



Participation of women in electoral politics in refugee settlements administration: A case study of South Sudanese in Palorinya refugee settlement, West Nile -Northern Uganda

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Disclaimer:

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Keywords

Gender, Political participation, Refugees, South Sudan, Women, power

List of Abbreviations

CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
COVID-19 - corona virus disease 2019
FGD - Focus Group Discussion
GBV – Gender Based Violence
GCR - Global Compact on Refugees
GoU - Government of Uganda
INGOs – International Non-Government Organizations
LC - Local Council
LCI - Local Council 1
LCII - Local Council 2
LCIII - Local Council 3

LWF - Lutheran World Federation

NGO - Non-governmental organization

OPM - Office of Prime Minister

PSNs - Persons with Special Needs

PWD – Persons with disabilities

RWC - Refugee Welfare Committees

RWC - Refugee Welfare Council

RWCI - Refugee Welfare Council 1

RWCII - Refugee Welfare Council 2

RWCIII - Refugee Welfare Council 3

SES - Socio-Economic Status

SPLA - Sudan People's Liberation Army

SPLA-IO - Sudan People's Liberation Army - In Opposition

TC - Transitional Constitution

UBOS – Uganda Bureau of Statistics

UCICA - Uganda Citizenship and Immigration Control Act

UN – United Nations

UNHCR - United Nations High Commission for Refugees

VSLAs - Village Savings and Loan Associations

WFP – World Food Program

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Abstract

This paper discusses the narratives of women's participation in electoral leadership positions and political spaces in Palorinya refugee settlement, West Nile, Northern Uganda. I use Gaventa's power cube and the concept of Intersectionality to analyse the narratives as given by the female and male research participants including refugees, I/NGO workers and staff of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) in Palorinya refugee settlement. The responses were gotten with the support of two field research assistants and my-self by employing qualitative methods of data collection including individual interviews by phone calls and in person interviews and holding FGDs whilst observing COVID-19 guidelines.

The paper discusses the factors influencing the participation of refugee women in electoral leadership of the settlement, how women who are elected into leadership are influencing development and make reference to the experiences of women who are in electoral leadership positions within the leadership spaces, in their families and the community at large.

The research found that refugee women find electoral leadership an important platform to lobby for their rights and to secure resources and opportunities for their families and communities. However, women are still struggling to find space for participation even when OPM and UNHCR reserved five positions for women through affirmative action. The study found that women who have served in the army in south Sudan would have more chances to be elected into leadership. It was also found that women do not get influential positions and get gendered positions like opinion leader for women, secretary for women among others which reinforce that women are good for women issues rather than general leadership. More so, men are still the ones influencing power and decision making directly and indirectly because they are more educated.

The study found that affirmative action is applauded for facilitating the entry of women into electoral politics; however a holistic approach is desired that will invite gate keepers of culture, facilitating education and other ways to ensure women's full participation. More so, it was found that women who are elected into leadership face are at higher chances of suffering from Gender Based Violence than their counterparts who are not in power. It was also found that intersecting identities like ethnicity, gender, degree of literacy, body dis(abilities) and social status were very important variables to women's ability to achieve leadership positions. I wrap up in the last chapter with a brief overview of the paper's discussion and draw recommendations for future research.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the background of the study which highlights the refugee situation in Uganda, the problem statement where I discuss the lack of (inadequate) refugee women in leadership of the settlement in Palorinya's Refugee welfare committee (RWC) structures. I also here give my personal and professional justification for choosing to focus on this subject and how relevant it is in the field of social sciences and development. To break the ground, I define the concept of political space and political participation which I will use a lot throughout the paper. Then further bring forth the research objectives and questions to which this research is based and attempts to respond.

1.1 Background

This study explores the space of political participation and leadership experiences of South Sudanese refugee women within Palorinya refugee settlement in Northern Uganda. The research attempted to look at what drives their motivation to (fully) engage or not, in the electoral politics and leadership of the settlement. But first, a brief overview of the refugee situation in Uganda;

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in April 2019 noted that Uganda is host to a total of 1,256,729 refugees. Of these, 66% are South Sudanese, majority of whom are women. According to Nyadera (2018), Refugees from South Sudan started fleeing the country's recent civil war in 2013 when conflict broke out between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM-IO) -which was challenging the leadership of the new government of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) under Silva Kiir. The two political factions failed to agree on a number of issues following the independence of South Sudan in 2011.

This follows Uganda's enactment of the 2006 Refugee Act which enables respect for refugee rights as embodied in the 1951 Convention. According to Ongara (2019), the 2006 Act allows refugees the freedom of movement and the government has moved an extra mile to provide them with agricultural land for purposes of sustainability.

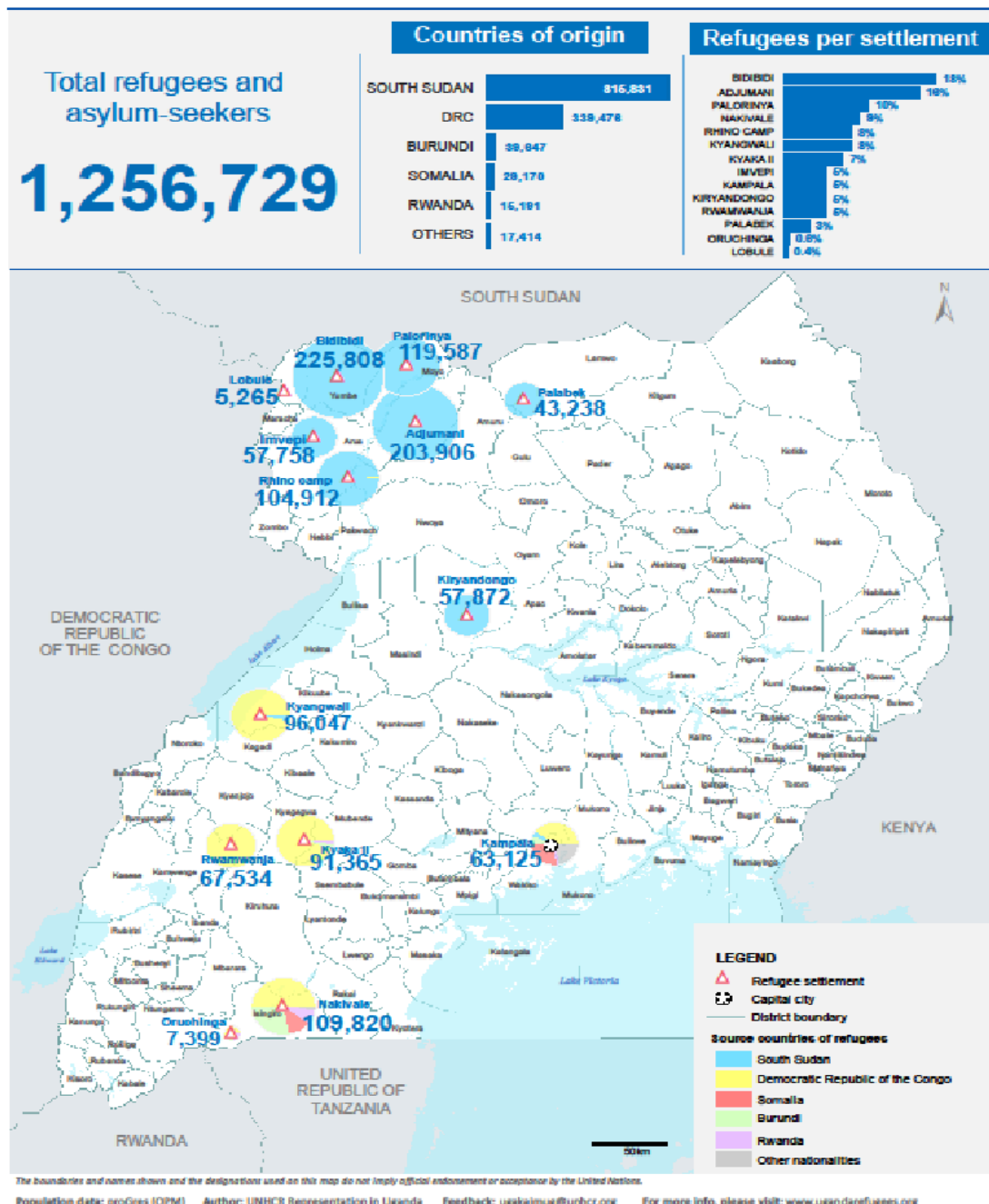
Illustration 1: *A map of Uganda showing statistics of refugees and asylum seekers*



Refugees and Asylum-Seekers in Uganda

Uganda Refugee Response

30 April 2019



From the map as illustrated by both the government of Uganda and the UNHCR, refugees from South Sudan are basically settled in Kiryandongo, Moyo, Koboko, Palabek, Yumbe, Arua, Lamwo and Adjumani districts (UNHCR 2019). This study looks at South Sudanese refugees in Palorinya settlement itula sub county in Moyo and obongi districts . Palorinya hosts a total of 122,889 refugees, 64,806 of whom are females (UNHCR and OPM 2019; OPM 2020). The high percentage of female refugees' vis a vis their male counterparts as per the refugee population in the settlement; lures one to

question whether these women are active and appropriate participation into the affairs of the settlement leadership and administration, which this research explores.

1.2 Justification and relevance of the research

1.2.1 Personal justification

Growing up in Uganda, I have realised that most women are not engaged in public spaces. When I was working in Arua, a refugee hosting district, I was exposed to the South Sudanese way of life and realised that for them it is even worse that women were almost not in the political arena. What was interesting is that they seemed to have internalised the situation that the men are meant to be the leaders. Although Uganda is catching up overall, I found that South Sudan is still struggling to engage women in the public space especially through electoral politics. In this case, I felt the need to understand if being in Uganda as refugees makes them have less potential or even more; could staying in Uganda have changed something? Could the increase in the attainment of education and exposure to development partners' interventions of women empowerment have helped to uplift their political engagement? What underlies the perception of a woman's ability or disability to engage in electoral politics among the South Sudanese refugees? How can women's participation in electoral politics be influenced? To understand these and more, I felt the need to focus my research on this topic.

1.2.2 Academic and professional reasons

As a student of Social Justice Perspectives (SJP), I find it prudent to find the aspects that improve on the efforts to achieve gender equality and equity. As such, the subject of women participation in electoral leadership is a crucial one as it brings women to the table of discussion and decision making in spaces of power. Women's political participation is fundamental at facilitating their direct engagement in spaces, levels and forms of power. Refugee women participation in electoral leadership has not been given focus because political engagement is majorly a citizen right. However, where there are structures of leadership even at refugee settlement local levels, it is important to analyse and highlight the participation of women. This research also contributes to the relevance of gender in peace and security matters as described in the UN resolution 1325 which mandates full participation of women at all levels of decision making in conflict and peace processes

1.3 Problem statement

Tracing from South Sudan, women's participation in the public space and electoral politics has been very low. This has been attributed to lack of education, discrimination, fear to participate, taking time in care/domestic work and childcare (South Sudan National election Bill 2012). This has not been any different even when the South Sudanese refugees settle into Uganda. For instance, Callamard (2002) analyses refugee women's participation and involvement in development and politics and observes that in many cases women were not encouraged into public spaces before the 1970s. To Callamard, the 1970s marked the start of realisation of women's rights worldwide. This involved analysing the status and position of refugee women and asylum seekers and their role in development in particular. Since

this was almost a new generation of women rights, international and national efforts were later made to improve the status and position of women in public arenas like development, and leadership. That was in addition to the fore gatherings of 1840s that were devoted to women's rights for instance in the United States (History.house.gov 2007¹)

However, although such drastic measures like adopting Security Council resolution 1325 of the UN were made in October 2000, (exactly 20 years as I write this), refugee women like South Sudanese in Palorinya refugee settlement have continued to be left out in peace and security participation especially through political engagement (Annan et al 2011; Ollek 2007). Therefore, this study cross-examines how refugee women take up public spaces in decision making using the political arena in Palorinya refugee settlement. The study also reflects on International standards and national mechanisms like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the 2003 and 2011 UN General Assembly resolutions on women's political participation and the Beijing platform for Action which all focus on equal gender participation and representation in political and public life (UNWomen 2020). I also look at UNHCR's declarations that affirm refugee women involvement and participation in leadership. As such, this paper closely looks at the programs done by development and partner organisations targeting to empower women to take up positions of leadership in the settlement. Other spheres of their life like education that necessitates and enables their inclusion and participation are explored. The international resolutions are what drives the interventions of all development partners (international organizations) and the state to ensure the wellbeing of each refugee. Therefore, these institutions are the starting point for this paper because they lay out what women leadership could look like in the refugee settlement. These institutions are also fundamental as initiatives of women empowerment. It would therefore be vital to analyse how these international instruments and treaties are used to bring women on sharing the "political cake" as a way of empowerment.

1.4 Defining Concepts-

The study uses the below concepts and their meaning;

Political space is used to mean "those institutional channels, political discourses and social and political practices through which the poor and those organisations working with them can pursue poverty reduction" (Gaventa 2006:26).

Political Participation "is action that influences the distribution of social goods and values" (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993)

¹History, Art & Archives, U.S. House of Representatives, Office of the Historian, Women in Congress, 1917–2006. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2007. "The Women's Rights Movement, 1848–1920," <https://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/WIC/Historical-Essays/No-Lady/Womens-Rights/>.

1.5 The Leadership entity of refugees in a Ugandan settlement

“Refugee settlements are known as legally plural social arenas in which different formal and informal actors are involved in ensuring coexistence, ranging from local leaders and community-based organizations to state authorities and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Vancluysen and Ingelaere 2020 :2). Refugee Welfare Committees (RWCs) are composed of elected refugee leaders in the settlements. Refugee leadership structures are made to mirror the Ugandan structure of Local councils (LCs) at the sub-county level.

The Uganda national structures of leadership at the sub-county levels are headed by a sub-county chief for technical duties and the elected local council three (LCIII) chair person with his/her executive committee which is like a parliament for that level of leadership at the sub county. The executive committee comprises of elected councillors representing different parishes. The parish is the next to the sub-county in size and it is made up of villages. The parish is the Local council two (LCII) and it is headed by the LCII chairperson and his/her committee which comprises of village representatives/chairpersons who are the Local council ones (LCIs). A village is the first on the bottom of the hierarchy and it comprises of up to 100 households. Each village is headed by a Local council one (LCI) and his/her executive committee of nine people. The LCIII and LCII executive committee number of members depend on the number of parishes and villages respectively. These are modelled in a hierarchical manner governing from village level upwards to the LCIII.

To mirror the same arrangement of the national leadership strategy, the refugees were assigned by the same structure by the government of Uganda to have their own leadership from village level, zone level to Settlement levels. At village level, refugees are governed by Refugee welfare council - RWC1 which is an equivalent of the LCI, at the zone level by the RWC2 which is an equivalent of the LCII and at the settlement level is the RWC3 which is an equivalent of the LCIII. At each level, the committee is headed by a chairperson and has an executive committee. RWCs are the immediate points of contact for refugees who are in need of support from a governing/administrative structure. The RWCs report to development partners (NGOs/INGOs), OPM and UNHCR (Hoff 2019; Ogeno and O'Byrne 2018). It is prudent for refugees to engage and have meaningful participation in refugee response, as it is called for in the 2016 New York Declaration and the 2018 Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) (Global Refugee-led Network and Asylum Access 2019: 9). Leadership is hence a crucial aspect of participation in the refugee response as it gives a fundamental platform for refugees to take part in decision making at those different levels and in policy that affects their stay in the settlements as given by the state of Uganda.

Illustration 2: INGO staff marking the index finger of a refugee voter during RWC elections



Source: Ogeno and O'Byrne (2018)

Away from home, in a developing country - Uganda, the refugees' traditional community structures have collapsed but minimally still have some cultural and religious leaders. Within customary structures, refugees of the different ethnic groups appoint their cultural leaders usually headed by the chief (Vancluyssen and Ingelaere 2020). However, these customary leaders are not formally involved in the governance of the settlement. The RWC are the formally democratically elected and highest refugee authority in the settlement. The RWC does not only join hands to work with the host community LCs but they also work closely with the refugee customary leaders. In fact, the RWC and the customary leaders are said to act as brokers between the Uganda law and the South Sudanese customs (Vancluyssen and Ingelaere 2020 :2), and between refugees and other present actors in the settlement. There are various categories of leadership structures like the community based structures including VSLAs, shelter leadership, Parent-Teachers-Associations etc

The RWC structure, unlike the Local Council (LC) structure, does not reach town and city levels. At these levels, the Local council is represented by the LCIV and LCV . The refugees do not have those levels and only stop at the third level – i.e RWCIII. This has been communicated in previous research as a limitation of the RWC leadership structures. In a research made by Meyer (2006), a male participant who was also a RWC leader referred to it as “an incomplete hierarchy” and added that; “that is why we (*the refugees*) are facing difficulties – it (*the RWC structure*) should have reached to a certain level so as to allow us to discuss the issues there as well, but RWCs only have power within a gazetted [settlement] area” as quoted from a male participant RWC leader at, Imvepi (in Meyer 2006: 41). As such, refugees are excluded from power spaces at the district local level and the RWC structure is a reflection “that political space for refugees is restricted to within the settlement Structure” (Meyer 2006: 48).

It is important to note that his paper endeavours not to study the customary leaders or any other categories and structures of leadership but the RWCs and block leaders. My interest in these is because

they are formally and democratically elected, which interests me to understand why even when there is electoral leadership; women do not seem to be represented equally with men.

1.6 Research objectives and questions

This study intends to analyse the factors influencing refugee women participation in electoral politics within Palorinya refugee settlement. The study engages women and men about leadership influencers like culture, gender, economic aspects, political space etc. The study also looks at the role of women empowerment programs of political participation to take on leadership roles in Palorinya refugee settlement. The paper also attempted to analyse the intersectionality of their status as females in a male dominated community, being the majority refugee population and yet the less representation numbers, women education, their social relations and integration in Uganda refugee political structures, among other intersections. This paper endeavours to recognise their agency, participation, victimization, and their other lived experiences. It is important to note that the research does not only concentrate on the number of women elected or are candidates to political positions, but it also gets views of women and men whether women are granted chance to exercise their authority of leadership.

1.6.1 Main question

What are the narratives of women's participation in electoral leadership positions and political spaces within a refugee settlement? And why are those narratives?

1.6.2 Sub questions

1. What are the factors influencing the participation of refugee women in electoral leadership of the settlement?
2. How are the elected women leaders influencing development and activities of the people living in the refugee settlement?
3. What are the experiences of women who are in electoral leadership positions and spaces?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This section discusses the literature regarding refugee women participation in the leadership spaces of the refugee settlement, but before that, I discuss the International law on refugee participation in electoral politics, narrowing down to the Uganda regulations of the same (refugee participation in electoral leadership), then give a briefing on women participation in leadership in South Sudan as the origin country of the refugees who are in Palorinya refugee settlement so as to contextualise their origin and identity. I then conclude the chapter with an analysis of the gender gap in political participation using literature including that marking gaps from western Africa.

2.1 Introduction

Existing literature on refugees majorly focuses on issues of integration and socio-economic problems experienced by either refugees or host communities. Also, although refugee experiences are clearly articulated, some scholarship explores only the challenges and experiences of refugees in general without taking specific focus of their different arenas of life. When analysing political participation in refugee settlements, it is important to look into what influences participation of both women and men (Krook 2017).

2.2 International law on refugee participation in electoral politics

The right to hold and express political opinions and to be heard is a fundamental right, suppression of which usually brings turmoil and in most cases the cause of refugee situations (Bekaj and Antara 2018). Even so, the political participation of refugees in the formal and non-formal spaces and processes of their host does not depend of global rules but it is left to the discretion and sovereignty of that individual host country but also to the country of origin when it comes to formal political participation where it needs a domestic legal framework that grants the participant access to naturalization and voting rights. For a non-formal framework, the legal structure is not always required (Bekaj and Antara 2018). However, for Uganda, the naturalization process for refugees is not permitted due to the fact that one can become a citizen only after 20years but only if they or their family members have not been to Uganda as refugees which some find contradictory; “the 1995 Ugandan Constitution, article 12(a)(2), and UCICA, article 14(a)(2), which states that a person residing in Uganda is only eligible for naturalization if ‘neither of his or her parents and none of his or her grandparents was a refugee in Uganda’” (Bekaj and Antara 2018:31).

Although political participation is a right, on the other hand it is left a fate of the host’s decision on how the refugees may participate (Mandal 2005). In some states, there is “no distinction made between the political rights of aliens and nationals, but in some States restrictions on freedom of political expression appear to have been imposed against certain groups of refugees simply on the basis of preserving friendly relations with the governments of their country of origin” (Mandal 2005: iv).

2.3 Uganda regulations of refugee participation

In the Refugee Act of Uganda, Section 35 (d) and (e) state that a recognised refugee shall²;

(d) not engage in any political activities within Uganda, whether at local or national level;

(e) not engage in any activity contrary to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Statute of the African Union, and in particular, shall not undertake any political activities within Uganda against any country, including his or her country of origin.

Although the ‘political activities’ are not specified, these have generally been defined as all government national electoral leadership structures from village Local council one (LCI) to presidency and any political party or NGOs criticizing the government (Zakaryan 2018). Therefore, UNHCR and the Government of Uganda (GoU) set an alternative system of governance in refugee settlements formally called the Refugee Welfare Committees (RWC), currently the Refugee Welfare Council to enable refugees’ participation within their own refugee leadership and to serve as a liasons platform between the service delivery of the state and international bodies to the refugee communities. More so, “These are not established by law, however, and confine refugees to settlement-specific issues, such as ensuring that food rations are distributed properly, and mediating household or community-based conflicts as they arise” (Zakaryan 2018 :15). Despite the fact that the RWC system is not an initiative of the refugees themselves, it is said to have been effective in maintaining communication between the office of the Prime Minister (OPM), the implementing partners and the refugee community (Zakaryan 2018).

2.4 Refugee women participation in electoral politics in refugee settlements

For settlements and refugees to ensure effective development and sustainability, there must be inclusive participation of both men and women in the management of both resources and the settlements (Turner 2001; Bakewell 2003; Kaiser 2004; Kreitzer, 2002). However, there is still minimal participation of women in electoral politics and leadership of the refugee settlements (UNHCR 2008; Buscher 2010; Grabska 2011; Edward 2010). With inclusive participation of both males and females in the governance and management of refugee settlements, both men and women can be more self – reliant (Turner 2004). McLean regards power structures as an interesting subject in a refugee setting as it “determines the refugees’ access to equitable shares of resources, decision making, and level of politicisation and militarisation in the settlement” and hence emphasises a gender analysis of power structures in camps (McLean 1999: 3). Literature indicates that women yield different results where

2

<http://www.judiciary.go.ug/files/downloads/Act%20No.%2021of%202006%20Refugees%20Act2006.pdf>

they participate in policy making and decision making, for instance countries in Europe with more women in the legislature make different immigration policies fundamentally different from those made where there are few women in the legislature (Olsen 2020)

In 1990, the UNHCR introduced a mechanism to provide protection appropriate to refugee women specific needs, to identify appropriate durable solutions and to provide assistance that would encourage the realization of their full potential and encourage their participation in preparing for the durable solution (UNHCR 1990). Based on such objectives, the UNHCR pointed to the concern of women engagement and participation in settlement leadership and politics (Kreitzer 2002). Moreover, some research has highlighted the need to identify whether the exodus of refugees and settlement in the camps or settlements could have had effects on the position of women in the social and power structures (McLean 1999). UNHCR (2001) also identified participation of women in programme planning, leadership and education for women and girls and advocating for gender-sensitive property laws as a way to improve on the status and position of refugee women in settlements.

Article 2 of the 1951 Convention provides that the host state has the mandate to control any political activities of refugees. However, this should be subjected to respecting the political rights of refugees. Article 25 of the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights restricts refugees from taking part into the political leadership of the hosting country. However, Article 19(1) of the same Covenant treats the freedom of expression as Universal. Therefore, this paper exclusively engages with politics within the settlement administration and representation.

Intentionally denying refugee women this freedom of expression including political opinion and participation within a refugee settlement is violation of refugee and human rights. Women face numerous challenges that hinder their active participation in politics and leadership giving the counterparts – men an advantage to dominate (Krook 2017). Although there is a significant improvement in numbers of women who take up leadership roles (Geneva report 2015), vulnerable women like refugees still face discrimination in the political sphere as men generally dominate (Pawur 2004; Eagly and Karau 2002).

According to Tindifa (2003), the Ugandan government under president Museveni took drastic measures towards the protection of refugee rights and in 1996 a Refugee bill was drafted to incorporate the 1951 Geneva Convention into Uganda's national laws regarding the protection and rights of refugees (Kanyayihamba 1986). The 2006 Refugee Act enacted by the parliament of Uganda among other rights emphasised the freedom of movement to refugees but restricted their participation into the political affairs of Uganda. Refugees should be treated like any other citizens in the country as long as that country is signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention (Asbjorn 1995). Although scholars like Asbjorn claim political rights to refugees, many countries developed and developing have not embraced such rights to refugees and when it comes to electoral politics in the settlements, women are marginalised as reflected also in national leadership and politics of the different nations of the world. To emphasise the role and importance of women in leadership and other positions of influence, in 2005 Kofi Annan – Former Secretary General of the United Nations made a remark;

“Sixty years have passed since the founders of the United Nations inscribed on the first page of our Charter the equal rights of women and men. Since then, study after study has taught us that there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women. No other policy is as likely to raise economic productivity or to reduce infant and maternal mortality. No other policy is as sure to improve nutrition and promote health – including the prevention of HIV/AIDS. No other policy is as powerful in increasing the chances of education for the next generation. And I would venture that no policy is more important in preventing conflict, or in achieving reconciliation after a conflict has ended”. (Kofi Annan March 2005).

Although there is a general feeling and sentiment that developed countries and economies have more respect for women civil and political rights, the notion in reality reveals a different case. This is because initially before the 1970s, women were marginalised in spheres of influence for example politics and leadership. It is such marginalisation that different countries and populations majorly dominated by men have nationalised and localised to “justify” the exclusion and marginalisation of women in politics and leadership. To this, Callamard noted;

“The initial gender bias and gender-blindness of the international mechanisms of assistance and relief have been consolidated locally to displace refugee women from their usual sphere of work and power, and justified locally on the basis of women’s biological characteristics, physical weaknesses and social backwardness”. (Callamard, 1996, p. 192)

Refugee women participation in politics and leadership is a patent issue because their population is higher and needs to be represented well. Moreover, “women-headed households represent 64 percent of all households, yet there is no meaningful participation of women in refugee leadership structures and service committees” (Fossvik 2017). In Palorinya refugee settlement, women above 18years old are 30,000, well as men are 22,471; less than women in Palorinya (UNHCR and OPM 2020³). According to Russell and Stage (1996), as men are busy in war situations, women are always responsible for rebuilding families and communities and thus, it is interesting to investigate if such refugee women are openly given space in politics and leadership which this study explores in chapter four.

According to Cole et al. (1992), refugee movements are as a result of numerous issues of failure in political leadership taking the lion’s share. It is therefore important to investigate what happens to refugees like South Sudanese refugee women in Palorinya within such settlements. Therefore, this paper serves right the need to study the role and position of women within refugee settings like settlements, that way this study contributes not only to gender equality in political participation but also to spheres as identified in Kofi Annan’s statement (earlier cited), which can be at stake if women’s participation is not observed.

2.5 Participation of women in electoral Politics in South Sudan

In South Sudan where these refugees originate there are very low levels of women participation in politics and national leadership. “Women’s participation in leadership has not been seen to be a woman’s prerogative” (Sherwood 2012: 82). This is unlike in the past, for instance if one traces back to pre-colonial times, women especially from Shilluk and Nuer kingdoms held positions as religious leaders, the Azande and Bari held positions as clan leaders and the Dinka communities appointed women as chiefs (Aldehaib 2010: 195). Indeed, south Sudanese women held religious, political and clan leadership (Aldehaib 2010). Colonialism suppressed the state of affairs of political participation for women and it is no wonder that women started movements against the colonial powers (Mahmoud et al 2010). According to an analysis of women political participation in Sudan between 1989-2010, Sudanese women’s political participation started with the struggle against Turkish colonialism, then against British- Egyptian (Mahmoud et al 2010). Most prominent of the women’s movements was the Sudanese Women’s Union who also advocated for women to start voting leading to the first success of having 15 women vote in the consequent national elections and had its president Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim become the first woman elected to parliament in 1965 (Abbas 2010).

However, challenges to women participation still surface as women are basically expected only to be supporters of men in decision making (EU EOM report, 2010). This is contrary to the Transitional Constitution, 2011 (TC) enacted by the South Sudan government which called for women to equally participate in public life. It is for that reason that the government of South Sudan is endeavouring to achieve women’s empowerment and as such, introduced a quota system that allocated 25 percent of seats at all levels of government to women which leaves their male counterparts with 75 per cent (Arabi 2011). “A quota system is a rule of redistribution of a benefit or burden among at least two groups on the basis of a fixed percentage or share for each group” (Conrad 1976: 135⁴) For example, according to the respondents during field research in Palorinya refugee settlement, 30% of the leadership committees at each leadership level are supposed to be women. Literature indicates that gender quotas improve the representation and visibility of women in leadership positions; however participation via quotas has also led to discrimination, friction with male counterparts and higher workloads (Eckert et al. 2017). Moreover, the more women involved in governance and political participation, the higher the chances to bring forth and address matters concerning women (UBOS 2017).

Although pre-colonial times women had some form of participation as discussed earlier, gradually It became uncommon in South Sudan for women to assume leadership positions in society because it may undermine their abilities and time to take care of their home responsibilities, taking care of their children and male relatives. Westendorf (2018: 435) notes that “exclusion is a deliberate strategic tactic of elites that extends from the war into peacetime”. Therefore, the exclusion during the stay in South Sudan could be replicated in the refugee lifestyle in the settlement. Research made in Juba and Pibor of South Sudan indicate that women’s participation in community level leadership and decision making is as low as at household level and that men are the sole decision makers in the community (Jayasinghe, Khatun, and Okwii 2020). It is for such reasons therefore, that It was prudent to find out about the refugee women in Palorinya and what narratives surround their participation or non-participation in leadership positions of the settlement administration.

⁴ <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2110514?seq=1>

2.6 The gender gap in political participation and its conceptualization

Eckert et al. (2017: 7) identify two theorised drivers or determinants of the gender gap in political participation, i.e;

1. Individual determinant; where attitudes of individuals contribute to political participation. For example, socialization, being more accommodating, ability to mediate, education and the socio-economic status (SES) of that individual. In fact, Tong (2003) as quoted in Eckert et al. (2017: 8), noted that women with a higher SES are more politically engaged than women and men who are in a lower SES. However, the same author notes that when women are into the labour force, there is a low turn up in political participation by women. Therefore, a labour force which also leads to better socio-economic status, has mixed effects on political participation.
2. Contextual determinants; under this, the examination of the presence of female political participants depends on the critical mass. Meaning, once women occupy a sizable proportion of say 30% in political participation, women's presence starts to increase and a broader impact on the political process starts to manifest (Eckert et al. 2017: 8). The second issue under contextual determinant is the patriarchal culture which is also a source of resistance for women participation due to the persistent societal gender norms that do not favour their participation and keep turning women off political participation. For example, It was noted by Bauer and Darkwah (2019) that the factors like negative labelling of women aspirants and candidates, married women being judged and penalized for 'neglecting their husbands and families to engage in politics; not only does it not encourage but also discourage women from competing for electoral positions hence contributing to the gender political representation gap. The third aspect under this is the global spread of norms and ideas about women's equality and participation which can influence their political participation. This could be priorities of the international donors, regional pressure from governing bodies, pressure from advocates and activists among others.

There are a range of barriers including those that are personal and those that are contextual that limit women's political participation. The prescribed norms and roles of women, economic constraints, education and unfriendly political systems. For example, in Ghana, women would prefer to serve in appointed leadership roles than in electoral leadership (Bauer and Darkwah 2019). That way, they do not face the wrath of the unfair political system.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This Chapter highlights the processes, activities, choices and methods used in the collection of data. The chapter also brings forth the challenges encountered during data collection, the ethical dilemmas and reflexivity. It is also in this chapter that I introduce the analytical and conceptual frameworks used which are - Power cube and Intersectionality.

3.1 Methods and data collection techniques

Qualitative interviewing was employed to understand and write perspectives of the participants where individual interviews were carried out, both in-person (by my research assistants) and on phone calls. The research engaged with various stakeholders like the staff members of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), development partners like I/NGOs, the refugee community and the Refugee Welfare Committee members (both current and former leaders). It is important to note that OPM and INGO workers who participated in this study were Ugandans.

The study employed a qualitative research approach to allow focus on specific events and individuals relevant to this research. This ensures effective examination and interpretation of the already existing data drawing on both written and oral sources. I examined documents from I/NGOs that work with refugee women within the settlement and institutional data like that from UNHCR and some from the Prime Minister's office. The study at the same time incorporates written sources including newspapers, parliamentary debates, government documents on refugees, and reports from humanitarian agencies like UNHCR, other I /NGO and organisations within the settlement. Other supplementary sources of data were material shared on emails to partner /INGOs in Palorinya by UNHCR and OPM; in which I and one of my research assistants are listed.

I had two (2) research assistants; Geoffrey Lukwago and Josylene Kirungi who supported my data collection. Geoffrey is based in Moyo district, where the refugee settlement is. Josylene is based in Kampala. The two were selected because they are my friends who I could trust with this task, they have research skills and also because they have access to the refugee settlement. Geoffrey has a bachelors' degree in education and pursuing his masters in history, his thesis is about refugee settlement. That made him very suitable to make a good research assistant to my topic on refugees. Joselyn holds a bachelors' degree in social sciences and she has ever worked in a refugee settlement. I chose to use research assistants because I was not personally able to reach the field due to COVID-19 travel restrictions and also to be able to get in-person field data which would richly inform my thesis. Also, I decided to get two assistants so that I could have a female and male assistants explore this subject associated with both genders. I also thought the second assistant would improve on the quality and effectiveness of the data because like they say, two heads are better than one. Therefore, I wanted to get informed data from two people from different fields of study to better engage the participants from a social sciences and history angle yet with knowledge on refugees.

The terms of agreement with them to be research assistants were that; they were to identify the research participants and their contacts, they would carry out some of the interviews and facilitate FGDs and they would record the discussions and interviews and send the audios to me. We also agreed and made

constant whatsapp app voice calls to update me of the field processes and for me to give directives and suggestions of what directions to take to suit my research methodology. We agreed to split research tasks and the three of us were involved in possible ways where I made a few phone calls for interviews and my research assistants connected me to research participants and in other cases, they did carry out the interviews. Geoffrey got phone numbers of refugee leaders for me to also do some interviews. I agreed with my research assistants that each one of us was to carry out individual 10 interviews and Geoffrey to carry out 2 FGDs with refugee women leaders.

However, with some challenges due to COVID19 rules that limit movements, that target was not reached by we managed to carry out 19 individual interviews and 2 FGDs. The interviews that were made by my research assistants were audio recorded by them with consent from the participants and they then sent me those audio recordings. I regularly met (on whatsapp calls and zoom) with my research assistants to enable me get their insights arising from data collection. These insights were also treated as data in analysis.

It was helpful to have one of my research assistant within the settlement, because at one point the snow balling got broken when a male leader refused to participate but also refused to recommend further participants to me when I had just had one interview with a refugee leader who had snow balled me to that other leader who then refused to cooperate. Geoffrey - the research assistant in the field got engaged and looked for more contacts for those who were willing to participate. This allowed me to make more calls to the participants. In total, I personally made five phone call interviews, Joselyne made and sent to me seven audios of seven participants. Geoffrey made and sent to me audios of two FGDs and seven individual interviews that he too carried out.

The process of participant selection depended on willingness and availability but also on who leaders were (which is also a limitation and will draw back to it in the conclusions). We considered both female and male leaders. The research assistants followed up on these both by getting their contacts and reaching out to some in person for request to participate and for the interviews. The implications with this included the fact that we targeted leaders to narrow down on our focus but this excluded opinions of those who are not in power/leadership positions. It was however easier to get contacts of leaders as they are known to NGOs working in the settlement.

This approach with research assistants helped to reach out to the participants, but to the interviews that I did not involve, I would feel the need to probe further while listening to the interviews and yet it was a finished interview. Never the less, whenever I met with my assistants, I highlighted that in such instances, they had to probe further to dig up more/deeper information of the subjects that came up even when we did not have specific questions addressing them in the guide. It so happened that because I received the recorded interviews in batches, each day that went by, the interviews got better. I also used the reflections of the research assistants and their notes as data sources.

Illustration 3: Participants' information

Date of Interview	Name*	Role/responsibility	Address
August 10 2020	Sarah*	OPM, community Service, settlement	Basecamp, Palorinya
August 10 2020	Annah*	Child protection OPM, settlement	Basecamp, Palorinya
August 12 2020	Opira*	Chairperson Iboa Unit-A Village	Iboa Unit-A, Palorinya
August 12 2020	Poni*	Secretary for education and children affairs, Zone III West	Zone III West
August 12 2020	Lamuni*	Opinion Leader – Female, entire settlement	Palorinya
August 25 2020	Violet*	Assistant Psychosocial officer, LWF	Basecamp, Palorinya
August 29 2020	Akabitunga*	Sexual and Reproductive Health Officer	Basecamp, Palorinya
September 2 2020	Jacob*	Chairperson Zone two	Zone Two, Palorinya
September 8 2020	Brenda*	Child protection officer, LWF	Basecamp, Palorinya
September 9 2020	Moses*	Senior Psychosocial officer, LWF	Basecamp, Palorinya
September 12 2020	Focus Group discussion with; 1. Rhoda* 2. Rebecca* 3. Rebeca* 4. Elizabeth* 5. Nyamon* 6. Mary* 7. Mary*(a 70yr old PWD) 8. Sarah* 9. Nyading*	Former leaders in Zones 1 & 2	Zone Two and Three, Palorinya
25 th September 2020	Mary*	Child protection committee member	Palorinya settlement
25 th September 2020	Moriku*	District Councilor in charge of refugee affairs	Moyo district headquarters
29 th September 2020	Focus Group discussion 2, with; 1. Tabu* 2. Lamuni* 3. Atim* 4. Catherine*	Current female leaders in different zones	

	5. Sunday* 6. Rosa* 7. Mary* 8. Ropi* 9. Meling* 10. Konga* 11. Poni* 12. Tariq*		
2nd October 2020	Tariq*	Vice Chairperson RWCII	Basecamp Zone
2nd October 2020	Rosa*	Secretary for disability and PSNs RWCIII	Palorinya
10 th October 2020	Ropi*	Secretary for production and environment RWCI	Zone III East
10 th October 2020	Poni*	Secretary for education and children affairs RWCII	Zone III West
15 October 2020	Mary*	Female Opinion leader, RWCII	Zone III East
15 October 2020	Lamuni*	Female Opinion leader, RWCII	Basecamp Zone
15 October 2020	Puru*	Secretary of women affairs, RWCII	Zone III East

3.2 Challenges during data collection

There was a challenge of language barrier with a few women. They preferred to speak in their local language for which I asked my research assistant to solve the issue by recruiting a translator for some of the interviews, including one FGD where most women were not comfortable speaking in English.

The impact of COVID19 on my field research was felt, especially because the means of public transport were reduced. Therefore it was difficult for my research assistants to move through the settlement zones with ease. It became a little costly to make movements because we had to use only private means of transport. Although, there was a time during field work when not even the private vehicles were allowed which made some delays in data collection.

Coordinating the research through research assistants was also challenging at some point, especially where I needed to make adjustments in the follow up / probing questions yet the interview was already finished. Therefore my comments and questions were only carried forward to the next interview but not in the same interview where I needed to make those probing questions or comments.

One of the research assistants also disconnected from the internet and I was not able to get in touch with him for three days which made me worried and lost some time of field work and field work

coordination. It was an issue of lack of electricity to charge his phone and later after three days, he got back in touch.

In a nutshell, most challenges were technical, some possible for my solutions while the rest were out of my hands but ended up positive and got the data I needed from the field.

3.3 Ethical and health Considerations

The research participants were made fully aware of the objectives and purpose of the research and consent their involvement in the study.

At all gatherings - including interviews, FGDs and meetings, COVID19 guidelines of social distancing, sanitizing and using masks were observed by my research assistants.

This research supports the women's initiatives in stepping up onto the political participation wheel. Therefore, this thesis will be shared with OPM and any relevant stakeholders like aid agencies and political leaders in the refugee settlement to bring to their attention the subject at hand.

3.4 Positionality and reflexivity

I had both a male and female research assistants whose identities as educated nationals; male/female genders could have influenced the responses of the interviewees. The other influence was about language translation. I do acknowledge that the FGDs were translated and this could also influence the content of the discussion.

As for myself, I come with my biases as a student of gender and human rights, I know that my perception on women rights and gender equality shapes also my research both in the way I use the collected data and in analysis. I shape and create this knowledge using also my experience as a person who has worked in the refugee settlement with clear knowledge of how women are treated.

3.5 Analytical and conceptual Framework

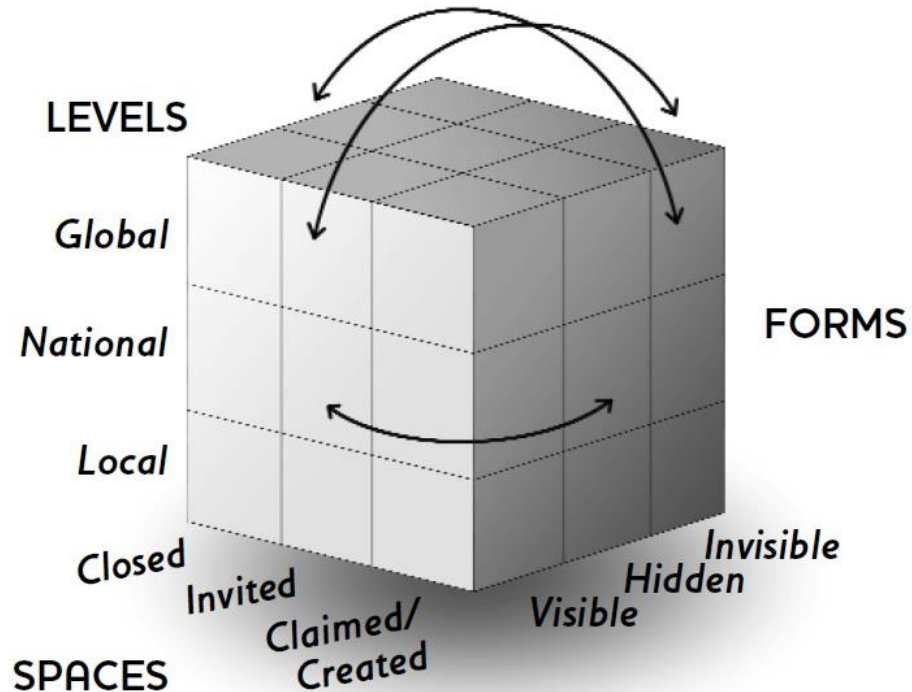
Two conceptual frameworks; 1. The power cube and 2. Intersectionality; are used to analyse this research and are elaborated below;

1. Gaventa's concept of power.

Gaventa explains power in three dimensions; Levels, Spaces and Forms of power. This was used to analyse how participation of refugees on such a Refugee Welfare Committee (RWC) local level influences and links onto the national and international levels. The analysis also involved the

identification of spaces if the refugee leadership includes invited, closed or claimed space and examine if the power is invisible, hidden or visible.

Illustration 4: The ‘power cube’: the levels, spaces and forms of power



Source: Gaventa (2006: 25)

Gaventa notes that everyone possesses power and is affected by power, but it is diverse and can be used, shared or created by actors and their networks in multiple ways eg power ‘over’, power ‘to’, power ‘within’, power ‘with’. Some regard power as capacity and agency to be used for positive change (Gaventa 2006: 24). Although Gaventa focused on citizen participation, in this paper I focus on refugees’ participation in their own leadership. The term space in this paper therefore signifies channels, opportunities and networks of influence and can potentially affect policies and decisions that impact on the lives of the refugees. However, as Gaventa mentions, a lot depends on the nature of the power than simply creating new institutional arrangements to achieve greater inclusion.

2. Intersectionality

This concept was used as a lens to analyse the different identities of refugee women participants in this study in the face of political participation and how the different identities they hold may influence their participation and how some of these identities intersect and limit these women’s participation. The term intersectionality was coined by a feminist scholar, Kimberle Williams Crenshaw in 1989 to express the way oppression can happen due to different intersecting identities of a person or a group of people (Crenshaw 1989). It is a concept useful in qualitative analysis as a tool to identify the interlocking systems of power affecting those in positions of vulnerability. I use this concept to identify the overlapping and interdependent categories of identities that impact the refugee women’s participation and make them face multi-dimensional experiences in the political space. After all, “There

is no such a thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives” (Lorde 2012: 138). By definition, Intersectionality is “the interaction between gender, race, and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies and the out-comes of these interactions in terms of power” (Davis 2008:68)

I discuss the experiences of gender relations and inclusion in political spaces of South Sudanese refugee women both before leaving their country of origin and after settling in Palorinya refugee settlement. Their life stories and experiences are analysed in line with both international and national efforts to uplift the status and position of women in general and refugee women in particular. When analysing their rights as embodied in the 1951 refugee Convention and the 1967 protocol, national laws and Acts like the 2006 refugee Act enacted by the Ugandan parliament as a tool to ensure both the well-being of refugees but also the respect for refugee human rights is briefly discussed.

Chapter 4: Refugees Electoral leadership?

This chapter discusses the finding while putting the analytical and conceptual frame to use. The chapter gives a brief back ground about Palorinya, delving further into answering the main and sub questions of the research.

4.1 Introduction

In this section, I give an overview about Palorinya refugee settlement, its community leadership structure and then discuss the motivations of women's involvement in leadership, its importance in their opinions and the challenges they face in the bid to participate in leadership. I will later discuss the merits and demerits of women's engagement in leadership through affirmative action and then make recommendations both as given from the field and as a result of data analysis.

4.2 About Palorinya

According to the participants, especially those working with INGOs and OPM, the settlement is at the kick-off state of the development phase and moving out of the emergence phase. They mentioned that by policy a settlement goes out of emergence state to development state after three years, which Palorinya has been in existence since 2016. Palorinya is constituted by two major ethnic groups i.e the Bali and the Nuer. The Bali includes; the Acholi, kuku, madi, kakwa among others. Palorinya refugee settlement is headed by RWCs at community level who at the apex are the RWC3. The RWC3 reports to UNHCR and OPM and the lead I/NGO in charge of the settlement, in Palorinya is the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). Election of RWCs takes place every two years.

The current RWCs were elected in June 2019. Below is a chart indicating the community and leadership structure;

Illustration 5: Community and leadership structure of the RWC

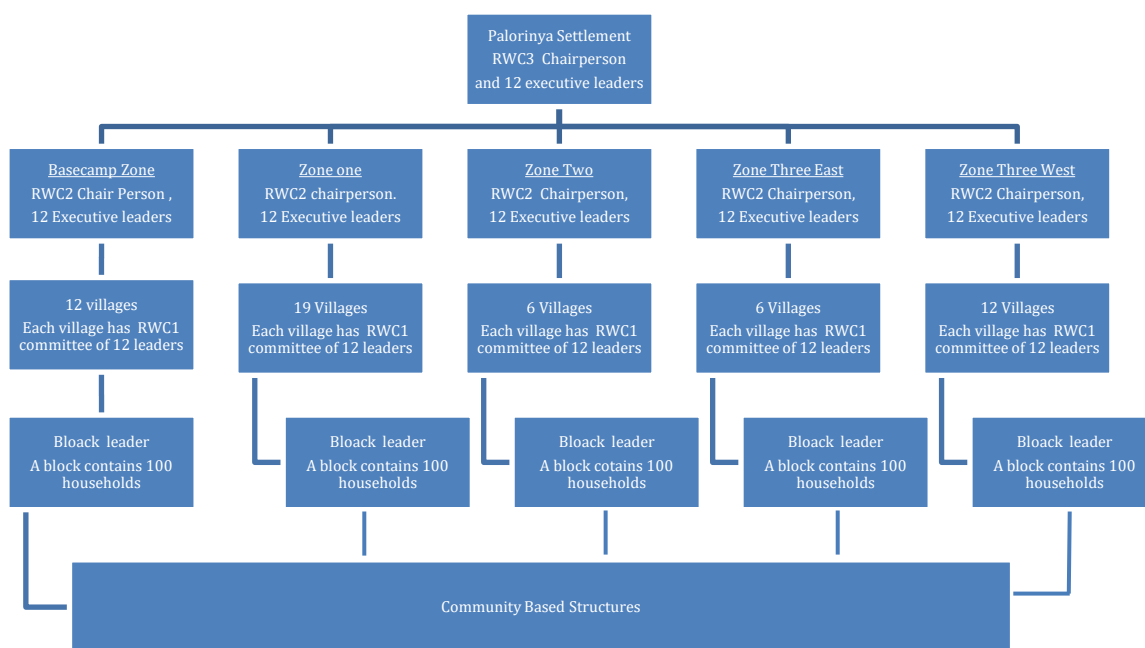


Chart Source: Field data analysis by Baguma, M. (September 2020)

As indicated in the chart above, the settlement is divided into five zones, namely Basecamp zone, zone one, two, three east and three west. In hierarchy, below the zones are villages and below the villages are blocks then the community-based structures for instance VSLAs. A block contains 100 households. All RWCs and block leaders are elected by the masses in democratic voting. On the other hand, block leaders are the one to appoint community based structure leaders.

4.3 Do women consider or believe that electoral leadership is important for them?

According to the lists of the RWC leaders in Palorinya, there is an increase in women participation in leadership and this was credited to the support of international organizations and the efforts of the state which demand for gender equality and equity. As a result, women constitute 41% of the RWCs and these are in positions supported by the affirmative action of five positions for every 12 members of the RWC committee. Below is a table indicating the positions and what sex is assigned to the positions in the affirmative action system;

Illustration 6: Assigned positions to male and female leaders by affirmative action

	TITLE	SEX
1	Chairperson	M
2	Vice Chairperson	F

3	General Secretary	M
4	Secretary Of Women Affairs	F
5	Secretary For Security And Mobilisation	M
6	Secretary For Production And Environment	F
7	Secretary for disability and PSNs	F
8	Secretary For Health And Wash	M
9	Secretary For Education And Children Affairs	M
10	Secretary For Youth And Sports	M
11	Opinion Leader Female	F
12	Opinion Leader Male	M

It was noted that women are still struggling to participate in community leadership even though there is some improvement. In addition to the affirmative action, the improvement is said to be an influence of staying away from their homeland which does not allow women participation in politics (Jayasinghe, Khatun, and Okwii 2020). A participant commented; “When refugees had just came, they used to not want to engage in leadership and the more they stay in the settlement, you see that it is changing” (Brenda Akiriat, Child protection officer, LWF in an Interview at Basecamp, Palorinya). In the same vein, another NGO worker noted that;

“The interaction of refugees with the nationals in the host community has also inspired women to participate in leadership, because refugees do not have opportunities in their home country south Sudan to participate in leadership but in our own state women are in a better situation and they say what they want to say. So I feel that this interaction with nationals have made them realize that they can take on leadership too like the nationals” (Violet Kirungi, Assistant Psychosocial officer, LWF at Basecamp, Palorinya)

In a FGD, former women leaders were asked why they participated in leadership and there they indicated that women are taking leadership important by giving reasons like; “I wanted to be better for my people and help them and also to teach my children how to become a leader” (Woman in a FGD). Some take it important to be exemplary to others on how to behave better, for instance a woman said; “The way you are behaving when you are a leader, you inspire also other people to become leaders” Other women join leadership in order to enhance the service of their care work, for example one said “I joined to be able to tell that the food (*meaning the food they receive from the WFP*) is not good when it is bad and the partners will change it” (a participant of the FGD).

Some participants noted that this increase in participation is influenced by new cultures that those refugees associate with. For instance, one said; “the exposure where refugees interact with the new cultures within the host community has facilitated and improved motivation for refugee women to participate in leadership” (Violet Kirungi Assistant Psychosocial officer, LWF in an interview at Basecamp, Palorinya). Another said, “the more refugees are exposed to new cultures and new behaviours, the more they can as well want to take up roles in their communities as leaders (Senior Psychosocial officer, LWF in an interview at Basecamp, Palorinya). The refugee settlement also has players like INGOs and OPM which have supported women roles to step up into public spheres. For

instance “the humanitarian sector has endeavoured to create gender equality and has helped women to come out into leadership through gender mainstreaming, that is why women have started coming up” – Annah Niyonsaba Child protection OPM, in an interview at Basecamp). Therefore women have realised their potential due to the I/NGOs’ interventions.

4.4 What motivates women to join leadership?

Women mentioned several aspects that motivate their participation these including fellow women in leadership and some mentioned the fact that their issues as women are not discussed when men are at the centre of discussions. For example a woman said; “there are issues men ignore as leaders e.g girl child education, they basically think that girls belong to the kitchen, house chores etc and have nothing to go do at school. But when a woman is in power, she looks at things differently. It is mainly women who push for children education” (Lamuni Matilida, settlement Opinion Leader for women, at Palorinya). Another participant added to that saying; “When men are in power, they majorly represent men and male needs” (Brenda Akiriat, Child protection officer, LWF in an Interview at Basecamp, Palorinya). On this issue Brenda also added that women get extra motivation from their fellow women who are in power; “The examples of seeing other women in leadership surely motivates others to join leadership” (Brenda Akiriat, Child protection officer, LWF in an Interview at Basecamp, Palorinya). In the same regard, another participant added that;

“Women have been exposed, so they have had an opportunity to interact with other women who are holding bigger positions in the government of Uganda, this has helped them to understand that they can do quite a lot even when they go back to their own populations, they know that they can influence decision making, influence policies and politics to have things work in their favour” (Akabitunga sajas Sexual and Reproductive Health Officer, Palorinya)

Basing on reflections from male and female leaders and INGO staff participants, they mentioned that most women who come up by themselves to engage in electoral leadership in the settlement have a history of military engagement back home in South Sudan. A participant said;

“There is a big link between the current women leaders and the previous experiences while in South Sudan. Ordinary women do not easily engage in leadership. Those women who were serving in some of the army fractions want to lead here with hope to continue even when they go back. When the situation normalises, those who had leadership positions in the refugee settlement would be able to also influence things even when they repatriate. So the women with this belief are the ones participating here in Palorinya” (Mukasa Moses Senior Psychosocial officer, LWF in an interview at Basecamp, Palorinya).

Following up on this with some of the current female leaders, in an interview with Mary .Lamwaka – she reported that; “it was easy for me to get selected by people (*voted for*) in my community as a leader simply because most of them knew me in kajokeji to have been in the army leading women in Kajokeji” (Mary .Lamwaka, Child protection committee member).

It is in this regard that the study revealed that women who had once been in active leadership in the army and boma (local council leadership) in South Sudan before coming to Palorinya refugee settlement easily found their way into leadership positions or easily acquired the OPM affirmative action reserved positions than their counter parts who were never involved in leadership prior to resettlement in Palorinya. This affirmed that; “power gained in one space, through new skills, capacity and experiences, can be used to enter and affect other spaces” (Gaventa 2009: 27). In addition, for those who have never been in leadership and do not come up to participate, their situation relates to Krook (2017)’s findings that it is difficult for people who have lived in situations where they are denied participation because they believe that power is impenetrable, for instance South Sudan in this case.

4.5 What challenges do women face that deter them from participation?

The findings from the field related to the earlier discussed literature emphasizing the number of factors deterring women from participation in leadership. These challenges range from personal to society reasons. Some deter women from participation before joining leadership space while others make them drop out of leadership roles. In response to questions why women do not access the leadership space in numbers proportionate to their population and instead men take higher numbers of positions even though they are less than the women, the participants had this to say; “Women have low self-esteem, they just want to sit home because they are made to believe that they cannot do better than home chores” (In an Interview with Brenda Akiriat, Child protection officer, LWF at Basecamp, Palorinya). Another participant said that “men are at a higher advantage to participate because of capacity, experience and confidence than the women, so when an opening comes, men are more engaged. (Akabitunga sajas, Sexual and Reproductive Health Officer, Palorinya). There are challenges that women face in leadership especially from men who think that a woman cannot lead them. This was noted when a male leader mentioned that; “Traditionally, it is believed that a man is the head of a household and the woman only follows. Men feel they are under women when a woman is now the leader. They feel a woman cannot go on their top (*be their boss*)” (Jacob Mataya Seme, Chairperson Zone two, in a phone call interview)

From the responses of participants, basically, for electoral leadership the major influencer is culture. “with my experience when I spoke with someone who contested with a man, the number of votes she got did not even reach 10. A woman and a man will proudly tell you that a woman will not lead you where there are men” (In an Interview with Brenda Akiriat, Child protection officer, LWF at Basecamp, Palorinya). Women have been tuned to believe that leadership is not their role. This was evident in the response given by a staff of an organization who witnessed women neglecting taking up leadership roles, he said; “we appointed women to become shelter leaders, they said it was not their responsibility to lead a shelter and when you meet some men even young boys and ask them to go pick food, they will tell you, ‘that is the work of women to pick food from the supply shelter’. So, things to do with leadership, is for men and things to do with care work is for women” (Moses Mukasa, Senior Psychosocial officer, LWF in an interview at Basecamp Palorinya). In supplement, another participant added that “most of these negative cultural norms that affect women are created by men to their

advantage”(Akabitunga sajas, Sexual and Reproductive Health Officer, Palorinya). As such, it is generally believed by women and men in these societies that public life and leadership positions should be reserved for men.

4.6 Women’s contribution to development in the settlement

As understood from the findings, women are supporting social development; they focus on not only on economic development but also on social change of behaviour, capabilities and wellbeing. Two participants mentioned that women in leadership have been lobbying for fellow women to be involved in economic trainings and being good examples to other women to be able to participate in leadership. Women in leadership positions have also involved in peace building and bridge gaps with unique ideas. An INGO staff remarked that; “we even have peace activists, for example in zone one. They (*women*) have good ideas and identify gaps in meetings which have men and women. So they influence development in that manner” (Brenda Akiriat, Child protection officer, LWF in an Interview at Basecamp, Palorinya)

Research done in two refugee camps in Bangladesh and Thailand indicated that women participation also may address child malnutrition by making food distribution more efficient (Olivius 2014). Indeed efficiency of food distribution was mentioned as one of the reasons the women join leadership, for instance as earlier noted, one woman in a FGD mentioned that she joined to ensure that there is food and good food distributed by the WFP in the refugee settlement and that she wanted to report to them whenever it was otherwise.

4.7 Experiences of women during their tenure in leadership

4.7.1 Exclusion from the ‘real deal’?

During the discussions made in several interviews, it was evident that women are not engaged into the most influential positions and major decision making spaces, what a participant called keeping them away from the ‘real deal’ (Lamuni Matilida, opinion Leader for women, Palorinya). As noticed in the [prior table](#) indicating positions of leadership granted to women through an affirmative action, the position of chairperson, general secretary, security and mobilization, health and Water Sanitation and hygiene (WASH) among others are left out for men while women take on positions like Secretary for women affairs, secretary for persons with disabilities and opinion leader for women; positions which are a lot to do not with a general population but women, children in some cases and Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) which means that women’s leadership spaces are limited and hence their participation in decision making get limited too.

The study found that underrepresentation and exclusion of women from political space was linked to power imbalance with in the refugee welfare council structural set up as noted by Poni Mary Wani in the focus group discussion “These men are almost leading in everything on the council and you find that even on the welfare council they are the majority. so let’s say you have been selected to be a leader

the men will always challenge and silence you because you as women are not many to challenge or voice out your views that is why even other women don't admire to participate" (Poni Mary Waniin in a FGD at Palorinya). Using Gaventa's analysis of power, a lot depends on the nature of the power than simply creating new institutional arrangements to achieve greater inclusion.' In the above case, as much as the refugee welfare council structure exists to give all refugees an equal footing in leadership, the fact that the system amplifies the importance of men in leadership than the active role women can play, it renders women powerless and titular even when they participate.

Gaventa notes that spaces of power are the opportunities, moments and channels where one can act to potentially affect decision making (Gaventa 2009), but for these women, we see that they are limited from the broader spaces of power and instead they are limited to occupying spaces that are meant to lead women and people with disabilities rather than the general public. As such, this implies that the larger and general platforms/spaces for decision making are intentionally 'closed' as it is termed by Gaventa. Hence, the 'invited spaces' in which efforts of affirmative action are made to include women participation remain limited both in numbers of participants which is capped at 5 out of the 12 members and in validity of position as discussed in the prior paragraph. Like Gaventa notes, it is important to ask how the spaces of participation "were created, and with whose interests and what terms of engagement" (Gaventa 2009: 26). In a focus group discussion, a female leader commented that;

"they tell us that women are given opportunity to participate, but they give us only five positions out of twelve positions of the committee, so whenever they say that we raise our hands in support of sometjing, men are always winning because they are many. They say that way that it is democracy to take a decision supported by many people" (Tabu Susan, RWC3 secretary of women affairs in a FGD on 29th September 2020)

It is important to note that on the RWC leadership structure which is the focus of this research, there are no portrayed claimed spaces of power by the refugees. Therefore, I can note that the RWC leadership is not an "organic" space (Gaventa 2009: 27). An organic space according to Cornwall in (Gaventa 2009: 27) is one created by people of the same interests, concerns and identification as a result of popular mobilization. These may include spaces create by social movements, community associations, debate clubs, among others and could be created by the common people, NGOs, church, civil society organizations etc (Gaventa 2009). However, the RWC are typically invited spaces organized of the state of Uganda through the office of the Prime Minister (OPM)

Gaventa mentions that forms of power do not only occur in the formal decision-making spaces (Gaventa 2016). Indeed, there is also invisible and hidden powers where there are other powers influencing decision making other than the formal power. The study revealed that in some cases, men are still the ones influencing power even in female led positions. Men's opinions and ideas still take up even the positions that are reserved for women by the Affirmative action, for instance one of the female leaders said;

"...even sometimes they (*identifying the men on the committee*) want to pass something and they will come to women before the meeting and tell us what to support so that we decide on what they want. If you refuse they tell your husband or other people that you refused something good for men and the community. So they control what we have to say when they want. For example last time I wanted to say that positions of child welfare should be given to women also, but the Opinion leader for women last time refused and he told me that in the meeting I should say that I agree with him that it is a position for the men and I had to. Now we have fewer women

on the committee, we lost that seat” (Lamuni Matilida, RWC3 Female Opinion Leader, in a FGD on 29th September 2020).

In the same vein, another female leader indicated that her husband ‘helps’ her on what to discuss in the committee meetings because he is more educated. Therefore, she has that male person behind her making influence on the ideas she discusses. Meaning, her husband controls the way she thinks of her position and what she has to contribute to decision making platforms. In a follow up question, she was asked how she prepares to attend an important meeting at the RWC and she said;

“I have my husband who understands those things very well, he is more educated and he helps me to get what I can share in the meetings and if I have a task in the community, he still helps me to do it because here men are respected very much, if this position was for men, my husband would be voted for because he does the job very well” (Tariq Josephine Francis, Vice Chairperson in an interview on 2nd October 2020)

Although this lady was not complaining about that but rather grateful that her husband helps her, it is a total indication of who is managing her position even when it is one of the affirmative action reserved positions for women which at the end is being managed by a man because the woman is not as educated as the man and also because society accepts the men a lot easier than they do women in leadership positions. Invisible power shapes meaning and what is acceptable psychologically and by ideology, as such, women’s beliefs, sense of self and acceptance is defined by the men. This perpetuates exclusion and inequality as men define what is normal, acceptable and safe.

Another issue is that identifying women in the affirmative action to deputise men to head a committee as indicated in [illustration 6](#), which also takes them back to the fact that they are regarded as ‘followers of men’. Moreover, the other positions identified for women in the same illustration are related to care work. One participant regarded these to be ceremonial as he said; “the roles of women in their positions are mostly ceremonial and titular due to affirmative action and so they (*women*) get positions that do not so much need decision making at the larger platforms of development. They are given facilitative roles of for instance go-do-that and she goes to do that. They (*women*) remain in facilitating roles which cripple their abilities and capacities”(Mukasa Moses Senior Psychosocial officer, LWF in an interview at Basecamp, Palorinya).

To briefly give a background; to encourage women participation in electoral leadership, UNHCR together with the government body responsible for refugees – OPM and a number of INGOs are coming up with sensitization programs in which they come up with aspects of human rights and including rights for women to participate in politics, therefore women look at these sensitizations and get inspired to take up leadership. The same affirmative action was portrayed as both a good and bad system for women participation by the research participants.

On the one hand, it was applauded for creating space and bringing aboard women in the leadership spaces. For example, “we used not to have women on the committee, but *women are now represented; we have five positions on each of the three levels of the RWCs, the affirmative action has made this change*” (Catherine Wani, RWC2 Female Opinion Leader Basecamp zone). In similar spirits, the RWC2 secretary for disability and persons with special needs (PSNs) added, yes, she is right imagine now we are many women compared to what we had in those leaders’ meetings (Atim Florence Joseph, in a FGD on 29th September 2020).

On the other hand, it was criticised for not being a fair way to have women participate in leadership. Some cited that five out of twelve positions was unfair and that women have no education, therefore have no good basis to participate on equal terms like their male counterparts. One lamented and asked;

“It is a joke to say that they are giving us equal opportunity with men when they give us only five positions and the men get seven, is that equal? my sister (*meaning Joselyne the research assistant*), is that equal, tell me! We have positions crafted for women to lead women only, like my position and people with disabilities and only five, how can that one be equal?” (Sunday Lydia, Female RWC2 Zone II Opinion leader in a FGD on 29th September 2020)

Furthermore, some indicated that even with this affirmative system, there are still great barriers that hinder women’s full participation. for example one Akabitunga, an NGO worker said;

“The fulfilment of the gender equality component of the SDGs is a top-down aspect and they are just bringing the checkbox of women involvement, for example they tick or check - have we achieved the 30% of women engagement, then yes and that is it. But that is not enough. We need to look also at the gatekeepers of culture” (Akabitunga sajas, Sexual and Reproductive Health Officer in an interview at Basecamp Palorinya).

Akabitunga’s response relates to Olivius (2014:2)’s argument that “women’s participation has become an instrument for optimising the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian operations rather than a tool for the promotion of gender equality”. Moreover, that instrumental reasons for women particip[ation] may reinforce existing gender inequalities and negative gender norms (Olivius 2014). Nevertheless, instrumentalism may open doors for inclusion or entry of women into spaces they previously were not able to take part . Therefore this challenges the notions of patriarchy and gender inequalities which if it is to be fully achieved, “it is necessary to eventually broaden the discussion of women’s participation

beyond instrumentalism” (Olivius 2014:5). It is in this regard that the quota system is regarded helpful in bringing some women aboard but should be supplemented with other initiatives to facilitate women’s full participation (both joining and influencing power relations). Like Aldehaib (2010:199) noted “in terms of ensuring increased participation of women in decision making that affects them and their communities, the quota system is simply a starting point”. In Palorinya, it is only a solution to bring females aboard but does not guarantee the full participation of those females as it only shrinks the thought of women participation to only joining in numbers and not effective at ensuring that they are the ones in charge of such positions of power and in general positions for women and men. It is in the same vein that another NGO worker explicated;

“Even if we have affirmative action of the quota system, the factors which deter women from having full political participation are so multi-faceted, therefore whoever is looking to solve such bottlenecks should look at them in that direction of the socio, economic and geographical factors for example the bottlenecks to female participation in leadership of the settlement where there are NGOs that try to support and promote the affirmative action of at least 30% women engagement but that is not enough, there are these cultural aspects which make it difficult for even those 30% who come into leadership because the cultural factors do not allow them to fully engage. It’s not only about creating numbers to achieve indicators. For example religion and culture are an important aspect at this. You need to engage the gate keepers of culture and religion for you to convince this population. For example among the Nuer, you cannot be a woman and participate in political leadership, and that is constructed in them by their culture and how they understand religion because they cannot even become priest. Therefore, for you to challenge and champion, you have to challenge and put these gate keepers of such practices in a position to understand that women and men are supposed to enjoy the same inalienable rights to make them challenge such practices by themselves”(Mukasa Moses, Senior Psychosocial officer, LWF, at Palorinya)

Moreover, even when there is a leaders' meeting, women do not get opportune space to share their ideas. For example a participant mentioned that; "*When there are meetings, men are the only ones participating, they would say, women, anything left?*" (Brenda Akiriat, Child protection officer, LWF in an interview at Basecamp, Palorinya). This was to highlight that women's opinions come secondary after the men's opinions. In another instance, upon asking why only a woman can be the leader for persons with disabilities and if males with disabilities would be represented, the leader mentioned that "*only women have the ability to work with people who need care*" (Jacob Mataya Seme, Chairperson Zone two in a phone interview).

In fact, other research about south Sudanese women participation in politics and leadership indicates that such patriarchy practices and gender stereotypes further the notion that women are subjects to men's authority and hinder women's progress in politics. In the same vein, a research participant in an interview was quoted in Aldehaib (2010) saying; "Political life is organised for male norms and values, and in many cases even for male lifestyles. In politics, you are looked at as an intruder because they think that politics is not in the space of women, and you feel lonely because of being few in numbers" (Aldehaib 2010: 206).

When implemented right, affirmative action for equal opportunities for women and men in leadership does not only bring women aboard but also creates role models for leadership, compensates women for the lost privileges when they were not considered in leadership, facilitates gender diversity, equity and equality⁵ and could allow them to take part in the different layers/levels of power. Because power is multi-layered, exclusion from one level, for instance the local level affects also the subsequent levels of participation. However, RWCs have anyway been criticised for being a separate system from the district system where the Government of Uganda (GoU) has excluded refugees from the national leadership structures with fear that the integration of refugees might mean their permanent settlement (Meyer 2006). Never the less, the interactions of the RWCs with the district and implementing partners (I/NGOs) may create space for refugees to tap into the other levels of power at the national and global levels. Therefore, women to tap on the same, should be given the same not only entry into leadership positions but be granted space to exercise the power as well.

4.7.2 Violence against female leaders

Engaging in leadership has multiple implications both bad and good. Among those bad implications include violence from their male partners but also emotional violence from the community especially men who keep demeaning them for being unworthy to lead men and for abandoning their families in quest for leadership. This has also been found in some recent studies noting that, although there is an increase in women participation in leadership, there is a growing number on reports of physical attacks, intimidation and harassment against the female politicians which are aiming "to restrict women's policy

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csus.edu/indiv/g/gaskilld/business_computer_ethics/the%20case%20against%20affirmative%20action.htm

contributions, deter women's electoral participation, and reinforce prevailing gender norms" (Krook 2017: 74).

In the current research, participants communicated that women involved in leadership go through a lot of violence from their husbands because they are in leadership. For example a participant narrated how a woman was physically and emotionally abused to an extent of wanting to commit suicide. This participant - a staff of an organization narrated that;

"In a village called Iboa, a woman assumed leadership as a child protection committee member and her husband started caning her every day because she had assumed a position of leadership. This was because the woman had got multiple trainings on human rights, leadership and knew a lot of things on children rights on which she could out-reason her husband telling him how better to treat children in the community so the man felt disempowered. Instead of voicing out his disagreements, he started acting otherwise and started beating the woman. I was called when the woman wanted to commit suicide. So these are part of the negative experiences that come with women's involvement into leadership. At family level, when a woman assumes power, it indirectly alters power balance within the family and as you may know, power is the root cause of violence within the family. So normally women who assume power regardless of if it is by appointment or elections; are likely to face GBV than their counterparts who are not leaders. Men have been raised with a thinking that they are supposed to be the bosses and leaders and here things are changing altering this kind of power structure. You will definitely have violence because a man will start looking at himself as an infidel as compared to the woman. The men usually act like that to reclaim 'their space' in the family and by so doing the actions men do includes violence" (Mukasa Moses, Senior Psychosocial officer, LWF, at Palorinya).

Another participant remarked that;

"one was going through it (*violence*) and the husband was telling her that she is trying to control him because she is a leader, and she should control the other refugee population but not him. But these women do not even want to tell that they face violence, because they feel that in their position they cannot report that. That woman was asking me, 'please do not tell Norah' (*The GBV coordinator*) about it" - (In an Interview with Brenda Akiriat, child protection officer, LWF at Basecamp, Palorinya).

According to Krook (2017), such violence that deter women from participation in leadership are attacks on their rights. Indeed, it has been globally noted that women in politics are at very high chances of facing physical, sexual and psychological GBV. In fact, research has it that all violence occurring against women in politics is gender-based; targeting women because they are women and the acts are gendered (Iknowpolitics.org 2018⁶).

Violence is a result of power imbalance in a social context, both men and women strive to exercise the power that they have within them. But because women have been made subordinate to men, and yet they become knowledgeable when they get power and want to do some things differently or share the new knowledge with their partners and households. However, because men are used to being the ones who know and have power over the women, this change does not come easy to them and hence they claim back the power and eventually violence in the home erupts. Relating this GBV situation with Gaventa's power

⁶ <https://www.iknowpolitics.org/en/discuss/e-discussions/violence-against-women-politics-0>

cube, we notice that Gender-based violence (GBV) directly portrays and reflects power imbalances between women and men due to the internalised cultural norms and patriarchal behaviours about women's subordinate role in society.

The empowerment of women to reactivate the power within them alters the power structures known to both the men and the women where men have power over women. It was evident in the study that such power imbalance is even internalised by both men and women for instance where a victim asked the NGO staff to not mention that she was beaten by her husband and she preferred to not say it out than to ensure the man pays for his wrong doing. As a result, spaces of participation are affected by GBV as men exert power over the women in a negative manner. Yet, both women and men have power within to create positive and safer environments for both men and women regardless of if women gain positions of power.

On a brighter side, some participants communicated that some women are treated better when they assume leadership; “women in leadership are more respected than an average person, the woman who is a leader is not treated like a kitchen woman, they are treated better” (Poni Mary Wani Secretary for education and children affairs, Zone III West)

4.7.3 Double labour: Leadership and family care

Women were said to be carrying out various activities and especially when they assume leadership, the load of activities of both leadership and family chores make it hard for a woman to keep on in leadership in spite of the desire to contribute to development in a leadership position. In a conversation with an NGO staff about this subject, he narrated;

“women are involved in development in different aspects; women participate in about three dimensions or three types of roles that women participate in i.e reproductive, productive and community development, but men are much more involved in the productive role. Therefore, women have to balance three roles which take a lot of their time and resources but men concentrate on only the productive role and as a result, women end up dividing their time on many things which limits their full participation in leadership but also makes them work in many aspects” (Akabitunga sajas, Sexual and Reproductive Health Officer, Palorinya).

It was noted that especially in an emergence situation, women in the settlement are most likely to not become leaders until the settlement reaches its stability of the development phase. This is because there is usually more need to give care and support to their families. Like a participant said; “Women's time is usually taken up in the care jobs, taking care of the family and the men end up taking on all the leadership roles of the society. Only when they are out of emergence, they start to realise that their needs are still pending and now they start to engage in leadership to front their needs too” (Sarah Agea OPM-community Service, Palorinya settlement). In some cases, the women are made to drop or become inactive in their leadership roles due to their husbands' complaints that they neglected family duties.

4.8 The intersection of Social identities and the experiences of leadership

Intersecting identities may pose vulnerability or privileges to different individuals or groups of people. It was noted that women from specific cultures like the Nuer are less willing to be engaged in leadership. It is also difficult for married women to take on other responsibilities that would take away their time to give care support to their family members. More so, it was identified that women barely get education and consequently they are not empowered enough to take up influential roles like their male counterparts. According to Aldehaib (2010), illiteracy rates in South Sudan were high as many education institutions were destroyed in war which hampered education of at least two generations of women and men. However, due to negative sociocultural norms, over 70% of South Sudanese women between the ages of 15 and 24 missed out on education (Aldehaib 2010). Education is an important aspect in political participation and leadership, the lack of it may exclude women from the processes like understanding key documents, rules and technicalities used eg English language (Aldehaib 2010). In a FGD, a woman said; “Communication barrier stops us from becoming leaders, we do not know English but the men know English so they become leaders”. This is because they have to have writing skills and also communicate to different partners in English which is a mark of education. The other key variables that make it more likely for women to be standing for election in addition to education are; experience in army or leadership positions, ethnicity where specific tribes like the Nuers are deeply rooted into patriarchy and the belief that women are followers.

As such, three identity intersections; being a married woman, without education, from the Nuer ethnic background makes it less likely for such a woman to assume leadership due to such identities. For example one of the male leaders cited marriage as one of the barriers saying; “most of the women here are married and their men cannot allow them to go and participate. Once they are elected as a leader, as you know you assume responsibilities that would make you go away from home or you bring people home. The husbands are not really comfortable with that” (Jacob Mataya Seme Chairperson Zone two Palorinya, in a phone call interview). Education was severally mentioned by different research participants including refugee leaders, INGO workers and district leaders especially highlighting that the lack of education limits women from participation in leadership. For example, one participant asked, “refugee women from South Sudan, they are not educated, they even fear speaking in public about key issues affecting them, so how can they even become leaders?” (in an interview with Moriku Martina District Councilor in charge of refugee affairs, at Moyo district headquarters on 25th September 2020). Another participant advised that it should be one of the areas given much attention as she said “Education constructs a person’s esteem; therefore create platforms which are literary creating or making leaders. So, education is an avenue that women can have to internally reflect on their capacity without having a person to push them just to create numbers” (Lamuni Matilida, Opinion Leader for women, in an interview in Palorinya settlement). There were several recommendations in addition to this and these are discussed in the next section.

A follow up with interviews on the Nuer ethnic group when participants in a FGD mentioned that it was harder for Nuer women to join political leadership or to sustain their positions in leadership, revealed that ethnicity has a lot to do with a woman’s ability to acquire political leadership. On one

hand, her being in that particular ethnicity and on the other hand her voters' ethnicity or the relation her ethnic group has with the majority of the people in that aspirant woman's area of jurisdiction. For example, one woman mentioned that she knows a friend of hers who tried to become a leader but because majority of the people in her neighbourhood were not from her own ethnicity, she lost. She was Nuer and that area has more Dinkas and Kukus than Nuers. The divides and differences that the South Sudanese have in South Sudan, still influence their life in the settlements in Uganda and some cannot vote for a person of a different ethnic background because they feel their own ethnic group should be in power and not the other. For example a woman narrated her experience;

I am Kuku, I wanted to be voted for in the position of Secretary for education and children affairs RWCII, I won but it was very difficult, I wanted other people from the Dinkas, Nuers, Pojulu, Acholi and all of them to vote for me. But we were in competition with that woman from the Nuer tribe and the Nuer are many. I was only lucky that the Dinka later joined to support me but before that, only a few Kuku, Acholi and they would not be enough to make me win" (Poni Mary Wani, in an interview on 10th October 2020)

These experiences shared by these participants indicated that beyond being a woman, ethnicity also played a big role to who joins office. More to that, such divides cause ethnic clashes and that too keep intensifying the relations of these ethnic groups, meaning they would not look at capacity of a candidate to serve the population but what tribe or ethnic group the candidate comes from.. For example, when I started my field research in August, there had just been an ethnic clash between the Nuer and the Kuku communities between 16th – 17th July 2020, which claimed three lives, 40 houses burnt and dozens injured⁷⁸. This was the second time a tribal clash happens within the same year.

The other issue of identity that came up was that of body disabled-ness. Women living with disabilities were almost non-existent in the leadership structures. The only woman living with disabilities and a leader in Zone Two, mentioned that;

"We are usually not considered for leadership because they think we cannot make good leaders. We cannot move easily to places to work for people and OPM when they need us. You see, even in positions that require PWD to be represented, in most cases they vote for the people who are not PWD. This makes it difficult because those people do not know our challenges that we face and they end up not representing PWD properly" (Ropi Annet, Secretary for production and environment RWCI, in an interview on 10th October 2020)

The research participants were very knowledgeable about the need for inclusion of PWDs in political spaces and referred to UNHCR's community- based protection approach which recognises the need to grant PWDs with equal opportunities to participate in decision making processes and policy formulation. One mentioned that "It is stipulated by both OPM and UNHCR that PWDs should be supported and voted for like any other people to join leadership positions and to enable them use their skills to serve their communities, support their families and themselves" (Puru Esther, Secretary of women affairs, RWCII in an Interview on 15th October 2020). She also added that "those people do not see what we can do, they focus on what we cannot do, they look at me and say, now that woman who cannot even walk, she should

⁷ <https://www.westnileweb.com/news-a-analysis/obongi-1/tribal-fights-rock-palorinya-settlement-in-obongi-district>

⁸ <https://www.independent.co.ug/over-40-houses-torched-dozens-injured-in-ethnic-refugee-clashes/>

use her little time to take care of her family not to move around that she wants votes. They were telling me like that when I was looking for their support to vote for me”. These women living with disabilities looking for opportunities in the electoral leadership spaces confirm that “There is no such a thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives” (Lorde 2012: 138). Society’s attitudes towards such a group of people as women, with disabilities limit their potential to contribute in leadership spaces, levels and all forms of power due to the way they render them incapable.

To sum up this section, it is very important to highlight therefore that the intersecting identities of women become vital variables of what enables a woman to be in power or spaces of electoral leadership.

4.9 What is done and what to be done further to encourage women as leaders?

Several participants expounded on engaging the gate keepers of culture and some gave examples of men, saying that there is need to train and engage men so that there is community reconstruction. Men at community level should be engaged to become advocates of women rights. “Remember its men who are acting as the bottlenecks to a certain degree. So you want to do a male engagement for them to make a contribution towards this change. That way, you will not find violence acts in the bid to claim for their space, here they will be the ones giving out the space and it will feel safer” (Opira Charles Chairperson Iboa Unit-A Village in an interview). This was further discussed by another participant who encountered a man and told her “even if you support women and you do not support men, then you are doing nothing because they will still come home and we will beat them” (Violet Kirungi, Assistant Psychosocial officer, LWF in an interview at Basecamp Palorinya). She added that therefore it is vital to engage men together with women for the same goals of gender equality. Another participant on the same issue said;

“Cultural transformation takes a gradual process; it does not come and take effect immediately. It requires a step by step process. The first is to understand that any change needs community involvement especially men because they have already put in place a system which defines the roles of men and the roles of the women. And to be able to uproot this, we need these same men to understand the advantages of involving women and the disadvantages of excluding them

Other participants felt the need to create further trainings for women in good leadership and management saying that some have just not yet realised their potential and once they get such training, they would join the leadership space and be able to sustain their empowerment even when the INGOs and all the humanitarian organizations are out of the camp, the women would still be able to carry on with leadership. It was also noted that women who have managed to become leaders must be encouraged to keep in the system and reward them so that they can inspire other women to join. In addition, a participant who thought that patriarchy might take a long way before it is washed out said “there should be dialogues and debates among women on how to be part of the existing partriachical structure and yet make a difference even while it exists” (Brenda Akiriat, Child protection officer, LWF in an interview at Basecamp, Palorinya).

The next Chapter gives an overview of what the discussion in the paper is and draws some recommendations for future research in this area of research.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

This chapter finalizes the discussion to this study and brings concluding remarks and recommendations for future research.

5.1 Overview

This research concentrated on women participation in the Refugee welfare Committees (RWCs) leadership structure of Palorinya refugee settlement. The study has endeavoured to bring forth the experiences of women who participate in electoral politics, the motivation to their participation and what they bring out of their political participation. The research highlights the narratives around the affirmative action and argues for an holistic approach that combines the affirmative action together with other means that allow women to participate into power.

The participation of women in political spaces is a lot driven by power and this determines whether women set an entry to this arena or if they can make full participation to avoid all the challenges discussed earlier.

In this paper, I have discussed that what motivates women to participate is largely to make contributions to the lives of their family members and the community. Women identified that they want their children to see them as role models and to be able to acquire food from the implementing partners. The paper also discussed the intersectional variables and identities that influence the participation of women in electoral leadership. In this research, I found that women who were once in armed groups had higher chances to be voted into leadership. The research participants criticized the affirmative action in Palorinya where out of 12 committee members, only five positions are reserved for women. Some respondents applauded this initiative while others mentioned that it was not a fair system as that would not be equality to reserve 5 positions out of 12 and yet those 5 are also gendered. There is a lot of hidden and invisible power exercised by men over women which influence indirectly what the women contribute to the political arenas.

The research has also discussed the experiences of women who attain leadership positions these including the experience of GBV to women in leadership by their husbands and community. GBV is a result of the power imbalances due to cultural norms that make women subordinates to men. The paper has also highlighted that among the variables enabling women to participate in electoral politics are; education, ethnicity, past experience and body abilities.

5.2 Suggestions for future research

This research was limited to participation of women on the RWC structures of leadership in Palorinya, this research could be widened to find what the cases are for other settlements in the Country. A comparison between south Sudanese refugees and other refugees could be done as well. More so, there is need to understand other spaces of power besides the RWCs, and how women participate in those. This could find out what spaces women have engaged in more and why.

Future research need to investigate what other spaces of participation are for women in the refugee settlements in Uganda. This kind of research would also include identifying what spaces of power are

claimed by refugee women, which are closed and by whom etc. In the current research we have learned that in Palorinya refugee settlement, there are invited spaces through affirmative action. However, these invited spaces are limited.

While this research touches a bit on the influence of engaging at one level of power, further research needs to be done to analyse how refugee leadership structures may influence national and global politics and decision making. This would cite out what decisions for example have been done that stem from refugee discussions. This research would also distinguish how women have participated in such decision making level or not and why.

Research should further analyse if indeed women who have attained education when they came to Uganda have engaged in Electoral leadership. This is because, one of the reasons and most importantly cited that excludes women from electoral leadership is the lack of education. Although Palorinya is a new settlement and not a possible location for such a research, it can be carried out in settlements that have been in existence for a long time and with refugees who have been in Uganda for more than five years to find out how the education these women and girls attain in Uganda is enabling their participation into electoral politics.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Research tools

General Notes to take

1. Number of zones in Palorinya
2. Number of leaders per zone
3. What are the positions on each committee of leadership
4. How many women and men
5. What are the positions women hold by quota system per zone
6. How many women are elected in direct positions (non-quota system positions) per zone
7. What is the leadership structure/hierarchy

Interview Guiding Questions

Data sources: Wo/men not in leadership, wo/men in leadership, NGO/OPM staff,

Elected Women leaders (Sample size 10)

Section A

- Date of Interview:
- Self-Introduction by researcher
- Communicating purpose of the study and how the interview is structured
- Requesting consent to participate and to be recorded on audio
- Need any clarification or you have any questions before we start?
- Name/code of respondent
- Gender self-identification
- Age (can be range)
- Level of education/ Last class attended
- What other leadership structures exist (cultural, etc)

Section B

1. General questions
 - Where in south Sudan do you come from/ ethnic group
 - What zone and village in Palorinya do you reside?
 - What ethnic group is majority in your area of residence?
 -

Section C

2. What are the factors influencing the participation of refugee women in electoral leadership of the settlement?
 - What inspired you to stand as a woman leader into your position?
 - As a woman leader, what do you think helped you to be elected into your position?
 - Do you have someone you knew who was in leadership? Male or female? What role did this person play?
3. How are elected women leaders influencing development and activities of the people living in the refugee settlement?
 - What are the most memorable good and bad experiences that you have experienced during your work?
 - In what way do you think you have added value to the development of your people? What is done different from your male leader counterparts?
 -
4. What are the experiences of women who are in electoral leadership positions and spaces?
 - What are the most memorable good and bad experiences that you have experienced during your work?
 - From your understanding, what influenced this experience?
 - As a woman, what challenges do you face during your work?
 - What do you think are the underlying causes of these challenges?
 - How are men and women treating you in particular as a woman leader?
5. Conclusions
 - What are your recommendations to inspire more women into leadership for this settlement?
 - That was my last question, do you have any question for me or if you want to make any comments on issues you feel I have left out?
 - Do you know of any person you suggest that I should speak with in this regard?

Guiding Questions for Wo/men not in leadership (sample size: 10)

Section A

- Date of Interview:

- Self-Introduction by researcher
- Communicating purpose of the study and how the interview is structured
- Requesting consent to participate and to be recorded on audio
- Need any clarification or you have any questions before we start?
- Name/code of respondent
- Gender self-identification
- Age (can be range)
- Level of education/ Last class attended

Section B

1. General questions
 - Where in south Sudan do you come from/ ethnic group
 - What zone and village in Palorinya are do you reside?
 - What ethnic group is majority in your area of residence?
 -

Section C

2. What are the factors influencing the participation of refugee women in electoral leadership of the settlement?
 - What in your opinion is helping women to step up and join political leadership?
 - Do you know of women in leadership? What helped them to win the elections?
3. How are elected women leaders influencing development and activities of the people living in the refugee settlement?
 - Would you please share with me what any woman leader has done in your area?
 - What do you have to say about women's service and how has it led to the development of your area?
4. What are the experiences of women who are in electoral leadership positions and spaces?
 - What stories do you hear that women in leadership go through?
 - Would you be inspired to join leadership? What are those good experiences that inspire you? What are the bad ones?
 -
5. Conclusions
 - What are your recommendations to inspire more women into leadership for this settlement?
 - That was my last question, do you have any question for me or if you want to make any comments on issues you feel I have left out?
 - Do you know of any person you suggest that I should speak with in this regard?

Interview Guiding Questions for Men both those in leadership and those who are not

Data sources: Men both those in leadership and those who are not

Elected men leaders (Sample size 5 in leadership and 5 who are not in leadership)

Section A

- Date of Interview:
- Self-Introduction by researcher
- Communicating purpose of the study and how the interview is structured
- Requesting consent to participate and to be recorded on audio
- Need any clarification or you have any questions before we start?
- Name/code of respondent
- Age (can be range/estimation)
- Level of education/ Last class attended
- What other leadership structures exist (cultural, etc)

Section B

6. General questions
 - Where in south Sudan do you come from/ ethnic group
 - What zone and village in Palorinya are do you reside?
 - What ethnic group is majority in your area of residence?
 -

Section C

7. In your opinion, what are the factors influencing the participation of refugee women in electoral leadership of the settlement?
8. How are elected women leaders influencing development and activities of the people living in the refugee settlement? (probe for achievements and perceptions of others to women's work)
 - In what way do you think you have added value to the development of your people?
9. From your experience and what you have heard, what are the experiences of women who are in electoral leadership positions and spaces?
 - From your understanding, what influenced this experience?
 - How are women in leadership being treated, talked about?
10. Conclusions
 - What are your recommendations to inspire more women into leadership for this settlement?

- That was my last question, do you have any question for me or if you want to make any comments on issues you feel I have left out?
- Do you know of any person you suggest that I should speak with in this regard?

Interview Guiding Questions

Data sources: NGO/OPM staff,

Elected men leaders (Sample size 5 in leadership and 5 who are not in leadership)

Section A

- Date of Interview:
- Self-Introduction by researcher
- Communicating purpose of the study and how the interview is structured
- Requesting consent to participate and to be recorded on audio
- Need any clarification or you have any questions before we start?
- Name
- Position
- What other leadership structures exist (cultural, etc)

Section B

11. In your opinion, what are the factors influencing the participation of refugee women in electoral leadership of the settlement?
12. How are elected women leaders influencing development and activities of the people living in the refugee settlement? (probe for achievements and perceptions of others to women's work)
 - In what way do you think you have added value to the development of your people?
13. From your experience and what you have heard, what are the experiences of women who are in electoral leadership positions and spaces?
 - From your understanding, what influenced this experience?
 - How are women in leadership being treated, talked about?
14. Conclusions
 - What are your recommendations to inspire more women into leadership for this settlement?

- That was my last question, do you have any question for me or if you want to make any comments on issues you feel I have left out?
- Do you know of any person you suggest that I should speak with in this regard?