

RESETTLEMENT CHALLENGES AND GENDER:  
A CASE STUDY OF LIBERIAN REFUGEES IN NOVA SCOTIA

by

Steven Claveau

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts

at

Dalhousie University  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
December 2010

© Copyright by Steven Claveau, 2010

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

The undersigned hereby certify that they have read and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance a thesis entitled “RESETTLEMENT CHALLENGES AND GENDER: A CASE STUDY OF LIBERIAN REFUGEES IN NOVA SCOTIA” by Steven Claveau in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Dated: December 8, 2010

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_  
Readers: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

DATE: December 8, 2010

AUTHOR: Steven Claveau

TITLE: RESETTLEMENT CHALLENGES AND GENDER:  
A CASE STUDY OF LIBERIAN REFUGEES IN NOVA SCOTIA

DEPARTMENT OR SCHOOL: Department of International Development Studies

DEGREE: MA CONVOCATION: May YEAR: 2011

Permission is herewith granted to Dalhousie University to circulate and to have copied for non-commercial purposes, at its discretion, the above title upon the request of individuals or institutions. I understand that my thesis will be electronically available to the public.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

The author attests that permission has been obtained for the use of any copyrighted material appearing in the thesis (other than the brief excerpts requiring only proper acknowledgement in scholarly writing), and that all such use is clearly acknowledged.

---

Signature of Author

**DEDICATION PAGE**

To my wonderful son Joshua Oscar Claveau

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>List of Tables</b> .....	vii
<b>Abstract</b> .....	viii
<b>List of Abbreviations Used</b> .....	ix
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	x
<b>1 Chapter One – Introduction</b> .....	1
1.1 Introduction .....	1
1.2 Rationale and Contribution to the Field .....	5
1.3 Why Liberia ? .....	8
1.4 Why Halifax, Nova Scotia? .....	10
1.5 Research Outline .....	10
<b>2 Chapter Two – Liberian History and Cultural Background</b> .....	12
2.1 Liberian History .....	12
2.1.1 From the Arrival of the Former Slave Colonists to the First Coup d’État .....	12
2.1.2 The Rule of Samuel Doe (1980-1989) .....	15
2.1.3 The Rule of Charles Taylor (1989-2003) .....	16
2.1.4 Some Facts about Liberia .....	18
2.2 The Role of Women in Liberia .....	18
2.3 Impact of War on Women and Men .....	22
2.4 Life in Refugee Camp .....	23
<b>3 Chapter Three – Immigration Context in Canada and Nova Scotia</b> .....	28
3.1 Introduction .....	28
3.2 The Canadian context: Immigration and Resettlement Program .....	28
3.3 The Liberian context in Nova Scotia .....	35
3.4 The Nova Scotia Context .....	37
<b>4 Chapter Four – Key Concepts and Literature Review</b> .....	41
4.1 Key Concepts .....	41
4.1.1 On Gender .....	41
4.1.2 Gender and Feminism .....	44
4.1.3 On Masculinity .....	47
4.1.4 On Patriarchy .....	50
4.2 Literature Review .....	52
4.2.1 On Gender and Migration in the Social Sciences .....	53
4.2.2 Gender and Resettlement Challenges .....	55

4.2.3 Liberian Refugees .....	57
4.2.4 Literature on Other Refugees .....	59
<b>5 Chapter Five – Methodology .....</b>	<b>62</b>
5.1 Introduction .....	62
5.2 Methodology .....	63
5.3 Research and Methodological Limitations .....	66
5.5 Data Analysis .....	69
<b>6 Chapter Six –Findings .....</b>	<b>71</b>
6.1 Introduction .....	71
6.2 About the Participants .....	71
6.3 Challenges for Liberian Migrants .....	80
6.3.1 Language and Education .....	81
6.3.2 Employment .....	89
6.4 Dealing with Gender Differences .....	96
6.5 Gender Roles, Responsibilities and Negotiations .....	99
6.6 Dealing with Discrimination and Racism .....	103
<b>7 Chapter Seven - Conclusions .....</b>	<b>108</b>
7.1 Conclusion .....	108
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>Appendix I: Interview Guide .....</b>	<b>132</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Top three source country of immigrants to Nova Scotia by immigration category 2002–2006.....	40
Table 2	Sample characteristics for Liberian Refugee Participants at the time of interviews in July 2007.....	72

## **ABSTRACT**

This Master's level research project investigates how gender shapes the resettlement challenges that Liberian refugees have faced in Nova Scotia. The study investigates the impact of the reframing of gender relations during resettlement processes in both material and symbolic domains of life in Halifax. While male Liberian refugees are found to have a comparative advantage over their female counterparts, due in large part to the priority given to educating young men in rural Liberia, they also have higher expectations of education and employment once settled. Women seem to benefit symbolically if not materially from the reframing of gender relations in Canada, as compared to Liberia.



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

ASC	American Colonization Society
AWPSG	African Women and Peace Support Group
CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
COA	Canadian orientation abroad
CLB	Canadian Language Benchmark
ECOWAS	Economic Community Of West African States
ESL	English as a second language
GAD	Gender and development
GAP	Gender action plan
GAR	Government assisted refugee
HPC	Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad Class
IDP	Internally displaced person
IDS	International development studies
IFH	Interim Federal Health Program
IMDB	Longitudinal immigration database
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISIS	Immigrant Settlement and Integration Services
JAS	Joint Assistance Sponsorship
LINC	Language instruction for newcomers to Canada
LSIC	Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada
NGO	Non governmental organization
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NSCC	Nova Scotia Community College
NSLA	Nova Scotia Liberian Association
PSR	Privately sponsored refugee
PTSD	Post traumatic stress syndrome
RAP	Resettlement Assistance Program
TIEDI	Toronto Immigrant Employment Data Initiative
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
US	United States
WAD	Women and development
WID	Women in development

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr. Pauline Gardiner Barber, current chair of the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Dalhousie University was my thesis supervisor. The first time we met she mentioned that she was a tough supervisor and demanded the very best from her student. She certainly helped me to deliver to the best of my ability and for that I am so grateful. Her wisdom, advice, and amazing academic mind allowed me to better solidify this thesis. I am also appreciative of the supervision of Dr. David Black, Director of the Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Associate Professor in Political Science, Dalhousie University who very generously accepted to look at my work even when he was on leave. Dr. Black had amazing insights that helped develop this research. I will always remember his wisdom, inspiration, and candid personality. My third reader, Dr. Martha Radice professor in the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Dalhousie University was also an amazing contributor to the successful completion of this thesis with the level of detailed and great comments she provided. All three challenged me to be and do better. I am very appreciative of the support from all of them. I am very appreciative to my wife Lisa for her love and patience throughout this amazing journey.

## **Chapter One – Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Since the end of the Second World War and the creation of the United Nations, the government of Canada has assisted refugees from all over the world to resettle throughout the country. After several years in a refugee camp, only a small minority of all refugees is successful in going through this process and relocating to a safer country by means of resettlement (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2000). Once in Canada, refugee women and men face resettlement challenges in different ways. This research will explore how different resettlement is for men and women and how gender affects their adjustment to their new lives.

The view that ‘refugees’ belong to a certain category of people with special needs, however, is overly simplistic. Refugees come with a mosaic of backgrounds and experiences and cannot be placed in a single model in terms of how they deal with change in resettlement. Factors that can influence resettlement experience include gender, age, class, cultural background, the complexity of refugee life, level of education, life experiences especially of a traumatic kind, and language skills. Arriving at specific conclusions about how gender mediates resettlement experiences is not the goal of this research. Instead, this research attempts to show how individuals, having shared a common experience as refugees and belonging to a specific gender, do react differently, and that gender is a factor that must be looked at together with other factors in a holistic approach that includes their cultural practices, their own personal histories and individuality.

Prior to arriving in Canada, government assisted refugees (GARs) and privately sponsored refugees (PSRs) have experienced hardships that include the violence of war, the loss of family members, friends, health, and material possessions. Sometimes, they have to leave some of their own family members behind in order to stay alive. While many refugees relocate inside the border of their own countries (internally displaced persons), many believe they have a better chance at survival outside of their homeland. Some trek through forests, deserts, and jungles with very little to eat for weeks. They arrive at border crossings to find unwelcoming and violent soldiers that often deprive them of any savings they might be carrying. The refugees who reach refugee camps in search of protection may soon find out that refugee camps are sites of violence and discrimination (Abdi 2006; Pessar 2006).

Although having to live in refugee camps in difficult conditions is supposed to provide temporary safe haven for refugees, all too often living in refugee camps becomes a permanent situation (Abdi 2006). According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada, in 2003 refugees globally spent an average of seventeen years in exile (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2008d). The majority live in extreme poverty as food and employment opportunities are limited and basic services are not sufficient to provide for an adequate education and/or good mental and physical health (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2008d; Pressé and Thompson 2007; Sutherland 2008). Furthermore, conditions are not experienced equally by women and men as women struggle with the gender disparity of refugee camps where the bureaucratic structure tends to favour men (Abdi 2006; Getu and Nsubuga 1996; Pessar 2006). Men often use violence against

women to maintain a patriarchal hierarchy that is part of their cultural practice (McSpadden and Moussa 1996). Often, a lack of money forces women into prostitution and forced cohabitation (Pessar 2006). It is in these difficult conditions that men and women must grieve for lost ones and the loss of what they have known to be their normal lives. There is no surprise that the thought of resettlement to a third country becomes an attractive proposition for many refugees looking for a safer and better life for themselves and their families.

The resettlement process is not easy. In 2005, only 80,080 out of ten million refugees worldwide (0.8 percent) successfully resettled to a third country (UNHCR 2006). To be selected for resettlement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the applicant must demonstrate that they are in need of a durable solution and fit the 1951 Geneva Convention definition relating to the status of refugees<sup>1</sup>. Day-to-day challenges for both women and men include finding appropriate food and housing, using the transportation system, going to a bank, using a toilet, bed and electrical appliances, etc. Refugees may also deal with physical and mental health issues, culture shock, post traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD), the lack of cultural understanding, the feeling of not being heard or understood, isolation, and so on. These challenges common to refugees contribute to a resulting prejudice and negative stereotyping towards them with the resulting popular assumption that refugees are a burden to society.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Geneva Convention of 1951 defines a refugee as “a person who is outside his/her country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion; and is unable or unwilling to avail himself/herself of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution.” (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: 2008)

Men and women can experience resettlement in different ways. Refugee women “arrive in Canada having escaped gender violence in their own country of origin to find that domestic violence is a common occurrence here, that women are confronted with racism and gender discrimination and sometimes harassment in education, at wage work, and in their access to a range of social and legal services” (Giles et al. 1996: 17). Men may find that they have lost their role as breadwinner which has been a major aspect of their male identity (Dolo 2003).

Many research questions emerge from the literature and will be discussed. What are the main challenges faced by Liberian migrants during resettlement? How are these challenges affected by gender dynamics? Do men, as Nyemah (2008) has proposed, undergo a decline in status while women gain in status when compared with cultural practices in their ‘home country’?

seem to benefit symbolically if not materially from the reframing of gender relations in Canada, as compared to Liberia.

Specifically, the research aims to accomplish the following objectives:

- examine the challenges Liberian refugees face in Halifax;
- understand what Liberian newcomers want regarding resettlement, education, employment, and quality of life;
- explore refugees’ experiences during flight, exile and resettlement;
- investigate how gender affects their resettlement experience;
- understand how cultural practices and individual histories impact their experiences;
- draw lessons from Liberian refugee experiences to apply to the broader context of refugee resettlement in Canada

This research concentrates on the case of Liberian refugees, who resettled in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada after witnessing two violent civil wars between 1989 and 2003. This research builds on the existing literature on gender and resettlement of Liberian refugees by looking at the impact resettlement challenges have on both women

and men. In his research on Liberian refugees in Halifax, Nyemah (2008) focused on gender, household budgets, and decision processes to “investigate whether there is any relationship between transnational migration and changing gender relations” (2008:1). This research seeks to complement his work by looking at how resettlement challenges affect Liberian refugees in their everyday lives in general and most particularly how gender dynamics influence and shape the way they face resettlement challenges such as language, employment, and education.

Using a qualitative approach this study provides a case study of gender, migration, and resettlement. Ten interviews with Liberian refugees<sup>2</sup> (five women and five men) were conducted in the summer of 2007. At that time, the city of Halifax had a total population of 52 Liberian refugees (32 females and 20 males). A little over one hundred Liberians have arrived in Halifax since 2003, however almost half of the Liberian refugees have left for other Canadian cities.

## **1.2 Rationale and Contribution to the Field**

Preliminary consultations conducted by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) have concluded that there is a “need for more research on resettled refugees” (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2008d). This research is important as between 10,000 and 12,000 GARs and PSRs come each year to resettle in Canada<sup>3</sup>.

---

<sup>2</sup> This research uses the term refugees to describe the GARs and PSRs even though technically they are permanent residents. Immigrant service providers, academics and the media still refer to them as refugees.

<sup>3</sup> CIC has increased its target to a total of 14, 500 refugees (GARs and PSRs) for 2011 (Parent 2010). This is an increase of 2,500 from the previous year (500 GARs and 2000 PSRs). The increase is the result of the Bill C-11, the Balanced Refugee Reform Act which has received Royal Assent on June 29, 2010 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2010a). According to CIC, “these reforms will improve Canada’s asylum system, resettle more refugees from abroad and make it easier for refugees to start their lives in this country” (ibid.). The province of Nova Scotia is hoping to significantly increase the numbers of refugees they welcome each year

Depending on where they land, refugees benefit from a wide range of services from service providers and existing communities such as orientations, language training, interpretation support, health services, cultural workshops, access to settlement case workers (only for GARs), and various employment support programs. The availability and quality of these services depend largely upon whether they are located in rural or urban areas, the proximity to a larger city and the size of an existing community. The experience of the host community in receiving and integrating new refugees is also a key element to providing relevant programs that lead to a successful resettlement.

However, government funding and resettlement services do not place an emphasis on gender and create policies and programs that may end up reinforcing cultural practices that advantage men. This contributes to creating intricate gender dynamics and social interactions that have an impact on how refugees adjust to life in Canada. This research thus analyzes the impact of gender on the resettlement challenges in order to understand the implication of gender on resettlement policy making and academic research. Influenced by the fields of anthropology and international development, this study attempts to foster a greater understanding of the lives of new Canadians and their experiences as they attempt to transform their lives through cross-cultural learning and adaptation. It provides an opportunity to understand human cultural diversity by comparing how gender differences evolve through unique experiences and how they influence the chances for Liberian and other refugees to resettle effectively.

My study of refugee resettlement is relevant to the field of international development studies (IDS). Firstly, there are important relationships between the resettled



refugees, family members and friends still living in refugee camps. There are expectations in the camps that resettled refugees are getting all they need and have plenty of money to spare. Thus transplanted refugees are often pressured for money under the threat of tarnishing their name. Secondly, there are implications for development workers and the Canadian Orientation Abroad program<sup>4</sup> in refugee camps as they are critical actors in the gendering process. A larger emphasis is needed on gender to allow future resettled refugees an opportunity to start developing critically their own views regarding the shifts in gender relations from the refugee camp all the way into resettlement. Thirdly, it is also important to underline that as Liberia was forced to accept the tenets of modernization theory, the gap between women and men increased in favour of the employment of men to the detriment of women. Finally, there are implications from the impact of Canada's decision to receive an extra 2,500 refugees (including 2000 PSRs). Some Liberians here in Nova Scotia have started to sponsor some family members through the family reunification program and more could come to Canada as a result of this change.

This thesis argues that gender has an impact on the resettlement experience of refugee men and women. Liberian men seem to have an advantage in terms of material benefits which are related to access to resources that originated from a comparative advantage in terms of education in Liberia. On the other hand, women enjoy an increase in symbolic benefits that are related to their status and social position, as they have the opportunity to be more independent and empowered in resettlement. This leads to an

---

<sup>4</sup> The Canadian Orientation Abroad program (COA) is given by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to refugees selected for resettlement in Canada. It is a 4 day program that helps them to adapt to life in Canada.

interesting paradox where it seems that when the men's material benefits increase, their symbolic benefits actually decrease and vice versa. It appears probable, however, that when class is combined with gender, it creates a resettlement advantage for the men. The thesis contends that refugee resettlement experiences of both men and women are influenced by historical and cultural practices from pre-war and war-torn Liberia, life in the refugee camps, conflicting gender views and their own individual histories. These factors have a profound impact on how different refugee men and women deal with the resettlement challenges in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The thesis also proposes that it is imperative that the two levels of governments, non-governmental organizations as well as academics understand and address these differences so that every government assisted or privately sponsored refugee is given a fair opportunity to be successful in their new lives regardless of their gender.

### **1.3 Why Liberia?**

Several factors influenced the selection of Liberian refugees in Nova Scotia as the subject group of this research. First, Liberian refugees have been largely ignored by academics. The diaspora of resettled Liberians in Canada has been mostly overlooked by academics and graduate students in favour of other larger and more politicized groups made familiar through the media, such as refugees from Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Historians and political scientists have written the bulk of the literature on Liberia covering themes such as colonialism and slavery (Clegg III 2004; Lovejoy 1983), the Civil Wars (Adebajo 2002b; Ellis 1995; Johnson 1998), peace building (Adebajo 2002a), and failed states (Gross 1996). At the same time,

with the exception of Emmanuel Dolo's (2003) and Joseph Nyemah's (2008) research, few social science research projects in the fields of anthropology, sociology, gender and refugee studies have dealt with Liberian resettlement challenges including gender as a focal point. This research builds on their work by analysing specifically how their cultural practices and gender dynamics impact how women and men deal with challenges such as education, language, and employment.

Prior to 2003, during the peak of the conflict, Canadians did not hear much about Liberia from the media. As of January 2006, Liberia had the tenth largest refugee population in the world with 231,100 people living outside the country (UNHCR 2006a). This study of Liberian refugees based in Halifax is of value and could be useful to: a) academics and governmental organizations interested in doing a comparative study, b) government policies regarding refugees, and finally, c) resettlement agencies who directly assist refugees during resettlement.

A second reason for focusing on Liberian refugees is that Liberians have the ability to communicate in English. Not only did it make the resettlement process easier, but it added a degree of uniqueness to the study because in several cases, one of the main challenges of resettled refugees is to cope with the language barrier. This study asks if a basic knowledge of the main settlement language has eased their resettlement and integration experiences. As we will see in this research, the ability to speak English may have made some things easier for Liberian refugees, especially men, as opposed to most non-English speaking refugees, but did not prevent them from facing other challenges.

#### **1.4 Why Halifax, Nova Scotia?**

From 2002 to 2006 in Nova Scotia, Liberia was the third source country of GARs and PSRs behind Afghanistan and Sudan with 93 refugees (Nova Scotia Office of Immigration 2007). It has been a challenge for Nova Scotia to retain immigrants, and Liberian refugees are no exception as more than half of all Liberian refugees coming during that period have relocated to other cities throughout Canada. According to a study on the retention of newcomers in second and third tier cities in Canada (Krahn et al. 2003), the primary factors that caused refugees in Alberta to leave their host cities were “employment and educational opportunities” (2003: 18). This study further explores these factors as well as others such as language, gender dynamics, personal histories and cultural practices to find out how Liberian refugees adjust and integrate to life in Halifax. This study will add to the scarce literature on challenges for resettled refugees in the province.

#### **1.5 Research Outline**

This study is organized into seven chapters. Chapter one has provided a description of the issues and the objectives of the research. Chapter two looks at the history of Liberia and the political circumstances that forced Liberians to flee the country. Chapter two also looks at the role of women in Liberian culture plus the impact of gender dynamics in refugee camps. The third chapter provides the federal and provincial context of immigration. Chapter four looks at key concepts and reviews the relevant literature. Chapter five deals with research methodology and introduces the participants. Chapter six

discusses the findings of the research, comparing and contrasting it with the literature, while chapter seven concludes and ties the thesis together.

## **Chapter Two – Liberian History and Cultural Background**

### **2.1 Liberian History**

The history of Liberia offers an understanding of why Liberians came to be in need of protection. Furthermore, this chapter explains how gender roles evolved in the contexts of colonial relationships, wars, and life in refugee camps and the impact on refugees in how they deal with present challenges. The history of Liberia provides important insights into how Liberian refugees currently deal with the social and political challenges they face during resettlement. The knowledge of Liberia's history allows a better understanding of the challenges Liberian newcomers face in their integration within Canada. This chapter offers a brief overview of pre- and post-war Liberian history. In addition, this chapter also discusses the role women have in Liberia and the impacts of war and refugee camp life for refugee women and men.

#### **2.1.1 From the Arrival of the Former Slave Colonists to the First Coup d'État**

In 2007, Liberia celebrated its 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence from the United States of America. On July 26, 1847 Liberia became the first African country and only the second modern black state after Haiti to secure its independence (Dunn et al., 2001). The origin of Liberia has its roots in one of the first abolitionist movements. The American Colonization Society (ACS) succeeded in creating a colony on the West coast of Africa by repatriating 19,000 former African slaves from the United States and the Caribbean (ibid.). The movement, an attempt to rid America of perceived “social and moral problems” that could occur with the disfranchisement of black slaves moving into American cities, has ironically been coined the “American solution to slavery” (Dick

2002: 10) and also the “privatization of a public responsibility” (Sanneh, 1999:203). In celebration of their new found freedom from slavery, the former educated and “considered to be partially civilized and Christianized blacks slaves” (Dick 2002: 10) named the land “Liberia” which in Latin means “Land of the Free”.

The former slaves progressively took control of the indigenous populations around some key coastal areas (Liebenow 1969). It appeared early on that the Americo-Liberians “themselves believed that Liberia had a special meaning for all Africans” as political leaders declared that they had a “manifest destiny to bring civilization to the tribal heathen of the hinterland” (Liebenow 1969: 17). The initial relationships between the two groups were ethnocentric (Dunn-Marcos et al. 2005). Americo-Liberians believed that their “Christian duty [was] to replace the ‘barbarous’ customs, religion, and political institutions of indigenous Liberians with their own ‘superior’ values, practices, and institutions”, while indigenous Liberians viewed the newcomers as former slaves who should have been at a lower status than themselves (Dunn-Marcos et al. 2005: 3). These diverging views led to conflicts between the two groups, which paved the way for the expansion of the Americo-Liberians to the interior. This consequently further contributed to their outnumbering and created a relationship where the sixteen indigenous groups were dependent upon the elite former slaves. By 1847, Independence was granted to Liberia. Today, the Americo-Liberians' former ruling elite counts for only three percent of the total population (Dunn-Marcos et al. 2005).

Since Liberia’s independence, the link between the United States and Liberia has been complex, varying from strong to uneven depending on the level of political or

economic interest the United States felt toward the former colony. Early on when Liberia was experiencing financial problems in the 1870s, one of the solutions applied by the United States along with some European countries was to force Liberia to accept high-interest loans that really set the stage for a period of financial and economic dependence (Duva 2002). The United States offered a large amount of aid to Liberia with no strings attached. “From 1962 to 1980, Liberia received \$280 million in aid from the United States the greatest level of U.S. aid to any African country on a per capita basis at the time” (Duva 2002: Public Broadcasting Service website, retrieved on December 20, 2008). It seemed that throughout this period both countries had a relatively close relationship. For example, the United States saw Liberia as a place where its own interest could be exploited as was done repetitively in Liberia’s short history – exemplified by the exploitation of the multinational Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, or during the Second World War by serving as a United States military base, and also during the Cold War, giving an African location where the United States could fight communism (ibid.).

At the beginning of the Liberian civil war, U.S. aid increased ten-fold when Samuel Doe, an uneducated soldier, mounted a coup that many came to interpret as “the historic revenge of the natives against the Americo-Liberians” (Smith, 1998: xi). According to Smith (1998), this meant that the United States aid, in an effort to make amends, “ultimately financed the slaughter of its rejected children” (ibid.). At the end of the Second World War, during the Cold War era, Liberia was transformed into an “American colony” with the establishment of an airport, modified for United States troop support; the creation of Firestone, at the time the largest rubber plantation in the world;



and the installation of military communication stations (Smith, 1998: xiii). As a result, Liberia mistakenly identified itself as the “fifty-first star” on the United States flag, as demonstrated by the Liberian flag (ibid.).

In summary the Americo-Liberians imposed hegemony over the indigenous Liberians by building a centralized government and promoting “ethnic and class cleavages, which ultimately caused a center-periphery dichotomy between settlers and indigenous Liberians” (Dolo 2003: 17; Riley 1996). The system in place promoted patriarchal values in which women and indigenous people experienced inequality and discrimination on a regular basis (Dolo 2003). Since the settlement of the Americo-Liberians until 1980, the ruling elite “defined and exemplified the national ideal of civilization [... and the 1980 military coup d’état] was widely seen as the triumph of civilized natives over the repatriate elite” (Moran 1990: 171).

### **2.1.2 The rule of Samuel Doe (1980-1989)**

The intricacies of the Liberian Civil War itself cannot be abbreviated into a few paragraphs. Instead, this overview intends to establish a time-line of the conflict to guide the reader in understanding the opposing forces and main factors that caused the first of two civil wars. In April 1980, after 133 years of leadership from the Americo-Liberian elite, Sergeant Samuel K. Doe, himself from a Liberian indigenous group, overthrew the government in a military coup d’état (Dunn et al., 2001). By assassinating William R. Tolbert Jr., Samuel Doe became the twenty first President but the first one of indigenous descent (Dunn et al. 2001; Riley 1996). This event was the beginning of a period that plunged Liberia into chaos and lawlessness (Dolo 2003). Doe was of Khran ethnic

identity, and during his nine years in power he assisted surrounding groups such as the Kpelle, Krahn, and Kru to acquire expanded political influence (Riley 1996). Doe then took advantage of the growing resentment of the smaller ethnic clans against the “Congos, as the Americo-Liberians were often derisively called” (Riley 1996: 4). According to Sawyer (2005), “Doe’s mode of control of Liberia came close to classical warlordism as seen in imperial China” (2005: 19).

“Doe’s regime was a disaster for most ordinary Liberians: it involved large abuses of human rights, a rapid economic decline, gross corruption, and abrogation of democratic procedures, including a fraudulent election in 1985 which ‘legitimized’ the transformation of Doe’s military government into a civilian Presidential system. The former Master Sergeant promoted himself to Dr. Major General Doe, the new president of a new Republic. Charles Taylor, the leader of the subsequent invasions in 1991, was a public official in the early years of the Doe regime” (Riley 1996: 4).

As a result of the history of the country and monopoly of the Americo-Liberians, the exploitation of the indigenous society during the 133 years of rule was the main factor that led to Doe’s coup (Riley 1996).

However in 1985, a failed coup d’état that aimed to remove Doe from power saw him retaliate with vengeance by asking people of his own Krahn ethnic clan to kill many Gio and Mano peoples, clans of the majority of of the coup organizers, by burning their villages (Nilsson 2003: 7). As a result, Liberia’s struggles shifted from the division of ‘civilized’ and ‘uncivilized’ to an inter-ethnic conflict (Adebajo 2002b).

### **2.1.3 The Rule of Charles Taylor (1989-2003)**

Taking advantage of the divisions among ethnic groups, and enjoying the support of Libya’s leader Muammar Al Qadhafi, the government of Burkina Faso and Côte

D'Ivoire's logistic support, as well as the disillusioned Liberians in exile, Charles Taylor led the rebel National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) which put an end to Doe's government in December 1989 (Smith, 2006; Sawyer 2005). A number of the recruited soldiers came from the Gio and Mano clans that were attacked by Doe following the failed 1985 coup d'état (Nilsson 2003). Taylor had previously lost his position in the government during Doe's rule and was imprisoned by the United States (ibid.). It has been alleged that Taylor "escaped" from the United States; however a few of the participants in this research believed that the United States government might have had something to do with it. Two successive waves of civil wars ensued - the first one from 1989 to 1995, and the second from 1999 to 2003. In 1995, the installation of a second transitional government where Taylor was part of the Council of State before becoming president in 1997 instated a fragile peace for the following years until 1999 when a rebel group backed by the Guinean government threatened Taylor (Dunn et al., 2001). Despite the attempts of the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) to facilitate peace talks in June 2003, it was not until August that intense United States and international pressures forced President Taylor to resign and flee to exile in Nigeria (Polgreen 2006). A two year transition plan was launched that resulted on November 8, 2005, in the election of the first female President in African history (Fuest 2008).

"Elected with an overwhelming majority of 75 percent in 1997, Taylor had consolidated power by systematically terrorizing his rivals and bringing most media, business, and military institutions under his personal control" (for a full discussion, see Harris 1999; Ellis 1999; Reno 1996, 1998, among others; cited in Moran 2005: 460). It is

clear that after the civil war the sense of Liberia's "Americanism" was in fact a fallacy (Smith, 1998). What is also clear is that, according to Stephen Smith (1998), the country had "failed to [find] a native Liberian identity that in any way replaced the long-lived institutional framework of Americo-Liberian rule, bound up as it was in freemasonry, fundamentalist Christianity and apartheid" (1998: ix).

#### **2.1.4 Some facts about Liberia**

According to the United Nations, as of 2006, Liberia had the highest population growth rate in the world at 4.91 percent (United Nations, 2006), including a large youth population. The country has over 16 ethnic groups, who are part of four major West African language groups and share over 20 indigenous languages and dialects (Dunn et al., 2001). In the sample of this research alone, eight different dialects were spoken by the ten participants, which demonstrated the country's diversity even within a small sample in Halifax. The three participants who shared a common language were part of the same extended family and thus came from the same place of origin. The official language in Liberia is English, although most of the population uses a Creole form called "Liberian English" as the lingua franca (ibid.). However, all interviewees had English as their second language. Since English is the official language and language of education, it is likely to be used by educated Liberians (Dunn et al. 2001; Marcos et al. 2005; Fuest 2008; Moran 1990).

#### **2.2 The Role of Women in Liberia**

The interviews reveal that when Liberian refugees come to Canada, they are shocked to see how gender roles differ from what they have known for most of their

lives. Traditionally, Liberia is a “society that is steeped in patriarchal norms, which rigidly segregates gender roles; Males are breadwinners and females are homemakers” (Dolo 2003: 6). Nyemah (2008) noted that: “Liberia is a patriarchal society built around a culture of dominant male influences, which asserts men as superior to women both in the home and in public domains” (2008: 7). In their country of origin, men benefit from a higher level of education, a better socio-economic position as well as more political influence (Dolo 2003).

Historically, the 1847 Liberian constitution was liberal for its time, granting women economic rights which were “historically concentrated in the agricultural sector” such as rice production, and selling produce at the market places (Dunn et al. 2001: 359). Americo-Liberian women, although not quite at the same legal status as men, enjoyed some of the most progressive rights in the world. (Newman 1984). Liberian women received suffrage in 1946 (Fuest 2008). However, giving women voting rights did not translate into gender equality between men and women. Rather, modernization meant that women often took a back seat as men became associated with economic progress. Since the arrival of the settlers and up to this day, Liberians tend to distinguish their status as a “two-part model of cultural difference” based on education (Moran 1990: 1). On the one hand, the ‘civilized’ western-educated people, who also include some indigenous groups, decided to adopt a lifestyle based on the ‘civilized’ North American model (Brown 1982; Tonkin 1981). On the other side of the spectrum are the “unschooled subsistence agriculturalists” who are composed of the many different indigenous groups in Liberia (Moran 1990: 1).

This historical construction of education as a marker of status and difference has arguably impacted how gender expectations are played out in Liberia. Men have traditionally had a considerable advantage over women as Liberian parents were more likely to invest in the education of their sons as opposed to their daughters. This differential treatment was based on the logic that men do not have pregnancies which could potentially “spoil” their parent’s investment (Moran 1990: 4). The difference in this case is relevant as with respect to this study, as all of the male participants had a higher level of education than the women interviewed.

The difference in how education is valued between men and women is based on a concept Moran (1990) calls “prestige”. According to Ortner and Whitehead (1981) gender is “first and foremost a prestige structure” (1981: 16). Influenced by Ortner and Whitehead’s (1981) framework on gender and sexuality, gender becomes a system of constructed meanings related to each gender in which individuals are collectively socialized with these meanings. Moran argues “prestige structures seem to correspond to Ralph Linton’s “patterns of reciprocal behaviour [and] the status of any individual means the sum of the total of all the statuses which he occupies” (1936: 113; cited in Moran 1990: 11). Accordingly, Liberians interact with a diverse set of meanings depending on the gender of the person they interact with. These collective meanings clashed with their new roles and identities here in Canada.

According to Nagbe (2010) women have been socialized with the understanding that they have a lower status than men in Liberian society. This is particularly true in rural areas where nine out of ten of the research participants came from. Nyemah (2008) has

argued that “in rural areas [Liberians] would prefer to socialize girls to remain in the domestic sphere while allowing boys to pursue formal education” (2008: 8). “It is easy to ignore women’s contribution in the public domain because it is assumed that women work, and should work, within households” (Barriteau 1999). This has been the result for many African countries that were forced to accept the tenets of modernization theory including capitalism, which has historically favoured the employment of men and has tended to discount women (Boserup 1970 and 1990).

However, Nyemah (2008) cautioned that even though “men are socially positioned as leaders and major decision makers” in Liberia, a good number of women held positions of power within the Liberian society (2008: 7). Supporting his point, the literature abounds with stories about successful Liberian women (AWPSG 2004; Dunn et al. 2001; Fuest 2008; Habtezghi 2008). Women such as the current Liberian President, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, have been key actors in the reconstruction of Liberia by actively empowering Liberian women, giving them cabinet positions in key ministries, and by launching some national programs that aim to support girls in schools and women working in local markets (Fuest 2008). There are several accounts of influential women who had a tremendous impact upon the Liberian society (Dunn et al. 2001: 360).

In terms of class, here in Canada, although some participants are part of ethnic groups that have fought against each other during the civil wars, according to them, men and women are all in the same situation here as Liberians trying to survive resettlement. It seems that the concept of class became less socially germane when they entered refugee camps, as they did not have access to accumulated wealth.

### **2.3 Impact of War on Women and Men**

In Liberia, the civil wars were experienced differently by men and women. The wars were devastating to the status of women as many of them became the object of sexual exploitation (AWPSG 2004). During the war, while many men died or simply went to hide in the forests as they became targets in the conflicts, women were forced to take on more of the “traditional tasks of men, such as making bricks, building and roofing houses, and clearing farms (Fuest 2008: 210). Despite all these challenges, women “from various sectors of the society have adopted new roles and some, both individually and collectively, gainfully used openings the war provided to them” (Fuest, 2008: 211). The war thus created a temporary shift in the gender-roles of the once strict patriarchal society, with women required to go beyond their culturally constructed roles to support their families.

One of the most important international partners in Liberia’s reconstruction, the World Bank, conducted a ‘gender needs assessment’ for the Gender Action Plan (GAP) that revealed women have not participated in the profitable sectors of Liberia’s economy such as infrastructure, cash crop farming, and mining (Bekoe and Parajon, 2007). These findings are alarming, considering that “women produce[d] sixty percent of all agricultural products in Liberia and comprise[d] a large number of entrepreneurs – 77 percent of women are reported to be engaged in business (‘self-employed’)” (Fuest 2008: 222).

Furthermore, the war has had a profound impact on Liberian society. Since the end of the civil war, women’s ability to live independently has increased dramatically,



and many women have assumed leadership roles in civil, political, and religious sectors of Liberian society – perceived to be an altogether ‘remarkable emancipation from their pre-war positions’ (Fuest 2008). There has also been an increase in the level of enrolment for young women in schools (Fuest 2008: 216-217). According to Fuest:

“the roles of local NGOs and aid agencies have influenced women’s human rights. International advocates for women and women’s rights have put increasing pressure on the United Nations, international organizations, and governments to design and implement peacekeeping and humanitarian operations with attention to gender. In Liberia UNIFEM, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and other international agencies have provided for projects to integrate gender concerns into the national reconstruction and peace-building programmes of the government and (international) NGOs employed by them. Male and female staff of local NGOs have been exposed to ‘gender mainstreaming’ workshops, a strategy to reach gender equity and equality in development cooperation” (2008: 218).

There is a definite change in how women are perceived in Liberian society due to the civil wars. However, what is important to point out here is that even though the conditions of Liberian women might have improved in Liberia, these favourable trends did not follow women along their journey while they lived in refugee camps and resettled in Canada.

## **2.4 Life in Refugee Camp**

There were several factors that pushed Liberians to either flee towards the capital, Monrovia, and other regions within the country, to become Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), or to leave the country altogether as refugees by walking for weeks in some of the harshest conditions into the unknown. Since this research not only focuses on the Liberians who left their country but more specifically on those who were selected for resettlement in Halifax, it is essential to look at the reasons that forced them to seek

refuge. During the interviews, some participants voluntarily opened up to some of the experiences that forced them to leave their everyday lives.

The causes of displacement related to the civil wars included harassment and the forced recruitment of military personnel (Nilsson 2003). In addition, Scott (1998) argues that several factors have aggravated the conflict and forced a mass exodus of the Liberian population. The first factor was the palpable tensions between the Americo-Liberians living mainly along the coastline and the indigenous population due to the oppressive behaviours that Americo-Liberians inflicted on the natives since their arrival (Scott 1998). The second factor was the militarization that led to the infringement of several human rights (ibid.). Finally, fractionalization within the indigenous groups (ibid.). This meant that shift of control in certain regions directly resulted in the worsening of conditions for whomever became a target of the leading group (ibid.). The risks to the security of Liberians meant that they had to flee the country to survive, and most of them were placed in camps outside the borders of their country. Some had to stop after crossing the border while others were able to secure transportation to drive farther away with the remaining of their savings. During the second civil war there were Liberian refugees in Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, and as far afield as Mali, Ghana, and Nigeria (Nilsson 2003). Furthermore, several participants mentioned that crossing the borders did not necessarily mean that they were safe. Some became victims of assault and theft as they were not particularly welcomed by host populations.

The time participants spent in the refugee camp had a profound impact on their resettlement. For the Liberians, life in a refugee camp was supposed to be a transition

time, betwixt and between the status of refugee, their repatriation in their home country, or citizenship status in their host country. However, these situations became semi-permanent and some participants remained in camps for periods as long as 15 years. These long stays in camps had a deep impact upon several participants who still saw themselves primarily as refugees in Canada. The process of moving forward and leaving behind one's experiences as a refugee varies from person to person. However, it is clear that moving to a new country does not erase feelings of apprehension nor the memories of life in the refugee camps which persist throughout the resettlement process.

In refugee camps several Liberian women had to work while men were powerless, unable to secure employment (Nyemah 2008). In Nyemah's study (2008), none of the five male participants in his research were actually working while they were in refugee camps or in cities in host countries, as opposed to their spouses all of whom had some form of employment (2008: 45). Academic studies explain that men may try to take control of the most lucrative activities and oversee food production, even though traditionally food preparation is primarily seen as the domain of women in a patriarchal society.

“Refugee camps are often rife with unprecedented social and economic changes that have implications for patriarchy. In some cases, women in refugee camps have confronted radical life transformations by becoming the sole providers and protectors of their families and households” (Korac in Nyemah, 2007: 50).

This underscores the point that cultures and gender roles are not static but evolve to adapt to changing situations (Callamard 1996).

The origin of the shifts in Liberian refugee gender dynamics does have a foundation in refugee camp life. According to anthropologist Liisa Malkki (1997), life in a refugee camp is supposed to be a non-permanent settlement in which “the people, their everyday routines, their social relationships, political processes, and, indeed their entire social context might well have disappeared or been transformed virtually beyond recognition in a matter of a few months” (1997: 89). Despite the breakdown of the social context, even in refugee camps women found themselves in a reduced role related to food activities (gathering) which, in camps, was often controlled by men (Callamard 1996). Their previous economic contributions in a typical African refugee camp is that women are usually responsible for child rearing, obtaining fuel and water, cooking the food, and carrying it from the production site to the households (Getu and Nsubuga 1996; Callamard 1996). This further reinforces the gap between women and men in terms of segregated gender role expectations when they resettle in Canada.

Another important gendered aspect of life in refugee camps is that women are more likely to suffer psychological (trauma) and physical health problems that might go unnoticed. In their study *Health Issues Affecting Sub-Saharan African Women Refugees* (Getu and Nsubuga 1996), the authors found that the assistance was not “particularly gender sensitive” during the early phase of refugee assistance by refugee agencies since it failed to address women’s specific needs (1996: 200). Several women became widows and as a result were more “vulnerable to adverse health conditions because they lack[ed] support from their extended families” (Ibid.: 201). Health problems affecting Liberian women refugees include a lack of access to productive resources which leads to poor

nutrition, a diminution of their reproductive health because of rapes, sexually transmitted disease, infections, and resulting pregnancies (Getu and Nsubuga 1996; Callamard 1996).

This chapter offers some key themes that will serve as the foundation of this research study. Historically, Liberia has been a society traditionally patriarchal where men had better opportunities than women to become educated and influential. Even though Liberian women enjoyed some of the most liberal rights, gender roles were segregated and women were restricted to the domestic sphere and some unprofitable economic opportunities in agriculture. This understanding is crucial as it allows for a better understanding of the tensions and clashes between refugee men and women in their resettlement in Canada. The war made matters worse for women who often were victims of violence and reduced economic opportunities. Liberia's recent history shows why the research participants had to leave their country by way of refugee camps as they lived in a climate of terror as leaders attempted to control the Liberian society by setting ethnic groups against each other. There were initial shifts in gender dynamics as women's roles and responsibilities slightly changed, demonstrating that gender roles are not static but evolve and adapt depending on the circumstances. Understanding the lives of Liberian refugees in camps is helpful to trace the origin of when gender roles were shattered and how they evolved during resettlement in Halifax. The following chapter will discuss the national and regional context of immigration for Liberian refugees.

## **Chapter Three – Immigration Context in Canada and Nova Scotia**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides an overview of immigration in Canada and in Nova Scotia. In addition, the context of Liberians arriving in Nova Scotia as well as the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) is explained. The chapter also aims to provide an understanding of the importance of having refugees in Nova Scotia as well as lay out historical, national, and regional contexts of the changing field of immigration policies in Canada.

### **3.2 The Canadian context: Immigration and Resettlement Program**

Canada has a long tradition of immigration (Li 2003; Castles and Davidson 2000). In the 2006 Canadian census, 19.8 percent of the Canadian population was foreign-born, the highest proportion in the last 75 years (Statistics Canada 2009, retrieved on July 10, 2010). Furthermore, immigrants composed 19.2 percent of the labour force in Canada, a number that further increases as the population gets older (Li 2003). There are three objectives to Canadian immigration policy (Tastsoglou and Preston 2005). Canadian immigration aims to: 1) develop the economy, 2) facilitate family reunification and 3) fulfill international humanitarian obligations (Horizons 2002). Li (2003) has argued that the objectives of Canadian immigration “tend to be much broader and more visionary than what are typically presumed in academic research and policy debates” (2003: 79). According to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act of 2001, which has replaced the obsolete Immigration Act of 1977, there are ten objectives for immigration and eight specifically for the refugee program. While the ten immigration objectives focus on

maximizing “social, cultural and economic benefits of immigration” (Department of Justice Canada website, retrieved on August 21, 2007), the refugee objectives concentrate only on humanitarian values.

Canada is known for its humanitarian tradition (Government Canada 2004, retrieved on August 23, 2008). Since World War II, Canada has resettled over 700,000 convention refugees and persons in refugee-like situations. Canada has chosen to protect persons for humanitarian reasons, to meet its international commitments, and to respond to international crises. Canada’s resettlement program places emphasis on the protection of refugees and people in refugee-like situations by providing a durable solution to persons in need of resettlement (Government Canada 2004: 1; Li 2003, 2003b: 166; Tastsoglou and Preston 2005; Department of Justice Canada 2007). It is important to note here that according to the UNHCR (2000) this solution is the least desirable of the three so-called permanent solutions, which include voluntary repatriation and local integration in the country of first asylum. In 2005, the year when 22 of the 52 Liberian refugees resettled here, Canada was the third largest country for resettlement behind the United States and Australia, receiving about thirteen percent of resettled refugees (UNHCR 2006a). The Canadian government prides itself on its reputation as a humanitarian country; however, the will to do well is not the only motivation behind assisting refugees.

In 2002, major changes to Canadian refugee policy under the Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act shifted the profile of the GARs entering the country. Up to this point, it seemed that in the last decade of the millennium national self interest was a higher priority than altruism. According to the Immigration Act, GARs were previously

selected “in part based on their individual ability to communicate in an official language, work and educational experience and potential to successfully integrate within a one-year period” (Pressé and Thomson 2007: 53)<sup>5</sup>. The 2002 Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act shifted the selection criteria from the ‘ability to settle’ to the ‘need for protection’ (Sherrell, 2008). In sum, since 2002, Citizenship and Immigration Canada has softened the selection criteria and exempted refugees from some of the medical requirements (Pressé and Thomson 2007). Eighty percent of GARs coming to Canada now have severe medical needs as opposed to ten percent prior to 2002 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2008d). As a result of this policy shift, more government assisted refugees now face multiple barriers and have higher needs than in the past. Despite the changing profile of refugees, the new services and programs have not always successfully adapted to the specific needs of GARs (Pressé and Thomson 2007).

Within the history of Canadian immigration, there has been a shift in immigration policy from a celebration of diversity to integration and civic participation (Gardiner Barber 2006). Other than immigration for humanitarian reasons, there is an economic need for workers in the economy. The population is getting older and as indicated by research from Statistics Canada, “sometime between 2016 and 2036, Canada would have to rely exclusively on net migration in order to prevent its population from shrinking because of its inability to replace itself naturally” (Li 2003: 69). Regarding the lack of labour, the former Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Denis Coderre, stated that: “we will be in a deficit of one million skilled workers and by 2011, our labour

---

<sup>5</sup> As I complete this thesis, further modifications to the process of determining Canada’s refugee entrants are under debate and likely to become policy in 2011.



force will depend only on immigrants, so we have to find a way to resolve this problem” (Krahn 2003 et al.: 5). Immigration is thus seen by the Canadian government as a way to even out the distribution of refugees and economic immigrants and as a strategy or “tool to address population decline in some regions as well as regional economic disparities” (ibid.: 18).

In the last decade, Canada has annually assisted between 7,300–7,500 GARs to resettle in the country (Hyndman and Mclean 2006). Government assisted refugees are selected overseas, “normally through referrals from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, based on eligibility criteria outlined in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees” (Hyndman and Mclean 2006: 349). “Across the country, another 3,000–4,000 refugees are sponsored privately (PSRs), normally by community groups and faith-based organizations, and the remainder is made up of refugee claims made at a Canadian port of entry which are decided by the Immigration and Refugee Board, an appointed body that adjudicates all eligible cases” (Hyndman and Mclean 2006: 349). The PSR program is family driven and used primarily in terms of reunification with family members still in refugee camps or in risky situations (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2008d). In 2007, 41.5 percent of all 28,000 refugees arriving in Canada could not speak English nor French (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2008c).

Refugees to Canada consist of four different categories: government assisted refugees, privately sponsored refugees, asylum refugees, and refugees’ dependents abroad. (Nova Scotia Office of Immigration 2007: 1). In this research, all ten participants

were sponsored and received the assistance of either the government (six government assisted refugees), or a private sponsorship group, often from a Church (four participants). Refugees are identified by the UNHCR and other private sponsorship groups and referred to Citizenship and Immigration Canada for resettlement in Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2010b, retrieved on September 25, 2010). GARs are convention refugees that are entirely sponsored by government Canada for the first year of resettlement (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2010c, retrieved on September 25, 2010). The private sponsorship of refugees program “enables organizations and private individuals to submit undertakings for refugees and persons in refugee-like situations (members of the Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad Class (HPC)) for consideration for resettlement” (Government Canada 2004). “Upon approval, the sponsor (s) is/are responsible for providing financial assistance for a limited period of time and assisting the refugee with integrating in Canada” (Government Canada 2004), usually for up to 24 months. While the Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program, is “for people seeking protection from outside Canada [...] the In-Canada Asylum Program [is] for people making refugee protection claims from within Canada, (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2008a, retrieved on August 23, 2008).

When refugees are accepted for resettlement in Canada, they are stripped of their identity as refugees and given a new start. They become permanent residents on arrival which eventually allows them the opportunity to apply for Canadian citizenship after three years in the country (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2008b, retrieved on August 25, 2008). This new status means that they have the same rights as any other

permanent resident, none of whom have voting rights in federal elections. They can legally work and access most educational institutions with the same advantages as Canadian citizens.

The Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) is a program offered by Citizenship and Immigration Canada jointly with provincial governments and is offered to government assisted refugees “to provide the refugee with income support for up to one year or until that person becomes self-sufficient, whichever comes first” (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2005, retrieved on September 28, 2008). The program is delivered through service-providing organizations that cater to immigrants such as the Immigrant Settlement and Integration Services (ISIS) in Halifax. The “program helps refugees and protected persons resettle in Canada by providing them with financial assistance to cover the costs of accommodations, essential clothing, household effects and other living expenses” (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2005). The program tends to favour families, as single persons receiving RAP are more likely to experience financial difficulties due to the high price of housing and the lower amount offered to shelter one person.

For those who are sponsored, there are two existing programs called the PSR Program and the Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2007d, retrieved on September 28). The length of time for sponsoring is usually one year but can be extended up to 36 months in special cases. The two Liberian women had their sponsorship extended to 24 months. Furthermore, three Liberian women and one man were sponsored by a church. In those cases where there are more than one

applicant per family, men are always the primary applicant thus receiving assistance from the government while other family members (women) are sponsored by a group or organization. Although not conclusive, these numbers demonstrate that men tend to be sponsored by the government more-so than women thus reflecting what some consider a paternalistic view from the Canadian government (Barnett 2007; Boyd 1999). Although slowly changing, it demonstrates the residual impact of the not so distant way of thinking in which women were seen as secondary applicants in all immigrant categories (Castles and Davidson 2000; Dobrowolsky 2008; Li 2003; Walker 2008). For instance, despite representing 52 percent of all economic immigrants and despite an improvement of eight percent since 2004, in 2008 only 38 percent of first applicants in the economic class were women (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2009b, retrieved on December 8, 2009).

According to Getu (1996), despite the fact that women are the majority in refugee camps, western countries, including Canada, historically accepted more men than women (1996: 200). Men are more likely than women to be captured and/or killed in an armed conflict which results in a higher number of widowed women in refugee camps. However, the sex ratio of males to females of GARs arriving in the country has improved dramatically since the 1990s as better policies were set in place to promote equity between refugee women and men. In 1983, the ratio was 1.5 refugee males to 1 female before going to a high of 1.6 males to 1 female in 1991 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2008c: 3). Since 1991, the ratio has been steadily declining until 2008 when for the first time, the number of refugee women (3,729) outnumbered refugee men (3,566) (Citizenship and Immigration Canada website 2009, retrieved on December 3, 2009).

Among all other permanent resident categories, only the economic immigrant class has a slightly higher level of women as main applicants. Not surprisingly, the family class tends to be dominated by women. This means that in terms of GARs since the amendments to the refugee convention and protocols in the 1990s, the former gender biased view from Citizenship and Immigration Canada has been replaced with a more balanced approach that has benefited GAR women and refugees with special needs. The Liberians in Halifax reflected this tendency, as at the time of the interview there were 21 women over the age of 18 and only 14 adult men remaining in Halifax.

### **3.3 The Liberian Context in Nova Scotia**

When GARs arrive in this country, they are well supported to facilitate their integration into their new surroundings. It is important to understand that when refugees arrive in Canada, they do not select their destination, but ultimately they have the freedom to resettle in the city of their choice. The plane ticket and travel expenses bringing them to Canada are temporarily paid for by the government but soon become the refugees' first loan as they are required to start payments after about six months - though at no interest. Refugees are welcomed at the airport by the staff of the settlement agency and brought to a hotel where they will stay for a week to ten days until they can secure more permanent accommodation. During that time, they learn the basics of Canadian living with the help of settlement workers and settlement volunteers (i.e. going to the bank, buying food, navigating through the healthcare system, and so on).

The context of community support is important for the adjustment of new refugees. The Nova Scotia Liberian Association (NSLA) is responsible for keeping the

Liberian refugees together by creating activities to welcome new refugees, have social gatherings to celebrate the culture, important events and dates. Monthly meetings are held to discuss activities, challenges, and new ideas to the betterment of the resettlement experience. Some of the participants in this study were not part of the regular gatherings due to other commitments.

Liberian refugees are guided by a case manager at ISIS and financially supported by the government for the first year of their stay in the country. In addition to their regular monthly allocation, initially they are given some extra money for buying furniture, clothes, and the essential household items they need when starting their new life. The amount given to them is low. For instance in 2008, the rates given in the resettlement assistance program for a single adult was \$872 a month. A couple received \$1191 a month and got a little below \$200 for each additional child until they could apply for child care benefits (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2008). Even with the extra money given for their settlement needs, the new permanent residents live below poverty levels. In comparison, according to these numbers, a couple without children would receive \$14,364 during the first year. In 2009, the low income cut-offs, considered as economic hardship in a second tier city in Canada was \$22,276 (Statistics Canada 2009a, retrieved on December 16, 2010). All GARs and PSRs benefit from the Interim Federal Health Program (IFH) for the first year (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2008d). This program allows refugees to get essential medical care. After the first year, when the government assistance stops, participants have to live independently by finding full-time work or by applying for social assistance when employment is not possible or sufficient.

As the research will demonstrate, one year is often insufficient to prepare refugees for full financial independence as they may still be struggling with the language and comprehension of the educational system and Canadian culture.

### **3.4 The Nova Scotia Context**

All over Canada, population decline and an aging population have been two of the reasons why immigration has become a topic of widespread interest. The province of Nova Scotia has also been facing some serious challenges regarding its economic capacities (Nova Scotia Immigration Strategies, 2005, retrieved on March 18, 2007). Several factors, including “slow population growth, an aging population, low birthrate, out-migration of our young people, urbanization, [and] low immigration numbers” have resulted in a labour shortage and slower growth in the economy (Nova Scotia Immigration Strategies, 2005: 1). The Halifax Chamber of Commerce (2009) claims that “Nova Scotia is facing a demographic and labour market crisis” and estimates that by 2013, “there will be more jobs available than there are people to fill them” (2009: 2). Immigration has thus become one of the strategies that the province employs to counter these challenges.

Typically, immigrants tend to migrate to first-tier cities where it is easier to find community and services adapted to the needs of refugees (Khran et al. 2003). Almost 75 percent of immigrants to Canada settle in Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2001; Hyndman and Mclean 2006). “Large urban areas also tend to host a greater concentration of services that refugees require: access to official language instruction, organizations that assist people traumatized by torture,

interpretation services for health and housing, to name but a few” (Hyndman et al. 2006). Krahn et al. (2003) believe that “second-tier cities are certainly capable of retaining the majority of the people destined to them, given that employment and educational opportunities are present” (Krahn et al. 2003: 21). Of all refugees coming to the province, 95 percent of them decide to resettle in the metropolitan Halifax region (Nova Scotia Office of Immigration 2007). Among Liberians in Halifax, research participants have settled in the city rather than rural areas despite having had experience working or owning farms while living in Liberia.

However, the low number of Liberians in Halifax, the limited amount of services that can be provided by people from their own cultural group, and the limited employment opportunities have given it a transitory status among immigrants. In the last three years the size of the Liberian community has dwindled as permanent residents have left for cities like Toronto, Ottawa, Edmonton, and Calgary where there is “hope” for better economic situations. However as we will see in the sixth chapter, there are several factors that influence whether Liberian refugees will stay here or leave, including their level of education, family composition, employment opportunities, and so forth.

In 2007, the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration created a fact sheet with information that covered a five year period (2002-2006), which corresponds to the arrival of the Liberian participants between 2004 and 2006. “Over the five year period from 2002-2006, Nova Scotia welcomed an average of 207 government assisted refugees per year. This represented approximately 0.7 percent of all refugees coming to Canada” (Nova Scotia Office of Immigration 2007: 1). This percentage is slightly lower



than Nova Scotia's share of total immigrants coming to Canada (one percent). In fact, Halifax received 93 Liberians, which is nine percent of the total 1036 refugees who arrived in Nova Scotia between 2002 and 2006 (ibid.). This means that about 45 percent of all Liberians that arrived in Halifax during that period relocated to another Canadian city. During the time interviews were conducted in the summer of 2007, four more Liberians left for Ottawa and Edmonton bringing the departure rate to over fifty percent.

Furthermore, the refugee population coming to the city of Halifax is young. Among the Liberian participants, the average age was 31 years old, including five participants under thirty years of age and four under the age of twenty five.

“Just over half (51 percent) of all refugees arriving in Nova Scotia from 2002-2006 were under the age of 25”. “In contrast, 38 percent of all immigrants to Nova Scotia during the same time period were under the age of 25” (Nova Scotia Office of Immigration 2007: 1).

It is easier for young people to adapt to Canadian society, as the researcher witnessed on several occasions during the study. Children and teenagers learn to integrate by being immersed in Canadian culture while attending the public school system (Israelite et al. 1999; Weiner 2008).

Another statistical table of interest specific to this period indicates the percentage of Liberian migrants in all refugee categories. Liberian refugees were in the top three in both the government assisted and privately sponsored refugee categories, ranking third in the former (9.2 percent) and second in the later (18.6 percent) (Nova Scotia Office of Immigration 2007: 1). Liberians do not figure in the table of the asylum refugees and dependants abroad. From 2002 to 2006, 71 Liberians came here as GARs while about 19 came here as PSRs. The number for the other categories is unknown.

Table 1 Top three source country of immigrants to Nova Scotia by immigration category 2002–2006.

<b>Immigration Category</b>	<b>Top Three Source Countries</b>	<b>% in the category</b>
GARs	Afghanistan Sudan Liberia	21.9% 12.3% 9.2%
PSRs	Sierra Leone Liberia Ethiopia	19.6% 18.6% 9.2%

The province of Nova Scotia and resettlement organizations are attempting to adapt their services but it takes time and the changes are slow. Halifax has thus become a transitory destination for many Liberian refugees as they seek better services adapted to their specific needs, better employment opportunities, and a chance to get support from a larger community.

In summary, this chapter gives an overview of the immigration context in Canada and Nova Scotia and identifies where Liberian refugees fit into this process. Welcoming refugees benefits Canada as it provides an economic strategy to address the lack of labour due to population decline and ageing population. In addition, it also allows Canada to maintain its international reputation as a humanitarian country. However, the shift in the 2002 Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act has resulted in GARs having more severe challenges and barriers to a successful integration within the Canadian society. The next chapter explores key concepts and the literature review

## **Chapter Four – Key Concepts and Literature Review**

### **4.1 Key Concepts**

In this chapter, some of the key concepts such as gender, feminism, and masculinity will be discussed, and the literature on settlement challenges and migration will be reviewed.

#### **4.1.1 On Gender**

When first exploring topics for this thesis, I wanted to look at the resettlement process in terms of culture and identity formation. What emerged from the preliminary findings was the significance of gender differences. The reality of the findings shifted the direction of the thesis as the interviews revealed the differential experiences of women and men during resettlement. Consequently, gender became one of the driving features of the thesis.

Defining gender has been a complicated process for academics and feminists. In the social sciences, during the 1970s, gender was perceived as a “binary opposition” (Giles et al. 1996: 25) and was equated to the sex of a person - a misconception that is still prevalent in certain areas (Malher and Pessar 2006) such as resettlement and governmental policies regarding immigration.

However, Butler (1990) has argued that the duality of sex is false. She refers to gender as being performative where the categories of male and female are not real but rather an erroneous construction. She further adds:

there is no real ‘essence’ of gender, rather, it is the various acts of gender which perpetuate the notion of gender: without the acts there would be no gender. In this sense, the labeling of different people as male/female, and the labeling of different behaviours as masculine/feminine, enables and

perpetuates the performance of gender (Butler 1990 cited in Francis 2002: 40).

Further evidence that confirms the misrepresentation of the duality of genders is evident in the discussions in the 1990s emanating from the work of the pioneer anthropologist Margaret Mead (1963). Anthropologists and feminists refer to Mead to critique the duality of gender which in turn spurred an increase in the literature about transgending and multiple genders (for a discussion on a multiple genders, see: Herdt 1994; Moore 1994; Nanda 1986; Peacock 1978; Wikan 1991).

Today, most social scientists agree that gender is socially constructed by peoples, cultures, and institutions (Francis 2002; Indra 1989; Malher and Pessar 2006; Moran 1990; Tatsoglou, Ray, and Preston 2005). According to Indra (1989), these constructed notions “structure human societies at every level, including their histories, ideologies, economic and political structures and religion” (1989 cited in Giles 1996: 24). Gender is fluid and evolves (Callamard 1996). Being a man or a woman is not a fixed thing but rather a moving outcome of human processes (Indra 1996). Young (2002) has further defined gender as “the socially acquired notions of masculinity and femininity and gender relations [as] the socially constructed form of relations between men and women” (2002: 323). In other words, gender is relative to a specific state of social and cultural relations in any given moment in time and can change and be negotiated between women and men, and influenced by cultural practices.

Although it has been demonstrated that gender is culturally constructed, most people in cultures throughout the world actually believe that gender is a natural construction (Pessar and Malher 2003):

The “natural attitude” (Garfinkel 1967) toward gender encompasses a series of “unquestionable” axioms about gender including the belief that there are two and only two genders; the belief that gender is invariant; the belief that genitals are the essential sign of gender; the belief that the male/female dichotomy is natural; the belief that being masculine or feminine is natural and not a matter of choice; and the belief that all individuals can (and must) be classified as masculine or feminine—and deviation from such a classification being either a joke or a pathology (Hawkesworth 2006: 146).

Hence, in everyday understandings and in gender dynamics, gender is socially enforced to appear as a natural dichotomy with each gender having a set of roles and duties that are appropriate. Women and men “adapt to their circumstances, making the best of their past and new culture and circumstances” (Giles and al. 1996: 25). There is often a preconceived notion that gender roles and duties are set and may not be changed. The understanding of how gender tends to be seen as natural is the first step to the understanding of how gender is experienced differently for both women and men.

How do gender differences arise? “Gender differences arise from the subordinate status of women in society which act as a ‘filter’, gendering structural forces and influencing the experiences of men and women differently” (Grieco and Boyd 1998, cited in Tastsoglou and Dobrowolsky 2006: 17). Dolo (2003) adds:

from their birth, “members of cultures ascribe gender-based expectations and ideologies to the behaviours of men and women”. Though sometimes contested, there usually is widespread social acceptance of these expectations and ideologies. These culturally prearranged norms are deeply entrenched in the social, political, and economic realms of society, although liberation or progressive movements contest them. Gender role expectations are derived from these belief systems, which shape marital relationships and interactions (Dolo 2003: 5-6).

The filters used by each society to determine gender expectations varies widely. Gender dynamics continually evolve and may be dramatically different for a person removed

from their familiar environment and resettled in a context that has different rules in terms of gender roles. Thus newcomers entering Canada are 'expected' or 'encouraged' to conform to a new cultural view of gender roles that can sometimes conflict with the original cultural norms they have been socialized with since birth.

#### **4.1.2 Gender and Feminism**

Feminism includes various arguments that tend to have in common the argument that "females are universally (albeit in diverse ways and to varying extents) disadvantaged or oppressed due to their sex, and that this situation should be challenged" (Francis, 2002: 42). Some of the most influential feminist theoretical schools of thought include: liberal feminism, socialist/Marxist feminism, radical feminism, post-structural feminism, post-modernism, and black and multiracial feminism. Despite the diversity of feminist theoretical frameworks and the lack of one definite and fixed definition, one common element on which feminists agree is that its aims are emancipatory (Stanley and Wise 1993; Kelly et al. 1994). Although the goals of feminist scholars are somewhat similar, each academic discipline responded differently to the impact of feminism.

Anthropology has been profoundly influenced by feminism (Pedraza 1991). It is with the issues of resettlement in Europe following the Second World War in the 1950s and 1960s that anthropologists started to focus on migration. Yet at this time there was no focus on women. For instance, in 1975, there were no index entries for either 'women' or 'female' in two of the volumes published from the Ninth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (Brettell et al. 1992). In the 1970s feminist

anthropologists (Goodale 1971; Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974; Ortner 1974; Rubin 1975; Weiner 1976) gave women “voices” and helped pave the way for the third wave of feminist anthropologists in the 1980s (Kehoe 1992). In January 1976 the *Anthropological Quarterly* published the special issue “Women and Migration” (Brettell et al.1992). Although an important first step, women were simply ‘added in’ without any attempt to change the framework (Indra 1996).

Feminist anthropologists believed the integration of women into anthropology had to go beyond the add-women-and-stir-approach and that academics had to look at the level of theory and analysis (Moore 1988). At that time feminist anthropologists pointed out that the representation of women as well as the way they were analytically characterized was the real historical problem in light of the “actual invisibility of women” (Indra 1996: 32). Therefore, what was important for feminist anthropologists “was not the study of women, per se, but of gender, of socio- and culturally-constructed notions of women and men, and how these notions structure human societies at every level, including their histories, ideologies, economic and political structures, and religions” (ibid.).

In the field of international development, the term gender has also been widely adopted but often simply used as a synonym for women (Young 2002). Over the years, development workers and academics have used three main approaches in an attempt to better include women in development work: Women in Development (WID), Women and Development (WAD), and Gender and Development (GAD). While WID was an attempt to integrate women in economic development by focusing on food activities and family

planning, WAD's goal is to understand the relationships between women, men, and development<sup>6</sup> (Rathgeber 1990; Young 2002). GAD emerged in the 1980s as an alternative to WID to "transform unequal social/gender relations", empower women and integrate them into development (Braidotti et al. 1994: 82).

All three approaches have limitations and have been contested. According to Chua et al. (2000), "all three approaches neglect a thorough analysis of the ways in which capitalism, patriarchy, and 'race'/ethnicity shape and inform women's subordination and oppression, and vice versa" (2000: 823). WID and WAD did not question social structures or how they would address gender inequality. Furthermore, the WID and WAD approaches have categorized women as a homogenous group without considering their culture, class, and ethnicity - an issue that has been addressed by GAD.

This research goes beyond GAD as this thesis is an attempt to rethink the resettlement process and practices as a whole through a gender lens. An important element of this thesis, a GAD argument, is that the unequal gender dynamics arising from Liberian society have denied women fair access to education that would help them gain employment opportunities comparable to that of men in Halifax. Therefore, the inequality in the power structure in early resettlement, and not the influence of settlement workers, is the reason why women fall behind and have to try to catch up to the men. This research focuses on both women and men and how gender dynamics are shaped by the challenges of resettlement.

---

<sup>6</sup> For a more complete discussion of WID, WAD, and GAD, see the following authors: Boserup 1970; Chua et al. 2000; Jaquette 1982; Moser 1993



Feminists may have different agendas but all of them seek integration (Indra 1996). It is not possible to treat gender and other factors such as race as mutually exclusive; researchers need to capture simultaneously gender, class, race and ethnic exploitation (Pessar 1999a). This research explores men and women's new interactions and roles equally, as such an approach is essential to understanding how women and men interpret the challenges they face in their everyday life.

#### **4.1.3 On Masculinity**

Internationally, there has been considerable growth in the number of academics writing on masculinity since the late 1980s and 1990s (Archer 2001; Connell 2005; Gough 1998; Newton 1998). Although not an autonomous discipline comparable to feminism, the field now forms a “comprehensible field of knowledge” (Connell 2005: xiii).

This interest in the topic of masculinity is thought to follow from a combination of factors, including the increasing ‘mainstreaming’ of feminist issues in academia, the rise of postmodernist theories, the pervasiveness of ‘crisis’ in the contemporary social world, the ‘feminization’ of the labour market and the emergence of ‘race’ as a central site of critique (Newton, 1998 cited in Archer 2001: 80).

One of the reasons why masculinity might not ever become a field of study in itself is that there are several ways to define masculinity and situate research questions. There is no consolidated and unified idea of what masculinity is (Morgenstern 2008). As exemplified in the previous quote from Archer (2001), the fact that there are many factors that contribute to the growing popularity of masculinity studies means that masculinity has a complex semantic.

Up to the late 1980s, masculinity was understood as the opposite of feminism (Mackie 1991). Today, social scientists understand that “masculinity and femininity are inherently relational concepts which have meaning in relation to each other, as a social demarcation and a cultural opposition” (Connell 2005: 43). There are multiple masculinities (Connell 2005a) and the concept does not exist “in contrast [to] femininity” but in relation with it (Connell 2000: 68). Masculinity is in fact “a place in gender relation, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experiences, personality and culture” (ibid.: 71). For Liberian refugees, masculinity becomes a negotiation between the cultural norms from Liberia and the host country. However, it can be quite challenging in the context of a Canadian multicultural society to talk about the social roles of men (Nyemah 2008).

Nyemah further adds that:

this is a consequence of varied stereotypes about gender roles that are preferred through different cultural norms and practices. If a particular society believes that men of a certain age should be married at that age, then that is part of their gender ideals of what a man is (Clatterbaugh, 1997). In other societies, being powerful, hardworking and brave are the criteria which define the status of a man. These gender ideals draw our attention to masculinities as a critical component of gender relations. (Nyemah 2008: 59).

Masculinities thus differ from culture to culture and in a geographical context as well as in the negotiation of gender roles.

Nyemah has argued that masculinities are often socially constructed in ways that promote inequalities between women and men (ibid.). “Masculinities of immigrant and ethnic minority men are complex and multidimensional [as] they are constituted both through experiences of dominance and subordination, and constructed through relations

with both women and other men” (Morgenstern: 2008: 3). There is an emphasis on the inferiority of ethnic minority men in discussions of marginal masculinities which prevents them from achieving the “dominant society’s ideal of masculinity” (ibid.). As a result, “under the requirement of hegemonic masculinity for men to control resources and other people, powerless immigrant men transform their desire for power into exaggerated displays of physical and sexual domination of women” (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Messner, 2000; Hooks 1992, cited in Morgenstern 2008: 3). For Eritreans resettling in the United States for example, the idea of masculinity was related to having power in the public sphere through social values attached to employment as well as demonstrating the ability to care for their families (McSpadden and Moussa: 1996). Due to the challenge of finding work, Liberians resettling in the United States learned to share a co-breadwinner role with women which is, however, against their cultural idea of masculinity and gender roles (Dolo 2003). To them, the experience has been ‘humiliating’ and as a result, men have experienced loathing and resentment towards women leading to a negative outcome on their marital lives (Dolo 2003).

“The change in the gender of the breadwinner’s role often produces a psychological struggle for men in the context of refugee life” (Pessar, 1994; Westerbeck, 2004; Carving, 2005; cited in Nyemah 2008: 61). The idea of a breadwinner male is not universal and is a concept that is recent and of western origin. According to Seccombe (1986), the concept of a breadwinner originated in the mid nineteenth century in Britain. Following the industrial revolution, the labour specialization as well as tensions between factories employers, employees, and unions led to a division between skilled (often male)

and unskilled (often female) workers (ibid.). It is clear that “definitions of masculinities are deeply enmeshed in the history of institutions and of economic structures” (Connell 2005: 29).

#### **4.1.4 On Patriarchy**

Lerner (1986) argues that patriarchy is an historical creation associated with the patriarchal family. This implies that the concept is not determined by biology but is in fact socially constructed. The concept of patriarchy has evolved over time in the social sciences. Sociologist Max Weber (1947) used the term to refer to men leading their societies due to their dominant position in the household (Weber 1947). Then, radical feminists broadened the definition by adding the element of domination of men over women, while dual-systems theorists developed the idea that patriarchy is linked to capitalism (Gordon 1996; Walby 1990). This study will use the definition of sociologist Sylvia Walby (1990) who defines patriarchy as a “system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women” (1990: 20). The definition by feminist Adrienne Rich (1976) further complements that of Walby as she associates patriarchy with a “familial-social, ideological, political system in which men - by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law, and language, etiquette, education, and the division of labor, determine what part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male” (1976: 57). Although patriarchy is a system where men oppress women, not all men have benefited from the patriarchal structures as in the example of homosexual men in several societies (Bennett 2006). At

the same time, some women have supported the structures of patriarchy by benefiting from them (ibid).

Several studies have documented how patriarchal structures still hold after resettlement (Glenn 1986; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1992; Kibria 1990; Pessar 1986). However, in their study on women and migration, Grieco and Boyd (2003) ask the following question from feminists who see gender as socially constructed:

how do women's relationships to family members, including spouses, change with migration? In other words, how is patriarchy altered or reconstituted after migration? (Migration Policy Institute Website; 2003, retrieved on December 18, 2010)

The question is directly related to this study as the meaning of patriarchy does shift in resettlement. Walby's distinctions of two different forms of patriarchy is helpful to further allow the understanding of how patriarchy changes through migration. Private patriarchy is characterized by actions of individuals within households while public patriarchy is set apart by the fact that it occurs in public places such as the workplace, school, or even at a state level (Walby 1990). Despite improvements in Canadian society in terms of gender where women have entered the public sphere, they are still, in many instances, subordinated in various positions. This is even more so for refugee women who are confined to entry level positions until they get a better education. Resettled refugees often switch from a private patriarchy in their home country and refugee camps to a more public patriarchy, while Liberian men contest trying to maintain their ways even in Canada.

In a Hondagneu-Sotelo's (1992) study on the reconstruction of Mexican immigrant men and women in the United States, she argues that the early departure of

men for the US impacted gender relations as women “assume new tasks and responsibilities, they learn to act more assertively and autonomously” (1992: 411), which led to more egalitarian relations between women and men. For the men who left almost at the same time as the women, the patriarchal ways were still prevalent (ibid.). Specifically with regards to Liberians, Dunn-Marcos et al. (2005) present a cultural profile that talks about patriarchy. It mentions:

With respect to authority within the family—that is [man], who has the final say in family matters—patriarchy is the prevailing norm among all groups in Liberia, although women may have greater influence in some family matters, particularly regarding the disciplining of children, especially female children. However, patriarchy is likely to be more pronounced among non-Western-educated Liberians than among Americo-Liberians. Among the latter, there may be greater egalitarianism between husband and wife. (2005: 27)

The findings in chapter six examine whether and how patriarchy is still an important concept that has an impact on the resettlement of the Liberian participants.

## **4.2 Literature Review**

This section starts with a discussion of the literature on gender and migration. From there the thesis goes on to cover the literature using specific themes related to gender and resettlement challenges. This research extensively reviewed related literature on gender and migration studies and refugee resettlement and more specifically on Liberian refugee resettlement issues. The thesis contributes to the feminist literature by exploring and contrasting the challenges migrants face as women and men, understanding why the issues are so different for women and men and how their experiences compare with examples in the existing literature.

#### **4.2.1 On Gender and Migration in the Social Sciences**

Gender, migration, and refugee resettlement challenges need to be explored using a multidisciplinary approach. “Truly, migration is one of the most cross-disciplinary fields in academia today” (Malher and Pessar 2006: 31 and Pedraza 1991). Writings on gender and migration reviewed for this research have encompassed several disciplines including anthropology, history, international development studies, migration studies, refugee studies, sociology, and women’s studies. First, the research looks at the gender assumptions in the study of migration. Then it examines important points about the literature on gender and migration and how some of the most relevant disciplines have impacted the field of gender and migration.

One of the pervasive assumptions that has affected the literature on gender in the social sciences has been the view that the “internal migrant is a young, economically motivated male” (Houston et al. 1984: 908 cited in Pedraza 1991: 34). “In the 1970s and 1980s, however, feminist scholarship began to produce research that documented the high proportion of women in migratory flows” (e.g., Morokvasic 1984; Ong 1991; Pedraza 1991; cited in Franz and Ives 2008: 7). “The invisibility of women in [earlier] international migration scholarship [did] not correspond to the reality of international migration” (Pessar and Malher 2003). In international migration, women migrate at the same rate as men do; however, women refugees dominate the refugee category. In Canada, women actually outnumber men in migration (Pedraza 1991). This is also the case in this research study where about 62 percent of Liberian migrants were women (32 women out of 52 Liberians in the summer of 2007).

The migration literature reveals that both forced and voluntary migrations have been gendered processes. Specifically, with forced migration, from the end of World War II until the 1970s, refugees were stereotyped as genderless (Indra 1989). This was due in large part to “the isolation of refugee women from bureaucratic decision-making” and the absence of structures to create and implement policies related to the concerns of marginalised women (Indra 1989: 222). The existing policies about women were often restricted to issues of protection, and childrearing (Indra 1989). In all disciplines, until the 1970’s gender was not a significant part of the mainstream migration literature (Tastsoglou and Dobrowolsky 2006). “Early studies focused almost exclusively on male migrants while women were presumed to play passive roles as companions or remain at home” (Handlin 1951, cited in Franz and Ives 2008: 7). The norm was an underlying assumption that men were always the principal immigrants and migration regulations are still built on that supposition (Tastsoglou and Dobrowolsky 2006). Then, to compensate, the field gradually adopted an add-women-and-stir-approach (Tastsoglou and Dobrowolsky 2006; Moore 1988; Malher and Pessar 2006; Franz and Ives 2008). “It was only in the mid-1980s and 1990s that gender, as a set of social relations and a central organizing category affecting decisions, circumstances, institutional processes and outcomes of migration, started gradually taking hold in the migration literature” (Tastsoglou and Dobrowolsky 2006: 18; also see Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Willis and Yeoh 2000; Tastsoglou and Maratou Alipranti 2003).

Up until the 1990s and even to this day, there is a tendency for some feminist researchers to equate gender with women (Indra 1996). According to Tastsoglou, Ray, and



Preston (2005), this is problematic as it has “ghettoized research about women and left men as the undifferentiated ‘other’ category about which far too much is assumed” (2005: 91). “The identification of feminist concerns with women’s concerns has been one of the many strategies employed in the social sciences to marginalize the feminist critique” (Moore 1988: vii). Often during academic events, the term and topic of gender was integrated as ‘special topics’ that were often only about women and would be limited into one or two sessions indicating that gender did not factor in other sessions (Indra 1996). Soon after, the field of migration studies concentrated on women which tipped the balance the other way and resulted in male migrants almost entirely disappearing from academic research (Pessar and Malher 2003). Taking gender into account should focus on both genders (Pessar 1999a; Prebisch and Santamaria 2006; Tatsoglou, Ray and Preston 2005). This research is an effort to include the views and perceptions of both Liberian women and men.

#### **4.2.2 Gender and Resettlement Challenges**

Attempts to study resettlement challenges, refugees, and gender have taken diverse forms. Some researchers have examined gender struggles in refugee camps prior to resettlement (Abdi 2006; Getu and Nsubuga, 1996). Other studies explore how women’s status and roles diminish during and after war (African Women and Peace Support Group 2004; Bekoe and Barajon 2007). Some have examined the challenges for newcomers (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2002; Weiner 2008; Ives 2007; Jedwab 2006; Krahn et al. 2000; Dunn et al 2005; Neuwirth and Clark 1981; Sutherland 2008), while others have been more focused at a policy level (Franz and Ives 2008), and the

several factors that influence the integration processes (Israelite et al 1999; Mahler and Pessar 2006). Another theme focuses exclusively on the challenges women refugees face in their new country of resettlement (Indra 1989; Boyd 1999; Franz 2003; Allen 2009; Kibria 1990; VanderPlatt 2007; Wasik 2006;), seemingly giving the impression that women are the more vulnerable group. Furthermore, some researchers have explored how changes in gender roles have affected men and women differently (Hyman et al. 2004; Mahler and Pessar 2006; McSpadden and Moussa 1993 and 1996; Nyemah 2008; VanderPlatt 2007; Nawyn 2006).

Yet, despite these advances, little attention has been devoted to assessing the impact of these gender challenges for GARs and PSRs. Two streams from the literature can be drawn pertaining to gender and resettlement. A first stream of research focuses on the scarce literature concerning Liberian refugees resettling in North American cities (Dolo 2003; Ives 2007; Nyemah 2008). Only three gender studies have been done concentrating on “gender-linked role and status among Liberian refugees (Dolo 2003: 23). The second stream centers on other refugees from Africa, the Middle East, and Asia resettling in North America (Abdi 2006; Abdul-Razzaq 2007; Allen 2009; Bahlbi 2009; Eastmond 1993, 2003; Franz 2003; Hyndman and Mclean 2006; Israelite et al 1999; Kibria 1990; McSpadden and Moussa 1993; Neuwirth and Clark 1981; Phan et al. 2005). Gender roles do change within migrant communities in Western Countries but comparisons are useful to understand the specific case of Liberians.

### **4.2.3 Liberian Refugees**

This research aims to modestly contribute and complement the small amount of literature concerning the experiences of Liberian migrants in Nova Scotia. Furthermore, although there is some literature about refugee resettlement in Canada (see DeVoretz et al., 2005; Lamba, 2003; Macklin, 1996; McLellan, 1996), aside from Nyemah (2008) there is little on Liberians as a group that focuses on second tier cities in Canada. This is important as in recent years Canada has placed an emphasis upon “increasing cultural diversity nationwide, globalizing small communities, developing local markets to rejuvenate regional economies, and easing the pressure on the capitals of immigrant Canada” (Krahn et al. 2003: 2).

One of the first important studies of Liberia and gender is Dolo’s (2003) doctoral thesis. He is a Liberian refugee who has lived in the United States for the last fifteen years. Dolo’s quantitative research is based on a constructivist model and examines “socio-economic and institutional dynamics responsible for gender-linked role and status changes among dual-earner Liberian refugee couples in the United States” (Dolo 2003: 138). He hypothesises that Liberian refugee husbands who earn less income than their wives are “vulnerable to feelings of disgust, anger, and failure” (Dolo 2003: 139). Furthermore, he argues that couples who are willing and open to adapt to socio-economic changes and alter some former cultural norms have a better chance of surmounting acculturation stress, which is the main source of marital instability (Dolo 2003: 141). While Dolo’s thesis does not account for the role played by immigrant service providers,

it is valuable in providing insights into the reasons why resettlement has been challenging to Liberian migrants in an American context.

Nicole Ives, Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work at McGill University, is interested in the relationship between United States immigration policy and the high rate of divorce among Liberian couples as well as the effects of these policies on Liberian refugees (Franz and Ives 2008). Ives concludes that Liberian men and women are using different strategies to create “conjunctional relationships” in order to deal with and negotiate through their new and “strange environment” (Franz and Ives 2008: 21). Furthermore, “Liberian family members today constantly renegotiate between the father and husband’s patriarchal assumptions about family life and his role within the extended family and kinship group and the mother and wife’s elevated status during the early phases of resettlement” (Franz and Ives 2008: 21). The identity negotiation takes place as men are afraid that women are becoming “too free”, which would threaten their masculinity and status in the community (Franz and Ives 2008).

Finally, Nyemah’s (2008) research focuses on whether or not there is any “relationship between transnational migration and changing gender relations” for Liberian couples in the city of Halifax, Canada. (Nyemah 2008: 1). Nyemah argued that the changes of employment status in refugee camps have prepared the men to take on some of the domestic tasks in Canada (Nyemah 2008: 111). Furthermore, he contends that men and women now have more opportunities to earn a regular income and learn about Canadian values and culture, which “sensitiz[es] Liberian immigrants about Canadian democracy, and how it promotes the rights of individuals to freely express their

views and take control of their lives” (Nyemah 2008: 111). Furthermore, Liberian refugee women contest the cultural definition of the head of household as they gain more influence in the decision-making processes (Nyemah 2008). By contrast, this study argues that the opportunities to gain work and educational opportunities are unequal materially and symbolically for women and men. However, unlike Nyemah, my research does not focus on the household as a unit of analysis but looks at individuals.

#### **4.2.4 Literature on Other Refugees**

Several groups that have resettled in countries like Canada and the United States share some “cultural norms and practices with Liberia [as they are often] steeped in communal traditions, predominantly patriarchal and hierarchical, espouse rigid gender role ideologies, and are heavily dependent on kinship and other informal support networks” (Dolo 2003: 24). Their flight from war-torn situations, stays in refugee camps, and resettlement experiences offer diverse exposures that profoundly alter the refugees’ perception of their own norms, practices, gender perceptions and roles in their new environment.

The literature suggests that there are major changes when newcomers come into Canada in terms of gender roles. However, Hyman et al. (2004), who studied changes in gender dynamics among Ethiopian immigrant couples, argues that men held preponderant power prior to coming to Canada, and although there has been adaptation in the gender tasks it is still women who do most of the work (Hyman et al. 2004; Dolo 2003). These findings show that the “prolonged constraints imposed on the women limited their ability to integrate into the mainstream of Canadian life, despite their expressed desire to do

so” (Israelite et al 1999: 20). Some authors such as Nyemah (2008) disagree and believe there is a lot more gender equality and that some Liberian men have in fact done more to support their family since arriving in Canada. Gender dynamics prior to forced migration affect resettlement and the ongoing relations between resettled refugee men and women (Franz and Ives 2008: 9).

Decades of war and camp experiences forced both Liberian men and women to adapt their behavior and constantly renegotiate their understanding of gender and kinship traditions in these unstable environments. Now living in resettlement in the USA, Liberians on the one hand attempt to recreate their old traditions and gender behaviors. On the other hand, Liberian women and men strategically alter their identities while focusing on attempts at social and economic mobility—sometimes through relationships that exist outside of the confines of family-centric, conventional marriages (Franz and Ives 2008: 18).

When women have a greater role in providing for the family, conflicts may result (Dolo 2003).

In conclusion, this chapter demonstrates that this multidisciplinary study has several themes that are connected to gender. Some key themes coming from the discussion have implications for the study. First, although gender roles and practices seem static for the participants in reality they have shifted from the time they left their country to their resettlement in Canada. Second, there is a difference in how women and men live through resettlement as changing conceptions of masculinity and femininity promote inequality between women and men albeit in different ways. Third, the field of gender and development has been contested and redefined within development studies. This thesis aims to contribute to debates over WID, WAD, and GAD, and to further challenge unequal gender inequality by looking at both women and men, and how they

influence these changes. Finally, the literature confirms that refugee women usually face more challenges when resettling to a third country. However, men also lose in the process as there is a decrease in their status. The differences in the resettlement experience for men and women however often may result in conflicts between refugees who are having difficulties negotiating their new identities in their new lives. The next chapter provides an overview of the methodology that was used for this study.

## **Chapter Five – Methodology**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This research is a case study that explores the process of change for the Liberian community revealing how individuals negotiate the challenges they face taking into account different gender experiences. A case study is the “study of particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (Stake 1995: xi). What makes case studies specific is the question of what can be learned from this single case. In the case of Liberian refugees, the study provides a window to understanding as to how gender affects the way they deal with resettlement challenges. By demonstrating how the government can better improve its infrastructure in order to better assist the Liberian refugees these findings could be applicable to the category of resettled refugees regardless of their ethnicity. The specificity and depth that can be obtained in a case study, in contrast with a comparative approach, makes it easier to analyse the data and find patterns leading to valuable observations. “Each case has important atypical features, happenings, relationships, and situations” (Stake, 2000: 439). Furthermore, this specific case study could be extended to a comparative study with other groups at a later point in time.

In June 2007, after corresponding with the president of the NSLA, the researcher was invited to give an overview of the research project at one of their meetings. On that occasion there was a fifteen minute presentation about the research, and an information sheet detailing the purpose of the study and its objectives was distributed. The presentation was received with great enthusiasm. After the presentation, there were many



questions and participants volunteered on the spot to be interviewed. Following the meeting the president of the NSLA sent an email to the community ensuring that all members, including those who could not attend, were aware of the research project and knew that they might possibly be contacted regarding participation in the study.

The first task was to contact potential participants that were present during the presentation and ask them about their interest in participating in the research. Five participants were recruited in this manner. Once this was done and realizing more participants would be needed for the research, the snowball sampling method was used at the end of each interview in order to gather a list of names from the interviewees of other potential candidates who might be interested in participating. To recruit additional participants a contact list offered by the president of the Nova Scotia Liberian Association (NSLA) was used to call two members asking them about their potential participation in an interview. All the selected research subjects were part of the Halifax Liberian community in the summer of 2007, and have been at some point a refugee according to the definition of the UNHCR.

## **5.2 Methodology**

The methods used to gather data were semi-structured and open-ended interviews along with some indirect forms of participant observation. Semi-structured interviews provided some control over the line of questioning, which was important due to the specific focus of the research. In modern social sciences and especially post-modern anthropology, interviewing has been concerned with the voices of the respondents (Marcus and Fischer, 1986), the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee

(Crapanzano, 1980), as well as other elements such as gender, race, social status, and age (Gluck and Patai, 1991; Seidman, 1991; cited in Fontana and Frey, 2000).

The researcher did not conduct participant observation which would have meant living with some of the participants for an extended period of time. However, he was involved indirectly in participant observation through friendships developed as a result of volunteering at Immigrant Settlement and Integration Services (ISIS). In addition to meeting regularly through the volunteer program in family homes, the researcher also met with other participants who needed help applying for an educational program or looking for a new place to live. Whenever Liberians met socially, they would often invite the researcher who thus participated in many joyful celebrations including a wedding. Although the volunteer match programme was officially terminated in 2008, friendships continue. Sadly, the researcher also attended a funeral ceremony when a young Liberian man drowned in an accident in September 2010. When the researcher became employed by ISIS in the Employment Services Unit as an Employment Specialist in January 2008, there were further opportunities to meet other Liberians who had arrived after the interviews took place. These encounters broadened his perspective on resettlement issues. All these informed elements allowed the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the issues of resettlement and gender.

The research used a qualitative approach to the analysis of the data. In using qualitative data the researcher applied small-scale theories about the localized challenges of the Liberian refugees as opposed to creating a grand narrative that would better result from the generalizations of a quantitative research method. As noted in their discussion

on the research methods related to gender, Malher and Pessar (2006) believe that “quantitative, positivist approaches to social science research often fail to contextualize the data collected or redress gender-linked biases in research design” (2006: 30-31). They further add that “arguably, the adoption of qualitative research methods by migration scholars focusing on gender – though appropriate to the nature of this multifarious concept – contributes to gender’s marginalization in the field” (2006: 30-31). The reasoning behind this statement is that according to some scholars, quantitative data is more easily generalized, reliable, and more compatible to theory development (ibid.). However, qualitative methods best capture the narratives and complex realities of the subject by placing immigrants at the centre to better understand their life experiences.

Pseudonyms were used for every person who participated in the project, and interviews were edited to remove any information that could readily identify subjects among their peers. The process of masking information is important considering that the target population is relatively small and people might recognize each other, which could potentially have a negative effect upon community dynamics. For example, when a participant named a child, the researcher would commonly use the term child, as opposed to girl or boy, which made the gender uncertain and identification more difficult.

The data was collected by means of semi-structured and open-ended interviews to allow for the modification of questions in order to suit the parameters of the research and allow the participants some flexibility in engaging in narrative discourses. An important aspect of this research was to gauge the ability of the members to communicate in English. Due to the difficulty in ascertaining the overall level of education of most

Liberian refugees, the researcher had to consider that it was likely there would be a lot of diversity in the knowledge of English among the participants. Although English is the official language in Liberia, for most Liberian participants in Halifax English is not the primary language that they speak in the household as all but one participant came from rural villages where dialects were used. The researcher was clear in explaining that participants could withdraw at any time during the research.

Ten interviews were conducted in a three week span from June to July 2007. The sample represented about twenty percent of the total members of the Liberian community and about thirty percent of the members over 18 years of age. The high percentage may indicate that the findings from the sample are more likely to be representative of their situations in general. Among the ten participants, four of them became key informants with whom further interviews and conversations about gender challenges for Liberian newcomers occurred. The interviews were divided into two parts. The first section asked the participants to give some demographic details about how long they lived in the refugee camp, how they came to Canada and how long they have been here. In the second part, the questions focused on the theme of this research. What are the challenges of resettling in Halifax? Did marital and/or family relationships as well as friendships evolve as a result of resettlement? Are there differences in the roles women and men have here in Canada?

### **5.3 Research and Methodological Limitations**

There are some obvious limitations in this study that are important to point out. The first limitation speaks to the validity and legitimacy of the data. In order to have

accurate and trustworthy data, the researcher can apply a series of actions that aim to gain the trust of the participants. One of these actions is prolonging the time in the field, which allows the researcher to better understand the subjects and their position in their environment. Making this commitment would result in thick and rich data. However, prolonging the time 'in the field' proved to be difficult as refugees are very busy and finding time for the ten interviews was a challenge in itself. Several interviews were cancelled at the last second because of changed plans, often having something to do with going to work, cancellation of a scheduled day off, and illness. However, the researcher still has interactions with some of the participants from time to time. Most of the interactions with the Liberian community are through key informants and their families and friends. This privileged relationship enabled the researcher to better understand the environment, and ask for clarifications and insights into the lives of the Liberians in Nova Scotia. The researcher is aware that his opinions as well as the opinions of other Liberian participants do not necessarily reflect the views of other resettled Liberians.

The data described here comes from a cross-section of resettled refugees from a single city in Canada and consequently, it is not possible to generalize the findings to all refugees, or indeed other cities in Canada. The ability to create a grand longitudinal research theme that compared the differences in gender among refugees by also including larger cities over a period of several years would add to the depth of the findings of this research (Allen 2009). In addition, another element that is missing from this study includes the possible effects of single versus two-parent headed households and the

presence of other family members in their social circle that has an impact on the amount of social capital available to alleviate the tensions of resettlement.

The last limitation concerns reflexivity. The researcher is a white male interviewer from outside Halifax who volunteered in the field of immigrant settlement. It is important to consider, especially in this research where conclusions have to be reached regarding gender, that female and male interviewees might not have provided the same answers if the interviewer was female. The subject position of the interviewees relative to the interviewer is an important element that must be brought into focus. Being a mature male and having student status, it was easy to get comfortable with male participants and vice versa, as we had such things in common as age and being unemployed or underemployed. They also knew that the researcher volunteered and assisted a Liberian family which made him more trustworthy and reduced the formality between the researcher and participants. On a positive note, this allowed the researcher to gain insights beyond the interview process. Often interviews with men would last longer than those with women. For women, in general, it was much harder to get them to elaborate upon their responses. They would answer the questions methodically with short answers, forcing the researcher to prompt with the aim of getting more detailed and in-depth responses.<sup>7</sup> The fact that the researcher did not originally come from Halifax was a shared experience albeit in very

---

<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the researcher had to slightly alter the grammatical structure of some of the sentences in the transcript. Only sentences which had major grammatical errors that rendered the quotation difficult to comprehend were modified. The rationale for doing so was that the researcher did not intend that the Liberian community members be portrayed negatively, and believed that by portraying the voices along with their grammatical mistakes would reinforce the stereotypical images of uneducated refugee migrants. Their speech pattern does not come from a lack of education but rather from speaking Liberian English which is different from American English. Liberian English is also like a second language to them as most Liberian refugees grew up speaking their own dialect.

different circumstances, which allowed for the participants and researcher to feel that they could relate to the experience of starting a life in Halifax. However, the researcher has never been a refugee and is in no position to ever really understand all the implications of refugee life.

#### **5.4 Data Analysis**

The interviews were transcribed and both field notes and interviews were coded, with particular attention paid to the way Liberian refugees negotiate challenges through a gender lens. The method of evaluation involved discourse analysis through coding and counting of trends, themes and issues. Individual quotes and general themes arising from the interviews were reported. Analysis of the qualitative research findings involved reflection on participants' experiences of resettlement, particularly focusing on gender.

This research has evolved through several stages before reaching a conclusion. The acquisition of the data has reshaped the direction of this research and required the researcher to be open-minded so that emerging patterns were not ignored simply because they did not fit into any of the original formulations. The data itself became the main driving catalyst in the formulation of the final argument. As the data accumulated, various other themes emerged that the researcher had not envisioned, requiring adjustment.

Elements of grounded theory were utilized in the data analysis. This research used two forms of coding that are the foundation of a grounded theory: open coding and axial coding. This led to emerging themes that were the main findings of this research. When using grounded theory, the researcher actually attempts to discover a theory coming out of the data in social research (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), as opposed to testing or

verifying the validity of existing theories (Martin and Turner, 1986). However, this research is a modest contribution to the literature that already exists on the subject.

As the first analytical step, open coding occurs when the accumulated data is categorized, labelled, and conceptualized into ‘discrete parts’ that are compared with each other for similarities and differences. In the process, the researcher looks at her/his own assumptions, compares and constantly questions the findings which lead to new directions. In the second analytical step, axial coding connects the categories of open coding together to create subcategories that are further divided in terms of properties and dimensions. In these subcategories themes emerged which became the pillars of this research. This research did not aim to integrate these themes together to form a theory, but to add to the existing literature.

In conclusion, this chapter provides more depth and allows for a better understanding of the methodology of this qualitative study. This foundation along with the literature review in chapter four will be used in the analysis of the following chapter.



## **Chapter Six – Findings**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter reveals how the challenges that Liberian migrants face in their resettlement in Halifax are experienced differently by men and women. One has to be careful not to generalize as individual histories, backgrounds and complexities of refugee lives further contribute to differences in their everyday acts on their journey to integrate into Canadian society. The research gives voices to Liberian refugees, looks at gender differences and discusses the findings by comparing and contrasting them with the existing literature. The research further explores gender patterns and looks at the factors that contribute to making life more challenging for Liberian refugee women and men. The thesis then looks at how Liberian men and women deal with gender differences and how they negotiate their new roles and responsibilities. The chapter concludes with a discussion on discrimination and racism and how they affect their resettlement.

### **6.2 About the Liberian Participants**

The first step to understanding the circumstances of Liberian refugees is to look at the participants themselves and their unique situations. At the time of the interviews in Halifax, Nova Scotia in the summer of 2007, there were 52 permanent residents in the city from Liberia - 32 women and 20 men. Of this number there were seventeen children under the age of eighteen (eleven girls and six boys). In the group of participants there were five males and five females. Five of the participants were recruited following a presentation given at a meeting of the NSLA. The remaining five participants were recruited using the snowball sampling method. Seven of the ten participants had children

(three men, four women), and of that number, four were part of a single parent household (one male and three females). Only three participants were married (two males and one female with a husband in Liberia) and two others in a common law relationship. None of the participants was married nor partners of each other. The following names are the pseudonyms used for the participants

Table 2 Sample characteristics for Liberian Refugee Participants at the time of interviews in July 2007.

<b>Sample Characteristics</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
<i><b>Gender</b></i>	
Male	5
Female	5
<i><b>Age range</b></i>	
20-29	5
30-39	2
40-49	3
<i><b>Marital status</b></i>	
Married	1
Married (husband outside of Canada)	1
Common Law	2
Single	6
<i><b>Family Status</b></i>	
Has one or several children	7
No child	3
<i><b>Years in the host country</b></i>	
1-2 years	6
2-3 years	2
3+ years	2
<i><b>Language Proficiency</b></i>	
Fluent in English (all skills)	7
Fluent in listening and speaking with low reading and writing skills	3
<i><b>Employment Status</b></i>	
Employed full-time	4
Employed part-time	2

<b>Sample Characteristics</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
Unemployed	2
Full-time student	0
Full-time student/working	2

### **Evelyn**

This section introduces each of the participants. Evelyn, in her early twenties, was sponsored by a church and had been in Canada for about a year after living in a refugee camp for a period of two years. She is the mother of two children. She is also part of a larger extended family in the city so she has access to some assistance if she needs to go to work and have someone look after her child. She does not want to go back to Liberia as she feels closer to her Canadian community than to Liberians. She expressed a lot of appreciation and gratefulness to the people who have assisted her in resettling here. She did not get any formal schooling in Liberia. She participated in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and worked as a room attendant and cleaner in a hotel on a part-time basis after her arrival in Canada. She is currently taking a one year continuing care assistant program with a local employer who offered to train her as long as she remains employed with the establishment for at least one year following the completion of the program. In her training year she plans to be working while studying part-time.

### **Simon**

Simon, a government assisted refugee, is a single father in his late twenties. At the time of the interview in the summer of 2007, he had been in Halifax for two years and previously lived in a refugee camp in Ghana for about three years. He has several family

members here in Halifax to support him by taking care of his children while he goes to school and works. He has plans to study in the healthcare field and has been successful in securing employment in a hotel in the maintenance department. He completed ESL training and has successfully completed educational upgrading in several subjects such as mathematics, chemistry and biology to prepare him for admission to a healthcare program at a community college. Simon understands the importance of a good education and feels education is the key to a successful life for his children, his family, and himself. In his opinion, Halifax is the ideal place for him especially because it is a safe environment for his family and they can get a good education.

### **Nancy**

Nancy, in her early twenties, had been living in Halifax for two and a half years after living in refugee camp for about five years. She is the mother of three young children and has been sponsored by a church. She lives the farthest away from all other participants that were interviewed and is the only Liberian in her area. This lack of a support network makes it very difficult for her to find someone to babysit her child, to go to work, school, or do other routine activities. She finds it hard because she feels isolated and alone and feels that there is nobody to help her and yet she did not express any desire to move to another part of the city. When asked if she would like to go back to Liberia, she enthusiastically answered “I want to go back. I want to go back”. After a few seconds of silent reflection she added: “Excuse me, the question that you just mention if (I) want to go back. [...] I can go back and see my country and come back” (Nancy interview). She often feels sad because she is the only one of her extended family in Halifax. At the

time of the interview, she was neither going to school nor working. Recently, she was still unemployed but had completed an interview to work as a room attendant.

### **William**

William came to Canada with the assistance of the UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). He arrived in Halifax in January 2005 after living in exile in Mali for fifteen years. William, in his mid twenties, is single, and came with his mother, brother, sister, and stepfather. His experience was very different from other participants as he did not live in a refugee camp but rather lived in Ghana in a community with his parents where he had access to a good education that included a grade 12 high school diploma and some computer training. In his opinion, that was key to an easier resettlement. He became self-sufficient relatively early in the resettlement process and was able to find employment as a cashier at a specialty produce store in downtown Halifax for his first job and later at a ship building company. He feels his pronunciation is different, because he adopted the intonations of Ghanaians which is a little easier for Canadians to understand. When we did the interview, he mentioned how large the Liberian community was when he arrived and how so many people have since gone “West” (to the province of Alberta) to find better employment opportunities. He himself was leaving a week later to settle in Vancouver where he had found some work in the construction field building houses.

### **Edith**

Edith, in her mid-thirties, had been living in Canada for a year after living in a refugee camp for about seven years. She received a two year sponsorship from a church

in Halifax. She is very grateful for the opportunity to live here; however, she is frustrated by the passiveness of the Canadian bureaucrats to repatriate her son from Africa. This often occurs during the application process to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as refugees are told that adding family members may slow down the process. If the name of the son is not indicated during the interview intake, there is very little that the Canadian government will do to reunify the family, especially in the first year. Rather, there is a delay until the applicant is well-off and in a position to sponsor the family member. She does not know where her parents are and two of her sisters were killed in the conflict. She has three children, one here and the other two in British Columbia and Alberta. She found cleaning work in a hotel in the downtown area. She also attended an ESL School for a short time.

### **James**

James was sponsored by the government to come to Canada in the summer of 2005 after living in a refugee camp for fifteen years. James is in his late thirties. He is married and a caring father to two children, one of them going to school in Halifax and one who has left for Ontario. He was formerly an elementary school teacher while living in the refugee camp and soon realized he could not work as a teacher here in Canada. For James, Halifax is the ideal place to raise his children as it is quiet and far from the dangers such as gang violence and drugs which he hears about from Liberians resettling in larger cities such as New York or Toronto. He finished ESL school and then went on to do a one-year technical course at the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) and has been working in his field ever since as an apprentice. He feels that he is doing “very

well” (James interview). James was the only one to mention that it is important for his children to understand where they are from and he spends time regularly telling them stories about Liberia. For him personally, he has not faced major challenges in his resettlement. He is also engaged in the community and was a board member of the Nova Scotia Liberian Association. He states he is happy here and does not wish to go back to Liberia in the future.

### **Bertha**

Bertha was the youngest participant of the group. She turned eighteen a few months before the interview. She has been here for about one year after living in a refugee camp in Mali for the same length of time. She is single with no children. During the interview she was finishing high school and planning to go to university. She stated she would like to be an accountant but acknowledged she will have to do some upgrading as her marks are not high enough to apply and be accepted to a university. When the researcher met with her a year later, her plans had changed. She had decided to go to work for a while instead of pursuing her studies. When she arrived here in Halifax, she believed that her father and younger brother had passed away in the conflict but she got news that they were alive and she had the opportunity to talk to them on the phone a few times. However, she was in the same situation as Edith in getting the Canadian government to assist in repatriating the rest of her family to Canada. She wants to go back to Liberia only for that reason, so she can be united with her family, despite stating Halifax would be better for her career. She was also working as a cashier and proud of the fact that she was earning her own money for the first time and was responsible for her

own life. She has found the high school environment to be very discriminatory and she spoke of feeling isolated at school.

### **Patrick**

Patrick, the oldest participant in the study, in his early forties, came to Canada of his own initiative late in the winter of 2004 after living in a Guinean refugee camp for eleven years. He wrote to a church group in Halifax who later agreed to sponsor him privately. He completed university before the civil war in Liberia in the field of medicine but none of the credits were accepted here so he decided to go back to university and is completing an Arts degree. He feels that his education will be the key to a successful career. He is married and has one child. At the time of the interview, he had stopped working in several jobs to better concentrate on his studies. He had several family members and friends who had relocated to the United States. From them he learned a lot about life in America in general and was well prepared when he arrived in Halifax. He and his wife have already adapted to a different division of labour with Patrick taking on more of the domestic duties. He became aware of behaviour of some young Liberian adults in New York who were having drug problems. This gave him an appreciation for what he feels to be a safe life style for himself and his family here in Halifax.

### **Mary**

Mary is in her mid thirties and has been in Canada for about four years. Previously, she lived in exile as a refugee in both Mali and Cote d'Ivoire for over eleven years. She was separated from her parents in 1990 when she fled further conflict in Cote d'Ivoire to go to Mali. Mary was assisted by the Canadian government to resettle in



Halifax. At the time of the interview, she was not married and had one child. She was adamant that if she had the opportunity to return to Liberia she would do so in a heartbeat as “I can never find a place like home” (Mary). Religion has always been an active part of her life in Liberia, but here, she realized quickly that becoming a pastor would be a long process involving university education. She has been disappointed by the distance there is between parish members here in Halifax compared to Liberia. She mentioned how she was blessed to be here and that God selected this path for her. At the time of the interview, she was employed in a call centre. She also works at a hotel and has recently taken a healthcare program.

### **David**

David’s interview was the most dramatic. David is in early forties and at the time of the interview had been in Halifax for less than two years. He came to Canada directly from Russia with the assistance of Government Canada and the UNHCR. Previously, David had lived in a refugee camp for six years before being offered a scholarship to complete his Bachelor and Master’s degree in the Science of Agriculture in Ghana. He was later invited to attend university in Moscow, Russia where he earned a PhD in Biology. David’s case is a further example among so many in the immigration literature of immigrants not being able to gain accreditation recognized by Canadian universities (Bauder 2003; Man 2004). Consequently, he had been working as a customer representative in a call centre for one year at the time of the interview. He was frustrated during the interview as he was explicitly hoping that it would allow the world to see this injustice and that as a result someone might decide to provide him with an opportunity to

“show his worth” (David). He is highly educated and worked as a university professor in Ghana, and as a Civil Servant in Russia before being promised a better position in Canada that never materialized. He was the only Liberian refugee in this sample to hold a PhD degree. He wishes to return to Liberia as soon as possible mentioning that he would never become a citizen in this country. He married his wife who is from Russia and has two children. She was so frustrated by the situation in Halifax that she left for British Columbia and found some work there as a development worker. David does not wish to join her as he is resistant to moving because he loves the city when compared to other destinations, and is hesitant to change.

### **6.3 – Challenges for Liberian Migrants**

According to the Liberian refugees interviewed, the main challenges they faced while resettling in Halifax included: employment opportunities, obtaining an education, learning English, accessing daycare and affordable housing, the lack of North American life skills training as well as extended psychological, emotional, social, and financial support. Furthermore, several families suffered from breakdowns in relationships. These challenges do reflect those found in the literature on resettlement (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2008d; Dolo 2003; Franz and Ives 2008; Sutherland 2008). Areas of change also occur in the field of household responsibilities, work responsibilities and relationships as described in Hyman et al. (2004). It is important to understand that these challenges are interconnected, cannot be viewed in isolation and requires a look at the issues from a holistic perspective. Specifically, the next section explores how language

and education is experienced differently for women and men, which has an impact on their ability to find work.

### **6.3.1– Language and Education**

It has been acknowledged among academics and settlement workers that language is the most important barrier faced by newcomers in their Canadian integration (Sutherland 2008; Weiner 2008). “Refugees are likely to experience and report language barriers as the most difficult challenge when accessing education and employment” (Hyndman et al 2006: 354). Early on during the resettlement process, GARs have to make important decisions regarding language acquisition.

One of the foremost priorities during the first few weeks in the RAP program is the referral to the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program offered by language schools and supported by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. The program offers English as a second language (ESL) classes free of charge (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2008b). Although available to all immigrant groups, the priority is given to refugees who have access to classes generally within the first or second month of their arrival. This depends on availability in one of the three schools in the Halifax Regional Municipality.

English is the official language of Liberia. However, only a small minority of the educated and Liberians of Americo-Liberians descent may speak English as their first language (Dunn-Marcos et al. 2005). For most Liberians, English is their second language (Dunn-Marcos et al. 2005). According to Ives (2007), in general,

“newcomers coming from countries where English is taught as a second language or having English-language backgrounds have an easier time

starting off in the United States. For example, refugees from countries in Africa as well as immigrants from some Asian countries which were formal colonies or had strong, historical Anglo ties have high levels of English proficiency” (2007: 59).

This quote from Ives might on the whole be true; however, it does not take gender into consideration. In the case of Liberian refugees in Halifax, gender has a direct correlation to a refugee’s level of education and, therefore, has a direct impact upon English language acquisition.

Liberian men, as explained, have easier access to formal education than women in Liberia. This point is clearly supported by the experiences of participants in this study as only one woman interviewed had access to some education before resettling in Canada.<sup>8</sup>

This point was well illustrated by James during our conversation about the different roles Liberian women have in Canada compared to Liberia.

James: In Liberia, women can drive their car, women are working in offices, if they are educated. But most of the time because the way the country is, the way poverty is, there are lot of men, lot of women who are not educated. You can see the Liberian society here. I think you have been visiting lot of them. You will see lot of women who are not educated among us. But you will see some men who went at least // went to high school ... that are able to read and write. [...] When we were in school, we have villages, towns and villages. If you go to school in a town and that time the level of education there is just grade six, or grade five, or grade four, if you finish you got to go to the city. The boy going to the city ..., they rent one room apartment for the group of boys to live there, care for themselves, go to school. And weekend, you walk to your town or village for food. We don’t have a lot of // girl who can undergo that struggle ..., [...]. This is why you see most of the girl children in our society in Liberia, they are not educated. [...]. But by the time you (can go to school) the person is pregnant. [...] So you see, most of the girls they are not educated. Even up to this time, it will be difficult for African women to

---

<sup>8</sup> It is important to note that the educated female participant was from the capital city of Monrovia, and was the only participant from an urban setting.

see a lot of girls women in Africa to be educated because the means are not there

According to James, the social fabric in Liberia would not allow school girls to go on their own to study. In contrast, all male participants in this study had access to some formal education and this made them more comfortable in their use of the English language. Furthermore, there were also more opportunities for men in refugee camps to get an education whereas for women only under certain conditions was it possible for them to gain some basic education. For instance, David obtained a scholarship and was able to get a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Ghana. Subsequently, he was invited to study in Russia for his doctoral studies. By contrast, Mary had a high school education but the war prevented her from further pursuing her studies. In this research, there seemed to be an advantage for men early on in resettlement as all five of the participants had received an English education which resulted in a higher English language proficiency. However, each participant had a different starting point, whether they were female or male.

In Halifax, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes start from a basic literacy level to level six. The English requirement for access to a college education at the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) or a university education is established at a Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) of eight. The women in this study often found themselves in lower level English classes, even as low as the literacy class if they had not learned previously to read or write, even though they could speak and understand spoken English. Liberian men tended to start in higher level classes, giving them quicker access to some higher level classes and training programs. Most of the female participants started at

lower levels ranging from the literacy level to level four, while the men's initial level was situated between levels four and eight.

Furthermore all male participants had access to some forms of training prior to resettling in Halifax.

James: Education are being changed because -- what I did in the refugee camp, I was primary teacher, teaching younger children, how to read [...] work with them. So // I tried to learn about certificate over. So, I decided to go back and see what I can do. But I look at it, I am far from that because the accent and everything, I don't have that qualification for here. So, they told me to // go back to school. If I go back to school, it will take me like 3 or 4 years, so I decided to // that. So I took different course, so that changed [...] my experience.

Having already obtained training prior to resettlement and understanding the barriers for accreditation in Canada, James was willing to get different training since his qualifications were not recognized. Meanwhile for the Liberian women, the educational opportunities have been few as only Bertha finished high school in Halifax. Instead of pursuing a university degree, her ultimate goal, she decided for the time being to go to work to better support herself and her mother who was still in a refugee camp.

This research confirmed that education is the primary concern for both men and women but that only men have actually been able to take advantage of opportunities in Canada provided by the head start that they received in Liberia. Of the five men interviewed, all of them but one (David, who already had a PhD) were receiving additional Canadian education. Patrick was doing a university degree in Environmental Studies; James completed a technical course and is completing an apprenticeship in automotive mechanics for a garage. Simon has started a nursing program at the Nova

Scotia Community College, and William received some vocational and technical training in the field of computers.

This apparent lead has not resulted in men feeling more settled. Despite having or receiving further post-secondary education, only William held a position he truly felt good about at the time of the writing, and was in the process of leaving Nova Scotia to obtain a better job in Alberta.

William: I had a chance of studying // five of their languages (referring to Ghanaian dialects), but // once you get over here with some sort of high school, at least, with some sort of college diploma ... if per se not college diploma, some vocational technical skill, integrating into Halifax employment-wise, it is not going to be difficult. Because, I realize that most of those that lived in a camp, never had a sufficient education, some never even had education.

James: One the most challenging part to live in Canada is education. You come from // then you don't have that qualification. [...] everything is just money. You come and you working for minimal wage. It is pretty hard to survive on that.

The quotes from William and James exemplify the importance of either having (in the case of William) or getting (in the case of James) the proper qualifications, perceived as the key to a better life. They also demonstrate that with a proper education and their ability with the English language, the transition is a lot easier than it would be if they did not possess either the language or education skills.

The Liberian women that were interviewed acknowledge the importance of education but took more time to go through language training courses, likely because they had less education in Liberia. They also had young children. Once the English training was completed, in the case of two participants, they went directly into the labour market instead of accessing further educational programs. Three female participants did

not finish ESL school and of this number two of them did not have the intention of finishing school despite recognizing its significance. When asked about her short and long term goals, Nancy replied “the education is number one. [...] To have better life”.

Edith: To be well educated. Your education is the challenge for you. If you are not educated. If your children here, that’s the challenge for you . If you don’t go to school to learn anything, tell me, you will become a loser, that’s the challenge for me. [...]

Bertha: For me the most important is education here. It’s really good. I’m really improving. When I was in Africa, they told me I was a good student, because in my class I was the best right. But when I came here I was the last -- yeah. And I was not improving. The education here is really, really challenging.

Bertha’s and Edith’s quotes reveal how important and challenging obtaining an education in Halifax can be.

Mary: [...] As I said for example, I have my 2 brothers in Africa, that I am trying to help to go to school. So because of them, I don’t have any plan for myself. Because I love my brothers so much, and I know that boy children in Liberia suffer a lot. [...] I rather suffer, and send my brothers to school // being well educated. But if I had the opportunity to go to school -- I would have loved to go to school and be someone. [...] I have the opportunity because I can take student loan and I go to school. But I said I don’t have the opportunity because I have to pay the loan and I have to // my people. So I rather // my people and don’t go to school. So for now, I don’t have any plan [...], but I believe god have a greater plan for me. [...] He brought me here, so there should be a reason why he brought me.

Mary mentioned that the main reason why she did not attend school in Canada is because she is self sacrificing for her brothers. The role played by family members in the Liberian community must not be overlooked. There are numerous examples in the migration literature of newcomers sacrificing comfort and well-being for families they have in refugee camps, or at home, by sending remittances (Pessar and Malher 2003; Sassen 2000).



In the winter of 2009, two and a half years after completing the individual interviews, two women were enrolled in a program to become continuing care assistants. Despite being at a disadvantage early on, with their own perseverance and the guidance of settlement counselors, the two women were able to make plans and access funding for their education. This indicates that more long term research is needed to monitor whether women reduce the gap over time as they improve their English skills and understanding of what is needed to be successful.

There are several other factors that might affect language acquisition for women. One of them is that they do not have as many opportunities to speak English at home or in the work place, preferring to speak their native dialect with their spouse, siblings, children, and friends. According to Vanderplatt (2007),

“women’s kin work may also affect language acquisition. While 82 percent of immigrant women can converse in either English or French, 47 percent continue to speak another language most often in their home – the rate is 68 percent for recent immigrant women” (VanderPlaat 2005: 20).

Since Liberian women in Halifax are more likely to stay at home after school hours than men to care for the family, or get employment where social and English skills are not required, it is difficult for women to improve their language skills adequately.

A second factor would be the “lack of appropriate daycare for children, or alternative care arrangements for the elderly, [as this] may prevent immigrant women from accessing language classes” (ibid.). Since women are held responsible for childcare at home, life is a real challenge for women, as it is very difficult to find affordable childcare (Neuwirth 1981). Some of the women decided to compromise and take part-time work or pay to send their child to daycare. Nancy, a single mother, said:

What I think is really difficult in Canada. When you live in Africa and you have the child, ... you have some ... people that can help. You have friends there, you can leave your child with some friend and go whatsoever you want to go. If you want to go to work you go to work. But here, you cannot do that. If you want to go anywhere, you either put the child in daycare, or you take the child where you are going. If you don't have enough money to take your child to the daycare, you just have to take your child anywhere you are going. You cannot do any other thing. [...] But in Africa, ... you want to work you can work, if you have a friend, you can leave your child with your friend.

The cost associated with daycare and the difficulty of finding a spot for a child often discourages women with children from entering the workforce. Furthermore, the situation becomes even more challenging if the woman is a single mother. This issue has been particularly difficult for Nancy as she is geographically isolated from other Liberians living on the other side of the harbour, far away from the concentration of Liberian families. The Halifax ESL schools offer free childcare for people enrolled in English classes; however, spots are limited. It is clear so far that women are disadvantaged regarding language acquisition and opportunities to study.

In summary, in the earlier part of the resettlement process, the men in this study had a comparative advantage as they had a Liberian education which gave them more chances to access training opportunities in a reasonable amount of time. This advantage originated in the patriarchal nature of Liberian society, which privileges men in obtaining an education. In contrast, the women were held responsible for childrearing. However, with time, it seems that women do get access to education when their language level improves. As we will see in the next section, this earlier disadvantage has implications in the search for a higher education and employment as the research discusses the challenges Liberian newcomers face when attempting to secure stable employment.

### **6.3.2– Employment**

Another important challenge that Liberian migrants face when coming to Canada is finding suitable employment (Henin and Bennet 2002; Hyndman et al 2006; Hyndman and Walton Roberts 1999). Recent immigrants are likely to have a higher rate of unemployment and earn a lower wage than immigrants who have settled in the area for a few years (Weiner; 2008). “In comparison to other immigrant classes, refugees may face greater challenges in securing employment, and experience the highest levels of unemployment during the first six months of settlement” (Statistics Canada: LSIC 2005: 59–60; cited in Hyndman et al 2006: 354).

During the first year on the RAP program, GARs have the opportunity to look for employment and earn in salary up to fifty percent of their monthly allowance without any reduction (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2007). The GAR income support payment amount depends upon marital status. However, the allowance is so low that they face a situation where they have to find some part-time employment to make ends meet and assist family members by sending remittances. The main economic hardship refugees face occurs at the end of the first year when government or other sponsorship support ends and refugees need to decide whether to work or apply for social assistance. According to the longitudinal immigration database (IMDB), over 21 percent of GARs end up on social assistance after their first year in Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2008d). This is high especially when compared to six percent of Canadians and seven percent for immigrants of all categories (ibid.).

Government assisted refugees usually occupy low-level entry occupations when they start working. Moving upward in the labour market is challenging as opportunities for improving language skills, education and vocational training are often “inadequate” (Castle and Davidson 2000: 74). This creates what Pedraza (1991) has called an ‘occupational concentration’ as most Liberian women end up doing very similar types of low skilled work. Dolo (2003) also finds that “Liberian refugees (males and females) are heavily concentrated in low-wage, dead-end jobs [having] minimal opportunities for advancing in their occupational roles and statuses” (2003: 28). From 1990 to 2003, the period preceding the arrival of Liberian refugees, refugees after their first year earned an average of about \$14,000 per year (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2008d).<sup>9</sup> Five years after landing, they fared a little better with an annual average salary slightly over \$20,000 (ibid.). However, this research demonstrates that early on men tend to have more varied occupations mainly due to a higher level of education and especially a higher level of English. Four out of five female participants worked in occupations related to healthcare or cleaning such as housekeeping, cleaning, babysitting, or patient care. Only Mary, the participant that had access to an English education in Liberia was working as a customer service representative in a call centre. It takes even more time for women to access programs designed to assist them in job search activities due to the higher English language required to participate. Liberian male participants on the other hand, occupied a more diverse range of occupations including that of hotel kitchen cleaner, construction worker, ship builder, customer service representative in a

---

<sup>9</sup> The average income for Canadians is about \$33,000 per year

call center and automotive technician. Gender inequality in education and employment (although salaries are still fairly low for both women and men) seems to be rooted in the lack of access to education for women prior to resettling in Halifax.

As Nyemah (2008) argued, Liberian patriarchal cultural practices that privilege male power are less marked in Halifax. The precarious economic situation means that unless the woman or man has a wage that can support the other spouse or family members of the household, all members of the household need to contribute to reach a decent standard of living. None of the participants were in a position to be breadwinners for their respective households. Second, there is tremendous pressure on refugees to conform to Canadian cultural standards. These pressures come from settlement agencies, meetings with legal specialists and officers of the law, English teachers, settlement case workers, employment specialists, tutors, and coworkers, of whom all encourage a transition for newcomers to adapt to Canadian cultural social norms and laws. As a result, women and men often perceive work as the best alternative to integrate regardless of whether they are ready or not.

A few statistics are helpful to illuminate gender difference regarding participation rates in the labour market. A 2010 study from the Toronto Immigrant Employment Data Initiative (TIEDI) has provided useful data on gender in relation relative to the labour market performance of Canadian refugees. One of the conclusions that emerged from the research is that four years after their arrival to Canada, both refugee men and women were still experiencing major hurdles in their resettlement as they were more likely to “have high unemployment rates, longer jobless spells, longer time taken to secure their

first job in Canada, and have lower earnings” than any other immigration categories (Shields 2010: 12). Generally, according to Boyd and Pikkov (2005), immigrant women do not participate in the labour force to the degree that immigrant men do or even Canadian born women . “In 2001, 64 percent of all foreign born women were in the paid labour force compared to 70 percent of Canadian born women and 80 percent of immigrant men” (Lindsay and Almey, 2005; cited in VanderPlaat 2007: 8). The numbers for refugees is more dramatic as only 21.9 percent of refugee women participated in the labour force during their first six months as opposed to 54.5 percent for refugee men (Shields 2010: 5). Four years later, the participation rate improved to 63.9 percent for refugee women and 89.5 percent for refugee men (ibid.). These data from the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) indicates that refugee women are much less likely to find employment than their male counterparts (VanderPlaat 2007). Further research is needed to confirm if indeed refugee women are slowly closing the gap as the numbers seem to confirm. Consequently, this disparity in the labour force participation further reinforces the inequalities between Liberian women and men. However, despite the early disadvantage of women in finding employment, not all aspects of their experiences are negative.

The findings show that gender has a tremendous impact on how work is perceived for men and women. Ethnographers have observed that when women are introduced to work they gain some independence (Malher and Pessar 2006). The data in this study confirm that for Liberian women the ability to work means that they may gain greater independence from men than was possible given the Liberian culture gender hierarchy.

With increased economic opportunities women can choose to have their own household and as a result resist gender and general subordination to men. In Nova Scotia, while the status of the male participants has declined in comparison to their former Liberian status, the status of female participants has shifted especially when they enter the wage economy. According to Dolo (2003) who researched Liberians in the United States:

In the old country, men generally had high status, while women had lower socioeconomic status. In the new country, men feel degraded because their status decreases significantly, while women who previously had lower status in the old country experience status increases. Opportunities for women in the new country are relatively immense, appealing, and rewarding. Hence, they tend to adapt more easily. This results in additional disruptions in the personal and marital lives of refugees (2003: 7).

However, as other researchers show that same economic freedom can result in a high ratio of conflicts between men and women within the same household as such “changes threaten the positions of men who did not have equal financial power” (Gamburd 1995 cited in Nyemah 2008: 15). While employment is welcomed for women the ability of women to work is often perceived as a threat to the Liberian cultural ideal of masculinity and patriarchy for men as the household provider (breadwinner) of the family (Nyemah 2008).

Mary: “The men is the decision maker of the home (In Liberia) -- except when he is not around, then the women come in to take decision in his absence. [...] But when you move to Canada it is completely different, because in Africa, the women mostly depend on the men. And even if the woman is working in Africa [...], they still have to submit to their husband. They have to respect the men. But when they come to Canada, it’s a big difference, they all make confusion over money -- everyone wants to // contribute their own money. Because why, they all pay bills ... equally, everyone provide for the home. So, there’s no longer respect. Even the children highly respect their family, their parents, because -- at age 17 sometime even 16, the children are working and able to earn their own money too.”

In this quote, Mary demonstrates that one of the results of women's greater independence from men is that women have more freedom to do as they please, which may often be met with resistance by men who want to protect their patriarchal ways. However, that freedom has not often resulted in higher expectations or motivations to develop a career for women.

In his thesis on gender and transnationalism, Nyemah (2008) has argued that in Liberia, men usually held higher expectations regarding work. Expectations might be fueled by several motivations but one of the most important ones would be the need to get a high salary to support their families here in Halifax as many did in refugee camps - by leaving the camp to find employment in neighbouring cities and/or at home in Liberia. Expectations held by Liberian men tend to be a lot higher than for women who are at first grateful for any opportunity to work and bring some money home. Liberian male participants who work at a casual or 'survival' job perceive the opportunity as temporary:

Simon: One, education I want to obtain. What my plan within myself to do for my future is the time for me to do, my goal is to be a nurse. // number one, nurse to save the life of people. Two, to be able to support my family. [...]. Because what I am doing now, I do not consider it, although it is employment, but I don't consider it to be the rightful // (way). [...]. Employment, when I am educated, and if I reach my goal, then I can obtain a good job. [...]. What I am doing now is just to have some experience and also to get something like // to be able to pay my rent and then, carry on my school. When I reach my goal, then I'll be able to get good employment, yeah. To be able to do // things with my family.

In this quote, despite his working at a survival job, Simon indicates he sees this period as a transition or stepping stone towards a better situation for him and his family.



Women did not tend to have as high expectations as men and seemed to be more grateful for the opportunities they received. This can be attributed to the fact that the pressure to support the family is still perceived as the responsibility of men especially early in the resettlement process. When Liberian female participants worked in refugee camps, occupations were often related to sewing, cooking, selling, and child rearing - occupations similar to what they are doing here in Canada. Liberian female participants do have the opportunity to study in various occupations, but it is likely to take them more time to complete their education than men.

Structural factors also influence gender inequality in their search for employment. “Women’s settlement experiences in Canada are not only impacted from within the household, but also by state regulations, professional accreditation systems and class dynamics, which act as institutional and racial hurdles to employment and integration into the host society” (Greve & Salaff 2002; Man 2004; Kofman and Raghuram 2006 cited in Abdul-Razzaq 2007). One of the greatest challenges for a newcomer with a higher level of English is to access the post-education system in universities and colleges. This is true for men and women but is especially restrictive for women due to language.

To sum up, education and language are two of the most important factors that funnel Liberian refugees into low level entry work. The male participants have more diversity and options as female participants tend to be restricted to a smaller number of low paying occupations. Despite these barriers, women who enter the labour market often do benefit from obtaining more autonomy which enables their resistance to gender

subordination to men. As this research demonstrates, these differences in education and work opportunities are expressed in different ways for both women and men.

#### **6.4 Dealing with Gender Differences**

This section presents the main differences regarding how Liberians deal with gender in Halifax as opposed to when they were in a refugee camp or while living in Liberia. Here are four quotes from research participants that reveal how they perceive gender differences between men and women in Liberia.

Edith: In Liberia, men have the power. Yes, women have the right, women have the power, but men does more.

Evelyn: Men is always the higher (status). Women have to work to support the family in the home.

Simon: The same way in Liberia, people look at men as men -- , like having more authority. For example, in (Liberia), men is the head of the home, and then the women follow.

James: We feel, men is the head of the woman. Women understand that, yes men is the head of them, in most society [...].

It is clear from the language of the participants in these four quotes that there is power inequality in Liberia favouring men. According to the participants, traditionally in Liberia gender roles are based on the idea that men are the family breadwinners while women work at home and are in charge of rearing the children. The following comment from William confirms this perception:

William: Actually, a general notion in Africa [...] is that the women often stay at home, the men have to go, get the funds, so like, go win the bread and bring it home for the women to prepare. And the women have to take care of the children at home. [...]. It goes a long // to making the ladies not being serious to develop any sort of vocation or technical skill. Because they are // supposed to stay at home, do laundry, do the cooking, take care of the children, and stuff like that -- they only sit at home. But they realize

that the men are having too much power, because in this case if the man is the one bringing home money, whatever you want to do the men will have to know and the men will have to approve of it [...]. It gave them men the chance to cheat. [...]. (Men) have a lot of control, and that isn't good.

As a result of these gender ideologies, it would appear that men expect to exercise more control over women in several facets of their lives. However, women have developed some strategies to resist men's domination including gentle reminders about their legal rights.

Legal rights are another aspect where divided gender roles have important ramifications. In their negotiation and re-negotiation of their gender identity, the participants are faced with conflicting values and assumptions when coming to Canada. Liberian men still perceived themselves as breadwinners, more educated, and enjoying better job opportunities; while according to men, women took advantage of the legal system and their rights when re-negotiating their roles in resettlement. In Liberia, men enjoyed a monopoly of violence and could use it against women to exercise control. Conversely, women are told almost at the very point of entry into the country about the differences in the Canadian legal system.

Researcher: So they (settlement agencies) tell you about the law?

Edith: Yes, ok. It was in the school. The police come there, you know, they explained a lot of things. They can teach us. Police will come and then investigates. [...] They explained some things to me. Like for example, in Canada, you cannot apply violent without your right. When you own your right, and then somebody do something to you. You have the right ... to call the police [if] some people do something to me.

The knowledge of the legal system has engendered several changes in gender relationships. Men understand that women have more rights and enjoy greater equality

than they did in Liberia, but nevertheless men see this new situation as a threat to their masculinity which is critical in determining how they perceive themselves.

James: Here, the female they are legally respected, but [hesitation] if you get trouble with female here, your case difficult for men [...] regarding the law. I think they made the law in a way that the two sex are afraid of each other. You are afraid of the women, and sometime the women are sometime afraid of you. So it just make people relationship difficult to deal with [...]. We feel that the man are the head of the family, so the female give lots of respect [...]. Here, nobody get higher position. The female think they get the higher position, the men think they have the higher position, so it's just difficult.

Fear might be an important element of the men's reaction. The differences between the former and new role led to an increase in tensions between couples in this study. Even though the women were working, several of the married men seemed to demand that their partners carry out a double day in which women perform domestic tasks along with their employment schedule.

Patrick: So, no matter the woman now is working. Even when he get home, ... they want to wait until the woman come home and cook. Sometime we have to go and settle those dispute. Because the woman find it ... much of a burden for her to work [...], come back home cook. The man is not ready or prepared to help the woman. He still feel that the woman is responsible. [...] But in Africa typically // there are job for men and job for women. Like when we first came out and my wife saw a woman driving a bus it was too astonishing. Because she had never saw a woman driving a bus. That's a job for a men.

As a result of these conflicting values, the community has experienced a fairly large amount of tension between married couples (see Nyemah 2008). Some spouses even separated, or left for other provinces to resettle away from their partners, as was the case for one of the participants.

Another important gender issue facing Liberian migrants is money. The community members all want to have the opportunity to contribute their own money to the household. For men, it is seen as their role as provider, while for women it is the opportunity to gain the financial freedom and independence that is attractive to them here in Canada. “Here (in Halifax) there is confusion over money and that divides the community” (Mary). Furthermore, Nyemah (2008) has pointed out that the capitalist desire of buying unnecessary goods such as cell phones and other popular electronic goods has also contributed to further “economic pressures on family incomes” which in turn has led to an increase in the tensions within family relationships (2008: 62). As a result it also creates a lot of tension in the community that further contributes to a rise in conflicts such as separations, and arguments about how to use the money.

In summary, this section demonstrated that the wide gap in Liberian cultural practices related to gender roles is at the origin of some conflicts between women and men. Furthermore, some of the women have used the knowledge of the legal system to their advantage in a way that threatens the masculinity of men as they had previously understood it to be prior to resettling to Halifax. Since the roles of men are changing as they are no longer seen as being the sole provider of the household, men are struggling . This also has led to further conflicts.

### **6.5 Gender Roles, Responsibilities and Negotiations**

A research project conducted by Hyman et al. (2004) explored changing gender roles and adaptation to new roles among the Ethiopian community in Toronto. The findings reveal that men were doing more work at home but it was still women who did

most of the work, and there was “strong evidence of change in gender relations following migration, particularly in the areas of household responsibilities, work responsibilities and relationships” (Hyman et al. 2004: 3,10). One of these changes, gender role reversals, first became apparent in refugee camps for some participants.

Patrick: When we were in Ghana, I knew definitively that one day we get to a point where my wife only have need to be the cook in the home, to be the babysitter, or maybe be a housewife. So, I began to consider taking some responsibility that normally in Africa have been considered ... for women to do something, like take care of the children, wash the baby diapers, or maybe do some babysitting, and sometime cook. Like even today I cook when she was about to go work. [...] That doesn't just happen in typical African setting. So we began to practice it so that when we get here I would know what to do. [...] (Talking about some Liberians here) So, no matter the woman now is working. Even when he get home, ... they want to wait until the woman come home and cook. Sometime we have to go and settle those dispute. Because the woman find it ... much of a burden for her to work [...], come back home cook. The man is not ready or prepared to help the woman. He still feel that the woman is responsible.

It became apparent that Patrick was the exception to the rule with respect to how men reacted to life in refugee camps. The previous quote by Patrick demonstrates that, “local agents are not passive subjects of social change imposed by outsiders and external forces, but that they are able to transform supra-local influences and forces into local forms” (Schroeder and Watts 1991: 67). His knowledge of the situation allowed him to face it by being pro-active, which really allowed him to adapt to his new circumstances in Canada. The lack of knowledge about the new situation facing refugees when resettling in a new country can be an important element in the resistance to change and slow adaptation to new circumstances. When Liberian men in this study did not previously know anything about the Canadian society prior to their arrival, they tended to replicate a

micro-culture from their country of origin by transferring elements of their former lives into their new ones, including the patriarchal division of labour.

Furthermore, the quote from Patrick clearly illustrates that some male participants are still not willing to take on a more hands-on role with household responsibilities and often there are disputes around the topic of household chores. In his case, the knowledge he had accumulated from other relatives living in the United States has prepared him to change his expectations even before his arrival in Halifax. The process of change and integration takes time and at the time of the interviews, the participants were still struggling to deal with them on several fronts.

Patrick: I can't just change -- everything overnight. Integration is a process, and it's a gradual process. Gradually, I'm changing. But it is a process. [...] Integration, if you want to change from one culture to another is a gradual process. But if you force it will break -- in a sense

“A number of studies exploring migratory experiences to the USA suggest that immigrant women are more likely to develop personal and household strategies consistent with long-term or permanent settlement in the USA, while men pursue a more transnational strategy—in many cases with an eye to an eventual return to the country of origin” (Franz and Ives 2008: 7-8). When asked if they want to settle down in Halifax, live somewhere else in the world or go back to Liberia, the answers were quite diverse. The data in this research does not support Franz (2005) and Pessar's (1999) findings that migrant men tend to see their migration as temporary and aim to return home. In fact, only David wants to return home as soon as possible. James and Simon believe this is a great place to stay and have a family. William has two citizenships, Ghana and Liberia, and eventually hopes to apply for Canada as well. He wants to stay in Canada for at least

ten years and see what happens from there. Even David, providing he finds suitable employment, wants to stay in Halifax. The main reasons for participants to stay are that Halifax is a safe place to raise a family, which is a big attraction over larger cities like Toronto, as well as a place to obtain a good education. This is true as long as the participants can find employment.

For Liberian women, that question brought up more emotional responses. Mary wants desperately to go home as there is “no place like home”. She further adds:

Mary: As I said, I have been a refugee for so long. 14 years is not 14 days, it's not 14 months, it's not 14 weeks, it's not 14 hours. 14 years is 14 years and it's a long time. Being a refugee first of all, it's a very bad thing. It's disgraceful, it's humiliating. I mean it's everything, you see everything. You will be insulted, you will be looked down upon [...] It's not a good thing to be a refugee.

Nancy first answered enthusiastically: “I want to go back. I want to go back”. After a few second of silent reflection she added: “Excuse me, the question that you just mention if (I) want to go back. [...] I can go back and see my country and come back”. Bertha likes Halifax, but would love to go to her country to have a chance to be reunited with her mom:

Bertha: I think it would be nice to go home, because ... it is my second year. Before coming here, I got to realize that my mom is not alive -- with my little sister. But, I just got the information that they are still alive. So, I will be excited to go home if only the place is safe. It's very hard living here //, but it's better living here because you are safe, // no problem. Like back home, your are in school // people running away because of war. But here, when you settle down in one place, you are safe, and you feel relax. [...] That's the only reason why I would want to go back, because of my family.

Evelyn wants to stay as there is no better place for her children. She was clear that she did not want to go back and looked distressed when saying it. There is not one definite



answer or generalization that can be applied to understand the motivations of why Liberian women and men would want to stay or leave Halifax to settle elsewhere, or to go back to their country of origin. Answers will depend on the person's actual life experience and motivations, and are unique to each individual.

## **6.6 Dealing with Discrimination and Racism**

Discrimination itself does not differentiate by gender as women and men may undergo some form or another of discrimination. Even though this research does not have conclusive evidence on the impact of discrimination upon gender, examples of discrimination are essential to understand the everyday lives and challenges of the Liberian participants. Discrimination often come as a shock as the Liberians expectations hold a view of Canada as a society free of any racism and discrimination. Everyday examples of discrimination leave scars that take time to heal and shape how they now perceive themselves and the society around them. There are several ways in which Liberian newcomers may be discriminated against, including the following: “the way they dress, lack of English skills, economic status, non-recognition of their educational qualifications and credentials, inability to advocate sufficiently, lack of knowledge of Canadian culture and how Canadian institutions work, [and finally] racial and ethnic backgrounds” (Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre 2008). Examples of discrimination for the Liberian participants included: being rejected at school; not being offered an interview for a job for which the candidate was overqualified; being labelled because of one's accent; having a cold reception by a landlord while visiting an apartment in search

of accommodation when the owner welcomed the previous “white” visitors with open arms.

Another example of discrimination for Liberian refugees and immigrants in general is not receiving calls for interviews when having a foreign name on a resume. When discussing not getting any response from his job search as a professor in Canadian universities, David concluded:

David: Maybe even my name. Because there are many ways to determine who the person is. [...] I worked with a little female resource ... personnel before. And the first thing you look at when you get the application is the name. [...] Some people they just look at it and they just // (throw it away) -- It's a fact.

This fact is indeed supported by a UBC study that job applicants having foreign names have fewer chances to be called for an interview (Oreopoulos 2009). Oreopoulos' findings suggest that there is “employer discrimination against applicants with ethnic names or with experience from foreign firms [as] those with English-sounding names received interview requests forty percent more often than applicants” with a foreign sounding name (2009: 5). Although this research does not have the data to support this point, since the Liberian participants are coming from ethnic clans and not from Americo-Liberian descent, all of them have foreign names that might contribute to discrimination when looking for employment.

Another instance of discrimination happens in learning institutions. In the case of Bertha, the discrimination was experienced in her everyday life when she attended school.

Bertha: Since I started to go to school, it's very hard to sharing with someone in class [...] When I go to class I sit alone. You don't get

someone to join with you //, that want to share with you. Yeah. Most (classmates), yeah. [...] So I just stood there, I don't talk. Sometime we have presentation, people share in group, so I am alone. Cause people don't want to join. But for me I don't think that it's a problem // because // I am there to learn. [...] // Maybe it's because I am not used to the culture, that's why I think I will get used to it. When I am used to it I think everything is going to be ok. [...]. Here when you have to make a friend, it's not like back in Africa where you say "Can you be my friend?" Because here everybody is independent.

For Bertha, discrimination became the norm at school and as a result, she developed some apprehension towards going to post secondary education for the time being. I asked David if he had any positive or negative examples of discrimination:

David: [...] It's a difficult question. I am not interacting with people you know. But one thing I realize here is the Black community, they tend to be resentful. Yes indeed, very resentful -- most of them, -- I don't even know why. [...] I can give you the first time I ever experienced -- in my life that indeed there's racism when I was a student at the University of Ghana. That was the first time in life. That a Ghanaian, my roommate told me ... "You came to study in our university. The space you are having a Ghanaian should have taken your space". I said "why"? "Because you are a Liberian" (he answered). That was my first time in life. Yes. There's racism everywhere. Steven, it's not colour ..., racism is not about colour, no way. It's not colour -- it's nature in men. [...]

It is interesting that David used an example from what happened to him prior to coming to Canada. Despite all the negative experiences, he has not labeled them as either discrimination or racism but rather as he says in the aforementioned discussion about the name on the resume:

David: No that's not discrimination, ... that is what we called // intent fascism //. It's not discrimination, no way. That is intent fascism they call it, and that's the system that people are living here. [...] It is a presupposive, you know, mindset of people. It's presuppose, " ah you know that person is not from here //".

Often, the question is not whether racism and discrimination exist, but rather how it is perceived by the participants. As in the example of Bertha, discrimination became naturalized into their way of life.

In some cases, participants felt they had not faced issues of discrimination and racism.

Patrick: But here in Canada, is equal right. [...] The law will be there to protect me. My children can go to school. There's no discrimination. When somebody try to discriminate them, the law will protect them.

Simon: Sometimes people say there is racism concerning race. I don't know, I haven't experienced it yet. Do you understand? [...]. (About racism) If it is the will of some people then this should be something that is not good because Canada is made of immigrants so we are also immigrants. Everybody has to have the right to be given [...]

Edith: [...]. I am not going to school, for maybe people to look at me because I am a refugee, or (I am black), they have not done it to me yet. Or going to look for apartment "oh she is black, we can't give this house to her". Not yet.

Here it seems that Edith is almost expecting discrimination but since she is not actively socializing, she feels that she has not encountered any discrimination.

Yet in one instance, the researcher was present with Simon when looking for a place to live and witnessed how landlords changed their attitudes when they addressed him and his family. They spoke to the researcher in a completely different way, as if he was deserving of more respect than the participant. The reality was that Simon did not even notice how the landlord was treating him differently until it was mentioned to him even after attempting to prompt an answer by asking if he noticed any difference in the way the landlord treated him. The researcher witnessed that evident discrimination was not perceived as such by Simon; indeed the reaction of the landlord seemed to him to be

normal. “In addition to low incomes, many studies have identified racism on the part of landlords and housing providers to be among the most formidable barriers to accessing affordable and appropriate housing facing black Africans” (Francis 2009:15). Although service providing organizations seem to do well in showing Liberians the differences in the legal system, in the way children are treated, and so on, it seems that there is a void when discussing discrimination and racism.

In summary, women and men experience resettlement challenges in very different ways. All the male participants are educated in Liberia and therefore have better language skills that give them an advantage in terms of accessing education and finding employment. In contrast, four of the women in this study were not educated while in Liberia and struggled early on as they had to concentrate on learning the English language. While men occupied a more diverse range of occupations, women were concentrated in some specific jobs that were physically demanding. Women underwent a more dramatic change in terms of their former gender dynamics as they were able to access employment and also enjoy more rights that protect them. The wide gap and differences compared to the former Liberian cultural practices have resulted in an increase in conflicts between women and men. As men and women negotiate daily their new responsibilities and gender dynamics, women still find themselves doing most of the work as men resist gender equality.

## **Chapter Seven - Conclusions**

### **7.1 Conclusion**

After surviving the hardships of wars and refugee camps often for several years, the prospect of resettlement in Canada must have appeared like the end of all struggles with the perception that life is relatively 'easy' in Canada. Yet resettlement has created for Liberian refugees a different set of complex challenges that has made integration more difficult than first expected. This research first looked at refugee experiences based upon gender during their lives in refugee camps and most importantly, after resettlement. It further aimed to look at the challenges and their differential impacts on women and men. The hope is that lessons may be drawn from Liberian refugee experiences to apply to future GARs and PSRs in the broader context of resettlement in Canada generally, and Halifax specifically. This research has demonstrated that resettlement challenges are experienced differently not just by men and women, but also in accordance with different cultural practices and individual histories of the people concerned.

The first step in the research process was to interview five Liberian women and five Liberian men. Originally, this research was supposed to be on the themes of identity construction in the context of resettlement. Early in the interview process, it became evident that the theme of gender and resettlement challenges was predominant in the lives of refugees. A refocusing of the thesis thus allowed a better analysis of the data that was obtained. This in turn contributes to the relevance of the findings as they were driven by the participants themselves as opposed to a specific agenda of the researcher.

This thesis has attempted to go beyond the three approaches of gender and development by looking at the interconnected complexities of relations between men and women and how these, in turn contribute to gender dynamics. The research reinforces the literature that claims that women are experiencing more challenges with greater impact on their ability to integrate within Canadian society. At the same time however, the research challenges the idea that all Liberian refugee men and women will act according to a set of rules defined for them. Not all men have benefited from the comparative advantage, as David has struggled more than any other participant due to having a higher education, increased structural barriers and higher expectations.

The data in this study suggest the presence of an interesting paradox. On the one hand, Liberian women enjoy more equality in terms of rights and a higher status relative to their position in Liberia, which is represented as a rise of symbolic benefit from resettlement. On the other hand, women are disadvantaged in their access to resources which is represented by a lack of access to a proper education, training, and employment. The reverse is true for men who suffer from relative deprivation, feeling they have lost whatever prestige, authority, and respect they previously held as the head of the family in Liberia and relative to their class status. There is a need to further investigate if this still applies over time as women gain increased opportunities to go to school and access training that might improve their access to resources. It would also be interesting to see how it applies to other refugee groups in Canada.

The main findings indicate that gender has a profound impact on the resettlement dynamics of Liberian refugee which are reshaped and negotiated by the participants in

their daily lives. This research has argued that in the earlier part of the resettlement process, due to the patriarchal nature of the Liberian society, men have a comparative advantage in resettlement because of the importance placed on educating young males in rural areas of Liberia. This access to a Liberian education gave them more opportunities to get further educational or vocational training in a reasonable amount of time. This is less true for women. In addition, this early access may also have enabled men to become more self-assured, confident and to do well in educational contexts. In contrast, in this study at least, women are less likely to have been exposed to a more formal style of education. This educational advantage originated in the patriarchal Liberian society which privileges men and assigns the role of women to child rearing practices. This relates to the key theme in the literature that women have to bear the fruit of prolonged constraints which can inhibit their ability to successfully integrate into their new surroundings. Women's lack of access to education, along with the necessity to care for children and the elderly, may also decrease their opportunities to improve their English language skills which in turn slows down their integration into the workforce.

Furthermore, the level of education and language abilities of the participants were often too low to allow them to participate in regular activities designed to assist newcomers in finding work. For instance, when the English level is lower than the level 5 or 6<sup>10</sup>, refugees are excluded from other programs offered to all immigrants such as job search workshops, English classes for labour market, business development workshops, work placement opportunities, practice interviews, and mentoring.

---

<sup>10</sup> None of the Liberian men were below level 5. Three Liberian women were below the level 5, one was in high school (English level is non available), and one was higher. This is the same woman who was born in a larger city and had an access to education.



Although both the men and women's jobs provided low wages, the men in this study had a greater diversity of occupations. The women's occupations were concentrated in services such as cleaning and housekeeping. This research demonstrates that early on men tend to have more variety of occupations, mainly due to a higher level of education and English proficiency. However, with time, it seems that women may get access to education when their language level improves. Two years after the original interviews, two of the women were able to successfully register in an educational program. This may demonstrate that when the language level of the women improves, the Liberian women are able to take advantage of the training opportunities to improve their lives. Further research will be needed to verify that women do indeed get access to an education and better employment opportunities which result in a greater economic autonomy. With increased economic opportunities and better knowledge of their legal rights, women can choose to resist subordination to men. While the male participants have acknowledged that their status have been lowered in comparison to their former Liberian status in terms of being the provider for the family, the female participants feel that their status has been raised as they acquired more social and economic independence than ever before. In terms of gender and development, this corresponds to the potential transformation and negotiation of unequal gender relations, empowerment and integration of women within the Canadian Society.

Men usually held higher expectations regarding resettlement and work. Liberian women were more accepting of their working conditions as they felt privileged by the sheer opportunity of being able to work. Despite these challenges, providing that

employment could be found, both men and women generally wanted to stay in Halifax as it is a safe place to raise a family, and get a good education.

There were several gender differences that resulted in an increased amount of conflicts between men and women. The increased status of women and increased rights for women did threaten the masculine identity of men who have been socialized to provide for the family. In addition, men were reluctant to take on a more hands-on role with household responsibilities. As a key theme, the literature has argued that masculinities are complex entities which are socially constructed and negotiated by the experiences of men's dominance and women's subordination. This means that the experiences of Liberian women and men in refugee camps and Liberia has had implications for how men and women see themselves. For men, the concept of not being able to provide for the family, which has been a cultural norm, has resulted in a psychological struggle to understand their place within Canadian society and as part of the Liberian group. For men the opportunity of women to gain financial freedom and independence is seen as a threat to a cultural norm and way of being.

Outside of the shared experience of war, the spectrum of refugee experiences is extremely diverse. From a policy perspective, this means that policy makers cannot use a "one size fits all" approach to apply to all refugee situations. All levels of government must be careful not to create policies and programs that may reinforce cultural practices that advantage men and ignore the needs of women. One practical solution would be to fund employment programs and workshops that offer the same services about job search training but at a lower level of English proficiency, allowing the use of interpreters when

necessary. The program could be offered in the evening to ensure it does not interrupt school or work schedules and childminders could be incorporated into the facility to care for the children. This would allow refugees with a lower level of English (often women in this case study) to have access to precious information from which they were previously excluded. In addition, more funding could be secured for daycare to allow them to participate in programs beyond language school.

These findings could also inform better practices for front line workers who carry out governmental programs. It is imperative for settlement workers to be informed about different cultural practices in terms of gender. Recognizing and understanding that men and women are different and react in varied ways will contribute to needs assessment and better resettlement outcomes.

It is the hope of this study that research with particular cultural groups will allow for a better understanding of the specific needs of refugee women and men by settlement workers, funders, government officials, as well as groups of refugees themselves. More research needs to be done with other cultural groups to allow comparisons of the similarities and differences among refugee groups with diverse cultural practices and experiences.

In the course of this research, it became obvious that some of the previously large gaps between Liberian women and men had started to shrink. What will the situation be in five or ten years as the permanent residents become Canadian citizens? The paradox between the symbolic and material needs to be further investigated. Hopefully, a long term study could be conducted to measure the impact of time on how these challenges are

dealt with and identify the remaining discrepancies between women and men. At the very least, a similar study can be conducted in a few years to assess how the gender dynamics and challenges have evolved with more time in the country. In addition more research is needed on the second generation of Liberians to compare how their experiences have differed from that of their parents. There is also a need for further research on the gendered impact of resettlement agencies and governmental policies with regard to the refugee resettlement process. Liberian refugee men and women are not vulnerable and passive individuals, but rather active participants, willing and ready to contribute to this diverse society. Understanding and addressing the challenges they face will certainly allow them to better integrate within our presumably welcoming communities.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abdi, A.W. (2006). Refugee, Gender-Based Violence and Resistance: A Case Study of Somali Women in Kenya. In E. Tastsoglou & A. Dobrowlsky (eds.), *Women, Migration and Citizenship. Making Local, National and Transnational Connections*, Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 231-251.
- Abdul-Razzaq, D. (2007). *Locating 'Home' in Transnational Spaces: The Narratives of Middle Eastern Immigrant Women in Halifax, Nova Scotia*. A Master of Arts Thesis, Halifax, Nova Scotia: Dalhousie University.
- Adebajo, A. (2002a). *Building Peace in West Africa: Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Adebajo, A. (2002b). *Liberia's Civil War. Nigeria, ECOMOG, and Regional Security in West Africa*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- African Women and Peace Support Group. (2004). *Liberian Women Peacemakers. Fighting for the Right to Be Seen, Heard and Counted*, Trenton, NJ: African World Press.
- Allen, R. (2009). Benefit or Burden? Social Capital, Gender, and the Economic Adaptation of Refugees. *International Migration Review*, 43 (2), 332-365.
- Archer, L. (2001). "Muslim Brothers, Black Lads, Traditional Asians": British Muslim Young Men's Construction of Race, Religion and Masculinity, *Feminism & Psychology*, 11 (1), 79-105.
- Ardener, E. (1975). Belief in the Problem of Women. In S. Ardener (ed.), *Perceiving Women*, London: Dent, 1-17.
- Bahlbi, Y. M. (2009). *The end of War Does not Guarantee the Existence of Peace: the Eritrean Refugee Influx in the Post-War Period*. Master's Thesis, Dalhousie University: Halifax.
- Barnett, L. (2007). *Bill C-57: An Act to Amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*. Parliamentary Information and Research Services, LS-557E, Library of Parliament: Ottawa.
- Barriteau, V. E. (1999). Feminist Theory and Development: Implications for Policy, Research, and Action. In Jane L. Parpart, M. Patricia Connelly, and V. Eudine Barriteau (eds.), *Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Development*, Ottawa: International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

- Bauder, H. (2003). "Brain Abuse" or the Devaluation of Immigrant Labour in Canada, *Antipode*, 35 (4), 699-717.
- Bekoe, D., and Parajon, C. (2007). *Women's Role in Liberia's Reconstruction* (USIP Peace Briefing, May 2007), retrieved on April 14, 2009, [http://www.usip.org/pubs/usipeace\\_briefings/2007/0530\\_liberia\\_women\\_reconstruction.html](http://www.usip.org/pubs/usipeace_briefings/2007/0530_liberia_women_reconstruction.html).
- Bennett, J. (2006). *History Matters. Patriarchy and the Challenge of Feminism*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Boserup, E. (1990). *Economic and Demographic Relationships in Development*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Boserup, E. (1970). *Woman's Role in Economic Development*, New York: St Martin's Press.
- Boyd, M. (1999). Gender, Refugee Status and Permanent Settlement, *Gender Issues*, 17 (1), 5-21.
- Boyd, M. and Pikkov, D. (2005). *Gendered Migration, Livelihood and Entitlements: Migrant Women in Canada and the United States*. Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.
- Braidotti, R., Charkiewicz, E., Hausler, S., and Wieringa, S. (1994). *Women, the Environment and Sustainable Development: Towards a Theoretical Synthesis*, London: Zed Press.
- Brettell, C., et al. (1992). Anthropology and the Study of Immigrant Women. In D. Gabaccia (ed.), *Seeking Common Ground: Multidisciplinary Studies of Immigrant Women in the United States*, Greenwood Press: Westport CT.
- Brown, D. (1982). On the Category 'Civilized' in Liberia and Elsewhere, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 20, 287-303.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge.
- Callamard, A. (1996). Flour is Power: The Gendered Division of Labour in Lisongwe Camp, in Wenona Giles, Helene Moussa, Penny van Esterik (eds.), *Development and Diaspora: Gender and the Refugee Experience*, Dundas, Ont: Artemis.
- Carving, A. (2005). *Life in Liberian Refugee Camps in Ghana*. *Global Voices*. Berkman Center for Internet and Society. Harvard Law School, retrieved April 6, 2007, <http://www.globalvoices.org>.

- Castles, S., and Davidson, A. (2000). *Citizenship and Migration: Globalization and the Politics of Belonging*, New York: Routledge.
- Chua, P., Bhavnani, K., and Foran, J. (2000). Women, Culture, Development: a New Paradigm for Development Studies?, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 23 (5), 820-841.
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) (2010a). *Balanced Refugee Reform: Moving Ahead with Refugee Reform*, Ottawa: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, retrieved on September 25, 2010, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/reform.asp>
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) (2010b). *Refugees: Resettlement from Outside Canada*, Ottawa: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, retrieved on September 25, 2010, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/index.asp>
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) (2010c). *Government-Assisted Refugee Program*, Ottawa: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, retrieved on September 25, 2010, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/resettle-gov.asp>
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) (2009). *Facts and Figures 2008: Immigration Overview: Permanent and temporary Residents*, Ottawa: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, retrieved on December 3, 2009, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/ENGLISH/resources/statistics/facts2008/permanent/02.asp>
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) (2009b). *Citizenship Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration, 2009*. Section 5, Gender-Based Analysis of the Impact of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, Ottawa: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, retrieved on December 8, 2009, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/annual-report2009/section5.asp>
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada website (CIC) (2008a). *The Refugee System in Canada*, retrieved on August 23, 2008. <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/canada.asp>
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada website (CIC) (2008b). *What you Need to Know about Canada, Refugee Resettlement in Canada, Information Bulletin*, retrieved on August 25, 2008. <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/bhutanese.asp>
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) (2008c). *Facts and Figures 2007: Immigration Overview: Permanent and Temporary Residents*, Ottawa: Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

- Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) (2008d). *Canada's Refugee Resettlement Program: Overview, Challenges and Priorities*. Presented at 13th International Metropolis Conference in Bonn, Russia, Ottawa: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, retrieved on September 6, 2010, [http://www.metropolis2008.org/pdf/20081028/workshops/w028-28\\_sadiq-kareem.pdf](http://www.metropolis2008.org/pdf/20081028/workshops/w028-28_sadiq-kareem.pdf)
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada website (CIC) (2007c). *Facts and Figures 2006: Immigration Overview: Permanent Residents*, retrieved on August 25, 2008. <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/facts2006/permanent/index.asp>
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada website (CIC) (2007d). *Refugees: Sponsoring refugees*, retrieved on September 28, 2008. <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/index.asp>
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada website (CIC) (2005). *Facts Financial assistance and loans: Resettlement Assistance Program*, retrieved on September 28, 2008. <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/resettle-assist.asp>
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada website (CIC) (2002). *A Statistical Profile of Government-Assisted Refugees*, retrieved on July 6, 2009. [http://www.srdc.org/uploads/statistical\\_profile.pdf](http://www.srdc.org/uploads/statistical_profile.pdf)
- Clatterbaugh, K. (1997). *Contemporary Perspectives on Masculinity: Men, Women, and Politics in Modern Society*, Central Avenue, USA: Westview Press.
- Clegg III, A. (2004). *The Price of Liberty: African Americans and the Making of Liberia*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Connell, R. W. (2005). *Masculinities*, 2nd Edition. Berkeley : University of California Press.
- Connell, R.W. (2005a). Masculinities and Globalization. In M. B. Zinn, P. Hondagneu-Sotelo & M. Messner (eds.). *Gender Through the Prism of Difference*, 3rd Edition, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Connell, R. W. (2000). *The Men and the Boys*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Crapanzano, V. (1980). *Tuhami: Portraits of a Moroccan*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Department of Justice Canada website. (2007). *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act 2001*, c. 27, retrieved on August 21, 2007. <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/I-2.5/text.html>



- Dick, S. (2002). *Liberians in Ghana: Living Without Humanitarian Assistance*. *New Issues in Refugee Research*, Working paper No.57, United Kingdom: Oxford University.
- Dolo, E. T. (2003). *Gender-Linked Role and Status Changes among Liberian Refugees in the United States*. A doctoral thesis submitted to the faculty of Graduate School of the University of Minnesota.
- Dobrowolsky, A. (2008). Interrogating 'Invisibilization' and 'Instrumentalization': Women and Current Citizenship Trends in Canada, *Citizenship Studies*, 12 (5), 465–479.
- Dunn, D.E., Beyan, A.J., Burrowes, C.P. (2001). *Historical Dictionary of Liberia*. 2nd Edition, Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, Inc.
- Dunn-Marcos et al. (2005). *Liberians: An Introduction to their History and Culture*. Washington: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Duva, A. M. (2002). *Liberia and the United States: A Complex Relationship, Global Connections, Liberia*. Public Broadcasting Service Website, retrieved on December 20, 2008, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/globalconnections/liberia/essays/uspolicy/index.html>.
- Eastmond, M. (1993). *Reconstructing Life: Chilean Women and the Dilemmas of Exile*. In G. Bujis (ed.), *Migrant Women: Crossing Boundaries and Changing Identities*, Oxford: Berg.
- Ellis, S. (1999). *The Mask of Anarchy: The Destruction of Liberia and the Religious Dimension of an African Civil War*. New York: New York University Press.
- Ellis, S. (1995). Liberia 1989-1994: A Study of Ethnic and Spiritual Violence, *African Affairs*, 94, 165-197.
- Fontana, A., Frey, J. (2000). The Interview: From Structured Questions to Negotiated Text. In N. Denzin, and Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 645-672). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publication
- Francis, B. (2002). Relativism, Realism, and Feminism: an Analysis of some Theoretical Tensions in Research on Gender Identity. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 11, (1), 39-54.
- Francis, J. (2009). "You Cannot Settle Like This": *The Housing Situation of African Refugees in Metro Vancouver*, Metropolis British Columbia, Working Paper Series No. 09 – 02, April 2009.

- Franz, B. (2005). *Uprooted and Unwanted: Bosnian Refugees in Austria and the United States*, College Station: Texas A& M University Press.
- Franz, B. (2003). Bosnian Refugee Women in (Re)Settlement: Gender Relations and Social Mobility. *Feminist Review*, 73, 86-103.
- Franz, B., and Ives, N. (2008). *Wading Through Muddy Water: Challenges to Liberian Refugee Family Restoration in Resettlement*. Paper presented for the 49th Annual International Studies Association Convention called: "Bridging Multiple Divides". In San Francisco, CA, March 26th - March 29th, 2008.
- Fuest, V. (2008). 'This is the Time to Get in Front': Changing Roles and Opportunities for Women in Liberia. *African Affairs*, 107 (427), 201-224
- Gamburd, M. R. (1995). Sri Lanka's Army of Housemaids: Control of Remittances and Gender Transformations, *Anthropological*. Waterloo: University of Waterloo: 37 (1), 49- 80.
- Gardiner Barber, P. (2006). Locating Gendered Subjects in Vocabularies of Citizenship. In Evangelia Tastsoglou and Alexandra Dobrowolsky (eds.), *Women, Migration and Citizenship: Making Local, National and Transnational Connections*. London: Ashgate Press, pp. 61- 83.
- Garfinkel, H. (1967). *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Getu, H. Nsubuga, J. (1996). Health Issues Affecting Sub-Saharan African Women Refugees, in Wenona Giles, Helene Moussa, Penny van Esterik (eds.), *Development and Diaspora: Gender and the Refugee Experience*, Dundas, Ont: Artemis.
- Giles, W. (1999). Gendered Violence in War: Reflections on Transnationalist and Comparative Frameworks in Militarized Conflict Zones. In D. M. Indra (ed.), *Engendering forced migration: theory and practice*, 83-93. New York and London: Berghahn Books.
- Giles, W, et al. (1996). Introduction. In Wenona Giles, Helene Moussa, Penny van Esterik (eds.), *Development and Diaspora: Gender and the Refugee Experience*, Dundas, Ont: Artemis.
- Glaser, B.G., and Strauss, A.L. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, Chicago: Aldine.
- Glenn, E. (1986). *Issei, Nisei, Warbride: Three Generations of Japanese American Women in Domestic Service*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

- Goodale, J. C. (1971) *Tiwi Wives*. University of Washington Press: Seattle.
- Gordon, A. (1996). *Transforming Capitalism and Patriarchy. Gender and Development in Africa*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.
- Gough, B. (1998). Men and the Discursive Reproduction of Sexism: Repertoires of Difference and Equality. *Feminism Psychology* 1998 8 (1), 25-49.
- Government Canada (2004). *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook and Country Chapters, Country Chapters: Canada*, retrieved on August 23, 2008. <http://www.unhcr.org/protect/PROTECTION/3c5e55594.pdf>
- Greve, A. and Salaff, J.W. (2004) Can Chinese Women's Social Networks Migrate?," *Women's Studies International Forum* 27: 149-162.
- Grieco, E.M., and Boyd, M. (2003). *Migration Fundamentals. Women and Migration: Incorporating Gender into International Migration Theory*, Migration Policy Institute Website, retrieved on December 18, 2010, <http://www.migrationinformation.org/feature/display.cfm?ID=106>
- Grieco, E.M., and Boyd, M. (1998). *Women and Migration: Incorporating Gender into International Migration Theory*, Working Paper, Center for the Study of Population, Florida: Florida State University, WPS 98-139 0740-9095.
- Habtezghi, N. (2008). Band of Women. *Essence*, 38 (12), 68.
- Halifax Chamber of Commerce (2009). Report on Population Crisis, *At Issue: A Business Voice Special Report*, Halifax: Halifax Chamber of Commerce.
- Halifax Immigrant Learning Center. (2008). *Through the Lens. Helping Newcomers Speak about Racism and Discrimination in Canada*, Halifax: Halifax Immigrant Learning Center.
- Handlin, O. (1951) *The Uprooted*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Harris, D. (1999). From 'Warlord' to 'Democratic' President: How Charles Taylor Won the 1997 Liberian Elections. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 37 (3), 431-455.
- Hawkesworth, M. (2006). *Feminist Inquiry. From Political Conviction to Methodological Innovation*, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.
- Henin, B., and Bennet, M. R. (2002). *Immigration to Canada's Mid-Sized Cities: A Study of Latin Americans and Africans in Victoria, B.C.*, Working Paper Series 02-22 Vancouver Centre for Excellence: Research on immigration and integration in the metropolis.

- Herdt G. H, (ed.). 1994. *Third Sex, Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History*. New York: Zone.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. (1994). *Gendered transitions*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Horizons. (2002). Canada's Immigration System, *Horizons* (Public Works and Government Services Canada), 5, (5), 27-29.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. (1992). Overcoming Patriarchal Constraints: The Reconstruction of Gender Relations Among Mexican Immigrant Women and Men, *Gender and Society*, 6, 393-415.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. & Messner, M. (2000). Gender displays and Men's Power. The "New Man" and the Mexican Immigrant Man. In: M. B. Zinn; P. Hondagneu-Sotelo; and M. Messner (eds.) *Gender Through the Prizm of Difference*, (pp. 63-74), 2nd edition, Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Hooks, B. (1992). *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
- Houston, M. F., Kramer, R. G., Barrett, L. M. (1984). Female Predominance of Immigration to the United States Since 1930: a First Look. *International Migration Review*, 18, 908-63.
- Hyman, I., et al. (2004). *Gender, Violence, and Health: Post-Migration Changes in Gender Relations Among Ethiopian Immigrant Couples in Toronto*. Final Report from the Metropolis Website. Retrieved on July 22, 2008. [http://pcerii.metropolis.net/frameset\\_e.html](http://pcerii.metropolis.net/frameset_e.html)
- Hyndman, J., and Mclean, J. (2006). Settling Like a State: Acehnese Refugees in Vancouver, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 19 (3), 345-360.
- Hyndman, J. and Walton-Roberts, M. (1999). *Transnational Migration and Nation: Burmese Refugees in Vancouver*. Working Paper series 99-07. Vancouver Centre for Excellence: Research on immigration and integration in the metropolis.
- Indra, D. (1996). Some Feminist Contributions to Refugee Studies. In Wenona Giles, Helene Moussa, Penny Van Esterik (eds.), *Development and Diaspora. Gender and the Refugee Experience*, Dundas, ant: Artemis.
- Indra, D. (1989). Ethnic Human Rights and Feminist Theory: Gender Implications for Refugee Studies, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 2 (2), 231-242.

- Israelite, N., et al. (1999). Settlement Experiences of Somali Refugee Women in Toronto. Presentation for the 7th International Congress of Somali Studies York University, Toronto, July 10, 1999.
- Ives, N. (2007). More than a “Good Back”: Looking for Integration, *Refuge*, 24 (2), 54-63.
- Jaquette, J. (1982). Review: Women and Modernization Theory: A Decade of Feminist, *World Politics*, 34, (2), 267-284.
- Jedwab, J. (2006). Canadian Integration: The Elusive Quest for Models and Measures, *Canadian Diversity/Diversité Canadienne*, 5 (1), 97-103.
- Johnson, A. (1998). Ethnic Conflict in Post Cold War-Africa: Four Case Studies (Rwanda, Liberia, Somalia, and Kwszulu-Natal). In K. Christie (ed.), *Ethnic Conflict, Tribal Politics, a Global Perspective*, Cornwall: Curzon Press.
- Kehoe, A. (1992). The Muted Class: Unshackling Tradition. In C. Claassen (ed.), *Exploring Gender Through Archeology. Selected Papers from the 1991 Boone Conference*, Madison: Prehistory Press, 23-32.
- Kelly, L., Burton, S., Regan, L. (1994). Researching Women's Lives or Studying Women's Oppression? Reflections on What Constitutes Feminist Research, in Maynard, M., Purvis, J. (eds.), *Researching Women's Lives from a Feminist Perspective*, London: Taylor and Francis, 27-48.
- Kibria, N. (1990). Power, Patriarchy, and Gender Conflict in the Vietnamese Immigrant Community. *Gender & Society*, 4 (1), 9-24.
- Kofman, E. and Raghuram, P. (2006) Gender and Global Labour Migrations: Incorporating Skilled Workers, *Antipode* 38, (2): 282-303.
- Krahn, H., Abu-Laban, B. and Derwing, T.M. (2003). The Retention of Newcomers in Second and Third Tier Cities in Canada, *PCERII Working Paper Series*, No. WP01-03. Retrieved on May 7, 2008. <http://pcerii.metropolis.net/WorkingPapers/WP01-03.pdf>
- Krahn, H. et al. (2000). Educated and Underemployed: Refugee Integration into the Canadian Labour Market. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 1 (1), 59-84.
- Lamba, N.K. (2003). The Employment Experiences of Canadian Refugees: Measuring the Impact of Human and Social Capital on Quality of Employment. *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*. 40 (1), 45-64.

- Lerner, G. (1986). *The Creation of Patriarchy*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Li, P. (2003). *Destination Canada. Immigration Debates an Issues*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Li, P. (2003b). The Place of Immigrants: The Politics of Difference in Territorial and Social Space. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 35 (2), 1-13.
- Liebenow, J. G. (1969). *Liberia: The Evolution of Privilege*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Lindsay, C. and Almey, M. (2005). *Immigrant Women. Women in Canada. A Gender-Based Statistical Report*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada. 211-238.
- Lovejoy, P. (1983). *Transformation in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mackie, M. (1991). *Gender Relations in Canada, Further Explorations*, Toronto: Butterworths.
- Macklin, A. (1996). Opening the Door to Women Refugees: A First Crack, in Wenona Giles, Helene Moussa, Penny van Esterik (eds.), *Development and Diaspora: Gender and the Refugee Experience*, Dundas, Ont: Artemis.
- Malher, J. S., and Pessar, R.P. (2006). Gender Matters: Ethnographers Bring Gender from the Periphery toward the Core of Migration Studies. *International Migration Reviews*. 40 (1), 27-63.
- Malkki, L. (1997). News and culture: Transitory Phenomena and the Fieldwork Tradition. In A. Gupta, and J. Ferguson (eds.), *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Man, G. (2004). Gender, Work and Immigration: Deskillling Chinese Immigrant Women in Canada. *Women's Study International Forum* 27, 135-148.
- Marcus, G., Fischer, M. (1986). *Anthropology as cultural critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Martin, P.Y., and Turner, B.A. (1986). Grounded Theory and Organizational Research, *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 22 (2), 141-157.
- McLennan, J. (1996). Silent Screams and Hidden Pain: Barriers to the Adaptation and Integration of Cambodian Women Refugees in Ontario, in Wenona Giles, Helene Moussa, Penny van Esterik (eds.), *Development and Diaspora: Gender and the Refugee Experience*, Dundas, Ont: Artemis.

- McSpadden, L. A., Moussa, H. (1996). Returning "Home"? The Decision-Making Processes of Eritrean Women and Men. In Wenona Giles, Helene Moussa, Penny van Esterik (eds.), *Development and Diaspora: Gender and the Refugee Experience*, Dundas, Ont: Artemis.
- McSpadden, L. A., Moussa, H. (1993). I Have a Name: The Gender Dynamics in Asylum and in Resettlement of Ethiopian and Eritrean Refugees in North America. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 6 (3), 203-225.
- Mead, M. (1963). *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*. New York: Morrow.
- Moore, H. L. (1988). *Feminism and Anthropology*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Moran, M. H. (2005). Time and Place in the Anthropology of Events: A Diaspora Perspective on the Liberian Transition. *Anthropological Quarterly* 78 (2), 457-464.
- Moran, M.H. (1990). *Civilized Women. Gender and Prestige in Southeastern Liberia*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Morgenstern, Scott, and Peter Siavelis, eds. (2008). *Pathways to Power*. College Station: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Morokvasic, M. (1984) 'Birds of Passage are also Women', *International Migration Review*, 18(4): 886-907.
- Moser, C. (1993). *Gender Planning and Development: Theory, Practice and Training*, London: Routledge.
- Nagbe, H. (2010). *Promoting Gender Equality in Post-Conflict Liberia: Challenges and Prospects*, *University for Peace, Peace and Conflict Monitor*, retrieved on July 15, 2010, [www.monitor.upeace.org/archive.cfm?id\\_article=717](http://www.monitor.upeace.org/archive.cfm?id_article=717),
- Nanda, S. (1986). The Hijras of India: Cultural and Individual Dimension of an Institutionalized Third Gender Role. In E. Blackwood (ed.), *The Many Faces of Homosexuality*, Harrington Park, NY, pp. 35-54.
- Nawyn, S. J. (2006). Making a Place to Call Home: Refugee Resettlement Organizations, Religion, and the State. A Sociology Doctorate Thesis, Los Angeles: University of Southern California.
- Neuwirth, G., Clark, L. (1981). Indochinese Refugees in Canada: Sponsorship and Adjustment. *International Migration Review*, 15 (1/2), 131-140.

- Newman, D. (1984). *The Emergence of Liberian Women in the Nineteenth Century*, Washington, DC: Howard University.
- Newton, J. (1998). White Guys. *Feminist Studies* 24 (3), 572-598.
- Nilsson, D. (2003). *Liberia-The Eye of the Storm: A Review of the Literature on Internally displaced, refugees and returnees*, Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute.
- Nova Scotia. (2007). *Refugee Immigrants to Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Immigration Information and Fact Sheet 2006*, Nova Scotia Office of Immigration.
- Nova Scotia. (2005). *Nova Scotia's Immigration Strategies*, Nova Scotia Office of Immigration, retrieved on March 18, 2007, [http://www.novascotiaimmigration.com/images/meetings/Immigration\\_Eng\\_web.pdf](http://www.novascotiaimmigration.com/images/meetings/Immigration_Eng_web.pdf).
- Nyemah, J. (2008). *Transnational Migration and Gender Relations: the Case of Liberian Immigrant Families in Halifax*. Master's thesis, Halifax: Dalhousie University.
- Ong, A. (1993) On the Edge of Empire: Flexible Citizenship among Chinese in Diaspora, *Positions*, 1(3), 745-778.
- Oreopoulos, P. (2009). *Why Do Skilled Immigrants Struggle in the Labor Market? A Field Experiment with Six Thousand Résumés*, Metropolis British Columbia, Working Paper Series No. 09 – 03, May 2009.
- Ortner, S., and Whitehead, H. (eds.) (1981). *Sexual Meaning: The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ortner, S. (1974). Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture? In John McGee and Richard Worms (eds.), *Anthropological Theory*, California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 402-413.
- Parent, R. (2010). *Resettlement Assistance Program*. Presentation at Atlantic Region Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (ARAISA) Conference on September 21, 2010, St-John, Newfoundland and Labrador: Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC).
- Peacock, J. (1978). Symbolic Reversal in Social History: Transvestites and Clowns of Java. In B. Babcock (ed.), *The Reversible World: Symbolic Inversion in Art and Society*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, pp. 209-24.
- Pedraza, S. (1991). Women and Migration: The Social Consequences of Gender. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 17, 303-325.



- Pessar, P. R. (2006). Refugees and Gendered Citizenship. In R. Mahalingam (ed.), *Cultural Psychology of Immigrants*, Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. 217-240.
- Pessar, P. R., and Malher, S.J. (2003). Transnational Migration: Bringing Gender In. *International Migration Review*, 37 (3), 812-846.
- Pessar, P. R. (2000). *Sweatshop Workers and Domestic Ideologies: Dominican Women in New York's Apparel Industry*. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 18 (1), 127-42.
- Pessar, P. R. (1999). Engendering Migration Studies: The Case of New Immigrants in the United States. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 42 (4), 577-600.
- Pessar, P. R. (1999b). The Role of Gender, Households and Social Networks in the Migration Process: A Review and Appraisal. In *The Handbook of International Migration: The American Experience*, Charles Hirschman (ed.), New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 53-70.
- Pessar, P. R. (1994). *Sweatshop Workers and Domestic Ideologies: Dominican Women in New York's Apparel Industry*. Cambridge, MA USA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Pessar, P. R. (1986). The Role of Gender in Dominican Settlement in the United States. In *Women and Change in Latin America*, (ed.) June Nash and Helen Safa, South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey
- Polgreen, L. (2006). Nigeria Counts 100 Deaths Over Danish Caricatures. *New York Times*, February 24. <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/24/international/africa/24nigeria.html>
- Prebisch, K., Santamaria, L. M. (2006). Engendering Labour Migration: The Case of Foreign Workers in Canadian Agriculture. In E. Tastsoglou & A. Dobrowsky (eds.), *Women, Migration and Citizenship. Making Local, National and Transnational connections*, Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 107-130.
- Pressé, D., and Thomson, J. (2007). The Resettlement Challenge: Integration of Refugees from Protracted Refugee Situations. *Refuge* (Sept. 22, 2007), 48-53.
- Rajaram, P. K. (2002). Humanitarianism and Representations of the Refugees, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 15 (3), 247-264.
- Rathgeber, M. E. (1990). WID, WAD, GAD: Trends in Research and Practice, *Journal of Developing Areas*, 24 (4), 489-502.

- Reno, W. (1998). *Warlord Politics and African States*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Reno, W. (1996). The Business of War in Liberia. *Current History*, May 1996:211-215.
- Rich, A. (1976). *Of Woman Born*, New York, Norton.
- Riley, S. (1996). *Liberia and Sierra Leone. Anarchy or Peace in West Africa*, London: Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism.
- Rosaldo, M. and Lamphere, L (eds). (1974). *Woman Culture and Society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Rubin, G. (1975). Toward an Anthropology of Women. In Rayna R. Reiter (ed.), New York: *Monthly Review Press*, 157-210.
- Sanneh, L. (1999). *American Colonization and the Founding of Liberia. Abolitionists Abroad: American Blacks and the Making of Modern West Africa*, Harvard, Harvard University Press.
- Sassen, S. (2000). Women's Burden: Counter-Geographies of Globalization and the Feminization of Survival. *Journal of International Affairs*, 53 (2), 503-525.
- Sawyer, A. (2005). *Beyond Plunder: Toward Democratic Governance in Liberia*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Schroeder, R., and Watts, M. (1991). Struggling over Strategies, Fighting over Food: Adjusting to Food Commercialization among Mandinka Peasants in The Gambia. In Harry Schwarzweiler and Daniel Clay (eds.), *Research in Rural Sociology and Development: Vol. 5, Household Strategies*, Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 45-72.
- Scott, C. (1998). Liberia A Nation Displaced. In R. Cohen and F. M. Deng (eds.), *The Forsaken People Case Studies of the Internally Displaced*, Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 97-137.
- Secombe, W. (1986). Patriarchy Stabilized: The Construction of the Male Breadwinner Wage Norm in Nineteenth-Century Britain, *Social History*, 11 (1), 53-76.
- Sherrell, K. (2008). *Working to Get a Job: Barriers to Employment among Post-IRPA GARs*, MITACS-Metropolis BC internship, retrieved July 20, 2009 on Metropolis Website, [http://riim.metropolis.net/knowledge/ppt/Sherrell percent20MBC percent20ALMD percent20Symposium.ppt](http://riim.metropolis.net/knowledge/ppt/Sherrell%20MBC%20ALMD%20Symposium.ppt).
- Smith. S. (1998). Foreword by Stephen Smith. In M. Husband (author), *The Liberian civil war*. London: Frank Cass Publishers.

- Shields, J. et al. (2010). *Do Immigrant Class and Gender Affect Labour Market Outcomes for Immigrants?*, TIEDI Analytical Report 2, Toronto: Toronto Immigrant Employment Data Initiative.
- Stake, R. (2000). Case studies. In N. Denzin, and Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp.435-454), Thousand Oaks: Sage Publication.
- Stanley, L. & Wise, S. (1993). *Breaking Out Again: Feminist Ontology and Epistemology*, London: Routledge.
- Statistics Canada Website (2009). *Immigration in Canada: A Portrait of the Foreign-born Population, 2006 Census: Immigration: Driver of Population Growth*. <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/as-sa/97-557/p2-eng.cfm>, retrieved on July 10, 2010.
- Statistics Canada Website (2009a). Table 18. *Low Income Before Cut-Offs (1992 Base) for Economic Families and Persons not in Economic Families, 2005*. <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/ref/dict/tables/table-tableau-18-eng.cfm>, retrieved on December 16, 2010.
- Sutherland, E. (2008). *Refugee Children and Families: A Model for Successful Integration*, Calgary: Edna Sutherland and Associates.
- Tastsoglou, E., Dobrowolsky, A. (2006). Crossing Boundaries and Making Connections. In E. Tastsoglou & A. Dobrowolsky (Eds.), *Women, Migration and Citizenship. Making Local, National and Transnational Connections*, Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate.
- Tastsoglou, E., and Preston, V. (2005). Gender, Immigration and Labour Market Integration: Where we Are and What we Still Need to Know, *Atlantis: a Women's Studies Journal*, 30 (1). Re-printed in Policy Matters, a CERIS Publication (Toronto Metropolis Centre of Excellence).
- Tastsoglou, E., Ray, B., Preston, V. (2005). Gender and Migration Intersection in a Canadian Context, *Canadian Issues/Thèmes Canadiens*, Spring 2005, 91-93.
- Tastsoglou, E. & L. Maratou-Alipranti (eds.) (2003). Gender and International Migration: Focus on Greece. *The Greek Review of Social Research*. Athens.
- Tonkin, E. (1981). Model and Ideology: Dimensions of Being Civilized in Liberia. In L. Holy and M. Stuchlik (Eds.), *The Structure of Folk Models*, London: Academic Press, pp. 305-330.

- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2008). *The 1951 Refugee Convention*, UNHCR Website, retrieved on February 10, 2010, [http://www.unhcr.org/BasicFacts/Docs/Refugees\\_IDP\\_Stateless.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/BasicFacts/Docs/Refugees_IDP_Stateless.pdf)
- United Nations (2006). *Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division. World Population Prospects*, Table A.2, 37-42, retrieved on January 14, 2009. [http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/wpp2006/WPP2006\\_Highlights\\_rev.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/wpp2006/WPP2006_Highlights_rev.pdf).
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2006a). *Refugees by Numbers*, retrieved on August 14, 2008, <http://www.unhcr.org/basics/BASICS/4523b0bb2.pdf><http://www.unhcr.org/basics/BASICS/4523b0bb2.pdf>
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2000). *The State of the World's Refugees: Fifty Years of Humanitarian Actions*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- VanderPlatt, M. (2007). *Integration Outcomes for Immigrant Women in Canada: A Review of the Literature 2000-2007*. Atlantic Metropolis Centre, Working Paper No. 7.
- Walby, S. (1990). *Theorizing Patriarchy*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Walker, B. (2008). *The History of Immigration and Racism in Canada; Essential Readings*, Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc.
- Wasik, S. (2006). *Economic Insecurity and Isolation: Post-Migration Traumas among Black African Refugee Women in the Greater Vancouver Area*. Research on Immigration and Integration in the Metropolis (RIIM), Working Paper Series, No. 06-17, Oct. 2006.
- Weber, M. (1947). *The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation*. Free Press: New York.
- Weiner, A. (1976). *Women of Value, Men of Renown*. University of Texas Press: Austin.
- Weiner, N. (2008). Breaking Down Barriers to Labour Market Integration of Newcomers in Toronto. *Choices*, 14 (10), 2-42.
- Westerbeck, A. (2004). *Liberian Refugees Future*. Unicef New Zealand, retrieved April 6, 2007, <http://www.Unicef.org/schoolroom/refugees/Liberian.htm>.
- Wikan U. (1991). *The Xanith: A Third Gender Role? In Behind the Veil in Arabia: Women in Oman*, Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press, pp. 168-86.

Willis K. and Yeoh B. (eds), 2000. *Gender and Migration*, Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, USA, an Elgar Reference Collection

Young, K. (2002). WID, GAD, and WAD. In V. Desai and R. B. Potter (eds.), *The Companion to Development Studies*, London: Arnold.

## **APPENDIX I: Interview Guide**

### **Warm up questions about background**

1. How long have you lived in Canada? And previously how long did you spend in a refugee camp?
2. Have you resettled in Canada with the assistance of the Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program or as an asylum seeker? The difference is that asylum is for persons making refugee claims from within Canada, while the Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program is about people seeking protection from outside Canada. If you have resettled through the Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program, what institution, sponsored your resettlement? Was it the government, a social institution (A church for instance), a person/group?
3. Do you feel that (name of institution) has helped you do adapt and understand about Canadian life? How?
4. Are you interested to learn about the Canadian culture? What aspects of Canadian culture do you like and dislike?
5. Do you think Halifax and Canada are a good place for you to settle down and live? Why? Do you intend to go back home when the situation get better in Liberia

### **Main Questions**

1. What are the differences between Canadian and Liberian cultures?
2. What is the most challenging part of living in Canada? How do you deal with the challenges you face?
3. Among these cultural aspects: education, religion, conversations, way to look at child-rearing, roles in relation to status by sex, age, class, occupation and kinship, views of friendship, preference for cooperation or competition, which aspects have changed the most since coming to Canada and how did these cultural aspects change?
4. What are the elements of Liberian culture that you feel have been lost since arriving in Canada?

5. What does it mean to you to be a refugee in Canada? Does it impact your everyday life? If so, in what way does it impact you? For instance, do you have examples of positive or negative discrimination that might have occurred when you mentioned your status (i.e. work, school, relationships, church, and apartment search)?
6. What are the goals you want to accomplish about employment, education, and family in the short term and long term?
7. Do you personally wish to keep elements of the Liberian culture in your life here in Canada? If so, what do you do to keep the Liberian culture alive in the community or in your family? If not, why? What do you think should be done?
8. What recommendations (if any) do you have to help other Liberian refugees who might come to Canada?
9. What did you hope about living in Canada before you arrived in Halifax? How have your hopes and goals changed since your arrival?
10. On a personal level, did resettlement have a negative or positive impact on your personal life?
11. What do your friends and family (children/wife if applicable) think of living in Canada? As a result of resettling in Halifax, did you notice any change in your personal relationships (spouse, children, family, friends, colleagues)?
12. Do you feel that you have more power/authority living in Canada? What do you think are the reasons for your response?
13. How are women thought of by women and men in Liberia? Are the roles that women play in Liberia different or the same as what you have observed in Canada? Does your family (community) see the roles of women differently, now that you are in Canada?