integrate well into the Moroccan culture. She explains how her contact is with Moroccans: 'It's good with modern Moroccans. You saw me just then with the waiter, I kissed him, they are open minded. Others don't even greet. There are open minded Moroccans and not open minded Moroccans, but the not open minded I try to ignore'.⁸⁸

The ambiguous position of refugees in the Moroccan society in relation to integration is illustrated by what a West-African refugee explained about his contact with Moroccans:

'I don't have a lot of contact with Moroccans. I am more friends with other refugees. Moroccans and Sub-Saharan Africans do not have the same culture and that causes clashes. They sometimes throw stones at me. I prefer to guard distance to Moroccans. They have no consideration for blacks. It is not religion but culture and tradition. They look at you as if you

⁸⁵ Interview with refugee from West-Africa, 3 July, 2010.

⁸⁶ Interview with refugee from East-Africa, 1 July, 2010.

⁸⁷ Fictive name

⁸⁸ Interview with refugee from the Middle-East, 14 July, 2010.

are a clandestine and call out 'Espagne' when you walk on the street. No, integration is not easy in Morocco, but there are also nice Moroccans'.⁸⁹

Many refugees point out that adaptation to the Moroccan society and the Moroccan live style is important because they feel like guests in Morocco and not at home. Although it is tough they feel they just have to accept the situation and live with it.

5.5.4 Support churches and NGO's to refugees

Church related organisations, like CEI and Caritas, do give assistance to irregular migrants but Caritas foremost refers refugees with a refugee status to UNHCR. The motivation for this is that they want to help people who cannot receive help from any other organisations. However financial assistance is only given to refugees who UNHCR believes to be in vulnerable situations like elderly or very sick people, (pregnant) women with child(ren), mentally disabled refugees or minors. CEI does not look at whether someone has a refugee status but only gives support to Sub-Saharan Africans by providing psychological assistance, some food packages or medicine for the very needy and vulnerable. Some refugees, who go to church to pray, occasionally receive some money or clothes from the church or fellow church members.

5.5.5 Virtual strategies

In the interviews I noticed that people use different methods to cope with living in Morocco. One way was using telecommunications like the internet and mobile phone. Jacques⁹⁰ a refugee from DRC explained to me that after having done courses in English and computer science he is now involved in autodidactic learning. He searches the internet via Google looking for free education. Particular courses in philosophy; philosophy of the Middle Ages, modern philosophy and Bantu philosophy have his interest. Jacques also focuses a little on law and management. Not everything is free on the internet and it is hard to find the literature that is needed for every course but sometimes he can read a part of the books through the internet. The different courses at FOO that Jacques followed did learn him interesting things but he finds it hard to bring all in practice, like the course in computer science, he has no computer to practice his knowledge and skills on. Another refugee used the internet to enlarge her network and gain some income through visiting dating- and contact sites:

'I search men on the internet. Through chat I have contact with them, they come from Europe and I have contact with them for one or two months, they are men who search for a

⁸⁹ Interview with refugee from West-Africa, 7 July, 2010.

⁹⁰ Fictive name.

women to talk to, and I send them my photograph and give them my phone number and we talk over the phone and sometimes they send me 15 dollars through Western Union'.⁹¹

5.6 Conclusion

Besides some furniture, clothing, a television and some personal belongings, refugees do not possess a lot and often share an apartment or a room with other refugees or irregular migrants to be able to divide the costs. Due to illegal renting agreements refugees are vulnerable to exploitation of the landlord and pay higher prices than Moroccans. As a consequence the physical capital is not of a sufficient level to contribute to a sustainable livelihood.

Furthermore regarding the financial capital the income of refugees varies from non-existing to around 1700 Dirham every month for people who are lucky to have found a job in the informal sector. Others assist UNHCR and FOO with special tasks like being a focal point or teaching, and receiving a compensation for this work. The expenditures of refugees are often more than the revenues, especially for women with a young child that needs special care and things like nappies and baby food. Financial support is marginal and occasionally given by individuals who are engaged with the situation of refugees or by the church. Because of the difficult situation in Morocco and back home there is no question of sending remittances to the home country or receiving financial support from family or friends in the country of origin. The biggest strain to the financial capital of refugees in Morocco is the limited access to the labour market. There are jobs available but because most refugees do not possess a residence permit they cannot sign a labour contract. These factors cause a real strain to the financial capital.

Regarding Human capital it is quite striking how high the highest received level of education is under the interviewed refugees. Many hold higher education degrees. The skills, knowledge and experience that correspond with different degrees is there but cannot be used because of the barrier the absence of residency permits causes. Healthcare and access to healthcare are very well organized by UNHCR who provides free consults and medicine to refugees. However this healthcare is quite basic and refugees with more severe illnesses do need more support than they can acquire from AU.

Regarding social capital, refugees have built up many and strong networks in which they support each other in as many ways as possible. For refugees from Ivory Coast, DRC and Chad the cultural groups are strongly connected to each other and provide support and services to members of the

⁹¹ Refugee from Central-Africa, 6 July, 2010.

community. Other refugee communities like the refugees from Iraq and Palestine live dispersed throughout Morocco and have not created such support networks. Support from churches and NGO's is marginal and refugees in Morocco usually have to fend for themselves.

Chapter 6 Geographical and social mobility

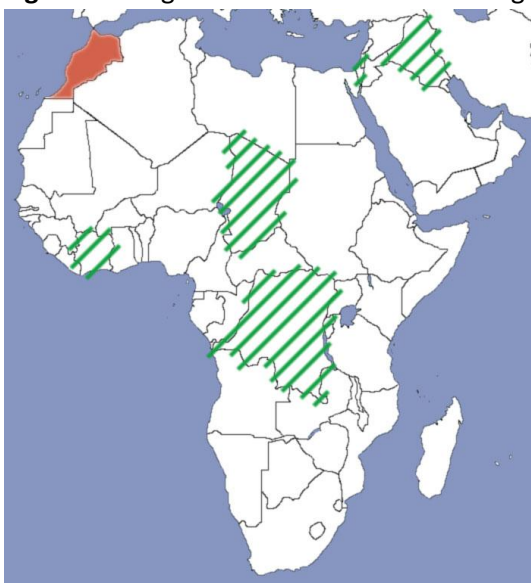
6.1 Introduction

To be able to answer the general research question how the livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco is related to their social and geographical mobility, this chapter deals with mobility. The focus of this chapter is the movement of refugees in Morocco in the spatial and social domain to provide an answer to the second sub question: How geographically and socially mobile are refugees in Morocco? In this chapter geographical mobility will first be discussed in paragraph 6.2, followed by the social mobility of refugees in Morocco in paragraph 6.3.

6.2 Geographical mobility

First we will look into how refugees move through geographical space; where do they come from and how did they reach and enter Morocco, what is their migration trajectory until now and what does the 'field of possibilities for mobility' include for refugees, or maybe more important, exclude. Secondly we will focus on *motility*, the capacity and capability for movement in geographical, social and economic space and how motility relates to livelihood strategies. Finally we will look into to what extent geographical movement makes refugees mobile or immobile and how is this influenced by the livelihood situation. In Chapter three I defined being geographically mobile as having the choice and agency for movement. Moreover it was discussed that to be geographically mobile means to be able and have the capacity and capability for movement that transcends fluidity; the daily repetitive movement from for example the shop to home. In the next section I will use data gathered during my fieldwork in Morocco to analyse the geographical mobility of refugees in Morocco.

Figure 6.1 Regions where interviewed refugees come from



6.2.1 Origin of refugees in Morocco and migratory trajectory

Research suggests that that 90% of migrants from Sub-Sahara Africa enter Morocco via Oujda (Schapendonk, 2008). Entering Morocco is for many refugees and migrants not a difficult hurdle with the prerequisite of having some money to be taken across the border as a refugee from Central-Africa explains: 'There are always people there that can take you, when you have money'.⁹²

The largest group of refugees that are currently in Morocco come from West- and Central Africa; Ivory Coast, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Middle East; Iraq and the Occupied Palestinian territories. But among the people I interviewed there were also people from East-Africa. Furthermore there are refugees from Cameroun, Liberia and Congo-Brazzaville who are recognized by UNHCR and live in Morocco. As an illustration of the migration routes that exist from west and central Africa to Northern Africa and Europe I have included a map, see figure 6.2, developed by de Haas (2007) who conducted research on migration routes in Africa.

The refugees from Central-Africa entered Morocco through Algeria near the city of Oujda. There is a sophisticated and well organized network of Nigerians, Congolese and people from Ivory Coast who take people across the Moroccan-Algerian border to Oujda. There is a set price for crossing from Algeria to Morocco which lays around 150 Euro's; the price all refugees mentioned in the interviews for being taken across the border. A refugee from East-Africa relates: 'There were Nigerian, Malinese and Congolese friends who knew where the police patrols and the barriers were. We travelled at night in a 4X4. We didn't have any problems with the police because the people who took us knew the way very well'.⁹³ The existence of a well-organized network of people smugglers makes the Algerian-Moroccan border near Oujda a popular entry point for migrants who do not poses (the correct) travel documents and many refugees and migrants without papers use this route to enter Morocco. This route is not necessarily trouble free and people taking this route experience expulsions as a refugee woman from Central Africa explains:

'I came without papers via the road, through Oujda. After I came to Rabat I was send back to the border of Algeria, near Oujda. I had applied for asylum already and after three weeks I received my refugee status. I was 2 or 3 months pregnant when I was expulsed near Oujda. In Oujda the Catholic Church and Medicines Sans Frontiers helped me a lot. I gave birth to a girl in Oujda and after this they [MSF] paid the transport to return to Rabat'.⁹⁴

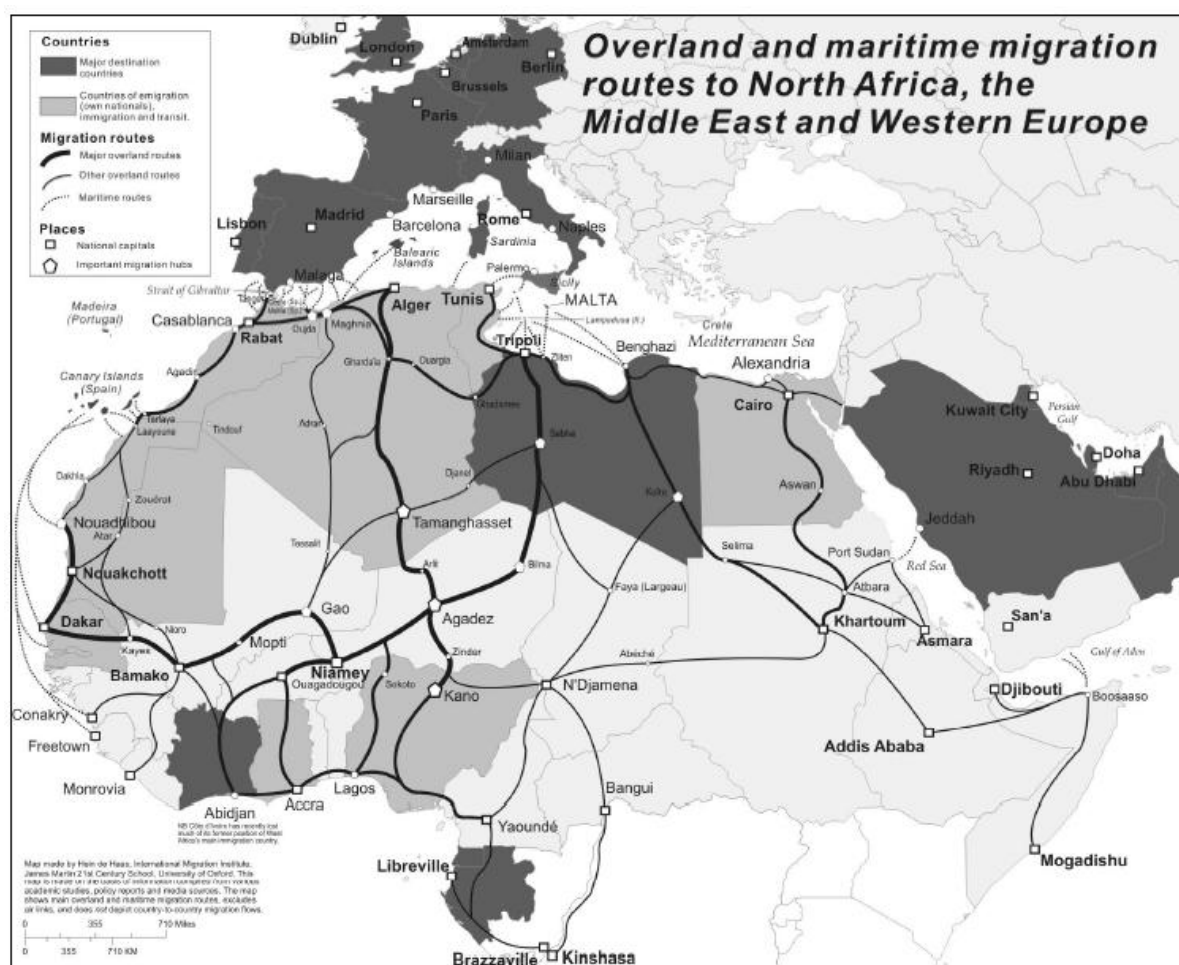
⁹² Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 13 July, 2010.

⁹³ Interview with refugee from East-Africa, 1 July, 2010.

⁹⁴ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 6 July, 2010.

Refugees from West Africa have taken different routes to Morocco both through Mauritania to Morocco and through Mali and Algeria across the Algerian-Moroccan border near Oujda. A refugee woman from West-Africa explains: 'I came with a big truck with vegetables from Mauritania over the road. I didn't have any legal documents with me. We gave a lot of money to the driver and they took us across the border'.⁹⁵ Another woman explained her migration trajectory through the east: 'I came via the road through Gao in Mali, and Tamanrasset in Algeria. I didn't have a passport with me; I did have my birth certificate. I came in Morocco through Oujda'.⁹⁶

Figure 6.2 Migration routes



Source: de Haas (2007) p. 17

Also among refugees from Ivory Coast *refoulement* occurred: 'because of the war I could not take any official documents. I came through Mali, Algeria and passed through Oujda. I have been *refouled*

⁹⁵ Interview with refugee from West-Africa, 3 July, 2010.

⁹⁶ Interview with refugee from West-Africa, 5 July, 2010.

twice and have been taken to the border with Algeria. They let you out and then you have to walk yourself across the border', explains a man from Ivory Coast.⁹⁷

A refugee from East-Africa used a regular way to enter Morocco but slipped into unauthorized residency in Morocco as he explains: 'I came to Morocco with a passport and applied for a *carte de sejour* and received one but since 2003 it has been expired and I could not renew it. I came by plane and flew, via Nigeria, to Mohammed V airport in Casablanca'. A refugee from the Middle-East who was born in a refugee camp in Beirut and who has lived in various places in the world including Germany, Libya and Morocco explains:

'I have a *carte de sejour* for Morocco because I married a Moroccan woman when I lived in Libya. Khadaffi then expelled refugees from the country so I left Libya and lived in the Sahara for 2 years. After that I went back to the Libyan-Egyptian border because of my Moroccan wife who I married in Libya. For my work I have a car registration certificate, my wife had to arrange that for me, I have that for 4 years now. Now I can work but nobody gives me work because there is no work here in Morocco. Because of my back operation, 3 years ago, I cannot carry more than 10 kilo's and now I'm only fit for practical work, so I have to work in the streets. Before my operation I had a garage 'Garage Barina' in Casablanca. But now life with Moroccans is not good. There are plenty of problems and I am going crazy'⁹⁸

A refugee from Iraq explains that she and her family fled Bagdad in 2004 by first travelling to Jordan by car. From Jordan the family flew, via Tunis to Morocco. All of them had passports and visa for Morocco organized by friends of her father, who had studied in Morocco when he was younger.

6.2.2 Destination: Morocco. Why?

Looking at the map of Africa the question arises why refugees chose to come to Morocco, seeing Morocco is situated thousands of kilometres away from DRC or Ivory Coast. However there are refugees who do not feel safe fleeing to a neighbouring country and travel as far as possible, away from their country of origin and end up in Morocco. Because Morocco is a kingdom and has the reputation of a stable and hospitable nation, before the unrest that started in the spring of 2011, the country enjoys a good reputation and is seen as a positive place to find refuge for a relative small number of refugees. As mentioned in chapter one of this thesis, most refugees stay in their region, closer to home. Furthermore Morocco borders with Europe and many refugees think this offers

⁹⁷ Interview with refugee from West-Africa, 7 July, 2010

⁹⁸ Interview with refugee from the Middle-East, 21 July, 2010.

opportunities to travel on to Europe if Morocco would not fulfil their expectations. In several other cases there is a connection with Morocco; some refugees are married to a Moroccan or have studied in Morocco through an exchange program like many Congolese and Liberians for example.⁹⁹

The urge to travel as far away possible from the country of origin is illustrated by a refugee woman from Central-Africa who first fled to Congo Brazzaville. It was however not safe enough for her to stay there. With acquaintances from her killed husband she travelled further on to Chad and through Sudan to Libya and Algeria where she worked for nine months. There she experienced hardship and depression because she felt 'like being in a prison with all those people *sans papiers* without any prospects'. That is why she left Algeria to go to Morocco.¹⁰⁰ This illustrates that migratory routes change under influence of the circumstances and are redefined under way (Schapendonk, 2008). In a study on immobility of transit migrants in Morocco Schapendonk (2008) found that some migrants intentionally chose Morocco as they perceive the country as a safe haven a country with some job opportunities. Unintentionally migrants can end up in Morocco due to 'spontaneous' migration, creating new goals and destinations along the way due to various inputs and influences. Furthermore some migrants were brought and left in Morocco by smugglers, who told them it was Europe.

6.2.3 Dreaming of going to...

Refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo have travelled thousands of kilometres to reach Morocco. This applies also for refugees from Ivory Coast, Chad, Iraq and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. For many refugees living in Morocco, the country does not provide all the opportunities they wished for. Many refugees have been motivated to travel on in search of a better place for them to live. More or less all refugees I spoke with during my stay in Morocco strongly wished to be resettled to a different country with better livelihood opportunities for refugees. However the Protection Officer at UNHCR in Rabat explained that on a yearly basis only around 30 refugees from Morocco get the chance to resettle in another country in North-America, Europe or Australia. In 2009, 27 refugees were resettlement and for 2010 UNHCR expected between 30-35 resettlements. UNHCR does not wish to set up high profile resettlement programs because this will attract refugees to Morocco. Morocco is used as transit country by refugees to go to Europe and Moroccan authorities are already under pressure from the European Union to clamp down on immigration into the European Union from Morocco (Lindstrom, 2002).

⁹⁹ Interview 22 July 2010 with Protection Officer UNHCR Rabat

¹⁰⁰ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 9 May, 2010.

Some refugees leave Morocco on their own accord and find irregular ways to reach Europe as a woman, refugee from DRC, explained; 'my husband has left and is in Great Britain now since March 2010, he was also a refugee but there was no life for him here'. Life in Morocco had traumatized her husband she explains as she continues:

'When we were asylum seekers still, one time my husband was walking on the street and he was arrested by the police and put in prison for six months. They used false accusations, written in Arabic. At first they took him to clarify his papers but they kept him in prison. I went to the landlord who was a lawyer because there was no OMDH yet then to help us get my husband out of prison. After six months he was expelled to Oujda. He has been traumatized by the event and did not want to stay in Morocco, he cannot work here. So he found someone who could help him to go to Europe'.¹⁰¹

6.2.4 Expulsions

The lack of legal protection and the fear of *refoulement* or unjust behaviour cause many refugees in Morocco to think about other options. Under international refugee law refugees cannot be arrested and expelled because their refugee status should protect refugees against *refoulement* (Article 33 of the Refugee convention). *Refoulement* happens quite a deal less than a couple of years ago. According to GADEM¹⁰² who talks of deportations, they began slowly after the introduction of the Schengen convention in 1982 and increased around 2000. With a rapid increase in 2005 related to the events in Melilla and Ceuta where hundreds of Africans stormed the gates of the border between Spain and Morocco that separate Europe and Africa (van Brabant, 2007). However *refoulement* is still a real fear to many refugees living in Morocco and many of the interviewees or close relatives have experienced *refoulement* themselves, at least once.

The situation in Morocco is different compared to 2005. Refugees and asylum seekers are officially protected now through UNHCR, as are pregnant women and children. Nowadays there are fewer deportations. In 2006 and 2007 there were regularly raids in Takadoum where people were taken to be deported. Takadoum is a low-income suburb of Rabat where many poor Moroccans, irregular migrants and refugees live. When people are deported the explaining reason is often not their irregular situation but motivated by other accusations like for example the illegal selling of alcohol¹⁰³.

¹⁰¹ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 21 July, 2010.

¹⁰² Groupe antiraciste d'Accompagnement et de Défense des Etrangers et Migrants

¹⁰³ Interview with Juridical Officer of GADEM, 15 June, 2010

Uncertainty is one of the key factors that makes life hard for refugees and that motivates them to search for a place with less uncertainties and more opportunities. UNHCR does provide some protection but is also restrained due to budget, mandate and the political situation in Morocco. That things can change quite suddenly is illustrated by the closing down of UNHCR's office in Tripoli, this has great effect on the feeling of security of refugees as a refugee explained: 'Now the UNHCR office in Libya is closed down it shows all the more how uncertain everything is, it can also happen here, it is a chain reaction of uncertainties'.¹⁰⁴

When refugees are *refouled* or arrested in Oujda the legal officers of UNHCR's partner OMDH take action to persuade the *Commissariat*¹⁰⁵ to release the refugee, pointing to the Refugee Convention and what it entails to have the status of a refugee.¹⁰⁶ OMDH in Oujda has handled 200 cases since January 2008 and has around four cases every month. However the work of UNHCR and OMDH does not create a safe feeling for many refugees as a refugee from Central-Africa explains: 'I fight every day to not go mad. Am I pessimistic? I do not expect a lot from OMDH and am getting tired of having too much hope'.¹⁰⁷

In the interviews it became apparent that refugees themselves experience that *refoulement* is becoming less. This is partly a result of the increasing awareness of the refugee status through the work of UNHCR in training and education of the Moroccan police force. This increases 'the power of the laminated refugee card'. A refugee man from Central-Africa explains: 'When I was in Casablanca they once came to my house but I was not there, I just left half an hour before. They arrested two Senegalese and one person from Ivory Coast that had a *carte de séjour* that was expired. The refugee card does protect against *refoulement* but it does not give any access to anything that is necessary to really help us'.¹⁰⁸ A refugee from East-Africa explained: 'We are a bit protected in comparison with the years before. With our papers [refugee card] that are recognized now, but we don't have any access to work!'¹⁰⁹

Not all policemen have extensive knowledge about refugees and the Refugee Convention, because of this there exists fear among the refugees as a man, refugee from DRC told me in an interview: 'I do

¹⁰⁴ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 28 June, 2010.

¹⁰⁵ Interview 25 July 2010 with Juridical Officer of OMDH in Oujda.

¹⁰⁶ Interview 25 July 2010 with Juridical Officer of OMDH in Oujda.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 28 June, 2010.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 29 June, 2010.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with refugee from East-Africa, 1 July, 2010.

have a card but the police don't all recognize it'.¹¹⁰ A refugee from Ivory Coast states: 'The Refugee card protects us a little bit, but not a lot. Often we are stopped by the police and it helps us then to not get arrested but we cannot work with it and our children cannot go to school'.¹¹¹

Others do not experience protection because of their refugee status at all: 'The police has *refouled* me just like everybody else, the carte did not protect against anything',¹¹² thus pointing to the need of UNHCR's work to be expanded so that all Moroccan police officers are aware of the protection of refugees in their country under the Refugee Convention. A man from West-Africa explains that the refugee card does not mean a lot: 'It only shows the difference between being a refugee and being a clandestine'.¹¹³ That a refugee status has also different connotations for different people is illustrated by what a woman refugee from Iraq explained to me in an interview: 'You cannot say that you are a refugee because all Arabs think badly of you; they think that it means that you have run away from your home or that you have killed someone'.¹¹⁴

Bad livelihood opportunities, the lack of protection, the constant uncertainty and fear motivate refugees to use geographical mobility to search for a better living environment. The 'field of possibilities' is however limited. The absence of travel documents makes it hard to travel in the regulated system. It is doubtful whether refugees have a free choice to decide to move on to other places. They are limited to make this decision using regulated ways but also the irregular migration routes need money and strength because of the difficult circumstances irregular migration subsist. Therefore the motility; the capacity and capability of movement of refugees are quite low. The livelihood situation of refugees has a great impact on the geographical mobility of refugees and motivates an outlook in search of a place with better livelihood opportunities. One by many refugees desired way to achieve this is through resettlement but this is not a given for everyone. Thus looking at the geographical mobility of refugees, the ability to chose and have agency in movement, the mobility is limited if not for some absent. On a spatial level refugees are often 'stuck' in the Moroccan society, most are not able to use regulated means to migrate on to countries with better livelihood opportunities. Speaking of refugees in Morocco geographical immobility is rather the rule than the exception.

¹¹⁰ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 1 July, 2010.

¹¹¹ Interview with refugee from West-Africa, 3 July, 2010.

¹¹² Interview with refugee from West-Africa, 5 July, 2010.

¹¹³ Interview with refugee from West-Africa, 7 July, 2010.

¹¹⁴ Interview with refugee from the Middle-East, 14 July, 2010.

6.3 Social mobility

As discussed in chapter three, social mobility is the movement of a person within the social hierarchy of a society. The degree in which a person can ‘move’ within social space determines whether a society is open or closed. In this paragraph the social mobility of refugees in Morocco will be discussed through looking at the professions of the fourteen refugees I interviewed and see whether it is possible for them to continue their profession like they did in their country of origin and whether they move up- or downward on the social ladder.

Figure 6.3 Employment in land of origin and in Morocco

	Employment in land of origin	Current employment in Morocco
1.	Paediatric nurse at a hospital (UMC)	None. In Rabat she tries to find little jobs for example as a cleaning lady.
2.	Student	None. Applied three times at a call centre but with negative response.
3.	Student	None. Unemployed computer scientist
4.	Owner of a small transport company. Owned big transport cars/trucks and two busses to transport people	None. Two years ago he had a job for one year as a French teacher; he gave French lessons to three students, children of diplomats from Burkina Faso and Congo.
5.	Entrepreneur Owned two shops, one with clothing and the other with general items	None. Focal point for UNHCR
6.	Veterinarian Assistant in a private vegetarian Clinique	None. Works voluntarily in the couture cooperation at FOO
7.	Student in Commerce	None Because of sickness
8.	Supervisor in Research and Marketing office	None. Focal Point for HCR
9.	Owner of a medium Textile shop.	None. Focal Point for UNHCR and did small jobs like tutoring students and as an educator for HIV/Aids sensibilisation campaign. Did some small jobs at FOO with festivals and manifestations.
10.	Policy Officer at the ministry of interior at the General Direction for Migration.	None.
11.	Entrepreneur. Bought in general commerce	None. Member of a theatre group at FOO and teaches mathematic lessons to refugee minors.

	Employment in land of origin	Current employment in Morocco
12.	Student in fine arts	Part-time job as Arabic teacher. Student Master Political Science at University Mohammed V.
13.	Mechanic	Street sales-man. Sells things like Kleenex and cigarettes
14.	Student	None. Teacher of Jewellery class at FOO and Focal Point for

As shown in figure 6.3 many refugees are skilful people with ambitious careers ranging from being a student, paediatric nurse, entrepreneur, policy officer, supervisor to being a mechanic. However in Morocco, none have managed to find employment equivalent to the work they did in the country of origin. A student from the Middle East created her own job by teaching Standard Arabic to Moroccan children and a former mechanic became a street salesman, selling Kleenex tissues along the street. Some refugees mention they have done little jobs in the past like washing clothes, tutoring schoolchildren or teaching French. Others became involved in voluntarily jobs at FOO like a refugee from Central-Africa who used to be a student back home and now teaches the women of the jewellery cooperative at FOO. Many refugees are desperate to find a job. Although there is a thriving informal labour market the unemployment rate in Morocco is high. According to ILO statistics¹¹⁵ the unemployment rate was 9.4% in 2008. This makes it hard to compete with jobs in the informal market and without a work permit the formal labour market is without reach for most refugees.

Looking at the intra-generational mobility and comparing the employment of refugees in the country of origin to the employment situation now in Morocco it is not hard to see that their situation has not improved. All refugees I interviewed experienced downward social mobility with maybe the exception of the refugee from the Middle East who studied fine arts in the home country and is now enrolled in a Master Political Science at the university in Rabat. The main reason to this downward mobility can be found in the restricted access to the labour market. This causes weak financial capital which is one of the significant cornerstones on which the livelihoods of refugees in Morocco are built.

6.3.1 Vulnerability context

Positive political systems and constructive regulations are significant to enable social mobility in a society. Though when systems and regulations do not create a constructive environment in which

¹¹⁵ <http://laborsta.ilo.org/STP/guest>. Accessed June 30, 2011.

members of the society can develop and grow people can become vulnerable to harsh conditions. Although refugees have received an official status, refugees in Morocco remain vulnerable. What makes them vulnerable is the absence of legal recognition by the Moroccan state. Refugees are recognized under international law as people in need of protection and assistance to build up a life in the host country. Having fled the home country because of war or persecution, many refugees do not have much more than the clothes they wear when they arrive in Morocco. Although UNHCR works to assist and aid refugees through providing health care, schooling, juridical assistance and the opportunity to set up a small business, it is the Moroccan government that blocks the way that can lead refugees out of vulnerability. Until refugees are accepted and incorporated into the regulated Moroccans system by granting them a residence permit so that they have access to the labour market and regular education, their position within the Moroccan society will remain vulnerable.

Without legal recognition by the Moroccan authorities refugees are easily exploited and no authority can protect them as is explained by a refugee from central Africa:

‘There are good and bad people and you have to be careful because as a refugee you are in a ‘vulnerable situation’ and you are easily exploited. We pay a much higher rent in comparison to Moroccans, we do not get an invoice for electricity. I do not have an electric device in my room but I had to pay an electricity bill for 200 Dirham, without them showing an invoice’.¹¹⁶

In particular refugee women are vulnerable as they are away from the protection of their homes, their government and or their family structure that otherwise would provide protection. Many female refugees related in their narratives to harassments and being raped during their migration. But still in Morocco refugee women get assaulted. A refugee women from Central-Africa relates: ‘Last year I was at the sit-in and I was near the American embassy when one policemen grabbed my skirt and threw it away so that everyone could see my lower body that was naked, he said we were not worth to live here and stay here in Morocco’.¹¹⁷ Furthermore when women become pregnant they need extra care and food to feed the baby, when once born. With a small child a women has less time and needs to take extra measures when going to work.

¹¹⁶ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 28 June, 2010.

¹¹⁷ Interview with refugee from Central-Africa, 6 July, 2010.

6.3.2 Is legal status enough?

Refugees in Morocco do receive a refugee status under international law from UNHCR. With this status they have access to certain facilities that asylum seekers and irregular migrants do not, as is explained by a refugee from West Africa:

‘I earn some money as a Focal Point and with doing little jobs. When my wife came to Morocco I went with her to Caritas to see whether they can help her to start up something, she is a hairdresser and she does traditional medicine, she has healing powers. We also went to HCR to put in an asylum application and they gave us an appointment for an interview. She also fled from the war and we hope she also receives refugee status because otherwise it is very expensive here, to be able to profit from the assistance of HCR you need to have a refugee status’.¹¹⁸

Recognition by UNHCR offers a refugee assistance and support in certain areas but legal recognition under national law would lift the structural constraints to a good livelihood situation. Recognition by the Moroccan authorities would allow refugees to integrate in the Moroccan society and enlarge their economic activities to the formal sector. Furthermore refugees would be able to use their diplomas and degrees to find employment; this would be a significant impetus for the social mobility. However the situatedness of the Moroccan society, a high unemployment rate and the competition with Moroccans to find a job does not necessarily change the life of a refugee with legal status into an easy life. Also for many Moroccans it is difficult to make ends meet and thus likewise refugees who would not be able to find a job, due to their level of education, racism or other factors would face the same challenges. When a legal status erases the fear of expulsions and being arrested, the uncertainties which trouble a large number of refugees will change and refugees will be in a position to choose to stay in Morocco and integrate into the Moroccan society.

6.3.4 Self-reliance and empowerment

In Morocco UNHCR's policy related to assisting refugees is based on self-reliance and empowerment with strong emphasis that refugees should not be dependable on UNHCR but be able to help themselves and find a durable solution to their situation. However having analysed the situation in Morocco in the previous chapters it becomes clear that there are a few heavy strains that prevent this policy from being successful in the Moroccan context. The Moroccan government, who ratified the Convention of 1951 that states that refugees should for example have access to the labour

¹¹⁸ Interview with refugee from West-Africa, 7 July, 2010.

market of their host country, does not apply the convention; leaving refugees to fend for themselves not offering a legal framework to enable refugees to build up a sustainable livelihood.

Jacobsen (2005 in Horst 2006) proposed a rights-based approach to assist refugees based on three principles: First of all a safe zone of legal residence needs to be designed by the host countries where refugees can settle. Secondly the social- and economic rights written down in the 1951 Geneva Convention should be assigned to the refugees. Thirdly health, education and financial services should be provided to refugees and non-refugees in the designated areas. Jacobsen (2005) however does not take into account the integration issue when reserving a separate space for refugees only, separating them from nationals from the host society. Especially for refugees who are in a 'long-term refugee situation' are helped with integration into the host society. This will bring them a sense of belonging and more opportunities to learn the language and to be included in Moroccan networks.

6.4 Are moving refugees mobile?

The fact that many refugees have travelled thousands of kilometres to reach Morocco would suggest that refugees are mobile people. However in my opinion movement and being mobile is not the same thing and therefore I included a social element in the definition of geographical mobility in chapter three. Being forced to move without having a choice and influence on how and when limits the mobile sense of movement. Aspiration of refugees to migrate further to places with better livelihood circumstances is high. But the capabilities to achieve this are low, especially for vulnerable like women and mothers with children. First of all refugees often lack legal documents like passport or birth certificate and without being able to identify it is more difficult to move around to places with better livelihood opportunities. Furthermore financial means are limited for many, whose primary worry is how to manage the week with food and rent. Thus the choice for geographical movement is through the limited capabilities quite restricted. The immobility and the downward social mobility of many refugees in the Moroccan society have foremost to do with the absent Moroccan framework and the inability to take in refugees and provide them with the proper care and means of existence. Foremost the denial of an access to the labour market is a significant strain to the livelihood situation and therefore affects the social and geographical mobility of refugees in Morocco. Therefore moving refugees are not necessarily mobile.

6.5 Conclusion

Refugees do move geographically and make choices but to say that refugees are geographically mobile according to the definition set out in chapter three cannot be grounded in the data gathered

during the fieldwork. Initially the migration trajectory generally does not start with a balanced decision to migrate to another place but was forced through many other factors than choice and agency. After the initial migration started a refugee however can decide to migrate further and to a specific country and Morocco is by many refugees chosen for a reason as mentioned before. The image that exists of Morocco as a relative stable and safe country, a constitutional monarchy in the close vicinity of the European border, attracts many migrants and refugees. Furthermore as a middle income country Morocco can offers people from lower income countries opportunities.

Refugees experience downward social mobility, the main cause for this is the absence of a work permit. Many refugees are highly skilled and highly educated and worked in ambitious professions in their country of origin. In Morocco there is no possibility to continue on the same level. To find a job alone is a challenging task, even work like cleaning or washing clothes is often without reach. This is also due to the high unemployment rate in the Moroccan society, where the competition for jobs is high. Furthermore existing racism in the Moroccan towards sub-Saharan Africans causes exclusion. Due to a limited access to the labour market that is included in financial capital, refugees experience a downward mobility. Thus the bad livelihood situation is partly the cause for downward mobility but foremost are the regulations and institutions like the Moroccan state that limit in many ways the access to diverse forms of capital and thus the development of a sustainable livelihood for refugees in Morocco.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

One thing becomes clear in this thesis: for Zody from DRC and Mohammed from Iraq their livelihood situation will not change if the Moroccan government does not take action. For their living conditions to improve they need to be recognized as a refugee by the Moroccan state, not only by UNHCR. The Moroccan authorities need to take action to implement an efficient framework to be able to support and protect refugees. To enable refugees to have sustainable livelihoods the Moroccan government must let them contribute to the Moroccan society with their professional skills and knowledge. In that way people like Zody and Mohammed will not only be able to build up a sustainable livelihood but also develop self-reliance and become a valuable asset to the Moroccan society.

The aim of this research was to gain an insight into the livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco and how the livelihood situation relates to the geographical and social mobility. In the past six chapters various aspects of the livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco have been discussed. Furthermore the relation between the livelihood situation and mobility was analysed. This chapter will provide an overview of the most important aspects that have come forward concerning the structural constraints to a sustainable livelihood for refugees in Morocco and the negative effect this has on the social and geographical mobility. Furthermore the research question that was formulated in chapter one will be answered using the two sub-questions as guidance.

Institutions and the absence or non-compliance with international regulations in Morocco and the perception of refugees within the Moroccan society have proven to be the main constraint to refugees to build up a sustainable livelihood. In this concluding chapter this will be set out first by discussing the perception of refugees in the Moroccan society and the influence of gender and the urban context. Secondly the limitations experienced by refugees in the Moroccan society for building up a sustainable livelihood will be set out and finally the influence of an unsustainable livelihood situation on social mobility and geographical mobility will be explained.

7.2 Perception of refugees as irregular migrants

As discussed in chapter two, although refugees are no different to 'general' migrants (regular, irregular, economic, forced or voluntarily) in the way they use the migratory routes and networks, the reason for migration is a significant factor that requires special attention. Within the flows of

migration both refugees and migrants move between regular and irregular statuses. I argue that within the general flow of migration it is important to take the different starting points of the migratory process of refugees compared to other migrants into account. When being forced to move due to persecution or armed conflict it is important that the host society in where these migrants search for a refuge offer refugees specific assistance and protection that is set out under international law in the Refugee Convention and the AOU Convention.

The dissimilarity between refugee and irregular migrant is in many ways not recognized by Moroccan authorities and in the Moroccan society. This has ramifications for the manner in which Moroccans receive refugees on their territory. Morocco struggles to manage the thousands of irregular Sub-Saharan migrants that live on their soil. The fear of attracting more irregular migrants makes Moroccan authorities reluctant to cooperate with UNHCR and other human rights organizations to set up a legal framework in which asylum applications can be processed (van der Klaauw, 2010). The Moroccan ministry of Foreign Affairs closed the department that processed asylum applications in 2004 and UNHCR partly took over the asylum application procedure through the Refugee Stratus Determination (RSD) but is only involved with recognize people who are refugees under the Refugee Convention and the AU Convention. This has effect on the wider Moroccan society where refugees are often seen as irregular migrants waiting for a chance to go to Europe. Perceived as irregular 'fortune seekers' on Moroccan soil, refugees face racism and negative attitudes from Moroccans. UNHCR aims to educate Moroccan officials, like the police force, in international refugee law in order to draw attention on the refugee situation in Morocco and make Moroccan authorities aware of refugee rights. Furthermore other organizations like Amnesty International, GADEM and OMDH work for recognition of human rights of refugees and migrants. Through annually organising the Festival Rabat Africa FOO is involved with changing the negative perception of sub-Sahara Africans in Morocco by focussing on the valuable side of Sub-Saharan African culture through music, art and cuisine.

7.3 Context of Vulnerabilities

In particular refugee women under marginal circumstances are vulnerable to destructive coping mechanisms like using prostitution to gain an income. This survival strategy is often the last resort and it illustrates how little opportunities some refugee women have in the Moroccan society. Away from the extended family structure they are vulnerable and often victim of sexual violation along the migratory route and in the host society (Laacher, 2010; mediciens sans frontiers, 2010). However also in Morocco the refugee community alone does not have the means to fully support and protect

these women. Although organisations like UNHCR, CEI and Medicines sans Frontiers, are extra sensitive towards this issue and provide some financial assistance, due to budget constraints, there is no structural support for refugee women in Morocco. As long as the Moroccan government does not recognize refugees on their soil and provides residency or working permits, it will remain hard for women to make a living, in particular when they need to take care of children.

The urban context in which refugees in Morocco live offers opportunities to set out activities in the informal economy. Although economic activities in the informal sector are largely condoned by the Moroccan authorities, there is only a small number of refugees who are successful in setting up a business in the informal economy (Mejjati Alami & Denis, 2010). The problem in setting up a business for refugees is not the absence of possibilities because AMMAPPE, the economic partner of UNHCR, offers assistance, finances and support to set up a small business. However the finances that are supposed to be invested in the business are often used for daily basic needs and obligations like rent, electricity or food. Because the financial situation of refugees is structural inadequate there is little room for investments into a business. Without a sustainable financial situation setting up a business has not much chance for success.

Besides that an urban context offers refugees opportunities in the informal sector the urban context makes refugees also more disposed to political and social entanglements, conditions and developments. Within the Moroccan society the distinction between refugee and irregular migrant is often non-existing. Therefore the negative attitude against sub-Saharan irregular migrants affects also refugees and they are often victim of racism and xenophobic behaviour. This ranges from bullying to sexual violation, but also expulsions to the Algerian border near Oujda.

7.4 Unsustainable livelihood situation

In analysing the livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco it is found that the overall livelihood conditions in Morocco are unfavourable for refugees due to various factors. To answer the first sub-question what the significant factors are in the lives of refugee in Morocco that determine the access to their livelihood situation, three factors are of importance.

The first and main factor that has effect on many aspects of the life of refugees is the absence of a legal Moroccan asylum framework that enables an assessment of the background and needs of immigrants coming to Morocco. This is a great disadvantage for refugees. It is important to explore the needs for assistance, support and protection for asylum seekers because every human being is

entitled to basic human rights. Especially refugees need specific protection and care which is written down in the Refugee Convention which Morocco has ratified already in 1956. Because the Moroccan government stopped processing asylum applications in 2004 with the halt of the work of the B.R.A there are hardly any structures and regulations in place that assist refugees in their live in Morocco. Because there is no operating asylum assessment framework in place that issues (temporal) residency permits or work permits to asylum seekers or refugees, the means for making a living in the Moroccan society are quite limited. Under the Refugee Convention refugees are granted certain rights like the access to the labour market, education and housing. Furthermore refugees should be granted legal documents because many left them behind in the chaos of the situation when fleeing the home country. The impossibility of the execution of these rights in the Moroccan society causes many refugees to feel 'stuck' in the Moroccan society. The activities that provide food, housing and a monetary or non-monetary income have to be carried out in the informal circuit, which makes the situation of refugees quite vulnerable. Refugees have to search within their own community for assistance and social networks and associations have arisen in which refugees, where possible, assist each other and ask attention for their situations.

Secondly the ignorance of the Moroccan police about the refugee problem and the Refugee Convention and what it entails to be a refugee cause many problematic encounters between the police and irregular migrants and refugees. Special precautions need to be taken when treating people who have suffered from violence and traumas. Fear of expulsion and the experience of being expelled have caused traumas, uncertainty and anxiety to many refugees and affect their functioning in daily life. This fear also feeds the wish to be resettled to other countries that offer better living conditions to refugees and do treat refugees according to what is internationally agreed in the Refugee Convention.

Thirdly the limited access to physical, financial, human and social capital limits refugees to develop a sustainable level of livelihood. Furthermore maintaining and developing capital is difficult under the existing circumstances in the Moroccan society. Regarding social capital, refugees have built up many and strong networks in which they support each other in ways possible. This ranges from supporting each other in sickness and difficulty and giving advice to a self-set up school for refugee children and also includes seeking international attention nationwide for the refugee situation in Morocco. Refugees from sub-Sahara Africa are strongly connected to each other and provide support and services to members of the community. Other refugee communities like the refugees from the Middle East live spread throughout Morocco and are to a lesser extend embedded in a support

network of refugees from their home region. Support to refugees from churches and NGO's is marginal and certainly not structural. Therefore refugees in Morocco usually have to fend for themselves. It is only the refugees in extremely vulnerable situations that UNHCR financially assists. These people are elderly, sick, disabled or pregnant women pregnant with or without children.

The level of received education under the interviewed refugees is remarkable high. Many hold degrees in higher education. Refugees are highly skilled, knowledgeable and experienced in many fields of employment. Therefore we can speak of a vast and extensive human capital. However this human capital cannot be used in the Moroccan society without granting refugees access to the labour market. This is a missed chance in two ways. First of all high qualified refugees do not have the means to make a living and are dependent on financial assistance, which is for most non-existing. Secondly these refugees cannot contribute to the Moroccan society with their skills and knowledge and therefore the Moroccan authorities miss out on a valuable labour force that is an extensive source of expertise. Also related to human capital are healthcare and access to health care which are very well organized by UNHCR who provides free consults and medicine to refugees through AU, UNHCR's partner in the medical domain. However the healthcare is quite basic and refugees with more severe illnesses do need more support than they can acquire from AU.

Most refugees do not possess many assets and having visited many homes it is obvious that the physical capital of refugees is limited. Refugees often share housing with other refugees or irregular migrants to be able to divide the costs. Due to illegal renting agreements, which offer them no security, refugees are vulnerable to exploitation of the landlord and pay higher prices than Moroccans. Looking at the financial situation it is clear that most refugees do not have a structural and fixed income. This makes their financial situation uncertain. The income of refugees varies from non-existing to around 1700 Dirham on a monthly basis for people who are lucky to have found a job in the informal sector or assist UNHCR or FOO in the work with the refugee community in Morocco. It is difficult for refugees to make ends meet because the expenditures exceed more often than not the revenues. Especially for women with children and no family or husband to support her, the financial situation can be quite difficult and stressful. Children need specific food and products that is a major expense when money is scarce.

Financial support is occasionally given by a church or individuals who are engaged with the situation of refugees. Because of the difficult situation in Morocco and many countries of origin there is no question of sending remittances to the home country or receiving financial support from family or

friends in the country of origin. Also in relation to financial capital the biggest strain to develop financial capital is the limited access to the labour market for refugees. There are jobs available but because most refugees do not possess a residence permit employers cannot officially employ them for they cannot sign a labour contract.

Concluding, the livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco is insecure and unsustainable. There is no question that refugees are able to take action to secure their livelihood without the Moroccan government taking action to recognize refugees. Because their non-existence and invisibility to the Moroccan authorities they are 'stuck' in the Moroccan society, limited in actively shaping their living conditions. In particular financial and physical capital is hard to build up. It is a great disadvantage to the living conditions of refugees that they are limited to use their human capital in order to contribute to the Moroccan society.

7.5 Social and geographical mobility

The unsustainable livelihood situations in which refugees in Morocco live have a negative effect on the social and geographical mobility of refugees in Morocco. In the second sub-question the question is raised how mobile refugees in Morocco are in the geographical and social domain. In this thesis it has become clear that populations that move a great deal, like refugees in Morocco, are not necessarily mobile and do not automatically have a great deal of possibilities that is particularly favourable to movement. This is certainly relevant to the situation of refugees in Morocco. The migratory space of which Faist (1997) speaks, indicating structures and opportunities in the society, is not favourable for refugees in the Moroccan context. Therefore refugees in Morocco find themselves more often in immobile situations. Due to the marginal livelihood situation in Morocco described above, refugees in Morocco experience barriers to their social and geographical mobility.

Refugees do move geographically and make choices where to go and how to reach this destination but to say that refugees are geographically mobile according to the definition set out in chapter three cannot be grounded in the data gathered during the fieldwork. Initially the migration trajectory generally does not start with a balanced decision to migrate to another place but was forced through many other factors than choice and agency. Due to persecution or violence refugees saw no other alternative than to flee. After the initial migration started a refugee however can decide to migrate further on to a specific country and Morocco is by many refugees chosen for a reason. The existing image of Morocco as a constitutional monarchy and relative stable and safe country, in the close

vicinity of the European border, attracts many migrants and refugees. Furthermore as a middle income country many migrants believe that Morocco has more to offer than a low income country.

It is not surprising that refugees try to find solutions for their problems and are searching for possibilities to enhance their livelihood situation. UNHCR in Morocco offers refugees two durable solutions; voluntarily return to the country of origin or integration into the Moroccan society. However for many refugees the situation in the country of origin is of such nature that for the current moment returning is not an option. Secondly integration into the Moroccan society is only possible when the Moroccan authorities recognize the presence of refugees on their territory and put into practice the Refugee Convention to enable refugees to build up a livelihood again. Since this is not the case there is no question of durable solutions to the refugee situation in Morocco.

The fear of being arrested and brought to the Algerian border is still present in the refugee community. Although in theory the refugee status protects a refugee against expulsion, in practice this still happens and causes traumas and anxiety amongst many refugees. This does not encourage integration into the Moroccan society. Therefore the wish of most refugees is to be resettled in a third country. However with only around 30 refugees on a yearly basis that has this chance, the majority of the people within the refugee population of about 800 people will not be able to be resettled.

For refugees in Morocco the potential for movement or being mobile, the capacity and capability for movement within the geographical, social and economic space is limited due to the absence of revenue, unfavourable institutions and inadequate regulations. Thus the *motility* of refugees in Morocco is low and limits the livelihood situation. However geographical mobility is set in as a strategy to reach countries with more favourable livelihood opportunities. Without travel documents it is not easy to reach a country that does provide refugees with opportunities to build up a sustainable livelihood. This does not prevent all refugees from trying to reach a country in Europe or another continent with better opportunities. In one case a respondent told me her husband had managed to reach Great Britain because he could not cope with living in Morocco. Through using irregular migration routes, like the husband of my respondent, or resettlement, the little geographical mobility that refugees do experience is set in as a strategy to enhance the livelihood situation.

In the case of many refugees geographical movement causes downward social mobility. This underlines what Kaufmann (2009) mentioned when he stated that populations that move a lot do not necessarily have opportunities that are favourable to their situation. None of the interviewed refugees could find employment related to their level of education or previous employment in their land of origin. Many refugees are highly skilled and highly educated and have worked in ambitious professions in their country of origin. In Morocco there is no possibility to continue on the same level. To find a job alone is a challenging task, even work like cleaning or washing clothes is often without reach. Therefore refugees experience downward social mobility. The main direct cause for this is the absence of a work permit. Indirect the Moroccan political system and non-constructive regulations disable upward social mobility in the Moroccan society for refugees. This is also due to the high unemployment rate in the Moroccan society, where the competition for jobs is high. Furthermore existing racism in the Moroccan society towards sub-Saharan Africans causes exclusion. Due to a limited access to the labour market refugees experience a downward mobility. Thus the bad livelihood situation causes downward mobility. Foremost the regulations and institutions like the Moroccan state in many ways limit the access to diverse forms of capital and thus the development of a sustainable livelihood for refugees in Morocco.

7.6 Livelihood related to geographical and social mobility

In discussing the answers to the sub-questions it has become clear how the livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco is related to their geographical and social mobility. In this paragraph an answer to the main Research Question will be set out.

How is the livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco related to their geographical and social mobility?

Refugees experience many constraints in the Moroccan society that disable them to build up a sustainable livelihood. As discussed in the first part of this chapter, the context of institutions and regulations is unfavourable for the livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco. This affects the social mobility of refugees in a negative way. Most refugees experience downward social mobility and experience they are 'stuck' within the Moroccan society. Geographical mobility is sometimes set in as strategy to enhance the livelihood situation. However the geographical mobility and migration are also explanations why refugees experience difficulty in securing a livelihood and experience downward social mobility. Perceived as irregular migrants many refugees experience racism and xenophobia, which limits the integration into the Moroccan host society. Because of the fear of

attracting more irregular migrants and refugees the Moroccan authorities do not acknowledge the presence of refugees on their soil. I argue for a stronger humanitarian focus within migration management. If the Moroccan government does not stop ignoring that there are refugees within the Moroccan territory then sustainable livelihoods for refugees in Morocco will remain without reach.

7.7 Recommendations

Concluding a few recommendations will be set out that have come forth from the research on the livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco. These recommendations are directed at the international community, UNHCR, (Moroccan) authorities and Morocco's civil society.

1) Although the entry, stay and exclusion of immigrants are in general conceived as matters related to a state's sovereignty and states therefore must be allowed to implement their immigration legislation (Boeles et al. 2009) to secure refugee rights for refugees it is of the utmost importance that states that ratified the Refugee Convention are held responsible for neglecting to execute the Refugee Convention and are summoned to act accordingly to the Refugee Convention, securing the right to protection and access to livelihood rights to recognized refugees. According to article 14 of the UDHR 'everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.' To facilitate this there is a need within the international community to set up a supra-national 'watchdog' that monitors whether sovereign states have adequate asylum procedures in place whereby the implementation and execution of the Refugee Convention are safeguarded. This 'watchdog' should have the mandate to take actions or sanctions towards a country like Morocco who has ratified the convention does not execute it. As a result refugees on their territory are constrained to build up a sustainable livelihood and are not protected. To safeguard basic human rights to refugees and prevent that refugees end up in degrading and destructive circumstances.

2) Representation and perception of refugees in the international and national media is often incorrect. In the Moroccan society Moroccans are often unaware of the definition and background of a refugee, unable to make a distinction between irregular migrants and refugees. The UNHCR Office in Rabat does excellent work in educating and informing Moroccan officials who work in the field of migration and asylum and the Moroccan police force about the definition and background of a refugee. It is important that officials are aware of the rights refugees are entitled to under the Refugee Convention. This will further decrease the number of refugees that is expelled from the country. Expansion and intensifying this work to educate and inform the Moroccan society is very important. First of all a better understanding of the situation of refugees will enhance the often

negative attitude towards in particular Sub-Saharan refugees. This will enhance the possibility to integrate in the Moroccan society and enhance the relationship between Moroccans and refugees. Faced with xenophobia and racism, many refugees are hindered in the integration process. Secondly with more awareness of refugee rights, refugees will easier be able to claim their rights and the Moroccan civil society can put more pressure on the Moroccan authorities to give refugee access to their refugee rights.

3)The malfunctioning of the Moroccan asylum procedures is harmful to many refugees who search for a safe haven in Morocco but are unable to build up a livelihood due to the reluctance of the Moroccan authorities to grant them their refugee rights. The Moroccan state should implement adequate asylum procedures to be clear both to irregular migrants and refugees about their rights and how realistic their expectations are. Migration management should incorporate a humanitarian perspective and focus safeguarding basic human rights to all migrants.

7.8 Reflection

In this paragraph I want to reflect briefly on the results of this research to set out the limitations and constraints. This thesis deals with the livelihood situation of refugees in Morocco and the relation to social and geographical mobility. However due to geographical and time limits the results cannot be generalized to correspond to the total refugee population in Morocco. Moreover my research was limited through only including by UNHCR recognized refugees whereas there are also refugees who for whatever reason are not recognized by UNHCR and live in Morocco, their livelihood situation is not included in this research. Thus the results of this research cannot be generalized for the complete refugee population in Morocco.

Through a small-scale approach I was able to provide an insight and deeper understanding of the complexity of the livelihood situation of a number of refugees in Morocco, this facilitates a deeper understanding of the limitations and constraints in developing livelihoods for refugees in host countries that do not execute the refugee rights laid down in the Refugee Convention. Furthermore it provide an insight in the urgent need to ensure there is a legal framework in place through which refugees are provided with adequate support and protection, for otherwise they will not be able to build up a sustainable livelihood.

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Annexes

1. List of interviewed organisations

- UNHCR, Rabat
 - Protection Officer
 - Associate Programme Officer
 - Associate Community Service Officer
- Amnesty International, Rabat
- Medecins Sans Frontiers, Rabat
- Medecins Sans Frontiers, Oujda
- OMDH, Rabat
- OMDH, Oujda
- ABCDS, Oujda
- French Protestant Church/ CEI, Rabat
- French Protestant Church/ CEI, Oujda
- AMAPPE, Rabat
- FOO, Rabat
- AU, Rabat
- GADEM, Rabat
- IOM, Rabat
- International Church, Rabat
- ARCOM, Rabat
- RTM, Rabat
- Collectif des Refugies, Rabat

2. List of interviewed refugees

1. woman refugee Central Africa
2. man refugee Central Africa
3. man refugee Central Africa
4. man refugee East Africa
5. man refugee Central Africa
6. woman refugee West Africa
7. woman refugee West Africa
8. woman refugee Central Africa
9. man refugee West Africa
10. man refugee Central Africa
11. man refugee Central Africa
12. woman refugee Middle East
13. man refugee Middle East
14. woman refugee Central Africa