

**Life for Women in a Refugee Camp in Malawi:
Understanding perceptions of security and insecurity**

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the MA degree in Globalization and International Development,
Specialization in Women's Studies

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Abstract

Feminist scholarship contributes to our understanding of the day-to-day experiences of female refugees especially as they relate to social and economic security. Traditional gender roles, the gender division of labour, systems of patriarchy, and sexual and gender based violence are contributing factors to the daily violence and insecurity that female refugees experience.

This thesis employed unstructured interviews with 15 refugee women and 9 institutional representatives based in Malawi's Dzaleka Refugee Camp as well as participant observation to examine perceptions of security within refugee camps as articulated by female refugees and by the institutional representatives working in Dzaleka camp. My findings underscore diverging perceptions between these two groups particularly along the themes of access to heating resources, prostitution and survival sex, boreholes, corruption, livelihoods, early and forced marriage, and reporting insecurity.

Analysis of these themes indicates a gendered duality regarding the visibility of women refugees and their access to basic necessities, particularly heating resources. As such, refugee women have limited options to achieve their basic necessities and therefore may engage in negative survival strategies such as sex work. Furthermore, inadequate trust between refugees and refugee-based organizations as well as limited accountability mechanisms contributes to the insecurity that refugee women experience.

Acknowledgements

I am truly grateful for the guidance and support that I have received throughout my thesis process. First and foremost, I have to thank my supervisor, Dr. Rebecca Tiessen, for her excellent advice during the many speed bumps I encountered. Thank-you for your understanding and for also pushing me into gear when necessary! Your intelligence and spirit are incredibly inspiring and I stick to my first year ingénue when I say that I want to be like you when I grow up!

My fieldwork would have been impossible without my ‘fixers’/interpreters from the Dzaleka refugee camp – Monica Monaliyo, Marie Merci Uwase, and Honorine John. Thank-you all for pushing me to continue recruiting and interviewing despite the rains, incredible mud, and never-ending logistical challenges! Thank-you for your patience with my continuous questions and for your friendship! Murakoze cyane, merci beaucoup, zikomo kwambiri!

I must also extend a warm thank-you/zikomo to WUSC Malawi for their support and assistance in achieving permission to conduct research within the Dzaleka camp. Particularly, I would like to thank Grace Kapatuka for allowing me access to her professional network within the camp, organizing continued transportation back and forth to Dzaleka, as well as allowing me to use the WUSC classroom for interviews. Zikomo kwambiri Grace!

Finally, I have to extend a heartfelt thank-you to both my family and friends for their love and support throughout the very turbulent past 18 months! In particular, I must thank my mom, Helen Ramier for her continuous cheerleading and reassurance that everything will work out in the end. I have to also thank my dad, Wayne Ramier, for his logistical support and for being a sounding board during the difficult times.

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List of Acronyms

ADFL	Alliance Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
HAP	Humanitarian Accountability Partnership
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IGA	Income Generating Activities
IR	International Relations
JRS	Jesuit Refugee Services
MoHAIS	Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security
MRCs	Malawi Red Cross Society
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PARinAC	Partnership in Action
PRDO	Participatory Rural Development Organization
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WUSC	World University Services Canada

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Context

The global population of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) is at an all-time high with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reporting almost 55 million people depending on their protection and assistance (UNHCR, 2014). National and international security concerns regarding refugee flows are the underlying reason for the creation of refugee camps; these camps are the traditional security response to potential security threats posed by refugee populations (UNHCR, 2006). However, this traditional security response does not overtly consider the individual insecurity that refugees, in particular female refugees, experience within the refugee camps. Women are particularly vulnerable in refugee camps largely due to poorly designed camps, traditional protection mechanisms, cultural norms validating sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), systemic gender inequality, and the triple burden i.e. physical, economic, and reproductive insecurity (Martin, 2004; Carlson, 2005; Wolte, 2004; Pavlish, Ho, & Rounkle, 2012; Aubone & Hernandez, 2013).

Insecurity such as fuel resources, a lack of economic opportunities, and SGBV are well-known to refugee organizations such as the UNHCR, however, including women in equal and meaningful participation structures remains elusive. For example, in instances where women are included in leadership positions, they are often allocated to subordinate and gender-stereotypical roles such as food distribution or child protection (UNHCR, 2015c). This is problematic as not only are female opinions on insecurity being considered less important, but also a true understanding of how female refugees perceive and prioritize insecurity or where insecurity stems from for female refugees remains misunderstood by institutional organizations. With record numbers of refugees and IDPs, understanding perceptions of security within refugee

camps is important, particularly in relation to gaps in perceptions between female refugees and institutional representatives.

1.2 Rationale

Refugee camps not only host thousands of refugees, but also local police forces, local health authorities, UNHCR, and UNHCR's implementing partners. Understanding how all of these parties perceive the security of female refugees in everyday activities is vital to confronting and overcoming paternalistic approaches to female refugees. Unfortunately, during my literature review, I was unable to identify how female refugees and how the institutional representatives view female refugees' security. I read articles about how representatives from organizations such as the UNHCR perceived refugees, and I perused articles indicating refugees' perceptions of their host environment and host community. Yet, I identified a knowledge gap regarding the perceptions of the refugees, in particular female refugees and institutional staff in relation to institutional (in)security. Note that institutional (in)security refers to the security or lack thereof related to the governing structure of the social order within the refugee camps i.e. the organizations within the camp or the refugee camp management. Therefore, appropriate and participatory policy and program development is stunted. This is underscored by a paternalistic and patriarchal governing structure within the refugee camp resulting in an infantilization and essentialism of female refugees and limited understanding of the everyday security issues for female refugees. I utilize the concept of essentialism to underscore the paternalistic strategies employed when treating women and girls as exclusive 'vulnerable victims' without due consideration for their agency, power and resistance. Additionally, research regarding institutional power hierarchies and how they impact the security or insecurity of women within the refugee camps is scarce.

1.3 Research Questions

The objectives of this research were to (1) investigate the daily experiences of refugee women in relation to economic and social well-being, particularly in relation to heating resources (especially firewood and charcoal), water, social services, economic opportunities, and health care facilities; and (2) identify differences in perception of security between female refugees and refugee institutional representatives. Note that the physical security dimensions to all of these day-to-day functions were of special interest as personal security was part of my broader analytical lens. The overarching research questions that this thesis endeavoured to answer: are institutional representatives aware of institutional insecurities identified by female refugees? And what are women's perceptions of security in the Dzaleka refugee camp? Secondary research questions include (1) what are the security concerns experienced by women in refugee camps? (2) How do perceptions of security for women in the refugee camp differ (if at all) between camp authorities and the women? Although information regarding perceptions of security between female refugee residents of Malawi's Dzaleka camp and those they perceive as responsible for refugee security is case-specific, important parallels can be drawn from this research and replicated in other refugee camp contexts.

1.4 Research Methods

To answer the above research questions, I conducted field research in Malawi's Dzaleka camp where I employed participant observation and unstructured interviews with 15 female refugees and 9 institutional representatives. Participant observation enabled me to witness the interaction between female refugees and organizations within the camp, experience collecting water from the boreholes, and observe economic activities within the camp. The female refugees

interviewed were from Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Rwanda; the institutional representatives included the Government of Malawi, UNHCR, Plan Malawi, Participatory Rural Development Organization (PRDO), and the Malawi Police. Intensive interviews enabled me to capture the experiences and opinions of both the female refugees and the Dzaleka staff regarding female refugee security challenges in the camp.

1.5 Case Study Context: Background to Refugee Camps, Conditions and Personnel in Malawi

In this section I will be providing a brief introduction to the Dzaleka camp as well as the organizations that operate and the refugees that live within the camp. Following a brief history of the Dzaleka camp, I describe the camp conditions and environment within and surrounding the Dzaleka camp. Finally, this section also provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the organizations present in the camp before culminating in a description of the interview participants.

Refugees have been fleeing into Malawi for decades now due to civil conflicts and political instability, particularly within the Great Lakes region. The border between Tanzania and Malawi's northern district of Karonga is the main entry point for refugees (WFP Malawi, 2010). Upon entering into Malawi, refugees are taken to the Karonga Transit Shelter before being transported to Malawi's refugee camp (WFP Malawi, 2010). Originally home to two refugee camps, Dzaleka camp (Central Region) and Luwani camp (Southern Region) the Government of Malawi decided to amalgamate the two camps in 2007, closing Luwani and transporting all of the refugees to Dzaleka (WFP Malawi, 2010). The Dzaleka refugee camp is located approximately 45km outside of Lilongwe, the capital city of Malawi. Originally a prison, the Dzaleka camp was transformed into a refugee camp to deal with the influx of refugees in Malawi in 1994 (Carlson, 2005). Carlson reports that for roughly twenty years (1970s – 1990s) Malawi

hosted approximately 1.2 million Mozambican refugees fleeing the civil war within Mozambique (2005). That is until 1992 when the majority of the Mozambicans were able to repatriate (Carlson, 2005). However, this was not the end of Malawi's refugee hosting history. As noted earlier in the literature review, the refugees at Dzaleka camp come from these countries: the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (8,760), Rwanda (4,561), and Burundi (4,418) (UNHCR, 2014).

Dust covered and barren, the environment of the Dzaleka camp offers little protection from the elements or provision of necessary available heating resources. During rainy season, surrounding farm land, offered to refugees on a lottery basis, flourishes with supplemental nourishment and crop-based income. Within the camp, the refugees reside in brick, thatched roof houses which they are responsible for constructing themselves. The residential area of the camp consists of a mixture of small shops, churches, hair salons, restaurants, small-scale livestock production, a couple of bars, and women selling agriculture. The shelters are in very close proximity to one another as well as to the private latrines. Refugees from different nationalities co-exist as neighbours, often lending assistance to one another when required. Water is normally readily provided within the camp through hand-pumped wells. However, during dusty season the water table drops very low and collecting water takes great time and effort for refugees. Roads in the residential area feature large moats / ditches on either side to aid in avoiding flooding conditions during rainy season. Little separates the refugees from neighbouring Malawian communities save for a dirt road. Rather, Malawians often enter into the camp for purposes including selling and purchasing during market days, sex work, alcohol, health care, and education.

The MoHAIS is formally responsible for the Dzaleka camp, particularly under the purview of the National Coordinator for Refugees Mr. C.S. Mopiwa. Land provision, security via Malawian police, coordination of health services from the Ministry of Health and camp management are all coordinated and provided by MoHAIS (UNHCR, 2013; Carlson, 2005). The tasks attributed to the Ministry of Health, Police, and Camp Manager are as follows:

- Camp Manager: coordinating role, protection services, representative of Ministry of Home Affairs;
- Malawi Police: protection services, investigation into reported crimes, and referral services for medical services upon physical or sexual assault;
- Ministry of Health: Outpatient care, maternal and child care, antenatal, growth monitoring, HIV/AIDS testing/counselling/treatment, malaria & TB testing, STIs, family planning (White & Kabwila, 2013).

Additionally, MoHAIS is responsible for refugee status determination on asylum seeking cases, however, during my research and at the time of writing my thesis, new refugee status had not been provided in several years according to a refugee-based institution. This is significant because without official refugee status, Dzaleka refugees are not legally granted the rights and obligations outlined in the 1951 Refugee Convention. For example, the 1951 Refugee Convention includes “the principle of non-refoulement contained in Article 33. According to this principle, a refugee should not be returned to a country where he or she faces serious threats to his or her life or freedom” (UNHCR, 2011, p. 4). Other rights that the 1951 Convention grants official refugees include the right to housing, education, public relief and assistance, and access to the courts (UNHCR, 2011). Therefore, without official refugee status, the refugees are at greater risk or vulnerability to having these international human rights impeded. As of December 2014, Dzaleka refugee camp hosted 5,874 refugees and 14,499 asylum seekers (UNHCR, 2015b).

Malawi is a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, the 1967 protocol, as well as the 1969 Organization of the African Union Refugee Convention (Mvula, n.d., WFP Malawi, 2010). However, the Government of Malawi has entered several exemptions to these conventions, specifically

Article 7: exemption from reciprocity; Article 13: the right to moveable and immovable property; Article 15: the right of association; Article 22: public education; Article 24: labour legislation and social security [...] Malawi [also] reserved the right to designate the place or places of residence of the refugees and to restrict their movements whenever considerations of national security or public order so required (Mvula, n.d.; WFP Malawi, 2010).

Furthermore refugees in Malawi are not permitted to participate in the economic sector within Malawi, nor are they afforded the freedom to live or travel outside of the refugee camp (Mvula, n.d.). Essentially, these reservations limit the ability of the refugee population to integrate with local Malawian communities and stymie the self-reliance and socio-economic prospects of the refugees (WFP Malawi, 2010). Overall, reliance on refugee services creates an environment of greater insecurity and vulnerability of the refugee populations.

UNHCR is the main UN agency within the camp. Working through implementing partners such as Plan Malawi, PRDO, JRS, and WUSC Malawi, the UNHCR provides financial and material assistance as well as technical expertise, and support capacity in the areas of health, education, water, sanitation, and community development (UNHCR, 2013; Carlson, 2005). Specifically, UNHCR services include registration of new arrivals, protection services, resettlement services, and social services. Material assistance in the form of non-food items such as soap, sanitary pads, blankets and cooking materials are provided by UNHCR dependent upon funding (White & Kabwila, 2013). Additional support for the refugees occurs through financial assistance in the form of contracts with implementing partners for the provision of services.

Further, the World Food Program is responsible for food acquisition and delivery to the refugee camp. The implementing partners within the camp oversee the following tasks and services:

- Plan Malawi: community services including sexual and gender-based violence services, child protection, human rights, income generating activities.
- PRDO: food distribution, land distribution, borehole creation and maintenance, housing material and non-food material distribution.
- JRS: Primary/Secondary/Adult education, psycho-social services, income generating activities, Christian counselling, vocational training, special needs education.
- WUSC: Student Refugee Program, Academic Leadership Program, Community Mobilizers, Vulnerable girls program, distribution of non-food material to vulnerable girls.

To note, of the implementing partners, Plan Malawi and PRDO have only been present in the camp for just over one year. Prior to their presence, the Malawi Red Cross Society (MRCS) was responsible for community services; however, the MRCS was removed from the camp in 2013 amidst allegations of sexual abuse and corruption.¹

1.6 Research Findings

There are six key findings which point to security concerns around the following thematic issues: heating resources (particularly firewood and charcoal), survival sex (forced or voluntary), accessing water, economic security, corruption, and early marriage. Reporting of these challenges is a sub-theme which is also explored in my thesis. The findings presented here shed light on the limited understanding of these security concerns on the part of the camp workers and the significant challenges women face in their day-to-day lives as a result of these insecurities. In some instances, the camp workers are aware of the security challenges, yet action to adequately address these issues is not taken. Stemming from my research, I have identified a dual understanding of female refugees' insecurity amongst the institutional representatives. The

¹ There is no official source documenting the reason, but institutional representatives referred to their removal in relation to allegations of sexual abuse and corruption.

first tier is primarily those camp workers who are directly on the ground, interacting with the refugees on a daily basis. This tier is generally well aware of the security concerns for women in the camp; although they may not prioritize the security concerns in the same way as the women, they are aware of what insecurity is present. The second tier of institutional staff is largely unaware of what security the female refugees' experience. They, in part, choose not to recognize insecurity and in part are oblivious due to their separation from the daily camp occurrences. Furthermore, this tier is also a contributing factor to the insecurity. This duality will be further discussed throughout the data analysis and discussion chapters.

To be clear, my use of heating resources throughout this essay is specific to resources used as cooking fuel which in this context is primarily firewood and charcoal (unless otherwise stated). In addition, I employ the term sex work in a generic fashion to refer to female refugees engaging in prostitution or transactional sex. However, the term 'prostitution or prostitute' in some instances may be used interchangeably because the women I interviewed employed the language of prostitution.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

My research employs the empirical concepts of essentialism, power, vulnerability, and SGBV to explore women's experiences in refugee camps. These concepts are informed by critical feminist scholarship, in particular feminist post-structuralism to deconstruct social structures and examine reinforcing constructs that perpetuate vulnerability amongst refugee women.

Essentialism underscores the tropes that rely on an assumed dichotomy between men and women e.g. that males are masculine and violence perpetrators, whereas females are vulnerable

and victims (Tiessen, 2015). For women, essentialism reduces their agency and pushes them solely into subordinate and caregiving roles, rather than capable of engaging in politics, decision-making, and state-building (Tiessen, 2015). The perceptions of essentialists are grounded in “gender hierarchies and patterns of inequality, [which are] in fact socially constructed” (Crompton & Lyonette, 2005, p. 601). This social construction is in fact, very damaging for both men and women as it implies who can be victimized and therefore who is worthy of protection (Tiessen, 2015). Essentialism is challenged throughout the analysis as I suggest that those women engaging in sex work are using their agency for economic gain. By this, I mean that the female refugees are choosing to trade their body for resources or money to purchase resources. It is a decision they are making, regardless of the exploitative circumstances and in my opinion is both a form of sex work and survival / transactional sex. This will be further clarified in chapter five.

Power is clearly understood in relation to discussions of authority, gendered division of labour, and survival sex. Power is discussed in terms of the distinction between institutions, power holders, and refugees; those that do and do not have power. Feminist post-structuralism lends support to the importance of understanding intersectionality, power, and discourse. Post-structural feminists oppose the concept of the hegemonic perspective, instead forwarding the importance of the subaltern viewpoint (Spivak, 2005). Post-structural theorists focus on class, gender, and race underscoring the belief that class is based in economics not culture; and gender in social constructions not sexual difference (Spivak, 2005). Feminist post-structuralism focuses on issues of power and discourse. The issue of power is perpetuated through language and discourse (Rosenberg, 2010). For example, discourses of femininity and masculinity or language

constituting feminine or masculine portrayals are not weighted equally within the public sphere (Rosenberg, 2010).

Additional empirical concepts used throughout this thesis to better understand my data include vulnerability and SGBV. Understanding that SGBV evolves from more than simply gender inequalities (West, 2013) is important. Rather it is perpetuated by a structural and social system without adequate measures to address power inequalities and vulnerability. As Judith Butler states, feminist post-structural analysis “is concerned not to polarize males as villains and females as victims in any oppositional sense, nor even to presume that women as a category are necessarily powerless, disadvantaged or oppressed by ‘the other’. Rather, it argues that female subjects are complex, shifting and multiply located” (Baxter, 2008, p. 4). Essentially, feminist post-structuralism helps us to understand the reinforcing constructs of vulnerability which is a contributing factor to understanding SGBV.

Furthermore, in relation to my methodology, I employ feminist standpoint theory because of its basis in the everyday lives of marginalized communities. Specifically, feminist standpoint theory has evolved from Hegelian and Marxist thought, as these theorists argue that through women’s subaltern perspective, greater understandings can be achieved (Peet & Hartwick, 2009). This theory assumes that marginalized communities “have developed a dual perspective: their personal perspective developed through experience and the perspective of their oppressors, which they develop to survive” (Hesse-Biber, Leavy, Yaiser, 2004). Feminist standpoint theorists argue for the everyday lives of women as the origin for research questions and that research must be conducted *with* rather than *on* the research communities (Hesse-Biber, Leavy, Yaiser, 2004; Swigonski, 1993; Hawkesworth, 1999, Hartstock, 1983, Peet & Hartwick, 2009). Because women provide a distinct voice in relation to instances of oppression and patriarchy,

this theory can enable “a powerful critique of the phallocratic institutions and ideology which constitute capitalist patriarchy” (Hartstock, 1983, p. 284; Hawkesworth, 1999, p. 135). Feminist standpoint theory was particularly useful in shaping my research methodology which I turn to in section three. My questions were grounded in the everyday experiences of the refugee women and how their daily reality informs their security within the camp.

By understanding essentialism, power, vulnerability, and SGBV within a broader feminist post-structuralist framework, I avoid the tropes of women as victims and men as aggressors. These theories and empirical concepts enable me to deconstruct my research and contribute to greater clarity in analysis while ensuring my research is grounded in the everyday experiences of refugee women within a gendered institutional structure.

1.8 Thesis Structure

Beginning with a review of the relevant literature in chapter two, I will delve into the UNHCR and its relationship with gender politics surrounding equality, security, and programming. My third chapter will outline the research design and methodology that I employed throughout my field research including gaining access to participants, recruitment, informed consent, participant observation, unstructured interviews, and data analysis. This chapter also provides a brief introduction to the case study i.e. the background to Malawi’s Dzaleka refugee camp, its conditions and the organizations/institutions operating within the camp, as well as information regarding the research participants. My research findings will be discussed in chapter four focusing on the themes of heating resources, sexual violence, boreholes, corruption, economic security, early marriage, and reporting problems. Chapter five will deconstruct the research findings putting them in context with relevant feminist scholarship

to suggest explanations and increase understanding in relation to gender inequality and power constructs. Finally, my overarching conclusions will be discussed in chapter six.

Chapter 2: Understanding Existing Studies on Refugee Security Concerns: A Literature and Document Review

Many important studies have been conducted to examine the experiences of refugees and institutional opportunities and challenges. For the purposes of this literature review, I will be drawing primarily upon reports from international organizations such as the UNHCR and academic journals. Studies of particular importance to this literature review and my thesis include Bic Ngo and Sarah Hansen's discourse analysis of semi-structured interviews with UNHCR and non-governmental organizations (NGO) employees (2013) and Jane Freedman's article regarding gender mainstreaming in refugee protection (2010). Both of these studies demonstrate a clear disconnect between the institutions and the refugees in relation to the insecurity of the refugees. Barbra Lukunka's article about male refugee emasculation is also vital to understanding the intersection between male feelings of helplessness / frustration and the perpetuation of sexual and gender-based violence within refugee camps (2012) and it underscores the need for gender-based research that focuses on masculinities and the social processes and practices that devalue men and women. In narrowing the scope of the literature review to gender and refugee-based institutions and the security issues that female refugees experience, several important themes emerge from this literature that I will examine in greater detail here.

This literature review is framed by feminist security studies. International Relations (IR) theorists often discuss security in relation to states and borders. This type of security studies

focuses on the state military and border control (Tickner, 2011; Wilcox, 2011). This mainstream approach to security studies does not recognize that men and women experience conflict and therefore security differently. Feminist security theorists argue that state security goes beyond the mainstream IR approach to security and should include security of the individual as well (Sjoberg, 2011; Tickner, 2011; Wilcox, 2011). Feminist security theory posits that the individual and group security must be included in definitions of security and in addressing issues related to insecurity (Sjoberg, 2011; Tickner, 2011; Wilcox, 2011). This theory moves away from examining the causes and consequences of conflict and toward the impact of conflict on individuals (Tickner, 2011). Through a feminist conceptualization of security studies, blindness towards gender in security studies can be overcome and an individual's body can be acknowledged as vulnerable to violence, international insecurity (Sjoberg, 2011, Wilcox, 2011), as well as sites of resistance, agency and empowerment.

Beginning with more general critiques of UNHCR, its role in refugee camp security, and the gendered dimensions of this institution; followed by specific literatures focused on particular areas of insecurity for the refugees in the camp. Further, the literature review provides important background information to understand the conflict environments that pushed the majority of the refugees to flee their home countries. These literatures provide insight into important analyses completed to date but also expose gaps in our understanding of gender equality. Before I turn to the gaps in the literature, I outline important analyses that facilitate my more focused evaluation. This literature review is broken down into six specific sections: (1) Critiques of UNHCR; (2) Refugee Camp Security; (3) UNHCR and Women; (4) Security Issues in Refugee Camps for Female Refugees; (5) Refugees in the Great Lakes Regions; and (6) Rationale and Significance.

2.1 Critiques of UNHCR

Established by the United Nations General Assembly on December 14, 1950, the Office of the UNHCR is the leading international organization for refugees (UNHCR, n.d.a). Specifically, the UNHCR is mandated to “lead and co-ordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide (UNHCR, n.d.a). The UNHCR operates in two distinct situations; (1) emergency situations in which refugees are fleeing from natural disasters, persecution, or violence; and (2) protracted refugee situations in which refugee camps have been established for at minimum three years. Originally, the primary purpose of the UNHCR was to work neutrally to provide refugees with (i) protection; and (ii) permanent solutions (Krever, 2011). However, Tor Krever identifies that UNHCR’s focus on protection did not include material assistance to refugees in its provision of protection (2011). Originally, protection correlated to simply humanitarian standard compliance, non-refoulement, and “fair treatment upon reception” (Krever, 2011, p. 590). Rather, it was the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol that outlined UNHCR’s responsibilities towards refugees, specifically in relation to the political and economic rights in the host country (Krever, 2011).

Anna Lise Purkey posits that refugee camps in emergency situations are necessary due to the provision of immediate protection and provision for those most in need (2014). However, Purkey argues that “prolonged encampment is not a solution to refugee crises and is characterized by dependence, vulnerability, and hardship, as well as by widespread violations of human rights” (2014, p. 694). Gil Loescher and James Milner tend to agree with Purkey as they consider protracted refugee camps a security risk to the host country, refugees, and country of origin (2005). Loescher and Milner indicate that following the Cold War, the UNHCR began to focus its efforts on countries of origin in an attempt to stem the refugee flows across borders resulting

from instances of conflict (2005). Additionally, the UNHCR also increased its presence in relation to “comprehensive and integrated UN peacekeeping or peacemaking operations” (Loescher & Milner, 2005, p. 28). Overall, these authors indicate that the UNHCR is a necessary, but flawed system for refugee management.

As with any international institution, opinions regarding the UNHCR are varied. Gil Loescher identifies two opposing claims regarding the UNHCR: (1) the UNHCR is simply a mechanism for states’ control; and (2) the UNHCR, since its inception, has grown increasingly independent in terms of agenda setting and capabilities (2001). In support of the former opinion, Raimo Vayrynen argues that because the UNHCR does not have a set budget and instead relies on voluntary contributions from Western Europe, the United States, and Canada (2001). These voluntary contributions correlate to difficulty in planning and budgeting for the UNHCR in its humanitarian aid. Specifically, Vayrynen states “there is a constant risk that the resources available for the support of refugees may fall short of the needs of the affected populations or, at a minimum, that a risky hiatus develops between the escalation of the crisis and the delivery of humanitarian relief” (2001, p. 151). In contrast, Loescher is more inclined towards the latter opinion as he indicates the role that High Commissioners such as Sadako Ogata in the 1990s played in relation to drawing “attention to the political and strategic significance of refugee and other forced movements of people (2001, p. 43-44). Michael Barnett supports Loescher’s argument as evident by his discussion of sovereignty in relation to the UNHCR. Specifically, Barnett states that

Whereas once humanitarianism meant helping individuals after they had managed to crawl across an international border, now UN agencies can parade their humanitarian credentials in order to bring relief and protection to people regardless of their geographic circumstances. The changing character of sovereignty has transformed the meaning and

practice of humanitarianism, allowing once shy UN agencies to strut into new domains” (Barnett, 2001, p. 245)

Therefore, as Barnett and Loescher agree, the UNHCR has increased in autonomy and to a certain extent sovereignty (2001; 2001). Krever opposes both Loescher and Barnett as he argues that UNHCR’s ability to respond to donor interests is predicated on its ability to respond to donor interests (2011). He posits that because of funding dependency / difficulty, several states have a “disproportionate influence over both the evolution of UNHCR’s work, and its priorities in the field” despite the necessity of UNHCR neutrality (Krever, 2011, p. 603). Krever uses American funding dominance as an example of funding dependence correlating to undue policy and personnel influence within the organization (2011). Essentially, Krever calls into question the level of neutrality that UNHCR claims as he argues that UNHCR assistance has been provided in coordination, he even goes so far as to suggest cooperation, with conflict antagonists and that UNHCR ultimately supported refoulement of refugees (2011).

2.2 Refugee Camp Security

In the context of refugee camps, the host state is responsible for the security both internally and externally for refugees (Purkey, 2014). The host government determines which human rights are respected in relation to refugees and what type of protection they receive (Purkey, 2014). Purkey identifies that host governments “determine whether refugees are permitted to work outside of the camp, move freely, access services, and integrate locally, on even a temporary basis” (2014, p. 700). However, governance of refugee camps often becomes the responsibility of the UNHCR when host states choose to sidestep their legal obligations (Purkey, 2014). Phillip Marfleet argues that the abdication of refugee responsibilities from the host state to the UNHCR is not a new concept (2006). Marfleet identifies that the emergence of government delegation of

refugee responsibilities, including security, to NGOs and the UNHCR began during the 1970s (2006).

The NGOs are sub-contracted by the UNHCR to work within the refugee camps to provide on-the-ground services. Marfleet suggests that although NGOs remained autonomous, their functions were increasingly state-like, correlating into a “humanitarian colonialism” (2006, p. 206). Yet, due to power constraints, the NGOs and the UNHCR are unable to ensure that refugee rights are respected and security is provided (Purkey, 2014). Essentially, the UNHCR often finds itself undertaking unsuitable activities beyond its mandate and capability. UNHCR and NGOs have had a positive relationship since UNHCR’s inception; however, it was not until the mid-1990s that interest in protection increased for NGOs (Schenkenberg van Mierop, 2004). Partnerships between UNHCR and NGOs fall under two categories (i) Implementing Partners in which the UNHCR provides financial support in exchange for the implementation of specific programs and services by the NGO; or (ii) Operational Partners in which financial support is not provided (UNHCR, 2007).

UNHCR considers protection a shared responsibility with NGOs (2007). For example, the UNHCR states “NGOs contribute to a broad spectrum of protection activities; for example, the prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence, and meeting the needs of women and children” (2007, p. 9). Due to the increasing magnitude of refugee and internally-displaced persons challenges in the 1990s, the UNHCR committed to re-doubling their partnership efforts via the Partnership in Action (PARinAC) initiative in 1994 (UNHCR, 2007). Ed Schenkenberg van Mierop suggests that interest in protection for NGOs developed in the early 1990s with the PARinAC plan (2004). This plan “included recommendations for the coordination of protection activities, the joint development of protection priorities and strategies, and the strengthening of

the complementarity of UNHCR and NGO protection activities” (Schenkenberg van Mierop, 2004). Unfortunately, improved protection was not an outcome of the PARinAC as the focus was more on the UNHCR-NGO operational aspects (Schenkenberg van Mierop, 2004). Schenkenberg van Mierop also indicated that the UNHCR engaged NGOs in a ‘Reach Out Process on International Protection’; however, this process also failed because of little follow-up and a common agenda was never realized (2004). Unfortunately, international refugee protection is politically and financially restricted correlating to basic operational failures (Schenkenberg van Mierop, 2004). Therefore, there is space for NGOs to provide additional protection support despite not having a specific protection mandate as outlined in international legal conventions (Van Goethem, 2003). Rather, NGOs could “be present, witness, monitor, document, report, advise, influence, and ‘responsibilise’ states and government actors” in relation to providing protection support (Schenkenberg van Mierop, 2004). For example, NGOs are often tasked with responding to incidents of sexual assault, SGBV, as well as forced abductions (Schenkenberg van Mierop, 2004). Henk Van Goethem (2003) suggests that because NGOs are often on the ground providing material and other forms of assistance in refugee camps, that they are in fact optimally positioned to engage in monitoring and reporting activities.

In opposition, Jennifer Hyndman and Alice Szczepanikova perceive the UNHCR and NGOs to be increasingly privatizing refugee programming and issues (2010; 2005). They argue that because NGOs are private agencies, in subcontracting the physical distribution of aid/ resources as well as the actual provision of basic services to NGOs the UNHCR is essentially privatizing refugee assistance (Hyndman 2010; Szczepanikova, 2005). Furthermore, these authors also posit that the NGOs’ “status as private agencies tacitly points to the privatization of gender politics in the settlement process” (Hyndman, 2010, p. 455; Szczepanikova, 2005). Although she does not

specifically state that NGOs are becoming subcontractors of the UNHCR, Vayrynen posits that a “mutual dependence” has formed between the UNHCR and NGOs; the NGOs depend on the UNHCR for contracts and funding, while the UNHCR depends on the NGOs for the on-the-ground implementation of its humanitarian assistance (2001). However, in relation to the priorities between the donor agencies, the UNHCR, and the NGOs, coordination is limited and in fact may lead to the various sectors undermining one another (Vayrynen, 2001). Despite this co-dependency, Schenkenberg van Mierop (2004) suggests that NGOs often view UNHCR’s policies as being subservient to government involvement which correlates to NGO concern as they are generally more interested in refugee protection than state interest (Schenkenberg van Mierop, 2004).

2.3 UNHCR and Women

The 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees is considered to be the “centrepiece of international refugee protection today” (UNHCR, n.d.b p. 2). Article 3 of the Convention states that “[t]he Contracting States shall apply the provisions of this Convention to refugees without discrimination as to race, religion or country of origin” (UNHCR, n.d.b, p. 17). The word ‘sex’ or ‘gender’ was not included in the convention, which according to Freedman indicates the patriarchy built into the refugee system from its very conception (2010; see also Edwards, 2010). The exclusion of gender in the 1951 Convention, Freedman argues, is troubling because it has yet to be successfully challenged (2010). In agreement, Susan Martin argues that protection from sexual discrimination is preserved within universal human rights frameworks despite the UNHCR’s lack of incorporation of sex as a category in the non-discrimination clause (2010). Protection from persecution, especially for women, is vital to the refugee system. Essentially, Martin suggests that by not including sex discrimination in the refugee protection

system, those unable to rely on their government for protection are, in effect, abandoned (2010). Freedman indicates that “violations and persecutions pertinent primarily to women are often left out of the spectrum of those things considered valid reasons for granting refugee status” (2010, p. 591). Therefore, one could argue that the discrimination against women within the refugee regime is indicative of the persistent patriarchy ingrained within the global system.

Amidst growing awareness of gender-based violence for female refugees, feminist networks and NGOs began to advocate for and put pressure on the UNHCR to better mainstream gender into its programming (Freedman, 2010). Freedman argues that for the UNHCR, it wasn’t until the mid 1980s that gender became part of the agenda in any real manner (2010; Edwards, 2010). Gender-related persecution was not formally recognized by the UNHCR until 1990 with *the Policy on Refugee Women* and 1991 with the *Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women* (Martin, 2010). According to Martin, the *Policy on Refugee Women* committed the UNHCR to mainstreaming female refugees’ needs and agency into UNHCR policies and operations (2010). The *Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women* recognized that gender may be the major contributing factor in female refugees’ decisions to flee their home countries (Martin, 2010). Furthermore, the 2001 *Guidelines on Gender-Related Persecution* acknowledged that gender can “influence, or dictate, the type of persecution or harm suffered and the reasons for this treatment” (Edwards, 2010). However, as Alice Edwards indicates women continue to be portrayed as less political than their male counterparts due to their inclusion in the guidelines in an “essentialist” or “gendered” format (2010). Edwards argues that two specific consequences exist regarding the failure to include gender into non-discrimination clauses relating to refugees: “first, they established the masculine experience as the norm of [International Refugee Law and Policy]; and second, by doing so, they relegated women and women’s experiences to second-class status.”

(2010, p. 23). In agreement, feminist security theorist Ann Tickner argues that the use of specific language and frameworks regarding national security can impact the (de)legitimization of certain policies in relation to security (2011). Therefore, inclusion and exclusion of specific words can have an immense impact upon the legitimization and implementation of certain policies.

Although largely in agreement, Elisabeth Olivius cautions that engagement with structural inequality too often correlates to simply incorporating the differences between women and men into program design (2014). This approach does not consider the underlying reasons for structural inequality and is an overt simplification. Essentially, rather than promoting gender equality, this approach strives to optimize humanitarian operation effectiveness (Olivius, 2014). Olivius suggests that while instrumentalization based on gender may enable women's inclusion in "previously hostile environments", women are also limited in ways they may act or interact (2014, p. 95). She argues that essentializing women correlates to the risk that as soon as women's contributions are no longer required, their participation will be forgotten (Olivius, 2014). Although, women's participation has become a central governance strategy in refugee camps and is therefore often understood as gender equality, Olivius articulates that the reality is that refugee women are often "discussed in instrumental terms, as important for the achievement of a range of humanitarian goals. Conversely, women's perceived passivity or failure to participate in ways expected by humanitarian organizations was also frequently brought up and described as a problem" (2014, p. 99-100). Yet, Olivius points out that while women are expected to engage more in humanitarian and development programs, their responsibilities often correlate to a greater workload, and yet existing gender and power frameworks remain consistent (2014).

Embedded power constructs are evident between the UNHCR and refugees, which perpetuate the dependency of the refugees on the aid of the UNHCR and place the security of female refugees into question (Freedman, 2010). Freedman argues that “the nature of aid given out develops a patron-client relationship within which powerful and competent aid workers distribute aid to the ‘helpless’ refugees” (2010, p. 600). In agreement, Ngo and Hansen demonstrate the paternalism within the relationships between refugees and the UNHCR. Through a discourse analysis stemming from several interviews that Ngo and Hansen conducted with UNHCR camp directors, they determine that the refugees, and in particular the refugee women, are viewed as childlike (2013). This infantilization is an identity that is juxtaposed against the parent-like UNHCR (Ngo & Hansen, 2013; Hyndman, 2010). Discourses such as this, according to Ngo and Hansen, perpetuate instances of inequality associated with female refugees and demonstrate the power constructs between the ‘powerless’ refugees, in particular female refugees, and the powerful refugee institutions (2013; Hyndman, 2010; Mohanty, 1988). Finally, in relation to the UNHCR hierarchy, an over-representation of men in the higher echelons and field operations is evident (Freedman, 2010). Freedman argues that this male dominance has had a negative impact on the 1991 *Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women*, as these guidelines are assumed to have largely failed (Freedman, 2010).

In her assessment of development institutions, Donna F. Murdock critiques the institutionalization of gender and development (2003). Murdock’s arguments correlate to the belief that international institutions providing support for female refugees are undermining feminist work towards the independence of women and instead forcing a re-domestication and de-legitimization of female refugees (2003; Mohanty, 2013). This correlates to further insecurity for female refugees as through such “re-domestication” female refugees experience limited

choices and independence. Furthermore, Ena Dua and Alissa Trotz argue that “processes of globalization have essentially re-colonized women’s and girl’s bodies and labours at different places and sites around the world. The fact is that women are invisible in the dominant discourses of policy making and the relations of rule that have to do with globalization” (2002, p. 67). Therefore, Dua and Trotz posit that female refugees’ agency is denied as they are forced back into their ‘traditional’ place, i.e. the home (2002).

2.4 Security Issues in Refugee Camps for Female Refugees

Protracted refugee situations are suggested to exacerbate instances of direct security threats such as arms-trafficking, human trafficking, drug smuggling, and the recruitment of soldiers to armed conflict (Loescher & Milner, 2005). This is especially true of refugee instances without major donor governments due to decreasing political interest or media attention (Loescher & Milner, 2005). With decreasing budgets, refugee camps and host governments are unable to provide the necessary security precautions to prevent direct threats. Indirect security concerns stem largely from local population grievances regarding the presence of refugees (Loescher & Milner, 2005). Freedman argues that host population’s feelings of racism and xenophobia towards refugees is a source of insecurity (2007). Specific to female refugees, women may be attacked by host populations while outside the camp collecting firewood, water, or searching for employment (Freedman, 2007). Without programming addressing both refugees and the communities surrounding refugee camps, violence and hostility between refugees and local populations can occur (Loescher & Milner, 2005; Freedman, 2007). However, Marfleet suggests that host governments resist assistance programs addressing both refugees and local populations as the differences may become less distinct between the refugee and local people (2006). The appearance of similarity, according to Marfleet, would impact upon the perception of refugees as

“problem people” and therefore refugees might not seem out of place within the host state (2006). Therefore, host governments are more likely to problematize refugee assimilation because they want the refugees to return to the refugees’ home country and do not want to be responsible for basic service provision.

However, female refugees have specific security concerns. The UNHCR suggests that gender inequality is a contributing factor in post-conflict violence (UNHCR, 2008). Female refugees are particularly vulnerable to SGBV in both conflict and post-conflict contexts. Post-conflict insecurity for female refugees is evident through their vulnerability to sexual violence, trafficking, and enslavement within refugee camp constructs (Wolte, 2004; Pavlish, Ho, & Rounkle, 2012; Aubone & Hernandez, 2013). Marfleet suggests that gender inequality is exaggerated by displacement and the refugee camp construct (2006). He also argues that refugee camp representatives reinforce gender inequality due to their assumptions about gender relations and “preference for liaison with male authority figures” (Marfleet, 2006, p. 208). Freedman posits that within the refugee system, female refugees are ascribed “sub-citizen” status by the UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations (2007). This “sub-citizenship” has an impact upon the vulnerability of female refugees as their security needs are not deemed a priority over the camp representatives or other refugees (Freedman, 2007). Marfleet indicates that refugee camp, holding station and transit centre conditions may emphasize the vulnerability of women, especially in relation to sexual violence (2007). Marfleet suggests that in these settings, “[y]oung men no longer associated with family groups and the influence of older relatives may focus upon women who do not have the usual kin protection” (2006, p. 209). Therefore, one can determine that insecurity for female refugees is present at all stages throughout the refugee process.

The structure of the refugee camp can be a clear source of insecurity for female refugees. Jennifer Hyndman completed research in a Kenyan refugee camp during which time she determined that “women’s everyday lives in these camps is regulated and framed by tasks such as collecting water and food rations. The spatial organisation of the camp structures the women’s management of their time and shapes the social routines and income-earning strategies of refugees and in particular women” (Freedman, 2007, p. 36). Similarly, Amber Aubone and Juan Hernandez completed a study on sexual violence in Kenya’s Dadaab refugee camp region and they determined through their literature review and research that the majority of incidents were perpetrated by non-family members (2013). Furthermore, women are most at risk while collecting water or firewood and while moving throughout the camp without a male companion (Aubone & Hernandez, 2013).

Carol Pavlish, Anita Ho, and Anne-Marie Rounkle argue that the violation of human rights in the form of violence against women has an intense impact upon the economic capacity of female refugees in camps. Specifically, they argue that “[v]iolence against women also has a profound impact on community development and perpetuates poverty by reducing women’s mobility, access to information, and capacity to work (Pavlish, Ho, Rounkle, 2012, p. 539). In terms of economic insecurity, impediments to economic activities within refugee camps are presented in many forms including the physical environment i.e. lack of arable land, constraints placed on refugee movements, work permits, and host community attitudes towards refugees (Jacobson, 2005). Karen Jacobsen writes that in protracted refugee situations, refugee camp budgets are likely to be diminished, resulting in lessening assistance to the refugees within camps (2005). Because of the depleting humanitarian assistance, refugees strive to subsidize their income through whatever economic means possible (Jacobson, 2005). Martin agrees with Jacobsen as

she describes refugee camp economies as humanitarian assistance subsidized by numerous activities including local employment, trade, the development of small businesses and income generating projects, as well as refugee participation in programs regarding skills training (2004). Female refugees who are able to work in the host country's local economy often participate in the service sector as domestics for the local communities (Martin, 2004). Employment with humanitarian agencies or in the closest village is common amongst refugee camp populations (Jacobsen, 2005).

Humanitarian agencies usually hire young men within the refugee camps which offer these men greater security both physically and economically (Martin, 2004). Female refugees, however, are hired primarily in the health sector of the refugee camps in such roles as working in supplementary feeding programs or as traditional birth attendants (Martin, 2004). However, the search for economic autonomy can lead to female refugees' insecurity through increased risk of attack while attempting to collect firewood or barter throughout the camp (Auborne & Hernandez, 2013). Furthermore, female refugees may resort to engaging in survival sex to sustain themselves and their family (Umutesi, 2004).

Female refugees are particularly vulnerable to SGBV in both conflict and post-conflict contexts. Post-conflict insecurity for female refugees is evident through their vulnerability to sexual violence, trafficking, and enslavement within refugee camp constructs (Wolte, 2004; Pavlish, Ho, & Rounkle, 2012; Aubone & Hernandez, 2013). The UNHCR suggests that gender inequality is a contributing factor in post-conflict violence (UNHCR, 2008). Through her study of domestic violence in Malawi's Dzaleka camp, Sharon Carlson determined that structural violence is normalized due to patriarchy within the socio-cultural context of the camp (2005). Carlson presents evidence as to the causes of violence within refugee camps for women (2005).

Similarly, Amber Aubone and Juan Hernandez completed a study on sexual violence in Kenya's Dadaab refugee camp region and they determined through their literature review and research that

most incidents of sexual violence by a non-family member occur (a) while going out to the bush to collect firewood, and (b) while in transit from one part of the camp to another, unaccompanied by a male companion. Thus, agencies have recommended various deterrents that might mitigate the proclivity of sexual violence in and around refugee camps. These can be characterized as follows: (1) *the provision of goods* (such as firewood) that women would seek in the bush; (2) *gender-sensitive camp design*; and (3) *camp policing* (e.g. patrols, community watch groups)" (2013, p. 34).

Evidently, the refugee camps are sources of both physical and sexual insecurity for female refugees in part due to the layout and structure of the refugee camps. Therefore, there is clear evidence that SGBV is an immense issue for female refugees in relation to insecurity while living in refugee camps.

Understanding insecurity in refugee camps is not complete without an understanding of refugee masculinities. According to Lukunka, refugee dependency on camp organizations correlates to a "socio-psychological crisis that took the form of a gender identity crisis, specifically, emasculation. In order to reverse the emasculation, refugee men engage in gender-based violence" (2012, p. 130). Lukunka posits that human security issues arise out of this psycho-social crisis and should therefore be considered in relation to international refugee policies and programs (2012). Although human security is traditionally thought of in relation to access to food and clean water, education, health care, and employment, Lukunka pushes this definition further and includes basic psycho-social support (2012). Understanding that SGBV against women stems from power and dominance structures is vital and many consider it to be the femininity within the men themselves that SGBV perpetrators are trying to control (Lukunka, 2012). Therefore, when men are emasculated as a result of conflict or when they lose their role

as breadwinners, like they do in refugee camps, then men engage in destructive behaviour such as SGBV as a coping mechanism (Lukunka, 2012). While not being able to farm or engage in formal paid labour, male refugees become “submerged in boredom and alcohol” (Lukunka, 2012, p. 136). Female refugees understood this dynamic as they witnessed and experienced the correlation between men’s lack of activities or income and their frustration being directed towards women (Lukunka, 2012). However, men also expressed their dismay with the lack of opportunities through engaging in sexual intercourse with numerous partners while in the camp correlating to an increase in the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (Lukunka, 2012). Essentially, men’s inclusion in the policies and programs that promote women’s rights implemented in refugee camps is vital to addressing issues of emasculation, in particular committing SGBV (Lukunka, 2012). To ensure that these policies and programs are successful, men need to be educated about women’s rights as a starting point (Lukunka, 2012).

In terms of addressing violence within the refugee camps instances of impunity are altogether too common. For example, Aubone & Hernandez argue that within refugee camps “rape takes place with relative impunity, perpetrated by soldiers, guards, invading bandits and fellow refugees. Women often must go outside of camps to search for firewood, or other resources, and here their vulnerability increases” (2012, p. 30-31). Similarly, in her autobiography, Marie Béatrice Umutesi describes the SGBV that she witnessed within the refugee camps committed by both the Rwandese génocidaires and refugee camp security members (2004). When prosecution of SGBV perpetrators does occur, the punishment does not often fit the crime. For example, Jeanne Ward and Beth Vann state that “a tribunal of respected elders hears disputes and decides consequences. For example, a wife batterer may receive a very small fine or be told to apologise, even when the assault is reflective of a long-standing pattern”

(2002, p.2). Therefore, with limited consequences for their actions SGBV perpetrators are likely to continue committing crimes and causing insecurity for female refugees.

Augustine Tanle's article about refugees' reflection on their stay in the Buduburam refugee camp in Ghana is an important contribution as it provides clear insight into how refugees perceive their environment while living in a refugee camp. Tanle argues that the missing gap in the literature is the perceptions of refugees of their host population and the camp itself (2013). Camp locations, according to Tanle, are often based in rural agriculture locations with environments not conducive to agriculture or heating resource availability (2013). Additionally, camps are also often located far from host populations in an effort to prevent the integration of refugees into their host country (Tanle, 2013). Tanle posits that refugee camp economies are "influenced by host country policies such as restrictions on refugees' movements and work, the physical and economic isolation of the site, humanitarian assistance and demographics or population characteristics of the camp" (2013, p. 869). Although these policies are restrictive and illegal according to international refugee conventions, they do offer some benefit to refugee populations in relation to the provision of security and basic infrastructure in the camp (Tanle, 2013). This isolation generally restricts any refugee – host population interaction limiting ill feelings from the host community towards the refugees. Further, camp isolation may correlate to greater access to natural resources and livelihood activities for refugees (Tanle, 2013). In relation to the institutions in the camp, Tanle suggests that the institutions govern refugee behaviour, while the host country police provide refugee security as well as "enforce the rules and regulations in the camp" (2013, p. 878). This literature has been incredibly important as it contributes to our understanding of gender issues, human rights issues, and institutional concerns. However, there are gaps remaining as each refugee site comes with its own

institutional structures, individuals, management approaches, etc. Therefore, I turn now to the context of my case study analysis and begin with a discussion of the refugee context in the Great Lakes regions which is where the majority of refugees who come to Malawi's Dzaleka camp originate.

2.5 Refugees in the Great Lakes Regions

The plight of the refugees in the Great Lakes region of the African continent is an interconnected issue filled with mass violence and horror. At the centre of the refugee crisis in the Great Lakes region is Rwanda, infamous for the 1994 genocide in which approximately 2 million people fled the indiscriminate killing (The Economist, 1996; Mills & Norton, 2002). However, lesser known is the fact that Burundi, Rwanda's neighbour, also broke out in civil war in 1993. For Burundi, the refugee exodus began after the assassination of Burundi's first Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye in 1993 (United Nations Office in Burundi, n.d.c). Civil war followed the assassination in which "tens of thousands of people were killed and hundreds of thousands were displaced" (United Nations Office in Burundi, n.d.c). A modicum of control was gained by the Hutu-dominated FRODEBU Party and elections were held, however upon the death of the newly elected President Cyprien Ntaryamira, in a plane crash with Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana on April 06, 1994, the violence was re-started and exacerbated (United Nations Office in Burundi, n.d.c). Further destabilization occurred with the influx of Rwandese and eventually Congolese refugees following the 1994 Rwandan genocide (United Nations Office in Burundi, n.d.c).

April 06, 1994 marked the beginning of the Rwandan genocide in which the violence within Rwanda resulted in a mass exodus of roughly 2 million primarily Hutu Rwandese to the

DRC, within which 50,000 génocidaires hid to escape the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) (The Economist, 1996). Refugee camps were created to aid the fleeing Rwandese, however, these camps became sources of insecurity as the former génocidaires continued to cause chaos by re-arming and re-grouping to launch attacks on Rwanda and the RPF using the refugee camps as a home base (The Economist, 1996). Within Eastern DRC, the Hutu continued to flee the RPF as the RPF had entered into Eastern DRC in an attempt to hunt down the Hutu refugees.

The DRC instigated the refugee crisis by threatening to expel hundreds of thousands of Congolese Tutsi's known as the Banyamulenge (The Economist, 1996; Mills & Norton, 2002). This caused panic amongst the Banyamulenge and resulted in them taking up arms throughout Eastern DRC panicking those both within and outside of the refugee camps. The DRC erupted into civil war as a result of this attempted expulsion (Mills & Norton, 2002). The Banyamulenge joined together with the Alliance Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL) which was an anti-Mobutu rebel group (Mills & Norton, 2002). This resulted in civil war breaking out in the DRC in 1998 and led to what is known as 'Africa's Great War' (Mills & Norton, 2002). Eventually, the ADFL attacked the refugee camps because they saw the ex-Rwandan Army (many of whom were residing in the refugee camps) as enemies and the refugee camps were believed to be their home base (Mills & Norton, 2002). As a result, approximately 600,000 refugees returned to Rwanda and 200,000 refugees ventured further into the DRC. (Mills & Norton, 2002).

Kurt Mills and Richard J. Norton argue that following the genocide and civil war in the DRC, the refugees remained completely insecure (2002). According to Mills and Norton

[t]he host governments, particularly Zaire, could not or did not want to protect [the refugees]. The international community did not provide the resources necessary to protect

the refugees and separate out the militants which would have created a much more secure environment for the refugees and allowed them to decide whether or not they wanted to go home (2002, p. 14).

The instability in the Great Lakes region unfortunately remains a current reality. In 2006, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres stated that “[i]t is not possible to solve the problems of the region on a strictly country-by-country approach” (McKinsey, 2006). The countries in the region, primarily the DRC and Burundi, continue to play both host and home country to refugees. For example, Amber Phalen reports that during 2007, UNHCR officers were “kept busy during the year handling two-way traffic of refugees between the two countries. There are currently more than 23,000 Congolese refugees in Burundi and some 18,000 Burundians in DRC” (2007). Therefore, due to the regional instability, refugees are reluctant to return to their country of origin, thus forcing a protracted refugee situation. Many of the refugees are now living in Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. For example, specific to DRC refugees, there are 57,700 in Burundi, 74,000 in Rwanda, and 55,400 in Tanzania (UNHCR, 2015a) not to mention the number of IDPs. Specific to the 72,499 Burundian refugees the majority are living in Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda (UNHCR, 2015a). Finally, the 79,411 Rwandese refugees have settled primarily in Burundi, Congo, and the DRC (UNHCR, 2015a). The Dzaleka refugee camp hosts 17,844 people primarily from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (8,760), Rwanda (4,561), and Burundi (4,418) (UNHCR, 2014).

2.6 Rationale and Significance

Based on the information provided in the literature review, I have identified that a knowledge gap exists regarding both the female refugees’ and the institution’s perceptions of female refugee security. The literature does not indicate the recognition of similar or differing security challenges between female refugees and the institutions present within the camp. Direct

dialogue and consultation between female refugees and refugee institutional representatives is limited. Although Ngo and Hansen indicate how the UNHCR perceives and infantilizes the female refugees, and Tanle examines how refugees understand their host environment, the crossover regarding security perceptions does not exist between refugee and camp institutions. Other studies such as Aubone and Hernandez's focus on the camp structures without seemingly having spoken to refugee camp residents about their (in)security. Freedman's article recognizes this disconnect as she argues that the UNHCR limits the agency of refugees through its institutional power and ability to limit the involvement of female refugees "in any form of planning, implementation or management of operations" (2010, p. 597). Furthermore, research regarding institutional power hierarchies and how they impact the security or insecurity of women within the refugee camps is scarce. Thus, by gathering data from female refugees and institutional representatives regarding insecurity valuable data could be gathered. This data can indicate areas of security which are being overlooked at an institutional level, or reassure both internal and external stakeholders that security is being adequately addressed. However, without considering both the female refugees' and the institution's perspectives, real and sustainable security cannot be implemented or provided.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

My experience in completing a research proposal, gaining ethics clearance, doing field-based research, and writing this thesis has been a "journey of learning" from which important lessons can be gleaned. In some respects, the knowledge gained (i.e. writing a successful research proposal, obtaining ethics clearance, conducting oneself ethically in the field, interacting with local populations, overcoming language barriers and recognizing power

structures, as well as remaining motivated to write about the research findings) while conducting research is, in my opinion, just as important as the actual research findings.

In this section, I describe my field based research experience beginning with my original research intent and how it evolved into the research that I actually conducted. I describe the multi-step process in the quest to gain access to both the female refugees and institutional representative participants. I also reflect upon my positionality in relation to the research participants. I express the steps taken during recruitment, expanding upon both the interpreters I worked with and the process undertaken to gain informed consent. Finally, I describe the research methods I employed e.g. participant observation, unstructured interviews, and data analysis. Within these sections I provide both a general overview of these research methods as well as how they relate to my particular research.

3.1 Original Research Intent versus Actual Research

I originally set out in my research intending to conduct 15 interviews with female refugees from the three major communities within the camp i.e. Burundian, Congolese, and Rwandese as well as seven interviews with representatives from institutions / organizations present in the camp. However, I ended up interviewing nine institutional representatives and unintentionally engaging in participant observation. I engaged in participant observation consistently throughout my internship and research i.e. from September 16, 2015 to February 19, 2015. My unstructured interviews were conducted from December 22, 2014 to January 29, 2015 with the female refugees and from February 02, 2015 to February 20, 2015 with the institutional representatives. The institutional employees that I did conduct interviews with were from the following institutions: Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security (MoHAIS), Ministry of Health, UNHCR, Malawi Police, PRDO, Plan Malawi, and Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS). The

criterion for the participation of female refugees in my research was twofold: the women had to be 18 years of age or older and have lived in the camp for a minimum of 3 years. For the institutional representatives' participation, I required that they had worked in the camp for a minimum of one year. To note, I intentionally chose to not interview any representative from World University Services of Canada (WUSC) Malawi as I completed a three-month internship with WUSC Malawi in the Dzaleka camp prior to conducting my research. Therefore, I wanted to avoid any potential conflict of interest or ethical issues that could arise. There was no overlap between the internship and my field research. Furthermore, WUSC Malawi primarily works with students and young girls in the camp which were largely outside of the scope of my research.

3.2 Gaining Access to Participants

Those hoping to conduct research in the Dzaleka camp must first receive written consent from the MoHAIS. The researcher must have an organization present within the camp vouch for them and how their research relates to the organization's mandate. For me, this process involved a meeting with the Country Director of WUSC Malawi Mr. Jacob Mapemba, from which Mr. Mapemba wrote a letter on my behalf to the Refugee Commissioner, MoHAIS. Upon receiving Mr. Mapemba's letter, I was granted written permission which I had to carry with me whenever I was in the camp. Overall, the written permission that I received from MoHAIS enabled me to legally enter the refugee camp despite not working with any of the organizations in the camp. However, this written permission did not guarantee me access to the refugee community or institutional representatives.

Prior to beginning my research I chose to request a meeting with both the male and female community leaders from the Burundian, Congolese, and Rwandese communities.

Unfortunately, the female leaders from the Burundian and Congolese communities did not attend the meeting and the male Somalian leader chose to attend the meeting despite having not been invited. The purpose of this meeting was not to gain permission to conduct my research; rather it was a sign of respect for their position within the communities that I would be engaging. As I was not including any refugee women from the Somali community, I did not invite the Somali community leaders to attend the meeting. However, the male Somali leader heard about my meeting and attended uninvited. This was not problematic as I had enough juice and cookies for everyone. During this meeting, I formally introduced myself to the community leaders as a researcher. I had met half of the leaders during my internship, therefore I wanted to clearly differentiate my dual role in the camp and inform them that I was no longer working with WUSC Malawi in the camp and was instead transitioning into a researcher role. Additionally, I informed the community leaders about the purpose of my research and that I would be speaking with five women from each of their communities. I listened to their concerns about my presence in their communities and their opinions about what type of security issues I would learn about from the women. Ultimately, this meeting secured my approval from the community leaders to engage with female refugees from their respective communities.

In relation to gaining access to the institutional representatives, I simply required permission to research within the camp as indicated by the written permission from the Refugee Commissioner from MoHAIS. Specific to the Malawi Police, my participant had to gain approval from the police chief in Dowa, the district in which Dzaleka camp is located. All other institutional participants were quick to agree to an interview, given that I work around their busy schedules.

3.3 Identity in Interviewer-Interviewee Relationships

Gaining access to my research communities involved much more than “meeting the right people, having a good intermediary, or identifying and communicating a project’s worthwhile goals” (Jansen & Davis, 1998, p. 295). Rather, recognizing my identity in relation to my participants’ was very important. Because social roles shape the interview process, ignoring social differences such as gender can shape the interview process negatively (DiCiccio-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Furthermore, because interviews are invasive, researchers must be reflexive and consider their own social role in relation to that of the participant (DiCiccio-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Thus, researchers need to acknowledge the power and social status differentials between interviewer and interviewee and integrate “reciprocity into the creation of knowledge” (DiCiccio-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 317). Golie Jansen and Diane Rae Davis state that differences such as age, ethnicity, and social class can influence access to the research community (1998). Specifically, Jansen and Davis suggest that the researcher must be clear about “their own identity and social position before they engage in research (Jansen & Davis, 1998, p. 296; Harding, 1991). Therefore, I had to acknowledge the insider-outsider nexus in my interviewer-interviewee relationships as well as the different socio-economic identity that I hold from my participants.

In relation to the female refugees, my identity is vastly different which correlates to different power dynamics and impacts the insider-outsider status. For example, the identity dynamics rely largely on the refugee/non-refugee status, Burundian, Rwandan, Congolese / Canadian, poor/relatively wealthy. Although we are all women, I had relative freedom within Malawi, whereas the female refugees were not legally allowed to leave the camp. I was interning with an organization prior to conducting research, whereas refugees are not allowed to legally

work in Malawi. Finally, I am in the process of obtaining my second university degree, whereas the vast majority of my participants have not and will not reach post-secondary education. These differences in identity clearly created communication and trust-oriented barriers between me and my participants. These different life experiences necessitated additional effort to overcome and to develop a rapport in which the participant became comfortable enough to share her knowledge of insecurity within the Dzaleka camp. However, as much as there are differences between myself and my participants, it is important not to categorize all of the female participants as one. Rather, welcoming a nuanced perspective in which my position was more “fluid” (Rose, 2001, p. 24). By fluid, I mean that I was a complete outsider at the beginning of my internship; however I became more accepted as my internship progressed and eventually morphed into a researching role. This growing acceptance allowed me to access participants for my research and to offer some element of trust for the participants going into the interviews. So, although we had vastly different identities and socio-economic statuses, I found this method of gaining trust with members of the community a more effective method of recruitment than a technical approach such as snowballing. Thus, my position and identity was fluid in the camp; it changed over time, although I should state that I could never be fully accepted into the refugee camp, nor did I expect to be.

More similarities such as educational background, international travel experience, and privilege existed between me and the institutional representatives; however, there were still barriers and socio-economic differences. The similarities that existed were clearly reflected in our interest in refugee affairs, our relative freedom of movement in Malawi, and our higher economic status within Malawi as compared to the refugees and many Malawians. However, several differences were still evident between the institutional representatives and me. For

example, whereas the institutional participants all came from an African country, I come from Canada; the institutional representatives were all of African ethnicity, whereas I am Canadian; the institutional participants were all employed full-time, I am not; and finally my participants were all in their mid-30s or older, whereas I am in my mid-20s. There were clear power dynamics between myself and the institutional representatives often placing me in a subordinate position. As I was not a formal employee of any organization within the camp, I was viewed as an outsider by the institutions. Additionally, previous to my research I worked as an intern, in a long line of interns within the camp. Therefore, the institutional representatives may have intern-fatigue and may not recognize the commitment and passion that I have for refugee issues. They may base their assumptions about me on their experience with past interns, rather than the work I completed. The power dynamic then, is one in which I was often placed in a subordinate role.

Advantages exist, however, for ‘outsider’ researchers such as myself, particularly in relation to the female refugees. Damaris Rose argues that being outside of the participant’s community may convey the perception of neutrality and therefore information may be relayed to the ‘outsider’ that would not be shared to an ‘insider’ researcher (2001). Furthermore, she suggests that participants may fear being judged for their opinions or actions by ‘insider’ activists correlating to “self-censorship in interviewee responses” (Rose, 2001, p. 25). Rose suggests that in order to obtain the relevant information from the participants, the interviewer may have to position herself differently depending on the participant and the topic, appearing to be more of an ‘insider’ or an ‘outsider’ (2001, p. 26). This is certainly true of my interviews with the institutional representatives. In some instances, it was beneficial to remind the participant that I had been working in the camp for four /five months prior to interviewing them, however, I also had to pull back from the participant in instances where I wanted them to fully explain

procedures and policies within the camp. Thereby positioning and re-positioning myself as an ‘insider’ and an ‘outsider’ proved necessary and beneficial to my interviews. While there are inherent challenges to focusing on differences, there is also valuable ethics-oriented education that arises from a careful reflection on my positionality and the potential impact of my presence as a result of these differences, both real and perceived.

3.4 Participant Recruitment

In conducting the interviews I partnered with three interpreters whom I worked with during my internship with WUSC Malawi. During my internship, these interpreters demonstrated a keen knowledge and awareness of the camp, sufficient language capability i.e. fluent in both English and Kinyarwanda or Kiswahili (or both), and demonstrated adequate interpretation skills. Overall, my interpreters ended up providing much more support than just interpretation skills. These women also assisted me in the logistics and recruitment of female refugees. Essentially, they acted as ‘fixers’ for me within the camp. The initial stages of my recruitment process involved suggestions for participants from my interpreters as well as people whom I identified during my internship as potential participants to recruit. Similarly, the institutional participants were largely identified during my internship and participant observation. In several cases, upon approaching an individual at an organization I was re-directed to whom the organization deemed more appropriate to answer questions on women refugees and security. Note that no participant was approached for participation during my internship and prior to receiving ethics clearance.

3.5 Informed Consent

Informed consent is a difficult process to determine, especially when power differentials, insider-outsider status, and language barriers are considered. For my research, the process of gaining informed consent was twofold: (1) during the recruitment process I ensured that the participant was informed and agreed to the study purpose, participation requirements, topic to be discussed, research risks, confidentiality, and anonymity; and (2) Prior to beginning the interview I gained verbal agreement to a consent form which I explained and my interpreter relayed to the participant in the case of the female refugees. In support, P. Gill et al. state that in relation to the informed consent process participants “should be informed about the study details and given assurance about ethical principles, such as anonymity and confidentiality. This gives [participants] some idea of what to expect from the interview, increases the likelihood of honesty and is also a fundamental aspect of the informed consent process” (2008, p. 292). I chose to obtain verbal rather than written consent to avoid issues of (il)literacy and distrust for documents requiring signatures of which the participant cannot read, again related to illiteracy or language barriers. Furthermore, avoiding requiring written consent was important as it added an additional level of security for the protection of the identity of the participants.

3.6 Participant Observation

Participant observation involves the observation and participation of the researcher alongside the study subjects (Bouma, Ling, Wilkinson, 2012). According to Gary Bouma, Rod Ling, and Lori Wilkinson, “[w]hen the researcher interacts in various social situations and participates as part of the group studied, it is believed that the observations and conclusions drawn are more ‘authentic’ than those drawn from quantitative research given the researcher

there is more distant and objective” (2012, p. 284). Jan Kees van Donge posits that within participant observation research, the researcher should strive to be as unobtrusive to the normal functioning of social life as possible (2010). However, this is rarely achieved. Participant observation researchers must first gain the confidence and acceptance of the people and community that they are studying (Kees van Donge, 2010). Within the realm of participant observation, one must distrust initial and surface level appearances of a society; rather, probing deeper into daily life is required (Kees van Donge, 2010). Through observation, preconceived notions on behalf of the researcher should be challenged. Therefore, participant observation researchers tend to avoid framing research situations beforehand; instead allowing their observations to inform research questions (Kees van Donge, 2010). In participant observation, particular importance is provided to the understanding that “[t]he purpose of interaction with informants is to elicit responses rather than get answers to particular questions. The fundamental awareness in ethnographic research is that one has to learn gradually the language that allows one to ask sensible questions as one penetrates deeper into society” (Kees van Donge, 2010, p. 183-184).

Participant observation was an unintended but unavoidable part of my research. While completing my internship I was able to gain important insights into the day-to-day lives of people in the camps which made me better prepared when it came time to begin my research regarding what questions to ask and how to ask them. I was often invited into the homes of my students and witnessed the goings on in the camp such as fetching water at the borehole, selling vegetables and part of their rations at the local market, farming, and income generating activities. I witnessed funeral ceremonies, attended baby showers, and took part in other regular celebrations. I was invited to several community events such as the promotion of human rights in

the camp, advocating against early marriage, and the promotion of girls remaining in education. These activities continued throughout the research portion of my time in Malawi. Prior to beginning the unstructured interviews, I toured the entire refugee camp with my interpreters during which time the interpreters explained to me some of the history of Dzaleka, pointed out problematic areas of the camps, and answered my questions regarding the agriculture and brick-making activities in the camp. I also continued to attend the celebrations, community events, and activities within the camp throughout the research process. Furthermore, as my time was no longer structured with my internship activities, I was able to observe more in the camp through sitting and watching the refugees going about their daily routines.

Furthermore, I traveled to Dzaleka camp four days a week during which I observed the conversations and attitudes towards refugees that UNHCR staff held. I kept a journal for personal purposes in which I described my everyday observations in the camp. These observations influenced the questions that I asked during my unstructured interviews with both the female refugees and institutional representatives. The importance of participant observation to my research cannot be understated as through my everyday experiences in the camp I gained greater insight into the camp realities, nuances, and challenges. Additionally, the refugee community witnessed my work and commitment within the camp correlating to a greater degree of trust and willingness to participate in my research.

Feminist researchers have altered qualitative research methods through the inclusion and examination of gendered perspectives. As the public and private spheres often exclude and ignore women, feminist researchers work to overthrow the subordination of women's experience in research (Jansen & Davis, 1998). However, Jansen and Davis suggest that "gender and power can be foregrounded in many quantitative and qualitative research methods, but the focus on

capturing the meaning of lived experience is unique to interpretive research” (1998, p. 292-293). The intent of interpretive research is to go beyond simple reporting of research findings, rather to look for meaning in the research enhancing the opinions of the participants (Jansen & Davis, 1998). Furthermore, interpretive researchers draw out information from observed behaviours and interactions with questions stemming from the researcher’s evolving knowledge (DiCiccio-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Participant observation is one contribution to the researchers’ evolving knowledge and can contribute to the formation of relevant questions.

Personal interviews also enable the interviewer and interviewee to talk face-to-face, discussing sometimes highly sensitive information (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). In such interviews, it is especially important that the interviewer read body language and respond accordingly, especially if the interviewee appears uncomfortable (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). In my experience, participants who were uncomfortable would look down at the ground, avoid eye contact and they would cover part of their face, particularly their mouth if they were providing information they were uncomfortable with such as references to rape and sex work. This was often the case when the participant had brought their personal experience into the answers rather than keeping answers general. As a result, I would broaden the topic back out to general experiences or I would switch to a less intrusive topic (e.g. boreholes) before re-approaching sensitive topics. I also relied on self-deprecating humour to break any discomfort of the participant. Such interviews are *sensitive topic research* in that they can pose some type of emotional or psychological discomfort or challenge to those being interviewed (Jansen & Davis, 1998). Sensitive research occurs when it intrudes into the personal life of the participant discussing topics which the participant may not be entirely comfortable sharing (Jansen & Davis, 1998). Therefore, qualitative research is better formatted for sensitive topic research because it enables

more interactive and personal information and has the ability to overcome typical power relationships (Jansen & Davis, 1998).

3.7 Unstructured Interviews

Unstructured interviews incorporate a greater degree of freedom than structured or semi-structured interviews (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). Yielding greater rich and nuanced information, unstructured interviews enable greater ability to explore a variety of in-depth research topics (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005; Rose, 2001). During unstructured interviews, the interviewee has the ability to adapt the interview to explore more in depth aspects that come up during the interview process (Rose, 2001). Specifically, Rose states that “the researcher can modify the interview process to explore, in more depth, aspects deemed important by the interviewee, which means that any and all of the data collected can be considered important even if this does not correspond to initial ‘hunches’ of the researcher” (2001, p. 7). Additionally, qualitative research methods such as unstructured interviews are viewed favourably by feminist standpoint theorists because “they allow women to be ‘experts’ about their own experiences and to ‘correct’ the researcher whose questions are on the wrong track” (Rose, 2001, p. 7-8). Similarly, as an unstructured interviewer, one must be highly aware and attuned for inconsistencies and missing information in the information being relayed (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). Asking additional questions for clarification purposes may be required. Furthermore, unstructured interviews are not conducted with the purpose of creating empirically generalizable findings; rather, they are more concerned with information-rich case studies (Rose, 2001).

There are several downsides to unstructured interviews that interviewers of this style must take into consideration. One such challenge is that because of the fluidity and freedom

associated with unstructured interviews, data analysis can prove complex and time-consuming (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). For those research topics involving highly sensitive discussion topics, the researcher must avoid the temptation of slipping from ‘interviewer’ into ‘counsellor’ during the interview (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). As Ellsberg & Heise (2005) indicate “[b]ecause of their conversational style, in-depth interviews tend to encourage emotional disclosure and intimacy. These types of interviews underscore the need for interviewers to stay true to their role, monitor their boundaries, and be attentive to levels of distress of the respondent” (p. 131). This is similar to what Rose (2001) posits in that a level of closeness is required for unstructured interviews as it enables the researcher to better comprehend the topics and environment that the participant is discussing, however, the researcher needs to remain aware of the professionalism and closeness of their position as a researcher on the “insider/outsider continuum” (p. 5).

Specifically, I chose to conduct unstructured interviews with both the female refugees and the institutional representatives. Although I had a set of interview topics involving collecting heating resources, fetching water, social services, maternal health, as well as economic security², unstructured interviews allowed me to engage in a more conversational-style of interview. The different conversational style that female refugees engage in, i.e. circular story-telling is better suited for unstructured interviews as they allow the conversational style to flow in an unrestricted manner. Furthermore, participants may become uncomfortable with a set of specific questions, correlating to shutting down of information. As Mary Ellsberg and Lori Heise iterate, “[q]uestions are open-ended, and the interviewer lets the respondent lead the conversation. The interviewer asks additional questions to gain as much useful information as possible” (2005, p. 131). Unstructured interviews involve a flexible interview plan in which the conversational flow dictates the sequencing of topics (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). Therefore, I was able to ask follow-up questions to better understand the content of my participant’s statement. Moreover, if the participant began discussing a subject not directly related to my topics, I had the freedom to engage and follow my participant’s line of thought.

² See appendix 1 for a list of my research topics.

3.8 Data Analysis

Data analysis can generate a variety of interpretations and findings. Critics of qualitative research argue that the supposition of data interpretations is subject to mistake or assumption. Therefore qualitative research is often deemed less accurate than quantitative data analysis. However, According to Bonnie Yegidis, Robert Weinbach, and Laura Myers (2012)

individual findings may need to be reinterpreted in light of other findings from the current research study or from the studies of others. This often requires researchers to make use of their practical experience. It also often requires them to look again at the relevant literature (or in predominantly qualitative studies to immerse themselves in it more than they did initially) in an attempt to reconcile their findings with those of other researchers. Eventually, they must use their best judgement, knowing that they can always be wrong in their interpretations.” (p. 306).

The amalgamation of research, observations, and relevant literature inform the interpretation of the data collected via qualitative research methods. The types of data analysis that I have employed in my research are content and discourse analysis. Although content and discourse analysis are similar in that both are concerned with the analysis of texts (Harley & Phillips, 2004), there are some distinct differences. For example, “discourse analysis highlights the precarious nature of meaning and focuses on exploring its shifting and contested nature, content analysis assumes a consistency of meaning that allows for occurrences of words (or other, larger units of text to be assumed equivalent and counted” (Harley & Phillips, 2004, p. 20). Both of these forms of data analysis are described more completely below.

Content analysis can be employed for both primary and secondary data analysis. For the purposes of my research study, content analysis was applied to original data gathered during the unstructured interviews with both female refugees and institutional representatives. Content analysis involves the application of a coding framework to textual data such as interview transcripts (Harley & Phillips, 2004; Yegidis, Weinbach & Myers, 2012). Content analysis is a

quantitative method with the purpose of remaining objective through the systematic application of analytic categories by coders (Harley & Phillips, 2004). Through an emphasis on “[r]epresentative samples and the accurate measurement of variables,” content analysis is employed to test for and examine correlations among variables (Yegidis, Weinbach & Myers, 2012). Due to the examination of data in one time period, content analysis is a cross-sectional research method (Yegidis, Weinbach & Myers, 2012, p. 95). Content analysis identifies the number of times a specific word or larger text is used in a particular text such as interview transcripts (Harley & Phillips, 2004). The development of specific software to quickly scan various forms of communication such as interview transcripts, journal articles, media counting the number of times certain words or phrases appear in the communication has made content analysis an easier and quicker data analysis method (Yegidis, Weinbach & Myers, 2012). I have used content analysis to count the number of times specific words related to my research questioning themes were used. For example, in relation to heating resources, I coded for charcoal, firewood, briquettes and would include overarching words such as safe/unsafe and secure/insecure. Additionally, I coded for the same words in both the female refugee and institutional representative transcripts. My assumption with this methodology was that the words would indicate priority security concerns for the female refugees and institutional representatives based on how many times relevant words were used. Of course content analysis is merely a first step in data analysis as discourse analysis is required to truly understand my research findings.

Discourse analysis assumes the social construction of reality as opposed to the realism associated with content analysis (Harley & Phillips, 2004). Discourses “are forms of knowledge or powerful sets of assumptions, expectations and explanations, governing mainstream social and cultural practices. They are systematic ways of making sense of the world by inscribing and

shaping power relations within all texts, including spoken interactions” (Baxter, 2003, p. 7). Essentially, discourse analysis focuses on the meanings of the words used within a particular text or the way a story or message is conveyed as well as what is not said. Discourse analysis is not solely focused on spoken discourse; rather it can include “socially situated language” in any medium (Cameron, 2001, p. 7). Various aspects of social science use discourse analysis for different purposes. For example, anthropologists concern themselves with how language is ingrained in a larger socio-cultural context (Yegidis, Weinbach & Myers, 2012). Through the use of participant observation, anthropologists study language as a means of engaging in and understanding different cultures (Yegidis, Weinbach & Myers, 2012). Linguists, however, concern themselves with the language structure, particularly what is found and not found in a specific language (Yegidis, Weinbach & Myers, 2012). Critics of discourse analysis posit that this type of data analysis does not accurately portray the information that is being gathered and analyzed (Cameron, 2001). For example, how do we, as researchers, know that the meaning we are assuming stems from our interpretation of the data? Critics argue that in face-to-face interviews the participant may simply be telling the researcher what he/she wants to hear or wants to believe (Cameron, 2001). However, Deborah Cameron (2001) suggests that this is an “unavoidable element of all communicative acts: people simply do not answer questions, in any situation, without first making some assessment of who is asking and why” (p.14). However, the same could be said for a questionnaire of statistical analysis as there is no way to determine whether the answer to the question is the one the participant would have given had other options been available. Furthermore, proponents for discourse analysis underscore that “analysing ‘real’ talk does a better job than standardized instruments of capturing the messiness of real life, and to that extent could be seen as more rather than less ‘accurate’” (Cameron, 2001, p. 14). Therefore,

answers to social science research cannot be categorized into neat multiple choice questionnaires, there needs to be a level of openness allowing the participant to fully express themselves, their opinions, and their answers to the research questions.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is one branch of discourse analysis which claims that in spoken and written communication, the choices of the communicator are “ideologically patterned” rather than randomly chosen (Cameron, 2001, p. 124). Stemming from critical theory, CDA proponents argue that one’s reality is constructed by “social forces” which then become mainstreamed into everyday discourse (Cameron, 2001, p. 123). CDA, however, offers a critical deconstruction and discussion of the naturalized social ideology (Cameron, 2001). Specifically, Cameron argues that

These [word/communication] choices do much of the work of naturalizing particular social arrangements which serve particular interests, so that in time they may come to seem like the only possible or rational arrangements. However, the word *choice* here does not necessarily imply a deliberate decision, or a conspiracy, to represent the world in misleading or self-interested ways. From the standpoint of the language *system* a choice has been made (this word or this sentence rather than that word or that sentence), but from the standpoint of most language-users on most occasions, choice is not consciously an issue (2001, p. 124).

Therefore, CDA helps researchers, such as me, understand why certain words were chosen, what that choice means, and what the underlying context is in these decisions. Furthermore, discourse analysis identifies what is not being said and why that is just as important during data analysis. For example, in discussions on sensitive subjects such as SGBV, participants may avoid discussing “contentious propositions” thereby relying on the researcher to infer said propositions (Cameron, 2001, p. 128). However, Cameron cautions against randomly picking out isolated examples and suggesting a pattern exists, rather, she underscores the importance of repetition to suggest a particular ingrained discourse (2001, p. 129). The priority themes that emerged from

the content analysis served as a beginning point for my discourse analysis. As you will see in subsequent chapters, I was able to draw out these themes and analyze why they differed between female refugees and institutional representatives. I also made several suggestions as to why these themes existed through discourse analysis largely in relation to gender roles, patriarchy, and power relationships.

The content and discourse analysis work together quite well. The content analysis helped to clearly identify the important themes throughout my research. By conducting the content analysis, I could clearly see where the repetition between the interviews occurred. To note, the list of words used throughout the content analysis were identified by reading several of the interviews beginning to end and drawing out common words before extrapolating this to the rest of the interviews. Moreover, as I was the one who conducted the interviews, my experience and memory of the interviews were able to correlate the words chosen to include in the content analysis. After completing the content analysis, I could clearly identify what was important throughout the interviews for both the refugee women and the institutional representatives to discuss.

The interviews lasted on average between one and two hours. Interviews with the female refugees usually lasted longer because of the required interpretation. All of the interviews with the institutional representatives were held in English, therefore, an interpreter was not required.

3.9 Participant Sample

Specific to my research sample, I interviewed 15 female refugees, five each from Burundi, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Of the Burundian women I interviewed, their ages ranged from 20 to 41 and the time they had spent in the camp was between three and 13

years. The Rwandese participants ranged in age from 39 to 51 and they had spent between five and 16 years in the camp. Finally, the Congolese women ranged in age between 22 and 51 years old and had been in the camp for three to 14 years. I purposely tried to include a broad range of women in terms of their ages because I anticipated that older women may have a different experience than younger women in terms of socio-economic security. Furthermore, 12 out of 15 women reported being single or widowed and all of the female refugees had at least one dependent. This information was collected to gather a sense of how the women were living i.e. did they have a partner to assist in the provision of resources as well as the number of dependents for which the women were responsible.

Specific to the institutional representatives, four men and five women were interviewed. Five of the participants worked for the government and four were NGO employees. The organizations that are included under the umbrella NGO include JRS, Plan Malawi, UNHCR, and PRDO. Note, as previously indicated, I chose not to interview a representative from WUSC Malawi as I had worked with them for three months prior to my research and I wanted to avoid any conflict of interest. The institutions included under the umbrella term Government cannot all be identified due to participant anonymity protection. However, I can indicate that representatives from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Health, as well as the Malawi Police were interviewed.

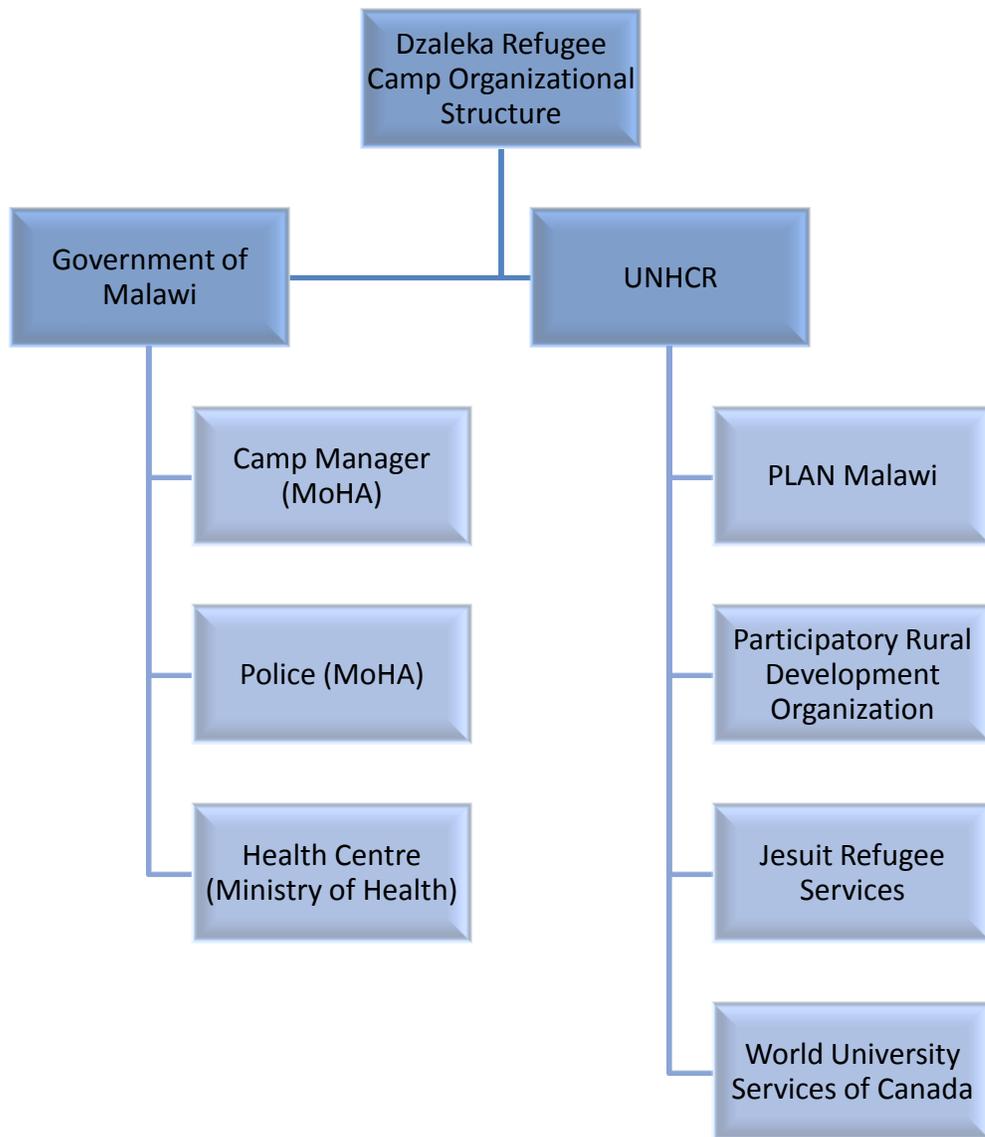


Fig. 1: Dzaleka Refugee Camp Organizational Structure

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

As expressed in the introduction of this thesis, my research questions for this thesis involved determining security concerns for refugee women in refugee camps and identifying the perceptions of refugee women’s security in the refugee camp of both the camp authorities and the women. In response to these finding, my research clearly indicated several prominent themes

throughout my research, specifically the different perceptions between the female refugees and the institutional representatives surrounding sex work, heating resources, boreholes, economic (in)security, corruption, and early marriage. These themes are related to the dual tiers of understanding amongst the institutional representatives as the responses provided during questions related to these themes demonstrate the duality amongst the participants. These security concerns will be elaborated on throughout both the content analysis and the discourse analysis. Moreover, one of the core findings from my research included the identification of differing tiers of understanding regarding security between the female refugees and the Dzaleka-based institutions summarized as (1) primarily those camp workers who are directly on the ground, interacting with the refugees on a daily basis. This tier is generally well aware of the security concerns for women in the camp, although they may not prioritize the security concerns in the same way as the women, they are aware of what insecurity is present; (2) Institutional staff largely unaware of what security the female refugees experience. This tier in part chooses not to recognize insecurity and in part is oblivious due to their separation from the daily camp occurrences. Both tiers contribute to insecurity for female refugees in different ways which will be demonstrated via information drawn from the various institutional representatives' interviews. I elaborate on these findings in detail in Chapters 5 and make suggestions for why these differences and perceptions exist as well as the larger impacts for the refugee community.

The words included in the content analysis portion of my research were derived from the themed questions asked during the interviews. The ten words most commonly cited by the female refugees throughout my research are as follows: money, report, water, police, charcoal, firewood, birth, beat, food, and leaders. The institutional representatives' top ten most common words were similar barring a few exceptions and included: report, police,

secure/security/insecurity, safe/safety, money, food, charcoal, sex, leaders, and support. Figure 1 demonstrates the ranking of the top ten words for each sample group indicating what was prioritized by each group.

Top 10 Most Common Words Used In Content Analysis				
Rank	Female Refugee	Number Used	Institutional Representative	Number Used
1	Money	368	Report	149
2	Report	268	Police	127
3	Water	205	Secure/security/ insecurity	114
4	Police	204	Safe/safety	103
5	Charcoal	143	Money	103
6	Firewood	121	Food	97
7	Birth	110	Charcoal	95
8	Beat	109	Sex	70
9	Food	108	Leaders	63
10	Leaders	88	Support	61

Fig. 2: Top 10 most common words derived from content analysis.

Money, report, police, charcoal, food, and leaders were the six common words between the female refugees and institutional representatives. To note, the number of times words were used appear to differ vastly between female refugees and institutional representatives likely because there were 15 female refugees interviewed and only 9 institutional representatives. Therefore the number of times the words were mentioned cannot be cross-compared between female refugees and institutional representatives. Of the 39 words that I included in my content analysis, money was the number one word mentioned during the female refugees’ interviews by a margin of 100. As the rations that the refugees receive are largely insufficient for survival, refugees are very focused on obtaining money. Therefore, money emerging from the content analysis as the most commonly used word makes sense for the female refugees. Specific to the institutional

representatives, the number one word used within the interviews was report by a margin of 22; report was the second most commonly used word by female refugees. Reporting was something that I was particularly interested in during my interviews as I suspected that if the insecurities identified by the women were reported to the institutions present in the camp and yet the institutional representatives didn't mention the problems, then that would be an important finding to discuss in my thesis. Therefore, reporting was returned to throughout the interviews through both my questions and the participants' responses. Reporting will be discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

The ten least commonly used words derived from my content analysis for the female refugees were as follows: Income/IGA, corruption, assault, briquette, ethnic, propose, marry, victim, transact, and early marriage. Similarly, the institutional representatives' top ten least commonly used words were as follows: physical, briquette, transact, poverty, ethnic, marry, assault, fight, propose, and quarrel. Clearly, six of the ten words overlapped between the female refugees and the institutional representatives, specifically assault, briquette, ethnic, propose, marry, and transact. The infrequent use of these words indicates that they are not real sources of insecurity according to both the female refugees and institutional representatives. Figure 2 demonstrates the relative ranking of the ten least commonly used words stemming from the content analysis.

Top 10 Least Common Words Used In Content Analysis

Rank	Female Refugee	Number Used	Institutional Representative	Number Used
30	Income / IGA	13	Physical	12
31	Corruption	10	Briquette	13
32	Assault	4	Transact	8
33	Briquette	2	Poverty	6
34	Ethnic	2	Ethnic	5
35	Propose	2	Marry	4
36	Marry	2	Assault	3
37	Victim	1	Fight	3
38	Transact	0	Propose	1
39	Early Marriage	0	Quarrel	0

Fig. 3. Top 10 least common words derived from content analysis

Throughout this chapter, I will present both quantitative data grounded in the content analysis conducted within the unstructured interviews as well as qualitative data indicating inconsistency between the female refugees and the institutional representatives. As such, I will now turn to the first theme of heating resources

4.1 Heating Resources

Rations within the camp were cut in 2013 so that the refugees are currently living on a “lean” diet. Refugees are now consuming half a portion of their daily recommended food due to the “lean” rations (White & Kabwila, 2013). Rations include cooking oil, cowpeas, maize, and likuni phala (White & Kabwila, 2013); however, vegetables, meat, and heating resources are not included. The diet in the camp largely consists of nsima which is maize that is grounded down

into flour then mixed with water to create a paste or porridge that is then dipped into a relish. The relish is usually some form of boiled down tomato and onion if the refugee can afford to purchase tomatoes and onions. Note that meat is an added benefit or specialty which is very rare, even in local Malawian diets. What is more concerning is the fact that heating resources are not provided to cook the rations, yet the rations cannot be eaten raw. Because the female refugees are food insecure due to limited rations, there is greater potential for SGBV against the refugees as money earned through the sex trade can be used to access additional food.

Refugees, in particular female refugees, must collect heating resources in the form of firewood or charcoal. Female refugees asserted that because heating resources are not provided as part of their rations and because the rations cannot be eaten raw, there are some refugees who spend “the whole day without eating because of the problem of finding firewood” (Participant 009, female refugee). The difficulty in collecting heating resources is further compounded by the limited availability of heating resources within and around Dzaleka camp. Environmental degradation is an issue correlating to absolutely no available firewood within walking distance of the camp. One participant remembers trees being plentiful in 2003; however, with the increasing number of refugees the trees were continuously cut down (Participant 009, female refugee). She states that “trees are not available” because they have already cut the trees down and therefore there is “no place where [she] can collect firewood” (Participant 009, female refugee). Therefore, female refugees travel long distances, often via mini-bus (public transportation in the form of a large van in which upwards of twenty people cram into) to obtain heating resources. Unfortunately, travelling outside of the camp is further complicated by the hostile refugee policies within Malawi. Essentially, refugees are not legally allowed to leave Dzaleka camp without written permission from the camp manager. This permission is not provided for the

purpose of collecting heating resources. Instead, female refugees must leave the camp illegally to obtain heating resources to cook the rations to feed themselves and their families.

However, the necessity of obtaining heating resources to ensure the food security of the refugees and their families opens the female refugees to a greater risk of rape, beating, theft, survival sex, and transactional sex. Collecting heating resources is a gendered activity, by which I mean that the responsibility falls primarily under the purview of women, as heating resources are required for cooking which is also a female task. Therefore, despite the known risks associated with collecting heating resources, female refugees in Dzaleka travel many kilometres to obtain heating resources. Female refugees cited that the risks associated with heating resource collection include (1) extortion from local Malawians, police, and government workers; (2) physical violence from local Malawians and police; and (3) sexual violence or survival/transactional sex in exchange for heating resources. The failure to provide firewood or an alternative heating resource is, therefore, dangerous. One participant (participant 003, female refugee) stated that women are “beaten” if they “don’t bring that firewood back” and sometimes they may even be “raped”. She suggested that the physical insecurity stems from the scarcity of available firewood close to the camp (Participant 003, female refugee). Similar problems exist for those that use charcoal. For example, one woman argued that many women engage in “prostitution” because of the hunger their children experience, therefore “the children keep crying” and because the women feel they do not have any other options they “go and do prostitution to get something to buy charcoal” (Participant 008, female refugee).

UNHCR and other refugee governing bodies are aware of the juxtaposition between food security and heating resources. For example, one participant reported that because of a particularly violent situation in which a female refugee was caught by local Malawians collecting

firewood outside of the camp and beaten severely, paraffin was distributed as part of the ration package (Participant 009, female refugee). However, this practice has since been halted and refugees are again responsible for finding their own heating resources (Participant 009, female refugee). This situation demonstrates that the institutions operating within Dzaleka are aware of the insecurity that female refugees are presented upon collecting firewood, yet the conscious decision has been made to halt the provision of heating resources.

During my interviews, the institutional representatives demonstrated partial awareness of the insecurity associated with obtaining heating resources. While some identify that collecting heating resources places female refugees in insecurity, others remain willfully oblivious towards the issue. For example, one participant stated:

when women go to collect firewood, they move long distances. So in the course of going in the bush, especially if you move along or there are some small young women you find some people who [...] want to sleep with those women, or to take advantage of those women (Participant 16, male, government).

However, another institutional representative indicated that she was not aware of how the women obtain charcoal (Participant 023, female, NGO). She is aware that sometimes rations are sold to obtain money to buy charcoal. However, the assumption is that refugees are provided enough food to sustain them for an entire month; therefore, they should not be selling their rations as that would be “indicative of too much food being provided” (Participant 023, female, NGO). This attitude completely ignores the necessity of cooking the raw rations and emphasizes the ignorance of some institutional representatives. Assuming that because the refugees have to make hard decisions (i.e. selling part of their rations) to obtain heating resources to cook the provided rations means that they are being given too much food demonstrates a failure to understand the significance of security issues surrounding firewood/charcoal and their

relationship to survival and being able to eat. This comment from the institutional representative suggests a dismissal of the real needs of refugee women and is indicative of the institutional failure to understand the day-to-day realities and challenges for women.

Heating resources such as charcoal and firewood emerged during the content analysis as important and often-spoken about topics. For example, the female refugees mentioned charcoal and firewood a total of 143 and 121 times respectively. This is indicative of the importance placed on heating resources during discussions relating to the security of female refugees. Institutional representatives mentioned charcoal 95 times and firewood 57 times respectively. Although charcoal was amongst the most commonly used words for both female refugees and institutional representatives, firewood was amongst the top ten frequently used words for the female refugees and not the institutional representatives. This indicates that heating resources are more highly prioritized by female refugees in relation to impacting their security than institutional representatives.

Content Analysis: Frequency of Heating Resource References			
Female Refugees	Frequency	Institutional Representatives	Frequency
Charcoal	143	Charcoal	95
Firewood	121	Firewood	57
Briquette	2	Briquette	13

Fig. 4: Frequency of reference to firewood, charcoal, briquette during interviews.

To note, *briquettes* are an income generating activity (IGA) that institutions within the camp are promoting as a response to the lack of heating resources. The term *briquette* was only used twice by the female refugees and thirteen times by the institutional representatives. Along with

interview discussions about dislike for briquettes, this tells us that *briquettes*, as an alternative heating resource, are unpopular from the perspective of both the female refugees and the institutional representatives. Although institutional representatives are trying to push the concept of *briquettes* to refugees as an alternative to firewood and charcoal, clearly it has not caught on yet. However, as indicated by the content analysis, neither participant sample demonstrated too much enthusiasm regarding their discussion about briquettes. In relation to briquette, the only female refugee who mentioned briquettes suggested that the institutions were aware of the challenges regarding heating resources and in response briquettes are produced (on a very small scale) as an IGA, however she suggests that they are only “given to special people” (Participant 013, female refugee). Furthermore, the refugees do not like to use briquettes because they expel a lot of unhealthy smoke which is especially difficult to deal with during the rainy season as the refugees’ shelters are often very poorly ventilated and cooking with open fire occurs inside the home. One institutional representative stated the “briquettes are not very popular because they produce smoke [...] your clothes will be smelling like smoke, so it’s not very popular among people” (Participant 016, male, government). He recognizes that the issue of smoke from briquettes is further compounded by the small cooking space in refugee homes (Participant 016, male, government). The three other institutional representatives who mentioned briquettes did so in passing as an alternative option to firewood and charcoal. However, two mentioned them in relation to an IGA, and two representatives identified the current unsustainability of the briquette project. Evidently, briquettes are not a possible solution to the heating resource challenge within Dzaleka camp.

4.2 Survival and Transactional Sex

Sex work emerged as a theme throughout my research. As previously mentioned, sex work is linked to female refugees' quest of obtaining housing resources as well as other themes to be discussed in this chapter e.g. economic insecurity, corruption, and early marriage. Essentially, discussion regarding insecurity surrounding sex work is an underlying theme throughout my data analysis and research overall. To note, although words related to sexual interaction were not identified within content analysis as the top ten most common words, sex work is still important to examine. An examination of these words will provide an indication as to the difference in perceptions between female refugees and the institutional representatives; however, first I will provide insight into how each sample group viewed sex work in relation to insecurity for female refugees.

The interviews with the female refugees indicated an association of "prostitution" with laziness or bad behaviour. One participant iterated that female refugees are often called "prostitutes" when women wear trousers or when they sit/associate with boys (Participant 011, female refugee). She observes that in these situations men begin "thinking oh that's a prostitute because she's always with men" (Participant 011, female refugee). Focusing on these types of assumptions and gossip hides the underlying push factors for why women engage in sex work such as poverty or limited economic security. Rather than recognizing these push factors, refugees choose to engage in 'moral/behaviour policing' instead of understanding and working to support vulnerable refugees. In relation to the contributing factors to a decision to begin engaging in sex work, one participant stated that she felt women are not able to support themselves and that, that is why they engaged in "prostitution" (Participant 001, female refugee). She goes on to recount her own experience with prostitution: "I was living with a friend who demanded that I contribute to the household, I had no money, so therefore I became engaged in

prostitution, I would have been kicked out of her house” (Participant 001, female refugee). This type of “prostitution” is a form of survival sex. According to Eileen Pittaway, survival sex “refers to situations whereby women have to exchange sex in order to gain food, papers, to avoid being thrown into jail, to avoid physical violence, to fulfill material needs for themselves and their families. It can be in the form of prostitution, working for employers who demand sexual favours, being forced into unwanted sexual relationships” (n.d., p. 2). Unfortunately, the female refugees perceived survival sex to be common. One participant referred to demands from Malawians for sex in exchange for charcoal or access to firewood as “Malawians proposing” (Participant 015 female refugee). The refugee woman noted that women accept these offers of sexual exchange in order to gain access to the firewood (Participant 015, female refugee). Another participant stated that in instances of collecting heating resources, women are sometimes forced to pay twice, once with money and once with their bodies (Participant 010, female refugee). As women need the firewood or charcoal they “just offer themselves” (Participant 010, female refugee). This information indicates that female refugees must exchange sex for heating resources to survive and for the survival of her family. Survival sex is especially common amongst newly arrived female refugees as they do not have an established socio-economic network to offer assistance or from whom they might borrow resources. One institutional representative indicates that new arrivals i.e. those living in Dzaleka for less than 2 years, “they are totally, totally vulnerable and exposed” (Participant 024, female, NGO) to sex-trade. Therefore, they are more vulnerable to engaging in survival sex to provide for themselves and their family. The new arrivals are unable to benefit from social capital and community support correlating to greater insecurity and vulnerability.

Institutional representatives are aware of sex work occurring in the camp, yet there are some differences in perceptions. While some institutional representatives recognize that poverty and a lack of economic opportunities are push factors for women to engage in sex work, others take a more sexist and discriminatory approach. For example, institutional representatives that understand the ramifications of poor economic security as one participant states:

most of the women in the camp and the girls as well, they are prone to do survival sex. And they get money to buy relish, or um firewood, or charcoal because they aren't given that at the distribution. (Participant 018, female, NGO).

Yet, other institutional representatives argue that female refugees are adults and therefore engaging in prostitution is their decision (Participant 023, female, NGO). Although they recognize the connection between economic insecurity and prostitution, they take a primarily advisory role i.e. informing female refugees of the consequences and potential alternatives. In relation to this sexist approach to female refugees engaging in prostitution or survival sex, one participant stated,

Female refugees are given goods, therefore, even if they don't have enough food they cannot sell their body. The women who do not have principles engage in survival sex. It's a human weakness. However, not all women are marketable. The women engaging in prostitution have to be attractive if selling merchandise. (Participant 020, male, Government).

Suggesting that female refugees must be 'marketable' (read attractive) to participate in sex work ignores the real push factors for why female refugees would engage in survival sex and sex work. It ignores the poverty and job insecurity associated with female refugees. Furthermore, suggesting that female refugees are provided with sufficient goods to sustain themselves and their families overlooks the issue of heating resources (or lack thereof) as well as non-food basic necessities not provided by institutions. Rather, it promotes the image of women with loose

morals engaging in sex work and does not take into account survival sex. A feminist analysis of this comment begins with a deeper understanding of why women are perceived to have ‘loose morals’ or are considered the guilty parties in relation to sex-trade activities. This comment speaks to the devaluing of women and cultural norms that perpetuate stereotypes of women as ‘less human’.

Although not identified as the most common or least common words stemming from the interviews, words related to sexual interaction (forced or voluntary) are important to examine as women may not choose to bring up these words and these issues because of cultural norms around discretion. Using just the words sex, sleep, rape, and prostitute, there is a clear discrepancy in relation to perceptions of female refugees and sexual interactions between female refugees and institutional representatives (see Fig. 3). For example, whereas rape is mentioned more than three times as often as sex in the female refugees’ interviews, the reverse is true of institutional representatives as sex is mentioned more than twice as often as rape. The more frequent use of the term rape for female refugees indicates that the female refugees perceive sexual interactions to occur more often without consent. To note, prostitution is often described by the female refugees as being conducted in a very coercive environment. One that I would describe as survival sex, and although the female refugees engaging in prostitution are doing so with consent, I would describe the consent as forced and therefore not real consent. Thus, prostitution is often a form of rape for the female refugees. Additionally, sleep is often used by the female refugees as an alternative to the term prostitution. Specific to institutional representatives, the term sex was used in conjunction with both survival and transactional sex, in addition to on its own.

Female Refugees	Times Used	Institutional Representatives	Times Used
Rape (ranked #14)	61	Sex (ranked #8)	70
Sleep (ranked #15)	60	Prostitute (ranked #14)	49
Prostitute (ranked #21)	35	Rape (ranked #16)	42
Sex (ranked #25)	19	Sleep (ranked #26)	19

Fig. 5: Content analysis specific to words related to sexual intercourse

Female refugees reported turning to prostitution for reasons including poverty, limited economic security, and a lack of basic necessities. For example, prostitution may be a means to purchase heating resources (as will be discussed in the subsequent section), soap, vegetables, clothes, etc.

4.3 Boreholes

Within the camp context, water is collected from boreholes for the purpose of drinking, cooking, washing clothes, washing dishes, and bathing. Boreholes are spread throughout the camp so that no one is ever more than one kilometre from a borehole. However, the camp is ever-growing in population and the boreholes are often crowded with wait times of 2 to 3 hours being common. This is especially true in the dry season when the water table is low, it takes longer to pump the water, and water needs are increased due to the dry climate and heat. Water was an important discussion point during the interviews. Specifically, female refugees made reference to *water* 205 times, making water the third most common word within the content analysis. However, the content analysis relevant to the institutional representatives indicated *water* was just outside of the top 10 most common words used. During the interviews, the discussion surrounding water and boreholes often included physical and verbal attacks between the female refugees. Some refugees even identified sexual assault as an insecurity associated with using the boreholes at night. Both of these topics will be discussed below.

Gender roles in the camp and home countries of the refugees dictate that water collection is a woman's responsibility as dictated by cultural norms around the gender division of labour. Therefore women gather around the boreholes for hours, several times a week, during which time gossip as well as verbal and physical fighting often erupts. Should a man have to fetch water, he does not wait in lines, rather he assumes his need for water is more important and he goes to the head of the line. Participant 001 states that

[w]hen we go to fetch water, what happens is that when a man comes he just wishes, he just go to be the first one to fetch water even if he has found there 10 women, you just find that man says that maybe they think they are better than women. (Participant 001, female refugee).

This example is clearly of some men assuming an inherent privilege over the women that their time is more important and should not be spent waiting in line like the women's. Furthermore, some women chose to return home without water rather than standing in long queues, or engaging in fighting. Choosing not to collect water is an important aspect to understand as there are several negative consequences. Without water women are unable to cook their rations therefore they become food insecure. Additionally, dehydration and lowered energy levels are a side effect of being unable to collect water. Negative health and socio-economic impacts are therefore associated with the inability to collect water.

Furthermore, physical insecurity stems from the boreholes in particular related to the long wait times associated with drawing water. Participant 006 indicated that in instances where women attempt to draw water prior to those women who have been waiting for one or two hours, then the women "start quarrelling" and "start fighting because of the quarrelling" (Participant 006, female refugee). Women who are viewed as weak, both physically and socially, or women who are ostracized may choose to fetch water at night in order to avoid confrontations with other

women, thus increasing their risk of physical and sexual assault. This was made clear by a couple of female refugees who indicated that rape at the borehole has also occurred when women go to collect water at night. For example, participant 009 indicated that “there are some quarrels, fighting at the borehole” and that in instances when women collect water without accompaniment they are at risk of being raped at the boreholes (Participant 009, female refugee). Evidently, the women refugees are aware of the dangers associated with fetching water at night, yet, they choose to risk their safety. The insecurities associated by female refugees in relation to the boreholes include verbal and physical fighting as well as sexual assault.

The perceptions held by the institutional representatives were different than those of the female refugees. The majority of the institutional representatives believed that the refugees were safe when using the boreholes. The most common issues that the female refugees cited (e.g. verbal and physical fighting) were not identified by the institutional representatives. Rather, the majority of the institutional representatives believe that the boreholes are safe because the refugees do not have to leave the camp to obtain water. Recognition of congestion at the boreholes correlates, according to the institutional representatives, to simply congestion and does not “impact security, but it’s like you spend more time collecting water than, than other, I mean that the normal time.” (Participant 016, male, government). They do not recognize the issues associated with verbal attacks / gossip and especially in relation to physical fighting. This is true for all except one of the NGO representatives. She indicates that “interpersonal conflicts” evolve at the boreholes and that the conflicts escalate into “foul language” and “physical attacks” which are compounded by the many witnesses surrounding the boreholes (Participant 24, female, NGO). Although these conflicts “may not end up in physical confrontation” it does result in humiliation (Participant 24, female, NGO). The institutional representatives fail to recognize the

underlying stress experienced by women that contributes to their anxiety and frustration which leads to these fights. These structural conditions are breeding grounds for these kinds of eruptions. Another institutional representative acknowledges the insecurity associated with collecting water at night. He states:

if you look at the spacing of the boreholes, it's reasonably good. Only in the dry season when the water table goes down, that's maybe a time when they may not be safe. That is, if they go in the boreholes at night. Because Dzaleka just like any other settlement, there are people who are drunkards, drug users, and mobbing at night for women to fetch water may not be a safe venture. (Participant 022, male, government).

Thus, the research indicates a number of security issues related to the boreholes for female refugees. However, institutional representatives are unaware of, or unwilling to admit to security issues for female refugees related to collecting water. Moreover, the institutional representatives underhandedly blame the victim in their veiled suggestion that women should know better than to collect water at night and thus it is her fault if she is raped. This is further compounded by references made about the Dzaleka camp curfew in relation to insecurity that women experience at the borehole rather than recognizing a need for change to better protect female refugees.

4.4 Economic (in)security

Female refugees within the camp are incredibly resourceful and resilient. Yet, how they support or contribute to supporting themselves and their families is cause for concern. The words derived from the content analysis of the interviews related to economic security include money, support, control, and poverty. As previously identified, money was prioritized by the female refugees as well as the institutional representatives during the unstructured interviews. Support was also discussed in relation to supporting themselves and their families through various economic capacities quite often by both the female refugees (ranked thirteenth) and the institutional representatives (ranked tenth). Interestingly, poverty and control were not discussed

as often indicating that the connection between *money* and *poverty* is not explicitly clear or verbalized. However, the topic of economic (in)security will be further explored below.

As previously mentioned in the literature review, refugees are unable to work in Malawi legally (Mvula, n.d.). Rather they are supposed to rely on rations despite requiring income to purchase heating resources, supplemental food, soap, clothes, etc. Several of the implementing partners, specifically Plan and JRS, offer IGAs within the camp borders. Plan's IGAs target sex workers and SGBV survivors while JRS' focus on IGAs for widows and elderly women. Yet, the number of IGA positions is limited and not anywhere near enough to support the female refugees in the camp. Therefore, other economic activities that the female refugees are engaged in include agriculture and agriculture selling, livestock raising, small business (e.g. shop owner, hairdresser), or completing chores for wealthier refugees or Malawian families. One of the participants indicated that women in the camp obtain money by working for other refugees or Malawian households surrounding the camp as well as in "small businesses, example selling tomatoes" (Participant 010, female refugee). This participant states that women engage in "prostitution and if they are paid, they also engage in small business to sell tomatoes" and other goods (Participant 010, female refugee). The example of selling tomatoes is indicative of the networks and alternative ways of making money that longer term refugees have established; however the seed money for these networks is sometimes gained from exploitative measures e.g. "prostitution".

Unfortunately, economic insecurity and sex work are linked. Financial insecurity correlates to the inability to provide adequate sustenance for families. This is especially true of families who must sell part of their rations to purchase heating resources to cook the remaining rations. Female refugees may require money to purchase basic necessities including soap or

clothes while others may require income to begin a small business, e.g. purchasing seeds for agriculture or raising small livestock. Still, some female refugees may require money for home repairs as refugees are provided with land plots and some building materials, yet repairs may require additional material for which they must purchase. However, when female refugees are unable to gain some form of economic security they may engage in sex work. In relation to whether women can support themselves in the camp one participant stated that women “are not supported” and that most of them “rely on prostitution” which she says is not something the women are “proud” of as a way to make an income (Participant 007, female refugee). This is largely because most of the women “don’t have anything to do which can provide [money/income] to them” (Participant 007, female refugee). This is especially true for female single headed households as they lack the support of a second potential income earner. Furthermore, men may detract from the family income through the selling of rations for their own gain i.e. for the purchase of alcohol or sex. This causes women to have to struggle harder to provide for their families.

Female refugees talked frequently about the importance of relationships or marriages in relation to financial security and control over resources in their family. Refugees distinguished between problematic husbands and a ‘good’ or ‘nice’ husband who allows them to participate in decision-making (Participant 013, female refugee). According to many of the female refugees, women’s lack of decision-making and control over resources is “African culture”; however many women defer to men because of the greater ramifications if they break from tradition. For those female refugees who do not have a ‘good’ husband they may engage in a ‘quarrel’ which always includes verbal abuse but often also includes physical abuse as well. These quarrels are rarely

reported to the police; however, because of the close proximity of houses, the neighbourhood is usually aware of what is occurring between the wife and her husband.

The institutional representatives are aware of the challenges associated with obtaining an income. However, they believe that female refugees are able to sustain themselves economically. They state that female refugees are involved in ‘piece work’ which involves working for another household in terms of doing housework, collecting water, short-term agriculture, selling items in the market, or short-term contracts for the organizations within the camp. However, piece work is not consistent or dependable. For example, one participant stated:

Financially, they are able because some they are making piecemeals. They are selling tomato, they are selling fish [...] I've seen so many refugees going into the field farming. Learning lands from neighbouring villages to have food, to have staple food, reliable maize, ground nuts, beans, tomato, and so forth [...] some of them, maybe she's failing to make money, uh, some others they opt to make prostitution.(Participant 019, female, government).

Evidently, institutional representatives suggest that when female refugees are unable to engage in the piecework income generation, they choose instead to engage in “prostitution”. This is supported by another institutional representative who indicates that the assumption is that women are engaging in prostitution because of their economic situation i.e. poverty (Participant 023, female, NGO). Therefore they chose to engage in prostitution to obtain more money (Participant 023, female, NGO). The women engaging in prostitution do not go into details regarding who they are sleeping with, rather they are sleeping with different men in exchange of money (Participant 023, female, NGO). However this representative goes on to say that she is unaware of reports of sex-trade in exchange for basic necessities (Participant 023, female, NGO). Yet, my research in Malawi demonstrated that in fact, this very same representative had indeed received a report documenting an example of sex-trade in exchange for basic necessities for survival.

Beyond that though, there is a clear divide between what the female refugees in the camp are reporting and what the institutional representatives indicate. In particular, refugee women make frequent references to survival sex-trade whereas camp staff and institutional representatives overwhelmingly failed to mention and even denied its existence when asked during the interview.

4.5 Corruption

Allegations of corruption are rampant throughout Dzaleka camp. The Malawi Police are the main culprit in corruption allegations from both female refugees and the institutional representatives. Conversations about reporting often included discussions about police ineffectiveness or corruption. Although the word corruption was a relatively low ranking word from the female refugees, it was often described in terms of either one family paying the police to investigate and release the suspect, or the police demanding money or goods in exchange for an allegation to be investigated. Specific to the institutional representatives, the word corruption was mentioned the 18th most often. This is likely because the institutional representatives also suspected the police of engaging in corruption. Police was a frequently used word by both institutional representatives and female refugees. There are several underlying reasons for the regular use of police including the fact that any issue related to physical or sexual assault must first be reported to the police before the assault survivor can access necessary services.

Female refugees suggest that there are instances of women reporting sexual or physical assault to the police, the police detain the defendant until the defendant's family or friends pay off the police and the defendant is released. One participant stated that in instances when female refugees go to report being raped to the police, action will not be taken because the accused will

“come and just give [the police] money” and despite evidence demonstrating that “he is the one that raped [her]” nothing will be done to that person (Participant 006, female refugee). Others suggest that “even the police, they may also force women to do prostitution so that if you go [with] a problem they try to help you to solve it” (Participant 008, female refugee). This information is indicative of the female refugee’s belief that the police are willing to receive money or sex in exchange for the release of refugees accused of crimes. To note, the female refugees only recognize corruption involving the institutional representatives, not from the refugees’ side. They do not indicate that the refugees also play a role in promoting corruption within the camp construct.

The Malawi Police are not the only institution accused of being corrupt. Other organizations implicated for corruption during interviews include the UNHCR, the Ministry of Health, the camp manager’s office, and PRDO. One female refugee suggested that those “people who work in the food distribution organization can engage in prostitution so that those [prostitutes] can be given extra food” (Participant 008, female refugee). To note, PRDO is responsible for the food distribution and refugees support PRDO through distribution assistance. This participant goes on to accuse the Ministry of Health of corruption as she indicates that those who work at the hospital do so to “get medicine and soap” (Participant 008, female refugee). The UNHCR has also had allegations of corruption made against its staff in Dzaleka camp. Specifically, one participant indicated the employee responsible for assigning appointments and acting as a gatekeeper for other UNHCR staff in Dzaleka “may also engage in prostitution so that they can give you appointment form to go and meet someone who you want” (Participant 008, female refugee). All allegations of corruption are disturbing; however, allegations against UNHCR specifically the gatekeeper or person responsible for providing appointment forms is

alarming. In Dzaleka, refugees must make an appointment with the UNHCR should they wish to speak to someone working for UNHCR e.g. intake officer, protection officer, social worker, etc. Therefore, if the person responsible for booking these appointments is using his position to achieve sex from those seeking UNHCR assistance, the entire role of UNHCR as providing for and protecting refugees is called into question.

Perceptions about corruption amongst the institutional representatives are not that much different from the female refugees. Challenges with the Malawi police are evident as the majority of institutional representatives are also suggesting that money or sex may be required in exchange for services from the police. One institutional representative stated:

I'm aware of complaints as well as allegations of complaints. I mean allegations of corruption [...] and mostly it is their word against the police [...] To say that for you to have a better service you need to pay some money as well as at the court (Participant 016, male, government).

However, institutional representatives were more likely to look at the dual nature of corruption i.e. the blame was placed on both those doing and being corrupted. For example, institutional representative 023 stated that

UNHCR's policy is that all services are free for refugees. However, the issue of corruption is two sided i.e. requesting money from refugees and refugees attempting to bribe. Corruption is dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Institutional representative 023 states that there are no cases of corruption regarding the police. Allegations are made, however, there needs to be evidence to support the allegations. (Participant 023, female, NGO)

Investigations into allegations of corruption are conducted by the Malawian Police, even instances where members of the police were the accused. There is no impartial investigating body. Therefore investigations rarely indicate that allegations are accurate. Furthermore, Participant 021 suggests that amongst staff and the refugees “if these cases happen they’re usually handled discreetly” (Participant 021, female, government). By “these cases” she is

referring to corruption cases which are never clear or obvious. Essentially, in relation to corruption, both female refugees and institutional representatives are aware of issues related to corruption. However, the difference in perception is that institutional representatives recognize the duality i.e. the problem with those bribing and those accepting bribes whereas the female refugees only acknowledge those accepting the bribe.

4.6 Early and Forced Marriage

Early marriage is not an issue that I anticipated investigating when I left for Malawi. However, during my six months in the camp I attended two sensitization campaigns regarding early marriage organized by Plan Malawi and WUSC Malawi. In addition, the issue of early marriage was evident throughout participant observation and alluded to during interviews with the female refugees and institutional representatives.

Girls that engage in early marriage have a higher likelihood of dropping out of school; having an early and problematic pregnancy; being abused by their spouse; and being psychologically and emotionally stunted. However, girls continue to get married at an early age due largely to economic factors. Through early marriage girls have an increased ability to fulfill their basic and secondary needs. There are instances within the refugee camp in which the parents of a young girl force her to get married for financial purposes. This financial gain would benefit the parents as they would have to provide for one less child (note many families in Dzaleka have more than two children) and in some instances a bride price would be provided to the parent. For example, one participant stated

I was forced to get married because in our family we are poor. They, my parents, forced me that I should get married to a certain man [...] I said uh, uh I am so busy with school, I can't get married. Because with that they wanted to take their poverty we are having at

home. I should be the one to end the poverty. Then I said no. (Participant 009, female refugee).

From this interview excerpt, poverty as a push factor for parents to force their daughters into early marriage is evident. Unfortunately, when the girls refuse to get married they often face physical abuse as evident by reports from female refugees about being chased away from their families when they refused to get married (Participant 009 & Participant 011, female refugees). The girls sometimes have to leave the camp for a period of time for their physical safety. Eventually, the girls were able to move back to the camp but lived on their own, separate from their families.

Interestingly, institutional representatives appeared more concerned with the issue of early marriage than the female refugees. Perceptions for why female refugees engage in early marriage are different for institutional representatives than for female refugees. For example, one participant stated

I think the reason is they are not motivated enough to go to school and then if they finish school, there's not a lot of home. The only thing that they can do is wait for WUSC, they cannot go for tertiary education in Malawi because they are not allowed to. So I finish form four [grade 12] and then what? So I think it's the lack of motivation. It's also being idle. (Participant 018, female, NGO).

This interview excerpt suggests that the girls are simply getting married because they lack tertiary educational opportunities. However, girls are getting married prior to completing secondary education as they are dropping out of school because of these marriages or early pregnancies. Therefore, the institutional representatives are missing the economic insecurity and poverty as a push factor for engaging in early marriage. The statement of the girls also choosing to get married at an early age due to 'idleness' is important as it suggests that the girls are getting married out of boredom rather than to fulfill their basic needs or escape unpleasant home environments. Another institutional representative stated

You know, when these women who are engaged in early marriages, some are as young as 14 or 13. [...] After 3 or 4 years they are out of that marriage. They get into somebody else as a husband then the issue of having multiple partners within their lifetime is very high and yes the issue of contracting disease is very high again. (Participant 022, male, NGO).

The differences in the way that early marriages are perceived are exemplified by these two interview excerpts as this institutional representative appears more concerned with the moral censorship of the girls. The institutional representative problematizes engaging in sexual activity with multiple partners for the girls and suggests a level of suppression of the girls' sexuality and sexual life choices, again related to moral censorship.

4.7 Reporting Insecurity

As previously indicated, I sought to understand the reporting mechanisms related to insecurity within the camp for female refugees. I often asked follow-up questions during the unstructured interviews related to whether specific instances of insecurity had been reported, who they were reported to, and what type of response or action was taken following a report of insecurity. These types of questions were posed to both female refugees and the institutional representatives. The purpose of these questions was to establish whether the Dzaleka-based institutions were receiving reports of insecurity for female refugees. I suspected that these types of questions would contribute to greater understanding in how insecurity for female refugees is perceived by the female refugees and the institutional representatives.

Female refugees have several options for reporting instances of insecurity. For those experiencing physical or sexual violence, they are supposed to first report to their community leaders. The community leader is supposed to intervene and attempt to resolve the problem. If the problem persists or the community leader is unable to address the problem appropriately, s/he is supposed to refer or accompany the refugee to the police. However, corruption, reporting, and

the police appear to be interlinked according to the accounts provided during the unstructured interviews. As one female refugee states: “although they go to report, they are never helped. They can even arrest those that beated them today and tomorrow they release them without even going to court to solve the problem. Which means they never solve the problems” (Participant 007, female refugee). Another participant states that “[c]orruption is very high in the police in the camp” and she argues that if someone reports a case and does not provide any form of corrupting measure (e.g. money or sometimes sex) then the police “don’t even attend you. They just say ahh go to the community leaders, you finish your problems there” (Participant 001, female refugee). This statement suggests that the police are only interested in those cases where they can make a profit undermining the entire camp security system. Another participant articulated that in cases of physical fighting, female refugees first report to the community leaders “and then they forward them to the police station” the police sometimes also “refer [the complainant] to UNHCR and even to Plan Malawi” (Participant 007, female refugee). However, reporting to the community leaders is not always an appropriate approach. For example, one participant recalled her experience with reporting her stepfather for attempting to have sex with her. She states “I said no. That’s when he started hitting me” (Participant 001, female refugee). She reported the issue to the police, who then brought in the community leaders to attempt to resolve the issue. She says that the community leaders “were his friends and he was once a community leader” so the community leaders

they were saying ‘oh you are doing this so that you should be resettled, oh you go nowhere’, they talked a lot of things. Then I was like being humiliated. I said, I’m doing this for my own self, but these people cannot understand me. I tried to tell them, but they couldn’t understand me. Then they were like, just say that all they could say is that I’m doing that because I want to punish my stepfather. (Participant 001, female refugee)

This statement is indicative of the power constructs ingrained not only between female refugees and institutional representatives but also between male and female refugees themselves. Rather than taking her report of physical violence seriously and intervening on her behalf, the police choose to involve the community leaders in the case despite the police being responsible for security within the camp. The community leaders' assumption that the participant is lying about her experience with physical violence and "humiliating" her suggests that her testimony is not validated. The assumption is that she is being vindictive against her stepfather or making false claims in hopes to be resettled. Therefore both the police and the community leaders act as challenge functions rather than advocates for the female refugee in this instance.

The system of reporting to the community leader and then the police is a challenge for female refugees receiving further assistance in the camp. For those participants who experience physical or sexual violence/assault they must receive a referral form from the police prior to seeking medical assistance (Participant 024, female, NGO). This is problematic on many fronts; (i) rape is highly stigmatized in many African societies, therefore reporting instances of physical assault may not be a choice for the victims as they wish to avoid community/familial ostracization or they do not want their partner to know about their assault (ii) forcing sexual assault victims to receive a referral form prior to seeking medical assistance may actually discourage appropriate treatment for sexual assault victims correlating to physical (sexually transmitted infections, physical trauma) and psychological harm to the victims. Beyond these issues, some institutional representatives promote this method of reporting (i.e. reporting to the police and then receiving a referral form for a medical examination). For example, one participant stated that the police can assist a female refugee to "go to a medical examiner to check whether she has really been raped. I may say that this is a common practice or this is the

conventional practice with all the cases here in Malawi that, that claim that there was rape” (Participant 021, female, government). She suggests that a medical examination confirming a rape occurred is required prior to the Malawi Police opening an investigation into the allegation of rape (Participant 021, female, government). Although the physical evidence gathered during a medical examination is beneficial to a criminal case the requirement of obtaining medical evidence before launching an investigation is demonstrative of clear power constructs between the female refugees and the institutional representatives. The female refugee is viewed as a liar or seeking something from the institutional representative until her claim is ‘validated’.

Beyond suggestions that female refugees are falsifying claims of sexual assault, institutional representatives hold other damaging presumptions about female refugees and reporting. For example, one participant pointed to alcohol being a point of conflict between spouses/partners in the camp. He suggests that husbands “drink beer too much” and therefore arrive “late at the house” which causes the wife to inquire as to why he has arrived home so late (Participant 019, male, government). This inquiry escalates between the spouses resulting in someone reporting. The participant states “that’s also the most challenging for female refugees from their husbands” (Participant 019, male, government). This participant articulates traditional power constructs in which the man can come and go as he pleases and should he be questioned then the confrontation can escalate. This is a clear example of victim-blaming. Furthermore, according to this participant female refugees may also choose to not report or to withdraw a report because of their economic dependence on their “breadwinner” husband (Participant 019, male, government). The lack of economic security for female refugees may prevent them from reporting their experiences of insecurity for fear of losing that source of income for themselves and their family.

Many female refugees also choose to remain quiet and not report the insecurity they experience. Rather than experiencing the “humiliation” (Participant 001, female refugee) of having to prove that they have experienced violence and are not “lying” (Participant 021, female, government) the female refugees internalize their insecurity. For example, women that experience insecurity while collecting heating resources sometimes choose not to report because they “are told [they] should not be going outside the camp” (Participant 009, female refugee); however, because of the lack of resources female refugees continue to leave the camp illegally in search of firewood or charcoal. Therefore as one participant declares “these days we can even be beaten, you think you can’t even report” (Participant 009, female refugee). The belief that she cannot report being beaten stems from the knowledge that she is not legally allowed to leave the camp despite the necessity of collecting firewood or charcoal. Other female refugees lack faith in the institutional authorities to take any action. For example, one participant stated that “she knows that although she can report, they will not help her. Then she decided to keep quiet. Since she knows that they will not help her with anything” (Participant 007, female refugee). This lack of trust in the institutional representatives demonstrates the divide between the female refugees and the institutional representatives regarding real security and how the female refugees perceive their security. Institutional representatives sometimes also worry about how much impact they can actually have in relation to security within the camp. For example, one participant argues that

even with the reporting procedures there are very few times that we have had um cases that go to court and successfully be in favour of implementing laws that protect and um criminalize any other behaviours that are targeting women in this way. So when there are no success stories of cases that have been taken to court a general feeling is it’s waste of time even going to report. What is the use? They will not do anything. The perpetrator will be set free. Like although we are talking about women, um we had incidences of violation of little girls at one time, five of them were violated in the camp. And the parents [in] two of the cases, the parents reported the cases and they knew the person who

had violated the children, but the cases [that] went to court came back and nothing. So that really makes general feeling of what is the point of reporting about this (Participant 024, NGO)

This participant identifies that if the court system in Malawi does not appropriately prosecute and protect women's security then she questions what reason the female refugees would have to report their insecurity. Without continuously challenging the sexism and discrimination in the court system, then real security for women cannot be reinforced. There will not be any preventative measure to stop the perpetrators from committing insecurity against female refugees if there are not any successful prosecution measures in place.

Chapter 5: Limited Opportunities, Survival Strategies, and Accountability

Men and women experience conflict, insecurity, and displacement differently (Hoogensen & Rottern, 2005; Baxter 2008,). These differences, particularly the subaltern perspective, bypass traditional barriers between individuals on the basis of "secure/insecure divisions" (Hoogensen & Rottern, 2005, p. 168). In many instances, discussions of how and why security issues evolve are dependent upon understandings of authority and legitimacy (Mustapha, 2013). The relationship between security and power is vital to acknowledge as it identifies whose security can and is valued as well as what voices are legitimized in relation to discussions of insecurity. Human security from a gendered perspective contributes to our understanding of the intersection of security, gender, and environment amongst other security perspectives (Rosenow-Williams, 2015). These insecurities are, for refugee women, an intersectional manifestation of oppression primarily based upon their race and gender (Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2001). The intersectionality impacts the security of female refugees as they relate to their male counterparts, local host country communities, and the refugee-based institutions. In this context, women

experience insecurity at the hands of private individuals, however, this insecurity is facilitated by the state (Campani & Wadia, 2004) and refugee-based institutions.

Refugee-based organizations accommodate and facilitate an environment conducive to the violation of female refugees' human rights and physical bodies (Campani & Wadia, 2004). This is further exasperated by the patriarchal society in which female refugees operate as it contributes to the insecurity as well as the "othering" of the female refugees within their own communities (Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2001). Additionally, "[f]eminists have recognized the relationship between the materiality of bodies and the sociality of representational practices as a key concern in terms of security and end to gender subordination" (Wilcox, 2011, p. 596). These circumstances are compounded by the traditional gender norms associated with masculinity and femininity. Grounded in this context, this chapter will examine the daily challenges female refugees confront as identified in the data analysis of chapter four. Refugee insecurity was identified for female refugees in relation to housing resources, sex work and survival sex, boreholes, corruption, early marriage, and reporting mechanisms. This chapter will contribute to a deeper understanding of those themes and contextualize them in a broader empirical framework. By understanding the invisibility of refugee women and their needs, their limited options and survival strategies, as well as the trust they have in authority, the themes derived from my research will become clearer and be better understood.

5.1 Invisibility of Women and Ignorance of Their Needs

Violence, according to Nadia Latif, is more than the extraordinary circumstances of rape, war, conflict, and torture, but is also evident in instances of poverty, malnutrition, inadequate access to employment, lack of potable water, and hazardous working conditions (2012). Violence can manifest itself in refugee gender norms, characterized by the gendered division of

labour. This is because there is a distinct dichotomy: the public versus the private sphere; labour expectations associated with masculinity and femininity e.g. men are responsible for providing protection and material resources to the family, while women are expected to maintain the domestic realm and provide for the physical and social needs of the family (Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2001; Latif, 2012). A distinct gender division of labour exists and women's roles are largely undervalued. In instances of single female or female-headed households, women must engage both the public and private sphere to survive, doubling their workload in some instances. These households are often poorer due to the division of labour. Maintaining a household takes a significant amount of time and "inflicts opportunity costs on wage earning labour" (Murray, 2000 p. 994). Further, the relative power (physical and social) that female refugees possess often correlates to the necessity of engaging in sexual favours in exchange for access to basic goods and resources (Murray, 2000). Yet, because the majority of their responsibility is relegated to the private sphere, women's needs are often overlooked or ignored. This is indicative of a distinct "spatial field of power/knowledge" (Peet & Hartwick, 2009, p. 224) in which women's needs are deemed secondary or supplementary to their male counterparts.

Accessing basic necessities including food, water, shelter as well as resources like firewood and charcoal are required to sustain and protect refugee women and their families. These daily needs are part of the private realm and therefore part of the woman's responsibility, yet they remain largely controlled by men and in some instances the associated insecurity for women is ignored by institutions altogether. This control and ignorance is evident in the food distribution process. As Royce Bernstein Murray argues:

Though not without exception, food distributed through male networks has been diverted to resistance forces or for sale on the black market, with women and children suffering as a result. Some refugee men have even been accused of taking blankets, clothes, and food

directly from refugee children and other vulnerable people in the camp, while polygamous husbands have been known to unfairly and unevenly distribute food among their plural wives and household (Murray, 2000, p. 992-993).

This example rings true of the research conducted in the Dzaleka camp as during participant observation, I witnessed husbands/fathers taking rations (or parts thereof) to sell on the black market. Similarly, during a non-food based ration distribution targeting vulnerable groups of refugees (orphaned children, the elderly, single mothers) by the UNHCR, many of the rations were taken by male refugees from the recipients as soon as the vulnerable refugees left the UNHCR compound. These examples are indicative of the power structures ingrained in the refugee camps and the inability of refugee-based organizations to provide security for vulnerable refugees in relation to the distribution process.

Another example of the invisibility of women and ignorance of their needs is the collection of heating resources during which refugee women are confronted with considerable physical and sexual insecurity. Within the refugee camps, food rations³ are distributed without the means of cooking the food (Buscher, 2010; Mulumba, 2012; Women's Refugee Commission, 2015). As meal preparation is considered a domestic role, female refugees are forced to gather heating resources such as firewood, charcoal, and in especially desperate situations agricultural waste or animal dung (Women's Refugee Commission, 2015). Mulumba argues that heating resources are not provided as part of the rations because they are considered "women's issues" and fall under the "domestic role" which the female refugees are expected to maintain (2000, p. 38).⁴ Refugee women are incredibly vulnerable in relation to collecting heating resources, as I have documented in this thesis. They often travel far distances to remote environments outside of

³ An overview of ration provision specifically for Dzaleka refugee camp refugees is provided in chapter four.

⁴ I think this is too simplistic and that voluntary repatriation and financial capacity are also likely contributing factors. However, this is a topic for further research beyond the scope of this thesis.

the refugee camps, susceptible to physical and sexual attack from host community members, rebels, soldiers, or government officials (Buscher, 2010; Mulumba, 2012). Female refugees have also been reported by the Women's Refugee Commission as "offering sex in exchange for food because they do not have enough food and/or enough fuel to cook what they have" (2015, p. 2). Those refugees who are not head of households or who are unaccompanied face increased rates of domestic violence because of their travel outside of the camp. As Deborah Mulumba states:

women refugees, whose role it is to provide fuel wood for household cooking were forced to travel long distances in search of firewood, they consequently faced negative changes in their gender relations, suffered domestic violence for being away from home for long periods of time, and were unable to invest in their personal development and health needs. Simply put, women refugees are in double jeopardy, as when coupled with gender biases they also have to deal with the challenges of managing and sustaining everyday life amid the precarious circumstances which beset en-camped refugees (2012, p. 33).

The collecting of heating resources coupled with the amount of time required to prepare a meal for their family often leaves women "time-poor" and may result in women resorting to desperate measures (Buscher, 2010) such as the sex trade to provide for their family. Moreover, the demand for resources, which are generally already scarce for local communities, is exasperated by the creation of refugee settlements (Martin, 2005). Refugees contribute to deforestation and environmental degradation which correlates to increased "tension between host and displaced communities, which often results in the targeting of displaced women" (Women's Refugee Commission, 2015, p. 1; Martin, 2005; Mulumba, 2012).⁵ Essentially, because gender norms persist within the camp construct, refugee women experience insecurity while maintaining these roles. Their vulnerability to violence is made especially clear by the presence of men who also

⁵ This is exacerbated by the UNHCR's and host governments' continued tendency to assume that refugee situations are temporary and short-term, yet historical evidence consistently opposes these assumptions as demonstrated by the multitude of protracted refugee camps (Mulumba, 2012).

obtain heating resources in certain cases but do not face the same type of vulnerability and exploitation (Murray, 2000).

A deeper understanding of the gender division of labour is that these roles are a product of social norms and social processes underscored by a distinct valuing of masculinities and undervaluing of femininities. Although marginalized, activities conducted by women are vital (Cockburn, 2010) within the family and camp structures, yet they are not perceived to have economic value. Thus, the devaluation of feminine roles is perpetuated. Therefore, women are prevented from accessing and having any control over family finances. Without access to livelihoods, refugee women are at an increased risk of SGBV (Buscher, 2010). As Dale Buscher states “[w]omen are often forced to resort to negative economic coping strategies such as leaving the safety of home and camps to collect firewood, exchanging sex for food and needed resources, and being forced to stay in abusive relationships when they do not have the requisite financial resources of their own to ensure their survival” (2010, p. 17). Therefore, increasing women’s access to livelihoods is a direct solution to vulnerability and violence that plague refugee women, particularly in relation to accessing heating resources.

The day-to-day challenges experienced by women demonstrate a level of vulnerability. However, defining women in terms of their vulnerability – or even their victim-related experiences – is insufficient for addressing gender inequality. Employing exclusively the language of victimization with reference to the invisibility of women’s needs, the undervaluing of their work, and the limited control over their economic future, essentializes refugee women as victims rather than active agents in development. They are forever pitied but never actually seen. This underscores Donna Haraway’s assertion that to “generate an understanding useful to subjugated groups” multiple experiences and standpoints, particularly those of the subaltern must

be considered (Cockburn, 2010), p. 141). The marginalization of women's perspectives and recognition of women's participation underscores the importance of including multiple standpoints.

If the refugee-based institutions recognized the importance of providing consistent and sustainable economic opportunities and skill based learning opportunities to refugee women, their risk of vulnerability and engagement in negative economic coping strategies would be reduced (Buscher, 2010). In fact, Partha Chatterjee suggests that violence is inextricably linked to state sovereignty through power constructs and relationships (Mustapha, 2013). This plays out through gendered dimensions of power (Mustapha, 2013). The refugee-based institutions and the refugees themselves must recognize that solutions to women's needs go beyond ensuring equal representation of women in leadership and decision-making bodies. Instead, participation must be meaningful, shared equally, and avoid tokenizing refugee women (Buscher, 2010). Refugee women must be involved in the decision-making process, feel safe to contribute ideas and suggestions, and not be relegated to secretaries and servers of leadership structures. Engaging both men and women in promoting and supporting gender equality (including access to livelihoods) is vital to achieving gender equality and improving the security of refugee women.

5.2 Limited Options and Survival Strategies

Traditional gender roles grounded in a distinct dichotomy contribute to the complexity of survival strategies that refugees employ. Male and female, public and private, provider and caregiver; these are the traditional constructs in which refugees engage. Men are generally perceived as the protectors and economic providers for the family operating largely outside of the home for their tasks, while women are responsible for maintaining the family through activities such as cooking, cleaning, and caring for children or elderly family members, operating

primarily within the home. However, Giorgio Agamben argues, that the way refugee camps are constructed and operate defy binary oppositions as they relate to the inner and the outer realms (1998 in Gligor, 2008). Female refugees often function in a non-traditional environment in which they are responsible for also ensuring the economic security of their family through whatever means possible, especially in female-headed households. The husbands or fathers, the “protect[or] and provider” are often absent from the refugee camp as they may be killed or joined a rebel or military force, they may also have chosen to abandon their families or lost the family while fleeing (Murray, 2000). Murray suggests that “[t]his independence forces refugee women to move into the unfamiliar public sphere where they may take on new economic roles to support the family. These tasks can be particularly intimidating where a woman is accustomed to living and operating within her small village and instead finds herself in a large camp housing thousands of people” (2000, p. 989). Moreover, unable to obtain legal employment, insufficient rations, and impoverished families push female refugees into incredibly difficult and desperate circumstances. Without legal or formal economic opportunities, female refugees are often forced to turn to the sex trade for their own and their families’ survival. This is the reality for women in a variety of situations in the refugee camps, not just single women or female heads of households, as female refugees with husbands and parent(s) may also engage in exploitative behaviour with their family’s knowledge because the family understands engaging in sex work as the only means to obtain basic necessities (Farmer, 2006).

Limited livelihood opportunities are juxtaposed against survival strategies to achieve basic necessities for refugees, particularly female refugees, within the refugee camps. Survival strategies for female refugees include working in agriculture production and selling, raising livestock, completing chores for richer refugees and local families surrounding the camp,

hairdressing, making small jewelry/crafts, working as seamstresses etc. Unfortunately, not all female refugees have sufficient capital or skills to conduct these activities, especially those female refugees who are newly arrived in the refugee camp. Therefore, as previously indicated, many female refugees turn to the sex trade to obtain basic necessities and provide for their families. Analysis of my data in chapter four indicated that women talked about sex work (“prostitution”) as a survival strategy. Those women who were unable to work in agriculture, or did not have the social capital to work for other families, or the skills to make crafts / be a seamstress, turned to sex work as a last resort. The decision to participate in sex work correlates to a commodification of women’s bodies. It indicates that women’s bodies have an economic value which can be exchanged for sexual services to the benefit / exploitation of each party. However, having to barter sex in exchange for basic necessities such as food, firewood, or shelter is a form of coercion or sexual exploitation (Murray, 2000). In fact, Murray argues that the female refugees’ “poor, unstable circumstances, as well as the assistance they receive, leave them vulnerable to sexual predators” (2000, p. 994). This vulnerability is compounded by living in situations in which women are heads of households or living alone (Murray, 2000). Rather, Murray suggests that sex work within refugee camps is a “direct result of the distribution of aid and refugees’ corresponding economic situation” (2000, p. 987). Therefore, despite the international community’s responsibility to provide basic necessities for refugees living in refugee camps, many female refugees feel their only choice is to engage in sex work to obtain the basic necessities for themselves and their families.

Sexual violence and exploitation violates the fundamental human rights of refugee women, yet current refugee protection mechanisms are not strong enough to adequately address these contraventions (Farmer, 2006, p. 45). Refugee women are particularly vulnerable to SGBV

largely due to the instability of their communities (Olsen & Scharffscher, 2004). As Olsen and Scharffscher indicate

[r]ape is often referred to as an exercise of power and it ‘strikes right at the roots of a person’s sense and worth’. Some rapists, however, have an edge that is more than physical. ‘They operate within an institutionalised setting that works to their advantage and in which a victim has little chance to redress her grievance (2004, p. 380).

Moreover, perpetrators of SGBV function in an environment shrouded in silence and based in cultural assumptions which perpetuate both the violence and exploitation of female refugees (Olsen & Scharffscher, 2004). Due to their instability and consistently changing demographics, socio-economic factors are altered, exacerbating “women’s existing cultural vulnerabilities to sexual exploitation” (Farmer, 2006, p. 53). Refugee camps are rife with a combination of “rigid gender roles” where men have confidence in their “sexual entitlement” culminating in an environment in which “sexual violence is more likely to occur” (Olsen & Scharffscher, 2004, p. 377-378). It is in this context that women go about their daily routines collecting heating resources, obtaining water, and cooking food. Yet, because sexual exploitation occurs in this context, in the daily activities and cultural practices of the female refugees, it is hard to address (Farmer, 2006). Furthermore, violence in refugee camps is entwined with local masculinities effectively forcing men to “vacate their masculinity” should they reject the concept of violence and exploitation (Griffin, Parpart, Zalewski, 2012). As women navigate the exploitative and violent conditions within refugee camps, they employ various survival strategies such as sex work and bartering to obtain basic necessities. Let us now unpack these survival strategies.

The female refugees engaging in sex work are gaining power and a sense of agency. Sex work is a form of SGBV; however perhaps more “subtle” than sexual assault or rape (Murray, 2000). The difference between overt and subtle SGBV is perhaps the level of force employed

over the woman⁶ i.e. women who are sexually assaulted or raped are forcibly engaging in sexual acts, whereas sex workers have a ‘choice’ in their actions⁷. The concept of ‘choice’ here is interesting to deconstruct. As Murray questions “[a]re these decisions to barter sex for food or passage genuinely real and effective choices? (2000, p. 1000). These “choices” are problematized by a fear of authorities, language barriers, access to legal systems, and diminished by poverty (Murray, 2000). Therefore, female refugees hoping to improve their economic outlook are pushed into the sex trade (Murray, 2000). Without the female refugees having a greater sense of empowerment, they will remain in these “discriminatory and sexually-conditioned” relationships whilst providing for their families (Murray, 2000). Upon recognizing the hardship that female refugees must overcome to obtain food, clothing, soap, etc, I would argue that the level of choice in turning to the sex trade is very low suggesting a sexually exploitative and violent environment.

Historically, sex workers have been constructed as victims to the sexuality of male clients confirming a distinct double standard in which “prostitution served as an outlet for men’s sexual energy exceeding the boundaries of the monogamous marriage” (Serughetti, 2012, p. 36). This double standard is furthered when contextualizing the relationship between the exploiter/exploitee, the oppressor/oppressed, the buyer/seller, and the perpetrator/victim dichotomy between the client and sex worker. However, this double standard ignores the possibility of sex workers acting as rational individuals who consider a “cost-benefit” analysis prior to their decision to engage in the sex trade (van der Veen, 2001, p. 30). The economic

⁶ Sex workers and victims of sexual assault / rape can also be men, however, for the purposes of this thesis I refer only to women.

⁷ This chapter will call into question the level of choice that women engaging in sex work actually possess, however that will be discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

analyses that the sex workers conduct are logic based and maximize the profit of the sex workers (van der Veen, 2001). Essentially, sex work can be understood as a rational decision employed to maximize one's economic capacity and obtain basic needs at the very least. This conceptualization removes the assumption that all sex workers are victims; rather it understands sex workers as actively engaging based on rational decision making. The power of sex workers is underscored by understanding their active decision to engage in sex work. Therefore, they have a sense of agency and ownership over their actions. This interpretation of sex work moves "far away from the traditional one and rather consisting of the relationship between different actors displaying their own needs, desires and rational behaviour, resulting in complex geometrics among gender, sexuality, and power" (Serughetti, 2012, p. 44). Moreover, sex work is understood as more than simply the victim and perpetrator paradox, rather the actors locate themselves amidst differing inequalities rooted in gender, economics and power (Serughetti, 2012). In other words, both participants achieve a sense of satisfaction either through sexual release or through economic gain. The argument can be made that engaging in sex work is in a sense empowering. Ownership and agency derived from the decision to engage in sex work is present in the refugee camp context. For example, young women who engage in sex work to obtain clothes, personal hygienic items, and other 'luxuries' are making a conscious cost-benefit analysis after which they determine the exchange of sex for these items to be 'worth it'.

However, the power and agency afforded to sex workers is called into question when the exchange of sex is for basic necessities such as heating resources or food. In that instance, the 'voluntary decision making' is problematized by the necessity of such actions for the personal and familial survival of the sex worker. This analysis does not necessarily place 'blame' on the clients of the sex workers, rather they could simply be construed as taking advantage of

someone's dire circumstances and in fact supporting the sex workers basic needs (to an extent). Rather, the refugee institutions must be called into question, particularly both the host government and the ration-providing organization i.e. the UNHCR/ World Food Program. The trade of sex for access to basic necessities is a clear indication of a broken system or, at the very least, the provision of insufficient rations. This is exemplified by the data analysis in chapter four in which the female refugees indicated that they sometimes are forced to engage in the sex trade in exchange for heating resources to cook their rations. Although there is a clear decision-making process, this is problematized when considering the alternative of not obtaining a heating resource, not being able to cook the rations, not being able to eat the rations, and therefore potentially starving to death. When placed in that context, it is very clear that female refugees are not likely to be empowered by their decisions to engage in sex work.

The decision to engage in sex work is not clearly defined for female refugees because of their dependence on insufficient rations and refugee institutions. Rather, it is grounded in sexual politics, patriarchy, and exploitation (Serughetti, 2012; van der Veen, 2001). The level of choice or decision-making is at the very least forced and at most non-existent, correlating to an obvious form of exploitation. In such relationships the sex worker is dehumanized, viewed as simply an object and the act of sex is commodified (Murray, 2000). The transaction of sex for money derives a relationship in which sexual pleasure and power is owned by the client (van der Veen, 2001). The power allotted to each participant is unequal and oppressive, grounded in the manipulation of vulnerable people and gender relations (Serughetti, 2012). However, gaining an understanding of the clients in the sex trade is of equal importance to a comprehension of the sex worker. Understanding why and how clients engage can contribute to broader knowledge of the

root causes of sex work. This is important because without the clients, without men willing to pay for sex, there would be no sex trade.

The clients of female refugees engaging in sex work include local host populations, employees of refugee-based institutions, as well as their fellow male refugees. In answer to the questions above, local populations and institution-based employees can afford to pay for sex through their income. However, if female refugees are in such dire circumstances as to turn to the sex trade to access basic services, the presumption is then that their fellow male counterparts are in similar positions. This assumption ignores gender relations/roles, power inequalities, and economic control that men have in refugee camps.

5.3 Trust, Authority and Accountability

Refugee women engaging in survival sex, having trouble meeting their basic needs, or who have been physically or sexually assaulted are encouraged to report to an institution-based authority such as the police or UNHCR. However, there are clear and definite issues associated with the reporting procedures in refugee camps. Reporting challenges include a reciprocation of mistrust from all parties, limited accountability, and unclear reporting structures. Even amongst the refugee-based institutions the reporting structure can be confusing. For example, in instances of state weakness in relation to refugee responsibility, the UNHCR and their implementing partners take on a progressively larger role in providing for the basic needs of the refugees (Turk & Eyster, 2010). Although in addition to providing land for the refugee camp, the host government is also mandated to protect the refugee population. Failure to provide said protection correlates to UNHCR involvement in refugee protection, seeking durable solutions, and ensuring basic human rights are met including an adequate standard of living (Turk & Eyster, 2010).

Because of these responsibilities, UNHCR operates as a quasi-state with diplomatic authority, despite lacking the necessary state power or governance capability (Turk & Eyster, 2010). The relationship, therefore, between UNHCR and the host government is problematized by hostile attitudes towards the state-like status of UNHCR as well as xenophobic attitudes towards the refugees.

The trust between refugee and camp-based institutions breaks down for a multitude of reasons including, at a societal level, perceived differences (Hynes, 2003). The reporting mechanisms implemented within the refugee camps are largely inadequate as many refugees are confused or unaware of to whom to report instances of underage sex, sex work, or rape, especially when these crimes involve institutional representatives (Reyes, 2009). Odd Einar Olsen and Kristin S. Scarffscher suggest that “a very low percentage of the violence [against women] ever reaches the attention of the NGO staff” (2004, p. 991). This may be true of instances of refugee women and institutional representatives; however, the insecurity that female refugees experience is a well known and documented fact. For example, the UNHCR created the guidelines for *Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Against Refugees, Returnees, and Internally Displaced Persons* in 2003, an Inter-Agency Standing Committee *Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action* was created in 2006, the UNHCR also developed the *UNHCR Handbook for the Protection of Women and Girls* in 2008, as well as *The Age, Gender, and Diversity Accountability Report* most recently published in 2014. These are just some of the examples of refugee-based institutions guidelines, policies, handbooks, and reports regarding security challenges for refugee women.⁸

⁸ Although these examples are developed primarily by UNHCR, they would have been shared with implementing partners as well as host governments, especially those governments who signed the 1951 Convention and additional protocols.

Instances involving specific institutional representatives violating the security of female refugees may not be well known. According to Reyes, “NGO workers [are] held in such high regard and treated as important people by the community, [therefore] refugees fear retaliation or withdrawal of the NGO’s provisions if they make problems known.” (Reyes, 2009, p. 217). Such problems would include reporting institutional representatives who have exchanged food or basic necessities, or who have raped refugee women. In such instances, female refugees often choose not to report their insecurity for fear of institution-based retaliation or they are simply unaware to whom to report such instances. Thereby a culture of silence is created and the refugee camp environment perpetuates insecurity for female refugees.

Moreover, there is a culture of mistrust between the refugees and the refugee-based institutions grounded in refugees’ fear of authoritative figures including soldiers, government officials, and immigration officers, based on their experiences in their home countries (Hynes, 2003). The cessation of trust begins upon the refugees’ arrival at the refugee camp (Hynes, 2003). They immediately enter into a system of imbalance in which clear power structures exist e.g. the dominance of the institutional organizations is displayed via the registration system and the dependence of the refugees is reinforced through the provision of rations. Furthermore, institutional staff are perceived as “inaccessible diplomats who are interested in their own careers rather than being empathetic to the circumstances of refugees” (Hynes, 2003). Unfortunately, authoritative figures and “protectors” may perpetuate violence and exploitation amongst conflict-affected refugee women (Hynes, 2003). At a policy level, voluntary repatriation has been the desired solution of UNHCR correlating to the refugees’ belief that by engaging with UNHCR, they are more likely to be sent ‘home’ despite continued insecurity and a lack of solutions (Hynes, 2003). Overall, these factors contribute to the mistrust that refugees feel towards the

refugee-based institutions. However, to be clear, decisions against reporting do not mean that refugee-based institutions are unaware of insecurity. Rather, it is indicative of a break-down in the relationships between the refugee and the refugee institutions and a strong contributing factor to refugees' insecurity.

Institutional representatives can also be active agents in the exploitation and violence that refugee women experience. As Jan Rachel Reyes indicates, abusers are “generally adult men between the ages of thirty and sixty” and can work as UN staff, government officials, camp leaders, teachers, police officers, etc (Reyes, 2009, p. 215). Unfortunately, a culture of silence is often formed around the abuser by their institution as there is usually a distinct hesitation associated with passing on information or ‘ratting’ on colleagues (Reyes, 2009). Olsen and Scharrfscher state that institutional representatives

‘used their positions of trust, authority and power’ to sexually exploit female refugees. The report described how sexual favours were demanded in trade of food, medical care or other services provided to camp residents. The investigations organised by UNHCR to follow up on the report did not manage to fully confirm the allegations. These investigations did however, reveal the vulnerability of females in refugee camps, as well as the prevalence of sexual suppression of female refugees (2004, p. 381).

This example underscores how refugee-based institutions contribute to the physical and sexual insecurity of female refugees. Even in instances when investigations are launched, rarely is action taken to address the broader factors contributing to the insecurity e.g. the power hierarchies present in refugee – refugee-based institutions. Rather, the malignant inaction results in an environment in which refugee women are scared or unsure of whom to report their insecurity. However, even if they did, the result may simply be a cursory report with little or no follow-up.

As previously indicated, the mistrust present in the refugee- refugee-based institutions is reciprocal. Institutional representatives rarely trust information provided by the refugees as the representatives often look for ulterior motives, or assume facts have been exaggerated. This is best exemplified by the refugee status determination process as well as ration provision processes. During refugee status determination processes, UNHCR or host country officials may not believe the refugee's case history (Hynes, 2003). Similarly, during resettlement processes, many refugees are accused of exaggerating their experiences for the purposes of resettlement. This was best exemplified during the unstructured interviews when an institutional representative suggested that women often fake being raped in hopes of being resettled. Similarly, refugee-based organizations do not trust the camp census data provided by the refugees resulting in a "game of duplicity played between the givers and receivers of material assistance – wherein numbers supplied by refugees themselves [are] rarely trusted and, in fact, [are] considered to be inflated" (Hynes, 2003, p. 10). This mistrust results in haggling between the refugees and institutions for basic needs (Hynes, 2003), which has broader implications for the security of refugee women in relation to access to basic resources.

Overall, there is a clear lack of accountability or complaint mechanism within the refugee camps further confusing the relationship between refugee and refugee-based institutions. Accountability should support the relationships between refugees and refugee-based institutions, as refugees, especially female refugees, should have a mechanism to hold institutions accountable for not providing for and ensuring their security. Effective accountability systems also reinforce societal standards and prevent the abuse of power (Turk & Eyster, 2010). According to the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP):

“An effective system of accountability, according to HAP [Humanitarian Accountability Partnership] standards, requires individuals, organizations, and states to account for and be held responsible for their actions, while at the same time allowing individuals, organizations, and states to report concerns, complaints, and abuses safely and legitimately and to get redress where appropriate. HAP’s humanitarian accountability framework relies on a participatory mechanism which assumes that: ‘in every humanitarian transaction there is an imbalance of circumstantial power between those able to give help and those in urgent need of assistance’ (Turk & Eyster, 2010, p. 161).

The HAP underscores the importance of recognizing the deeply ingrained power imbalance present between refugees and refugee-based institutions. This is especially true for female refugees as host countries are generally patriarchal and gender norms are consistently returned to or perpetuated. Additionally, reporting procedures can also be highly problematic in instances in which insecurity is reported, yet a solution is not available or a response is not provided in a timely manner as this diminishes the trust that refugees place in the reporting mechanism (Reyes, 2009). This negatively impacts the likelihood of future victims’ reporting (Reyes, 2009). Moreover, it relegates the insecurity female refugees experience further into invisibility or the private sphere of “women’s work”. Without appropriate reporting measures, refugee institutions cannot be held accountable and real change will not occur within the camp context.

Refugee women reporting sources of insecurity often experience a lack of legal protection (Reyes, 2009) and their cases are often not successful. This can dissuade future victims from coming forward. Beyond that, law enforcement may further victimize the refugee woman by attempting to dissuade her from launching a formal complaint (Reyes, 2009). This is demonstrative of the clear power differentials between refugees and refugee-based institutions. Power can be thought of as on a continuum, and in the case of refugee camps can be arbitrarily exercised through political and judicial rule (Gligor, 2008). Power differentials are particularly relevant to accountability and reporting systems because power dictates who is being reported to

and how issues are handled. For example, women may be uncomfortable if their reporting options are solely male authority figures. They may avoid relating instances of transactional sex, sex work, or rape to men therefore allowing the insecurity to fester. Even when women share the source of their insecurity they are dissuaded from formally reporting, assumed to be lying in an attempt to get resettlement, or their complaints are not acted upon. Because insecurity for female refugees is often grounded in the domestic or private sphere, male authority figures receiving reports of insecurity may not understand why or how such insecurity arises. Furthermore, refugee women reporting to refugee-based institutions further reinforce the dependency of refugees (McLean, 1999). Even those well intended institutional representatives can “augment women’s disempowerment” (Murray, 2000) because the system itself is inherently problematic, gendered, and exploitative.

5.4 Conclusion

Overall, this chapter has provided an examination of the root causes contributing to refugee insecurity as identified in the field research. Although this chapter has not been specific to Malawi’s Dzaleka camp, the systems of oppression, exploitation, and inequality are similar. Therefore, the deconstruction of these factors using the empirical concepts of essentialism, power, vulnerability, and SGBV contributes to our understanding of the differences in perception between the female refugees and the refugee-based institutions regarding the female refugees’ insecurity. Specifically, invisibility of women and their needs was identified as negatively impacting the fulfillment of refugee women’s needs resulting in negative coping strategies such as sex work. Engagement in sex work was understood as either empowering or exploitative depending on the context of the sex worker. Furthermore, this chapter has examined the reporting mechanisms, accountability, and trust that refugee women have in relation to their

protection from insecurity. Gendered divisions of labour, power structure inequality, and patriarchy are primary contributing factors to these issues which, if not appropriately, addressed will continue to enable an environment in which refugee women and girls experience insecurity. Furthermore, this chapter has acknowledged that refugee camps perpetuate a gendered institutional environment which further contributes to the limited opportunities, coping strategies, and mistrust within the refugee woman and refugee-based institutional relationships. Without addressing the power dynamics, essentialist attitudes towards refugee women, and exploitative environment of refugee camps, insecurity for refugee women will continue to deteriorate.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Throughout this thesis I have investigated how female refugees and institutional representatives perceive refugee women's everyday security. I identified a clear difference in understanding of the daily insecurities that female refugees endure within refugee camps particularly in relation to heating resources, sex work and survival sex, boreholes, economic opportunities, corruption, early marriage, and reporting insecurity. This thesis contributes to our understanding of how the gendered division of labour and women's access to basic resources contribute to the oppression and subjugation of women within the refugee camps. Studies that lend support to my findings are particularly those of Murray (2000), Olsen & Scarffscher (2004), and Buscher (2010). Murray's article advanced arguments regarding the intersection of sex work and resources particularly as they relate to insecurity and human rights, as well as institutional accountability (2000). Olsen & Scarffscher contributed to arguments regarding refugee-based institutional failure in light of SGBV within refugee camps (2004). Finally, Buscher identified that although improvements have been made within the last 25 years, much work is still required,

particularly in relation to SGBV, the inclusion of refugee women in leadership structures, and access to basic resources (2010).

The contribution of this thesis to feminist scholarship is a discussion of essentialism, power, vulnerability, and SGBV as conducted through the examination of three major analytical points: the invisibility of women and their needs, the limited options available to women and their survival strategies, as well as trust and authority in relation to reporting within the camp. Feminist theory, in particular feminist standpoint theory and feminist post-structuralism, were useful in guiding my analysis. Feminist standpoint theory guided my research methodology while feminist post-structuralism helped frame my research findings through the lens of the empirical concepts I employed. Overall, I have contributed to feminist theory by demonstrating, through empirical research, the complexity of the day-to-day lives of women, their victimhood, but also their agency. This agency is evident in the survival strategies and coping mechanisms that refugee women employ for the survival of their family.

As with any type of research, there were several distinct limitations. For example, I was only able to interview fifteen women throughout my research due in large part to time constraints and having never completed field research before. Fifteen women out of a camp with over 20,000 people is a very small sample and it is likely that I have missed some important perceptions. However, by bringing these voices forward, sharing their experiences and opinions, as well as deconstructing what they relayed, I have contributed to the broader body of knowledge regarding insecurity and refugee women grounded in the everyday woman's standpoint. I attempted to address this limitation by ensuring that my participant sample included an equal number of women from the three major nationalities within the camp as well as a broad range of ages, time spent in the camp, number of children, relationship status, etc. Limitations with the

methodology include the subjectivity associated with content analysis and discourse analysis. Choosing the appropriate dictionary and deriving meaning from the spoken word is incredibly subjective to interpretation. This is especially true of interviews requiring an interpreter. Even the best interpreter cannot portray exactly what is being said by the participant due to colloquiums, different understandings of phrases or words, and emphasis placed differently within sentences. I attempted to address these limitations by working with my interpreters prior to my research (i.e. as part of my internship) to gain an understanding of their interpretation ability and style. I also asked for and received references from each interpreter from their previous experience working with international agencies. In reference to the subjectivity of discourse analysis, I drew upon various feminist scholars to build an understanding of what was and was not said by my participants. Specific to my content analysis, I read through several interview transcripts prior to building my dictionary, thereby ensuring that the words I chose were grounded in the actual interviews. These limitations are simply pieces of a larger puzzle to consider within future research.

With those limitations in mind, there is definite room for more research on this and other related topics. I recommend reproducing this research with a larger sample as there was a clear indication of different perceptions regarding refugee women's security. Therefore, the involvement of more refugee women would bring a greater sense of validity as it would encompass more perspectives. Research on masculinities is vital to include on any societal-based topic, particularly because we know that SGBV cannot be addressed successfully without the involvement of men. Furthermore, as the abusers identified in instances of insecurity are largely men, understanding masculinity in relation to insecurity is incredibly vital.

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Appendix I: Unstructured Interview Topics

- Background Information:
 - Age
 - Nationality
 - Time in Camp
 - Refugee status
 - Number of children
 - Who are you staying with?
- Can you tell me a story about a woman (no names or identification) who faces insecurity on a daily basis in her day-to-day activities, for example collecting firewood, going to market, collecting water, etc.?
- Collecting Firewood
 - How far of a distance do you travel for firewood?
 - Tell me about the location of firewood? Do you feel safe going to collect firewood? Why or why not?
 - What are some of the challenges of collecting firewood?
 - Have you reported the problems in the camp?
- Collecting charcoal:
 - What are some of the challenges of collecting charcoal?
 - Tell me about the location of charcoal? Do you feel safe collecting charcoal? Why or why not?
 - How do female refugees afford to purchase charcoal?
 - Have you reported the problems in the camp?
- Collecting water:
 - How far of a distance do you travel for water?
 - On average, how many times would you collect water from the borehole in one week? How long would you spend collecting water on average?
 - What are some of the challenges of collecting water?
 - Have you reported the problems in the camp? Organizations? Police? Government of Malawi?
- Location of Latrines:
 - How far of a distance do you travel to use the latrine?
 - Tell me about the location of the latrines. Do you feel safe going to use the latrines during the day? What about at night? Why or why not?
 - What are some of the challenges of using the latrine?
- Economic Security:
 - Are women able to support themselves in the camp? If so, how?
 - Do women have any control over money within their household? If so, what type of control? If not, how does this impact them?

- What are some of the survival strategies women employ to meet economic needs?
- Do the organizations in the camp support the women refugees in obtaining an income? If so, how? If not, why? How does this impact the women refugee's safety?
- Maternal Health and Security:
 - When a woman becomes pregnant, what types of services are available to her?
 - Is there someone in the camp who monitors the pregnant woman's health?
 - Where does a woman go when she gives birth? Who attends the birth?
 - What organization within the camp is responsible for caring for pregnant women?
 - Is pregnancy and childbirth a risk to women refugee's safety? If so, how? If not, why?
 - Do you know of any women who have had problems during their pregnancy or post-pregnancy?
 - Who did they tell about their problems? What did the person they told about their problem do?
 - How are unmarried mothers treated / viewed?
 - What are challenges for single mothers in the camp?
- Reporting Problems:
 - Who can women go to, to report problems?
 - When a woman reports a problem, what type of response does she receive? Does the person / people she's reporting to listen to her concerns? What type of action, if any, is taken to address her concerns?
 - Can you tell me about the services available for women experiencing problems within the refugee camp?
 - Does the Government of Malawi protect women refugees?
 - Does the United Nations i.e. UNHCR, protect women refugees?

Once the audio recorder is turned off: Is there anyone that you would recommend I speak to for this study, based on the topics we've discussed?

Topics Covered during unstructured interview –Institutional Representatives

- Day-to-Day Activities of Female Refugees
 - What are sources of insecurity within the refugee camp?
 - Do you think that female refugees are safe fetching firewood?
 - What are the challenges associated with fetching firewood?
 - Are female refugees safe in collecting charcoal?
 - Are there any challenges associated with using charcoal for female refugees?
 - Who do refugees buy charcoal from?
 - How do female refugees afford charcoal?

- Do you think that female refugees are safe fetching water at the borehole during the day? At night?
 - What are the challenges associated with the borehole?
- Do you think that female refugees are safe using the public latrine? Private latrine?
 - Are there any challenges associated with using the latrines?
- To whom do female refugees report challenges or problems they experience within the camp?
- Do these challenges / problems have a long-term impact on the security and well-being of the women? If so how?
- Physical security
 - What type of action is taken if a female refugee reports being beaten?
 - What if she is beaten by a Malawian? A refugee?
 - What type of action is taken if a female refugee reports being raped?
 - What if she is raped by a Malawian? A refugee?
 - What type of action is taken if a female refugee reports harassment?
 - Are you aware of any female refugees who have voiced security concerns within the refugee camp? Was the concern addressed? If yes, how? If not, why?
 - Do you think that issues of security within the refugee camp are adequately addressed?
- Prostitution
 - Are you aware of prostitution occurring in the camp?
 - Why do you think women refugees engage in prostitution?
 - Who are the customers engaging in prostitution with female refugees?
 - Are you aware of any allegations of employees or the organizations within camp engaging in prostitution with female refugees?
 - Is anything being done to address prostitution in the camp?
 - Are female refugees always paid the agreed upon price for sex?
 - What happens if the female refugee is not paid, or paid the agreed upon price?
- Corruption
 - Are you aware of any issues relating to corruption within the camp?
 - Are you aware of allegations of corruption against the camp police / security?
 - Are you aware of allegations of corruption against organizations within the camp?
 - Are the allegations of corruption related to requests for Kwacha in exchange for services? In-kind for services? Sex in exchange for services?
 - Has there been or is there any action being taken to address the corruption?
- Early Marriage
 - Do you know of any refugees engaging in early marriage?
 - How does early marriage impact female refugees?

- Is there any action being taken to address early marriage?
- Early marriage often leads to early pregnancy. Is this the case in the camp?
- Is any action being taken to address early pregnancy?
- Economic Security
 - Are female refugees able to support themselves in the camp? If so, how?
 - What happens when a female refugee is unable to make money?
 - What are some of the survival strategies women employ to meet economic needs?
 - Do the organizations in the camp support the female refugees in obtaining an income? If so, how? If not, why?
 - How does this impact the women refugee's safety?
 - Do female refugees have any control over money within their household?
 - If so, what type of control?
 - If not, how does this impact their safety?
- Maternal Health
 - When a female refugee becomes pregnant, what types of services are available to her?
 - What organization within the camp is responsible for caring for pregnant women?
 - Is there someone in the camp who monitors the pregnant woman's health?
 - Where does a woman go when she gives birth? Who attends the birth?
 - What happens if a girl / woman gives birth outside the hospital?
 - Do you know of any women who have had problems during their pregnancy?
 - Who did they tell about their problems?
 - What did the person they told about their problem do?
- Gender Mainstreaming in Dzaleka
 - Can you describe the relationship between the female refugees and the NGOs present within the camp?
 - The UNHCR representatives within the camp?
 - Is there any difference between the way that male and female refugees are treated?
 - How does the Government of Malawi provide security for female refugees within the camp? Is this sufficient?
 - Are there any gender mainstreaming activities / projects present within the camp?
 - Who is responsible for these projects?
 - Can you describe the projects?
 - What types of impacts are the gender mainstreaming activities supposed to have on the refugee camp?