

The Socio-cultural and economic impact of Refugees on the host Indigenous Communities in West Africa: A case study of Liberian Refugees at Buduburam Community in Ghana.



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Thesis Submitted for the Degree:

Master of Philosophy in Indigenous Studies

Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tromsø

Norway

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this study to my dearest Aunt, Agnes Abena Serwah and all refugees and their host communities all over the globe, especially the Liberian refugees and the people of Buduburam community. Also to UNHCR for the good things they are doing for these homeless people (refugees).

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AIDS – Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome

AU – African Union

BUDUSEC – Buduburam Community Secondary School

ECG- Electricity Corporation of Ghana

ECOMOG –ECOWAS Monitory Group

ECOWAS – Economic Community of West African States

HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus

JSS – Junior Secondary School (Junior High)

KVIP – Kumasi Ventilated Improved Pit Latrine

NADMO – the National Disaster Management Organisation

NGA – Non-Governmental Agencies

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

NMP – National Mobilisation Programme

NPFL – the National Patriotic Front of Liberia

OAU – Organisation of African States

SPLA – Sudan People’s Liberation Army

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund

UNICEF – United Nations Children and Educational Fund

UNIDO – United Nations Industrial Development Organisation

UNRISD – United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

USA – United States of America

WFP – the World Food Programme

WISE – Women’s Initiative for Self-Employment

ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with refugees and their impact on the host community. Throughout the World, the UNHCR is not only concerned with the hosting, feeding, sheltering, clothing and educating the refugees. It is also addressing their impact on the host communities that face the consequences of their presence. In the effort to host protracted refugees, many developing host communities face various forms of socio-cultural influence and economic challenges.

Previous findings from research on hosting refugees have shown that the burdens of the refugees' presence in the host communities surpass the benefits. However, the findings of this study are rather the opposite. This study examines the socio-cultural and economic impacts of the presence of the Liberian refugees on the Buduburam community.

It has revealed that the situation at the Buduburam camp is as normal as any other community in Ghana. Unlike many communities whereby refugees are restricted to the camp, the situation in Buduburam is different. The Liberian refugees move freely to any part of the community. There is a good social relation between the host community and the Liberian refugees. There have been intermarriages between the refugees and the host community. The hosts and the refugees also attend some social events like weddings, funerals and child naming ceremonies together.

However, there are some minor negative developments as a result of the Liberian refugees' presence for almost two decades in the Buduburam community. These negative impacts include poor sanitation, scarcity of land, security issues and moral degeneration. This notwithstanding, the positive impacts of the refugees' presence on the host community outweighed the negatives. Indeed, the presence of the Liberian refugees on Gomoa-Buduburam has turned the place from a small village to an urbanized centre. The Buduburam community can boast of much better modern infrastructural development springing up all over the town after the refugees' settlement. The study found the types of development that can be associated with the presence of the Liberian refugees to include the provision of banks, telecommunication and Internet cafés. The Buduburam community now has easy access to transportation and a big market to sell and buy their goods. There has also been an expansion of educational facilities and the provision of a clinic to the community. Finally, a police station has been provided with police on duty to maintain peace and security.

KEY WORDS: Refugees, Host community, Impact.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. General Introduction

“...Yes, our presence here may have brought some problems to the locals but even that these pertain in any party of Accra. There are some journalists who do not want to see both sides of the coin and always write against the presence of refugees creating that perception in the minds of some Ghanaians. Buduburam was a small village and now you can see that the place is urbanized with a lot of infrastructure developments and other facilities spring up all over. Most of the houses you can see were built by we the Liberians or because of us...” A Liberian refugee in the Gomoa-Buduburam Refugee Camp in Ghana

The refugee issue is as complex as its causes, solutions and effects. It is important to note that the primary victims of the refugee problem are always individuals. Nonetheless, it also manifests itself in various forms on the societal, governmental and international levels. Obviously, it is a clear humanitarian, moral and development issue facing humanity. Indeed, its scope is wide enough to have significant bearing on security, environmental and natural resources concerns (Hakovirta, 1988). However, a casual look back into history tells us that the refugee movement is not a recent phenomenon. For instance, the Israelites were made refugees on several lands as they moved from Egypt to the Promised Land.¹ Similarly, the world media in headlines had with great zeal shown the terrible pictures of persons moving away from their homes to presumably, places of safety. Central America, Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia are apt illustrations as people labor daily to escape the depressing effects of war and natural disasters. Understandably, no part of the world today is immune to a refugee situation (Earl E. et al, 1983).

The world refugee problem is caused by a variety of reasons; factors and forces. These include massive violations of human rights, especially the practice of colonialism, direct and structural violence, war, internal conflicts, external aggression, ethnic and religious strife, direct political persecution and economic and national disasters. Nevertheless, most refugee movements today are caused by conflict. And contemporary conflicts are mostly of an internal, inter-communal nature (Gil, 1992).

¹ See the Bible at Exodus 12:31-51

The massive changes and instability generated by the end of the Cold War triggered new mass movements of people across the globe. In fact the Horn of Africa, Southern Africa (Aristide et al, 1989) and most recently Iraq and Sudan, war and mass displacement of peoples are challenging the sanctity of borders and have contributed to the disintegration of nations. The magnitude of refugee flows in recent years has generated urgent global concern. In 1951, when the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established, there were some 1.5 million refugees, by 1980 there were 8.2 million (Gil Loescher, 1992:9). Religious revivalism moreover was the direct cause of several major refugee movements during the 1980s. In Sudan, for instance, the imposition of Islamic laws have alarmed southern Sudanese Christians and animists and intensified the insurgency led by the SPLA. More recently the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Somalia has complicated refugee movements (Gil 1992:15, Aristide 1992).

The majorities of mass movements, especially contemporary refugee movements in the Third World, are caused by war, ethnic strife and shape socio-economic inequalities (Gil 1992:28). Also, a large proportion of the world's displacements occur as a direct result of political and social revolutions. During the past 40years, Cuba, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Iran, Angola, Mozambique and Nicaragua generated massive refugee outflows as a result of the revolutionary changes in their political, economic and social systems (Aristide et al 1992:10, Gil 1992:29). In the 1990s, refugee movements were mostly the result of ethnic and communal conflicts, fuelled by the increasing availability of modern weaponry and socio-economic inequalities. Although East-West conflict was a factor in the past, the underlying dynamic of many Third World conflicts has in fact been competition for political power among fiercely rival ethnic groups for example Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan (Gil 1992:31).

Refugee movements are usually sudden and unplanned. Most of them left their homes immediately after either seeing people executed around their houses or when bombs or other factors caused it difficult to get food or shelter. Many refugees are at times unable

to transfer assets from their countries of origin to their countries of asylum, and thus turn to be a problem or burden on the host countries and the host communities in particular.

The responses of host countries to these mass influxes have varied greatly, both between states and, for single governments, over time and by refugee group. Some governments have received refugees with generosity, providing them with assistance and guaranteeing their safety. Others have tried to prevent refugees from entering or have treated them harshly, restricting their movements and even endangering their safety (Jacobsen 1996, Aristide 1992).

The majority of countries hosting large numbers of refugees are developing and poor countries. These countries hosted two thirds of the global population of concern to UNHCR. The host government often largely ignores refugee-hosting communities in remote areas. Developing countries that host refugees for protracted periods can experience long-term, economic, social and environmental consequences (UNHCR Standing Committee 1997). In early 2003, more than 35 per cent of the 20.6 million asylum-seekers, refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR were hosted by the forty-one Least Developed Countries. Of the 10.5 million refugees who have been officially recognized by the UNHCR's mandate, 29 per cent were hosted by Sub-Saharan Africa (UNHCR Standing Committee 2004). But in (2007) the total number of refugees and others of concern to UNHCR in the globe is estimated to 32, 861, 500 of which 9, 752, 600 in Africa (UNCHR-Geneva, 2007).

Bascom gave this picture of the refugee situation in Africa:

The forty-one different countries hosting refugees in Africa include more than 250,000 people in eastern Sudan, western Ethiopia, central and southern Malawi, southern Zaire and Guinea. In lighting the fact that many reception countries are beset by severe economic problems, including decreasing agricultural production, stalled industrialisation, and rising foreign debt burden the hospitality of host countries in Africa is beginning to wear thin, especially for those refugees without assistance and protection from the United Nations. (Bascom 1992:320).

The presence of refugees sometimes aggravates the already prevailing economic, environmental, social and, at times, political difficulties in these countries. Often such

countries are confronted by a combination of all four of these factors. Near always their impact is substantial. Moreover, in many refugee situations, problems are aggravated when refugees are a substantial proportion of the local, if not national population. For example, in Nepal, in the district of Jhapa, 90,000 refugees represent over 13 per cent of the local population. In Ngara, in the United Republic of Tanzania, the refugee influxes meant that the local population was outnumbered by a ratio of approximately 4:1, that is there were some 700,000 refugees among a local population of 186,000 and about 3.3 million Afghan refugees, some of whom have lived in Pakistan for over 15 years, have largely been portrayed by the host government as a burden (UNHCR Standing Committee 1997, Melissa 2003). Malawi in 1990, hosted the largest numerical and proportional refugee population in Africa, which peaked with over a million Mozambicans in late 1992 representing almost 10 per cent of the national population (Melissa, 2003). Many developing host communities also face forms of socio-cultural change. The socio-cultural impact of refugees on the receiving community can occur simply through their presence, in that they can play a role in altering the ethnic balance of the host community, and if the influx is sizeable, according to some researchers, pose a threat to the cultural values and norms of the host community.

The impact of refugees on host communities has largely been assumed to be negative. As the government of Tanzania is quoted as saying:

The refugee problem seems to have no end... it is a threat to host governments, a reality which needs the appreciation of the world community. Much as the rich nations seem to get donor fatigue, likewise those who have been hosting refugees for years with no solution in sight are similar fatigued... the fact we are required to open our borders to refugees (while others are closing theirs) without much support thereafter is very frustrating indeed. Once we admit the thousands and millions we are left alone to cushion both social and economic impacts, something that puts our governments into confrontation with the civil population particularly in the refugee impacted areas (Melissa 2003: 1).

On the other hand some also believe that the influx of the refugees create a new context in which hosts devised strategies to gain access to incoming resources and to maintain access to their own resources. It must also be acknowledged that refugees could have a positive impact on the economy by contributing to agricultural production, providing

cheap labour and increasing local traders' income from the sale of essential foodstuffs. Some local populations benefit from access to schools, clinics and other social facilities built by the international community (Beth 1999).

Following civil wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast as well as political discontent in Togo since the mid 1980s, refugee movements have come prevalent in West Africa up to date. Most refugees in West Africa countries are placed in camps by the help of both host government and the UNHCR. Refugee camps in West Africa countries face a lot of problems (Aristide et al, 1992). Prominent among the problems are persistent shortage of food and water as well as dearth of hygiene and adequate shelter, which seems to have consequences on the host communities. West Africa countries that suddenly find themselves inundated with thousands of refugees may already be struggling just to feed their own citizens. Consequently, they cannot provide much help to the multitudes who suddenly appear on their doorsteps.

One of the countries that went through these turbulent times in its political history is Liberia. The Liberian refugees currently in the Buduburam camp mostly arrived in Ghana as a result of the destabilization of Liberia by Charles Taylor in the late 1980s (Dick, 2002).

1.2. Statement of the problem

The consequences of hosting the Liberian refugees are worth considering. It is widely believed that influx of refugees in a community can place considerable stress on natural resources especially land. Repatriation of the Liberian refugees after the end of the war in Liberia seems to have turned out to be difficult to accomplish. However, it seems the people of the Buduburam indigenous community have continuously faced socio-cultural influence and economic challenges for almost nineteen years caused by the presence of the refugees. In many host communities, refugees are often housed in camps and are discouraged or prevented from mixing with the host community because of security (Finnstrom 2003). However, this seems not to be the case in Buduburam, where some Liberian refugees have married the local people and even own property like land in the village. With assistance from families abroad, organizations and the UNHCR, the

refugees seem to have an advantage over the natives. This advantage seems to have enabled the refugees to develop and institutionalize an elaborate system of stratification in which they are becoming a dominant group controlling the community's major social and economic activities especially in the camp and its immediate surroundings, which seems to have a great impact on the local population.

The presence of the Liberian refugees in Buduburam community has had both negative and positive economic and social tendencies on the people of Buduburam since the arrival. The fact that the refugees outnumber the host community seems to pose a threat to the livelihood of the community as well as its norms and values. The pressure on the land and the impact of this pressure on food production as an economic activity of the host community prior to the influx of refugees are other issues that need an in-depth study. It looks like the influx of the refugees and relief resources and assistance to the refugees have created more problems than a blessing to the people of Buduburam community. With the increased local market, there has been an upsurge in business and trade conducted by both host community and the refugees have made many locals shifting from farming to trading. However, the standard of living seems to be high as compared to other villages in Ghana. It is further contended that since the refugees may one day leave, the long-term consequence of the substitute of farming for trade, the host community is expected to bear the consequences.

Given all the above background, the world is not left with only the issue of hosting, feeding, clothing, resettlement or educating the refugees but also their impact on the host, who in most cases are left with the burden of seeing to the survival of these refugees. This study topic came in mind after a couple of readings and studies on refugee issues in the early part of the year 2002. There is therefore an urgent need to do an in-depth investigation into the refugees' impact at Buduburam community in a bid to contribute to this line of inquiry by examining the costs and benefits associated with the refugees' presence. This research will thus seek to analyse the impact of the refugees' presence on the economic and socio-cultural structures *of the host community* in relations to small business, land use patterns, new forms of social relations in terms of marriages, education

and health, cultural values and new forms of livelihood crisis. This development has impacted both negatively and positively on the social and economic livelihood of the Buduburam community.

1.3. The research questions for this study are:

- What kind of socio-economic situation is facing the Liberian refugees at the Buduburam camp?
- What provisions are made by both domestic and international interventions that mediate the impacts of Liberian refugees on the livelihood strategies of Buduburam Community?
- Are there any contributions of Liberian refugees to the socio-economic development of Buduburam community?
- What is the natives' perception of the refugees' presence in their community, and particularly the fact that some of them are absorbed in the community?

1.4. The hypothesis:

The presence of the Liberian refugees in the Buduburam camp has had a more negative than positive impact on the socio-cultural and economic structures of the local people in Buduburam Community.

1.5. Objectives

In order to investigate this hypothesis, I intend:

- To investigate the kind of relationship between the local people and the Liberian refugees.
- To find out the real and perceived impact of the refugees presence on the socio-cultural and economic structure of the host community.
- To find out the role played by both local authorities and other international bodies in terms of ensuring a cordial relationship between the host and the refugees.

- I also want to recommend ways that can help the minority (the host) maintain their ways of life and survive with their socio-cultural and economic practices.

1.6. Justification of the study

Although there have been numerous books and articles on refugees in general and Liberian refugees in particular, in this case the prevalence of both conflict and the refugee influx in West Africa and its implications for refugees and the impact on host communities have attracted my attention to this study. It is also worth noting that although refugee issues have been long under study, more emphasis has been on the welfare of refugees themselves and less on the impact, both burden and benefit, as the case may be, that they exert on the host communities. This study aims to make a modest contribution to the existing body of knowledge on refugees in West Africa. Also recommendations and suggestions to the problems of the situation when completed would further communicate the knowledge gained in this regard to governmental agencies as well as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other bodies like the NGOs that may constitute a suitable working tool to help developing policies about the plight of the host communities of the Liberian refugees in Ghana.

1.7. Methodology

A multi-method qualitative approach was adopted in order to facilitate cross-checking of data, which increase reliability. These were done to solicit their views, opinions and comments on the impact of the Liberian refugees on the host community. This is to ensure that the studied community would be a subject of the research but not used merely as passive objects of the study because most study communities seem to be tired of research primarily because of their experience of being treated as objects (Smith 1999,). Researchers have taken extensive indigenous knowledge away and have given little or nothing back to the study communities who have been used as sources of information (Smith and Porsanger, 2004). This research avoided that during the fieldwork by engaging in a participatory research by including or consulting the study community, so that they figured not as object but rather as participants or subject.

1.7.1. Data collection Tools

My primary method of research was informal interviewing and observation. During the engagement the research played on the role of listener and asked the natives about the impact of the refugees since the arrival and their current situation, which was followed up with questions, that seemed important to my topic. Relying on qualitative approaches to data collection such as participant observation and semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion seemed a more appropriate way for my data collection. Data from my fieldwork come primarily from Buduburam natives as well as Liberian refugees whose comments have informed my research. It should be made clear that my informants were selected based on the reliable information I had from my field assistants and not just selected randomly. I sometimes lived with the people in the community and spent a lot of time with both the natives and the refugees.

The research was conducted with an input from field assistants recruited within the community. My paramount concern thought has been to maintain the highest ethical standards and avoid any distress to both the community and the camp inhabitants. Intensive fieldwork was conducted in the Buduburam community over a period of three month (May – July 2007). The details of the research methodology are as follows.

1.7.1.1. Semi-structured interviews

Interview was one of the effective methods I used during my data collection. I did not interview any one on the street or in the community, neither did I base my interview on sample but was rather purposive. This is to make sure that the people who were engaged were the right people to interview because of time constraint. The following categories of people or groups were interviewed during the period of the fieldwork; individual interviews were conducted with people in the community and the camp as well as students from both sides. Also, key informant interviews were done, which include the Gomoa district assemble coordinator, the chairman of the Liberian refugees welfare council Mr. Sambolah, the manager of Gomoa-Buduburam Liberian refugee camp, Mr. Cal Afun, the head teacher of Buduburam junior secondary school, an elected district assemble man Mr. Jewel, who is the chair of the unit committee, staff at UNHCR branch

office, Ghana, staff at Agriculture Development Bank, Buduburam and the Secretary of Ghana Refugee Board, Mr. Bawumia.

At the end of the fieldwork almost all the important informants I thought of engaging were almost interviewed which made my fieldwork a challenge but successful. Time and dates were scheduled for each appointment, which was usually at the convenience of the interviewee even though it was not easy to fix a good time for both. The interview questions were grouped under two categories. There were well-structured questions for the natives and other opinion leaders in Ghana, which were different from the Liberian refugees and agencies, like the UNHCR, Ghana but they were all developed from my research questions. The usage of my tape recorder and camera was a challenge to me. For security and other personal reasons some participants felt uneasy with such tools but many of them accepted as I stated earlier they were interested with the topic. In fact these tools especially the tape recorder, helped me much during the interviews because I got much time for many questions.

On the other hand, there were some difficulties I faced during these interviews. The top of it all was time schedules. There were many instances I booked appointments with my informants according to their own fixed times, only to be told by the informant or left with a message for another time which meant that I had to go and come back for another appointment. It happened that I tried as many as five times to contact an informant before I was able to interview him.

1.7.1.2. Participation and Observation

Personal observation and participation was based on visits to the Buduburam community and the camp to ascertain at first hand the real situation at the camp and its impact on the host community. The researcher participated in the daily lives of the people and took detailed field-notes. The diaries report on topics such as: local traditional festivals, Parents Teachers Association meetings, communal labour, religious activities, Unit committee meeting and daily pattern of living and working in the community. This provided detailed information, which was not easy to get through interviews, may be

because of time constraints to enable me to record in detail movements and social interactions.

By this I am very confident that the research findings reflect the situation on the ground. This method provided me with the opportunity to cross check some answers I had already gathered from my interviewees and also some perceptions about the situation before going to the research site. Since my study topic is the refugees impact on the host community and as I have mentioned earlier on took part in meetings involving teachers and parents from both natives and refugees about their wards and education. The natives who gave information on their culture or ways of life also invited me to a cultural festival, which was in remembrance of the dead. Sanitation is a problem there so on two occasions I participated in communal labours organized by the unity committee led by the assembly man Mr. Jewel to clean the township. I also took time to observe some life activities within the camp and the Buduburam Township. In order to compare with surrounding villages I also went around observing certain developments over there to enable me see the extent of impact the refugees presence has been on the Buduburam community. The use of this method was successful and at many occasions, I was able to interact with people I met.

This method made the people trust me and open up to me. However, it did not go without challenges. Initially I was seen as intruder or spy because my study coincided with the end of UNHCR voluntary repatriation, which happened to be on the 30th June 2007. This was because the community led by the unit committee was thinking of taking over the camp, especially the market which they thought had not benefited from the revenue collected, so far so there was some tension around. But all the same they opened up because they were also interested in the research topic.

1.7.1.3. Focus group discussions

Extensive use was made of focus groups, because they are very well suited to research topics involving contested or controversial issues and are a particularly useful tool in a pilot study for helping to identify key issues and questions. This also made me to ensure that the study community would be a subject of the research and not used merely as a

passive object of study. Five different focus groups were used; market women (both natives and refugees), the chief and elders of Buduburam, zonal leaders (refugees camp), some youths from both sides and Buduburam unit committee who are by the constitution of Ghana elected to be in charge of the day to day activities of the people of Buduburam and some surrounding villages. The group discussions in fact were fruitful because it gave room for corrections and different views. For instance I recorded during my discussions some participations were citing only negative impacts and vice versa but others quickly drew their attention to the other side too. The only problem was that some were not contributing, leaving few people talking.

1.7.1.4. Secondary sources- Documentary Analysis

Before I started my fieldwork, secondary data was one of the methods I thought of using since a number of studies had gone on about refugees in general and Liberian refugees at Goama-Buduburam camp in particular by scholars and authorities. My frequent visits to the University of Ghana Libraries, especially Political Science gave me the opportunity to photocopy some text books which were not available to buy at that moment of my stay. I bought relevant books from the university bookshop especially ones written by Ghanaians, which were useful in my studies and gave information that were difficult to come by when I was at the field. Also, some information that I thought would be relevant to my topic was collected from government policy statements, newspapers, journals, magazines, etc., issued by various international and non-governmental organizations.

However, lack of documentation on the part of the Gomoa district and the Ghana Refugee Board deprived me from having access to data to cross check the accuracy of some of the information provided by the informants.

1.8. Fieldwork Ethics

Before I left for the fieldwork, a lot of courses offered during the last two semesters emphasized field work ethics that became my guide map during the period of study, which actually helped me to avoid unnecessary mistakes and tensions. For instance, I tried not to take photographs indiscriminately and tape record without obtaining prior permission, even though I once tried. I also tried to preserve the anonymity of my

informants and finally made sure that I would not jeopardize the access of future researchers to the study area by my words and actions (Bourois, 1992).

1.9. Key Concepts

Refugee

There are many definitions of refugees, but the most recognized and acceptable is the ones given by the United Nations and the then Organization of African Unity.

The United Nations 1951 Geneva Convention Article 1(2) relating to the status of refugees, which came into force in April 1954, defined a refugee:

As any person who as a result of events occurring before 1st January, 1951 and 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 of country of his nationality and is unable to or owing to such fear is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country or who not have a nationality and being outside of his country of his former habitual residence as a result of such event is unable or owing to such fear is unwilling to return to it. (Maina 1997:82, Aristide et al, 1992, Gil 1992:6).

The 1951 Convention did not take into consideration the realities of African politics and the nationalist struggle against colonialism and apartheid in the effort of obtaining independence which led to the massive exodus of refugees running for their lives. This led to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) now African Union (AU). Its Convention expanded the definition of refugee as:

Any 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 seek refuge of another place outside his country of origin or nationality. (Opoku 1995, Maina 1997:83, Aristide et al, 1992).

Indigenous Peoples/Community

The concept of indigenous people, as applied to the African setting is complicated and much debated. Many national politicians argue strongly that all Africans are indigenous, but less so when seen by those who claim to be indigenous (Saugestad 2001). In this study the term indigenous is used in a technical sense as native kind of identity in reference to this particular location in Ghana whose people are in minority among the

Liberian refugees in number, but not in a legal sense. However, their government protects the natives' rights and interests, which is the government of Ghana. Indigenous peoples at the international level are defined as:

Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems (1989 report UN special Rapporteur Martinez Cobo in Kingsbury 1998:419).

1.10. Organisation of the study

The study has been divided into five chapters. Chapter one begins with general introduction to the topic, the statement of the research problem and questions, hypothesis, objectives of the study and the justification of the study. The other aspect of this chapter is the methodology, including the data collection, strategies and challenges.

Chapter two deals with the theoretical framework and the literature review, which has been used in the analysis of the data collected during the fieldwork.

Chapter three focuses on the host community and the Liberian refugees in Gomoa-Buduburam, Ghana: the history, socio-cultural dynamics, economic features, natural environment and social amenities. This chapter also deals with the Liberian refugees in Ghana with an emphasis on their historical background, causes of movement, arrival and assistance, and administration of the camp.

Chapter four discusses the socio-economic situation at the camp and its impacts on the host Buduburam community in relation to housing, sanitation, health, education, social and cultural life and economic situation. The same chapter discusses the impact of the host community on the refugees.

The final chapter covers my recommendations of what can be done to improve the situation, summary and conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The previous chapter tried to look at the refugees general situations from the international arena to the host countries in general and the possibly impact on the host communities. The chapter captured that refugee movements in most of the time have different causes so also as it impact on the host communities. Also, in recent time refugee movement has increased globally and most ended up in developing and poor countries. This chapter has two parts. The fist part will be the discussion on the theoretical framework. The second part will be a review of related literature to the research topic.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

Though theoretical knowledge is crucial in providing a good foundation and better understanding in any academic research of importance very little theories exist in refugee research. Musoke (2004) is of the view that until very recently most of the research and the resulting literature on the impact of refugees to host communities and the subsequent government policies on refugee protection have been guided and inspired by the population theory by Thomas Maltus (1798) edited by James (1989) that population growth generally affect the natural resources of a country and for that matter refugee host communities. He cited pressure on food as an example. However, a counter thesis developed by Ester Boserup (1965) held a different view that population growth rather has a positive effect on agriculture, which brings host of socio-economic change of the community or the country in general. Many scholars who have based their work on either of the above thought had one way or the other tried to blame or exonerate refugees from all blames. This study is based on the theory and concepts expounded by Werker (2007), Barth (1994) and Whitaker (2002) whose theories and concepts give room for both negative and positive impacts of refugees' presence on host communities.

2.1.1. The Refugee Camp Economy Theory

In his work, “The Refugee Camp Economy” Werker (2007) has made a solid observation about this model, which can be made about distortions to the economies of refugee camps in general instead of a particular refugee camp situation. The model is designed to serve as a guide to understand any camp economy rather than a rigorous quantification of a particular settlement. The theory has hypothesized that “camp economics are influenced by host country policies, such as restrictions on refugees’ movement and work, as well as the physical and economic isolation of the site, Humanitarian assistance and camp demographic”.

Werker’s theory has come up after he realized how important these dynamics of the refugee camp economy is for both policy makers and researchers since it is not easy to come by a reliable theory in the area of refugee camp economy and its implication on host communities. Werker further explains that:

Often this makes sense: having recently escaped horrendous circumstances, traveled hundreds of miles and in poor health, refugees ought to be taken care of by the international community. More often, however, the unique distortions imposed by the camp regime stifle the productivity and thus the economic welfare of refugees, causing them to live in poorer conditions than is necessary (p. 462).

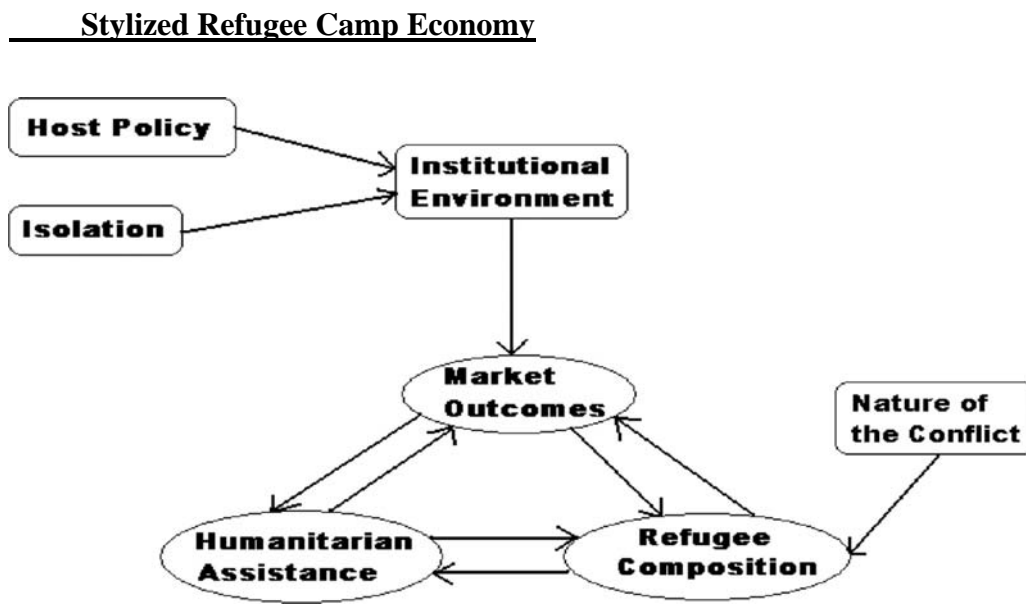
Werker underpinned this theoretical consideration that refugee camp economics are influenced by some important factors. These factors are host government policies, humanitarian assistance, camp demographic or composition. The theory has acknowledged that refugees in general, are received and treated differently by host governments and communities, which could be hostile or friendly. The theory has also noted that:

Host country policies can be divided into two categories, restrictions and benefits. As it can be seen in many camps, two restrictions that refugees often face are limitations on movement and on employment, even though this practice is contrary to the 1951 Refugee Convention. Restrictions on employment outside the camp have obvious effects on refugees living in the camps [...]. A common benefit that refugees receive is on paying taxes. While the 1951 Convention allows for taxes to be levied on refugees up to

the level that nationals pay, in practice this is often not applied to refugees living in the camps. Refugee camps can be isolated in a variety of ways. The most obvious is physically, for instance, are located in remote parts of the country. (Werker 2007:471-72)

In an attempt to model the refugee camp economy, Werker noted that the factors he has considered earlier which differentiate a refugee camp economy from a normal economy might be interdependent. An example would be that the economy of a refugee camp and its demographic make-up depend on the kind of humanitarian assistance such a camp receives. Any change in this assistance would then have an impact on the results of the economic performance of that camp.

He has supported his argument with the diagram below which depicts a stylized model of the refugee camp economy, demonstrating how factors listed earlier influence the market outcomes.



Werker, E. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 2007 20:461-480

In explaining this theory he has noted that:

Among the four given above, host policies and isolation are seen as externally determined especially if host policies on the refugees are legislated debates, then the model sees these factors as independent variables. Here,

many economic determinants such as transport costs, transaction costs, information costs, risk of expropriation, and violation fee schedules are determined. In addition, these determinants affect malleable outcomes, such as the attractiveness of investment, the type of production and labour within the camps and the relative prices of goods inside the camp. (Werker 2007:473)

In view of this theory these results interact with both humanitarian assistance and the demographic selection of refugees. It further stated that whether the market is healthy, equitable, large, or constricted will it have an effect on the humanitarian interventions approved of: the distribution of food will be the centre point, whether income-generating activities are pursued. Werker has moreover observed that these also serve to attract certain refugees to come and live in the camp and deter others who may be thinking of integrating with the host population. Humanitarian assistance is further shaped by the selection of large number of refugees living in the camp alone without such dependents as elders or minors which will encourage programmes that, again, increase the possibility of the camp area to broken families.

The composition of refugees, then, impacts the humanitarian aid that is delivered, as it also impacts the markets, especially through insecurity. If the results from the market attract investment based on the institutional package and the assistance programmes are conducive to investment, the demand for labour will increase while the price of goods will decrease. This can have an effect on “market outcomes and aid programmes if those who become refugees tend to be from more educated classes or tend to arrive with valuable commodities or even weapons from the region of conflict” Werker (2004). The explanation will help those interested in refugee issues to understand refugee economic activities within and around camps better, and its impacts on host communities.

The theory concluded that the effort of maximizing economic outcomes within refugee camps is a fairly unconventional way to view the goal of refugee interventions.

However, Jacobsen (2005) on economic life in camps reviewed by Nicholas Van Hear reminds us that while refugees may be isolated and their movements may be controlled,

such institutions are not closed off but are embedded in the surrounding society and economy. This is exactly what happened in the Buduburam refugee camp. This is not least because refugee households often have members living both inside and outside camps to take advantage of opportunities that may arise in either setting. Forms of economic activity in camps are explored: mainly trade in goods and services, including aid items, and limited employment opportunities, jobs with non-governmental organizations being among the most sought after. Jacobsen then looks at constraints on economic activities (especially the location of the camp and impediments to freedom of movement), as well as enabling factors, the provision of infrastructural inputs such as roads among them. Aid is cast as a free public good for camp refugees, which among other things enables them to work for lower wages, sometimes creating tensions with local workers. He then looks at impacts on the surrounding area, drawing the now familiar conclusion that the presence of refugees is on balance beneficial in terms of the economic stimulus it can bring.

2.1.2. Ethnicity and Boundaries Theory

I will use the theory of Barth (1994) on ethnicity and boundaries, to closely look at the ethnicity and culture dichotomy between the refugees and the natives. According to this theory:

(...) Boundaries persist despite a flow of personnel across them. In other words, categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information but do entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained despite changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories (Barth 1994:9-10).

Barth argued that no matter how a group or an individual come in contact, be it economic or social, they still maintain their ethnic status and that the contacts do not affect their ethnic identity or ways of live. By this thought there can be intermarriages among different ethnic groups and they still maintain their cultural differences. Barth supported the theory by stating that ethnic identity can persist in inter-ethnic contact and

independence even though the individuals may cross national boundaries or their ethnic areas.

The theory believes that when ethnic groups compete for social and economic resources like in the case of the refugees and their host communities, their ethnic categories become more fixed. The Liberian refugees have been in the midst of the natives of Buduburam community since the year 1990. The refugee population in the camp and the community is approximately 45000 with less than 3000 natives.

2.1.3. The distribution of Burden and Benefits Among Local Host Theory/Concept

Whitaker (2000) argues that the burdens and benefits associated with the refugee presence are not distributed evenly among local hosts. Some communities stand the chance of benefiting from the presence of refugees and international relief agencies to a large extent, while others struggled to maintain access to even the most basic resources. According to Beth Whitaker, the impact of refugees varies within host communities based on factors such as gender, age and class. Whitaker has also observed that:

The host experiences can also be different from one area to another depending on settlement patterns, existing socio-economic conditions, and nature of the host-refugee relations. In the end, hosts who already had access to resources, education, or power better poised to benefit from the refugee presence, while those who were already disadvantaged in the local context became further marginalized.

Whitaker also observed that the extent to which hosts were able to benefit from the refugee presence depend gender, age, and socio-economic class. This means that men benefit more than women from the opportunities created by a refugee situation. This is because women are in charge of their homes and responsible for collecting firewood and water and therefore suffer from environmental conditions. But it might also be wrong to say that women are always negatively impacted by the refugee presence. Some take advantage of changing opportunities for their own benefit, especially with increased local upsurge in business and trade.

Secondly, the changing dynamics associated with the refugee situation also create different opportunities for locals depending on their age and physical health. Young adults are likely to take advantage of these opportunities while the elderly and the disabled are likely to suffer. It has also been noted that the host experiences with the refugee situation vary depending on socio-economic class. The host community or individuals who were already wealthy are able to take advantage of opportunities to their benefit. This means that the impact, be it negative or positive, will be the individual or community, which already has the resources to turn to their advantage.

2.2. Literature Review

The African refugee problem has not been accorded the attention it deserves especially on the impact on the host communities. However, this is not to say that the field has not been explored. Some writers have made their contributions on the refugee situation in Africa, and prominent among them are Gold (1992), Kibreab (1987), Gil Loescher (1993), Harrell-Bond (1985), Chambers (1986), among others. The academic contributions of some of these writers will be considered as part of the literature review for the study. Case studies of specific refugee situations and their impact on host communities are reviewed and applied in the context of Buduburam community in Ghana.

Brief indications of some of the literature are depicted below referring to Hopper (1972) and Preston (1984):

The rhetoric of individual responsibility for capitalizing on educational opportunities masks the implications of the systemic inequalities of educational access. In practice, across the world, age and other restrictions are used to regulate access to formal education institutions **varying quality**, while an individual's ability to maximize life chances through, for example, school education is determined in part by its quality and in part by personal cognitive and socio-economic characteristics". (Preston 1991: 61)

He has observed that many children in poor countries whose families' social and economic status are low; usually have difficulties in getting access to school. Everywhere, students with what are described as disadvantaged home backgrounds find that the quality of education available to them is inferior to that have available to the

more advantaged. In each of these cases, the so-called disadvantaged include those, whether indigenous or immigrant, who lack competence in the dominant variants of national or regional languages used as media of instruction in schools and other educational institutions (Bernstein, 1977; Preston, 1985; Avalos, 1986) cited in Preston (1991).

Comparative studies are also rare. Most ignore the extent to which education for refugees and other asylum seekers promotes change, either in the host country or in the lives of individual refugees. Preston noted that many kinds of educational provision are found in camps and other places of asylum.

Mostly, refuge seekers themselves initiate educational activities, before host governments or agencies have come to think about its delivery (Dodds & Inquai, 1983 in Preston 1991). In many cases, there is no obligation to provide academic secondary schooling and host governments do what they can to discourage it. Preston however, acknowledged that most commonly it is vocational education, which constitutes the principal form of post-primary instruction.

Preston has made this observation about why refugees are interested in education in their place of asylum. In most, but not all, cases, the principal concern of the refugees is to provide primary education for their children. The intention of such schools may be to compensate for educational careers that have been interrupted, often for a number of years, following either the disruption of educational services in countries of origin or a protracted period of time between flight and settlement. He cited a recent study in Honduras as an example which came out that refugee initiated educational activities, ranging from pre-school to adult literacy and vocational training, served similar purposes, while the Lutaya School in Sudan is a rare example of a refugee-initiated secondary school (Bush, 1989, Brooker et al, 1990) cited in Preston (1991)

He has also stated that not all groups of refugees and asylum-seekers initiate educational projects. In some cases there may be no one able to teach or, as in the case of many

refugee camps, qualified teachers may be reluctant to participate. However, Preston has noted that the situation in Honduras is different whereby the refugee-initiated educational activities were going on well because they strongly believe that children without education will suffer future social and economic disadvantage or, in the case of them intending to repatriate to countries suffering the effects of war, the conviction of the need to develop as many skills as possible so as to contribute to national reconstruction when they return home will be a problem.

Preston has also noted that some of the refugees see education as a preparation for resettlement. Settlement expectations themselves can confer differential status within the refugee community. With few expectations, refugees selected for resettlement in industrial countries have relatively high social and economic status in their place of origin. In Papua New Guinea, government approval has been given to educational development for refugee children through the permitted school scheme. The scheme authorizes the development of schools, which are independent of the state educational system, but subject to a certain national control on quality.

Sanjugta (2003) explored the socio-cultural impact of refugees on developing or host communities. This study encompasses the issues of social or relational as well as religious, linguistic and ethnic character which arise when large groups of refugees arrive within a given host community. She explored this type of impact in relation to communities within the nations of Pakistan and Tanzania - two of the main refugee hosting nations in the world. Pakistan currently provides asylum for around 2 million Afghans, a number which has continued to rise and fall since 1979 when the Soviets invaded that country during the Cold War. The host government sometimes responds negatively toward the refugees, suggesting it holds a fear that the refugees might pose a threat to national security.

She also observed that many developing host communities often face forms of socio-cultural change, including a challenged sense of identity and the increased visibility of ethnic, religious, racial, linguistic or ideological tensions between refugees and locals

apart from economic and security problems. The socio-cultural impact of refugees on the receiving community can occur simply through their presence, in that they can play a role in altering the ethnic balance of the host community, and if the influx is sizeable, pose a threat to the cultural values and norms of the nation.

From the perspective of various host governments in the developing world, there is a huge possibility that tensions may arise as a consequence of admitting outsiders into traditional social structures. She has observed some key factors, which have been leading to social instability deriving from the differences in culture and values between the host country nationals and the refugees themselves.

These barriers include language and cultural barriers between Pakistan and the Afghan refugees that have led to miscommunication at one level, but at a far deeper level to ethnocentrism and xenophobia -cultural conditions increasingly common amongst many developing nations today hosting refugees, to which Pakistan is no exception. This is why they were reluctant to take on more refugees. They feared that the increasing number of refugees can endanger social stability within the civil society, particularly in countries where ethnic rivalries may already be virulent, where the central government is weak and consensus on the legitimacy of the political system is scarce.

She noted this in Baluchistan and Punjab communities in Pakistan where the bulk of the Afghan refugees settled in camps or what commonly became known as Refugee Tent Villages, amongst UNHCR officials. These villages were crowded accommodation and located amongst Pakistani districts in both rural and urban areas.

Usually an Afghan refugee village constituted an accommodation unit in itself, but in some cases, local and refugee villages are interconnected. Inevitably social relations formed between the two groups. She cited a survey conducted by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) in 1986 suggested that although friendships were established between hosts and refugees in each of the three provinces, on the whole relationships, particularly friendships, were limited, despite frequently common linguistic and cultural affinities.

She noted that local Tanzanians often established far more extensive social relations with refugees than did Pakistani communities, particularly in areas close to the camps. The two groups socialized together, visited one another, and attended social functions such as weddings and funerals of the other. Rwandan and Burundian refugees, with their impressive dance and drum routines, were often asked to entertain at local ceremonies. Refugee and local teams frequently competed in soccer and other sports. Some Tanzanians even took refugees as wives. Social relations between refugees and hosts also had some negative consequences.

On the negative aspect she has cited the findings of a researcher that the camps were associated with social problems such as drunkenness, prostitution, sexual promiscuity, and mischief. Elderly people perceived a breakdown of the traditional social structure and a change in the attitudes of youth toward their elders and their roots during the time of the refugees.

According to the researcher who observed those specific changes, host did not blame the refugees for these changing social dynamics, but rather saw them as an inevitable result of the drastic population increase in the area. As we will see, however, this lack of blame is quite unusual. The researcher does not believe that the general socio-cultural impact of a mass refugee influx on a host society is shaped to a large degree by the relationship between the refugees and their hosts. Certainly there is no doubt that their relationship in turn is related to a variety of factors as Sanjuga has observed which include, for example, common ethnic and cultural affiliation between refugees and their hosts, as well as the beliefs and expectations held by both the host community and the refugees, regarding the duration of asylum and their chances for repatriation.

Within many Pakistani host communities, for example, Sanjuga attributed some signs of growing hostility to the prolonged presence of the Afghans despite strong common religious and cultural affiliation between the two groups. The Afghans were not the only ones to have found a new identity by redefining themselves in relation to the situation of exile: many communities within Pakistan, or at least certain of their inhabitants and

leaders, also initially considered themselves neighbours, and poor but gracious hosts to guests in trouble.

As exile became prolonged however, the hosts began to define refugees in a new light - less related to Pushtun culture or Islamic religion and more concerned with the national economic and security burdens perceived to stem from their presence. The study concluded that today, it would not be contentious to state that many Pakistanis generally feel weighed down by the overwhelming burden of 3 million refugees. Local inhabitants are fearful that a large influx of foreigners will overwhelm them, reducing them to a demographic minority and threatening their cultural and political dominance.

Werker (2007) in a case study of refugees in Uganda has made the following observations about the Kyangwali refugee camp economy as it tends to give refugees more choice on their settlement relative to many other countries in Africa. He noted that refugees in Uganda can be found both in camps as well as self-settled, and though the overall refugee policy is liberal relative to much of Africa, there are nonetheless restrictions that refugees especially those living in camps face which includes Kyangwali (at the time of the field research in 2002) was one of the least problematic from an economic perspective, possessing ample land and a suitable climate for agriculture. This implies that whatever distortions affect the economy in Kyangwali should be amplified in more 'typical' refugee camps.

He argues that the economy in the settlement is fairly complex. Incomes are produced through a variety of means. Most refugees are either engaged in agricultural production or are receiving food rations from charity. Minority of refugees has businesses in the settlement, ranging from small stalls at the weekly market to shops or teahouses in the main trading centre.

He has made a model that for refugee assistance that try to support refugee livelihoods while not privileging them over local people which in most cases, the refugees acquired the capital to start these businesses from goods or money brought from home; loans; own-labour production; or remittances from abroad. Still some refugees rely mostly on

remittances; this is probably more prevalent in Kyangwali than in other settlements because of more frequent connections with third countries through the higher rates of resettlement. Werker suggests that the Kyangwali camp economy is influenced by host country policies, such as restrictions on refugees' movement and work, as well as the physical and economic isolation of the site which makes the camp's economy difficult for the refugees. Of these, the restrictions on movement implied in the first principle will be the most controversial, and getting permit to go out from the camp is difficult. This implies that the specific nature of the programmes could have an even larger impact on economic outcomes than would be the case in a normal economy.

Whitaker (2000) examines the implications of the refugee presence for host communities in Tanzania. Over the years, there have been many calls for strategies linking refugee relief with local development, but a number of factors have impeded their effective integration, including lack of donor support, weak coordination between refugee and development bureaucracies, and increasing numbers of refugees (Betts 1981, 1984; Gorman 1994 see Whitaker 2000). Despite the common assumption that refugees represent a problem or burden (Harrell-Bond 1986), it is clear that refugee migrations bring both costs and benefits to host countries (Kuhlman 1994, Sorenson 1994, J. Baker 1995) cited in Whitaker (2000). Refugees generally impose a burden on local infrastructure, environment, and resources, but they also provide cheap labour, expand consumer markets, and justify increased foreign aid.

On the beneficial aspects of refugees Whitaker cited Ndege et al (1995) as a support to his findings that refugees represent a source of cheap labour for Tanzanian villagers. Local farmers generally hired refugees to do agricultural work, but also to build houses. Before the arrival of the refugees, labour shortages and lack of markets were significant constraints to agricultural production and their presence has moved markets closer to local villagers. The refugee relief operation meant an increase in employment opportunities for hosts. In response to the calls from the communities, NGOs initiated development projects in host communities which included more than 50 primary schools and 20 dispensaries, four district hospitals were expanded, at least 120 water systems

were improved or installed, a community centre was constructed, and several teacher resource centres were built.

Whitaker considered the following developments as some of the negative impacts of the refugees' presence on the host communities. One was that the sudden population increase affected food security and local access to environmental resources in the local villages, particularly at the beginning of the influx, although deforestation was a problem even before the refugees, its rate accelerated after their arrival. The massive deforestation led to a water problem because the water resources were depleted.

Whitaker argues that the economic boom associated with the refugee presence was accompanied by an increase in the cost of living. The prices of basic items and rent went up. He also considers the following as negative development and that the refugee situation also affected local infrastructure. During the influx, border area schools were damaged when refugees slept in classrooms, burned desks as firewood, and filled latrine. Local health facilities quickly became overstretched. Notwithstanding this the refugee presence was associated with an influx of diseases, including high-fever malaria and skin diseases affected a large members of Tanzania children. There were a lot of HIV/AIDS cases among the refugees. The criminal justice system was also overburdened; according to government records, refugees at times represented as many as 75 per cent of jail inmates. Social relations between refugees and hosts also had some negative consequences. The camps were associated with problems such as drunkenness, prostitution, and sexual promiscuity. Elderly people perceived a breakdown of traditional social structure. In addition, western Tanzania experienced high levels of theft and insecurity.

Andrian (2005) in his study of Bonga camp in Ethiopia argues that the most obvious environmental impact of the refugee camp is deforestation, although he believes that this problem was already occurring before the refugees arrived in 1993 but it has increased because of the expansion of slash and burn agriculture into the near by hillsides, mainly for growing sorghum. He noted that both refugee and host people also rely on wood for fuel and construction, and there are high levels of hunting with traditional weapons and

dogs. Andrian has observed that the host communities were strongly outnumbered by the refugees. He recorded the locals as blaming the refugees of being the cause of the environmental problems facing them. They believe life was considerably easier before the arrival of the camp. Resources such as land, forests and wildlife have now become much scarcer. They also complained that refugees stole their crops and water, destroyed their irrigation channels, used illegal fishing methods and spoiled their traditional grazing land.

Andrian noted that the lack of benefits accompanying the refugee camp was a specific source of dissatisfaction. When the camp was located there, UNHCR had apparently promised a number of benefits, including a new school in the village. These never materialized, and this may be the reason that the locals were made victims and the refugees being at advantage. Uduk refugees see the population growth at the camp as part of their strategies for cultural survival. The host communities are also alarmed at the growth in numbers of refugees.

Harrell-Bond (1986) has done a critical study and outlined three durable solutions to the refugee problem in Africa: Voluntary repatriation back to their home country; resettlement in another country, or integration into the host society. She is concerned of the third recommendation that is “durable” solutions to the refugee problem in Africa; integration into the host society. She particularly examined an emergency programme mounted in response to an influx of refugees from Uganda to Sudan. She also accepted that most African refugees are likely to remain in their country of asylum for a protracted period of time.

Gil Loescher (1992), attempts to develop an analytic focus on refugees and international security in order to unify these insights and accentuate the political determinants and strategic effects of international population movements. He argues that refugee movements not only create and exacerbate conflict between states but influence their relations in many other ways as well. He also noted that a growth in unwanted and often uncontrolled population movements is increasingly perceived as a challenge to the integrity and security of both the sending and receiving states.

2.3. Summary

This chapter has discussed theories and conceptual frameworks in relation to refugee situations and their impact on the host community in detail. In testing the theories, the people who propounded them used various refugee camps in different communities as case study. Especially with Werker and Whitaker views revealed that the impact of refugees on host communities will greatly depend on the host government's policy towards the refugees.

Werker believes that the development of refugee welfare, especially their economic activities will depend on the sort of policies implemented towards the refugees, for instance, on their movement. Such policies determine the kinds of impact their presence will have on the host community.

Beth's concept sees refugee impact from this same direction. He is of the view that each community hosting refugees experiences different effects as a result of certain factors already existing before the arrival and measures put in place during their stay. For instance, the settlement patterns, existing socio-economic conditions and the relationship between the host and the refugees can determine the nature of the impact on the host community.

Barth's ethnicity and boundaries perspective also has the opinion that no matter the nature of relationship that exist between two different groups they still maintain the core ethnic identity. This study is not into ethnicity as such but the idea is borrowed to find out how the situation is in the Buduburam since the Liberian refugees have been in the community for almost nineteen years.

The next chapter will capture issues relating to both the host and the refugees from their past and the current situations

CHAPTER THREE

THE HOST COMMUNITY AND THE LIBERIAN REFUGEES

Introduction

The previous chapters on theories and literature review established the fact that the refugees' impact on the host communities in the world and for that matter West Africa is a mix of benefits and burdens. The impact of refugees on the host community in West Africa is very acute indeed; and one such example is the impact of Liberian refugees in the Buduburam community. In order to appreciate the nature of the socio-cultural and economic impact of the Liberian refugees on their host community, which is the main objective of the study, it will be important to take into consideration the socio-economic and cultural dynamics of the study area before the arrival of the Liberian refugees to effectively appreciate the impact. It is also important to review the causes of the Liberian refugee movement and the situation with which they are living in the Buduburam camp.

3.1. The study Area: Brief background of the People of Buduburam community

The Gomoa-Bububuram is located along the Accra-Winneba road in the Central region of Ghana; about 35km from the nation's capital Accra. The town is part of Fetteh land, which is under the traditional authority of Gomoa-Fetteh and has some of its members staying there with a head that acts on behalf of the Fetteh chief. The Buduburam, a Fante-speaking group, constitute the majority of people in the village and they are mainly farmers. Gomoa-Fetteh is considered the traditional home of the people of Buduburam, a place where their ancestors first settled in the Gomoa area. The town got its name after a man called Budu from Fetteh. Budu used the land for farming. While there he excavated a well, which became so useful and popular to the people that they named the village in his honour; thus Buduburam which means "Budu Well".

3.1.1. Socio-cultural aspects

Over the years, the Gomoa-Buduburam has a higher population density than any village in the Gomoa District. The last two Ghana National population and housing censuses put the population to 463 in 1984 and 18,713 in the year 2000, which was the highest in the

district (1984,2000 Census report).² Currently, the population of the area is estimated to be more than 50,000 with more than 47,000 refugees.

Every September the Buduburam natives join other communities in the Gomoa district to celebrate Akwambo and Ahorbaa Festivals in their own peculiar way. Such ceremonies are well organized and usually attract a lot of tourists during the festivities. Akwambo is marked yearly to honour the ancestors of Nyakrom who migrated from Ashanti Region to settle in the area. The celebration of this festival symbolizes the people beliefs in the eternity of life. That is, life continues after biological death. At death, the God-given spirit departs in its fleshless form and starts its journey back to the spiritual world, where it remains. However, it maintains contact with the living and continues to mediate between the spiritual world and the world of the living when conflicts between these two worlds arise. It is in this respect that death is described as an invisible cord, which links people to their ancestors. Therefore their festivals are celebrated in remembrance of the departed souls who by their contributions have brought the Gomoa people to this far (Kuada and Chachah 1999).

The people of Buduburam community respect traditional values and norms, which according to them keep them together. The members of the community about their life and history define the values and rules of behaviour. By this the people use to have strong institutions and transitions in life, which are in the form of ceremonies. Most of the time, it involved more families. Some of these ceremonies are birth and outdooing ceremonies, transition from infancy to adulthood and marriage. The people believe in a communal way of living and think these ceremonies keep them together and foster unity. The people of Buduburam also practice an extended family system as it is in all part of Ghana. Family relationships form one of the underlying foundations of the socio-cultural understanding of the people. They believe that all purposes, actions, gains and ideals of

² Ghana Statistical Service (2005), 1984, 2000 Population and Housing Census: Central region, analysis of district data and implications and planning.

individual members are evaluated by comparison with the fortune of the family as a whole.³

In the area of education as far back as the early stage of independence of Ghana, the government through its District Assemblies recognises the constitutional right of every child to education, especially because many universally accepted declarations and reports confirm that a generally low-level literacy rate perpetuates underdevelopment. In terms of educational facilities, the town had a six-classroom block, which served as a primary and junior secondary school before the arrival of the refugees. A lack of access to classrooms and some basic educational facilities made teaching and learning very difficult. Residents who had the desire to continue their education were to move to other communities that had the privilege of having such facilities and this also accounts for the high rate of illiteracy among the natives of the town in the 1980s.⁴

In terms of other social facilities, the community in the late 1980s had no hospital or clinic to address the health needs of the people. Therefore, they had to travel long distances to get medical attention and also mostly relied on herbal medicine. Before the 1990s the Buduburam community had no police station, post office, telephone service or other important social amenities. However, residents of the town enjoyed electricity and water facilities regularly but today the electricity supply is irregular while water no longer flows through the pipes.

For security purposes since they had no police station, fire service station or court, the palace of the chief was used as a court and a police station. The chief and his elders always settled cases among the natives, and punishments were given to the ones found guilty, while the innocent were set free on compensation for damages. However, for some time now, there has been leadership crisis as to who is to be the chief of Gomoa-Buduburam. This has led to a long-standing chieftaincy dispute between two chiefs in the community, which should not have been the case. Information gathered revealed that, this

³ This information was gathered from the chief of Gomoa-Buduburam and his elders during a discussion.

⁴ Interview with a native teacher who has been teaching in the community before the arrival of the Liberian refugees in 1990.

dispute just started in the late 1990s after the arrival of the Liberian refugees which has brought about development in the community. As usual of leaders, the attractiveness of the community makes competition for leadership keener than before. Little wonder then, that the community currently has two chiefs which under normal circumstances should not have been the case. In response to this leadership crisis some of the locals did question the relevance of chieftaincy to their development.

3.1.2. Natural environment

The research area is an almost level plain land area. The area has no river but a pond whose main source is the rain. The vegetation is treeless grassland with occasional shrubs and some tall trees interspersed with grass cover and soft woody species (Kuada and Chachah 1999), which was not the case some years ago. The Buduburam community experiences two rainfall patterns the major rainy season (April - July) and the minor rainy season (September - November). Just like most districts of the region, the major and minor dry seasons are December - March and August respectively. The community used to have large tracts of land that had not been cultivated or used for other purposes but now most of the land has been cultivated for both agricultural and housing purposes to cater for the need of the ever increasing population.

Erosion has been the major problem in the built environment. This is due to the absence of drains along the roads and in the settlements. Most of the houses or buildings have exposed foundations. The physical and natural environments present a lot of resources that may contribute to the development of the community. But degradation of vegetation leads to soil infertility and soil erosion and its associated environmental problems in the farming areas.

3.1.3. Economic features

Traditionally, the people of Gomoa-Buduburam are farmers with few of them engaging in trading. Agriculture activities comprising crop and animal production constitute the main economic activity of the Buduburam economy. The dominant farming system practiced in the community is continuous cropping, which is followed by crop rotation.

This practice is the general farming system within the entire district. The ecology of the community encourages the cultivation of crops such as cassava, maize, pepper, pineapple, pawpaw, vegetable, citrus, yam and plantain. The people rely mostly on traditional farm tools and equipment and methods which make it difficult sometimes to cover the costs and also the strong dependence on the raining season for cultivation is a problem to the farmers. In the predominantly smallholder farming system, livelihoods were mainly dependent on harvestable crop yields on a seasonal basis. During my interaction with some farmers, it came up that some of the constraints to sustainable production are the dry spells during the cropping seasons, access to land and low fertility of available farmland. Even though some individual families own land, the chief is the custodian of all the lands in the community.⁵

With the existing flexibility and general availability of land, one can, therefore, say that the acquisition of the land in the community is devoid of any hindrance as far as development and farming in the community is concerned. Farming was the mainstay of Buduburam community economy but at the moment the economy of Gomoa-Buduburam has shifted from the over reliance on agriculture to other sectors. With the increased local market, there has been an upsurge in business and trade conducted by both the host community and the refugees and this has made many people shifting from farming to trading even though trading activities were there before the arrival of the refugees but has increased. This market is the largest in the Gomoa District but dominated by the Liberian refugees. Having examined the socio-economic activities and political history of the people at the Buduburam Community, the following section examines the history of the Liberian people before independence.

3.2. Brief History of Liberia (Before 1847 Independent)

Liberia is in fact the only colony, which the United States ever established, and though political dependence ceased many years ago, the USA continues to exert control on its former colony. The first expedition to Liberia was in a ship chartered by the United States Government to transport the captured Africans who had been brought as a prize to the

⁵ <http://ghanadistricts.com/districts/news> 13/12/2007. Also discussion was held with native farmers.

United States. The Government also agreed to take out such free emigrants and send them to Africa. Out of this grew a regular system of settling these victims of the slave traffic in Liberia. The United States intervened frequently between the indigenous Liberians and the Americo-Liberians, patching up difficulties and settling disputes. As such, there was political stability under the control of the United States. In a sense, under the protecting care of the United States, the colonists derived their form of government from a private company, and not from the government of the mother country (Roland P. Falkner, 1910, Dick 2002).

3.2.1. The Cause of Movement

Liberia was founded by private interests in the United States as a means of resettling American slaves. The first groups of settlers were sent to Liberia in 1820. In 1828, Monrovia was founded and became Liberia's largest settlement and future capital.

Before that as early as 1817, there was misunderstanding and tension between settlers of African descendants from Europe and the Americas and the indigenous people, who either came to dominate these societies or enjoyed more privileged positions, and the indigenous Africans for the fear that the settlers would grow strong and rule them. Largely because the allocation of resources also occurred along center-periphery lines, political competition was predominantly for control of center (Sesay 1999).

In 1847, Liberia got its independence from the United States, which was the first African country to become republic. Immediately after independence the settlers became rulers of Liberia because they were the elite class, exercising a discriminatory and authoritarian control over the indigenous peoples became the order of the day (UNHCR 1993). The conflict that led to Liberians fleeing to Ghana, and other West African countries, began in December 1989, but had its root in the last 150 years of Liberian history.

On 12 April 1980, Samuel Doe, a 28 year old Master Sergeant in the Liberian Army and a member of the Krahn ethnic group, terminated the half a century rule of the Americo-Liberians in a military coup. Even though the Americo-Liberians were in the minority,

they exerted a monopoly of power over the majority of indigenous peoples and had dominated the country's political, social and economic life for over 130 years. Significantly for Doe, the country's indigenous population initially supported the coup as it signalled an end to what was seen as a hostile regime. The indigenous population welcomed the coup led by Doe and thought it would be the end of their suffering.

As the 1980s set in, the Liberian state was being plagued by multiple financial crisis; the dying up of foreign investment, dwindling export earnings, increased indebtedness, and a high debt service ratio. Even the government's efforts to increase timber exploitation which had over taken iron ore and rubber as the major source of government income by 1979, did nothing to abate the situation, the collapse of fiscal discipline with the advent of military rule following Doe's seizure of power in 1980 further worsened matters. Between 1980 and 1988, the Liberia economy registered a negative annual growth rate (Desiree 2003, Dick 2002).

The alleged failed coup led by an ex-commander of the Liberian Army Thomas Quiwomkpa in 1985 saw Doe retaliating strongly against the opposition groups. Through his security forces Doe took strong measures against opposition leaders through harassment and intimidation. Doe's ethnic group, the Krahn who were in majority in the Armed Forces of Liberia based in Quiwomkpa's home region of Nimba County, attacked the Gio and the Mano ethnic groups who were seen to be strong supporters of Quiwomkpa after the failed coup. It was therefore not surprising that Charles Taylor and Prince Yormie Johnson (himself a Gio) initiated their invasion and that the core of their commando units was mainly Gio and Mano (Sawyer 1992, 2004, UNHCR 1993, Ofuatey-Kodjoe 1994)).

Despite its record the government of President Doe was not prepared to let go of the reigns of power and as often in the case in African countries, a struggle for power emerged. Doe legitimized himself by forming a political party and won a dubious election. Various attempts to get Doe to step down from the office failed. The final attempt to move Doe from power started in December 1989, when a former member of his government, Charles Taylor, led an attack on the government from Nimba County.

This touched off a civil war. The Charles Taylor forces- The National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) overran the country but got bogged down in the battle for Monrovia, which started in May 1990 (Dick 2002).

The campaign to oust President Doe touched off a flow of refugees. The first flow was from Nimba County into Cote D'Ivoire in December 1989. Initially Guinea reported an influx of about 13,000 Liberians, reaching an estimated of 66,000-80,000 by March 1990. Cote D'Ivoire reported some 55,000 Liberian refugees in the last week of December 1989 (Essuman-Johnson 1994).

As the conflict became protracted no faction could establish a government. This led to the intervention of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) governments and diplomatic negotiations to bring peace to Liberia, including the creation of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to intervene. As a show of concern for Ghanaians trapped by the conflict, Ghana dispatched a ship to evacuate her nationals from Monrovia. Meanwhile, Ghana had started to receive Liberian refugees from May 1990. The ships dispatched to bring Ghanaians from Monrovia and Freetown ended up bringing back Ghanaians and Liberians who were stranded at the two ports.⁶

Liberia's internal conflict can be traced back to at least 1847 when it gained its independence from the United States. However, the civil war has immediate causes in the Samuel Doe military regime and his failed promise to institute democratic reforms and return the country back to civilian rule after the 1980 coup, which brought him to power.

3.3. The Liberian Refugees in Ghana: Arrival

Interviews with Liberian refugees at the Gomoa Buduburam camp gave a vivid picture of how they got to Ghana. Most of them left their homes in a hurry, after seeing people being executed around their houses or when bombs fell and destroyed parts of their houses or when they saw neighbours being interrogated, taken away and shot dead. It was

⁶ Essuman-Johnson A. Department of Political Science, University of Ghana, Legon. Paper prepared for the 4th IRAP Conference on Refugees, Somerville College, Oxford University (1994), "Ghana's Response to the Liberian and Sahelian Refugees Influx".

difficult in the circumstances to find a better place so they decided to get away from it all and by the intervention of Ghanaian government saw them in Ghana.

A Liberian man interviewed had this to say: “My brother, can you believe that I had to leave Liberia only with what I was wearing, my two kids and few possessions and had to leave most of my belongings for my life”. Refugees were uncertain about their destination at the time of leaving. According to the information I gathered most of the Liberians refugees who went to Ghana through the evacuation of Ghanaians from Monrovia port, did not have the chance to choose the destination with deliberation unlike those who later joined the camp when the war restarted in 2002.

3.4. What was Ghanaians’ initial response to the Liberian Refugees?

Providing assistance to Liberian refugees in Ghana initially posed some problems. When the first refugees landed on Ghana soil, Ghana had no refugee law. It was not until 1992 that a refugee law came to force. Providing for the establishment of the Refugee Board and spelling out the rights and duties of refugees among others was passed (Essuman 1992). So for two years the government could not accord them refugee status. This was compounded by the fact that there was no state agency competent enough to handle refugees. It was unclear to Non-governmental agencies (NGA) whether the Liberians could be designated as refugees at all given the peculiar circumstances of their arrival. The government was not prompt in seeking international assistance for the refugees. So in the early and subsequent years, assistance for refugees fell largely on the institutions of civil society, the generosity of ordinary Ghanaian families, especially the host traditional rulers obligated by custom to provide help to strangers in their midst, the Christian Council of Ghana and other philanthropists.

But soon, in addition to the UNHCR, there was massive response from the international community and NGOs- the European Union, Ghana Red Cross Society, National Catholic Secretariat, World Vision International, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), the Salvation Army, Caritas International, the Echo Club of Japan, the Assembly of God Relief and Development Services and Lutheran Evangelical Church are

among the organizations that helped transform the camp into habitable and thriving communities (Owusu, 2000).

But ultimately the greatest credit goes to the refugees themselves, especially many women who were determined against all odds to work hard to make a decent home away from home for themselves and their children. Owusu (2000) argues that the refugees were driven by their faith in God; they were willing to bury the internecine feuds, ethnic sectarian and factional hostilities that intensified the unprecedented brutalities of war that claimed over lives, caused inestimable property and environmental damage and forced hundreds of thousands from their homeland (ibid)⁷.

They arrived in Ghana from attacks in their country of origin but a whole lot of other problems existed for them even though they had a nice reception by Ghanaians in general, and the Buduburam community in particular. However, this did not necessarily guarantee them a haven of safety. As has been observed by Essuman-Johnson (1993), the Liberian refugees also faced the problem of food shortage and shelter, especially those who arrived later by their own means. In many cases detention is an expression of the refusal to grant asylum and it is often followed by expulsion. However, Melander (1979), as cited in Essuman (1993), indicated that expulsions are on the increase; this has not been the case in Buduburam.

3.5. The Gomoa-Buduburam Camp-Location and Population

The Liberian refugee camp is located at Gomoa Buduburam area previously known as Ekwamkrom. One prophet Ekwam originally used the area as a prayer camp but because of some problems, the then government of Ghana confiscated it. The refugee camp is bordered to the west by the village and to the north by an estate. Unlike most refugee camps it does not isolate the Liberian refugees from the Buduburam village, like for instance the Kyangwali camp which has been studied by Werker (2007) in Uganda which has been separated from the town and with a total restriction on refugee movement. It

⁷ Owusu Maxwell is a Professor of anthropology. He is the author of *Abuses of Political Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1970).

takes a trained eye to distinguish the boundaries between the camp and the village as well as the estate. Originally, the land was to cater for about 8000 refugees. Since the place was initially used as a prayer camp, there were already permanent structures on the site but since they were not enough to accommodate a population of 8000, tents had to be pitched as a complement to the already existing structures. As Owusu (2000) has observed, today there are no tent serving as shelter for the refugees but they all live in permanent structures made of cement blocks and wood with aluminum roofing. The refugees, who are not only found in the camp but also settled within the host community, constitute more than 60 per cent of the community's populace.

However, the refugee population in the camp and the community is approximately 45000 with less than 3000 natives. The Liberian refugees' in Buduburam in the Gomoa District of the Central region of Ghana found themselves in a different ethnic and socio-cultural environment but their numerical strength has helped them to cope easily.

The information gathered suggests that by the end of 1992, two years after the Gomoa-Buduburam Camp was opened for refugees, its population stood around 8000 people. This population has now increased from this to about 45,000 crammed in that area due to the uncertain fragile peace existing in Liberia. The camp kept attracting more and more Liberians from Cote D'Ivoire when the fight restarted in 2002 after a disputed election won by Charles Taylor. This means that the camp is congested. However, the number keeps changing because of resettlement and repatriation.⁸

Most refugee movements are often associated with loss of wealth, position and status and this is not different in this case. Liberian refugees living in Buduburam camp came from diverse backgrounds: rich, poor, young and old. A majority were urban living in and around the national capital, Monrovia. Many of those who came initially were enterprising and educated young men and women, including a significant number of professionals. This is not the situation in many camps in the world and West Africa in

⁸ Interview with NADMO representative at the camp and Liberian refugee welfare council manager revealed that the number of the refugees is not fixed because of situation in Liberian and resettlement programmes making people moving in and out on daily bases.

particular. For instance, refugee camps in Pakistan, Uganda and Tanzania (Sanjuga 2003, Whitaker 2000) do not have enterprising, educated young men and women professionals.

3.6. The Administrative Structure of the Buduburam Camp

The Ghana government staffed by the National Disaster and Mobilisation Organisation (NADMO) manages the camp. It used to be managed by the National Mobilisation Programme (NMP), which provided the camp commandant and two assistants. They represent the Ghana government. The camp management comprises the manager, estate official, and units' officers and screened Liberian who represent the refugees from a group called Liberian Refugee Welfare Council. This is because management policies are implemented through this body who can interpret the needs better than Ghanaian officials, who only play supervisory roles.

There are ten standing committees operating in the camp, which include arbitration and discipline, health and sanitation, education, logistics and mobilisation, male department, zonal heads, sports department and other committees. These activities are coordinated by the welfare council whose members are all Liberian refugees and who reports to the management. The camp has been divided into ten zones; each zone has a zonal head supported by persons as zonal unit members to form a welfare council. They coordinate issues at the grassroots and submit to the welfare council. Understandably, the zonal heads and zonal units' members are elected by the refugees among themselves to serve them. This utilization of electoral principle in selecting or electing people as leaders in the camp is highly commendable.⁹

According to the camp manager there were a number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working towards the general upkeep of the camp before the withdrawal of UNHCR in the year 2000, but still there are a number of them who are helping with new

⁹ Information gathered suggests that the Liberian refugees are well organized as compare to the Buduburam natives themselves making somewhat have advantage over them.

agencies joining, some agencies implemented certain policies on a specific basis and others who were helping one way or the other. The presence of all the above institutions and agencies initially and now has enabled the refugees to develop and institutionalize a well organized system in the camp. This puts them in an advantage position compared to the host community.

Apart from these agencies various individuals and organizations have also made contributions either in cash or kind towards the upkeep of the refugees. Among these are the WISE, the Gomoa District Assembly, the UNHCR and a host of others.

3.7. Summary

This chapter concentrated on the history and socio-cultural dynamics of the people of Buduburam community. Some of the findings revealed that the host community, before the arrival of the Liberian refugees, had a normal life as any other community in Ghana. The chief has been the custodian of all lands and was seen as the ‘God-father’ of the people. His palace was used as a court, settling disputes among the subjects and making sure they respect traditional values and norms. Traditionally the people of Buduburam were farmers with few of them engaging in trading before the Liberian refugees arrived in 1990. The community lacked some basic social facilities like post office, hospital or clinic and others before the arrival of the refugees, yet the people were happy and had a normal life especially during their tradition festivities.

The chapter has also traced the historical background and the causes of the Liberians flight to Ghana. It came out that the Liberian war has its roots as early as 1847 when the country got its independence. The reason has been that the liberated slaves who came to be known as Americo-Liberians and who are the minority, established power and became hostile towards the indigenous Liberians. Therefore, the 1980 coup led by Sergeant Doe, which was to end the intimidation and the oppression of the minority rather deepened the crisis which gave birth to the 1989 war which produced thousands of refugees all over.

The next chapter will consider the current socio-economic situation of the Liberian refugees in Buduburam, and will be used to analyse the impact of the refugees' presence on the economic and social structures of the host community.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE IMPACT OF THE LIBERIAN REFUGEES PRESENCE ON THE
ECONOMIC AND SOICIO-CULTURAL STRUCTURES OF THE HOST
BUDUBURAM COMMUNITY

Introduction

Chapter three examined the history and social dynamics of the host Buduburam community before the arrival of the Liberian refugees. It also traced the history and causes of influx of the Liberians to the host community. This chapter will seek to analyze the impact of the refugees' presence on the economic and social structures of the host community. We will take a look at such areas as small business, sanitation and environment, new forms of social relations in terms of marriages, education, health and security. The chapter will also take a look at the possible consequences, be they negative or positive, of the presence of the refugees on the host community. This will be analyzed in relation to theories and literature review to compare with different situations elsewhere. The chapter is divided in two sections. The first part will concentrate on the refugees' situation at the camp and the second part will deal with the impact on the host community.

4.1. The Liberian refugees situation at the Buduburam Camp (1990-2007)

This section tries to present the kind of situation facing the Liberian refugees at the camp and how they are coping with the situation. The situation prevailing in the camp will help the analyses of the impact their presence had been on the host community.

4.1.1. Refugees Livelihoods Strategies

The situation of the refugees at the camp will be built around Werker's (2007) refugee Economic Theory. This Theory is of the view that camp economies are mostly influenced by the host government policies and humanitarian assistance. Initially, on arrival, the Liberian refugees received assistance from civil society institutions, ordinary Ghanaian families, especially within the host community. Other class of people who came to the assistance of the refugees included: traditional rulers, who are obliged by custom to help

strangers in their midst, the Christian Council of Ghana, the UNHCR and its implementing partners. These made the refugees rely mainly on aid. The theory further posits that, when this assistance stops the refugees look for alternative means of survival (Werker 2007).

Werker (2007) in support of his theory uses Kyangwali refugee camp in Uganda as a case study. His research findings are consistent with the situation that pertains at the Buduburam camp. The major disparity that I have observed is the fact that there are no economic restrictions on the refugees. They are allowed to trade or engage in farming either within the vicinity of the camp or the community. Dick (2002) makes the claim that it is difficult for the Liberian refugees to get employment owing to the difficulties in obtaining work permits in Ghana. However, this research found her claims untrue. On the contrary, the host community is not an industrial area, so it is not impossible to set up small scale businesses within the community. Dick's claim then becomes somewhat valid if one looks at employment from the formal sector perspective where it becomes a requirement to have a work permit before employment. When the Liberian refugees welfare council was asked whether there has been restrictions on their movements into the community, this is what he said:

“No, to my knowledge never has it been a circumstances we have been restricted to this camp we go into the village whenever we want to, sell to the natives and buy from them too...Even the market in front of the camp was established by us the refugees which serves both the village and the camp”.

This situation supports the argument by Jacobsen (2005) that refugees embedded in the surrounding society and economy and that refugees households most of time have their members living both inside and outside camps.

The withdrawal of the UNHCR from the camp by stopping to give material assistance to the refugees in 2000 was based on the reason that there is peace in Liberia after the election in 1997. However, the organization could not convince many of the refugees to return home. According to information gathered from the UNHCR, Accra branch, material assistance to Liberian Refugees ceased in the year 2000 because in 1997, the

situation in Liberia was deemed safe for return. Moreover, the office facilitated the voluntary repatriation of over 3000 Liberian refugees (UNHCR, Ghana). Appropriate conditions for repatriation to Liberia, however, meant that continued assistance was no longer warranted. This has made the refugee become economically self-reliant by engaging in economic activities for survival. Small shops and tabletop displays offering basic necessities for both locals and the refugees characterise the camp. According to the information I gathered from the refugees' group discussion these types of business activities were learnt from their host because they were not used to it. Restaurants, entertainment centers and 'chop bars' are also present. Some refugees went for training to prepare themselves for income generation and thus engaged themselves in sewing, carpentry, construction, soap making, fish smoking, tie and dye and batik. Still some refugees generate income from these skills, especially construction and carpentry. In early 2000, the refugees managed to get their share with all the constructional work going on in the camp despite the competition they faced with local professionals. Many of the refugees were able to contract out their labour to other refugees to earn a small income.



Fig.4.1 the picture above shows how skilful and dynamic refugees could be when given the necessary assistance and encouragement.

In addition, tailoring shops, clothing, shoe making shops, hair salons, manicure shops, electric repair shops are all available at the camp as ways of generating income. An

agricultural project was implemented as part of measures to assist refugees to grow their own food, making it possible for them to be weaned off of food rations and get some income. From the perspective of refugees interviewed, this was not a viable project because there was not enough water to farm. Although the agricultural programme did not work out as the aid workers had intended, it should be noted that some refugees currently cultivate the land to supplement their diet and they sell excess produce at the Buduburam market. As Dick (2002) observes, many refugees have also engaged in water business for their survival through the sale of little bags of filtered water from Accra and Kasoa. They also buy water from trucks with overhead tanks, store it and resell to Liberians in small quantities.

Now voluntary repatriation has ended and the inflow of remittance is not as it used to be, which has affected skilled labour work especially constructional work. The explanation given to the situation was that the resettlement programme and the just ended repatriation reduced the pace of construction activities in the camp and its surroundings, making many of them unemployed.

In spite of these minor economic activities, most of the refugees are unemployed. There are no facilities such as markets or factories that can trigger off a vibrant commercial society or even create job opportunities. A greater number of the refugees are idle and are involved in anti-social and criminal behaviours, especially the youth whose dream is to resettle in the United States of America or any European country. Well this may be their survival strategies. As such, it is not easy to find work as a youth who are living in the camp on their own effort without assistance from within the camp or relatives abroad.

Some Liberian market women I engaged in discussion told that the UNHCR's withdrawal in 2000 forced many of them to be self-employed as petty traders. Unlike in Ghana where it is quite usual for women to trade on tabletops it was not that common in Liberia. Most of them preferred being employed by the government or sell in boutiques or stores. One Liberian refugee woman trader has this to say about how she started her business:

“Before 2000, most of us were some kind at receiving end from families, friends and charities for a living. However, after 2000, I engaged in small tabletop business with some small amount of money sent to me from a relative who based in the United States to start with an income activity to support the family for our survival since there was no help from the UNHCR any more. Now with hard work I am able to turn my business into big venture as you can see”.

With the assumption of hostilities in Liberia in 2000 and the escalation of conflict into a full-fledged civil war in 2002, UNHCR re-established its presence in the camp in July 2002. Today, UNHCR is working on a community basis to strengthen resources towards greater self-reliance. UNHCR continues to provide the minimum basic community assistance to residents at Buduburam Camp, which includes Ghanaians who live in the environs of the camp and share facilities available in camp. These Ghanaians who are within the camp are those who were living in Liberia and came with the refugees when the war started. Residents of Buduburam have formed a stable community which benefits from businesses, schools, a clinic, sanitation facilities, recreational facilities, conflict resolution and welfare councils, and a network of women’s support group”¹⁰(UNHCR, Ghana).

4.1.2. Education

A pilot study at the camp observed that, “In the early 1990s, educational assistance was provided. In October 1990, the refugees themselves established a primary school on the camp but lacked resource” (Hampshire et al 2006). This support the view of Preston (1991) that the refugees themselves in many cases initiate educational facilities, right on their arrival before any assistance from host government or agencies. In order for this viable initiative to be sustainable, a Ghanaian NGO, the Christian Council became the UNHCR’s implementing partner in charge of education in the camp by supporting them with basic educational materials.

There are a good number of schools inside and around the camp run entirely by residents, and the Central Board of Education coordinates all activities of schools in the camp. The

¹⁰ This information was given by the UNHCR branch in Ghana as one of the information I gathered during the field work.

schools include, nursery, primary, junior secondary schools, senior secondary schools and three adult night schools run by individuals in the camp. Because of the repatriation programme the number of children enrolled in the schools this year is not as it used to be. Most of these schools came up prior to the withdrawal of UNHCR in 2000 and because the schools built by UNHCR were inadequate to meet the increasing number of school going children in the camp. Churches, organizations and private entities put up other schools, which are numbering about fifty different schools according to the Liberian refugee's welfare officer.

When the UNHCR withdrew funding in 2000, the Christian Council, the implementing partner responsible for refugee education was unable to continue assisting the camp schools. As a result, the Liberians running the schools decided to charge school fees so the schools could continue as a self-sufficient institution. In addition, the refugee school administrators registered with the Ghanaian Ministry of Education so that students would be eligible to take Ghanaian qualifying examinations at Buduburam Community Secondary School (Budusec) without necessarily having to join students at neighbouring Ghanaian schools as was the practice before the withdrawal of UNCHR in the year 2000.

In addition to the camp schools, a proliferation of private primary schools gives evidence to Liberians' ability to address the educational needs of their community. Refugee churches and individuals run these schools entirely on their own initiatives, charging fees to maintain the school and also pay teachers who are all Liberians. The situation in the Liberian refugee camp is almost the same as what has been going on in Honduras (Preston 1991) whereby both qualified and unqualified refugee teachers help to educate their young ones in preparation for resettlement or repatriation to enable them to face future challenges. One interviewee put it like this:

“Now that Liberia is peaceful and we must go home by the end of June according to the UNHCR voluntary repatriation programme... I have the confidence that those who are returning will contribute immensely to the Liberia national reconstruction. It is very important to make sure your children are educated here even up to junior secondary school and after that there are so many vocational skills training which include sewing,

hairdressing, soap-making and many others which I think will be in demand when we return or resettle elsewhere of which many are waiting for”

There are many problems facing the camp schools. Especially for the Buduburam Community School is the inability of some students to pay the fees. Also, the problem of classroom overcrowding persists and non-access to textbooks makes teaching and learning very difficult just to mention a few. The refugees are not only in the camp schools alone, it came up during discussion with a staff in the community school that the refugees form about 60 per cent of enrolment that confirmed their seriousness when it comes to education. However, the records of the schools entirely run by the refugees in external examinations are not all that encouraging. This can be attributed to inadequate teaching and learning materials and a high rate of untrained teachers. UNHCR has been providing a wide range of community-based assistance through its implementing partners and the sister agencies who are closely working to improve the standard of education inside and around the camp to make sure the refugees and for that matter natives who attend such schools benefit.

Not long time ago, due to the comeback of UNCHR to support the camp, they have donated dual desks and textbooks to the school. There has been construction work going on, sponsored by UNHCR to expand the Buduburam Community Secondary School to ease congestion. The school has also benefited from a total number of desks from Western Union as a way to assist the community since Liberians receive their remittances through the Union.

4.1.3. The infrastructure situation at the camp

Since the camp was initially used as a prayer camp, there were some structures already in the camp. The Liberians with encouragement from the UNHCR have constructed their own houses with their own means with minimum assistance since 1993 till withdrawal of UNHCR in the year 2000. The camp is more of a settlement; there are no tents at present. They constructed these houses with money from their relatives abroad, especially the United States. The continuous influx of refugees into Ghana and the movement of urban

refugees into the camp put a lot of strain on accommodation and other infrastructure, but they managed to avoid the use of tents in the camp.

New arrivals had find money to rent houses in the surrounding areas because the camp boundaries are fixed and there is no room for more houses. Rent is determined by the owner of the house and because demand for housing was high and supply limited, coupled with the fact that many Liberians have access to US dollar through remittances, higher rents were charged in areas surrounding Buduburam than it is typical in other areas of Accra. Some refugees have gone into agreement with landowners in the Budunuram community to build one or two bedrooms on their land for leasing for a period of time. They agree to pay rent if they are still in Ghana after the leasing period. Currently the accommodation situation in the camp is better because many have been resettled in United States and other European countries and also the just ended voluntary repatriation embarked by the UNHCR which was 30th June 2007 has made accommodation cost within the camp somewhat.

As regards electric power, the camp is served with electricity from Kasoa branch of the Electricity Corporation of Ghana (ECG). Almost every house in the camp has access to electricity. This has put pressure on the transformer because the energy requirement in the camp is more than the capacity of the transformer in the camp. According to the camp administrator, the management has petitioned Kasoa ECG branch to assist them with another transformer. Initially the UNHCR was responsible for the payment of the bills, but due to their withdrawal in the year 2000, individuals are to pay their own bills with exception of bills from the police and the clinic, which are paid by UNHCR.

4.1.4. Water supply

In 1996 the Buduburam camp enjoyed the supply of pipe-borne water, especially during the rainy season. Water tanker services and boreholes at the camp supplemented this. The water supply was cut due to the inability of Ghana Water and Sewerage Corporation to continue the pumping of water to the camp. Of greater concern to the refugees was the withdrawal of the water from the camp in 1996. Apparently, taps were left running

continuously making UNHCR unwilling to foot the high water bills. In addition, water pipes were not well maintained. As a result water to the camp was eventually cut off. However, the provision of water has been one of the biggest challenges for the camp refugees and as a result it illustrates the degree to which refugees are capable of solving their own problems in spite of severe limitations. Refugees responded by contracting Ghanaians to bring water to the camp in trucks, built cement reservoirs and big black polytanks are use for storage (Dick 2002).

Now Ghanaian truck drivers bring water to the camp daily and Liberian distributors purchase it by the tank load for storage and then resell it to other Liberians by a bucket load. Yet still drinking water is particularly a problem. The Ghanaian camp management has taken over the task of checking each truckload of water to ensure that the water is clean. But the sale of little bags of filtered water has become a primary solution to the water problem and it has grown into an important small business for many on the camp. The filtered water is bagged in Accra and send to the camp by trucks to Liberians and re-distributed to household business. Now it seems the water situation is getting better because I observed that the UNHCR has laid pipe lines all over with reservoir mounted within the camp.

The system is well organized and efficient and Liberians have learned to conserve water since it is a valuable commodity at the camp.

4.1.5. Health

The camp has a clinic, which is supervised by Apam Catholic Hospital after its closure at the beginning of 2000 because the implementing partner responsible for refugee health care since 1994, the Assemblies of God Development and Relief Agency was unable to maintain it when UNHCR financial support was withdrawn. The coming back of the UNHCR has brought a lot of improvement to the camp's health situation compared to an earlier visit in 2002. This is because the UNHCR is now assisting the camp again with all the basic needs to enable the officials to perform their professional duties.

As I mentioned in chapter three, many are refugees enterprising and educated young men and women, including a significant number of professionals, among them also health officials. Liberian refugees' health officials and a Ghanaian are in charge of supervising the camp clinic. These Liberian experts were given orientation by Apam Catholic Hospital. The clinic is run like a clinic in Accra. According to the health officer in charge, because of the coming back of the UNHCR situation has improved in the clinic. There is, however, the need to keep the clinic open 24 hours a day as well as the need for ambulance and laboratory. An education programme is in place, run by the welfare council and Liberian health officials at the clinic to educate the refugees, especially the women on prevention of the diarrhoea disease, the danger of sexual promiscuity and on family planning.

HIV/AIDS seems to be a big problem facing many refugee camps. A study of refugee camps in Tanzania by Whitaker (2000) revealed a lot of reported HIV/AIDS cases among the refugees. At the Buduburam camp there are no reliable records of the extent of people living with HIV/AIDS, but it is a big problem facing the camp and the Buduburam and its surroundings communities because of the level of sexual promiscuity going on within the camp. There are attempts by non-governmental organizations and some individual volunteers especially the Liberian refugees themselves, to prevent the spread of HIV within and around the camp. They provide free counseling to people living with HIV/AIDS and give them condom. There are a lot of education about the disease in schools, churches and other places on the prevention of HIV/AIDS. Stigmatization is making people having the disease not to come out and admit that they have the disease, making it difficult to control it. The camp clinic is not for free; patients must pay for their medical treatment and, it is very expensive for many of the refugees whose economic situation is very poor. Although the camp clinic is doing well with the assistance from the UNHCR and other partners, it has not grown to the demands of the population.

4.1.6. Some observations made on the Liberian refugees

From what has been outlined so far, it has become clear that in spite of the withdrawal of the UNHCR, the Liberians have put some measures in place to sustain themselves. The

camp is now large with a lot of refugees; one can say it is a little town. Nobody lives in tents anymore at the camp. There are houses everywhere built of concrete and electricity available.

There are provisions of little shops, displays offering basic necessities and produce for the people everywhere in the camp. Restaurants, chop bars and video centres are all over the camp. In fact many refugees at the camp are going through hard times but because of the lifestyle of some of them, it is not easy for one to say they are refugees who are in need, especially those who receive remittances from their relatives who are either in the United States of America and Europe. Inside and around the camp, one sees expensive cars like BMWs and Mercedes Benz parked here and there in refugee houses. It is important to note that even though the Liberians at the camp are all refugees on foreign land, there is always tension between them. Many of them are quick tempered and individualistic. It came up that for some, no day is successfully spent without inter personal fights, clashes over issues or differences and theft cases among others.

The information gathered was that many Liberians enjoy displaying affluence. The type of expensive dressing and the use of mobile phones in the camp also give evidence to the value placed on public display of wealth. Meanwhile, there are so many of them in the camp who need aid and assistance to survive, especially those who are unlucky not to have relatives abroad for them to also receive remittance. In fact living in the camp is going to be more difficult for such people now that UNHCR has ended repatriation program. It is also important to mention that the way some of the Liberian youth within and around the community dress, especially the ladies, is a big challenge to the locals.

Another key observation is that Liberians are highly religious with most of them being Christians, especially the women. There has been a phenomenal growth of churches and religious organizations in the camp: The Lutheran Church, Liberian International Assembly, Buduburam United Methodist Church and Refugee Baptist Church are among many others with Liberian pastors in charge. There is also a mosque for the few Muslims among them. Most of them rely on God as a solution to their problems and even a longer-

term solution of the crisis in Liberia. “But the question here is do they actually practise what they profess?” as one informant put it.

4.2. Refugees-host Relations

There has been a good social relationship between the host community and the Liberian refugees. As Sanjuga (2003) has noted in her study in Tanzania their relation is cordial as they both admitted during discussions. There have been intermarriages between them and they attend some social events like weddings, funerals, and child naming ceremonies of the other. This has been possible because large numbers of the refugees are living outside the camp and have been unofficially integrated in the community. Touring around the camp and the community during the study and especially visiting the market and the schools, testified how peaceful they co-exist. This is what the Liberian refugees welfare Council chairman had to say:

“... Our relation is up and down issue generally our relationship with the community is very calm and cordial. We live among the people and there is a high degree of understanding. As I said, you cannot rule out ‘xenophobia’ or people who definitely do not like to see another person even if they were of the same nationality. So also people who do not want to see refugees are here too but they are very small minority and as a result dominated by the economic impact we are making... We do not have statistics of how many Ghanaians married to Liberians but the number there is huge which has created some kind of union, which is inseparable. This has led to cross cultural kind of relations in the process some Liberians have learnt how to cook Ghanaian food, code of dressing, language even my niece has married to a Ghanaian likewise Ghanaians but the locals have maintained most of their culture”.

The youth are also living together in harmony, they compete in sports especially soccer, have joint beach programmes and other engagements. Of course there are problems as exist in any other community, especially when two groups from two different cultures meet with Ghanaians seen as reserved and the Liberians as more expressive as one of my interviewees put it. There are at times clashes between the two over petty issues like stealing, payment of house rent, land, excessive noise, sanitation issues. Also, misunderstandings do arise between them about which side to control the schools and the revenue from the market, toilets constructed by either UNHCR or any of its implementing partners. In anticipating these possible frictions, the government of Ghana

has established a police post at the camp, which is serving both the locals and the refugees in maintaining law and order. Due to a long-standing chieftaincy dispute there are two chiefs in Buduburam community. It also came up that both use the two chiefs' palaces effectively in solving most of the civil cases between the two sides. Notwithstanding this intervention by the locals and the government of Ghana, the UNHCR and an NGO who is responsible for conflict resolutions are helping in this direction. They also have a lot of educational programs on tolerance and peaceful co-existence between the two.

During one of my discussions with the refugees they eluded to the fact that they have had many differences but they respect their host and their good relations dated back to the good reception they had from the host when they arrived in the early 1990s.

4.3. The Socio-cultural and economic impact of the Liberian refugees on host Buduburam Community.

It is really important to state that the Liberian civil war had seen a number of Liberians escaping into Ghana as refugees. As such, under the international refugee's law and Organisation of African Unity (OAU) perspective of a refugee, these Liberians were indeed welcomed to Ghana. The people and government and the UNHCR jointly met their interests and welfare needs.

Obviously, their interaction with the host community has brought about tremendous mixed socio-economic impacts on the hosting community. At this venture the distribution of burdens and benefits theory by Whitaker (2000) is going to be used in assessing the economic and other impacts on the Buduburam community base on the variables put across. The theory argues that the presence of refugees at a particular community could be a burden or benefit depending on the existing socio-economic conditions and the nature of the host-refugee relations. I think this should be the case because free movement and good relations can be an advantage to both sides. UNHCR closely cooperates with sister agencies such as UNDP, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNFPA and WFP to

improve the living standards of refugees in Ghana and in this case, Buduburam as well as the Ghanaians who live in the camp and its environs also benefit from this aid.

4.3.1. Economic impact

At present, UNHCR provides a wide range of community-based assistance through its implementing partners and the sister agencies in the areas of health, education, sanitation, waste disposal, income generating activities and support for refugee women and children as well as survivors of violence. According to UNHCR-Ghana this has brought a lot of development to the Buduburam community. The setting up of several vocational schools and training centers with assistance from the UNHCR and other organisations to teach the refugees and some of the local youth skills such as tie and dye, soap making, hair dressing, sewing, construction, baking and carpentry skills. According to some local youth this has created employment for them. One of the local youth has this to say:

“I am now working in my own shop as a hairdresser after I was lucky to be among of those of us from the Buduburam community who were giving skill training along side with the Liberian refugees some years ago. Now I am happy that I am not on the street in Accra as some are. Thanks to UNHCR, I have my profession and now even giving training to three girls whom I think is all because of the trained I had from the UNHCR assistance programme. I have been able to assist my family in many ways and at least life is far better than before”.

As noted in chapter three, the Buduburam community is traditionally a farming community. The natives took advantage of their presence at the initial stages to cultivate more food because the demand for farm products was high to the extent that farmers had to acquire more lands in order to meet the demands at that time. Native farmers benefited to the level that products like cassava and potatoes leaves were in high demand and they made money out of it because they have been selling to the refugees, a commodity hitherto regarded as waste by the locals after the cassava tuber had been uprooted. Many farmers who were into subsistence farming, cultivating maize, cassava, pepper, pawpaw and other products, found it difficult to find market for their products, but now the refugees’ presence has improved their economic status. This stems from the fact that farmers could earn extra income from commodities, which previously were uncommon as commercial products in the community.

These farmers suddenly entered into the building and renting of apartments business. They built and rented them to the refugees and as usual the owner of the house determine the amount and because demand for housing was high and supply was limited, coupled with the fact that many Liberians have access to US dollar through remittances, higher rents were charged in areas surrounding Buduburam than in other areas of Accra. According to the natives, this 'build and rent' business made a lot of them rich. Transport business has become lucrative even though people living outside the Buduburam community largely own most of the mini buses and taxis transporting goods and people to and from Buduburam and surrounding towns including Accra. But it has also created a lot of employment for the youth from the village. Before the arrival of the refugees, the Buduburam natives found it difficult to transport their farm products to the nearest market, which is Kasoa Market, but transportation has improved tremendously thus deepening transactions between Buduburam and the satellite towns and markets.

Many farmers who were cultivating maize, cassava, pepper, pawpaw and others found it difficult to find market for their products but now the refugees presence has moved closer to the community helping them to break even and has also created jobs for the native women at the market which is the biggest in the Gomoa district. Even though most of the people at the market are Liberians, the few local women are taking the opportunities for making a living within the camp market and elsewhere around the camp. This means that Whitaker's fear that women from the host community may not take advantage of the opportunity created by refugee situation because of their responsibilities at home, is not applicable to that of the Buduburam community.

In the sphere of subsistence agriculture the impact of the influx of Liberian refugees into the Buduburam Camp has been clearly mixed. One of the indisputable negative effects on the local people is that there has been a considerable reduction in food production. The primary reason is that most of the locals who hitherto zealously engaged in agriculture with the aim of producing food have now engaged in buying and selling at the new small market created at the camp. This indeed does not only affect the typical accepted

conventional economic culture of the people, which primarily centered on producing food for themselves but also strangle the ambitions and processes of the people to be food self-sufficient. A lot of the people now seriously rely on the neighbouring villages for foodstuffs. The energetic youth out of enthusiasm engage in commerce where they mostly act as middlemen between the camp population and neighbouring food producing villages such as Kasoa.

It is further contended that since the refugees may one day leave, the long-term consequences of the substitution of farming for trade by host community could be that the natives may one day loose their market (Liberian refugees). They may also find it difficult to reconcile themselves with their original economic activity, farming. But it should be stated that this scenario has not been overall bad. Thus, the profits accrued from the buying and selling activities have immensely raised the economic base of the people. Besides, it has created an important avenue for employment. Some have been benefiting from the remittance through intermarriage or a good Liberian friend who has now resettled in the United States of America or Europe. These positive effects enumerated above are not only observed facts but also agreed upon by the camp manager and a staff of Ghana Refugee Board who are all Ghanaians. They see Gomoa district as one of the poorest in Ghana and for that matter the refugee presence has improved Buduburam local economic conditions drastically compared to surrounding villages. The same observation was made during a group discussion with separate groups from the refugees' side and the natives.

It is true that the economy is booming and has created a lot of employment for both natives and the refugees although some contested that the economy has created jobs for people who come from villages around because they believe they were better off before the arrival of the refugees.

A staff member from Agricultural Development Bank in charge of Western Union Money Transfer also observed that because of the remittances received by the Liberians almost every month, have made the standard of living very expensive in the village. Since

most of the natives do not have that much, they find it difficult to enjoy certain things. For instance, basic commodities like coca-cola, phone cards, sugar and others are more expensive as compared to villages around and even in some cases Accra, the nation's capital. My observation and interviews with the local people emphasized the enormous frustrations and difficulties that they face because of high standard of living costs. However, some acknowledge the positive side of the refugee presence on the economy.

A large number of Liberians receive remittance from their relatives and from friends abroad. It should be noted that it is not all the refugees who get such help, however. Some of the refugees face severe economic hardship. I put a question to the Camp manager that some believe that the economic impact has been more negative than positive based on the high cost of living. This is what he had to say:

“It is normal to expect that because the population increase has made demand exceeding supply and since people are ready to pay for what they need then things will definitely be expensive...any way the locals get money from what they sell the money from the rooms they rent to the refugees so they can also buy what Liberian refugees buy”. He continued by saying, “Now many local women get a lot of money to support their families. Those who are still farming have a market for what they produce, good transportation system for their goods and services. Market women can now easily move to and from business any time, unlike before”.

It must be noted that there are signs indicating that because of resettlement and the voluntary repatriation going on, sales are coming down and shops are not running as it used to be according to the information I gathered.

4.3.2. Infrastructural Impact

Another impact of the refugees' presence on the host community is that urbanization is steadily penetrating the town. For instance, estates have been constructed at the southern part of the village. Besides a branch of Agricultural Development Bank, The Trust Bank, internet café and hotels are also built in the village. The presence of these facilities saves residents' time from travelling to Apam the district capital or Cape Coast, the Regional capital for such facilities. The banks have helped some people in the host community in

the habit of saving. This has been revealed as a benefit to both the refugees and members of the host community.



Fig.4.2. The pictures above show the extent of infrastructure development in Buduburam. Photo by the researcher

This according to Mr. Bawumia, a staff member from Ghana Refugee Board this is helping in facilitating business activities, which is a normal practice. Also, the village is enjoying electricity and pipelines, which were sponsored by the UNHCR. Quite remarkable, some of the refugees have gone further to build their own houses through leasing of lands by natives. All the afore-mentioned benefits have contributed instrumentally to the development of the community. During my interaction with the people in the community, the pace of development observed revealed why most people, including the refugees, assert that Buduburam is the fastest developing village in the Gomoa district. Readers must, however, not lose sight of the fact that there is a reduction in the pace of economic development in the community can be observed, when compared to what had pertained before their arrival. In fact, the current economic situation in the area of study is predictive of the possible deterioration in economic activities within the area when the refugees leave or resettle finally.

Notwithstanding the fact that urbanization has impacted positively on the lives of the people, it has as well brought some negative impacts on the lives of the people. Apart from the high cost of living on the side of the locals, land acquisition has become a major problem within the community. This has especially affected farmers and traders who want to acquire lands have to do so at exorbitant prices. My informants asserted that

there are instances when a person has the money but acquiring the land is difficult, due to land scarcity. Owing to the scarcity of the land and the quest of several people to buy land within the host community, land owners have sold out the land that was reserved for public places such as market squares, lorry parks and other places of public gatherings have been sold out. Accordingly, this has resulted in struggles not only on the part of the refugees, but even the local people themselves. According to the locals, there was a large tract of land available before the refugees came.

One could easily get a land to farm on or a place to set up a market stall, but now land is difficult to come by. The locals who are not able to get a place to sell are doing their trading just beside a toilet and under a high electrical tension. This is seen as a dangerous undertaking, though that is the only alternative available to them.



Fig.4.3. The pictures are illustrations of the impact of land scarcity in the community. Photo by the researcher

Furthermore, the Liberian refugees' presence at the Buduburam community has not only brought the town to urban status but also positively put the name of Buduburam in the corridors of the international arena. Day in day out tourists, researchers and other visitors from all over the world visit the town as well as Buduburam over the internet. In fact, Buduburam is currently a big town by all standards. The kind of infrastructures and development project ongoing supports this claim.

However, though by all standards Buduburam is a rural area village, land is sold there at cutthroat price. For instance, a plot of land (80m by 100m) is sold from 25,000,000.00 equivalent to 2,500 US dollars and above. The demand of land is now high making it difficult for the few locals farming to expand their cultivation. Land is an issue in the Ghanaian society. If care is not taken in its acquisitions and use, it is highly likely that devastation conflicts will be generated. Indeed, the camp may best be described as a flask spot for conflict eruption given the fact that land is haphazardly acquired and used by the refugees. This is because in some cases no documents are covered especially the ones on lease to the refugees. Although they have not used the orthodox means to acquire land at the camp some refugees strongly claim ownership over such lands. Rents are also exorbitantly charged. For this reason most local youth have to contend with the uncomfortable situation living with their parents. Others indeed stay out of the village. A native interviewed had this to say:

“My people are ready to rent rooms to the Liberians instead of us because we can’t raise such a huge amount of money they claim to rent a room, some of us are now staying in the next village and come to work every day because it is far cheaper than here”.

4.3.3. Education and Health impacts

Another area worth looking at with regard to positive socio-cultural and economic impact of the refugees on the host community is education and health. As regards to education, the community has seen a tremendous infrastructure development. UNHCR, in charge of the responsibility to help cater for the needs of refugees the world over, has constructed two junior secondary schools classroom blocks for the village. A senior secondary school, primary school and nursery school have also been constructed by UNHCR. Even though sometimes they create problems between the community and the refugees as to who to manage them, Ghana Education Service, Gomoa district and UNHCR did intervene to reach amicable solutions. These facilities are to be used by both the natives and refugees. But one clear thing is that had it not been the presence of the refugees, these infrastructures may not have been constructed. This means that the community is no more struggling with educational facilities as it used to be in the 1980s before the arrival of the Liberian refugees.

Furthermore, UNHCR also donated a number of books and dual desks to the village junior secondary school. This was done in consonance with the objective that the refugees could benefit from these facilities. In fact, before this donation, the village J.S.S had very small number of books to satisfy the increasing demand of the large student population of the school. Also, the Agriculture Development Bank in charge of western union money transfer in Buduburam village serving the refugees has built a well equipped library for both the natives and the refugees which according to a staff I interviewed is being used by all.

Apart from the infrastructural development and basic facilities being enjoyed by the community because of the presence of the refugees, most of the natives I interviewed, including the two chiefs, confirmed that most of the natives are taking their children to school because they see many Liberians who are refugees taking care of the wards in school. A native teacher made this observation:

“The Liberians have enhanced education in the community, now schools are all over and one does not need to travel a long distance before getting access to education which I think is positive. Most people are taking education seriously because of the attitude of the Liberians toward education... the problem is that most of the schools do not have qualified teachers but there is a remarkable improvement in educational level as compared to many villages around Buduburam. Because of them there have been occasions that UNHCR have paid fees for school children whose parents were not able to pay, including the natives”.

Another thing worth considering is that because of the cordial relationship between the natives and the refugees, a staff from the Buduburam Junior secondary school is helping the school especially if there is a decision to be taken in improving the standard of education in the school. Usually the Liberians dominate the Parents-Teachers association meetings and they are mostly of the ones who contribute when there is a levy.

On the other hand, there is a lack of discipline in the school, which is being attributed to some behaviour by the refugees. Consequently, teachers posted to the school do not only

seek transfers to other schools but also those who stay had their zeal and remarkable teacher spirits destroyed by this lack of discipline. Indeed, the records of the school in Basic Education Certificate Examinations are nothing to write home about.

The basis of the awkward behaviour by the refugees clearly stems from the fact that they are convinced that they may one day be settled in the United States of America or any other western European country as a staff put it. Under this impression, some refugees at the school do not respect the teachers and even some parents. This came up as a confirmation during a meeting I attended between parents and teachers of the Buduburam village J.S.S. Quite apart, the high cost of living has also affected newly posted teachers to the village. Indeed, those who are not natives stay outside the village owing to the high cost of rent. This does not only affect academic work but also debase the value of time spent by the teachers in the classroom because they have spent time waiting for the bus to school.

Also the health sector has seen a tremendous improvement, the UNHCR has established a clinic in the camp, which is not only used by the refugees but also accessed by the natives. In fact, out of the thirteen staffs of the clinic only one is a Ghanaian, the rest are Liberians. The overall qualitative and quantitative services rendered by these staffs are directed not only at the refugees but all the people in the village. Who knows, what would happen to the villagers if the refugees had not come there? It is also difficult to tell whether the government, with its numerous responsibilities and naggings from Ghanaians, would have been able to set up any clinic for the people. It is my strong opinion that the presence of the refugees here has helped the people by dint of the fact that there is a clinic being accessed by both the refugees and the natives. Also, the UNHCR and its implementation partners have donated basic hospital equipment and various kinds of drugs to the Apam Catholic General hospital meant for the locals, which of course the refugees also benefit from.

The destruction of forest area in their early 1990s, when the refugees arrived for firewood and other activities, has affected the locals in the area of health. The clinic in the camp

and the Apam Catholic hospital have been helping the host community because of the presence of the refugees, yet still many locals believe in traditional medicine as the only cure for certain diseases and sicknesses which they think the scientific or orthodox medicine is not able to cure. These human activities have dangerously affected the natural environment negatively so that the trees and leaves for medicine, which they depended on before the arrival of the refugees, are now difficult to come by.

4.3.4. The Liberian refugees' presence and Security

Fire service and police stations have been opened in the camp, which indeed have been extensively used by the whole Buduburam community with. The help of UNHCR a neighbourhood has established a watch committee to enhance the desired capacity of the police patrol not only in the camp but also in the community in safeguarding the security of the residents and their property. Notwithstanding the presence of this security related facilities the refugees sporadically pose security risks to the community.

As it was observed by UNHCR standing committee (1997), “there are commonly complaints that refugees have added to security problems in general and crime rates, theft, murder, etc. in particular”. The case in Buduburam is not different from observations made by researchers in other host communities all over. N'tow, who has carried out a study at the Buduburam camp made this serious observation about how dangerous the place called the ‘Gulf’ look like:

The inadequacy of affordable or free toilet facilities in the settlement has compelled residents to utilize an area of woodland on the outskirts of the settlement, commonly referred to as the ‘Gulf’... The shades of the tree and its isolation from the camp make the ‘gulf’ a suitable place for rapists, murderers and child molesters to ply their detestable trades. There have been several reports of small children disappearing and found murdered later...”¹¹

In fact most of the people I interviewed mentioned that area but as to whether the perpetrators are refugees was difficult to answer. This came up in a discussion with the

¹¹ This observation was made by N'tow Charles Saah (2004) during his study at the Buduburam camp “How Liberians Live on the camp at Buduburam in Ghana” in *The Perspective*, a Monthly newsmagazine, which covers a variety of Liberian issues. Atlanta, Georgia. www.theperspective.org

Ghana Refugee Board staff Mr. Bawumia, as to whether the criminal activities going on are committed by the refugees as some locals made me to believe. This was his views,

“Yes, there are security problems facing the camp which in most of the cases are attributed to the refugees just may be because they are voiceless which I think we need to talk for they...in fact their presence has brought a lot of foreigners to settle in the community, engaging in all kinds of criminal activities which are always seen not only by the host but most Ghanaians as perpetrated by refugees which in the actual fact may not be them”.

To explain this point further the attraction of the security agencies especially the military to the place speaks volumes for this. From my interviews, it was apparent that the camp became a well-positioned receptacle for ex-combatants and armed robbers. Perhaps the military presence there at the early part of 2003 was to flush out these bad nuts that are not only security threats to the village and the camp but also top the whole nation. According to the interior minister of Ghana, “The Government is aware of the presence of a number of ex-combatants at the settlement and will, therefore, not sit down unconcerned for the country’s security to be jeopardized”¹². The Minister’s comments recently just confirmed the concerns of the locals. The presence of these supposedly ex-combatants can cause mayhem at the Gomoa Buduburam settlement and threaten the security of Ghana if care is not taken. On the other hand, the Liberian refugees welfare Council chairman held this view when I asked him about the perceived threat their presence pose to the host community:

“With security, I don’t think we pose any threat to the people of Buduburam and Ghana in general. Ghana has very sensitive security network and there is no way the Government of Ghana will ever allow this place to become a security barrier. The mandate that host governments sign allows them to send us back if we become threat to security...we leaders here we are on and off advising and make the people aware that security for Ghana is security for us all. There are some lapses, which I agree, but such situations happen anywhere in Ghana where you find people violating the laws and creating insecurity, which does happen in human settings. But in general I do not think we have created such possibility”.

¹² This comment by the Minister was made recently during the country’s meet the press on the demonstration by the Liberian refugees women in support of a petition addressed to the UNHCR in Geneva.

<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php> 2nd April 2008.

4.3.5. Sanitation and Environmental impact on the host community

On sanitation and environmental issues the impact has been serious; the Buduburam community is facing a serious environmental hazard due to improper waste management system. As we all know bad sanitation in a society affects the people who live within that society and they are likely to suffer from disease like cholera, malaria, diarrhoea or any related diseases. Still toilets are particularly problematic as was observed by Dick (2002). The ones built when refugees first arrived have not been maintained, primarily due to public misuse. Instead, many camp residents use the bush areas. A refugee interviewed said:

“Prior to the Liberians’ arrival, the Ghanaian villagers used the bush as well but the large population increase has made this an unsustainable practice and when one wants to visit KVIP or the toilet, he or she has to pay an amount per visit which according to the informant is difficult to come by”.

Both liquid and solid wastes are disposed of indiscriminately all over the township as it is in the camp. There are no well constructed drains to serve as outlets for liquid waste and continuous dumping of waste at a particular space all over the town has created mountains of refuse, more so, there is a lot of pressure on sanitation facilities such as the village public latrines and few garbage containers with the community. Also garbage is scattered on almost every street, and in some places huge mountains of rubbish are piled around homes and public places.

The problem of bad sanitation poses a serious health threat to the residents at the village. The sanitation condition is very bad and yet to be addressed by relevant agencies. Drainages are clogged, garbage not properly disposed of causing mosquitoes and flies all over and from the information I gathered malaria, diarrhoea, cholera among others are common sickness in the community. In most cases, the extent of assistance given by UNHCR in managing waste in the community as compared to that of the camp is nothing to write home about. For instance, during my tour within the community and the camp I saw that there is a sanitation problem facing the camp. However, the situation is much better than that in the village where one can see waste all over. Although there is garbage collection service that should see to it, it is woefully inadequate. During groups

discussion with some locals what came up was that Liberians keep their homes clean but do not care what happen in public areas.



Fig.4.4. The picture depicts a refuse dump site right at the source of 'Budu Well'.Photo: by the researcher

One serious problem facing the village, which came up constantly, was that because wastes are disposed indiscriminately within the community has severely affected their sources of drinking water. As water is a big problem facing the refugees in the camp it is even worse in the host community. The reason is that when organizations like World Vision supplying the refugees with water, the locals are left out. Also recently UNHCR has laid a pipe line all over the camp and water reservoirs mounted without doing the same for the community with more than 60 per cent Liberian refugees living among them. As earlier on noted in chapter three, before the arrival of the refugees the main source of water within the community was from wells especially the one dug by Budu which later became the town's name. This is no longer reliable among few others constructed by the natives. This is because of bad drainage system and bad method of refuse disposal. The waste container in the picture is just at the source of Budu-well which is no more in use because of health threat. Now the locals who did not have any problem with water have now also resulted to buying water from tanker supply and little bags of filter water which is expensive to be use in your daily activities.

This environmental deterioration due to the bad sanitation can also endanger the quality of life of the host community. This may become particularly precarious in the areas of their source of water since there is no more water running through the already laid pipe lines. According to information gathered from some of the few farmers left, since most of the refugees relied on fire wood for cooking, the cutting of trees had intensified causing deforestation. It has been observed in the research that the cutting of trees had existed long before the arrival of the refugees to the host community. This indicates that, they should not in totality be blamed for the state of deforestation in the community. The pressure has only been caused by the increased in population, which had resulted from their influx. This has significantly led to climatic change. It came up that the rainfall pattern as noted in chapter three, which was mostly followed by farmers, is no more reliable. This has been claimed to be a by-product of such human activities as mentioned above. Some of the informants even attributed it to one of the reasons why some farmers shifted to other industry like trading and build and rent business.

4.3.6. Cultural impact and ethnic relations

The local's main ethnic identity as Ghanaians in general and Fante tribe in particular is still maintained despite their interactions with the Liberian refugee regardless of their minority position. Their religious beliefs and their language, which form the main component of their ethnic identity, are still maintained despite the presence of the refugees. The locals still practice most of their traditional beliefs like the annual festivals, which are meant to honor or remember the dead. Probably, it is so because the refugees are not from one ethnic group and for that matter most of their life styles are influence by western culture which I was made to believe is related to their United States linkage before the war.

Although there have been intermarriages, and various kinds of social integration between the refugees and the members of the host community, and also trade between them, the contact which has been for over eighteen years has not affected the locals' ethnic status.

We cannot overlook the fact that some parts of their culture have been influenced by the presence of the refugees. For instance, the food and dressing of both parties have been influenced. Even though some elders complained of the fact that the youngsters have adopted what they called Liberian English (Colloquia) English, it was my observation that the Fante language is what is mostly used as means of communication among the people. This therefore leaves the Fante language not an endangered one.

Sacred areas and forest reserves for the locals' religious activities are almost all destroyed due to human activities like the cutting of firewood and excavation of sand for constructions. Most of the Liberian refugees are Christians and also came from the cities. By virtue of their Christian tenets, they have a stereotype perception of the traditional beliefs and practices of the locals as paganism. Even though traditional practices like going to sacred places to honour the ancestors and the annual prayers for the dead and their families are still going on, the fear is that the young generation may not continue with such practices because of the stereotype that has been associated with them. Yet still the locals perform these practices, especially the old generation.



Fig.4.5. A gathering in the memory of the dead. Photo by the researcher

More so, there is a remarkable moral degeneration and cultural denigration in the village. Thus, most of the practices brought to the village by the refugees are apparently antithesis to the cultural indices and social values of the people. For instance, the youth today in the village are seen as replicas of the refugees whose way of dressing is different. Some of the native boys wear earrings and plaited hair and ladies are always in mini skirts, thereby

exposing all sensitive aspects of their bodies. By the cultural and moral standards of the host community this is unacceptable. Lamenting on the deplorable state of the moral turpitude of the youth, an elder of the village had this to say:

“The way the Liberians dress and the way they talk to their elders has had influence on the young people in the village. Gentleman, look at the way the people are dressed right now, women in mini skirts and their bodies being exposed and some of the men in earrings with plaited hair have made our youth coping blindly”, He concluded with a question, “Is that how we behave in Ghana?”

It seemed my observation is in line with the claims of Hampshire et al (2006) that some of the Liberian youth exhibit some form of sub-culture based heavily on Black American youth culture and Rastafarian identity of which some of the local youth have been influenced. The camp has been associated with anti-social practices like prostitution, alcoholism; hide out for criminals and many other socially endangering undertakings that affect the traditional values and norms of the Buduburam community.

4.4. Summary

This chapter outlines the refugees’ conditions at the camp. It finds that the refugees have no government restrictions and they have been more or less integrated into the local host community. Generally speaking, there is a good relationship between the host community and the refugees. This has been illustrated by the attendance of social functions of each other. However, there are times when the two clash over petty issues. Such frictions necessitated and led to the establishment of a police post at the camp by the Government of Ghana. The primary purpose is to maintain law and order. This has been supported by an NGO at the camp responsible for conflict resolutions between the two groups, and efforts of the traditional leaders. The chapter also looks at the impacts of the presence of the refugees in the camp. In this light, I captured benefits that have been derived by the host community as well as the negative impacts.

The next chapter will be a summary and conclusion of the findings of the research. It will also give an account of possible recommendations for the situation.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Summary and Conclusion

In all, the thesis considers the impact the Liberian refugees have had on the host community. Notably, the host community has benefited from the refugees' presence, especially in the areas of economics, infrastructural development, health and education. From both personal observations and insights of my informants during the fieldwork, the economy of Buduburam community has drastically improved. A wealth of job avenues has been created for the locals. Also, the few local farmers had no difficulty selling their produce as there is a big market created by the refugee's presence. This has reduced the marginal cost of production and considerably increased the monetary output of their farming engagement. Overall, it betters the quality of the economic life of the locals.

In addition, increase in population as a result of the presence of the refugees dictates increase in physical infrastructure development. New buildings have been put up in order to accommodate the people. The necessary consequences are increased scarcity of land owned by the locals and demand for apartments. Renting business thus aids the locals to raise their living standards. It brings in income and secures for them an additional means of economic livelihood. Education and health cannot be left out. The two sectors have seen a lot of improvements within the community since the arrival of the refugees. Buduburam community has seen tremendous infrastructure development and other educational facilities, which according to the locals have remarkably improved the quality of education within the community. Besides, the community now has a health clinic and benefits from periodic generous donations from the UNHCR to the Apam Catholic General hospital within the Gomoa district.

Another positive impact that is worth mentioning is that progressive urbanization is penetrating the Buduburam town. This means the presence of the Liberian refugees has supported the creation of facilities and services for the host community which otherwise might not have been developed in such a community. For instance, facilities like banks,

hotels, Internet cafés, communication centers, restaurants, basket ball court and others demonstrate why the locals refuse to call Buduburam a village.

However, the presence of the refugees is believed to have had a negative impact on areas like sanitation and environmental issues, land acquisition and usage, security and traditional values and norms. Moreover, though the economy of the area is booming, the cost of living within the community is too high for a place like Buduburam, in the Gomoa district and for that matter Ghana. Foodstuffs and other basic commodities are very expensive. The price of land and rent are up to the extent that the youth find it difficult to settle independently out of the family apartments.

Previously, the community had food sufficiency and food security. This used to be provided for and sustained by the farmers in Buduburam community. There is now a reduction in food production making them rely on food from outside the community, which is more expensive. The reason has been that many farmers have shifted from farming to other areas like trading, building business, which in the short term seem to be more profitable than farming. This begs the question as to what happens to such people given the fact that the supposedly customers (Liberian refugees) are leaving and also cash flow into the community has drastically decreased. Land has become a “hot cake”. It is difficult to get land. Even if one wants to revert back to farming, it may be difficult, as marked urbanization has made land within the community very expensive.

Furthermore, sanitation and environmental issues were great concerns to the locals due to the massive cutting of trees in the early days of the refugee’s presence. This human activity has caused changes in climatic conditions with its attendant negative impact on the general weather and the rainfall pattern. Garbage is disposed indiscriminately, almost everywhere, especially within the community. Worst of all, HIV/AIDS, malaria and cholera constitute serious health threats to all residents. This has been exacerbated by many acts of criminality attributed to the presence of the Liberia refugees by locals. There is a firm belief on the part of the locals that the camp is a host for criminals like rapists, murderers, and armed robbers. This makes the community unsafe for human

habitation, an obvious departure from its original status. Additionally, cultural values and traditional norms of the host have been severely affected since the arrival of the refugees. Many of the locals, especially the youth, are no longer interested in dressing in traditional Ghanaian costumes but the ones, which will normally expose the sensitive parts of the body. This was of great concern for the elders of the Buduburam community.

Indeed, one can anticipate a stronger conflict between generations. Most of the young people stick to western or what they call blessings of modernity as opposed to the older generation with their traditional values on dressing and music, and their attitude toward the elderly in the society. There is a cultural tension between these two generations. The older generation sees the adoption of the western style of living as a clear negation of the established values. Yet most of my respondents in general found that the overall impact was more positive than negative. However, the difficulty associated with sustaining value judgments makes these positions problematic. In fact, what can be said to be positive for one person may be negative for another. Accordingly, subjectivism in values assessment may be a mitigating factor here, not to suggest a complete disregard of the evaluations of socio-economic impact on the refugee presence in the camp. After all these problems exist everywhere in Ghana.

The host community has not experienced these impacts alone but the surrounding communities and Ghana in general have also experienced one or the other. The information I gathered from the Agricultural Development Bank revealed that the Buduburam branch on two occasions has won top five hundred financial institutions involved in money transfer in Ghana for the year 2006 and 2007 respectively. This means that the whole nation has also benefited from the large number of Liberians who had been receiving remittance from their relatives and from friends abroad.

Finally, the findings of this study have proved that the positive impact of the Liberian refugees' presence on the Buduburam community outweighed the negative, which is the opposite of the study's hypothesis.

Although the negative impacts have created some problems, member states of the United Nations are obligated to receive and protect refugees. Therefore, Ghana has to accept them notwithstanding the negative consequences associated with them. However, there should be policy measures/options by the government and the UNHCR to ensure the challenges faced by the host communities are addressed upon the exit of the refugees.

5.2. Recommendations

In light of the above findings, it is important to provide recommendations that may serve as solutions to the perceived negative impact of the presence of the Liberian refugees on the Buduburam community in socio-cultural and economic terms, and to those of the large refugee host communities in West Africa as a whole. The situations on the ground point out that there is an urgent need for the authorities, especially the chiefs of Buduburam community, the Ghana government and the UNHCR, to take serious actions to improve the situation at the Gomoa-Buduburam community. As such, this paper puts forward the following recommendations for their consideration and possible actions to be implemented.

5.2.1. Sanitation and Waste Disposal

The sanitation problem is of concern to both the UNHCR and the local authorities. Several efforts have been put in place to curb the situation. However, the large population present at the camp has largely negated such efforts. This compels UNHCR to provide for large refuse containers at vantage places in order to effectively deal with waste disposal. The local authorities have also organized series of communal labour ventures to control the mess. Nevertheless, looking at the kind of problem depicted in chapter four I think these measures are not enough.

The district assembly needs some amount of commitment and resources to be able to collect most of the waste in and around the Buduburam community. During the raining season a lot of waste mixes with water, which makes it difficult for both human and vehicular movement. Worst of all, the wastewater pollutes some streams that serve as a source of drinking water to the people. According to the findings, this presents a serious

threat to life. In order to reduce or overcome the situation, it is recommended that the local authorities, including the two chiefs and the UNHCR, must intensify their effort on an awareness programme on personal hygiene and the consequence of bad sanitation. It is prudent to adhere to the assertion that prevention is better than cure. It is also important that the local authorities see to it that waste containers are regularly collected and emptied when full. It is the surest means to avoid any outbreak of cholera. An outbreak of such an infectious disease will be a disaster for the people.

5.2.2. Environmental Degradation

Deforestation and other forms of land degradation resulting from urbanization have had a negative impact on the climate and the environment in general. There have been extensive cutting of trees and excavation of sand since the arrival of the refugees. These activities have affected the few determined farmers by influencing the raining patterns within the immediate and surrounding environs of the community. Therefore, there is a need for the local authorities and the UNHCR in collaboration with its implementing partners to initiate tree-planting programmes. This will help restore the environment and good climatic conditions. Such projects must be sustainable to be able to extend beyond the present generation their benefits to posterity.

5.2.3. Possible Repatriation or Integration

A recent development at the Buduburam settlement has been that some Liberian refugee women embarked on a demonstration for almost a month in support of a petition addressed to the UNHCR in Geneva, demanding among other things, that they do not wish to be integrated into the Ghanaian society and would resist every attempt to integrate them. They wish to be resettled in a western country. In the alternative, they would only voluntarily repatriate to Liberia if they could get \$1000 each instead of the \$100 promised by the UNHCR. This issue, which came up during the study, has received significant attention by the Ghanaian public and the media. Some people have called for the closing down of the camp on the grounds that the situation, which brought the refugees to Ghana, no longer exists in Liberia. It is obviously difficult to pronounce a value-free judgment on this. Therefore, I recommend that the UNHCR must negotiate

with the Liberian and Ghanaian governments on a possible repatriation to Liberia with a substantial amount when they go home, or to integrate those refugees who want to remain in Ghana into the Ghanaian community.

It is important to note here that the refugees must know the essence of cooperating with authorities and accept repatriation back to their country of origin. With the current relative peace in Liberia, repatriation will help serve the purpose of assisting in the rebuilding of their badly devastated country. Their dream of resettling in a western country may not materialize because of the current democratic and peaceful status of Liberia, which absolve the host country and UNHCR from such an obligation. After all, Article 1 (4e) of the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention¹³ changes their status as refugees due to the non-existence of the events, which originally brought them to Ghana. It is in their interest to avoid jeopardizing the good relationship that exists between their country and Ghana by embarking on such actions. The refugees must also appreciate the role played by the UNHCR and their host for protecting them for nearly twenty years. Such a noble role should not be overlooked within the context of their current demands.

5.2.4. Economic Dimension

With regard to the economy, many natives have benefited from the presence of the Liberian refugees through petty trading and other opportunities like ‘build and rent’ business. However, current developments at the community have shown that conditions are not the same as they used to be. Sales have gone down, business shops closed down, and cash inflow reduced as reported by the banks. Yet the cost of living is still high. This has generated a legitimate concern for the welfare of the people. The predicament may worsen given the fact that the big market created by the presence of refugees cannot be sustained. The market may not exist following a possible repatriation of the refugees. It is contended that the long-term consequence of substituting farming for trade as noted

¹³ Convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problem in Africa. The Assembly of Heads of State and governments at its sixth ordinary session (Addis Ababa, 10th September 1969. www.africa-union.org/Official_documents/ 15/05/08

earlier will exacerbate this problem. It is not too late nonetheless to rivet to the farming industry. Exorbitant prices and scarcity of land should not deter the farmers from getting back to their traditional occupation. The two Chiefs within the community must come to terms on making lands available for farming activities. This will at least help to reduce the impact of food shortage facing the community and also create job avenues for their people.

5.2.5. Security Perspective

One of the concerns raised by the locals in the previous chapter was about security. An attention was drawn to the fact that increasingly the community and the camp are becoming a 'hide-out' for criminals. These include murderers, armed robbers, and rapists. Most dangerous are Liberian ex-combatants who found their way into the camp after the war. In order to make sure that the place is safe for the residents, which include the refugees themselves, there must be a legitimate government action to clear out such people. This will dispel the fears of the host community and the refugees in particular. I will go by Jacobsen's (2005) suggestion that governments, and in this case the government of Ghana, must make sure that the police post at the camp is staffed with well trained security personnels who are familiar with refugee rights. Such security personnel will, in turn, deal with security problems associated with the refugees' presence at host communities and for that matter Buduburam community. Moreover, other major parties such as UNHCR, opinion leaders from the Buduburam community, the Government of Ghana and the refugees must play an active role in ensuring a peaceful community for human habitation. With criminals and various acts of criminality, there can be no peace and stability in the camp.

5.2.6. Cultural Sector

The presence of the refugees has impacted negatively on the cultural values and traditional practices of the host. This cultural erosion may have occurred due to the high presence of western mode of dressing and music brought into the community by the refugees. This is due to their socio-economic background and historical link to the United States. The local youth in particular have been negatively influenced. This has created

some sort of tension between the youth and the older generation within the community. In effect, some elders have put some stringent measures to curtail the situation by putting certain restrictions on their wards like restraining friendship with the Liberians. This may help in the short term. In a substantive respect, sustained education is needed to expose the local youth to the consequences of such behaviours and the need to uphold their cultural values. It may also help if the chiefs and the elders of the community make their traditions and cultural practices to attract the youth.

However, the challenges of globalization today have made it difficult for such measures to achieve their objective. All these attitudes and dressing are also shown on Television making the youth look at it from a different direction. Despite all these challenges the community has been able to maintain the core of its religious practices and festivals. However, the community is facing a high risk of HIV/AIDS within the camp. I am aware that the so called westernization, especially with dressing and music, is a problem facing almost every community in Ghana but the situation they found themselves is an exceptional. Therefore, it is imperative that they recognize themselves as Ghanaians and learn to appreciate, cherish and adore their Ghanaian rich cultural values.

5.2.7. Project Distribution

The UNHCR and its implementing partners must not be restricted to the camp in their effort of carrying out some essential developmental projects in Buduburam. The most common complaint I gathered from the locals during discussions and interviews were about the above issue. They complained of a pipe line project in the bid of solving the water problem facing the whole community which was restricted to the camp with reservoirs mounted within the camp. Meanwhile it is because of the consequences of the refugees' presence that the host is facing this water crisis. Another concern raised was about the UNHCR's effort to curb the sanitation problems. I was asked to tour within the camp and see for myself how the organization has placed containers all over the camp as compared to the community where the refugees count more than 60 percent of the population faced with a huge sanitation problem. This parallel service is both unfair and inequitable and is not in the interest of the refugees in the long run, especially those

living among the locals. I know UNCHR should not be held fully responsible, but if the organization has seen the need to address a common problem it should not be concentrated only to the camp, even though it will in the long term belong to the host. It creates unnecessary tension between the refugees and host, which was the case in the Buduburam community.

As I have indicated earlier, the UNHCR should not fully take the blame but also the leaders of the community especially the two chiefs who have divided the front of the community because of a long-standing chieftaincy dispute. I believe that the two chiefs are there for their own interests, which has been shown by the rate at which they are selling the land at such exorbitant price without taking into consideration the financial stands of the people and their inability to purchase land at such prices. What is more, the money generated from the sales is not used to mitigate some of the problems facing the community. The fact is that the refugees are well organized with effective leadership, which negotiates on behalf of the people; while because of the leadership crisis facing the host community it becomes difficult for UNHCR to play its roles and not to deepen the crisis.

It is also essential that the expectations of both the host community and the refugees are not very high. In order to avoid perpetuating expectations of continuous assistance provision, the UNHCR must make it clear to all refugees and host communities what it means by refugee protection and their role from the beginning. If this is not clearly stated they will conclude on the basis of UNHCR's initial response that refugee protection includes material assistance. If the host community's willingness to offer asylum is conditioned upon UNHCR's willingness to provide material assistance, there will be no problem when assistance is withdrawn. I therefore urge the chiefs to settle their difference for the common interests of their people. This unity will help them at the negotiation table and the earlier they do that the better, because the programme of the government of Ghana is to repatriate all the refugees to their home country within the next six months. Therefore, this is the time to negotiate for any compensation, else the locals will regret after the refugees have left and the community begins to face the real

consequence of the above negative impact for hosting the Liberian refugees for almost two decades.

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Appendices

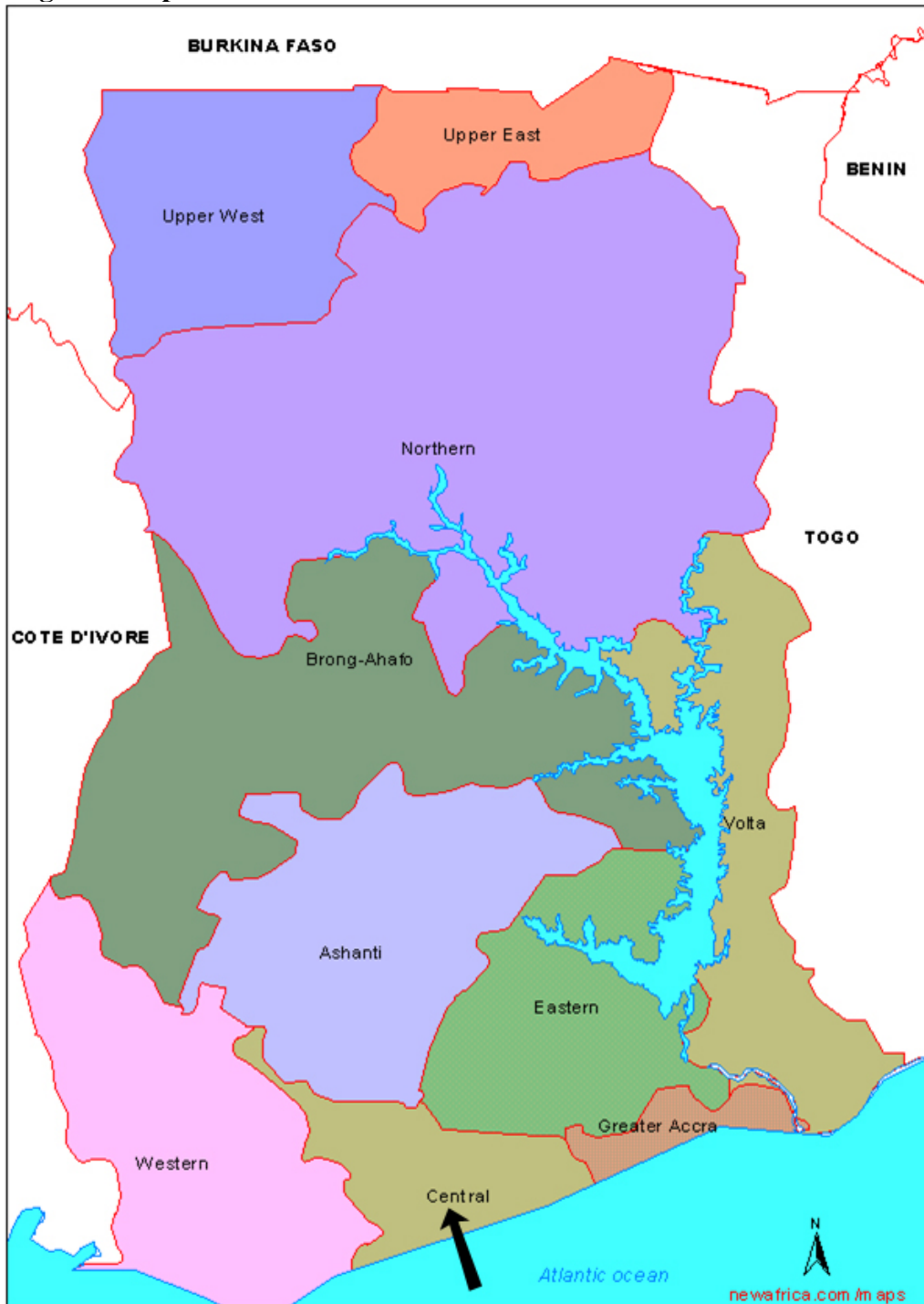
Appendix 1
Map of Ghana



The map above shows the location of Ghana in Africa.

Source: <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php>

Appendix 2
Regional map of Ghana

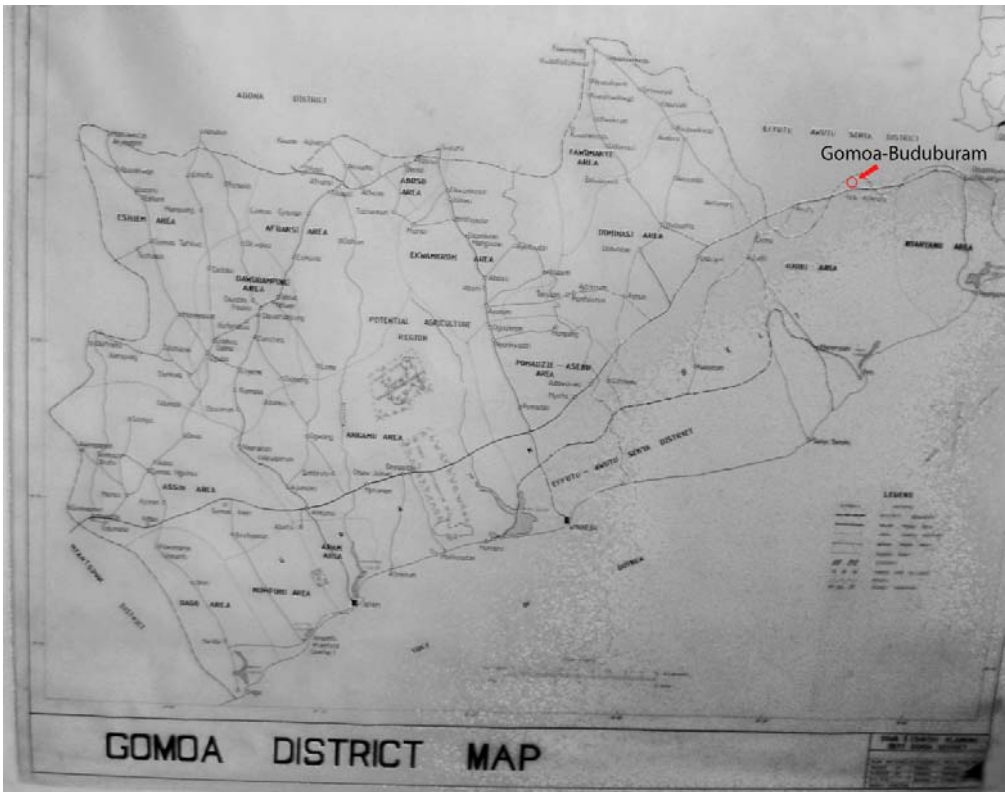


The black arrow indicates the region where Gomoa district is located.

Source:

<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php>

Appendix 3
Map of Gomoa District in the Central region of Ghana



The red arrow and circle indicate where the host Gomoa-Buduburam community is located. Source: Fieldwork survey.

Appendix 4: Some of the fieldwork pictures: By the researcher

