

**Understanding gender power relations,
transactional sex and HIV in fishing
communities in Southern Malawi**



**Thesis submitted in accordance with the
requirements of the University of Liverpool for the
degree of Doctor in Philosophy**

By

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I, Eleanor Elizabeth MacPherson, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Abstract

Over the past 30 years, HIV/AIDS has had a devastating impact on the lives of millions of people around the world. Despite successes in the roll out of HIV treatment programmes, HIV prevention programmes have been less successful in lowering incidence rates. Certain groups have been found to experience significantly higher prevalence than seen in the general population, with fishing communities representing one key group with significantly higher risk of HIV infection.

In fishing communities, gender power relations and economic vulnerability intersect in ways that mean that individuals are particularly vulnerable to HIV infection. In the past decade, there has increasingly been a focus on structural drivers of HIV transmission such as gender power relations. Gender differences are fundamentally underpinned by power inequalities in society and can result in the subordination of women and their interests in a manner that favours men. This thesis set out to understand how gendered structural drivers shaped vulnerability to HIV in fishing communities, and to develop interventions to address these structural drivers.

The research was conducted in two fishing communities in the rural district of Mangochi in Southern Malawi. The design of the study drew on social relations theory and second-wave feminism. The research methodology used qualitative and participatory methods to address four key research objectives: (1) to understand gender power relations in fishing communities in Southern Malawi; (2) to explore and document the key drivers and facilitators of participation in transactional sex in the study villages; (3) to document individual and community perceptions of HIV risk and transactional sex in the study villages; (4) to develop a HIV prevention strategy to address risk of HIV/AIDS among fishing communities in southern Lake Malawi.

Key findings are that in fishing communities, transactional sex was common and took a variety of forms, ranging from gift-giving within relationships, to-sex-for-fish exchanges, to sex worker encounters. Power differences between couples in transactional sexual encounters shaped individuals' abilities to negotiate condom

use. The context and motivations for transactional sex varied and were mediated by economic need and social position both of men and women. Microfinance is a tool that can alleviate poverty and potentially prevent HIV. However, in the fishing context microfinance loan repayment procedures often increased female fish traders' vulnerability to HIV.

Participants had a good understanding of HIV risk yet this did not result in the adoption of risk-reduction strategies. Building on these findings, the thesis presents suggested HIV interventions that were developed through participatory community workshops. Interventions identified included: working with men and boys to support transformation of gender roles and normative behaviour; enforcing legislation to improve the ecological environment to reduce the impact of decline fish stocks and environmental hazards on risk-taking behaviour; improving access to HIV testing and treatment services; and improving living and working conditions of men and women working in the fishing industry. In conclusion, this thesis demonstrates the urgent need to introduce structural interventions in fishing communities in Southern Malawi and provides clear recommendations for implementing potential interventions.

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List of Acronyms

ARVs	Antiretroviral treatment
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CoM	College of Medicine
EDCTP	European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership
FGDs	Focus group discussions
GOM	Government of Malawi
IDIs	In-depth interviews
LSTM	Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine
MCP	Malawi Congress Party
MDHS	Malawi Demographic & Health Survey
MLW	Malawi Liverpool Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Programme
MMR	Maternal mortality ratio
PW	Participatory workshops
PR	Participatory research
RA	Research assistants
SAPs	Structural adjustment programmes
STDs	Sexually transmitted diseases

Local Language Terms

bombay – type of catfish caught in Lake Malawi

chibuku – sweet beer commercially produced and sold in cardboard cartons

chambo – large cichlid fish that is considered a local delicacy.

chikokeyani – sweet beer fermented from sugar and yeast

hule – derogatory term for a sex worker

kachaso – beer brewed in people's homes and sold

kamtuteni - small scale fish trading. Derives from the word '*kututa*' which means placing something on your head and participants used the term to refer to the practice of trading fish locally where women placed basins of fish on their head as they moved around the community.

kauni – type of fishing using lights at night.

mayi phikani – women who sell food to fishermen on the beach they often travel with them

nsima – the staple dish in Malawi. Made from ground maize and eaten for most meals.

siginala – the position in boats occupied by experienced boat crew member.

usipa – small cichlid fish frequently caught in the fishing communities

utaka – a type of fish caught seasonally on Lake Malawi

List of Supporting Manuscripts

MacPherson E.E., Sadalaki, J., Njoloma, M., Nyongopa, V., Nkhwazi, L., Mwapasa, V. Lalloo, D.G., Desmond, N., Seeley, J., and Theobald, S. (2012) “Transactional sex and HIV: Understanding the gendered structural drivers of HIV in fishing communities in southern Malawi” *Journal of the International AIDS Society*, 15 (Suppl 1):17364

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the research

In the past decade, there have been impressive achievements in the roll out of HIV treatment programmes across the globe. By the end of 2012, an estimated 9.7 million people in low- and middle-income countries were receiving antiretroviral therapy (ART) (UNAIDS 2013). There has also been increasing recognition that providing ART treatment to HIV positive individuals can be used to prevent HIV transmission (UNAIDS 2013). However, while rapid expansion of ART programmes have been promising, the 2013 UNAIDS Report on the Global Epidemic highlights that 18.9 million people who require ART are still not receiving it (UNAIDS 2013).

The roll out of HIV treatment programmes have made impressive gains in reducing mortality from HIV, yet other HIV prevention programmes have been less successful in lowering incidence rates (Coates, Richter et al. 2008). The public health approach to HIV prevention has frequently focused on changing individual behaviour (Dworkin and Ehrhardt 2007). Recent evidence has shown that the social and economic forces that underpin HIV vulnerability can constrain individuals and make behaviour change difficult (Seeley, Watts et al. 2012).

These social and economic forces have often been referred to as social or structural drivers and have been defined as “core social processes and arrangements, reflective of social and cultural norms, values, networks, structures and institutions, that operate in concert with individuals behaviours and practices

to influence HIV epidemics in particular settings’’ (Auerbach, Parkhurst et al. 2009: 2-3). The manifestation of structural factors include gender and socio-economic inequalities, stigma, discrimination, and human rights violations (Rao Gupta, Parkhurst et al. 2008). There has been growing recognition that interventions that address structural factors have been more successful than those who fail to consider their impact (Pronyk, Hargreaves et al. 2006, Baird, Garfein et al. 2012).

In the HIV epidemic, gender inequalities (referring to the power imbalances between men and women) have been identified as a key structural driver because of the way they can shape and constrain individuals in sexual interactions (Rao Gupta et al. 2008; Jewkes 2010). Central to this is that gender differences are fundamentally underpinned by power inequalities in society and can result in the subordination of women and their interests in a manner that favours men. However, gender also interacts with other socio-cultural and economic structures to shape different communities vulnerabilities. Understanding how these dynamics play out in contexts – particularly with groups that are recognised as being high risk – are important when developing prevention strategies.

Certain groups, even in countries with generalised HIV epidemics, have been found to have a significantly higher prevalence of HIV than the general population. Men and women working in the fishing industry have been recognised as a particularly high-risk group in sub-Saharan Africa (Kissling, Allison et al. 2005, Seeley, Tumwekwase et al. 2009, Tumwesigye, Atuyambe et al. 2012,

Kwena, Camlin et al. 2013). In Malawi, fishermen have also been identified as a group with higher risk of HIV with prevalence estimates for this group standing at 16.6% (Government of Malawi 2006, Government of Malawi 2009). This is higher than the national prevalence rate that stands at 11.7%. Further, the Mangochi district, where the study was situated, prevalence stands at 13.1% (Government of Malawi 2007) higher than other rural districts in Malawi.

Structural drivers are complex social phenomena that operate at a number of levels simultaneously. This includes within policy and legal frameworks; service infrastructure and access; social norms and practices and finally with interpersonal relations at the community and household and individual level. Given the complexity of structural drivers, developing interventions that address these complexities and target multiple levels are required. However, as Jewkes (2010) notes this is challenging and requires us to “deepen our understanding of drivers of the epidemic in different populations and develop a complex multifaceted prevention strategy to address them” (Jewkes 2010: 145).

1.2 Justification for the study

As noted above fishing communities have been identified as a group at an increased risk of HIV. Additionally, some of the first cases of HIV and AIDS were identified in fishing communities in Uganda (Seeley and Allison 2005). Yet, fishing communities have often been neglected in the global response to HIV and to date there have been few interventions to prevent HIV that have been undertaken in these communities. This thesis attempts to address this gap by

providing an in-depth exploration of key structural drivers shaping HIV vulnerability in fishing communities in Southern Malawi. Building on this evidence, interventions that can be used to address structural drivers in this context are presented.

1.3 Research aim and objectives

The overall aim of the study was to understand the structural drivers of HIV in fishing communities in Southern Malawi and develop interventions to address these. This was translated into four key objectives:

- (1) To understand gender power relations in fishing communities in Southern Malawi;
- (2) To explore and document the key drivers and facilitators of participation in transactional sex in the study villages;
- (3) To document individual and community perceptions of HIV risk and transactional sex in the study villages;
- (4) To develop a HIV prevention strategy to address HIV/AIDS among the fishing communities in southern Lake Malawi

1.4 Structure of thesis

I have presented this thesis in 8 chapters. In Chapter 2, I provide a review of the international literature in five key areas, including gender theory (including social relations), structural drivers of health, gender and HIV, key drivers of HIV in fishing communities and interventions to prevent HIV. In Chapter 3, I provide an

in-depth description of the context in which the research was conducted. This chapter focuses on the national level as well as providing a thick description of the villages the research was conducted in. In Chapter 4, I provide an in-depth description and discussion of the methodology and methods deployed in the study and the strategies I used to ensure the quality of the data that were collected. This is followed by three results chapters, which are guided by the analytical process. In Chapter 5, I present findings around gender power relations and how their operation within the villages shapes different groups' participation in transactional sex. In Chapter 6, I present findings around understandings of HIV risk and discuss areas for intervention identified during the participatory workshops. In Chapter 7, I explore microfinance, its presence within the study communities and how its administration and use by female fish traders shaped both their vulnerability and resilience to HIV. In Chapter 8, I summaries the main findings of the research, I discuss how these findings relate to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and respond to the research aim and objectives. I discuss the limitations of the study including the methodology, focus and approach. I end the chapter by describing the contribution this thesis has made to the existing body of knowledge.

1.5 Statement of contribution

This thesis is composed of my original work. I designed the study, developed the data collection tools and trained the research assistants to conduct the interviews, focus group discussions and participatory workshops. I analysed the data and wrote the thesis. The research assistants (Victoria Nyongopa Magombo, Lawrence Nkhwazi, Mackwellings Phiri and Alinafe Chimphonda) conducted the

in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and participatory workshops. They also provided feedback on the analysis. I provided support throughout the process, meeting the research assistants following each data collection episode, discussing any emerging themes and modifying the data collection tools.

2 Literature review

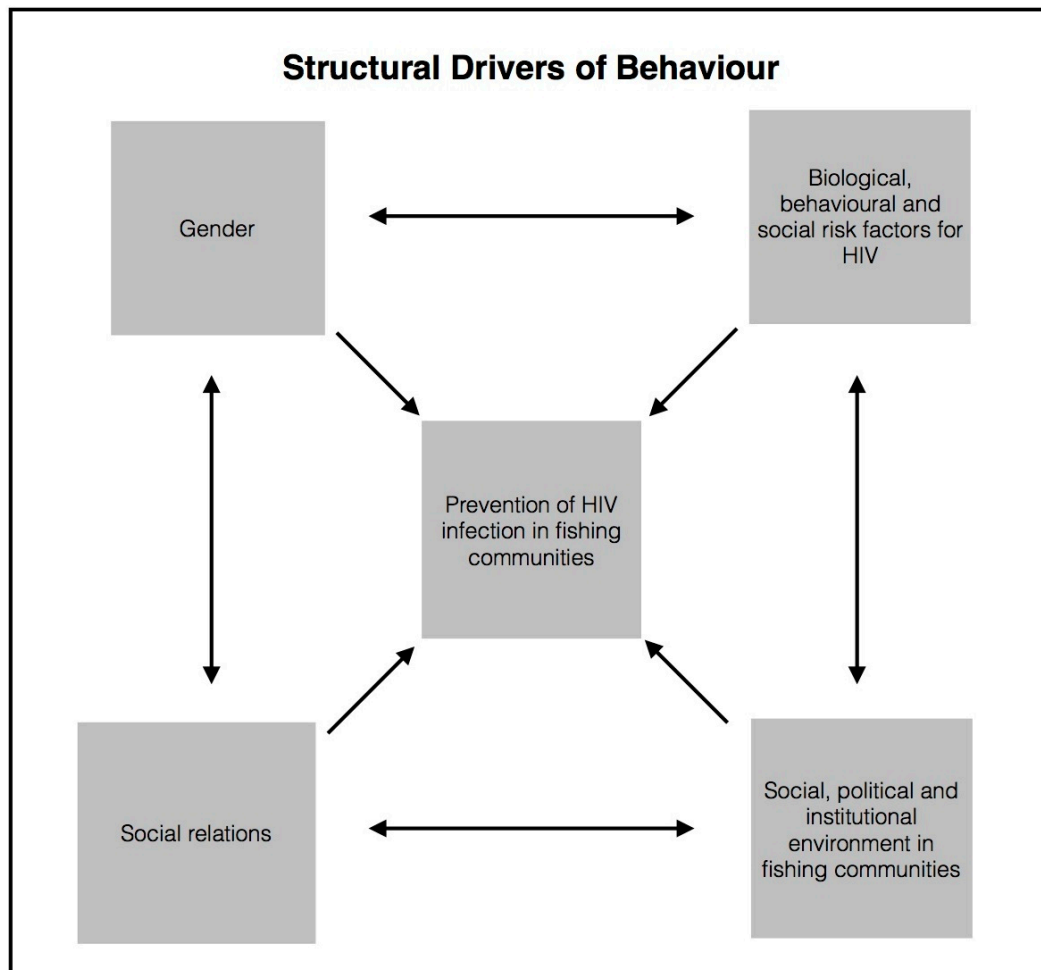
2.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 1, structural drivers are complex social phenomena that operate at a number of levels simultaneously. Gender has been identified as a key structural driver of the HIV epidemic. The social relations approach seeks to expose the gendered power relations that perpetrate inequities. In this approach the analysis includes the household and beyond to consider how gender inequalities are perpetrated within community, market and state institutions. To capture the complexities of how gendered structural drivers shape HIV vulnerability in fishing communities I have drawn on five areas of the literature:

- Structural drivers of health
- Gender theory (including social relations),
- Gender and HIV risk
- Key drivers of HIV in fishing communities
- Interventions to prevent HIV

In Figure 2.1 below I present a diagram of how these different bodies of literature can inform the development of interventions to prevent HIV in fishing communities.

Figure 2.1: Map of how bodies of literature inform the development of interventions to prevent HIV in fishing communities



2.1.1 Structure of chapter

This chapter begins with a review of gender theory and the ways in which gender power relations can shape people’s lives (section 2.2). In section 2.3, I move on to discuss social drivers of health, in particular how gender interacts with other social determinants of health to shape men, women, boys’ and girls’ health outcomes. In this section I review the different concepts and debates in the international literature on applying gender theory in the field of health and health

care. In section 2.4, I present literature on a development tool – microfinance – that has often been offered to poor rural women with the explicit aim of empowering them. In this section I present discussion of the academic debates about microfinance and women’s empowerment; microfinance and sub-Saharan Africa and finally microfinance as a tool to prevent HIV. In Section 2.5 I discuss how gender shapes men and women’s risk and vulnerability to HIV. In particular I discuss gender power relations, biological vulnerability, masculinities, sexualities, gender based violence, alcohol, poverty and transactional sex. In this section, where it has been possible, I have presented literature from Malawi and the Southern and Eastern Africa regions. In section 2.6, I have drawn together this discussion and present the literature on fishing communities and HIV vulnerability. In section 2.7, I discuss successful HIV interventions and include behavioural, bio-medical and structural interventions. Finally in section 2.8, I draw together the different concepts discussed and present a conceptual framework which provides the conceptual underpinning to the thesis.

2.1.2 Literature review strategies

I used electronic database searches (using key search words) to identify relevant academic papers in five areas structural drivers of health; gender theory (including social relations), gender and HIV risk, key drivers of HIV in fishing communities, interventions to prevent HIV. The databases I used for the searches were Medline and Web of Knowledge. I also used Google Scholar and Google to ensure I had not missed any papers and had included the grey literature.

2.2 Gender theory

The concept of gender was introduced into feminist research in the early 1970s (Vlassoff and Manderson 1998). The term refers to how a person's biological sex is culturally valued and interpreted into locally accepted ideas of what it is to be female or male (Reeves and Baden 2000: 1). Gender as a concept therefore describes all the socially given attributes, roles, activities and responsibilities connected to being a male or female in any given society (March, Smyth et al. 1999). In most societies these gendered social norms invest a greater privilege (often power and resources) in men and boys compared to women and girls. Gendered social norms are not fixed but are dynamic, changing over time and varying across cultures (Reeves and Baden 2000, Esplen and Jolly 2006). The context specific nature of gender norms can be viewed in the significant differences between what men and women can or cannot do in one culture compared to another (Rao Gupta 2000).

Central to the concern of gender is the hierarchical power relations that are created within societies and which are often referred to as gender power relations. Gender power relations shape how material resources such as income, land, credit and education are divided within both households, as well as society, more generally. They also shape how labour is divided with women often given the responsibility for reproductive roles and men responsible for economically productive roles. They also embody the ideological "ascribing females and males different abilities, attitudes, desires and personality traits" (Agarwal 1997: 1). Gendered identities can be self-defined, ascribed or imposed. They shape relationships between

individuals, but also cultural and institutional practices from the household to the global level. They can influence behaviours and opportunities in many different contexts such as households, schools, workplaces and health systems (O'Manique 2009). As Whitehead notes, gender, like race, is never absent, and instead reinforced across all levels of social organisation (Whitehead 1979).

Kabeer (1994) uses the concept of social relations to describe the structural relationships that create and reproduce systematic differences in the positioning of different groups of people (Kabeer 1994: 56-59). She highlights that gender relations are a form of social relations that intersect with other relational divides such as class, race and ethnicity. Rather than giving preference to gender or class Kabeer sees both shaping social relations. To present this point she cites Beneria and Sen (1982) to highlight the role both gender and class can play in social relations:

“First, a women’s class position structures the concrete meaning of gender from her. The variations that exist between women of different classes are at least as important for the woman’s social position as the commonalities inherent in being a woman within a given society. Second, class defines the relations among women and themselves. That is, class is not simply a differentiating mechanism that places women in varying social boxes. It is an antagonistic social relation that defines, for example, the oppressive social relation between female domestic servants and their mistresses. Class is also antagonistic in broader terms... women of different classes often have opposing interests in social organizations and programs for social change.” Beneria and Sen (1982) cited in (Kabeer 1994: 57).

Therefore any discussion and study of gender relations requires an understanding that they are implicitly negotiated in relation to other relational divides such as class, race, ethnicity and sexuality (Agarwal 1997). Age is a particularly important divide when exploring gender and health because women have different biological vulnerabilities and social positions depending on their reproductive status (Sen and Ostlin 2008: 3). Social relations therefore produce cross-cutting inequalities, which ascribe each individual a position in the structure and hierarchy of their society. While social relations shape people's wellbeing they are not immovable and changes at the macro-level can change social relations. One example of this is that the end of apartheid rule in South Africa in 1994 led to a rapid change in social relationships particularly those based on race.

In the last five years there has been an increasing focus on how gender interacts with other social relations to shape health beyond the focus of 'men's health' and 'women's health.' This research has been termed intersectionality and a recent Social Science and Medicine issue presents ways in which this research has been taken forward (Springer, Hankivsky et al. 2012).

2.2.1 Intra-household decision making and gender

Economic models have often made the assumption that households are unitary with the implicit belief that household members pool income and behave altruistically towards one another (Basu 2006). Yet, feminist economists have played an important role in dispelling this notion and unpacking gendered power dynamics within households (Basu 2006, Duggan 2011). Ultimately,

who is able to access resources and make decisions depends on a number of factors including an individual's perceived contribution to the household's livelihood or what Sen terms their 'breakdown' position: the social or economic position an individual would be left with in the event of a breakdown of their relationship (Sen 1990).

This decision-making process is often referred to as intra-household bargaining, and influences who makes the decisions within the household and who has access to and control over the resources within the household (Kandiyoti 1988). A women's bargaining position is strengthened by her ability to earn an independent income, to find employment outside the home, to have ownership rights and to have access to education (Sen 1999).

The power to make decisions and access economic resources are important for health. They influence when household members, in particular women and girls, are able to seek treatment when they are sick, or when mothers are able to seek treatment for their children. Without being able to access resources within the household women may not be able to cover the indirect costs of seeking health care such as transportation. There is also evidence that distribution of money is influenced by who receives the income. Empirical studies in Europe and Africa have shown that consumption spending on the needs of women and children and the allocation of food and medical care are influenced by the shares of income that women and men earn (Kanbur and Haddad 1994, Duggan 2011: 109). Women tend to allocate more money to children's needs which has important implications for the overall well being

of the household (Lundberg, Pollak et al. 1997).

2.2.2 Gender and macro-economic environment

Long-standing inequalities in the gender distribution of economic and financial resources have placed women at a disadvantage relative to men in their capability to participate in, contribute to and benefit from broader processes of development (UN DESA 2009). Macroeconomic policies impact on gender equality through markets and state interventions which distribute key economic and financial resources (UN DESA 2009). These include tax systems which can create and perpetrate gender inequalities by influencing the allocation of time to formal, informal and unpaid work as well as through the imposition of direct taxes for the consumption of goods and service (UN DESA 2009). Budgets influence how governments allocate public sector expenditure and can shape inequality in relation to gender, race, age and ability (Elson 1999, Klot, Holvoet et al. 2002). In the UK, wide reaching changes to the welfare system and budget cuts since 2010 have primarily affected women with two-thirds of these changes impacting women's income rather than men's (Fawcett Society 2012).

Government budgets particularly in the Global South have also been shaped by Globalization. In the 1970s the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) introduced Structural Adjustment Programmes in sub-Saharan Africa (Gershman and Irwin 2000, O'Manique 2004). These programmes specified strict conditions on any loans provided to governments and led to reductions of state budgets (particularly for social projects), the reduction of

employment of public sector workers, the privatization of and establishment of user fees for public services and the weakening of ministries of health and education due to budget and human resource constraints (Gershman and Irwin 2000, O'Manique 2004, Poku 2004). All these policies had important implications for gender equality because reductions in funding for social and health funding often led to women providing these services for free increasing their unpaid workload and meaning they had to work longer days or withdraw from income generation outside the home.

The introduction of user fees for social services such as health also had an impact on gender equity. The World Bank in 1987 argued that the introduction of user fees would be effective in raising additional funds and improving efficiency within the health system (Yates 2009). However, a number of studies have highlighted that user fees are in fact “an ineffective, inefficient and inequitable funding mechanism that has been ineffective at raising substantial funds” (Yates 2009: 2078).

To highlight the impact of user fees on women’s demand for health care, Nanda (2002) cites the case in Kenya of the introduction of user fees. “[T]he introduction of user fees (amounting to half a day of pay for a poor person) in government outpatient health facilities led to a dramatic reduction in utilisation of sexually transmitted disease services by both men and women, but at significantly greater rates for women. Before the introduction of user fees, there were fewer women than men attending. Nine months after their introduction, the fees were revoked, and women’s utilisation rose to a greater

level than the pre-fees level” (Nanda 2002: 129). A further study in Kenya demonstrated the impact made on demand by charging women for social goods. In a randomised control trial, conducted by the Poverty Action Laboratory, found that charging pregnant women US\$0.75 for an insecticide-treated bed net lessened demand by 75% (Yates 2009).

The way that economic systems remunerate and organise the labour force is central to macro-economic processes and gender. Traditionally in most societies there has been a clear division of labour based around a separation between productive and reproductive activities. Men have been primarily concentrated in formal paid work, while women have undertaken reproductive activities within the home (Barrientos, Kabeer et al. 2004). While there have been changes in the division of labour in the past thirty years, gendered norms still impact on who has access to work: who can work and where they can work. The division of labour within work which includes sex segregation and the compensation for work (the pay which particular kinds of work) often favours men over women (Reskin 1993, Charles and Bradley 2009). In developing countries many occupations that are dominated by men, such as mining, road construction or quarrying pay more money than occupations that are dominated by women such as farming, domestic work and selling vegetables.

Globalization has through improved communication and transportation connected large numbers of workers and consumers across the Global North and South. These improved linkages have led to fundamental changes in how

consumer goods are produced. These changes have in turn created increased employment opportunities for women in export-oriented labour-intensive manufacturing (Barrientos, Kabeer et al. 2004, UN DESA 2009). While these have created new opportunities for women to enter paid employment, earn an income and gain independence the employment conditions of these positions have often provided little social protection (Barrientos, Kabeer et al. 2004). This is because the conditions of employment have often been flexible (part-time, temporary, casual) and often without an employment contract. This has allowed producers to further shift the costs and risks of production such as adverse conditions or market fluctuations onto workers (Barrientos, Kabeer et al. 2004). The flexible nature of this work can also mean that women are forced to work long hours for low wages. Studies have also shown that while women may have access to wage employment they have also remained responsible for most of the domestic tasks. This has meant that women have had to work longer hours with less social support (Barrientos, Kabeer et al. 2004).

2.2.3 Gender analysis frameworks

In the field of gender and development there have been a number of frameworks that have been developed with the aim of providing descriptive analysis of how gender roles and relations are constructed in any given society. These frameworks have principally been used in the field of development to integrate gender considerations into development initiatives (March, Smyth et al. 1999). The frameworks include the Harvard Analytical Framework, Moser's Gender Planning Framework and Kabeer's Social

Relations Framework. Harvard Analytical Framework is often referred to as Gender Roles framework. It was one of the first frameworks designed to be used to analyse gender. The aim of this framework is to demonstrate that there is an economic case for allocating resources to women as well as men to make development projects more efficient (March, Smyth and Mukhopadhyay 1999: 32).

The Moser Gender Analysis Framework is a planning methodology that aims to emancipation women from their subordination and their achievement of equality, equity, and empowerment. One central component of this framework is the conceptual distinction between practical and strategic gender needs. Practical gender needs are those that, if met, help women with their current activities. They are a response to the immediate perceived necessities within a particular context and are usually practical in nature. The fulfilment of practical needs, however, will not challenge existing gender divisions of labour or women's subordinate position (Moser 1993). Strategic gender needs exist because of women's subordinate social position and would if met, enable women and men to transform gender imbalances of power (Moser 1993).

In Section 2.2 I drew on Kabeer's concept of social relations to describe the structural relationships that can create and reproduce differences between different groups of people. I return to this framework in Section 4.3.2 of the Methods Chapter where I discuss the epistemological underpinning of the thesis. Kabeer's Social Relations Framework builds on the concepts and produces a framework

that aims to examine the existing gender inequalities in the distribution of resources, responsibilities and power (March, Smyth et al. 1999). This knowledge is then used to assist the design of policies and programmes which is aimed to enable women to be agents of their own development (Kabeer 1994). The approach uses concepts rather than tools to concentrate on the relationships between people and their relationship to resources, activities, and how these are reworked through state, market and social institutions (Kabeer 1994).

2.2.4 Social determinants of health

The bulk of the global burden of disease and the majority of health inequalities, which are found in all countries, arise from the conditions in which people are born, grow, live work and age (Rasanathan 2011: 2). These social determinants of health encompass the social, economic, political, cultural and environmental factors. The most important determinants are those that produce stratification within a society and are referred to as structural determinants (Rasanathan 2011: 2). These can be most plainly viewed in the distribution of income or in different forms of discrimination (such as gender, class, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation), and the political and governance structures that reinforce rather than reduce inequalities in economic power (Rasanathan 2011: 2). These structural mechanisms that affect the social positions of individuals constitute the root cause of inequalities in health. They do this through impacting intermediary determinants such as living conditions, psychosocial circumstances as well as behavioural factors, these structural mechanisms affect the social position of individuals and can led to inequalities in health outcomes (Rasanathan 2011).

Drawing on the work of John Galtung and his concept of structural violence Farmer and colleagues use the term as a way of describing social relationships that place individuals and populations in harm's way (Farmer, Nizeye et al. 2006). These are described as “structural” because their arrangements are embedded in the political and economic organisation of our social world and “violent” because they cause injury to people who are not typically those responsible for perpetrating the inequalities (Farmer, Nizeye et al. 2006). Gender power relations are a form of structural violence and their configuration in communities has important implications for the wellbeing and agency of both men and women.

2.3 Gender and health

Sen and Ostlin (2008) argue *“gender relations of power constitute the root causes of gender inequality, and are among the most influential of the social determinants of health. They determine whether people’s health needs are acknowledged, whether they have a voice or a modicum of control over their lives and health, and whether they can realize their rights* (Sen and Ostlin 2008: 2).

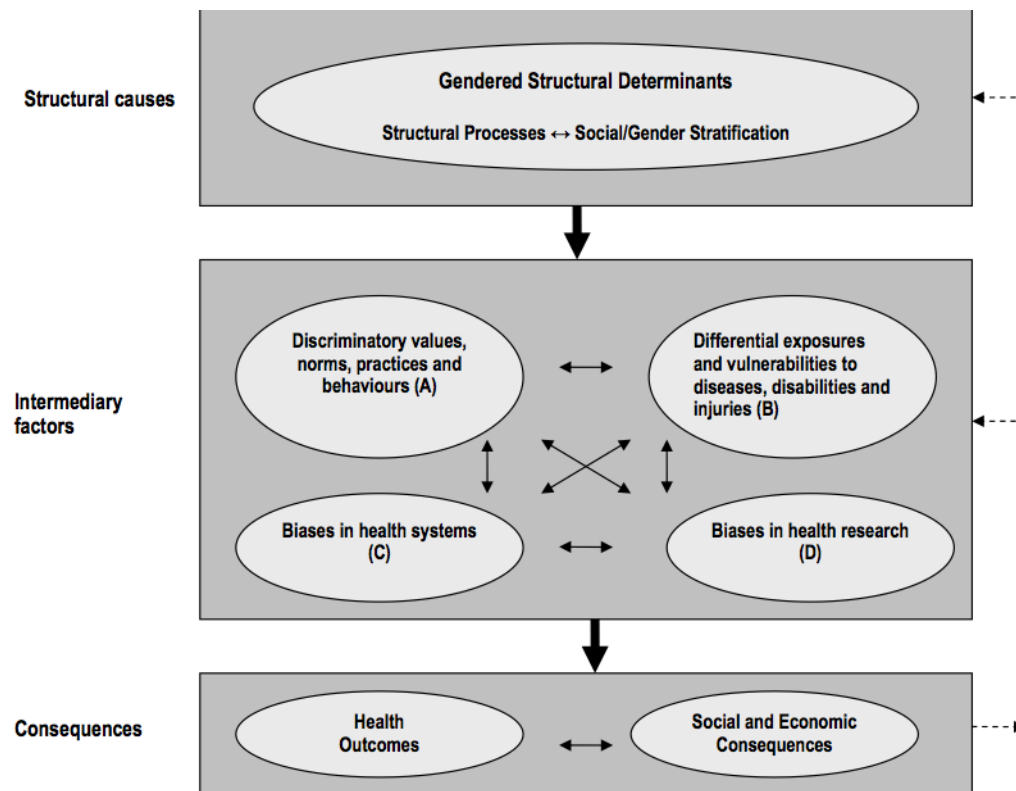
Within most societies women have less access to economically productive resources such as land, property and credit and often have much more responsibility for reproductive roles (this encompasses both the production of children but also the survival and security of people both young and old). Most reproductive roles are often undertaken for free and overlooked within standard economic models (Razavi 2007, Folbre 2011). Women and girls are in some regions, viewed as the repositories of male or family honour and the

self-respect of communities (Fazio 2004).

Gendered power relations govern how people live, and what they believe, and claim to know (Sen, Östlin et al. 2007). Restrictions on women's physical mobility, sexuality and reproductive capacity are often viewed as natural and in many countries, legal systems and accepted codes of conduct often condone violence against women (Garcia-Moreno, Jansen et al. 2006).

The WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health report provides a conceptual framework for explaining how gendered structural driver shape women and men's vulnerability to ill health.

Figure 2.2: Framework for the role of gender as a social determinant of health



Note: The dashed lines represent feedback effects

Source: (Sen, Östlin et al. 2007)

Within the framework gendered structural determinants of health are formed by the interaction between two different factors. Firstly, gender as a social stratifier intersects with other forms of discrimination and biases such as economic class or race to create disadvantage and marginalisation. These interactions are also shaped by broader structural processes (social, economic, political, cultural and environmental factors) that together constitute the gendered structural determinants of health (Sen and Ostlin 2008).

There are four main intermediate factors within the framework that are shaped by broader gendered structural determinants. These are discriminatory values, norms, practices and behaviours; differential exposures and vulnerabilities to disease, disability and injury; biases within health systems and biases in health research (Sen, Östlin et al. 2007). These intermediary factors result in biased and inequitable health outcomes, which in turn have serious economic and social consequences for girls and boys, women and men, their families and communities as well as their countries (Sen and Ostlin 2008).

The discriminatory values, norms, practices and behaviours can shape health and vulnerability to ill health in a number of ways. The gendered norms within health manifest themselves in households and communities on the basis of values and attitudes about the relative importance of women and girls as compared to men and boys. These can mean women and girls have less access to information and economic resources which can prevent them from seeking health care when it is required (Tolhurst, Amekudzi et al. 2008). They influence the roles and responsibilities that women and men undertake, and who has access to and control over information and power at all levels of decision-making, from the household to the national level. Gendered norms also dictate who ensures that household and community order is maintained and deviance is appropriately sanctioned or punished (Sen and Ostlin 2008). They also shape sexuality and decisions relating to reproductive health. These decisions touch on the most intimate relationships and often not discussed openly (both at the household level as well as within the community) (Boyce, Huang Soo Lee et al. 2007).

Men and women experience different exposures and vulnerabilities to ill health. Some of these differences are related to their different biological sex differences. Women are particularly vulnerable to ill-health during pregnancy and labour (Worthington, Natividad et al. 2008, Hogan, Foreman et al. 2010). They are also biologically more vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV (Türmen 2003). Others are related to the way men and women are socialised and which roles they undertake within society. For example within societies women are often responsible for the collection of water, this role can increase their vulnerability to water-borne diseases such as schistosomiasis and diarrhoeal diseases (Vlassoff and Manderson 1998, Moshabela, MacPherson et al. 2011). Men are often socialised into conceptions of masculinity that can impact their psychological and emotional health, this can lead to risk-taking behaviours (such as increased alcohol use and low condom use), which can lead to higher levels of mortality and morbidity (Courtenay 2000).

Health systems are composed of social institutions that are both shaped by gender and also reproduce gendered inequalities (Ostlin 2009). For women and men to access health services depends on both the demand for health care, as well as on how services are supplied (Ostlin 2009). How services are supplied depends on how they are funded, where they are located and how they meet the needs of women and men who use them. All these aspects can impact on women and men's decision making to seek health care and therefore will have important implications for their health outcomes (Ostlin 2009). In some

contexts women's mobility is limited preventing them from seeking care; this can be exacerbated by women's limited access to economic resources.

Women's health needs are often overlooked in the provision of services. The very high rates of maternal mortality especially in resource limited settings highlights this concern (Fransen 2003). The majority of the health work force is female, and the women's contribution to formal and informal health care systems are significant but often ignored or undervalued (George 2007, George 2008, Ostlin 2009). It has been estimated that up to 80% of all health and 90% of HIV/AIDS care is provided at home (Ogden, Esim et al. 2006).

Gender discrimination and bias not only affect differentials in health needs, health seeking behaviour, treatment, and outcomes, but also permeate the content and the process of health research (Sen and Ostlin 2008). Gender imbalances in research content include the following dimensions: slow recognition of health problems that particularly affect women; misdirected or partial approaches to women's and men's health needs in different fields of health research; and lack of recognition of the interaction between gender and other social factors (Sen and Ostlin 2008).

2.3.1 Key concepts relating to gender and health

This section briefly defines some important concepts that relate to both gender theory and gender and health. Empowerment, wellbeing and freedom relate to broader social processes and gender. Gender equity and health as well as gender mainstreaming are all important concepts in the application of gender theory in the field of health.

2.3.1.1 Empowerment and agency

Kabeer (1999) argues that empowerment is “about the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability” (Kabeer 1999: 435). She also sees that there is a logical relationship between disempowerment and poverty because an insufficiency in the means of meeting one’s basic needs can often rule out the ability to exercise meaningful choice (Kabeer 1999).

Kabeer (1999) presents three inter-related dimensions that shape an individual’s ability to exercise choice these are:

Resources	Agency	Achievements
(pre conditions)	(process)	(outcomes)

Kabeer (1999) uses the term resources to include not only materials in the economic sense but also the human and social resources that can improve the ability for individuals to exercise choice. Access to resources reflects the rules and norms that govern the distribution and exchange in different institutional arenas. These rules and norms give certain actors authority over others in determining the principles of distribution and exchange. Household heads, chiefs or elites are all endowed with decision making authority within the institutional contexts in which they are based (Kabeer 1999).

The second dimension of empowerment relates to agency or “ the ability to define one’s goals and act upon them” (Kabeer 1999: 438). Kabeer sees agency as more

than observable actions but that it also encompasses the meaning, motivation and purpose which individuals bring to their activity or their sense of agency or the “power within.”¹ Kabeer (1999) argues that agency can take the form of decision making power but can also go beyond this to include bargaining and negotiation, depiction and manipulation, subversion and resistance as well as an individual’s ability for reflection and analysis. Kabeer (1999) argues that agency can have both positive and negative connotations. In the positive sense “power to” refers to people’s capacity to define their own life choices and goals even when they face opposition of others (Kabeer 1999). However, people can also use agency to control others or “power over” where actors can control other people’s agency often through domination or the threat of violence (Kabeer 1999). However, power can also operate in the absence of explicit agency. Often rules and norms governing social behaviour tend to ensure that certain outcomes are reproduced with the apparent lack of agency.

Kabeer (1999) also draws on Sen (1985) to argue that resources and agency together constitute capacities. Capacities refer to the potential that people have for living the lives they want, of achieving valued ways of being and doing (Sen 1985, Kabeer 1999). Sen (1985) uses the idea of ‘functionings’ to refer to all the possible ways of being and doing which are valued by people in a given context and of ‘functioning achievements’ of the particular ways of being and doing that are realised by people. As it can be seen from this discussion empowerment,

¹ When using the term “power over” and “power within” Kabeer is drawing on Stephen Luke (1974) theory of power. Lukes (1974) also presents a third dimension of power that recognises that conflicts of interest may be suppressed not only from the decision making agenda but also from the parties involved. In this scenario power relations are kept in place because the actors involved – both dominant and subordinate subscribe to accounts of social reality which deny that such inequalities exist or else assert that they are due to individual misfortune rather than social justice.

power and the way it operates within societies have important implications for people's health. When men and women are disempowered they are often unable to act in ways that would ensure health.

2.3.1.2 Gender equity and health

Gender equity refers to “fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits, power, resources and responsibilities between men and women. The concept recognises that women and men have different needs, power and access to resources, and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies the imbalance between the sexes” (Payne 2009: 3). This is often used to contrast gender equality which means “the absence of discrimination on the basis of a person's sex in opportunities, allocation and resources or benefits, and access to services” (Payne 2009: 3). Gender equity approach in health is concerned with the role gender power relations play in the production of, and vulnerability to, ill health or disadvantage within the health system. “Achieving gender equity in health implies eliminating unnecessary, avoidable and unjust health inequities which exist as a result of the social construction of gender.” (Pan American Health Organization and GenSalud 2000: 1).

2.3.1.3 Gender mainstreaming and health

In the past two decades, the influence of gender power relations has increasingly been recognised by the international community (including international and bilateral donors, national governments and International NGOs) as shaping people's health. Most international and national development organisations have developed gender policies or statements and these have been framed within the discourse of ‘gender mainstreaming.’

The concept of ‘gender mainstreaming’ evolved from attempts to improve women’s share of the gains of development in the early 1970s (Ravindran and Kelkar-Khambete 2008: 121). In the years following the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1994, and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, the agenda shifted from an exclusive focus on women to ‘mainstreaming’, or integrating, gender into the mainstream in all sectors (Ravindran and Kelkar-Khambete 2008). The policy focuses on taking into consideration gender at all stages of the policy design and implementation (Baden and Goetz 1997). This was in response to the realisation that the approach of the earlier decades had led to the ‘ghettoization’ of women’s projects, and to the mere addition of a few services, without fundamental changes in the way programmes are formulated and service is delivered (Ravindran and Kelkar-Khambete 2008: 121). The gender analysis frameworks that I discussed in section 2.2.3 have used to aid this process by providing planners with “simplified tools which allow them to feed the particular complexities of specific contexts into the planning process” (Moser 1993).

In the field of health, despite there being a great deal of discussion of the need to incorporate gender into health policy there has been a wide gap between intention and practice (Doyal 2000, Sen, Östlin et al. 2007, Ravindran and Kelkar-Khambete 2008). At the national level, health policies and programmes have integrated gender into their objectives and programmes but have rarely operationalised these into concrete programmes. According to Ravindran and Kelkar-Khambete (2008) the lack of progress on mainstreaming gender in health may be attributed to “depoliticization and delinking of gender mainstreaming

from social transformation and social justice agendas; adoption of top-down approaches to mainstreaming; growing hostility within the global policy environment to justice and equity concerns; and increasing privatization and retraction of the state's role in health" (Ravindran and Kelkar-Khambete 2008: 121).

2.3.2 Critiques of gender and health

Since the introduction of the term gender there have been critiques of its meaning and application within international policy (Baden and Goetz 1997). When the term gender has been applied in health it has often meant women rather than the power relations between men and women, which can also disadvantage men (Rao Gupta 2000, Springer, Hankivsky et al. 2012). As Tolhurst, Leach et al. (2012) note, post-modern and post-colonial feminists have challenged assumptions about the very category of 'woman', and pointed to the multiple divisions and hierarchies between women on the basis of social axes such as race, ethnicity, class, nationality, age, sexuality, dis/ability and religion (Connell 2012, Tolhurst, Leach et al. 2012). These different axes of social power relations are interrelated and it is not sufficient to view them as "additive" but rather as intersecting processes (Iyer, Sen et al. 2008). Or as Tolhurst, Leach et al. (2012) term them "gender binaries" and argue that "*a woman is not simply 'even more disadvantaged' because she is also disabled. Rather gender intersects with these multiple social divisions and inequalities to create specific positionalities in relation to power*" (Tolhurst, Leach et al. 2012: 1825).

In the field of gender and health there have been recent debates about addressing these critiques through using intersectionality theory. Intersectionality theory conceptualises gender as a fluid, intersecting form of inequality and explicitly encourages investigations into the numerous ways different social axes interact to shape vulnerability at the individual level but also at the structural level (Springer, Hankivsky et al. 2012). While, research drawing on intersectionality remains in its infancy a recent Special Issue in *Social Science and Medicine* explored debates, gaps and empirical papers in the field of gender and health (Springer, Hankivsky et al. 2012).

2.4 Microfinance

Since the 1980s, microfinance² has become the international community's most prevalent development tool to alleviate poverty in the global South. Microfinance usually involves the offering of small loans to poor households that have been excluded from the formal banking system because they lack collateral and are therefore deemed to be too high risk to receive loans (Morduch 2000). The underlying logic of providing financial services to poor people is that this will result in improved capacity to manage money and result in greater investment, acquisition of productive assets and increased development of skills and knowledge (van Rooyen, Stewart et al. 2012). Microfinance programmes are among the most well-funded development interventions (Visvanthan and Yoder 2011). There is a vast academic literature (predominately in the development literature) dedicated to the analysis of microfinance programmes and assessment

² The term microfinance is often used as an umbrella term to a range of financial services including refer to micro-loans, micro-insurance and village banking. In general the term is focused on programmes that provide credit.

of their impact on outcomes including poverty, health and wellbeing and empowerment (Holvoet 2005, Mersland and Strøm 2010, Karlan and Valdivia 2011, van Rooyen, Stewart et al. 2012, Banerjee, Duflo et al. 2013).

Microfinance programmes have penetrated almost all regions of the globe, but are especially concentrated in the poorest countries of the world, particularly in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

While there is considerable diversity in the operating practices of microfinance programmes, all have a number of common features. The first is the practice of group lending, where group members assume the responsibility for repaying the whole loan. Secondly, the grace period between signing the loan agreement and first loan repayment or compulsory saving deposit is typically very short (usually within 2-4 weeks). Finally, groups may only graduate to take a subsequent, larger loan once they have successfully completed repayments on their first loan (Sengupta and Aubuchon 2008).

2.4.1 Microfinance and women's empowerment

Globally, the majority of microfinance recipients are women. Microfinance organisations have made ambitious claims regarding the power of microfinance to achieve women's empowerment and poverty alleviation (Mayoux 1999, Visvanthan and Yoder 2011), although academic researchers have contested these claims. Claims relating to women's empowerment are built on the argument that by providing financial services to poor women (including loans and opportunities to saving), this will enable women to generate or support self-employment (Johnson 2005). Further, it is anticipated that the money that women generate

through this employment will enhance their role in household decision-making, as well as increasing confidence to negotiate with partners (Johnson 2005, Kalpana 2011). The group-based nature of microfinance programmes is also seen as providing women with an opportunity to participate in a wider social network, foster engagement in political activities and provide the opportunity for social change (Pankhurst 2002, Kalpana 2011). Despite these laudable aims, a growing body of academic work has challenged the validity of microfinance organisations' claims of success in achieving poverty-alleviation and empowerment (Goetz and Gupta 1996, Mayoux 1999, Rahman 1999, Cornwall and Edwards 2010, Kalpana 2011). Visvanthan and Yoder (2011) suggest that microfinance organisations may promote empowerment without sufficiently emphasising either transformation of dynamics within the household, or the social and cultural structures that perpetrate inequality. Cornwall and Edwards (2010) argue that women's empowerment is a complex process that requires more than one simple intervention (Cornwall and Edwards 2010). In short, by focusing on the individual as a means of overcoming poverty, microfinance programmes fail to address the broader structural factors (both at the local as well as the international level) that drive poverty and gender imbalances at the household and community levels (Pankhurst 2002).

Further, a number of studies have questioned whether microfinance may actually be harmful for women. Empirical studies, mainly undertaken in South Asia, have reported disempowering outcomes for female recipients of microfinance. Goetz and Gupta (1996) found that in households in rural Bangladesh male relatives controlled a significant proportion of women's loans. The authors also argued that the preoccupation with 'credit performance', measured primarily in terms of

high repayment rates, affects the incentives of fieldworkers dispensing and recovering credit in ways that may outweigh concerns to ensure that women develop meaningful control over their investment activities. One of the central aims of microfinance organisations is to alleviate poverty in developing countries. However, Matin and Hulme (2003) show that microfinance frequently fails to reach the poorest members of the communities in which they work (Matin and Hulme 2003). This may be a policy that is actively encouraged by some MF organisations because the poorest groups may be less likely to repay their loans (ibid). Matin and Hulme (2003) also note that microfinance might not be most suitable for the poorest groups. They argue that for households who are trapped in chronic food insecurity and who lack the asset base to protect themselves from shocks to their income and food supply “microfinance can be ineffective and sometimes counterproductive” (Matin and Hulme 2003: 653).

Rahman (1999) found that the need for timely repayment in loan centres in Bangladesh led to MF loan officers and other lending-group members placing intense pressure on female clients. Many of the borrowers maintained regular repayment through loan recycling that led to considerable increases to the debt-liability of the individual households. This led to an increase in tension and frustration in the household and violence against female members (Rahman 1999). Kabeer (2001), on the other hand, challenges some of the negative findings relating to women in microfinance programmes (such as those presented in Goetz and Gupta (1996)). In her work, which used qualitative and participatory methods, she found that women’s access to loans gave them the support to improve their bargaining position within the household.

2.4.2 Microfinance, Africa and women's empowerment

As noted earlier, much of the research exploring the impact of MF programmes on women's empowerment has been conducted in South Asia. Many feminist scholars have noted that gender power relations are context specific and there are differences in the social norms that govern women and men's behaviour in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. These different social norms are likely to have an impact on how men and women can use the loans.

Mayoux (1999) argues that the impact of MF in Africa has been mixed. Mayoux (1999) used mostly unpublished secondary data analysis from microfinance programmes and her own exploratory research to understand the impact of microfinance on women's empowerment. In this study, African women were generally more widely involved in production and market activities than women in South Asia, and this meant they were more likely to retain and use their own income. The pre-existence of well-developed networks between women meant that microfinance did not necessarily make a considerable contribution to women's social empowerment, as was seen in South Asian programmes. Finally, Mayoux (1999) raised the criticism that microfinance programmes in Africa have been far more concerned with financial sustainability than with achieving a broader impact on women's empowerment.

Kabeer (2005) argues that the debate over microfinance has been divided, with those who have an evangelistic zeal for promoting its use being matched by the outright rejection by its opponents. In reality, Kabeer (2005) argues that the impact of microfinance is like any development resource and “represents a range of possibilities, rather than a predetermined set of outcomes” (Kabeer 2005: 4709). Kabeer (2005) also states that the impact of microfinance is dependent on a wide range of factors including “the philosophy that governs their delivery, the extent to which they are tailored to the needs and interests of those they are intended to reach, the nature of the relationships which govern their delivery and – that most elusive of all developmental inputs – the calibre and commitment of the people who are responsible for delivery” (Kabeer 2005: 4709).

2.4.3 Microfinance and HIV prevention

Building on claims of benefits for women’s empowerment, microfinance has also been promoted as a tool that could be used to prevent HIV (Dworkin and Blankenship 2009). Public health interventions using microfinance have been studied in high HIV prevalence countries in South Africa and Zimbabwe. The IMAGE Study, conducted in mining communities in rural South Africa, found a reduction in gender based violence but no impact on reductions in HIV transmission (perhaps due to a short timeframe) (Pronyk, Hargreaves et al. 2006). The SHAZ Study, based in Harare, was conducted with young female orphans and combined gender training with microfinance. The study took place in 2004, when Zimbabwe was facing a severe economic crisis and the lending of microfinance loans to this vulnerable group “increased participants exposure to physical harm, sexual abuse and coercion” (Dunbar, Maternowska et al. 2010: 158). I return to

discussing the IMAGE study in section 2.7.2 when I explore structural interventions to prevent HIV.

2.5 Gender, Power and HIV

In the following section I discuss risk and vulnerability to HIV. When I use the term HIV risk I am referring to the probability that a person may acquire HIV (UNAIDS 1998). When I use the term vulnerability I am referring to the range of factors that can reduce individuals and communities ability to avoid HIV infection. These can include personal factors such as lacking knowledge or skill to protect oneself. It also incorporates the quality and coverage of health services and finally societal factors such as social and cultural norms, practices beliefs and laws that stigmatise and disempower populations and communities (UNAIDS 1998).

The focus of the discussion is the complex ways that gender power relations shape vulnerability and risk to HIV. I begin the section by discussing how gender power relations shape vulnerability to HIV and how the global community has responded to this. I then move on to discuss the different concepts and practices that contribute to HIV vulnerability. These include biological vulnerability, masculinities, sexualities, gender based violence, poverty and transactional sex. I then discuss how these factors shape vulnerability to HIV in fishing communities in the Global South. The final section discusses HIV prevention, in particular structural interventions that prevent HIV.

2.5.1 Gender and HIV vulnerability

Gender roles and relations can structure and legitimate women's subordination particularly in relation to sexual interactions. In many societies there is a silence that surrounds sex and which can dictate that "good" women should be ignorant about sex and passive in sexual relations (Rao Gupta 2000, Greig, Peacock et al. 2008). This silence can limit women's access to information about sex and about their bodies, which in turn can lead to an inability to protect themselves from HIV. In many cultures, motherhood is considered a feminine ideal and therefore using barrier methods or non-penetrative sex as safer sex presents women with a significant dilemma (Heise and Elias 1995).

As discussed earlier, in many societies women and girls have lower social and economic status simply because they are female. Their access to and control over resources can be particularly limited within the household. Being economically dependent on their sexual partners can therefore mean that women are unable to negotiate safer sex, discuss fidelity with their partners, or leave risky relationships (Rao Gupta 2002, Dunkle, Jewkes et al. 2004). Economic dependency can lead to women engaging in transactional sex as a way of fulfilling their economic needs, and which may also place them at increased risk of HIV infection. In section 2.5.9. I return to this discussion and present a full review of the literature.

Power dynamics within relationships can also influence women's ability to negotiate the terms of sexual relationships. Pettifor, Measham et al. (2004) found that limited sexual power was associated with inconsistent condom use in South

Africa. In this study women who reported low 'relationship control' measures were two times more likely to use condoms inconsistently. The study also found that women who were experiencing forced sex were nearly six times more likely to be using condoms inconsistently.

As seen in Pettifor and colleagues' study, condom use, particularly within long term relationships, can be problematic. This is further discussed in Chimbiri (2007), a study of Malawian women's ability to use condoms with their partners. In this study she found that while perceptions around condom use outside marriage were changing, initiating discussion about condom use for preventing infection in marriage "is like bringing an intruder into the domestic space" (Chimbiri 2007: 1102). This is further confirmed in Ghosh and Kalipeni (2005) study based in Lilongwe Malawi, which found that women can do very little to influence condom use by their husbands to protect themselves from HIV due to the perception that condom-use implies infidelity, nor can they space or stop having children without the permission of their male partner.

2.5.2 Global response to gender and HIV

Globally the response to HIV and AIDS has triggered an unprecedented focus on gender inequality and how this shapes women's vulnerability (Rao Gupta 2009, Rao Gupta, Ogden et al. 2011). This response is unprecedented because it has not been mirrored in other aspects of disease prevention or within health systems more generally (Rao Gupta, Ogden et al. 2011). An example of how gender has been prioritised in the international response to HIV is reflected in the UN

Secretary Ban Ki Moon's statement³ on the 1st April 2008, "countries should ensure a massive political and social mobilization to address gender inequities, sexual norms and their roles in increasing HIV risk and vulnerability" (United Nations 2008). These commitments by international organisations represent an achievement by feminist researchers and social scientists who have emphasised the importance of the role gender plays in HIV vulnerability from the early days of the epidemic (Schoepf 1988). Rao Gupta (2009) argues that this response has also been a catalysis for action in other development fields including food security, education and economic empowerment.

One of the reasons for this unparalleled response is the statistics relating to HIV. Of the estimated 34 million people living with HIV worldwide (UNAIDS 2011). In sub-Saharan Africa, there are 14 HIV-infected women for every 10 HIV-infected men (UNAIDS and WHO 2008). Seventy-five per cent of new HIV infections occur among young girls and female adolescents in Southern Africa (UNAIDS and WHO 2008). Additionally, women aged 15-24 are twice as likely to be infected with HIV than boys of the same age in the region (UNAIDS and WHO 2008).

³ Further examples of this are the Millennium Development goals which explicitly incorporated gender equality as goals, in 2004 UNAIDS founded the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS as well as 2005, UN General Assembly Special Session on AIDS included specific indicators targeting the vulnerability of women and girls and finally numerous commitments by major donors and national governments to address gender and make programming more effective for women and girls.

2.5.3 Biological vulnerability to HIV

While social norms play an important role in shaping women and girls vulnerability to HIV biology is also a factor shaping risk. This is because biologically women and girls are more susceptible to HIV. Young women have immature genital tracts that are more likely to sustain tears during sexual activity, creating a higher risk of HIV transmission (Türmen 2003). Additionally, male to female transmission is between two and four times more efficient than female to male (Türmen 2003). The presence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) increases the risk of transmission and acquisition of HIV by up to 10 fold (Türmen 2003). Many STIs in women are asymptomatic which can make diagnosis and treatment more difficult.

2.5.4 Masculinities and HIV

Gender theory refers to how power relations shape both men and women's lives however while the term gender has been used it has often referred to women rather than men (Cornwall 2000). In the field of HIV/AIDS Kaler (2003) notes, "most work on the gendering of AIDS has focused on women's experiences rather than men's, perhaps as an extension of the common bias in social science research that women are gendered, men are simply men" (Kaler 2003: 350).

In reality men, like women are shaped by gender norms. These gender norms intersect with other social markers such as age and class to shape behaviour. Masculinities are therefore "contested, constructed and reconstructed, and are highly dependent on positions in the social structure" (Ragnarsson, Townsend

et al. 2010: 2). Men who are socially and economically marginalised may attempt to compensate for their subordinate status by adopting hyper or more extreme forms of masculine identities and associated behaviours.

Connell (1995) uses the term hegemonic masculinity to refer to an idealised form of masculinity which is a socially dominant gender construct that subordinates femininities as well as other forms of masculinity (Courtenay 2000). These can reflect and shape men's social relationships with women and other men and represents power and authority. In relation to ill health constructions of masculinities ideas can in many societies shape both men's health seeking behaviour as well as encouraging men to behave in ways that shape their vulnerability to ill health (Cleaver 2002).

Grieg, Peacock et al. (2008) argue that prevalent notions of masculinity can equate being a man with “dominance over women, sexual conquest and risk-taking are associated with less condom use, more sexually transmitted infections, more partners, including more casual partners, more frequent sex, more abuse of alcohol and more transactional sex” (Greig, Peacock et al. 2008: 35). These are all behaviours that increase men, as well as their sexual partners, risk of HIV. Greig, Peacock et al. (2008) also argue that these constructions of masculinity prevent men from testing for HIV and using other health care services because they do not want to appear weak. This can lead to men coming forward later for HIV treatment with severely compromised immune systems and more opportunistic infections (Druyts, Dybul et al. 2013) these can be harder and more costly to treat.

2.5.5 Sexualities and HIV

The WHO's working definition of sexuality sees the concept as "a central aspect of being human throughout life" and that it "encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction." It is also "influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, ethical, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors" (WHO 2004). As it can be seen from this definition sexuality is intimately linked to the study of gender. It is a multidimensional and dynamic concept that has explicit and implicit rules imposed by societies (Ilkharacan and Jolly 2007). These rules are often defined by one's gender, age, economic status and ethnicity, which in turn, influences one's individual sexuality (Rao Gupta 2000). Maternal mortality, HIV and sexual violence are all influenced by a person's sexuality (Ilkharacan and Jolly 2007).

Since the early days of the HIV epidemic it has been clear that sexual contact was one of the primary modes of transmission (Aggleton 2004). Sexuality, as a social construction of biological drive is an important component of HIV vulnerability. According to Gupta (2009) it shapes who one has sex with, in what ways, why, under what circumstances and with what outcomes. Rao Gupta (2000) sees that power in relation to sexuality "determines whose pleasure is given priority and when, how, and with whom sex takes place" (Rao Gupta 2000: 2).

Yet, Rao Gupta (2009) argues that there has been a limited understanding of the complexity and variability of sexuality and its interactions with gender. She goes on to state: “too often, we perpetrate the narrow expectations that “good” women will be sexually naïve, passive and faithful to one partner. In fact, women, like men, are sexual beings and can seek sex for a variety of reasons – for pleasure, for procreation, for intimacy, for economic gain” (Rao Gupta 2009: 5).

Boyce, Huang Soo Lee et al. (2007) also argue that diverse sexualities have rarely been acknowledged in the global response to HIV. There has been a narrow hetero-normative view of males and female sexuality with the only “other” being homosexuality. The consequence of this has been a silence around the existence of transgender and transsexual individuals (Boyce, Huang Soo Lee et al. 2007). This silence has effectively led to a marginalisation in most of the funding and policies of HIV/AIDS prevention of transgender and transsexual people.

As Boyce, Huang Soo Lee et al. (2007) also argue this denial of programmatic attention and the analytical complexity of sexualities other than heterosexuality, specifically heterosexual monogamy, further compounds the structural vulnerabilities that help to make many sexual minority populations more vulnerable to HIV infection in the first place (Boyce, Huang Soo Lee et al. 2007: 13).

2.5.6 Gender-based violence and HIV

Gender-based violence is pervasive but often under-recognised within the field of public health. The extent to which women are exposed to violence varies across countries. A WHO multi-country study found that between 15–71% of women aged 15- 49 years reported physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner at some point in their lives (WHO 2005). This data indicates that violence against women is widespread and that women are subjected to different forms of violence – physical, sexual, psychological and economic – both within and outside their homes (Heise and Garcia-Moreno 2002, WHO 2005).

Violence limits women’s autonomy and their ability to make decisions about their bodies. It can also have a wide ranging impact on the short- and long-term physical, mental and sexual health problems of women (Heise and Garcia-Moreno 2002). These health problems can range from physical injuries to depression and suicide. Perpetrators of violence against women are most often their intimate partners, and violence may be considered one of the “most graphic expressions of unequal household power relations” (Duggan 2011: 107).

Academic research has established a significant association between experiences of intimate partner violence and HIV risk (Maman, Mbwambo et al. 2002, Dunkle, Jewkes et al. 2004, Decker, Seage et al. 2009, Jewkes, Dunkle et al. 2010). There are a number of factors that may explain this association. Forced sex can lead to trauma to the vaginal wall that can increase the likelihood of transmission (Rao Gupta, Ogden et al. 2011). The threat of violence in a relationship can influence women’s power and their ability to negotiate the conditions of sexual intercourse (Rao Gupta, Ogden et al. 2011); this can include the frequency of sex as well as

condom use (Rao Gupta 2002). Men who are abusive to their partners are more likely to be HIV positive (Jewkes, Sikweyiya et al. 2009). Violence within a relationship may also mean women are less likely to access HIV testing services because of the fear of disclosing their HIV status to their partner (Dunkle and Jewkes 2007). Further, women who have experienced violence (including sexual abuse in childhood) have more risky sex. This risky sex includes more sexual partners as well as older partners, more transactional sex and engaging in sex work (Jewkes 2010).

The ecological framework that has often been used in gender based violence research to “*conceptualize violence as a multifaceted phenomenon, grounded in an interplay among personal, situational, and sociocultural factors*” (Heise 1998: 262). Central to the ecological framework is that no single internal or external factor can explain why some people or groups of people are at risk of interpersonal violence, while others are less vulnerable. Instead the ecological framework views interpersonal violence as the outcome of interaction among many factors at the four levels – the individual, the relationship, the community and the societal (WHO 2013). Ecological frameworks treat the interaction between factors at the different levels with equal importance to the influence of factors within a single level (WHO 2013).

2.5.7 Alcohol use and HIV vulnerability

There is a growing body of evidence that finds an association between alcohol consumption and HIV risk (Cook and Clark 2005, Fritz 2009, Pitpitan, Kalichman et al. 2012). In their systematic review and meta-analysis of alcohol use and HIV

risk Fisher, Bang et al. (2007) found that drinkers had 1.57 times the risk of acquiring HIV of those who abstained, and that problem drinkers had 2.04 times the risk. In sub-Saharan Africa, the annual consumption per alcohol drinker is 16.6 litres per year, and is the highest level of any region in the world (Van geertruyden, Woelk et al. 2010). Drinking at this level is likely to have a detrimental impact on health (Rehm, Rehn et al. 2003).

Fritz (2009) in a review of the literature documents a number of studies that have shown that drinking alcohol before sex or being intoxicated during sex is directly linked with being HIV positive. In Rakai, Uganda, use of alcohol before sex increased HIV acquisition by 50% in a study of over 14,000 women and men (Zablotska, Gray et al. 2006). Among men who visited beer halls in Harare, Zimbabwe, having sex while intoxicated was strongly associated with having recently acquired HIV infection. (Fritz, Woelk et al. 2002). In Mumbai, India, sex under the influence of alcohol was independently associated with having an STI or HIV among men who had sex with female sex workers (Madhivanan, Hernandez et al. 2005). Drinking venues themselves have been associated with HIV risk: they bring together the opportunity to drink alcohol with the opportunity to meet casual sexual partners. In rural eastern Zimbabwe, a population-based survey of nearly 10,000 women and men showed that visiting a beer hall in the last month was associated with both risky behaviour and with HIV infection itself (Lewis, Garnett et al. 2005).

The casual pathways linking alcohol use and sexual risk taking are still under study but there is some evidence that alcohol use is linked to risk dis-inhibition

making people more likely to take more risks in their sexual behaviour when they are drunk (Mataure, McFarland et al. 2002). This includes decision making over condom use as well as the number of sexual partners (Pitpitan, Kalichman et al. 2012).

Alcohol use has also been reported to impact negatively upon adherence to anti-retroviral therapy (ART). In a review and meta-analysis of ART adherence and alcohol use non-adherence was almost twice as high in people who drank compared to those who did not drink (Hendershot, Stoner et al. 2009).

2.5.8 Poverty and HIV vulnerability

There has been wide recognition of the importance of poverty in the spread of HIV. More people with HIV live in poor countries than rich ones and more than two thirds of people with HIV live in Africa the poorest continent in the world (Piot, Greener et al. 2007). However, recent studies in the area of HIV and poverty have highlighted the complexities of this relationship (Bärnighausen, Hosegood et al. 2007, Gillespie, Kadiyala et al. 2007, Mishra, Assche et al. 2007). Poverty alone cannot be viewed as a driver of HIV infection; instead it is multi-dimensional and interacts with a wide number of risk-factors including social and economic inequalities and mobility, in addition to biological vulnerability. Piot, Greener et al. (2007) describe HIV not as an epidemic of poverty but rather an epidemic of inequality where inequality is the driver of new infections.

In Southern Africa, the gendered economies with highly skewed compensation structures are a feature of several settings where HIV prevalence is high such as mining. These economic realities structure intimate relationships, sexual economies and HIV vulnerability (Hunter 2002, Campbell and Currey 2003).

2.5.9 Transactional sex and HIV vulnerability

Transactional sex is defined as a relationship that involves the exchange of money or material goods for sex (Silberschmidt and Rasch 2001, Leclerc-Madlala 2003, Côté, Sobela et al. 2004, Moore, Biddlecom et al. 2007, Norris, Kitali et al. 2009). While this transaction has both an economic and sexual component, it has often been differentiated from western conceptions of sex work (Hunter 2002). This is because the women engaging in sex and the men paying for the sex do not view themselves as engaging in sex work. The participants engaging in these exchanges instead construct themselves as “girlfriends” and “boyfriends” and the exchange of gifts for sex is “part of a broader set of obligations that might not involve predetermined payment” (Hunter 2002: 101).

Transactional sex has been documented in a wide range of countries in sub-Saharan Africa. These have included Ghana (Côté, Sobela et al. 2004), Malawi (Swidler and Watkins 2007), Mozambique (Hawkins, Price et al. 2009), Nigeria (Cornwall 2002), South Africa (Hunter 2002, Kaufman and Stavrou 2002, Wojcicki 2002, Leclerc-Madlala 2003, Dunkle, Jewkes et al. 2004), Tanzania (Silberschmidt and Rasch 2001, Maganja, Maman et al. 2007, Wamoyi, Wight et al. 2010, Wamoyi, Fenwick et al. 2011), Uganda (Nyanzi, Pool et al. 2001) and

Zimbabwe (Masvawure 2010). In a review of published studies from Africa, Luke and Kurtz (2002) found that there was a “widespread transactional component to sexual relations for adolescent girls, and in some contexts, large proportions of girls have engaged in this type of relationship” (Luke and Kurtz 2002: 3).

Generally, it is predominately men who provide the material benefits and women who receive these material benefits in transactional sexual encounters, reflecting economic and social roles within many high HIV prevalence countries, (Moore, Biddlecom et al. 2007). Although, there has also been documentation of older women paying younger men for sex – often referred to as sugar mummies (Morojele, Kachieng'a et al. 2006), this practice seems to be much less prevalent.

Within the literature relating to transactional sex there have been dichotomous representations of women, particularly young women, who engage in transactional sex and their motivations for engagement. One representation sees women who engage in transactional sex as victims who are forced by economic circumstance to have sex to meet their own basic needs as well as their families (Epstein 2002, Hallman 2004, Kaute-Defo 2004, Epstein and Kim 2007). The other portrayal within the literature is of young women behaving as active social agents who rationally choose their behaviours and negotiate their sexual relationships to gain small ‘luxuries’ rather than for their economic survival (Silberschmidt and Rasch 2001).

Within the literature most studies have reported that women have agency to decide to enter sexual relationships for material gain. They are also seen as having the power to decide the length of these relationships and using their agency to maximise the benefits of these exchanges. However, most of the literature acknowledges that these relationships take place within a social, economic and cultural context that disadvantages women, particularly young women. Also women have little power once they are in these relationships to negotiate the terms of sexual encounters, in particular condom use (Luke and Kurz 2002, Maganja, Maman et al. 2007, Wamoyi, Wight et al. 2010).

There has also been discussion in the literature of how transactional sex is viewed by those engaging in the practice. Poulin (2007) argues that transactional sex is not viewed as something that is unusual or degrading, but rather as integral to a wide range of relationships from marriages to long term relationships to extra-marital affairs (Poulin 2007). In Southern Uganda, secondary school girls reported that whatever their economic position having sex for free would be humiliating because receiving gifts “rubs off the cheapness of being used” (Nyanzi, Pool et al. 2001: 88).

Leclerc-Madlala (2003) reports that in Durban, women see transactional sex as a normal part of sexual relationships and they are motivated to acquire the commodities of modernity. In Malawi, in contrast to policy makers’ perceptions that survival is the motivations for involvement in transactional sex, rural women said that they were also motivated by attractive consumer goods, passion and

revenge (Tawfik and Watkins 2007). In rural Tanzania, Wamoyi and colleagues (2010) found that transactional sex underlay most non-marital relationships of young women. However, they found women's motivations varied from escaping intense poverty, to seeking beauty products or accumulating business products. Young women in this context actively used their sexuality as an economic resource often entering relationships primarily for economic gain (Wamoyi, Wight et al. 2010).

In a second study with young women and their parents in rural Tanzania Wamoyi and colleagues (2011), found that women viewed sex without exchange as “demeaning to women and held that women who agreed to this did not value their self-worth: they were seen as stupid, easily cheated, and lacking attractive power” (Wamoyi, Fenwick et al. 2011: 9). If women did not ask for something in exchange of sex then they were seen as easy and could be equated to prostitutes. The study findings run contrary to the definition of prostitution as gaining money in exchange for sex. The women in this study felt their sexuality was worth something and by not receiving something for it meant they had no worth (Wamoyi, Fenwick et al. 2011).

These findings were also reflected in the study undertaken by Hawkins and colleagues (2009) based in Maputo, Mozambique. They found through a strategy of extracting financial and material resources from men based on the power of their sexuality, young women constructed a positive identity and esteem linked to

perceptions of modernity and consumption and their ability to access consumer goods (Hawkins, Price et al. 2009).

As both Poulin (2007) and Wamoyi, Wight et al. (2010) note that the majority of the literature on transactional sex in sub-Saharan Africa have been conducted in urban and peri-urban areas as well as with girls attending secondary school. In reality the majority of girls living in Southern and Eastern Africa neither live in urban areas nor attended secondary school. These factors are likely to shape how transactional sex has been reported in the academic literature.

In the literature drivers for engagement in transactional sex can be viewed broadly in two ways; for financial interest and to build social and emotional ties (Chatterji, Murray et al. 2005). The financial drivers for women to engage in transactional sex can be divided into three categories: economic survival, to increase her longer-term life chances, and to increase her status among peers (Luke and Kurz 2002).

Swidler and Watkins (2007) study undertaken in rural Malawi highlights the role of social and emotional ties in the conceptualising of transactional sex. They analysed the meaning of gifts and money for sex in rural Malawi and argue that in this context transactional sex is not solely about sex or money but rather about establishing, maintaining and sustaining ties that bind men and women in a social relationship. These social relationships also need to be placed within the broader

context of sub-Saharan Africa where patron-client relationships are pervasive.

They argue that transactional sex can be seen as a form of patron-client relationships. These relationships both mitigate the insecurity of poverty (in a subsistence economy where food shortages are present) as well as the insecurity of wealth (in a poor and donor dependent country).

In the past decade there has been increased focus on transactional sex in the academic literature because of the link to unintended pregnancy, abortion, gender based violence and HIV/AIDS (Silberschmidt and Rasch 2001, Hunter 2002, Luke and Kurz 2002, Dunkle, Jewkes et al. 2004, Swidler and Watkins 2007, Norris, Kitali et al. 2009, Masvawure 2010).

Where women are motivated by economic vulnerability they are more likely to have more sexual partners or concurrent sexual partnerships – which place women and men at an increased risk of HIV (Epstein 2008). Although recent research has contested whether having multiple concurrent partnerships increases risk of HIV infection, it is still clear that having more sexual partners, (often linked to economic vulnerability) can place women and men at an increased risk of HIV (Tanser, Bärnighausen et al. 2011).

The context and motivation of engagement in transactional sex is important in understanding HIV risk and HIV risk perception. Transactional sex can occur between couples who belong to groups that are not traditionally defined as high-

risk for HIV infection, but are in longer-term, more trusting relationships. This level of trust in longer-term relationships can mean that condom use is not insisted upon and therefore can increase the risk of HIV transmission (Campbell and Currey 2003).

Economic dependency can also mean that power imbalances within sexual relationships prevent women from negotiating the terms of sexual relationships including condom use (Maganja, Maman et al. 2007). Maganja and colleagues (2007) argue that within communities that have highly stratified gender expectations and opportunities, women can be placed at an economic and social disadvantage and women are motivated to participate in transactional sex because of the few alternative pathways for economic survival (Stephenson, Winter et al. 2012).

2.6 Fishing communities and HIV vulnerability

Fishing communities in middle and low-income countries have been identified as being one of the highest risk groups for HIV transmission (Allison and Seeley 2004, Seeley and Allison 2005, Merten and Haller 2007, Nagoli, Holvoet et al. 2010, Bailey 2011). Kissling and colleagues (2005) found that in fishing communities in ten low-to middle-income countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, prevalence rates were between four to fourteen times higher than that of the national average of adults aged 15 to 49 years (Kissling, Allison et al. 2005). These findings have been corroborated by recent epidemiological research in Uganda (Asiki, Mpendo et al. 2011) and Kenya (Kwena, Bukusi et al. 2010).

There have been a number of risk factors relating to the nature and dynamics of the fish trade and the fishing lifestyle that have been identified as contributing to HIV vulnerabilities (Allison and Seeley 2004). Young men and women between the ages of 15 and 35 make up the majority of people working in the fishing industry and this group are at the highest risk of acquiring a sexually transmitted infection including HIV (Kissling, Allison et al. 2005).

Occupations with a high levels of migration and mobility that have been associated with HIV acquisition include truck drivers, motorbike taxis drivers, and miners (Carswell, Lloyd et al. 1989, Oruboloye, Caldwell et al. 1993, Campbell and Currey 2003, Lurie, Williams et al. 2003, Nyanzi, Nyanzi et al. 2004). Much of the activities related to the fishing industry require high levels of mobility.

This includes men spending time away during fishing expeditions (especially in boats with motor engines), female and male fish traders travelling to access fish and members of the fishing industry travelling to sell fish at markets (these can be male and female fish traders as well as fishermen selling their fish). Fishing communities also have high rates of in and outward migration because of the low social and economic capital required to participate in the fishing industry.

Vulnerability to HIV from mobility and migration is likely to come from a number of factors. Fishermen and male fish traders spend long periods of time away from home with their cash incomes, which are then often spent, in trading centres on casual sex and alcohol (Hemrich and Topouzis 2000: 90). This vulnerability extends to fishermen's casual or semi-casual sexual partners as well as to their wives at home (Hemrich and Topouzis 2000).

In Malawi many fishers migrate from the Northern part of the country to fish in the southern part of Lake Malawi and during the course of their work may travel large distances in search of fish catches, sometimes spending months away from their families (Nagoli, Holvoet et al. 2010). Within the Southern region people migrate to areas where fishing activities are intensive. Some Malawian female and male fish traders also travel long distances to sell their fish at markets in large cities (Nagoli, Holvoet et al. 2010). This high level of mobility can mean that social constraints on sexual behaviour which apply at home, may not apply at fish landing sites and beaches in other areas (Kissling, Allison et al. 2005).

While fishermen are not wealthy in absolute terms they are one of the few groups who are able to access a daily source of cash in impoverished coastal and lakeshore communities (Béné and Merten 2008). This was reflected in the fishing communities in Southern Malawi, where poverty levels were high and educational attainment was low. Fish landing sites are often in remote areas and access to health care services may be difficult. Long and unpredictable absences away from home villages can create challenges in offering both HIV prevention and treatment programmes (Seeley and Allison 2005). This may also mean that fishermen are less likely to seek treatment for other sexually transmitted diseases making them more susceptible to HIV (Grosskurth, Mosha et al. 1995).

There are risks involved in fishing, particularly when fishing is undertaken at night, as is common on Lake Malawi. Fishermen may face dangerous conditions such as sudden changes in the weather and risk drowning. These risks can

contribute to a culture of risk taking and risk confrontation (Kissling, Allison et al. 2005).

Men and women involved in the fishing industry can also be socially marginalised, and have a low social status. This marginalisation can mean that fishermen adopt an oppositional or hyper masculinity that challenges mainstream behaviour (Westaway, Seeley et al. 2007). This can include multiple sexual partnerships or aggression towards female partners. Alcohol use is widespread among fishermen in many parts of the world, and can be used to help cope with the dangers or stresses of their occupation (Allison and Seeley 2004).

2.6.1 Gendered drivers of HIV in the Malawian fishing industry

Traditionally fishing has been viewed as a male only occupation offering little opportunities for women (Choo, Nowak et al. 2008). In reality women play an important role in the fishing industry particularly in developing countries.

However, the fishing industry is highly gendered (Acheson 1981, Thompson 1985, Carsten 1989, Béné and Merten 2008).

In Malawi, the fishing industry also reflects this gendered division of labour. In Southern Malawi, men almost exclusively carry out the fishing. They also own the fishing boats and nets, which are the most profitable part of the fishing. Men dominate the selling of larger fresher more profitable fish because they have better access to capital. Women on the other hand are dominant in the drying and processing of smaller fish, which requires smaller capital but also provides

smaller profits. In this gendered division of labour, men are able to make larger profits and dominate the means of production and women have to negotiate access to fish through men (MacPherson, Sadalaki et al. 2012).

2.6.2 Sex for fish exchanges

The gendered division of labour can increase both women and men's vulnerability to HIV. In fishing communities transactional sex has been seen as taking the form of sex for fish exchanges. In these exchanges, female fish traders engage in transactional sexual networks with influential fishermen to ensure access to fish. By entering these exchanges women are able to secure access to fish, free or at a more favourable price (Béné and Merten 2008, Nagoli, Holvoet et al. 2010, Mojola 2011, Kwena, Bukusi et al. 2012). By controlling the means of production, the power dynamics in these exchanges favour men and can make it more difficult for women to negotiate safer sex. If these exchanges take place over a period of time with the same partner men and women may not view themselves as at a high risk from HIV.

In two recent papers, Merten and colleagues in Zambia presented data on women accessing fish through sex-for-fish exchanges (Merten and Haller 2007, Béné and Merten 2008). Mojola's (2011) work also documents sex for fish exchanges within the Kenyan Nyanza communities on the shores of Lake Victoria. In these exchanges Nyanza fishermen provided preferential access to fish to women with whom they were having sexual relationships. These women were sometimes their wives but at other times these were fisherwomen whose livelihoods depended on

the sale of fish (Mojola 2011). Mojola (2011) reports that women in the surrounding areas targeted fishermen as sexual partners because these men were perceived to have access to cash (Mojola 2011: 153). Kwena and colleagues study based in fishing communities in Kisumu County, Kenya found transactional relationships between fishermen and female fishmongers were common (Kwena, Bukusi et al. 2012). Women's primary motive in these exchanges was access to fish. Further, the hurried nature and context of these exchanges meant protection was rarely used and sex was rough because of the limitations of time and a safe place. The authors argue these factors increased the risk of HIV for both men and women. Nagoli and colleagues explored HIV vulnerability in Southern Malawi discussed the role of transactional sex as a risk factor. They found that when female fish traders engaged in transactional sexual relationships with fishermen these women can improve their access to fish (Nagoli, Holvoet et al. 2010).

2.7 HIV interventions

The following section discusses three types of HIV interventions; behavioural, biomedical and structural interventions. I discuss the rationale for each approach and then provide evidence of the most successful interventions. In particular I focus on structural interventions and how they can be used to alter the broader structural factors that place people at an increased risk of HIV.

2.7.1 Behavioural and biomedical HIV interventions

In the past twenty-five years, HIV prevention efforts have predominantly been concentrated in two areas, behavioural and biomedical. Behaviour interventions

have sought to influence individual behaviour targeting knowledge, attitude and practices (Rao Gupta, Parkhurst et al. 2008). These have included interventions that have promoted condom use and education on sexual health as well as education to injecting drug users (Rao Gupta, Parkhurst et al. 2008). In sub-Saharan Africa the behavioural intervention that has received the most focus has been education on three key messages Abstinence, Be Faithful and use Condoms (or as it has been frequently referred to as ABC) (Dworkin and Ehrhardt 2007). The underlying assumption made by behavioural interventions is that once individuals have sufficient knowledge about what causes ill health, they will change their behaviour to prevent them from becoming sick (Bates, Fenton et al. 2004). From a gender perspective however, there are broader structural factors that can prevent women from changing behaviour and within sub-Saharan Africa gender power relations and economic vulnerabilities seem to intersect in ways that place women at an increased risk of HIV.

Despite knowledge of the ABC public health messages, women can remain trapped in a cycle of structural violence that means that they are unable to change their behaviour. A number of interdependent factors may perpetuate this cycle of structural violence and therefore increase women's vulnerability. Societal norms often permit men to have multiple sexual partnerships and to partner with much younger women (Gillespie, Kadiyala et al. 2007). When younger women are involved with older men they are unlikely to have the same power to dictate the terms of the relationship particularly around safer sex practices (Luke and Kurz 2002). Faithfulness to one's sexual partner will not prevent women from contracting HIV if their partner is not adhering to this principle (Dworkin and

Ehrhardt 2007). Furthermore, suggesting condom use in a relationship may leave women vulnerable to increased risk of domestic violence (Rao Gupta 2002).

Consistent condom use in a long-term relationships can often prove challenging. As Farmer (2003) points out, “current prevention tools work least well precisely where individual agency is most constrained, usually by poverty and gender inequality. Because what the have-nots lack is agency” (Farmer 2003: 7).

Biomedical HIV prevention strategies seek to use medical and public health approaches to block infection, decrease infectiousness, and reduce susceptibility (USAID 2013). In the past decade significant progress has been made in the development of biomedical interventions for the treatment and prevention of HIV. There are five key biomedical interventions that have shown to be effective in reducing HIV acquisition. These include microbicide gel, syndromic treatment of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), pre-exposure prophylaxis, male circumcision, and early ART initiation.

In 2010 the CAPRISA 004 study in South Africa found a 39% reduction in becoming infected with HIV by using a vaginal microbicide gel (Abdool Karim, Abdool Karim et al. 2010). This trial was significant because it was the first trial of a vaginal microbicide gel, which had been found to have a positive effect at reducing HIV acquisition after more than 30 randomized controlled studies of microbicides, vaccines and drugs had failed to report positive findings (Cohen 2010). Microbicide gel has important implications for women and their ability to protect themselves from HIV transmission. This is because unlike male and

female condoms, microbicides are a potential preventive option that women can easily control and do not require the cooperation, consent or even knowledge of their partner (WHO 2013).

The syndromic treatment of sexually transmitted diseases has been shown to reduce HIV transmission. The first trial to show this was undertaken in rural Tanzania and found that through improved treatment of sexually transmitted diseases HIV incidence was reduced by 40% (Grosskurth, Mosha et al. 1995).

Providing pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) aims to prevent acquisition of HIV through use of oral antiretroviral (ARV) agents before and during potential exposure to HIV. In a trial that provided PrEP to serodiscordant heterosexual couples in Kenya and Uganda found a relative reduction of 67% in the acquisition of HIV (Baeten, Donnell et al. 2012).

Like PrEP, post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) aims to prevent acquisition of HIV through the use of oral ARVs. However, the treatment is administered after the potential exposure to HIV. The use of PEP has been identified as particularly important for sexual assault survivors. While the degree of protection offered by PEP cannot be established in placebo-controlled trials, studies of people who had a known exposure to HIV and were administered PEP suggest that PEP is about 80 percent effective in preventing HIV (USAID 2013). PEP should begin within 48 hours of exposure and at least within 72 hours, and PEP should continue for 28

days (USAID 2013). One of the challenges for accessing PEP for sexual assault survivors, particularly in high incidence countries, is the availability of resources (Kim, Martin et al. 2003).

Voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) uses a surgical procedure to completely remove the foreskin of the penis. While conducted for a number of reasons, evidence from recent clinical trials has shown that medical male circumcision can significantly reduce (but not eliminate) men's risk of acquiring HIV through heterosexual vaginal sex. The first trial to show a reduction in HIV acquisition was published in 2005 (Auvert, Taljaard et al. 2005). The trial, which was conducted in Orange Farm South Africa, had to be stopped early because it was shown part way through that it could protect study participants from acquiring HIV by 61% compared to uncircumcised men (Auvert, Taljaard et al. 2005).

Providing early treatment of ARV drugs to HIV positive people has also been found to be a highly effective measure for preventing HIV transmission. Cohen et al's study was stopped early as individuals initiated immediately onto ART had a 96% reduction in HIV acquisition compared to individuals who were delayed in starting ART (Cohen, Chen et al. 2011, Eshleman, Hudelson et al. 2011).

While all of these interventions show promising results for HIV prevention, the effectiveness of their implementation will be strongly shaped by the broader

structural factors which shape susceptibility to HIV and the ability of these interventions to translate effectively from the laboratory/test conditions into people's lived realities (Kippax 2008). Condom use has been proven to prevent HIV yet in reality there are societal and cultural barriers that prevent men and women, particularly married women from using them (Chimbiri 2007). Accessing HIV testing and treatment is also shaped by societal factors with the fear of HIV/AIDS related stigma and discrimination preventing men and women from coming forward to test (Kalichman and Simbayi 2003). Evidence from the roll out of ART programmes around the globe have shown that stigma, lack of access to a functioning health system, poverty and gender norms can all shape access to treatment (Kagee, Remien et al. 2011).

2.7.2 Structural interventions and HIV prevention

There has in the past decade been an increased focus on how the broader structural environment can shape individuals HIV risk (Blankenship, Friedman et al. 2006, Coates, Richter et al. 2008, Rao Gupta, Parkhurst et al. 2008, Seeley, Watts et al. 2012). This has led to a shift in HIV prevention efforts from interventions that focus on the individual to structural interventions that attempt to address HIV vulnerability through changing deeply entrenched social, economic, political and environmental factors such as gender or income inequality and social marginalisation.

Due to the broad nature of structural interventions, the meaning of the term remains contested. However, Blankenship, Friedman et al. (2006) definition is useful:

The term 'structural' is used to refer to interventions that work by altering the context within which health is produced or reproduced. Structural interventions locate the source of public-health problems in factors in the social, economic and political environments that shape and constrain individual, community, and societal health outcomes (Blankenship, Bray et al. 2000: 11).

Central to structural interventions is the way individual agency and autonomy is viewed. In behavioural interventions individuals are assumed to have considerable autonomy to make and act on their choices, but structural approaches view individual agency as constrained by broader structural factors (Blankenship, Bray et al. 2000).

Rao Gupta and colleagues (2008) argue that understanding the broader structural factors that constrain individual behaviour in sexual interactions such as poverty, wealth, gender and age are vital when developing effective HIV prevention strategies (Rao Gupta, Parkhurst et al. 2008). However, as Auerbach, Parkhurst et al. (2009) note “social drivers are complex, fluid, non-linear, and contextual, and they interact dynamically with biological, psychological, behavioural, and other social factor” (Auerbach, Parkhurst et al. 2009: 4). This can make conceptualising and operationalising structural approaches to HIV prevention challenging.

As Rao Gupta and colleagues (2008) note, the relationship of structural factors to HIV vulnerability, however, can be complex and variable (Rao Gupta, Parkhurst et al. 2008). As noted in the discussion above, the relationship between poverty and

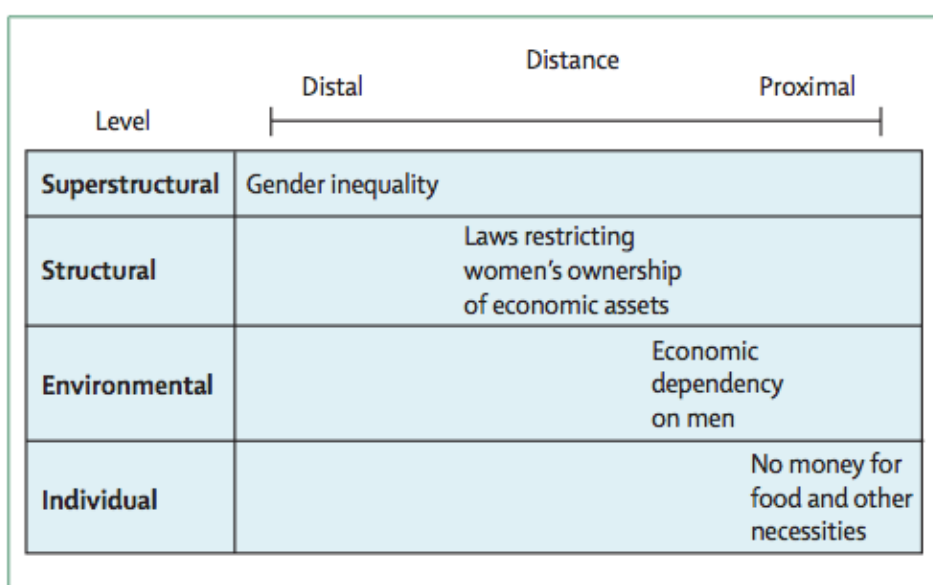
HIV risk is complex with poverty not being a straightforward driver for HIV risk. In the earlier discussion of studies on gender and HIV vulnerability it can be seen that the exact consequences or manifestations of gender inequality can be difficult to predict, particularly because of the context specific nature of these relations. In addition, gender intersects with income, race, religion and sexuality to create complex and shifting power dynamics. The multiple ways that they can influence and counteract with one another can make it difficult to predict the consequences or exact manifestations of gender power relations in a given context (Rao Gupta 2009). Rao Gupta, Parkhurst et al. (2008) argue that progress on the use of structural approaches has been limited due to an “absence of a clear definition; lack of operational guidance; and limited data on the effectiveness of structural approaches to the reduction of HIV incidence” (Rao Gupta, Parkhurst et al. 2008: 764).

Rao Gupta and colleagues (2008) present a framework that draws on two models to analyse the effect of structural factors on HIV risk and vulnerability. In the first model Barnett and Whiteside (2002) incorporates structural factors on the basis of a continuum of distance from risk. The more distal factors determine risk through a longer and more variable, series of causes and effects than the proximal factors. At the macro environmental level, factors such as the national economic context or the governance are most distal. At the micro environmental, factors such as migration and urbanisation that shape the local context, are less distal and therefore influence HIV risk more directly.

The second framework that Rao Gupta and colleagues (2008) discuss is from Sweat and Denison (1995) where the superstructural factors such as economic

development as well as national cultural attitudes affect nations, with structural factors (such as laws and policies) affecting a segment of the population within these nations, and environmental factors such as living conditions and the opportunities available to the population affect the conditions and resources of individuals, and individual factors affecting how the environmental factors are experienced (Sweat and Denison 1995). In Figure 2.2 Gupta and colleagues (2008) combine these two frameworks to highlight how gender inequality might lead to women engaging in transactional sex.

Figure 2.3: Framework to understand how gender inequality might lead to transactional sex



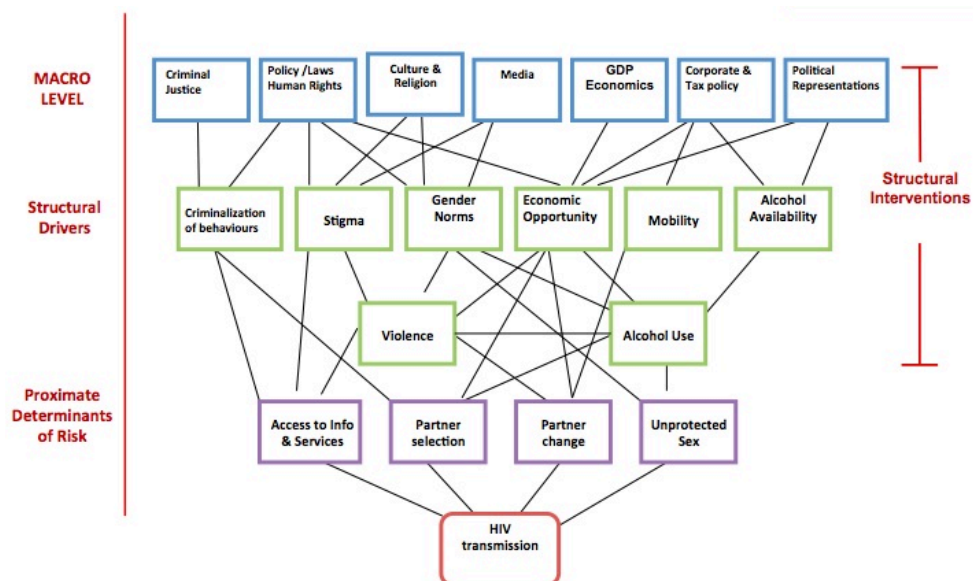
Source: (Rao Gupta, Parkhurst et al. 2008)

Within the framework it can be seen how the broader structural factors shape behaviour and lead to women engaging in transactional sex. At the superstructural level, gender inequality shapes factors from the distal to the proximal level. At the structural level the laws restricting women's ownership of economic assets can shape the environmental level which can lead to women becoming dependent on

men. At the individual level, this may lead to women not having sufficient money to meet their basic needs and leading them to engaging in transactional sex to meet these needs.

The STRIVE consortium, a DfID funded research programme based at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine is investigating how structural factors shape vulnerability to HIV also presents a useful framework for conceptualising structural drivers and HIV (LSHTM 2012).

Figure 2.4: STRIVE conceptual framework on understanding structural drivers of HIV vulnerability



Source: (LSHTM 2012)

Within the framework, macro level factors such as the criminal justice system, GDP, media culture and religion can shape the structural drivers such as stigma, gender norms, economic opportunities and mobility which in turn shape the proximate determinants of risk such as access to information and services, partner selection,

partner change and unprotected sex that lead to HIV transmission. This framework highlights both the breadth of factors that make up structural drivers but also the specific areas that led to HIV transmission.

There have been a number of interventions in the past five years that have aimed to change the broader structures that influence vulnerability to HIV. Three of these interventions, which have reported positive results, are discussed below. Two of these interventions were based in South Africa and one in Malawi.

The Stepping Stones programme, that is a participatory HIV prevention programme aims to improve sexual health through building stronger, more gender-equitable relationships (Jewkes, Nduna et al. 2008). The programme was developed more than a decade ago and has been used in over 40 countries (Wallace 2006).

The intervention has been evaluated with rural youth in South Africa in a randomised controlled trial. The trial used a 50 hour programme, which aimed to improve sexual health by using participatory learning approaches to build knowledge, risk awareness, and communication skills and to stimulate critical reflection (Jewkes, Nduna et al. 2008). Villages were randomised to receive either this or a three hour intervention on HIV and safer sex. After 2 years follow-up, Stepping Stones lowered the incidence of herpes simplex virus 2 in men and women by approximately 33%, and men reported less perpetration of intimate partner violence across 2 years of follow-up, as well as changes in several other HIV risk behaviours (Jewkes, Nduna et al. 2008). However, there was no evidence that Stepping Stones lowered the incidence of HIV (Jewkes, Nduna et al. 2008).

The second study based in South Africa, the IMAGE study, sought to reduce HIV risk by intervening structurally at community and individual levels (Hargreaves, Atsbeha et al. 2002). Based on evidence that the rising prevalence of HIV in that country was a product of prevalent migrant labour, widespread poverty, and entrenched gender inequalities, the study combined microfinance initiative with a participatory learning and action curriculum on gender and HIV education (Pronyk, Hargreaves et al. 2006).

IMAGE sought to determine whether the involvement of women in the programme would improve household economic wellbeing, social capital, and empowerment and thus reduce vulnerability to intimate partner violence a known risk factor for HIV (Pronyk, Hargreaves et al. 2006). The project also sought to assess “whether such measures could raise levels of communication and collective action on HIV and gender issues within communities and reduce the vulnerability of 14–35-year old household and village residents to HIV infection” (Pronyk, Hargreaves et al. 2006: 1973). The study was evaluated using a cluster randomised trial methodology. The study team estimated that over two years, levels of intimate partner violence were reduced by 55% in the intervention group (who had access to microfinance services and the gender training programme) relative to the control group (Pronyk, Hargreaves et al. 2006). There was evidence that the intervention improved household wellbeing, social capital, and empowerment however, there appeared to be no effect on HIV incidence (Pronyk, Hargreaves et al. 2006).

The lack of education and economic dependence on men has often been seen as important drivers of HIV infection in women. In the Zomba district of Malawi,

Baird and colleagues (2012) assessed the efficacy of giving young women money to reduce their risk of sexually transmitted infections (Baird, Garfein et al. 2012).

Using a cluster randomised trial, the study team provided a payment of between \$4 and \$10 a month to never-married women aged 13-22 (Baird et al. 2012). There were two groups: one where the payment was conditional on attending school and one where there were no conditions to receive the money. Behavioural risk assessments were done at baseline and 12 months; serology was tested at 18 months. The study found a reduction in new HIV and HSV-2 infections in the schoolgirls irrespective of whether the money was given conditionally or not (Baird, Garfein et al. 2012).

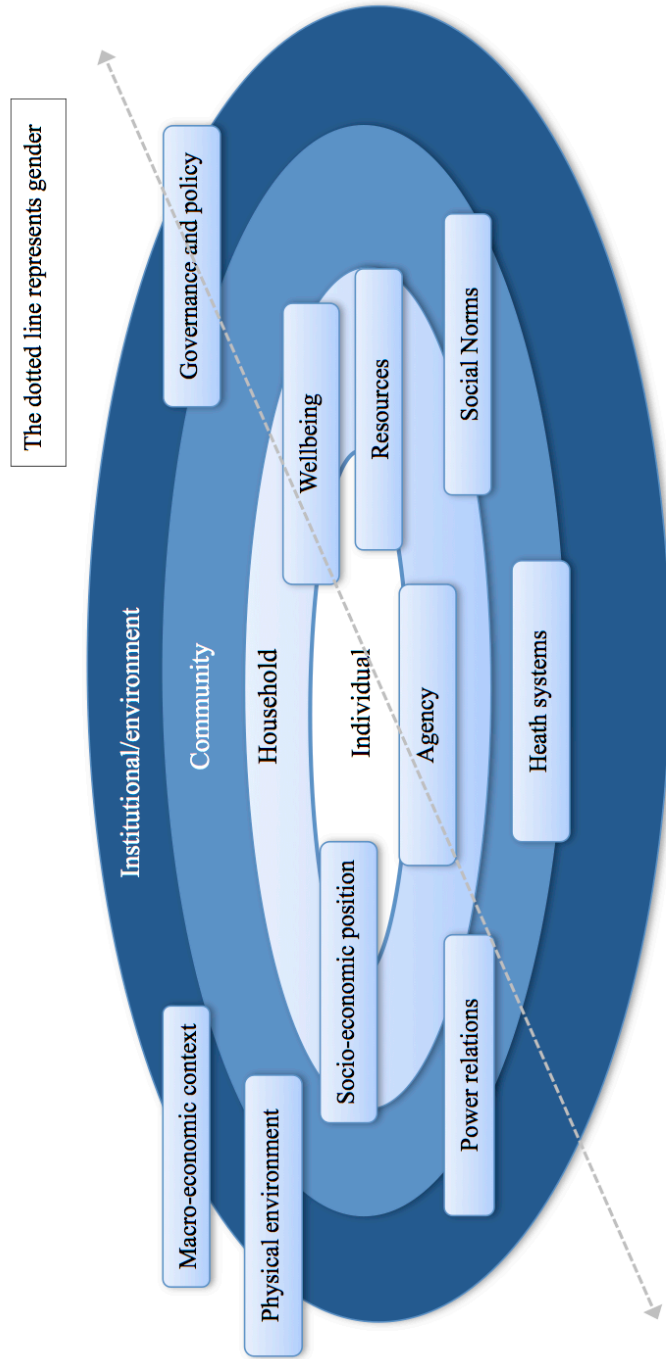
2.8 Conceptual framework

In the earlier sections of the literature review I have discussed: gender theory; gender analysis frameworks; broader social determinants of health; gender and health; HIV and gendered vulnerabilities; vulnerabilities in fishing communities; and structural interventions and HIV prevention. To draw these concepts together and aid understanding of structural drivers of HIV in fishing communities, I now present a conceptual framework on which the planning and application of this research was based.

My conceptual framework draws on the structural drivers frameworks I discussed in section 2.7.2 as well as the ecological framework I discussed earlier in section 2.5.6 on HIV vulnerability and GBV. Within the ecological frameworks violence is viewed as the outcome of interactions among many factors at the four levels – the

individual, the relationship, the community and the societal. Ecological frameworks treat the interaction between factors at the different levels with equal importance to the influence of factors within a single level (WHO 2013).

Figure 2.5: Conceptual Framework



The conceptual framework draws together social, political, and environmental factors that were presented within the literature review. These factors shape individuals and communities vulnerability to HIV. The factors operate and are influenced by individual, household, community and institutional/environmental interactions. Hence the conceptual framework draws on both the ecological framework and concepts relating to structural drivers to highlight how broader structural factors can shape individual and communities vulnerability to HIV.

At the centre of the conceptual framework is the individual. I have presented gender as a dotted line signifying a something that crosscuts and intersects with other factors. An individual's agency and their wellbeing are shaped by their access to resources (material, human and social), which also shapes their socio-economic position. In fishing communities individuals who have poor access to resources and correspondingly a weak socio-economic position are likely to have their agency constrained. Once an individual's agency is constrained they are likely to be more vulnerable to HIV.

Power relations and social norms that operate at the household, community and institutional level can also limit an individual's access to resources and therefore impact their wellbeing and agency. In fishing communities, like in many other settings, social norms dictate what activities different groups of people are able to undertake and how they are valued both socially and economically. Social norms also shape more intimate aspects of people's lives including sexual behaviour and partner selection. In fishing communities' social norms dictate who is able to fish and this can limit freedom and agency particularly for women. Social norms around alcohol consumption and the condoning of multiple sexual partners can also shape vulnerability by impeding judgement and increasing the number of sexual partners that fishermen have.

In fishing communities the physical environment includes both the climate as well as the ecology of the Lake. These two factors can have a strong role in shaping vulnerability to HIV. The changing ecology of the Lake can make access to fish

harder for all members of the fishing industry. This can lead to longer fishing expeditions. The climate can also impact on access to fish as hostile climatic conditions increase physical risk for those undertaking the fishing activities. These dangerous weather conditions shape the social norms operating in the communities with men taking risks in other aspects of their lives and risk confrontation to compensate.

Health systems are social institutions that can shape gendered social norms and reproduce gendered inequalities. Both Government policies and the broader macroeconomic environment can shape how health care is both delivered and accessed, whose needs are given priority. The macro-economic environment, particularly in resource-limited settings, also shapes the quality and availability of health care. When countries are dependent on aid to fund services there may be limited availability of resources.

Access to health systems can shape individual and community's vulnerability to HIV. Good access to HIV testing services and early initiation of ARTs can prevent further transmission of HIV within communities. Fishing communities are often hard to reach and been overlooked within access for HIV testing and treatment services. How health services are delivered also impacts on individual and community vulnerability to HIV. The fact that fishing communities have been overlooked with respect to service provision may mean that communities face an increased vulnerability to HIV.

3 Malawi: Background and context

3.1 Introduction

The overall aim of this chapter is to provide a detailed description of the context in which the research was conducted. The chapter is therefore structured around two areas – a broader discussion of Malawian society and a detailed description of the Mangochi district and the two villages the research was conducted within. In section 3.2, I begin by discussing human development, governance in a historical context (3.3) and the political economy (3.4) in Malawi. I then discuss gender roles and relations in Malawi (3.5). This section focuses on the gender and legal frameworks (both nationally and internationally), division of labour, reproductive rights, HIV, education and political representation. In section 3.6, I provide a description of the fishing industry in Malawi and specifically discuss the contribution that the fishing industry makes to Malawian society as well as reviewing the changing nature of the industry. In section 3.7, I provide a detailed description of Village 1 and Village 2 - the two study villages where the research was situated. In this section I provide information on the location, ethnicity, religion and livelihoods of each of the two study villages.

3.2 Development situation

Malawi is one of the most densely populated and least urbanised countries in Africa with 85% of the national population living in rural areas (Booth, Cammack et al. 2006, NSO 2008). It is also one of the poorest countries in the world and in

2013 ranked 171 out of 181 countries on the UN Human Development Index⁴ and was classed as having low human development (UNDP 2013).

Population growth, fertility, maternal and child mortality rates are among the highest in Africa and 44% of children under the age of five are chronically malnourished (UNDP 2013). Over half of the population of Malawi lives below the poverty line and 22% of people are unable to meet their minimum food requirements (National Statistical Office 2005b, UNDAF 2008). Therefore, poverty remains pervasive.

3.3 Governance in historical context

The present day state of Malawi became a British Protectorate in 1891, under the name of Nyasaland, which was later changed to the British Central African Protectorate. Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda led the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) in the fight against external rule gaining independence in 1964 (Morrow 2006). Dr Banda was a medical doctor who had spent long periods of time in the US, UK and Ghana. Once he became leader he quickly disposed of, or silenced, his younger allies (Kaspin 1995). According to Marrow (2006) he represented “a paternalistic African nationalism whose social conservatism was expressed in a neo-traditional idiom” (Morrow 2006: 152). Dr Banda emphasised traditionally ascribed power relations and the importance of subordination of the young to the old and urged that parents, elders and chiefs be respected (Forster 1994: 490). He

⁴ The Human Development Index produced by the UN draws on life expectancy, educational attainment, and income to provide a more holistic understanding of development than simply considering a country's GDP.

also viewed women as having a very limited role in Malawian society (Forster 1994). He banned the use of modern contraceptives in the 1960s preventing women from having the power to decide when they could have children (Chimbwete, Watkins et al. 2005). His social conservatism extended to writing legislation which limited what clothing women were able to wear⁵ this included the wearing of trousers or short skirts (Clark 2012). While these laws were overturned following the transfer to multiparty democracy, in the past two years there have been cases of women being attacked for the way they were dressed. This has included a spate of attacks in January 2012 where women were pulled off the street in urban areas by men, stripped naked and beaten for wearing trousers, leggings and miniskirts, instead of dresses and therefore “defying cultural norms” (Clark 2012, Karimi 2012).

Dr Hastings Banda outwardly observed parliamentary procedures, but in practice he relied on traditional courts, the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), the Malawi Young Pioneers (the paramilitary wing of the MCP) as well as the police and armed forces to maintain control (Kaspin 1995). The Malawi Young Pioneers were particularly effective at silencing dissent and controlling ordinary citizens (Forster 1994). They achieved this through the powers they were given to intimidate law-breakers and harass any citizens who were seen as troublemakers (Kaspin 1995). Using a network of regional and district conferences and committees, all Malawians whether working in the public or private sector were linked in a chain of communication that led directly to the party elite (Kaspin 1995: 603). People, who were seen to be critical of the government or rivals to

⁵ He also banned men from having long hair or beards

Banda, both within Malawi and outside the country, were banned, detained, maimed and murdered (Kaspin 1995: 603).

The transfer to multi-party democracy began in March 1992 when the Catholic bishops issued a formal protest against President Banda's political high-handedness (Kaspin 1995). This initiated a popular movement for democratic reform and anti-regime demonstrations by university students and staff and factory workers (Kaspin 1995). These protests coincided with a shift in the international community's focus from simply supporting regimes that were anti-communist to promoting good governance and human rights (Phiri and Ross 1998). This led to the international community withholding foreign aid until democratisation took place (Ihonvbere 1997). This was a strong motivation because Malawi was at the time heavily reliant on foreign aid, a situation that continues to the present day. The Government finally yielded, holding a referendum for multi-party democracy in June 1993 that led to presidential and parliamentary elections in May 1994. The results from these elections were that Banda and the MCP were replaced by Bakili Muluzi and the United Democratic Front (UDF) (Thorold 2000).

Bakili Muluzi served as president of Malawi from 1994 until 2004. His time in office, particularly his second term, was marred with allegations of corruption and a lack of separation between government and party funds (Booth, Cammack et al. 2006). In 2004, Bingu wa Mutharika running on the UDF ticket was elected president. He was an economist who had previously worked for the World Bank

and soon after his election he founded the Democratic Progressive Party in 2005 (Cohen and Jomo 2012). In 2009, he won a second term on the ticket of his new party. During his second term wa Mutharika faced widespread allegations of using authoritarian methods in his governing of the country. Increasing civil unrest led to widespread demonstrations and in July 2011, his security forces killed 19 people during demonstrations held in major cities across Malawi. This led to tensions with civil society groups and the further suspension of aid by a wide number of international donors (Cohen and Jomo 2012).

In April 2012, while Malawi was facing a serious economic crisis, wa Mutharika died of a heart attack. Following a power struggle, which saw Bingu wa Mutharika's brother Peter wa Mutharika attempting to accede to the presidency, with support from the army, Joyce Banda, the Vice President, was sworn into power (Lamble, Francis et al. 2012).

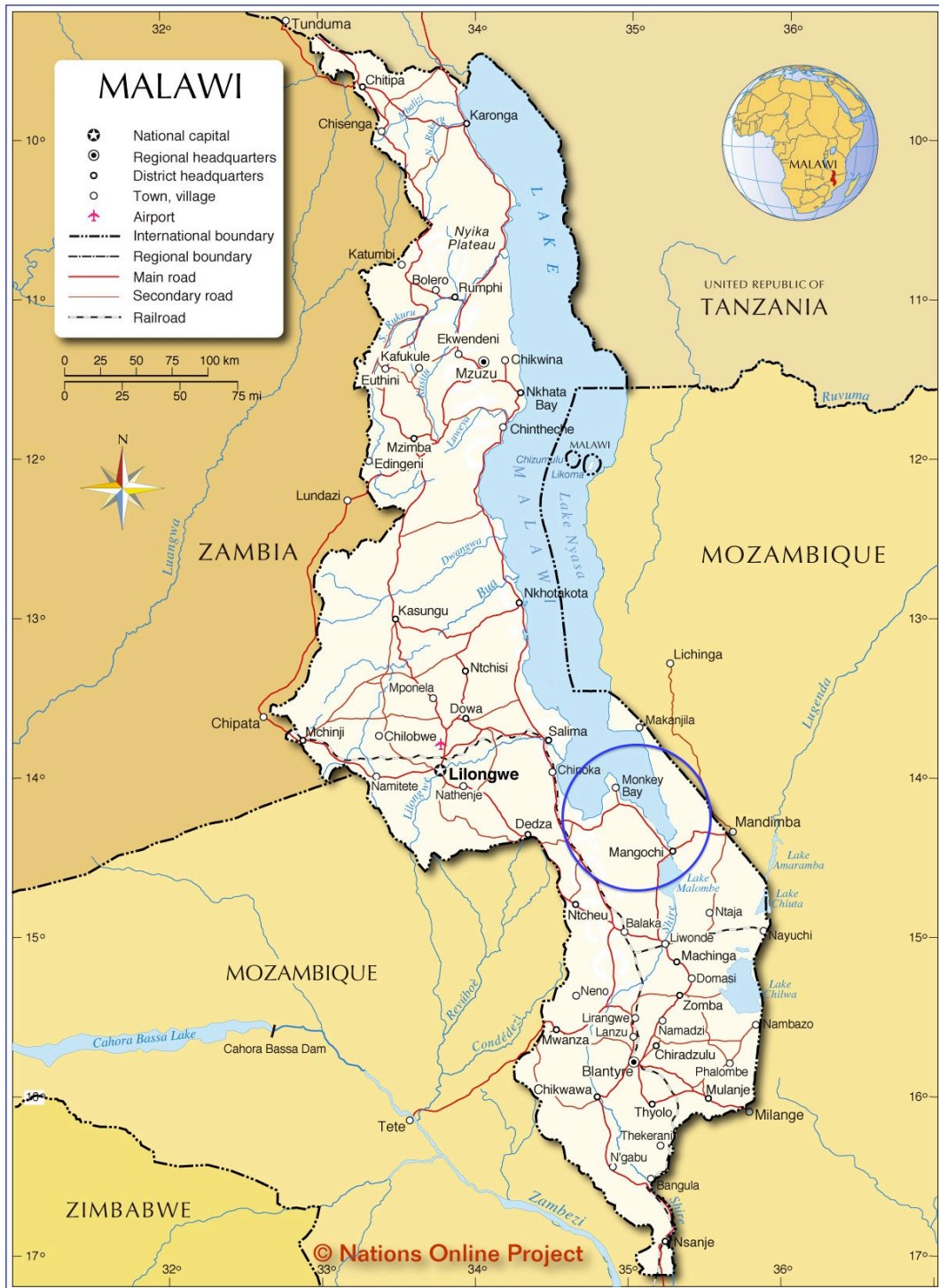
Her appointment to the presidency meant that Joyce Banda became the first female president in Southern Africa and the second female President in Africa. Joyce Banda had previously won awards for her gender activism particularly in the realm of girls education (Lamble, Francis et al. 2012). Since taking office she has launched a safe motherhood initiative with the aim to reduce maternal mortality (Martin 2013). She initially took steps to improve Malawi's fractured relationship with international donors and devalued the currency by one third shortly after being elected (Lamble, Francis et al. 2012). However, in November 2013, international donors suspended aid again over allegations of corruption and

Chapter 3 | Malawi: Background and Context

the attempted murder of a whistle-blower (Laing 2013). The devaluation of the currency has led to high levels of inflation particularly on basic commodities, and growing public protests.

During Hastings Banda's rule Malawi was governed as three regions: the Northern, the Central and the Southern Regions (National Statistical Office 2005a). These regional administrations continued after the transfer to multiparty democracy. There are 28 districts in the country - six districts in the Northern Region, nine in the Central Region, and 13 in the Southern Region. The map of Malawi below shows the Mangochi district where the research was conducted.

Figure 3.1: Map of Malawi



Source: (Nations Online 2012)

Administratively, the districts are subdivided into traditional authorities (TAs), which are presided over by chiefs. Each TA is composed of villages, which are

the smallest administrative units and are presided over by village headmen (National Statistical Office 2005a). Bryceson and Fonseca (2006) state that “much of the countryside has a reputation for being “*deep rural*” in the sense that it is characterised by a patchy road network and poor physical, economic, and social infrastructure within a culturally conservative context of village-based traditional tribal leadership” (Bryceson and Fonseca 2006: 1657).

An important aspect of Banda’s governance policies was the favouring of the Chewa tribe. This was instigated both in the government’s language policy (through the use of Chi-Chewa as the official language) as well as through iconography (Kaspin 1995: 605). As the Central region had the largest concentration of Chewa, this area was also economically and politically favoured. One of the most significant manifestations of this policy, as well as the most important economic development programme during Banda’s rule, was the relocation of the national capital from Zomba in the Southern region to Lilongwe in the Central region. Lilongwe at the time of independence was a small trading centre and the decision to relocate and build a new city was taken by Banda (Kaspin 1995).

3.4 Political economy

Malawi is extremely poor with over 90% of the population surviving on less than \$2 per day (World Bank 2012) and heavily reliant on international donors. Forty per cent of the national budget is contributed by foreign aid and between 2007 and 2009, a fifth of the country’s gross national income came from overseas donations (Wroe 2012).

Malawi's economy is also dependent on agriculture for both foreign exchange earnings and employment (Chilowa 1998). The agricultural sector supports 85% of the population and agricultural output accounts for 70% of Malawian exports; tobacco, tea, and sugar being the major export commodities (National Statistical Office 2005a, Mathiassen, Eliasi et al. 2007). As Malawi has only one short rainy season, the high dependence on agriculture leads to considerable intermittent problems.

The FAO (2002) argue that when a country's economy is highly dependent on primary agricultural commodities (such as tea and sugar), they face the recurring conditions of boom and slump in their economies (FAO 2002: 225). This instability in prices is due in part to the unpredictability of both production and demand of agricultural commodities. As demand for primary agricultural commodities is currently characterised as slow, countries specialising in production of these products face a declining share of world trade (FAO 2002: 225). Their production is also heavily influenced by both climatic changes and natural and human-made disasters meaning that commodities prices can sharply change depending on supply. International trade agreements also influence the price that countries selling primary agricultural commodities can realise for their products (Oxfam International 2013). The imposition of tariffs on processed goods and farm subsidies often benefits economies in the Global North at the expense of farmers in the Global South (Oxfam International 2013). These conditions, shaped by both the broader structural terms of international trade and

the local climate, can mean that development planning in Malawi is more difficult because of the unpredictability of income, investment and employment.

Malawi's dependence on agriculture means that there is heavy involvement of the population in agricultural production. This extends to large-scale involvement in subsistence farming. Mathiassen, Eliasi et al. (2007) found that about 90% of all Malawian households can be defined as agricultural households⁶ and that female headed households were more likely to be agricultural than male headed households (95% and 88% respectively) (Mathiassen, Eliasi et al. 2007). This dependence on agriculture is further complicated by Malawi's rapid population growth. Since 1966, Malawi's population has grown from approximately 4 million to approximately 13 million in 2008 and between 1998 and 2008 the population grew at a rate of 2.8% per year (National Statistical Office 2011: 2). This population increase also led to an increase in population density of 105 persons per square kilometre in 1998 to 139 persons per square kilometre in 2008 (National Statistical Office 2011: 2).

3.5 Gender roles and relations

This section discusses gender roles and relations in Malawi. I discuss the gender and legal frameworks (both nationally and internationally), division of labour and proportion of men and women employed in the formal sector, gender and health (including reproductive rights and HIV), education and political representation.

⁶ Agricultural or farming households were defined as households with at least one member engaged in farming in the previous cropping season

3.5.1 Legal frameworks and gender

The 1995 Malawi Constitution guarantees equal rights for men and women. The Prevention of Domestic Violence Act (2006) also commits the state to eliminate gender based violence occurring within domestic relationships, and to provide effective remedies and other social services to persons affected by domestic violence. Domestic violence is defined as any criminal offence arising out of physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, social, economic or financial abuse committed by a person against another person within a domestic relationship.

Malawi has also ratified two international conventions. These are the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Despite the existence of these legal frameworks, in reality gender disparities exist in most aspects of Malawian society including law, education, agriculture, health, employment, credit accessibility and political participation (Kathewera-Banda, Gomile-Chidyaonga et al. 2005). This differential access to productive resources means that women are economically dependent on their partners (Kathewera-Banda, Gomile-Chidyaonga et al. 2005). UNICEF Malawi, note that CEDAW and CRC have not been fully applied in the local context with limited reporting on the human rights situation (UNICEF Malawi 2012). This is also reflected in the CEDAW Committee's report on Malawi that notes the slow progress in the submission of reports as well as providing the committee with responses to points raised (CEDAW 2006).

The Women and Law in Southern Africa Research and Educational Trust Malawi (WLSA-Malawi) argue that the rule of law in Malawi also contributes to, and

sustains, unequal gender power relations. They highlight the disconnect between women's constitutional rights and statutory and customary law (WLSA-Malawi 2009). Many statutory laws, which comprise subsidiary legislation to the Constitution, continue to discriminate against women. Of particular importance are laws relating to citizenship, inheritance and abortion laws. Many women, particularly those residing in rural areas, are subject to the jurisdiction of traditional courts applying customary laws. Customary laws are discriminatory against women and often deny women their constitutional rights threatening women's access to property, inheritance and divorce (WLSA-Malawi 2009).

3.5.2 Employment and gender

In their gender assessment in Malawi, Mathiassen, Eliasi et al. (2007) found that there was a strong division of labour along gender lines within the household.

Women and girls conducted most domestic tasks including cooking, collection of firewood for cooking as well as the families' water requirements (Mathiassen, Eliasi et al. 2007). The authors found that few women were employed in the wage economy and were far outnumbered by men. In sectors where no specialist skills were required, women received significantly less pay than their male counterparts. The agricultural sector was the only sector in which women and men were equally represented. However women had less access to, and control over, production factors such as land, agricultural inputs and technology. Men were much more involved in the production of crops for cash and women were mainly involved in growing food crops (Mathiassen, Eliasi et al. 2007).

3.5.3 Gender and health in Malawi

As noted previously, Dr Hastings Banda viewed women as having a very limited role in Malawian society and banned any form of modern contraception in the 1960s. This ban was lifted in the late 1980s according to Chimbwete, Watkins et al. (2005) although the exact date does not seem to be publically recorded.

Women's reproductive health rights continue to be poorly served with women reporting a low contraceptive use rate (41%) and a high unmet need for contraceptives (28%) (National Statistical Office 2005a). Unmet contraceptive need was higher for women residing in rural areas (29%) than those in urban areas (23%) (National Statistical Office 2005a).

Correspondingly Malawi has one of the highest fertility rates in the world.

Malawian women bear an average of 5.7 children in their lifetime (National Statistical Office 2011: 44) with significant differences between rural and urban areas. Women in rural areas were reported to have on average 6.1 children those in urban areas had on average 4 children (National Statistical Office 2011).

In Chichewa the word for pregnancy is *pakati* which literally translates as the place between life and death (Jackson, Johnson et al. 2011). The association between pregnancy and death is perhaps not surprising given Malawi's high maternal mortality ratio (MMR). In 2008, it stood at 1140 per 100,000 live births (Hogan, Foreman et al. 2010) and was one of the highest in the world. To provide some context the UK's MMR was 8 per 100,000 in 2008. The second leading cause of maternal death in Malawi is unsafe abortion, accounting for 18% of all

maternal deaths. In Malawi only abortions that preserve a woman's life are legal and any attempt to procure an abortion is punishable by 7-14 years in prison (Jackson, Johnson et al. 2011). According to Jackson and colleagues, no one to date has been prosecuted for supplying abortions, but health practitioners will not routinely offer the procedure because they do not want to be seen to be acting unlawfully. This means that women, particularly poor women, have to seek unsafe abortions.

In 1995, the United Nations Beijing World Conference on Women recognised that gender based violence was a threat to health outcomes, human rights and national development (Kishor 2005). Despite the signing of the 2006 Prevention of Domestic Violence Act in Malawi, gender based violence remains a significant problem with intimate partner violence occurring across all socio-economic and cultural backgrounds (National Statistical Office 2005a). The Malawi Demographic Health Survey (MDHS) in 2004 found that 65% of girls had experienced some form of abuse during their lifetime, compared with 35% of boys (National Statistical Office 2005a). The MDHS conducted in 2010 found that 41% of women reported experiences of physical or sexual violence (National Statistical Office 2011). The United States Department of State (2011) Human Rights Report on Malawi reported that domestic violence, especially intimate partner violence was common. It also reported that women seldom discussed the problem openly and that survivors rarely sought legal recourse. The report states that “legal experts and human rights workers attributed victims’⁷ reluctance to report their abusers to economic dependence on the abuser, lack of awareness of their legal

⁷ The term victim is used in the report however I prefer to use the term sexual assault survivor

rights, and fear of retribution and ostracism” (United States Department of State 2011).

3.5.4 HIV and Malawi

In Malawi, the first cases of AIDS were diagnosed in 1985 and national prevalence peaked at 26% in 1998 (USAID 2010). Since 1998, HIV has been declining steadily and in 2007, prevalence was estimated to stand at 11.8% in the 15-49 year old group with 97,000 people acquiring HIV and 87,000 dying from HIV/AIDS annually (Government of Malawi 2007).

From surveillance data published in 2007, sex between heterosexual couples was the principal mode of HIV transmission. This was followed by mother-to-child transmission which accounted for about 25% of all new HIV infections (Government of Malawi 2007). HIV prevalence is higher for women than it is for men (National Statistical Office 2005a). In keeping with prevalence trends in other Southern and Eastern African countries, young women are particularly vulnerable to HIV, with the prevalence among women aged 15-19 years old standing at 4% compared with less than 1% for men of the same age (National Statistical Office 2005a). As discussed in Section 2.5 of the literature review, biological vulnerability combines with social vulnerability to place younger women at an increased risk of HIV.

There are also significant differences between prevalence rates in the different regions of Malawi. The Southern region has the highest prevalence (20.5%) while the Northern and Central regions have similar prevalence of 10.2% and 10.7% respectively (National Statistical Office 2005a). Prevalence differences were also noted between locations; 12.1% rural, 16.4% semi urban (district town based sites), and 17.1% urban sites (Government of Malawi 2007: 4).

In Malawi, the initial response to the AIDS epidemic was limited despite Hastings Banda's medical training. According to Robinson (2011) HIV was viewed by many as something dubious that came from abroad. Lwanda (2002) also argues that family planning was seen as a western effort to take the fun out of sex, as were the condoms that health workers and NGOs insisted protected against HIV. Despite slow early responses to HIV, Malawi has now made impressive achievements in scaling up both the provision of HIV testing and counselling (HTC) as well as antiretroviral therapy (ART). By June 2011, over 3 million Malawians had undergone HTC since the inception of the programme and nearly 400,000 HIV-positive individuals had initiated ART (Ministry of Health 2011). Malawi pioneered the public health approach to ART, including decentralisation of services to primary care level, a limited number of treatment regimens and laboratory investigations and standardised facility- and district-level reporting (Lowrance, Makombe et al. 2008).

3.5.5 Gender and Education

Education is an important determinant of girl and women's economic, health and social status (Fransen 2003). In sub-Saharan Africa, women having a minimal level of secondary education are, on average, two times more likely to have their need for family planning met, compared with women who have no formal education (Ortayli and Malarcher 2010). In 1994, Malawi introduced free primary school education for all children (Chimombo 2005). This led to a rapid increase in the number of children attending from 1.9 million to 2.9 million in one academic year (Chimombo 2005). However, Chimombo (2005) found that while the number of pupils attending primary school increased, the quality of the teaching and the learning environment worsened. This was because the introduction of free primary education was not accompanied by an increase in funding for more teachers or materials, which resulted in a marked decline in grades and numbers of children graduating to secondary school (Chimombo 2005).

Boys and girls attending secondary school in Malawi however, still have to pay fees and according to the World Bank, only 27% of Malawi's girls are enrolled in secondary school (World Bank 2012). In Malawi there is a marked difference in literacy between men and women with 68% of women being literate compared to 81% of men (National Statistical Office 2011: 29). There is also a significant difference between the age group 45-49 where 80% of men are literate compared with 45% of women (National Statistical Office 2011: 29).

3.5.6 Gender and political representation

Women's under-representation in political processes is near universal in democracies around the world. The first requirement of a representative democracy is that it represents all its citizens. By failing to ensure women are adequately represented at the national level, states are therefore failing to fulfil the central tenet of representative democracy. Moreover, this oversight could lead to gender interests being neglected in the formation of legislation.

Across Africa there have been striking gains in the political representation of women in national legislatures (South Africa, Mozambique and Rwanda have also shown impressive increases in the representation of women) (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2013). In Malawi, these gains have not been as strongly reflected in women's political representation which currently stands at 22.1% (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2013). While this is below population representative levels it is roughly equal to the UK. The appointment of a female president is also an impressive achievement. Kamlongera (2008) in a study with female parliamentarians in Malawi argued that contemporary formal state politics is constructed as a masculine domain where only a small minority of women find space within this sphere. She found that constraints for women's further involvement in politics were present in economic income, education and gender stereotypes and gendered expectations of women in family and society (Kamlongera 2008: 471).

3.6 Fishing and Malawi

In Malawi, 23% of land is covered with water (Government of Malawi 2007). Given the large bodies of fresh water covering Malawi's land, fish and the fisheries sector play an important role in providing employment, nutrition and income to Malawians. In 2007, the fishing industry provided more than 60% of animal protein consumed in the country and 40% of total animal protein consumed (Government of Malawi 2007: 2). In Malawi, the staple diet is dominated by maize and cassava and fish provides vital supplementation of vitamins, minerals, micro-nutrients and essential fatty acids (Jamu, Banda et al. 2011). The fishing sector directly employs approximately 60,000 fishers and approximately 450,000 people in fisheries-related industries such as fish processing, fish marketing, net making, boat building and engine repair (Government of Malawi 2009).

Malawi fisheries are classified into two groups: small-scale commercial sector (often called the traditional or the artisanal sector), and the large-scale commercial sector (with large capital investment). Fish landings from small scale commercial fishing are approximately 45,000 tonnes per year, which comprises predominantly of small and large cichlids *usipa* and *utaka*. The large-scale commercial sector accounts for approximately 5,600 tonnes of fish per year (Government of Malawi 2007: 2-3). In 2007, fishing contributed approximately 4% of total gross domestic production of Malawi (Government of Malawi 2007).

3.6.1 Lake Malawi

Lake Malawi is the largest body of water in the country, the third largest fresh water lake in Africa and the southernmost of the Great Rift Valley lakes (Jamu, Andrew et al. 2011). It has more than 1000 endemic fish species that are of both national and international importance (Snoeks 2000). Some of these species also contribute to the global aquarium trade providing a further source of foreign exchange. The Lakeshore area supports more than 2 million people's livelihoods in a diverse number of activities including tourism, agriculture, fishing irrigation and transportation (National Statistical Office 2008). Lake Malawi, contributes over 60% of the total annual fish landings. The most common fish between 1976 and 2009 were *usipa* and *utaka* which comprised 26% and 28% of all fish caught commercially (Jamu, Banda et al. 2011).

The South Eastern and South Western arms of Lake Malawi produce the greatest fish yields. This is due to the broad shallow shelf area that supports benthic productivity as well as facilitating both trawling and small-scale fishing (Turner 1995). The shape of the lake as well as direction of the prevailing winds mean a seasonal upwelling of nutrients occurs mostly in the South (Turner 1995).

3.6.2 Fisheries management and Malawi

Fish stocks in Lake Malawi, like in the other fresh water lakes in Malawi have been depleted. This may be due to the large amount of pressure placed on Malawian lakes, rivers and ecosystems by large population growth, increasing levels of poverty, environmental degradation and high fish demand (Jamu, Banda

et al. 2011). In particular, environmental degradation in lake catchments has increased soil erosion rates, siltation of shallow lakes and increased nutrient loading (Hecky, Bootsma et al. 2003). This has also led to reduced water quality, and in turn the reduced production of cyprinids and other fish species which depend on influent rivers for breeding (Jamu, Banda et al. 2011).

The high fish demand has led to localised overexploitation of fish resources (Jamu, Andrew et al. 2011). *Chambo* fish are an important example of this. During the 1970s and 1980s, *chambo* was an important fish stock for both small scale as well as commercial fishing. However, over-fishing led to the collapse of fish stocks from 9000 metric tonnes in the mid-1970s to 2000 metric tonnes in 2001 (Jamu, Banda et al. 2011: 4).

According to Jamu and colleagues (2011) there has been failure of conventional fisheries management approaches in Malawi. They argue this failure stems from the inadequate incorporation of wider socio-economic and ecological systems, which the lakes in Malawi are embedded within. The impact has been:

“loss of livelihoods for fishing communities, declining national nutritional security, fisheries collapse, changes in species composition and conflicts between fishers and fisheries managers” (Jamu, Andrew et al. 2011: 1).

3.7 Study Village Descriptions

The following section provides some broader information about the Mangochi District, then goes on to discuss the two study villages providing a detailed

description of the location, ethnicity, religion and livelihoods of each of the two study villages.

3.7.1 Mangochi district

Malawi is divided into three administrated regions and Mangochi is situated in the Southern region. During the dictatorship of Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda (1964-94) the Central region was favoured both politically and economically to the detriment of the Northern and Southern regions (Kaspin 1995). Banda's rule was "absolutely unyielding in his intolerance and brutal suppression of dissent" (Morrow 2006: 152).

The 2005 Integrated Household Survey found that the Southern region has the largest population living below the poverty line and those living in the rural areas were twice as likely to be poor than those living in urban areas (National Statistical Office 2005b). I found it difficult to identify data on poverty rates for the Mangochi district but as it is situated in the Southern region and predominantly rural therefore it can be expected that poverty levels will be high.

Mangochi district has the lowest rates of educational attainment for men and women in Malawi with a median of 1.1 years of education (National Statistical Office 2005a). The Mangochi district has a higher than average fertility rate of 7.2 children per women and correspondingly one of the lowest levels of modern contraceptive use in Malawi with only 17% reported use (National Statistical

Office 2011). The prevalence rate of HIV in the Mangochi district was 13.1% in 2007 compared to a national prevalence of 11.8% (Government of Malawi 2007). The demographic health survey conducted in 2010 found that men in the Mangochi district had the lowest prevalence rate for HIV testing in Malawi. Just 30% of men had ever taken an HIV test (National Statistical Office 2011).

Fishing activities on Lake Malawi are concentrated in the Southern arm because the shallow water facilitated fish catches whereas the water in the northern part of the Lake is deeper (Darwall and Allison 2002). The Mangochi district is the most productive fishing area on Lake Malawi and because of this people's livelihoods in the district are heavily reliant on fishing (Hara 2008). The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO) estimated that in 2003, 30% of all livelihoods in Mangochi were in the fishing industry (FAO 2003).

3.7.2 Location and governance

The two villages are situated in the Traditional Authority of Nankumba in the Mangochi district. Village 1 is close to Monkey Bay. Monkey Bay is a small peri-urban area with a population of approximately 5100 and has a small hospital, secondary school, army barracks, market and bus/mini-bus station. This station provides good transport links to many urban centres in Malawi including Mangochi, Blantyre and Lilongwe. There are also a number of bars and resthouses that are patronised by fishermen, businessmen and members of the army. The bars served a range of both bottled beer as well as *chibuku* a commercially sold beer that is fermented and considerably less expensive than beer. There was also a

fisheries research unit and a number of NGO offices. Due to the close proximity of Monkey Bay most residents in Village 1 used Monkey Bay for their amenities. For this reason the amenities in Village 1 are limited to a video showroom and one guesthouse with a bar (although this tended to be patronised by foreign travellers and sold more expensive bottled beer). Local beer *kachaso* (similar to *chibuku* but locally rather than commercially produced) was brewed and widely available in the village. According to a household survey conducted by the Chief in 2009 there were 4005 people living in Village 1.

Village 2 is situated approximately 23kms from Monkey Bay. The village was accessible by a dirt road of approximately 18kms from the main tar road. Accessing the village during the wet season can be challenging as sections of the road became waterlogged. The village is situated within the Lake Malawi National Park, which means there are restrictions on fishing close to the shore (although there was confusion over what was actually permissible and we frequently saw drag nets being used). There are also restrictions on cutting down trees for firewood although participants talked openly about collecting firewood and being caught by the rangers.

Within the village there are a large number of shops selling a wide variety of foodstuffs and clothes as well as two mills for ground maize. There are also four bars selling bottled beers and a restaurant where people buy food. Like Village 1, locally brewed beer is widely sold in informal settings (usually outside people's houses).

In 2010, the Chief conducted a house-to-house survey of the number of residents of Village 2 and found there were approximately 3400 residents. This figure was however disputed by the Chief and the Health Surveillance Assistant (HSA). They felt the number of people resident in the village was much larger due to the heavy presence of the fishing. The fishing industry meant that there was a lot of inward and outward migration as men and women came to buy fish or take part in fishing or leave to sell fish or conduct fishing when fish catches are lower.

The nearest hospital for both Village 1 and Village 2 was Monkey Bay Hospital (this was much closer for residents of Village 1). In Village 2 residents also travelled to Cape Maclear (a village approximately 18km away on a dirt road which had a heavy presence of tourist lodges) for medical treatment as there was an NGO clinic that provided medical treatment for a small fee. The nearest district hospital was located in Mangochi town and was approximately 60kms from Village 1 and 80kms from Village 2. In Monkey Bay there were also a number of private clinics that provide medical treatment for a fee.

3.7.3 Population and Ethnicity

Both villages are ethnically diverse and included people from the Chewa (for people living around the lake sometimes referred to as Nyanja) Tonga, Tumbuka, Lomwes, Yaos, Senas and Ngonis tribes. In Malawi, tribes originating from the North (including both Tongas and Tumbukas) follow patrilineal and patrilocal

systems of inheritance (Chimbiri 2007). The tribes originating in the Southern and Central regions (including Chewa) are matrilineal and matrilineal. However, both systems are patriarchal because in the matrilineal and matrilineal system it is the brother of the mother who owns and controls inheritance and any significant family resources including land (Chimbiri 2007). In the past ethnicity has played a strong role in determining people's occupation. Chewas have traditionally been farmers and Tongas and Tumbukas have traditionally been seen as "natural" fishermen. At the time of the data collection, this division was changing and all ethnic groups took part in the fishing as well as farming (when they could get access to land). However, the Tumbuka and Tonga are the dominant tribes in all aspects of the fishing industry in the two villages.

In both study villages the dominant tribes are the Chewa, Tonga and Tumbuka. Both chiefs are from the Chewa tribe and the Chewas in both villages were considered the veterans of the village. The title of veterans of the village is important because that entitled them to own and cultivate the land in the village. Other tribes were also able to rent or buy the land from the Chewa but primacy meant that the Chewa were dominant in the farming sector.

3.7.4 Religion

The dominant religion in both the villages was Christianity. However, there was a wide range of dominations of Christian churches including Roman Catholic, Anglican, CCAP, African International Church, Emmanuel International Church, Living Waters, the Assemblies of God and the Church of Christ. There were also

Muslims present in the villages. In Village 1 due to their small number they attended the mosque in Monkey Bay but in Village 2 there was a mosque.

3.7.5 Livelihoods

Fishing and farming are dominant livelihoods in both villages. In Village 1, due to the sandy nature of the soil, some of the fields are located approximately 3kms away across the main tar road. Access to land is also determined on the basis of tribe (although it is possible for other tribes to buy or rent fields). While the fish trade provides more readily available money, growing maize is important as it provides food for families during low fish catches. The staple diet of people living in the two villages is *nsima*. This is made from ground maize. In Malawi there is one wet season a year so most farmers grew and harvested one maize crop a year (this means the months preceding the harvest maize is very expensive to buy). In Village 1, there is electricity but it was only connected to the video showroom and the guesthouse, none of the houses had electricity. This is in contrast to Village 2 where electricity is more widely available with shops, bars and the houses of the wealthier community members having electricity.

The most common type of fishing conducted in both villages is the *kauni*; the term derives from the word *kuunika* that means to light or give light. The light refers to the lanterns that are used to attract *usipa* fish. This type of small-scale fishing requires an engine boat, 3-4 canoes, lanterns and nets (Figure 3.4). It also requires a boat crew of 10 men. In Figure 3.5, the picture shows a line of engine boats conducting the night fishing in a storm. There are a large number of these

engine boats in both villages (although in Village 2 there are more than 100 boats and fewer than 30 in Village 1) and the industry is dominated by a large number of boat owners owning between 3 and 4 engine boats.

Figure 3.2: Engine boat with dugout canoes, lanterns and nets



Figure 3.3: Fishing boats on the Lake at night



While both villages had large fish landing sites, the fisheries extension officer considered Village 2 to have one of the largest fish landing sites in Malawi. Fish trading was also an important livelihood for men and women living in the two villages. Testament to this was the large presence of fish drying racks (particularly within the compounds of houses). Women dominated the trading of usipa fish with men often trading in the larger, fresher fish such as *chambo*. Figure 3.4 shows fish drying in the sun in Village 1.

Figure 3.4: Usipa fish drying in the sun in Village 1



3.8 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to provide a detailed description of the context in which the research was conducted. The discussion highlights how pervasive poverty is within Malawi and the low levels of educational attainment within the Mangochi, in comparison to other districts in Malawi.

The changing nature of the fishing industry in Malawi was also discussed. Poor fisheries management has led to declining fish yield creating a difficult environment for all groups working in the industry. Finally the chapter highlights the gendered inequalities that exist within Malawian society with men having preferential access to resources and political power. These factors were also set against a generalised HIV epidemic. The HIV prevalence within the district is

also high for a rural district. Despite the high HIV prevalence rate men in the district had the lowest rates of HIV testing in the whole of Malawi.

4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The overall aim of this chapter is to provide the reader with a comprehensive record of the methodology I used for this research study. To assess the quality of qualitative research, Kitto, Chesters et al. (2008) present seven key areas that need to be addressed when presenting qualitative research. These are clarification, justification, procedural rigour, representativeness, interpretation, reflexivity and evaluative rigour and transferability (Kitto, Chesters et al. 2008: 244). I address these areas throughout the chapter. In Chapter 8, I return to the generalizability and transferability of the study findings.

I begin this chapter (4.2) by providing a description of the study and how it was situated within the larger parent study (MAFESSTA study). I then describe the study design (4.3) and provide a discussion of the epistemological and methodological foundations of the study. In this section I provide clarification and justification for why I selected the methods. I then return to my discussion of the research communities (drawing on the descriptions provided in Chapter 3) to discuss how and why they were selected. In Sections 4.5-4.9 I provide further details of the methods and how they were conducted. In particular, I provide a full discussion of the role of the research assistants in the collection and analysis of the data. In this section I address procedural rigour. I then provide a full account of how we analysed the data (4.10). I then discuss the limitations of the research methodology (4.11). In this section I address reflexivity and evaluative rigour. I

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discuss both the broader research environment as well as my own role in the production of the research. I then discuss the ethical issues that arose during the research process and how we addressed these issues.

4.2 Situating the research study

In chapter 3, I provided an in depth discussion of the two study villages. This section provides further detail of how this study was conceived and how it was situated within the larger study. I arrived in Liverpool in October 2009 after working for two years in mining communities in rural South Africa. My husband was beginning his PhD at Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM) and following my time in the field, I wanted to also undertake a PhD. I identified the MAFESSTA study, in which LSTM was a collaborating research institution. One of the researchers was Sally Theobald and the study was based in fishing communities in rural Malawi. I was aware of Sally's work and hoped that I might become involved in this project. Following a series of meetings with Sally, it became clear that there was an opportunity to support the qualitative and participatory research components. In February 2010, I accompanied Sally on a visit to Malawi to further explore this and meet the research team. Following this visit I officially enrolled in my PhD in March 2010 to undertake studies that were nested within the MAFESSTA study.

The Malawian MAFESSTA study was a combined social science and epidemiological study with two key research objectives.

a) The objective of the prospective epidemiological study was to:

Determine the prevalence, incidence and type of HIV and STIs (Gonorrhoea, Chlamydia, Syphilis and HSV-2) in the fishing communities in Mangochi.

b) The social science study objective was to:

Explore how different constituents that make up the fishing communities shape vulnerability/resilience to sexually-transmitted infections including HIV.

The study was a collaboration between the Malawi Liverpool Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Programme (MLW), the College of Medicine (CoM) at the University of Malawi, the World Fish Centre, Malawi and the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM). The study began in February 2009 and ran until October 2011 and recruited participants in 12 villages on the Southern arm of Lake Malawi. All the villages lay in the Traditional Authority of Nankumba in the district of Mangochi. The European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) funded the study and there was a sister study situated in Uganda.

During the visit to the field site in March 2010, we discussed initial findings from the data collection and analysis conducted by the social science research team. Transactional sex and gender power relations had emerged as two key factors shaping vulnerability to HIV in the 12 study villages. Following discussions with the team we decided to establish a small nested study exploring these two observations in more detail that formed the basis of my PhD.

4.3 Study design

Within this section I provide a discussion of the research aim and objectives, overview of the research methodology and a justification for why the methodology was selected. In doing this I address the first two of Kitto, Chesters et al. (2008) criteria for assessing quality in qualitative research which are clarification⁸ and justification.⁹

4.3.1 Study aim and objectives

The overall aim of the study was to understand structural drivers of HIV in fishing communities in Southern Malawi and develop interventions to address these. The four key research objectives of the study were to:

- (1) To understand gender power relations in fishing communities in Southern Malawi;
- (2) To explore and document the key drivers and facilitators of participation in transactional sex in the study villages;
- (3) To document individual and community perceptions of HIV risk and transactional sex in the study villages;
- (4) To develop a HIV prevention strategy to address HIV/AIDS among the fishing communities in southern Lake Malawi

To answer these research objectives, I designed a qualitative study that used participatory methods and drew on feminist and gender theories. The following

⁸ In the category of clarification the paper asks what are the aims of the research? What are the research questions?

⁹ In the category of justification the paper asks why is a qualitative approach the best option for answering this question? Why was the particular research design chosen?

sections describe how these theories shaped the research objectives and methodology.

4.3.2 Gender theory and the study design

The methodological and epistemological foundations of the study are drawn from feminist qualitative research. In particular, the study draws on a feminist epistemology that is articulated by Anderson (1995) "as the branch of naturalized, social epistemology that studies the various influences of norms and conceptions of gender and gendered interests and experiences on the production of knowledge" (Anderson 1995: 50). It is important to acknowledge that feminist qualitative research is not a codified form of research but instead, as Olesen (2005) argues, feminist qualitative research remains "highly diversified, enormously dynamic, and thoroughly challenging" (Olesen 2005: 235).

Two theories underlie the development of my research objectives – these are i) Kabeer’s social relations approach I discussed in the literature review in Section 2.2 and ii) second wave feminist theory. Reeves and Baden (2000) define social relations approach as a method that seeks to “expose the gendered power relations that perpetrate inequities. This analysis moves beyond the household to include the community, market and state institutions... It uncovers the differences between women, divided by other aspects of social differentiation such as class, race and ethnicity” (Reeves and Baden 2000: 6). Green and Thorogood (2009) see second-wave feminist theory as critiquing the relationship between power and knowledge - knowledge does not simply enable empowerment but also that the

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legitimation of knowledge claims are tied to social structures of domination (Green and Thorogood 2009: 19).

I drew on these concepts to shape the development of the research objectives, the design of the data collection and the analysis of the data. Key ways I took forward these concepts was by ensuring a holistic analysis that extended the focus of the research beyond the individual to include analysis of household and the broader political economy. Through using participatory research methods I included voices that have not often been heard when developing interventions.

Feminist qualitative research methodology and social relations theory shaped all aspects of the research design and application. The conceptual framework, which I presented in Chapter 2 section 2.8, included key concepts drawn from feminist qualitative research and social relations theory. The concepts included power relations, agency and social norms and how these functioned at the individual, household, community and institutional levels. The conceptual framework in turn shaped the development of the research objectives.

Social relations theory and feminist qualitative research methodology also shaped how the research was carried out. One key way this shaped the process was through consciousness-raising of gender theory with the research assistants. I facilitated this through a series of participatory gender training workshops with the team. During these trainings I used a range of exercises and videos to highlight

the different ways gender can shape men and women's lives and their vulnerability to HIV.

Another way social relations theory translated into the data collection was through the inclusion of a range of men and women of different ages and socio-economic positions. The sampling frame included older, younger men and women as well participants in different socio-economic positions.

I also ensured that gender theory was incorporated into the data collection and analysis through reflective team meetings. These team meetings took place after each interview, focus group discussions and participatory workshop. During the meetings we discussed the different themes that had come out of the method, how they related to gender and how they could be further explored and probed in subsequent methods.

4.3.3 Qualitative research methods

Qualitative research methods are about studying people's experiences and exploring social phenomenon particularly when they are under-investigated, or, as Malterud (2001) states, they "refer to theories of interpretation (hermeneutics) and human experience (phenomenology) (Malterud 2001: 398). Qualitative research is often referred to as naturalistic inquiry because the research is conducted in a natural rather than experimental setting and the methods were developed within the social and human sciences (Pope and Mays 1995, Malterud 2001). Kitto and colleagues see the aim of qualitative research methods as exploring the "behaviour, processes of interaction, and the meanings, values and experiences of purposefully sampled individuals and groups in their "natural" context" (Kitto, Chesters et al. 2008). Therefore, through their application, qualitative research methods provide

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research participants with the opportunity to express their own lived realities and allow researchers to understand how social experience is created and understood in everyday life (Mays and Pope 1995).

Malterud (2001) defines a number of areas in which qualitative methods are useful, including: “human and social experience, communication, thoughts, expectations, meaning, attitudes, and processes, especially related to interaction, relation, development, interpretation, movement and activity” (Malterud 2001: 398). The central aim of this research was to understand how gender power relations operated and how this shaped vulnerability to HIV in fishing communities in Southern Malawi. I was particularly interested in understanding transactional sex in these communities. Qualitative research methods were most appropriate, given the sensitive and personal nature of this topic. This is because qualitative methods allow the researcher to be sensitive and responsive to the participant’s language and the iterative nature allows the researcher to explore unexpected issues as they emerge (Pole and Lampard 2002). Given the lack of data on transactional sex in fishing communities in Malawi, qualitative research methods allowed us to explore phenomena where little information exists. The research objectives developed organically following initial data collection and analysis by qualitative researchers within the MAFESSTA study. The flexibility of the research methods allowed for this iterative development of the objectives and allowed us to explore the two key themes being studied.

4.3.4 Participatory research methods

Participatory research methods are part of a methodological approach often referred to as Participatory Learning and Action¹⁰ (PLA). Robert Chambers (2007) defines PLA as a “growing family of methods and approaches that enable local people to analyse, share and enhance their knowledge of life and conditions, and to plan, prioritize, act and monitor and evaluate” (Chambers 2007: 1). Central to the aim of PLA is to generate knowledge and information that represents the perceptions, understandings, concepts and practices of different groups. The emphasis is on generating knowledge from the perspective of, not only the researchers, but also of those being researched (de Koning and Martin 1996). One of the epistemological roots of participatory methods is an ethical critique of the relationships generated by traditional scientific practice (Green and Thorogood 2009). As Cornwall and Pratt (2003) state, rather than viewing PLA as having a fixed definition, PLA should be viewed as a starting point for changing the ways in which development work is done, by directly addressing relationships of power that subordinate local people and local knowledge (Cornwall and Pratt 2003).

I had hoped when I was initially developing this research project that we would also be able to develop and evaluate an intervention working in the two study communities. This would have been designed and evaluated using PLA tools. Unfortunately financial and time constraints meant that this was not possible. PR methods were therefore only used for a small component and only offered participants an opportunity to reflect on the findings and to discuss potential

¹⁰ They are sometimes referred to as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) or Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA). Chambers (2007) sees that there are continuities and overlaps between each of these methods however, the key distinction is how participatory they are

interventions from their perspective. There was not an opportunity to translate this discussion into action in the form of an intervention and thus I was only able to use a PR approach in a very limited way.

4.4 Research community selection

Selection of the research communities was an important step in the study design.

As Lewis state “selecting research settings and populations involves identifying those which, by virtue of their relationship with the research questions, are able to provide the most relevant, comprehensive and rich information” (Lewis 2003: 49).

The social science research team (which comprised of eight research assistants, two field supervisors and one field manager) and myself, held lengthy discussions to identify which population would provide the most relevant, comprehensive and rich information. We selected the two villages because of the presence of fish landing sites¹¹ within the boundaries of the villages and high levels of inward and outward migration of both women and men working in the fishing industry. As a team we felt that these two criteria for the villages were important to ensure that there was a large population of men and women working in the fishing industry. We deliberately selected two villages that were therefore heavily involved in the fishing industry. However, there were more intense fishing activities within Village 2. In Village 1, the population was less reliant on fishing for livelihoods and the village was also located closer to medical facilities and had better transport links.

¹¹ Fishing on Lake Malawi often takes place outside of a formal port. Instead places where fishermen land their catch and fish traders buy and sell fish are often referred to as fish landing sites.

The two study villages had very different experiences in relation to the MAFESSTA study. From the start of the study in September 2009, MAFESSTA had recruited prospective cohort study participants from Village 1. This meant that there had been intensive community mobilisation activities as well as elected Community Advisory Group (CAG) members representing the village. The research assistants continued to conduct client follow up throughout the study.

However, despite the intention to recruit study participants in Village 2, there had been delays with establishing a study clinic and the study recruitment had ended by the time the clinic was established. This meant that there had been community mobilisation activities that ended without participants being recruited from the village. There was however, an improved clinic facility (although no additional health personnel provided). In both villages we asked the Chiefs for permission to work (which was granted) as well as holding village meetings to provide community members with information about our small qualitative study and how it related to the MAFESSTA's epidemiological study.

4.5 Methods

Kitto, Chesters et al. (2008) use the term procedural rigour to refer to the documentation of the research techniques and analysis procedures. In the following sections I document the qualitative and participatory research methods, which we used, and how they were conducted. I begin this section with a discussion of the four research assistants (RAs) who played a vital role in the collection and analysis of the data.

4.5.1 Role of the Research Assistants

The research assistants were employed full time through the MAFESSTA study. They had all worked for the study since February 2009 (the start of the study) and had been present for all the community mobilisation activities in the study villages. I began learning Chi-Chewa (the dominant language in Malawi) when I arrived in the country in October 2010. However, the short project timeframe meant that the data collection had to begin in January 2011 and my language skills were not good enough to conduct interviews, focus groups and participatory workshops particularly on sensitive topics. In the initial observation period when we spent time informally chatting to people within the villages, the research assistants acted as translators. While this was acceptable for general discussions about the village and the fishing industry we found it interrupted the flow of the discussions. Therefore, as a team we decided that it would be better for the research assistants to conduct the interviews alone but then to come together as a team and discuss all aspects of the interviews. The research assistants facilitated the focus group discussions and participatory workshops. To create a permissive environment I was present for the female discussions but not the male discussions. The research assistants then translated and transcribed the data as we went along. As Green and Thorogood (2009) note, language is central both to how data is collected as well as how it is analysed in qualitative research. Data transcription and translation is described later in this chapter. Below is a short description of the four research assistants who worked on the project and their backgrounds.

Victoria was 26 years old, recently married with one child from the Thyolo district (the tea growing area in the Southern Region) and spoke English and Chi-Chewa fluently. She had completed secondary school and had a diploma in Rural Development as well as an HIV voluntary counselling and testing certificate. She had previously worked as a field worker on a water project in her home district. She worked on my research study from the beginning of January 2011 until the end of October 2011. Victoria conducted the structured observation with Lawrence and I. She also conducted the majority of the in-depth interviews with the female participants and co-facilitated the focus group discussions and participatory workshops.

Figure 4.1: Victoria Nyongopa Magombo



Alinafe was 21 years old and single. She was originally from the Nkotakota district of Malawi (Central region) and spoke fluent Chi-Chewa and English. She had completed secondary school and had a diploma in Rural Development. She had previously worked as a field worker using quantitative methods for six months on a women's empowerment project in her home district. She conducted

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four in-depth interviews as well as co-facilitated the focus group discussions and participatory workshops with the female participants.

Figure 4.2: Alinafe Chimphonda



Lawrence was 37 years old, married with two children and originally from the Karonga district (Northern region). He spoke Chi-Chewa, Chi-Tumbuka and English fluently. The ability to speak Chi-Tumbuka was important because many of the people living and working in the fishing communities spoke Chi-Tumbuka as a first language as they had migrated from the north of the country. Lawrence had completed secondary school and had a diploma in Rural Development as well as a voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) certificate. He had previously worked as a VCT counsellor in the Thyolo district for a health project. This provided him with a very good understanding of HIV and the challenges faced by people with the disease. He conducted the structured observation at night in the

bars the majority of the in-depth interviews with the male participants and co-facilitated the focus group discussions and the participatory workshops.

Figure 4.3: Lawrence Nkhwazi



Mackwellings was 32 years old, married with two children and originally from the Karonga district (Northern region). He spoke Chi-Chewa, Chi-Tumbuka and English fluently. He had completed secondary school and had a certificate in IT. Mackwellings lived close to Lake Malawi when he was growing up. From the age of 16, he spent time working in the fishing industry. He had both been a boat crew member, and traded fish both in the North and in Mangochi District. He had spent five years working as a field worker and data officer at a health research project in the Karonga district. In this role he had undertaken quantitative interviews within the study communities. He conducted eight of the male in-depth interviews as well as co-facilitated the focus group discussions and participatory workshops. Microfinance emerged as an important issue following the initial analysis. We therefore decided to conduct further interviews with female fish traders receiving loans. Mackwellings continued to be based close to the study communities and

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therefore between March and May conducted ten additional interviews with this group.

Figure 4.4: Mackwellings Phiri



My role: When I began the fieldwork for this PhD I was 29 years old and been married for four years (I gave birth to my first child after I had completed the fieldwork in July 2012). I had studied gender and development and worked in the field of HIV and gender. Specifically I spent two years running the IMAGE project. The IMAGE project was a gender and HIV intervention based in mining communities in rural South Africa (Pronyk, Hargreaves et al. 2006). One of my key roles within the IMAGE project was delivering training on gender and facilitation to ten community based gender trainers. This group of ten women taught me a lot about South Africa, gender hierarchies within that setting and how to deliver key messages on gender, HIV and participatory research methodologies.

We decided that the RAs would conduct the interviews and focus group discussions themselves rather than acting as a translator for me. To ensure this approach worked and that the methods were conducted to the highest standard, I designed a training programme for the research assistants. The programme was delivered using participatory training methods and involved trainings on conducting in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and qualitative research analysis and key participatory methods including seasonal calendars, body mapping, livelihood mapping, problem analysis and ranking. I also delivered a 3-day gender and HIV training workshop to the whole social science research team in July 2010 before the commencement of my study. Throughout these trainings, we reflected on how best to handle sensitive questions particularly those relating to violence, sexual relationships and HIV. One of the central aims of the training was to ensure that the research assistants had the fullest understanding of the research objectives and the underlying theoretical frameworks that contributed to their development. I tried to identify a wide range of reading both from academic sources but also from the grey literature. During this training we worked on developing the topic guides for the in-depth interviews as well as updating and modifying the data collection plan.

Following the trainings I felt confident that the Research Assistants were able to conduct the research. However, we saw this as a constantly evolving process and following the transcription of every transcript, we sat together as a team and discussed how the interview or focus group had gone and whether we could make any improvements to the way they were conducted and whether there were new or unexpected responses from the research participants.

This process of working together as a team, feeding back on transcripts and identifying new avenues for research together helped build trust within the team. It enhanced the procedural rigour of the data collection process and helped to enhance trustworthiness in the whole research process.

4.5.2 Data collection

Data collection took place over two periods: January 2011 to October 2011 and February 2012 to April 2012. Table 4.1 presents an outline of the timing of each method for the data collection. The following sections provide a detailed description of the specific qualitative and participatory methods that were used for the data collection, presents the number of times the different methods were used, and describes their conduct.

Table 4.1: Timeline for data collection

Period	Method
January – March 2011	Structured observation
April-June 2011	In-depth interviews
July-September 2011	Focus group discussions
October 2011	Participatory Workshops
February-April 2012	In-depth interviews with female and male participants receiving microfinance

4.6 Observation

Mays and Pope (1995) see observational research methods as the systematic and detailed observation of behaviour and talk. The method requires the researcher to watch and report what people say and do. As Richie (2003) notes, observational methods offer the opportunity to record and analyse behaviour and interactions as they occur. This allows for the researcher to ‘see’ behaviour, without any construction on the part of those reporting (Richie 2003).

In his classic typology of observational research roles, Gold (1958) classifies different observation roles depending on the degree of participation within the community under study. These are complete participant, participant as observer and observer as participant and complete observer. Complete participation is when a researcher goes ‘native’ in the field they are observing (Mays and Pope 1995). Participant observation is the form of observation most frequently used within qualitative research methods. This methodological approach has traditionally been utilised by anthropologists. In this traditional form, anthropologists lived or worked in the settings they were researching over long periods of time (Green and Thorogood 2009). However, at the other end of Gold’s typology is the complete observer and in this role the researcher does not have to be present in the field. There are a number of ways this method has been used within health research, including analysing video recordings of medical consultations. The method has also been used to analysis interactions in waiting rooms where the observer watches the patients but does not interact with them.

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I have classed our use of this method as observation. We did interact with participants but we did not live within the two study villages. I, Victoria and Lawrence all lived in Monkey Bay for the duration of the data collection. Alinafe and Mackwellings lived closer to Mangochi town as they were also working in the MAFESSTA study villages that were situated closer to Mangochi town. Therefore, we had a close proximity to Village 1 but we did not physically live within the boundary of the village.

For our periods of observation, we began by spending time in each of the villages chatting with different groups, buying local produce from the small shops, eating meals with community members when we were invited and buying fish from the boats when they had landed. In addition to this more unstructured approach to observation, we also conducted periods of structured observation. I kept a research diary to document these interactions and to note any conversations. In the research diary, I also noted decision-making around the different steps of the research process. This allowed me to reflect on the data collection and reflect on our thinking as it evolved with the different stages of data collection. When we undertook conversations that the RAs translated, they also gave me a written account after the discussion.

The initial observation allowed time for the research assistants and me to become acquainted with key informants in the villages and plan the sampling frame for the in-depth interviews as well as the focus group discussions. The observation also provided time for the research assistants and me to reflect on the power-relations

that existed within the study. We discussed how our position was economically and socially privileged, compared to those living in the village. We also reflected on preconceived ideas that we had had about transactional sex and those who participated in it. During these early discussions it became clear that the research assistants had some negative opinions about women who worked in the bars and sold sex to their customers. Women working in bars in Malawi were viewed as prostitutes (or in Chi-chewa *hule*), and were highly stigmatised by many groups in society. These periods of observation allowed us to discuss together why women may end up working in bars and the importance of treating all research participants including bar workers with respect. By the end of the study all the RAs regularly met and greeted the bar workers in Monkey Bay helping them to access male and female condoms.

The structured observations focused on different aspects of the fishing industry and involved different members of the team observing different aspects of the industry. They were structured so that we picked particular times and places to be present. Lawrence, the male research assistant, undertook the observation at bars during the evening. He did this following high and low fish catches. Other aspects of the fish trade were observed by the whole team including the landing of fishing boats at the two beaches, the exchange of fish by male and female fish traders and the drying and processing of fish on the benches. The team also spent time with women in the afternoons following fish catches. Both the research assistants and I wrote up field notes and we spent time following the periods of observation discussing what we had seen and whom we had met.

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Mays and Pope (1995) note that when using observational research, it is impossible to document everything which is said and done. Therefore the process is inevitably selective and heavily reliant on the researcher to act as the research instrument and document the world that he or she observes. By conducting some of the observations together, we were able to discuss what we had noted from the interactions and compare interpretations. These written observations were coded during the analysis.

The observation also provided us with an opportunity to build rapport with different groups within the community. We were able to interview these community members and build on these relationships in some of the interviews and focus group discussions.

Silverman (2001) notes that there are important ethical considerations to be considered when conducting observation based research. A tension exists between wanting to give full information to the people you are studying but also not wanting to ‘contaminate’ their research by informing subjects too specifically about the research question to be studied. Before we began the research we sought permission from the Chiefs of both villages as well as at the district assembly. We were concerned that if we presented our research as focusing on transactional sex, this could potentially influence whether people were interviewed or took part in the focus groups, and how the wider community viewed study participants. We

did not want the wider community to perceive those who we were interviewing as automatically involved in transactional sex. Instead, during these meetings we said we were interested in understanding men and women's position within the communities and how this influenced HIV transmission. At the meetings we said we were going to be conducting observation as well as interviews and focus groups.

4.7 *In-depth interviews*

Green and Thorogood (2009) argue that in essence a qualitative interview "is a conversation that is directed more or less towards the research's particular needs for data" (Green and Thorogood 2009: 94). Qualitative interviews are often classified depending on how far the researcher directs the interview (Britten 1995). This classification can be viewed as a spectrum with structured interviews at one end, in which the topics discussed are tightly controlled by the researcher and follows specific pre-defined questions. At the other end of the spectrum there are informal interviews which are more like natural conversations that fortuitously happen in the field and where data is gathered opportunistically (Green and Thorogood 2009: 95).

Qualitative interviews are interactive and sensitive to the language used by the interviewee. Britten (1995) sees this process as a good tool for exploring participants individual experiences and opinions (Britten 1995). However, it is important to note that qualitative interviews are specific kind of interactions, where the researcher and the interviewee produce language data about beliefs,

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behaviours, ways of classifying the world, or about how knowledge is categorised.

What qualitative interviews do not do is produce a direct representation of the world (Green and Thorogood 2009). This research study was concerned with understanding individuals' lived experiences and, particularly their beliefs and behaviours within the fishing industry. For this reason in-depth qualitative interviews were used.

Green and Thorogood (2009) see the aim of in-depth interviews as to allow the respondent to "speak at length, in detail, in ways in which they are most comfortable on a given topic. They may have a topic guide, but not a strict, pre-determined schedule of questions" (Green and Thorogood 2009: 285). We conducted a total of 59 in-depth interviews, 34 with female participants and 25 with male participants. I have included a table with demographic details of these participants in [Appendix A](#). Most of the interviews lasted between one and two hours. The interviews were held at the participants' homes or close to their homes (sometimes under a tree, or on the beach at quieter times) and we used a topic guide to structure some of the discussion (although this was designed to be very flexible). I provide further details of the topic guide in the following section.

Manderson, Bennett et al. (2006) state that "social, structural and contextual factors such as age, socioeconomic positioning, and ethnicity, all influence the direction, flow and content of interviews" This in turn can shape how the researchers interpret the information collected in the process" (Manderson, Bennett et al. 2006: 1317). For this reason we decided where possible, the female

research assistants would conduct the interviews with female participants and male research assistants would conduct interviews with the male participants. However, following the end of the first data collection in October 2011 the two female research assistants returned to their home districts. This meant that for the second phase of in-depth interviews the only research assistant who was available and had experience of the research areas was Mackwellings. I was a little concerned initially that the female fish traders may not feel comfortable discussing intimate aspects of their lives with a male research assistant. However, by January 2012 all the research assistants had received extensive training on how to conduct interviews, particularly on sensitive topics. The openness of the participants in these interviews reflected Mackwelling's skill and sensitivity as an interviewer.

The research assistants were often more affluent than the research participants (although some of the boat owners were more affluent than the research assistants). The RAs also had a higher level of education than most of the research participants. This stronger socio-economic position was something we discussed frequently during the planning as well as the analysis of the data. This was an important aspect that we reflected on during the training as well as during the interviews. As a white British woman who had a much higher level of education than both the research assistants and the research participants I was conscious of this social distance. I discussed this with the RAs frequently. We focused on how difference can be used as an advantage as it can be used to probe different issues that may be seen by those participating in the activities as a

natural part of life. Given that the research topic was focused on the gendered power dynamics, being able to ask why as an outsider was helpful.

4.7.1 Sampling frame for the in-depth interviews

We developed a purposive sampling frame to identify which individuals we would interview. Patton (1990) sees the aim of purposive sampling as including “information rich cases for in-depth study” (Patton 1990: 169). He defines information-rich cases as “those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposeful sampling” (Patton 1990: 169). The sample frame we developed was based on the principle of maximum variation, which we used to elicit viewpoints from a diverse population of people living and working in the two study villages (Richie, Lewis et al. 2003).

The sample frame for the in-depth interviews has been included in Appendix B. Within the sampling frame, we separated participants into four groups: insider men; outsider men; insider women; and outsider women. The notions of insider and outsider were developed to reflect the focus of the study (which was focused both on women and men working in the fishing industry and women working in bars). In table 4.2 below I describe the different groups included in these distinctions.

Table 4.2: Table defining insider and outsider groups

Insider Men	Men working directly in the fishing industry
Outsider Men	Men living in the village working in professions outside fishing
Insider women	Women working directly in the fishing industry (including microfinance loan recipients), women working in bars (often selling sex)
Outsider women	Women living in the study and working outside the fishing industry

Insider men included a wide spectrum of men working in the fishing industry including boat crew members, boat managers, boat owners and male fish traders. Outsider men were classified as those living in the fishing communities but not working directly in the fishing industry and included petty traders, farmers, bicycle taxis driver, a pick up driver and bar workers (in both bottle beer bars as well as *Chibuku* bars) as well as school-going boys (over the age of 15).

There were two groups of insider women. Women working in different types of bars, were considered insider because they were working directly within the sex industry, with a clear inter-relationship with the fishing industry. The other group

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of insider women were those working directly in the fishing industry and included female fish traders, processors (including both women who sold their fish locally and those who travelled to different markets to sell their fish) and microfinance beneficiaries.

Outsider women were women living in the community and not working directly in the fishing industry, including *mayi phikani* (women who cooked and sold food on the beach when the boats landed), and women who brewed local beer, petty traders, school going girls (over 15 years of age) and farmers. We updated the sample frame following the identification of different groups. The largest addition we made to the sampling frame was the addition of female and male fish traders who were receiving microfinance loans from a range of organisations working in the two villages. We identified these groups following initial analysis of the data which showed that microfinance may be important for understanding women's HIV vulnerability within the two villages.

The study participants were identified through the initial structured observation, through snowballing (following up suggestions from other participants) and through key informants living and working in the two study communities (Patton 1990).

The research assistants used a topic guide during the interviews. I developed the topic guides with the research assistants and they were assessed and updated after

each interview and focus group discussion. Themes included in the guide included the motivations and expectations in sexual relationships by both men and women; position of men and women in the fishing industry; how fish is accessed by both men and women; mobility; the challenges of working in the fishing industries and how these have changed over time; violence, leisure time activities including alcohol use and sex work; and how people viewed risk in their lives (different topic guides were developed for each of the four groups and all four topic guides are included in [Appendix C](#)).

Given the sensitive nature of the themes, the researchers also allowed participants to distance themselves from topics. They did this by asking questions both about the participant's own lives but also about the lives of people living in the community more broadly. In a similar way to vignettes based on case studies, this allowed the participants to reflect on other people's experiences rather than their own and to place some distance between themselves and actions that were not viewed as socially desirable and allowed us to collect data on sexual behaviour. This was particularly effective when discussing transactional sex with female fish traders.

In his discussion of sample sizes for qualitative research Mason (2010) points out "that within a qualitative sample there is a point of diminishing return as the study gathers more data does not necessarily lead to more information. This is because one occurrence of a piece of data, or a code, is all that is necessary to ensure that it becomes part of the analysis framework" (Mason 2010). We used the concept of

data saturation for deciding when to stop conducting or both the in-depth interviews and the focus group discussions, (O'Reilly and Parker 2012). The point of data saturation is when the collection of new data does not provide any new information about the phenomena under study.

4.8 Focus group discussions

Focus group discussions were first used in the 1920s, mainly as a way of developing survey instruments (Fontana and Frey 1993) and have, in recent decades, been extensively used in market research and by political parties (Finch and Lewis 2003). Krueger and Casey (2000) argue that focus groups are a form of group interview that capitalises on communication between participants in order to generate data. Kitzinger (1995) sees that the interaction between the group allows the researcher to tap into other forms of communication that people use in their day-to-day interactions including jokes, anecdotes, teasing and arguing. Being able to observe these forms of communication are helpful for researchers “because people's knowledge and attitudes are not entirely encapsulated in reasoned responses to direct questions” (Kitzinger 1995: 299). Understanding group interactions can also help to highlight cultural values and group norms. Theobald, Nyirenda et al. (2011), in their review of using focus groups in different cultural contexts, found that in Malawi, where direct criticism is rare, participants were more comfortable being critical in a group rather than in individual interviews. The authors also note that in Southern Africa, focus groups are considered a comfortable and familiar way of discussing issues (Theobald, Nyirenda et al. 2011). Kreuger and Casey (2000) also argue “[t]he focus group

presents a more natural environment than that of an individual interview because participants are influencing and influenced by others – as they are in real life”

(Krueger and Casey 2000: 11)

While there are important benefits to using focus groups, Kitzinger (1995) acknowledges some drawbacks. In particular, the articulation of group norms may silence individual voices of dissent. Further, by bringing participants together to discuss a research topic, confidentiality of the research session cannot be guaranteed particularly when participants live and work closely together.

In total, we conducted 18 focus groups. Most had between 8 and 12 participants although one had 18. We sampled participants primarily by occupation and sex to reduce the social distance and create a permissive environment for the discussion (Kitzinger 1995). The following groups were included in each village:

- Female fish traders (selling outside the community and selling within the community)
- Male fish traders
- Male boat crew members
- School going boys and girls living in the communities (over 15 years)
- Male and female groups working outside the fishing industry
- Female bar workers

We identified participants through snowballing of participants who had been involved in the in-depth interviews (we asked these participants if they knew other participants who would be will to be interested in taking part in a focus group) as

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well as through key informants. As the two communities from which we were recruiting participants were relatively small, most of the participants were familiar with each other. For the boat crew members, we used pre-existing groups in the form of a whole crew who worked on a boat. This was done to try and build on existing social relationships and encourage participants to discuss issues openly. However, it did mean that within these group discussions, both younger (16 and over) and older men (in their 40s and 50s) were included. In these boat crews there were strict hierarchies. During the focus group discussions the intimacy of the group seemed to ensure that most participants contributed and there did not appear to be dominant older male group members. With the female bar workers we sampled women working in the same bars.

We aimed to conduct the focus groups in neutral and private surroundings to provide as permissive environment as possible for the participants. For this reason the two female research assistants conducted the focus groups with female groups and the two male research assistants conducted the focus groups with the male participants. In Village 2 the discussions were conducted in the primary school during the weekends and out of school hours. In Village 1 the discussions were conducted in a community resource centre that was within the boundaries of the community.

With the two bar worker groups, the discussions were conducted close to the bars that they worked in. In the first case this was because the bar workers requested that they be close to their living quarters (which were 2kms away from the Village 1 village). This worked well as there had been low fish catches and the bar was

closed in the morning. In Village 2, the bar was very centrally located in the village and the bar workers reported a lot of harassment from women and men living in the local village. In this setting we also conducted the discussion close to the bar. However, this did not work well and we ended the discussion early because the bar was busy and the bar owner kept interrupting the discussion. We discussed with the bar workers and decided that we should conduct individual interviews in quieter times rather than repeat the group discussions.

The research assistants and I developed a topic guide to guide the focus group discussions. An example of this is presented in [Appendix C](#) and covered a range of topics including the position of men and women in the fishing industry; how fish is accessed by both men and women; the challenges of working in the fishing industries and how these have changed over time; the motivations and expectations in sexual relationships of both men and women and how this relates to contraceptive use; mobility; how risk was viewed by different community groups and access to health services including HIV and contraception. Different topic guides were used with different groups and they were updated following each group discussion.

The focus groups allowed us to get a range of views from different groups in a short period of time. They also allowed us to understand how different groups perceived different practices within the community. In particular they allowed us to explore what topics the groups were comfortable in exploring openly and what was uncomfortable. They also allowed the data to be triangulated from the field

notes as well as the interviews. Finally, they allowed us to discuss sensitive issues such as heavy drinking in the communities, HIV risk and transactional sex in a general way rather than focusing on an individual's behaviour.

4.9 Participatory workshops

The participatory workshops had two objectives. Firstly they provided us with an opportunity to undertake participant checking (Pretty 1993). This provided us with an opportunity to discuss our findings from the focus group discussions and the in-depth interviews and for participants to reflect on these findings. The second objective of the participatory workshops was to begin the process of developing an HIV intervention.

We conducted two participatory workshops in each village (one with female groups and one with male groups). For each workshop twenty participants were invited from those who had participated in the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. Participants were selected to ensure a range of ages and occupations. During discussions, we split groups into older and younger to provide a more inclusive environment for discussion. The female research assistants facilitated the workshops with the female participants and the male research assistants facilitated the workshops with male participants. Audio recordings and notes were taken during the workshops. With each RA transcribing a participatory workshop each. Due to time constraints the workshops were held very close together and this did not provide the RAs with sufficient time to

conduct transcription. Instead we sat together as a group to discuss successful elements of the workshops and modified the programmes to reflect this learning.

The participatory workshops took a full day each and participants were provided with drinks, snacks and lunch. We began by using a problem tree to discuss the determinants of HIV within the communities. Following this discussion we presented our study findings and allowed the participants to discuss whether they felt these results reflected the reality of their lives. The final session discussed what could be done to prevent HIV in their communities with participants discussing the factors they had identified in the first session and identifying strategies that could be used to prevent individuals and communities from acquiring HIV.

4.10 Data analysis

4.10.1 Transcription and Translation

Qualitative research is about the production and interpretation of language and therefore documenting how participants' words are transcribed and translated into the written form is vital for presenting a full account of how the research was conducted and analysed.

Informed consent was granted from all participants for interviews, focus groups and participatory workshops to be recorded. These recordings were then transcribed and translated into English by the research assistants. With the focus

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groups, the facilitator transcribed from the audio recording and also drew on the notes taken by the observer during the discussion to provide further insights. Due to time constraints all four of the PW were conducted in one week so there was insufficient time for transcription between each one. However, the whole team met following each of the workshops to identify key themes emerging from the discussion. The RAs then worked together to transcribe the audio recordings with each of the RAs transcribing one of the audio recordings for each of the workshops.

As Green and Thorogood (2009) note qualitative research ideally requires fluency in the language and culture of the research setting (Green and Thorogood 2009: 98). There are a number of studies that document the challenges of conducting qualitative research in a language that is not the first language of the researcher (Temple 1997, Kapborg and Berterö 2002, Temple and Young 2004, Smith, Chen et al. 2008). The overall lesson from these studies is that to ensure rigour within the process, the translator should be required to translate both the literal meaning of the words but also the contextual information such as the humorous use of the words and phrases, sarcasm and metaphoric use. For this to happen the translator should have a strong understanding of the social environment in which they are working. In their discussion of the challenges of using an interpreter to conduct qualitative interviews, Kapborg and Berterö (2002) note that one way of overcoming these challenges is to ensure that the interpreter has both training in translation and in the field research.

To ensure rigour within the process, I began the project by providing the RAs with intensive training in qualitative and participatory research methods as well as the research topic to ensure the data was collected to the highest possible standard. They also received training on how best to provide quality transcription. Bogusia Temple (1997), when reflecting on translation issues in her work with British-Polish families, points to the often implicit assumptions that are built into particular translations. She discusses the different emphasises that her translator had put into the words which had been translated. She felt that these discussions with her translator afforded her with an opportunity to advance her own understanding of Polish women and what they were able to do within their communities (Temple 1997).

Using the Research Assistants who had conducted the interviews or discussion helped to improve the quality of the data in a number of ways. Firstly, the research assistants were able to provide transcriptions quickly rather than having to wait for a transcription service. By listening to the tape the RAs were able to reflect on their interviewing techniques and pick up any mistakes that they may have made. This was particularly helpful during early interviews and focus groups when we could discuss phrasing of questions, responses from participants and sensitive handling of the research topic. However, there were concerns about rigour when using this strategy. By allowing the RAs to undertake the translation and transcription, there are risks that the data may not be fully transcribed or that it was edited to improve how the RA is viewed in the transcript. To address this potential challenge, a field supervisor checked the transcription and translation of 5% of the transcripts. We also discussed the transcripts as a group and

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occasionally referred back to the audio file when there was discussion of the meaning of a participant's phrase. I found, like Temple (1997), that my discussions with the RAs provided me with a much deeper understanding of the participant's responses and the broader social context. It was also helpful on a practical level because it meant we were able to use the transcripts to discuss and inform the next interviews and focus groups rather than having to wait weeks or even months to receive transcripts if an outside service had been used. Finally by conducting the interviews or discussions, the RAs had an understanding of what the participants were referring to and were able to provide important insights immediately into the transcript. This helped aid the discussion and the analysis of the meaning behind terms and concepts. I have included an example of the clarifications RAs were able to give during the transcription process in the quote below. I have included this to provide an example of the level of details RAs were able to provide. The interview was conducted with a 35-year-old female fish trader.

This helped aid the discussion and the analysis. An example of this is taken from an in-depth interview that was conducted with a 35-year-old female fish trader:

P: [Laughs] for us to start seeing each other, as I was explaining, as you know what happens when you have met and known someone, he was not staying away from here. He was staying just over there [pointing at the houses on the other side of the road towards the lake]. Since we are just close to the road, he was coming to propose to me. We did not start 'kukhalira malo amodzi' [literally spending time together, the reference is

usually to having sex] as soon as we knew each other. A considerable period of time passed before we started spending time together.

Therefore I feel that on balance using the RAs to conduct both the methods and the transcription enhanced the quality of the data collection and the analysis.

4.10.2 Framework approach

Data analysis was informed by the framework approach to qualitative research (Ritchie, Spencer et al. 2003). The framework approach provides a systematic structure for analysis of qualitative data using both inductive and deductive approaches (Ritchie, Spencer et al. 2003). I also chose the approach because the research assistants were familiar with it, having received training in it with the MAFESSTA study, and this allowed them to be involved in the analysis process. Analysis began at the beginning of the data collection and continued throughout the data collection. A key aspect of this was discussion with the research assistants about emerging themes. Following each period of observation, interview, FGD and PW the research team met to discuss the transcripts, noting all emerging themes. Following this, we updated discussion guides and adapted the sampling frame to ensure that all emerging themes were covered.

The framework approach involved five stages – familiarisation, identifying a thematic framework, indexing the data, charting and mapping and interpreting (Pope, Ziebland et al. 2000, Ritchie, Spencer et al. 2003). I began with familiarising myself with the data through reading all the transcripts and field

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notes noting key ideas and recurrent themes. Once I had developed a list I discussed this with the research assistants and asked them to add any themes that they felt may have been missed. From the initial familiarisation I developed a thematic framework. For the thematic framework I drew both inductively from the data and deductively from the research questions and discussion guides. To index the data I then imported all the transcripts and field notes into Nvivo 9 to apply the thematic framework to the data. For the charting of the data, I arranged the data according to the appropriate part of the framework they related to. I charted a number of themes including responses about the types of transactional sex as well as the drivers for involvement. This allowed me to map the range of views present in the data. The charts also distilled data and summarised people's views about different themes. To provide a full account of how I undertook the analysis in [Appendix D](#) I have included the thematic framework and an example of how I used charting.

The final stage of data analysis was mapping and interpretation of the data. Drawing on the charts I defined concepts and mapped the range and nature of the phenomena. This allowed me to identify associations between the themes and provided explanations for the findings. The mapping and interpretation stage was both deductive drawing on the original study objectives and inductive drawing on the themes that had emerged from the data.

Throughout each step of data analysis, I looked for 'negative cases' that offered alternative interpretations and considered their implications for the analysis that I

had developed (Patton 1990, Mason 2000). The participatory workshops were also used as a way of checking the study findings and to allow participants to challenge the findings. Additionally, participant checking is also being used as a quality assurance mechanism (Pretty 1993).

4.10.3 Analysis workshop

An analysis workshop was held in Liverpool in May 2012 to provide further interrogation of the results. Participants in the workshop included senior social scientists and PhD students (both Malawian and British). During this workshop I presented the different steps of my analysis process to the group. This included a discussion of my thematic framework as well as my overall findings. Through this process the group asked questions and challenged interpretations.

4.10.4 Discussion and presentation of findings

In the three results chapters (Chapter 5, 6 & 7) I present the discussion of findings in two ways. Firstly I present a discussion of the different themes and the context in which transactional sex took place within the villages. I also constructed case studies from the interviews to provide illustration, detail and contextualisation of the drivers and facilitators for different groups participating in transactional sex. This method has often been used in the field of anthropology and an example of this is presented in this paper (Seeley, Tumwekwase et al. 2009).

4.11 Reflexivity

Green and Thorogood (2009) state that at its essence, the principle of reflexivity is about a researcher subjecting their own research practice to the same critical analysis that they deploy when studying their own research topic. They argue that part of reflexivity should be answering the question as to why it was possible to ask the research questions at that particular point in time (Green and Thorogood 2009: 23). By addressing this question the researcher is acknowledging how the broader social and political context is likely to have shaped the research.

HIV is a topic within international public health that has received a large amount of funding, both internationally and nationally in countries with high prevalence levels. As I discussed in the literature review, in the past two decades there has been a growing interest in gender power relations and the role they play in shaping the vulnerability and risk of individuals and communities. This has led to numerous calls by international institutions including the UN and DFID to provide more empirical data on how gender power relations shape the HIV epidemic.

While the development of these research objectives did come organically through discussions with the MAFESSTA study research team, these research objectives have also been shaped by this wider literature and broader policy context. Green and Thorogood (2009) see the second level of reflexivity that is required for rigorous qualitative research is more personal and involves reflecting on the role the researcher plays in generating the data. According to the authors this is to attempt to "account explicitly for the fact that data are 'produced' rather than merely collected" (Green and Thorogood 2009: 25).

Throughout this thesis I have deliberately used the active voice. This is because I believe, we (I and the research assistants) who conducted this research were active participants in the designing, collecting, analysing, interpreting and writing of the research (Malterud 2001).

My background as a white British feminist who had previously studied and worked on gender and health issues shaped the way I designed and implemented the study. However, I tried to remain open to other and unexpected issues that were likely to arise from the research. While the initial sample frame that was developed included more female groups, it became apparent early from the interviews and observations that the term fisherman actually described a wide number of roles within the industry. Therefore we expanded the number of groups that we interviewed and included in the FGDs and PWs. My outsider status also provided me with an opportunity to probe both the RAs and community members about different aspects that had not been noted previously. One example of this is that there had been very little previous discussion with the MAFESSTA project that the dominant tribes involved in fishing were the Tonga and Tumbuka. When I asked about this, one of the RAs said that this was something that they all knew and hadn't thought to mention. Of course it is important to note that there must have been many instances when I did not fully understand the cultural context but I do feel my outsider status did allow me to ask questions that may not have been tolerated from other community members within the communities.

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The people who lived in the study villages were extremely poor and very few participants we interacted with had completed secondary-level education (most had failed to complete primary school). There was therefore a social distance that existed between the research participants and us the research team. As a team we tried to reflect often on this social distance and took steps to try and minimise this. Whenever we were invited to, we ate meals at the houses of the community members. We also took steps to wear clothes that were similar to those that the research participants wore. Of course it was impossible to completely overcome this social distance and therefore we discussed the data often and tried as a group to reflect on where this may have had an impact.

One issue that I found challenging was using my car to access the field sites (particularly Village 2). Victoria, Lawrence and I began by using bicycle taxis and a pick up. However, as we were working during the wet season the roads became increasingly difficult to navigate. Malawi also faced chronic fuel shortages meaning that pick up trucks were travelling the routes that we were taking less and less frequently. Given this challenges, I used my 4x4 vehicle to access the villages. Using this mode of transport was likely to increase the social distance between the community members and the research team. However, given the access issues and the time constraints I felt this was the best option for accessing the villages. We also provided community members with transport when they asked. This provided us with an opportunity for more informal discussions and the consequent building of rapport with different community members.

There are a large number of NGOs working within Malawi and one of my initial concerns was that we would raise participants' expectations that we would be providing material support to the communities. I was very careful to explain that we were not going to be undertaking an intervention but were rather asking community members about their lives. I was particularly mindful of this during the PWs. There were however a number of times when community members approached us for help, particularly when they had questions about HIV. On one occasion, the guardians of an orphaned child had been struggling to access ARVs for the child at the local clinic. As Lawrence had previously worked as a VCT counsellor within the Malawian public health system, he accompanied the guardians to the clinic and helped them to access the treatment. I provided the money for the transport for both Lawrence and the family. These episodes highlighted the challenges that the community faced in accessing treatment but also ethical challenges that field workers face when working in extremely poor environments with limited access to medical facilities.

4.12 Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the College of Medicine Research Ethics Committee, Malawi and the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM) Research Ethics Committee (the approval letter for the ethics have been attached in [Appendix E](#)). Permission to work in the district and villages was also provided by the Chiefs of both villages as well as district level representatives.

4.12.1 Informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individuals participating in the interviews, FGDs and PWs. This was provided either in a written form for the participants who were literate, or with a thumbprint for those who were illiterate. I have attached the two information sheets and consent forms we used in [Appendix F](#) and [Appendix G](#). We used different consent forms for the FGDs and PWs than the IDIs. This was because confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in a group discussion environment. The age at which an individual is deemed able to give informed consent in Malawi is 15 years. We only involved participants over the age of 15 in the different methods.

4.12.2 Confidentiality

Throughout this thesis I have replaced the names of the study villages. The name of the district and the names of the areas close by have remained. I have removed the village names to ensure the privacy and anonymity of the study participants. Also to ensure confidentiality of the study participants, we used codes instead of names in all the transcripts and records that we kept. We stored all tapes, transcripts and consent forms in a secure cabinet as well as on a password protected computer. Access to these materials was limited to the research team.

In the focus groups and participatory workshops we could not guarantee confidentiality to all participants because of the public nature of the discussions. However, the RAs did remind the participants at the beginning and the end of the discussions about keeping what was said during the discussions confidential. The RAs also received training on confidentiality and the importance of keeping

everything the participants discussed confidential. The RAs had all previously worked in health research and understood the importance of maintaining participants' confidentiality.

4.12.3 Risks and benefits to participants and community

By asking questions about sexual behaviour such as transactional sex, HIV and contraceptive use we were asking people about intimate aspects of their lives. We also asked about experiences of violence. To minimise the potential upset the participants may have felt, I provided training on sensitive questioning. We also followed the 1999 WHO guidelines for addressing ethical and safety issues in gender based violence research (Ellsberg and Heise 2002). In accordance with these guidelines we only asked one woman per household about violence to avoid alerting other women who may communicate the nature of the study back to potential abusers.

The interviews and focus groups did not last more than 3 hours. We did not offer compensation to participants in line with procedures of the MAFESSTA study. However, we did provide all participants with drinks and snacks during the IDIs and focus group discussions. As the PWs took a whole day we provided participants with drinks, snacks and lunch.

4.13 Conclusion

In the previous chapter I provide an in-depth discussion of the context in which the research was conducted. In this chapter I aimed to provide a full account of how and why this research study was conducted. Drawing on Kitto and colleagues (2008) framework for assessing quality in qualitative research I have presented a full account of the research methodology. I discuss the methods used, why they were selected and the process of analysis. I discussed the epistemological underpinning of the research and how this informed the data collection. I also discussed reflexivity within the research process and documented the procedural rigour reflecting on the dilemmas I faced in the data collection process. I return to the concepts of transferability and generalizability in Chapter 8. In the following three chapters I present the empirical findings of the study.

5 “You force yourself to have a relationship so that you can buy fish easily.” Gender, fish and power: understanding drivers of transactional sex in Southern Malawi

5.1 Introduction

In the previous three chapters I have provided a comprehensive discussion of the theoretical basis of this research, an in-depth review of the literature relating to the research topic and a detailed description of the study villages, including the methods used in this study. In the following three chapters I present the empirical findings from the research. Throughout, the presentation of the findings I address the four key research objectives that I laid out in Chapter 1. The research objectives were:

- (1) To understand gender power relations in fishing communities in Southern Malawi;
- (2) To explore and document the key drivers and facilitators of participation in transactional sex in the study villages;
- (3) To document individual and community perceptions of HIV risk and transactional sex in the study villages;
- (4) To develop a HIV prevention strategy to address HIV/AIDS among the fishing communities in southern Lake Malawi

In this chapter I focus on gender power relations and how their operation within the villages shapes different groups' participation in transactional sex. In Chapter 6, I present findings around understandings of HIV risk and discuss areas for intervention identified during the participatory workshops. In Chapter 7, I explore microfinance, its presence within the study communities and how its administration and use by female fish traders shaped their vulnerability and resilience to HIV.

In this chapter I present empirical findings around two themes:

- (1) the highly gendered context of fishing communities and how this shaped participation in transactional sex
- (2) the key drivers and facilitators of engagement in transactional sex and how they are mediated by economic need, social position, gender roles and gender relations

I structure the chapter in the following way. In Section 5.2, I discuss the highly gendered context of the two fishing communities. In Sections 5.3 and Section 5.4 I explore how prevailing social norms and power relations influence relations and the different roles men and women perform within the two villages. In these sections (5.3. and 5.4.) I present illustrative case studies to provide a more in-depth and nuanced understanding of the drivers for participation of different groups working in the fishing communities. In Section 5.5, I discuss the different forms of transactional sex that occurred in the villages and how economic need,

social position and gender roles and relations that existed within the villages shaped motivations.

The dominant form of fishing within the two study villages was *kauni*. *Kauni* was used predominately to catch *usipa* fish. This type of small-scale fishing required an engine boat, 3-4 canoes, lanterns and nets and took place at night. Throughout this chapter, unless otherwise stated, I am referring to this form of fishing.

5.2 Gender and the fishing industry

In the two study villages, we found a strong gendered division of labour. Within households, women were predominantly responsible for domestic work. This included water and firewood collection, cleaning and washing of clothes, cooking and taking care of the children and sick relatives. Girls and boys were socialised early to this division of labour with, girls helping their female relatives with these tasks. Men were predominately responsible for providing economically for the household, although women in fishing communities frequently discussed how they would have to find the money to provide for the basic needs of the household members. In women headed households, often the poorest, women had to undertake domestic work as well as provide for the economic needs of the household. In this group, younger girls would assist in the domestic work.

Household division of labour was reflected in the fishing industry, where it was more pronounced. Participants clearly articulated that the physical activity of

fishing was a man's role. Both male and female participants felt women were incapable of undertaking fishing. This was because they were seen as lacking physical strength to conduct the fishing activities (both pulling the nets and paddling the canoes). Participants also felt that women's participation in fishing was unnatural and their presence on fishing boats would be unseemly. One female participant discussed the case of a woman moving from Nkhotakota (in the central region of Malawi) to Village 2 village. She had become a member of a boat crew and had undertaken fishing expeditions. However, the Chief had intervened to prevent her from fishing because it was perceived to be indecent for a woman to take part in fishing around men who were wearing very little clothing. This was the only participant who discussed this case and it was unclear whether the event actually happened. However, what the case does illustrate is the entrenched gendered roles within the community and how these were reinforced by the political system.

Women's roles were concentrated in the processing and selling of fish, particularly of *usipa*, a smaller fish. Men undertook fishing and selling of the catch. Women had to negotiate access to fish through men. With this division of labour men had control of the means of production and women were left to negotiate their access through men.

Inside and outside the fishing industry the gendered division of labour limited women's livelihood options and provided more economic power to men. However, this was not the complete picture. We also found that there were divisions

between different groups of men and women and those were characterised by age and socio-economic position. Younger, poorer men undertook the physical labour of fishing, but older and wealthier men who owned the boats gained the most economically from fishing expeditions. There were also gradations of power that shaped different women's position: wealthier and better socially-connected women gained more from the fishing industry because they were able to secure fish and capital to trade fish on a larger scale. Whereas poorer less well socially-connected women struggled more to access capital and fish.

In the following discussion of the different roles that men and women occupied, I explore these divisions in more detail. However, this is an important illustration of how gendered power relations do not simply shape relationships between men and women, but they also structure relationships between different groups of men and different groups of women.

5.3 Men's roles in the fishing industry

Through observation and discussions with key informants, we identified a range of roles that men and women occupied in the villages. For men working in the fishing industry, these roles included:

- boat crew members
- boat managers
- fish traders
- boat owners.

In the following section, I provide further details about these roles and which groups occupied them.

5.3.1 Boat owners

Boat owners were men who were viewed as having a high standing in their communities. Boat owners tended to be older, married, predominantly from the Tonga or Tumbuka tribe (which often meant they, or their parents, had migrated to the village from the Central and Northern Regions) and were more economically secure. They were able to purchase an engine boat and all the equipment required to undertake fishing expeditions including nets, canoes and paraffin lamps. This cost approximately 1 million Malawi Kwacha¹² or UK £4400. Boat owners usually accessed this capital through loans, funds from other businesses or through family members.

Boat owners' position in the fishing industry meant that they gained the most profits from the fishing activities on the boat. In Village 1 boat owners usually owned 1 or 2 boats whereas in Village 2 boat owners often owned 4 or 5 boats. Boat owners carried the most financial risk, particularly if there was a problem with the boat, or if the boat crew were unable to catch fish during expeditions. Boat owners infrequently went onto the Lake to fish (particularly if they owned more than one boat) and instead employed younger, less economically secure men to undertake the fishing. Therefore their roles as boat owners required less travel

¹² This calculation was made in 2011 prior to the devaluation of the kwacha

than other roles within the fishing industry. Their economic position made them attractive sexual partners.

5.3.2 Boat managers

Boat managers were men who were employed by the boat owners to manage the boat and fishing activities. Boat managers tended to be younger men, predominantly from the Tumbuka or Tonga tribes and sometimes related to the boat owner. They were responsible for the day-to-day operations of the boat and ensuring there was sufficient fuel for the fishing expeditions, as well as paraffin to light the lanterns that were used for night fishing. They established and managed relationships with successful fish traders (both male and female) to help fund fishing expeditions.

Boat manager also managed the fishing expeditions when the crew were away from their home sites. One of their key roles was selling the fish catch and managing the money from the sales. The role of selling the catch meant that the boat owner trusted them. It also made them desirable sexual partners, particularly for female fish traders who were trying to secure access to fish in a highly competitive environment.

5.3.3 Boat crew members

The boat crew members were employed to conduct fishing. Fishing expeditions took place at night and boat crew members faced difficult working conditions and

physical danger during these expeditions. If the boats encountered problems with the engine or if they developed leaks because of lack of maintenance, the boat could take in a lot of water making it difficult to navigate. In this situation the crew could struggle to get back to the shore and would have to wait to be rescued. Adverse weather conditions, particularly high winds, also meant that the boat crews risked drowning.

Boat crews normally comprised ten members, with eight of these being younger men aged between 15 and 25. The younger group of men frequently migrated into the villages (although some were born and lived in the villages). While boat crew members came from a range of tribes, the two tribes which dominated were the Tonga and Tumbuka. Barriers to entry to becoming a boat crew member were low because this role did not require money or any educational qualifications. Therefore boat crew members were often the youngest and the most socially marginalised in the community.

Boat crew members frequently came from poor families and did not have access to economic resources to enable them to trade fish on a large scale, or own fishing equipment or boats. Few boat crew members had completed school and, in rural Mangochi, there were few alternative livelihood options, particularly for those who did not have access to land. Most of the boat crew members had grown up along the lakeshore and were exposed to the industry from an early age.

The younger men within the boat crews often tried to combine fishing with paying for school or financially supporting their families. Male and female participants noted that once younger men began fishing intensely they rarely completed school. The man in the following quote provides a fairly typical discussion of how and why boys became involved in fishing activities while they are still at school.

“The small boys who manage to continue with school are those who come from well to do families. Their parents prevent them from taking part in fishing because they provide for their needs. Those who do fishing and school at the same time come from poor families. They may have fees problems and in the process of looking for fees they end up dropping from school.” FGD, male fish trader/boat crew member, 30-year-old, Tumbuka, married, dropped out at Standard 6,

This quote provides a good illustration of how poverty, particularly for younger boys, shaped involvement in fishing and how this involvement in turn prevented them from completing school, resulting in fewer livelihood options. It also shows that boys from poorer households were more likely to be involved in fishing from a young age. The majority of boat crew members came from poorer households. In focus group discussions, the participants also discussed how younger men dropped out or struggled with school due to exhaustion from fishing expeditions. Others stopped attending because they enjoyed earning money and did not feel that school offered them any additional opportunities.

There was also a strong feeling voiced by participants that younger boys growing up along the lakeshore did not feel they needed to go to or complete school. This was because they could earn money from fishing without any educational qualification. Older men who were able to earn money without completing school reinforced these views. Young boys were also able to experience this first hand by undertaking small jobs for the boat crews such as scooping water from the boat or helping with the nets before or after fishing expeditions. These roles were undertaken by boys as young as eight and they would be given a small amount of fish or money for their labour. Some poorer families encouraged their sons to undertake this work from a young age. More economically secure households tended to try and encourage their sons to remain in school. However, this did not always work with some younger boys citing dropping out of school against their parents advice.

The boat crew members were paid daily in cash while this depended on the catch and their position in the boat it could be upwards of £10 per day. In these communities, few other livelihoods provided such relatively large sums of money daily. Many participants (both male and female) discussed how access to this money could shape men's behaviour. Men felt that this daily money made them desirable sexual partners, particularly for poorer women within the village and they discussed how women would seek them out for material gain. Boat crew members also used this money for having sex with bar workers and for drinking in bars. There was a strong perception within the community that boat crews did not save their money. The ready availability of money fuelled a culture of spending rather than saving and the community members viewed the boat crew members as

squandering money on bar workers or alcohol and not using it in their homes. As many participants noted, while there was sometimes a readily available supply of money, this was influenced by the fluctuations in fish catches and boat crew members could quickly struggle to find money.

Boat crew members were highly mobile and travelled both to access work and to undertake fishing expeditions. Men could be away from home for weeks, and sometimes months, at a time on fishing expeditions. Being away from home for long periods of time provided men with the opportunity to have sexual partners that their wives or girlfriends did not know about. The distances boat crew members travelled depended on the availability of fish. If fish was difficult to find, the boat crews would travel longer distances to where there had been reports of higher fish catches. They would land the boat and sell the catch on the fish landing sites closest to the fishing expedition. This could be up to 100km away from their home villages. It was widely accepted by both male and female participants that men had a biological need for sex and having additional sexual partners and while boat crew members were away from home, was seen as a natural way of fulfilling this need. In the quote below a participant who worked in a bar in Village 1 describes this:

P1: I just want to add that it is not only the Chewa that find other women when far away from home, even the fishermen do the same, fishermen from other fishing villages come here to camp for more than a month when there is high fish catches, and they can't live this whole period without having sex FGD, Chewa, bar tender, 29-years-old, married, dropped out of school in Form 2

When boat crews travelled, they often-encountered difficult living situations, sleeping either in cramped rented accommodation, rest houses – if they were available – or on the beach under fish drying racks. During the rainy season this was particularly difficult as boat crews only had plastic bags or tarpaulin to protect them from the elements. As fishing often took place at night, boat crew members had erratic sleep patterns as they would have to sleep on the beach, often in the daylight hours.

These difficult living situations often influenced their decision about paying for sex. Two of the boat crew members we interviewed discussed having sex with bar workers after fishing as a way to warm themselves after fishing. Paying for sex, both with local women as well as bar workers, may have been a way for boat crew members to seek physical comfort. This was articulated in the quote below:

I also want to add on that, even those couples who trust each other, some men say they cannot work without having an affair with a woman, they say “mankhwala atchito” [meaning a form of medication for your job], and because they sleep in the open space where they catch cold at night and this probably encourages them to find women who they sleep with while there, besides when a man is away from his wife, he is free to indulge in other behaviours FGD, male fish trader, 25-years-old, Chewa, single, dropped out in Form 2

In these living situations boat crew members reported frequently drinking alcohol to excess, and some reported experiencing violence from other boat crew members, particularly those older than themselves. Older boat crew members discussed physically disciplining younger boat crew members. In the quote below a boat crew member discusses this violence and how the violence was often shaped by alcohol consumption:

That is beer, because at that time they don't know what they are doing yes, normal persons can not quarrel on petty issues, this all starts because of the influence of beer, they are small issues which could end by contact and dialogue, even salt starts quarrels, when one is asking for salt and the other is delaying passing on to the other eventually a slap comes.” IDI, boat crew member, 23-years-old, Yao, married, dropped out of school in Primary Standard 7

All groups of participants discussed how the fishing industry had changed over time. Participants discussed how the past decade had seen a rapid expansion in the number of engine boats operating in the two villages, which in turn had led to, increased competition for fish and a negative impact on the availability of fish. The limited availability of fish also meant that boat crews had to travel further distances to locate fish. When the boat crews found an area that had plenty of fish, they would remain in the area for longer periods of time leading to prolonged absences from home and this often meant men would engage in transactional sex.

There were variations both within months, and from season-to-season as to when fishing expeditions could take place. As paraffin lamps were used to attract the fish to the surface, fishing expeditions would only take place when there was little light from the moon. Weather conditions also influenced the timing of fishing trips and during periods of strong winds (often in the winter months July and August) and during the wet season (November, December and January) as when there were bad storms, the lake was too dangerous for fishermen to go out.

When questioned about whether they wanted their children to follow them into the fishing industry none of the men who worked as boat crew members said they wanted this. In the two quotes below boat crew members articulate why they felt this way.

R: no, because I know how painful this job is

I: how painful is the job?

R: Fishing work is one of the most difficult jobs, we work throughout the night until dawn, we can work without any sleep for a whole month, yes that is how painful it is. IDI, siginala/boat crew member, 26-year-old, Tonga, married, dropped out of school in standard 6

R: no, the way I see it fishing is strenuous and you cannot say my children should follow my footsteps no, fishing is like slavery

I: why do you think fishing is like slavery?

R: well, what I mean, is it is not a steady job, fishing is determined by seasonality, you cannot rely on last month's catches and say this month I am going to catch the same, no, nothing of that sort happens, when God blesses us, we are happy that very day and we should wait for tomorrow, fishermen have happy times, yes, but the majority of the time we worry IDI, 28-year-old, boat crew member, Yao, married, never attended school

In both the quotes the men describe how working in the fishing industry could be challenging and very physically demanding, using extremely negative terms such as painful and slavery to describe the experience. This highlights the challenges that men who worked as boat crew members faced when going fishing.

Within the boat crews, there were also two more experienced men who occupied the roles of *siginala*, and “head-of-the-boat”. The term *siginala* is derived from the Chichewa word for “signal” and was given to the fisherman who attracted fish using lamps. This role involved the *siginala* getting out of the engine boat and into a wooden canoe with paraffin lanterns. He used the lights to attract the *usipa* fish and when he saw air bubbles from a shoal of fish, he instructed the boat crew members to cast the net. This role was considered to be the most skilled on the boat, but also the most risky. If there were strong winds the *siginala* could be blown out of the heavy wooden canoe and drown. *Siginala* also carried the financial risk of the fishing expedition because if they were unable to locate *usipa* fish, the fishing expedition failed and the crew did not get paid. To reflect this risk and skill they were paid twice as much as any of the other boat crew members.

The final position within the boat was the “head-of-the-boat” who was part of the boat crew but appointed to take charge of the technical aspects of the fishing when the boat was on the water. He tended to be older and well respected within the group and would maintain order. If boat crew members were not seen to be doing their job correctly, he would discipline them. Some of the participants described how this would be physical, particularly if the boat crew member was young. These two roles highlight how there were hierarchical structures that governed operations in the fishing boats. These tended to reward older and more experienced boat crew members.

5.3.4 Male fish traders

The final key male group were male fish traders. Fish traders, like boat crew members, often came from the Tonga or Tumbuka tribe. Male fish traders often combined working as boat crew members with fish trading as a way of earning enough capital to trade fish. Some male fish traders had grown up away from the lake and therefore did not have sufficient experience of fishing to become a boat crew member. If fish traders had not grown up by the lake, their entry into the industry was commonly supported by loans from microfinance organisations or capital provided by family members. Men who had not grown up tended to be drawn into the industry by the financial gains that could be made, particularly when trading fresh fish.

While female fish traders dominated the selling of the smaller *usipa* fish, male fish traders dominated the selling of the larger, more profitable fish such as

chambo and *Bombay*. This was because purchasing the larger fish ¹³ required the men to paddle canoes to meet boats or wade into the water. As women were not allowed to paddle canoes and it was viewed as unseemly for women to lift their skirts to wade out into the water, this often prevented women from meeting boats further from the shore. Selling larger fish also required access to refrigeration and good social networks to sell the fish quickly. Refrigeration and the initial outlay to buy fresh fish required much larger capital than purchasing smaller fish such as *usipa*. As this female participant noted in a focus group discussion:

R1: Fresh fish needs many things like ice blocks, hiring a car with a lot of money and they also have some people whom they use to buy the fish casual labours, they also know where to trade the fish in advance, women fail due to limited capital and knowledge, there are some who are wise and are succeeding in their business while some are not wise enough, they do not know where to trade, buy ice blocks, she doesn't have fish carrying tins, she also does not have boys to carry the fish hence she just stays. FGD, female fish trader, 39, Yao, married, dropped out of school in Standard 8

The barriers women faced highlight the structural factors within the fishing industry that prevented women from increasing their income as fish traders or even competing equally with men.

¹³ Chambo is a large cichlid fish that is popular in Malawi. In the past Malawi used to export large quantities of Chambo but following the collapse of the fish stocks it is now only sold within Malawi. Bombay is a type of large catfish

Like the boat crew members, male fish traders were also highly mobile, often meeting the boat crews when they landed at beaches away from their home villages. They also travelled to sell fish, both to larger urban centres and at markets. While male fish traders didn't always face the same physical risks as the boat crew members (although some did combine fish trading with working as a boat crew member) their work meant they were often away from home for long periods of time often sleeping in difficult conditions especially when accessing fish. Like boat crew members, there was a general acceptance that men had a biological need for sex and transactional sex was a way of fulfilling this when they travelled away from home. While not all male fish traders reported engaging in transactional sex some of the fish traders did talk openly about paying women for sex. Like boat crew members this often took place in the bars after drinking excessively or at the market when they were away from home. Fish traders also talked about being viewed as desirable sexual partners by women, particularly when they went to the market. This was because their economic position meant women hoping to gain economically from such encounters sought them out.

I have constructed a case study below of an older male fish trader. I have included this case study as his life provides a good illustration of how male fish traders entered into the fishing industry and reflects how behaviour might change over time.

Patrick's case study

Patrick¹⁴ was a 50-year-old male fish trader. We conducted the interview with Patrick in Village 2, but his homestead was in the Salima district where he lived with his wife and relatives. He spent long periods of time in Village 2 because this where he had the best networks for buying fish.

Patrick was originally from the Tonga tribe in Nkhata Bay and was a member of the Assemblies of God Church. He spent periods of his childhood in various locations in Lilongwe, relocating regularly for his father's work as a builder. Patrick described his father as a 'womanizer' and said his mother grew tired of this behaviour and she left him. Patrick's parents separated while he was in primary school because of this behaviour. Following his parent's separation Patrick went to live with his paternal grandparents in the Salima district. He described having a close relationship with his paternal grandfather and describing how his grandfather loved him, despite his father no longer wanting him.

Before the Malawian government made primary school education free in 1994, primary school children had to pay to attend school. Patrick attended primary school before 1994 and therefore had to pay school fees. When he moved to live with his grandparents they were unable to pay the school fees so he dropped out.

Reflecting the experiences of other male fish traders, Patrick worked in another job before joining the fishing industry. This was often the case for participants who had grown up away from the lake. In Patrick's case he trained and worked as a welder in Lilongwe and Rumphu (in the Northern Region) for a number of years before returning to live with his relatives in the Salima District. Livelihoods in the Salima District, like the Mangochi district, were heavily reliant on the fishing industry. Patrick began fish trading because his relatives were fish traders and he learnt the trade from them.

¹⁴ All the names used in the case studies are fictional

When Patrick returned to Salima District he met his first wife through relatives and they had three children together. Patrick travelled throughout the Southern Region both to buy fish at the lake and sell the fish at markets, distances of between 100 and 200kms. Because of this he spent prolonged periods of time away from his wife.

Patrick reflected on his younger self and described drinking to excess and sleeping with other women when he travelled. Fifteen years ago while buying fish he met a female fish trader in Village 2. He described how he admired her and decided to leave his first wife for her. She was a female fish trader and like many other female fish traders in Village 2, she had begun selling fish to support herself and her two children following the break up of her marriage.

Patrick said that as a Malawian man he had more power over his wife and said she accepted his decision to marry another woman but asked that he continue to economically support the family. He said he left his first wife with his family and throughout his second marriage regularly returned to see his first wife and their children.

He did not have children with his second wife and described the second marriage as turbulent and he said he had other sexual relationships with female fish traders and sex with bar workers in the bars during this relationship. He also described drinking to excess during these years. While he was with his second wife Patrick had a longer term sexual relationship with another female fish trader whom he met while selling fish at the market and he described staying with her when he went to sell fish. He discussed providing economically for his first, his second wife and his partner in the longer term relationship because women have to rely on their partners for their material needs.

Patrick discussed a turning point in his life. After ten years of living separately from his first wife he decided to return to living with her. He said his focus was now on providing for his children's education and supporting his wife. He said he no longer drank and spent his money at home rather than in the bar. During the

interviews we did not ask directly about participants' HIV status however, Patrick openly discussed being positive. He said he was positive because of drinking excessively and going out with many women. He said his first wife was also positive and he suspected that the women whom he had a longer term sexual relationship (while he was with his second wife) had died of HIV.

Constructed from an in-depth interview

Patrick's case highlights the high levels of mobility male fish traders undertook for their work. Travelling for work provided fish traders with an opportunity to have extra-marital affairs. It also highlights the role alcohol played in shaping transactional sex with Patrick discussing how he regularly paid women for sex after drinking to excess. Patrick provided economic support to the women in his more permanent sexual relationships, highlighting that this was often an expectation even in non-formal longer term relationships. Finally the case study demonstrates how men's behaviour may change with age. As he got older, his desire to drink and sleep with women seemed to diminish. Instead he returned to his first wife and discussed how now his focus was on ensuring all his children completed school.

Summary of men's roles in fishing industry

As seen from the above discussion, the roles that men occupied in the fishing industry depended on a number of factors including their age, socio-economic position and the amount of experience they had in the fishing industry. The roles that men undertook within the industry in turn shaped a number of aspects of their lives, including exposure to occupational risks, mobility, economic remuneration

and standing within the community. In this context younger poorer men occupied roles with the highest levels of occupational risk, mobility and the least economic remuneration. These factors in turn often influenced their sexual behaviour and alcohol consumption that increased vulnerability to HIV.

The term “fishermen” therefore did not refer to a homogenous group, but instead had a range of meanings that was often typified by hierarchical structures and for some groups more social marginalisation. Interventions to prevent HIV with these communities need to draw and address these different social dynamics.

5.4 Women’s roles in the fishing industry

The female groups working in the fishing environment included: female fish traders (both those who traded large and small amounts); women who sold cooked food to fishermen (*mayi phikani*); and beer brewers. Female bar workers were also present in the villages. These were women who worked in bars and whose primary source of income was from selling sex to the customers in the bar.

5.4.1 Female fish traders

Women dominated the *usipa* fish trade. As discussed earlier *usipa* is a small fish and the profits realised were smaller than those for larger fish such as *chambo* or *bombay*. However, the barriers of entry for this type of fish trading were much lower than larger fish trading with women simply requiring a small amount of money for business capital to enter the industry.

Participants described two types of *usipa* fish trading: small-and larger-scale trading. The two principal differences between these types of fish trading were the amount of fish women bought and the distances they travelled to sell the fish. Participants used the term *kamtutteni* to refer to women who engaged in small-scale fish trading. The term derives from '*kututa*', which means placing something on your head and was used to describe the practice of women selling small amounts of fish in the community from basins that they carried on their heads. Women who practiced *kamtutteni* rarely travelled either to purchase or sell the fish. They instead processed (through drying on raised racks or par-boiling the fish) or sold the fish fresh in their local area. These women often combined small-scale fish trading with other income generation activities, such as the collection of firewood from the hills surrounding the villages, or from farming. The women engaging in this form of trading rarely realised large profits from fish trading and the women clustered in this role were often among the poorest in the community.

The second group of women involved in the fishing industry were large-scale fish traders. Key informants identified these women as those who were able to buy much larger quantities of fish. They purchased fish either at the landing sites located within the villages, or travelled to other landing sites. They often followed the engine boats from their home villages to buy and process fish from fishermen they had a relationship with – either financial or familial. If they purchased fish in villages away from their home village, then they would stay until they had processed the fish. This involved rental, or sometimes transportation, of fish drying benches to the beaches where fish was landed. During these trips women could stay up to a month or two away from home, sending money home with

other fish traders to support their children, or returning periodically to leave money. The living conditions were difficult. If female fish traders had relatives in the villages they would stay with them; if not, they, like the boat crew members, slept on the beach under fish-drying benches.

In the following quote a 37-year-old divorced female fish trader from Village 2 described how challenging it could be for fish traders buying fish and provides a typical description of where most female fish traders slept when they went to buy fish:

I: Where do you sleep when you go to buy fish from the places you mentioned?

P: That's where we really have challenges. We sleep in very difficult situations. We sleep under a drying rack like the one over there [points at a drying rack outside her house]. We make tents under the drying racks and sleep there. IDI, female fish trader, 37-year-old, Tonga, divorced (for a second time), dropped out of school in standard 8

The female fish traders sold the fish either within their home villages, at the landing sites where they travelled to buy and process the fish, or at markets up to 250kms away, staying for up to two weeks at the markets.

Women's entry into both types of fish trading was often facilitated by family members who taught them how to process and sell the fish. In the following quote a 34-year-old fish trader describes how she became involved in fish trading.

I am agreeing with her, that in the fish trading business we do not consider the age, to my side I can say that I started to be involved in fish trading when I was 8 years old, because I was emulating my mother who is a fish trader she was taking me to the market, after selling fish we were coming back home together FGD, female fish trader, 34-year-old, Chewa, married, dropped out primary school standard 5

This quote represents a fairly typical description of how women entered the fish trading industry. It also echoes the experiences of young men joining the fishing industry through gaining exposure and experience at a young age, often from other family members.

Female fish traders who traded fish on a larger scale tended to be older, from the Tumbuka or Tonga tribes and were often connected to the fishing industry either through their husbands or other family members. Poorer fish traders often began trading fish locally but if they were able to increase their capital they would move to buying and selling fish in larger quantities further away from home. Therefore, to trade fish on a larger scale, women had to have good social or economic connections and for this reason, it was usually wealthier women who traded on a larger scale.

Usipa fish traders (both small and large scale) often faced a number of challenges in their work. To purchase fish they needed to maintain their business capital and

their social connections. All female participants interviewed discussed gaining and maintaining their business capital as a daily struggle. The following quote represents a typical way in which female fish traders articulated this challenge.

the only problem that I experience is lack of capital. You can't do anything without problem. For us who are living in extended families we need to support the whole family from the little capital so we experience a lot of problems. When you have a big capital you have big profits. IDI, female fish trader, 32-year-old, Tumbuka, married for a second time, dropped out of school in primary Standard 5

Processing *usipa* fish usually involved either drying the fish in the sun or through par-boiling (boiling the fish to soften it). In the wet season drying fish could be very challenging because of the heavy rain and lack of sunlight. A 17-year-old female fish trader, who worked in the fish trade with her grandmother following the death of both her parents, discussed this challenge.

I: what aspect do you take in your life to be risky?

R: to me the rainy season is the riskiest aspect of my life. We lose a lot of money because when we buy usipa and we put it on our drying benches it ends up going bad because of the rain. There are some days we experience rain throughout the day that makes us lose all the fish that we have bought, IDI, female fish trader, 17-year-old, Chewa, in a relationship, dropped out in primary standard 8

The Southern area of Lake Malawi, where fishing activities were intensively conducted, was geographically large and densely populated. There were a large number of villages that were heavily involved in *usipa* fishing. Fishing was also conducted in the Lower Shire valley, as well as Lake Chilwa. If there had been heavy fish catches this could affect the price that could be obtained at the market. Female fish traders in the study villages described how there were sometimes shortages of fish in their home districts and they had to compete with other fish traders to buy fish and this competition would drive the price up. Once the fish traders arrived at the market they found that the price was lower than the one they had paid because they had been catches in other bodies of water that had increased supply and driven down the price. This would lead to the fish traders making a loss and their capital could be completely wiped out. If this happened poorer fish traders would have to rebuild their capital again. To do this they would either need to identify new sources of money, or begin again by trading smaller amounts of fish. In the quote below a 29 year old woman provides a typical example of this situation:

R: are there any challenges you encounter in your business?

I: yes, I encounter a lot of problems like fluctuations in price at the market. For example, you buy a 20 litre bucket at K 2000 at the lake when you go to the market you find that the price is K 600 and because a lot of fish traders have come to sell the prices gone down as low as K 200 so in the end you lose capital IDI, female fish trader, 29-year-old, Tonga, married, dropped out at primary school Standard 8

5.4.2 Mayi phikani

In the study villages there were other women whose livelihoods depended on the fishing industry. These included *mayi phikani* (literally translates as woman who cooks), who cooked food (normally *nsima* - the staple meal made of ground maize), for the boat crews and fish traders when they landed the boats on the beach. *Mayi phikani* often travelled to the areas where the boat crews landed their catches. In an interview with a 34-year-old married *mayi phikani* from Village 1, she discussed wanting to work as a fish trader but because she only had a small capital she cooked food for the fishermen. She described how she would go to the lake after midnight to sell the food to the fishermen who were returning from their fishing expeditions.

5.4.3 Female beer brewers

Another key female group identified were female beer brewers. Like the *mayi phikani* they often travelled with the fishermen. The beer brewers brewed two types of beer *chikokeyani* and *kachasu*. *Chikokeyani* beer was a sweet fermented beer brewed from boiling sugar, yeast, brown maize flour and millet flour. *Kachasu* was a spirit similar to gin and was prepared by distilling fermented sugar and maize husk. The beer brewers we interviewed described how fishermen preferred *chikokeyani* because it made them feel physically full. But when beer brewers travelled they sold *kachasu* as it would keep for longer and was more easily transportable. By travelling with the boat crews, the beer brewers ensured that boat crew members had access to alcohol, even in villages where formal bars did not exist. They also sold their beer at much lower costs than bottle bars, meaning that men had access to very cheap alcohol. Like all other groups working in the fishing villages the success of both *mayi phikani* and beer brewers

depended on good fish catches and when boats didn't go out or weren't able to access fish, their business suffered.

5.4.4 Bar workers

There were a large number of bars in both Village 2 and Monkey Bay (3kms from Village 1). The customers of these bars were almost exclusively men and they were populated with a large number of female bar workers. The bars were associated with sexual exchange between bar workers and male patrons. The bar workers received a very small wage for working in the bars and the sexual exchange was their primary source of income. In the community, female bar workers were seen as a homogenous group *muhule* (prostitutes) who spread diseases and broke up marriages. However, the women working in the bars identified themselves as bar workers rather than *muhule*. In the quote below a female bar worker describes the difference between herself and a *muhule*.

Like myself I also work in a bottle store, I don't hang around in streets like a dog with rabies searching for men's penis. I sell beer at the bar and month end I get my salary. Female bar worker, focus group discussion in Monkey Bay

These were a highly mobile group of women who often came to the communities following high fish catches. There were two types of bars in the study communities: *chibuku* and bottle bars. *Chibuku* beer was cheaper than bottled beer and the female bar workers who worked in these bars tended to be poorer, from

within the Mangochi district and made less money from their work. Women who worked in the bottle bars tended to come from outside the district and made more money from their work. The women working in the bottle bars were often hand selected by the bar owners and men discussed how bar owners would select women who were better dressed and considered more beautiful by the men. This group of women would travel to work in Blantyre, Lilongwe, Salima and sometimes into Tanzania and Mozambique.

Bar workers had living quarters within the bars where they stayed, often only temporarily, and had sex with the customers. The female bar workers we interviewed were young, between 17 and 27, and had all joined the sex industry out of economic need. There was no tribe who were dominant in the industry. Their customers were predominantly fishermen – boat crew members or male fish traders – and like other livelihoods in the fishing communities, the seasonal and temporal aspects of the fishing catch influenced how much and when bar workers earned.

Bar workers also reported that travelling to new areas would boost their income. This was because if they were viewed as ‘new’ to the bar, men would compete to have sex with them. Women who worked in bottle beer bars frequently took advantage of this and travelled very frequently. Bar owners also travelled to urban centres to recruit bar workers encouraging them to come to the bars (particularly in Village 2) when fish catches were high. In the periods of high fish catches demand for sex with bar workers outstripped supply.

Economic need was the primary motivation for participation of female bar workers in sex work. This included their own basic needs as well those of their families. Some of the women interviewed talked about going hungry if they did not engage in sex work. Nearly all the women we interviewed entered the industry either due to marital break up or due to the death of a close family member. Reasons for marital breakup included men leaving their wives to work in South Africa and not returning, as well as intimate partner violence. All of the bar workers we interviewed reported experiencing violence on an almost daily basis. This violence ranged from extreme experiences of being raped or attacked in their living quarters to men slapping or shouting at them during their work. Only the most extreme cases of violence were ever reported to the police or the Chief.

In the case study below I have presented the case of a 20-year-old bar worker. Her case provides a good illustration of the drivers for engagement in sex work that were voiced by the other bar workers and the challenges that they encounter in their work.

Peace case study

Peace¹⁵ was 20 years old and was born in the Mwanza district in the Southern region of Malawi. Peace was from the Ngoni tribe and said she no longer believed in God. She was the only person interviewed who said this and, given the deep religious convictions held by most Malawians, this was a very unexpected statement.

By the time Peace was 13, both her parents had died and she described getting married before her breasts were large and she had started to bleed. Peace's husband was a taxi driver and much older than her. She had agreed to marry him because he offered to support her and her younger sister and brother.

During the early years of their marriage Peace said her husband supported her to attend school. This included providing her with groceries so that she could continue to study. In this poor rural setting, where educational attainment was low, Peace was one of the only female participants we interviewed who had attended secondary school. However, she had to drop out of school because her husband withdrew economic support and she was unable to pay the school fees.

Peace felt the problems within her marriage began once she fell pregnant. During her pregnancy her husband demanded to have sex with her sister. When they both refused he started to beat Peace and prevented her from seeing her siblings. She had her baby by caesarean section because she was still very young. She said that after the birth of her child the violence got progressively worse to the extent that her husband knocked out her two front teeth. Peace decided to leave her husband when he wanted to take a second wife. The woman he chose was one of her friends.

After Peace left her husband she felt a strong need to economically support her younger siblings. Without having completed education and without access to land, she had few livelihood options and began working in the sex industry. At the time of the interview she had been working in the sex industry for two years. Like all

¹⁵ All the names used in the case studies are fictional.

the other bar workers we interviewed she was highly mobile and she worked in bars all over Malawi including Karonga District, Lilongwe, Blantyre and Tanzania (these were hundreds of kilometres apart). The primary customers who paid for sex with her were boat crew members and male fish traders. She described sometimes having sex with men younger than herself but this was something she didn't like to do. Peace said the fishermen did not respect her, saying that they did not wash before sex, leaving the stink of fish in her room. Like many of the other bar workers operating in the villages, Peace would come to the village when fish catches were high and demand from men working in the fishing industry was high and leave when fish catches were low.

Peace also discussed another reason why bar workers were highly mobile: they felt that clients often wanted a new bar worker to have sex with. Peace described going to new areas and men would all want to have sex with her. The other bar workers we interviewed also discussed this and would try to capitalise on this by changing their hair and their clothes so that men did not recognise them.

Like all the other bar workers we interviewed, Peace had frequently experienced violence. She described this as being much worse when she first joined the industry. In the early days of her work Peace described being gang raped in Lilongwe. The violence was very extreme and she required medical attention. The incident was reported to the police. She was also beaten and verbally abused by boat crew members during her time at work but this was not reported. In a similar way to the other bar workers who we interviewed, very few of these incidents of violence were reported to police or traditional authorities. Peace felt now she was able to protect herself by discussing the conduct of men in the bars with the other bar workers who were working in the area. If a man had a reputation for being violent or refusing to pay then, the bar workers would tell Peace this information, which enabled her to be more careful about who she slept with.

Peace discussed being fearful of contracting HIV. She had recently been for a HIV test and said that as long as the clinic staff hadn't been lying, she was negative. She described insisting on condom use with all her clients but complained that condoms frequently burst due to the men tampering with them. The tampering with condoms and the fear of them bursting was a concern for all

the bar workers we interviewed. Like other bar workers Peace made a distinction between sex with and without a condom. She felt if you wanted sex to feel good you would have sex without a condom. Other bar workers also articulated, this describing having sex with their boyfriends without condoms as a way to make sex feel good.

Despite the violence Peace had experienced through her involvement in the sex industry, she still felt that she was at more risk during her marriage than she was participating in sex work. She also discussed how sex work had allowed her to economically support her brother to finish school and provide food for her sister. Her sister wanted her to reconcile with her husband because she felt it would be safer work but Peace refused to return to him.

Constructed from an in-depth interview

Peace's case study makes it clear that one of the key drivers for her involvement in the sex industry was intimate partner violence. However, once she had entered the industry she continued to experience violence because of this work. In her work it was often male boat crews and male fish traders who perpetrated the violence against her and other bar workers. These were socially marginalised men who were often living in difficult situations exposed to violence, often fuelled by the ready availability of alcohol and the risks experienced in their work. These aspects of the case study highlight that the broader social environment shaped the risk of violence experienced by bar workers.

The discussion above shows that there were a range of roles that women carried out in connection to the fishing industry. Women's socio-economic position primarily shaped the different livelihood strategies that they undertook. Their

marital status also influenced their socio-economic position, with women who were married to wealthier fishermen or fish traders more able to access capital and fish. Their livelihoods also influenced the amount of travel they undertook, with only small-scale fish traders travelling infrequently. When travelling, they commonly encountered difficult living situations. The seasonal and temporal nature of the fishing industry meant that even wealthier fish traders were frequently economically vulnerable.

5.5 Different types of transactional sex occurring in the fishing communities

Transactional sex was widely reported within the study communities. Members of a wide variety of groups participated in transactional sex and involvement was often shaped by roles undertaken within the fishing industry. The highly gendered context of the study communities broadly, and the fishing industry specifically, also shaped how participants engaged in transactional sex.

In nearly all the accounts of transactional sex, men provided the money or material goods and women were recipients. In only one interview did a male boat crew member discuss receiving money from a female partner. They had previously been in a sexual relationship together and she was now married to a wealthier boat owner. In the interview he did not describe her as a girlfriend (he also had one) but as a sexual partner and someone who he asked for money when he wanted to have sex with bar workers. His livelihood did not depend on the economic relationship.

The following discussion provides more details of the following forms of transactional sex: gift giving in longer term relationships; sex for fish for consumption (sex for relish); sex for fish for sale; transactional sex for money at the market and men having sex with local women or bar workers for money. I have chosen to provide further details on these forms of transactional sex because they were the forms of transactional sex most frequently discussed by participants.

It is important to note that in discussions around transactional sex, none of the female groups (apart from bar workers) discussed engaging in transactional sex in the first person. While they did acknowledge gift giving in longer-term relationships, the exchange of sex for a material good such as fish or money was always discussed in the third person. This discussion in the third person emphasised the fact that women wanted to place distance between themselves and this practice, and showed the socially undesirable nature of transactional sex.

In the male groups boat crew members, boat managers and male fish traders openly discussed paying for sex. When we interviewed boat owners, this group did not openly report their engagement. Younger men reported being “middle men” for boat owners. In this role they would arrange sexual liaisons with fish traders and bar workers for the boat owners. In return they would receive beer or money from the boat owner. This highlights that it was more socially acceptable for men to report engaging in transactional sex than women, but only among certain groups; men who were seen as having a higher standing within the community were less able to discuss their participation in transactional sex.

5.5.1 Gift giving in relationships

Throughout the data collection there was frequent discussion of gift giving within relationships, particularly by younger participants. In these relationships, men would give women small gifts such as money, lotion or clothes. Younger men described how younger women expected this from their sexual partners and that they would end relationships with men if they were unable to provide these things. In the quote below, a 17-year old boy who was still attending school described this situation.

If you don't give your sexual partner money, she admires to have good things other girls receive from their partners. In the long run, she ends the relationship and looks for another man who can provide for her needs FGD, attending school, 17-year-old, Ngoni, single, in secondary school Form 2

This quote highlights the power younger women had to enter and exit sexual relationships with younger men. Younger women talked about a desire to gain admiration and attention from their peers as a motive for engaging in sexual relationships where they received gifts. Younger women described how having new items of clothing, or money that they could spend, would attract attention from their peers. As one 17-year-old female participant from Village 2 said “most of the young girls are addicted to money.” She also described how the girls would use the money they received to buy “whatever they wanted” and would lie to their parents about where the clothes came from saying they had earned the money from collecting firewood. The gifts received by younger women in these

relationships were small amounts of money or lotion; these gifts rarely provided for their basic needs. Instead the gifts were seen as a status symbol and something that attracted attention in a context where girls had little access to money outside relationships. However, once girls had been given gifts men spoke about their expectation to have sex.

R3: They [women] expect to sleep with you [the man] so that they can have financial aid from you. You similarly expect girls to give you sex after you give them money. If they fail to give you sex, you suspect they have other boyfriends.

FGD, boat crew member; 22 years old, Tumbuka; single; dropped out of school in Form 3

Younger men also discussed how relationships ended if the girl refused to have sex with them.

R6: Relationships sometimes end because of the two partners not being able to understand one another. For instance, when the man wants to have sex at the time when the woman doesn't want, the man suspects that she is seeing another man.

He becomes angry and decides to look for another woman. FGD, boat crew member/attending school, 19 years old, Chewa, single, Form 3 (continuing to attend school)

These discussions highlight that while women could enter sexual relationships to receive gifts they had little choice but to provide sex otherwise the relationship would end.

5.5.2 Sex for fish exchanges

In the study villages, boat crew members, boat managers and boat owners all had access to fish from the fishing expeditions. Boat crew members and boat managers were frequently paid in fish rather than cash for their labour during fishing expeditions. These men would often give the fish to their female relatives or wives to process and sell at the market.

Sex for fish exchange was a practice that was widely reported in both of the study villages. Fish for sex exchanges involved female fish traders having sex with boat crew members, boat managers or boat owners as a way of ensuring access to fish. The exchanges provided women with a way of accessing fish, particularly during periods of low fish catches when there was fierce competition. Low fish catches often occurred in the winter months when heavy winds prevented fishing expeditions from going onto the lake. It also occurred when there were intense farming periods between January and March/April and maize prices were high, a period when women found accessing money challenging. Within fish for sex exchanges, women were still required to pay for the fish; the sex simply provided them with access.

Participants discussed how female fish traders who were new to the fish trading industry would engage more frequently in fish for sex exchanges. Village 2 had a large fish-landing site where boats landed their catches all year round and so female fish traders often temporarily migrated to Village 2 to buy fish. These conditions were seen as most likely to result in fish for sex exchanges because the female fish traders lacked social networks and wanted to access fish quickly.

In the following quote, a female fish trader discusses sex for fish exchanges. Her discussion centred on the challenges fish traders could encounter when trying to access fish, and how this could drive women to engage in transactional sex.

“So the following day you will see a boat crew member asking you your whereabouts and proposing love to you. So when you refuse they tell you where are you going to buy fish? They will see if you can be shaken up with what they have said. You force yourself to have a relationship so that you can buy fish easily and it really happens. But when you are buying you will be knowing that even though I am buying this [fish] my boyfriend has transmitted the disease to me, and that is a bad thing with fishing communities” IDI, 54-years-old, female fish trader, Tonga, divorced, dropped out of primary school standard 2

The participant in this quote was particularly articulate when she discussed the drivers of engagement in fish for sex exchanges. Like other participants, she also provided important insights into how engaging in transactional sex could increase the risk of HIV. In Chapter 6, I return to this theme and provide a much fuller discussion of individual and community understandings of HIV risk.

Men, particularly boat crew members, also reported exploiting their access to fish as a way of pressuring female fish traders into having sex with them. In this quote below a 22-year-old boat crew member describes this.

I: ...I sleep with women in the fish business from Blantyre, Lilongwe aah and Mangochi, women from far away who do not know the fish trade

I: Those who have ventured into the fish trade?

R: Yes, I tell them to link with fishermen at the boat and I will collect your fish, we have elevated fish drying racks at home to hire, they belong to my parents but when I am with one of the women from far away, I tell my parents that the fish belongs to a friend, while I know that I am going to have sex with her, if she refuses to have sex with me I tell her to pay the fee for processing her usipa at our fish drying racks and for helping her buy usipa even processing IDI, 22-year-old, Nyanja, boat crew member, in a relationship, dropped out of school in Standard 6

This quote is important in highlighting how men used their access to economic goods that women wanted to pressure them to have sexual relationships.

Not all female fish traders needed to engage in sex to ensure access to fish and there were other key ways to secure access to fish. Being a family member (such as a spouse or sister) of the boat owner or becoming a “customer” of the boat helped to secure access. A “customer” had a financial relationship with either a boat owner or boat manager to fund the fishing expedition (including money for lanterns and fuel). Once a fish trader became a customer of a boat, they were guaranteed access to fish when the boat landed on the beach. However, to become a customer, female fish traders required access to larger capital than many women were able to access. Women who were customers of boats tended to be older and more economically and socially established.

This discussion highlights that female fish traders faced a fairly rigid hierarchy when accessing fish. Familial connections and being a customer of a boat secured access to fish. Women without these connections faced fierce competition for access to fish. Engaging in fish for sex exchanges with boat crew members, boat managers or boat owners was one way of securing access to fish.

5.5.3 Sex for relish

The staple diet in Malawi is *nsima*, (ground maize). *Nsima* is often accompanied by a relish that, in fishing communities, was made with *usipa* fish. Many people living in the study villages reported being food insecure and faced periods of hunger. Food insecurity was most pronounced between January and March/April when maize prices were very high. At this time the fields had been planted but not yet harvested. Women who struggled to meet their own, and their family's basic needs, would beg for food from fishermen, often boat crew members. Men and women referred to this as begging for relish.

Men, often boat crew members, discussed using this practice as a way of pressuring women into having sex with them and the boat crews would often particularly pressure younger women to have sex for relish. The following quote taken from a focus group discussion with boat crew members illustrates how this phenomenon was discussed.

“We meet women when we are back from fishing, after resting we walk around the village that is when we meet them, they don’t follow us to our resting place [under the fish drying racks], we meet women whom we gave fish at the boat, they don’t resist us [having sex] because they know we will give them more fish the following day” FGD, Boat crew member – head of boat, 60-year-old, Tumbuka, married, dropped out of school in primary standard 8

While participants discussed women from a range of ages and backgrounds begging for fish from fishermen, not all women were given it. In the quote below the boat crew member discussed which women they were most likely to give fish to:

R: Yes, they come [to beg for fish], but when they come we send them back with a message to tell their husbands to start fishing, not just staying at home and producing babies, [laughing] while we are freezing on the Lake. Yes, we give to some and we don’t give to others. We give to women who we adore, but most of the time we give free fish for home consumption to old women, like our mothers, but not young ladies whose husbands just sleep at night while we are at the Lake IDI, 22-year-old, Nyanja, boat crew member, in a relationship, dropped out of school in Standard 6

It is clear in these quotes that boat crew members had power over the poorest and most food insecure members of the villages. These quotes also make clear how they could and would use this power to pressure women to have sex with them. For example, throughout one focus group discussion, a 60-year-old head of the boat discussed how he would use his position to pressure young women to have

sex with him. In the second quote the boat crew member discusses how older women would be given fish for home consumption without the expectation of sex.

5.5.4 Transactional sex and markets

The market was the place where female and male fish traders realised profits or made losses on their sales. For both men and women, travel to the market could cost a substantial amount, particularly when the markets were hundreds of kilometres away from their homes. If sales were slow fish traders would have to pay for accommodation and food while they were at market. Both male and female participants involved in the fishing industry described the market as a common site for transactional sex. These costs were seen as key drivers for female fish traders and participants described sexual transactions occurring to gain transportation to and from the market; sex for accommodation and food once they had arrived at the market; and sex for money to replenish capital if women had made a loss.

The quote below was taken from an interview with a female fish trader and describes how transactional sex at the markets could occur.

What happens, brother, without hiding it from you, what happens to people who don't control their hearts, if you haven't sold the fish, you may have no money to buy food for the day. When we go to the market, we are sometimes accompanied by men who are also fish traders. So, when they see you sitting quietly over there, as you have not eaten yet, they start you saying "are you not going to eat nsima?"

You retort, “I haven’t sold any fish yet”. They tell you, “Let’s go so you can eat”. When they do that, you feel they are just being kind to you. But in the evening they will come and say “let’s go to my room”. If you ask why, they say “so you think I could just buy you nsima without doing anything with you?” These are the challenges that we experience.” IDI, female fish trader, 47-year-old, Tumbuka, divorced, dropped out of school in primary standard 8

Male fish traders also described how the market was a place where they would engage in transactional sex. Unlike female fish traders, male fish traders participated in transactional sex because they were in a strong economic position rather than a weak one. The quote below, taken from a focus group discussion with male fish traders, highlights this point further:

“The reason men fall into sex temptations is because they are highly admired at the market unlike at the lake where they come from. People at the market say fish traders always have money on them, but at the lake they are regarded as nobody. This makes it easy for male fish traders to find women at the guesthouses where they stay. Sometimes women come to them voluntarily. They are so approachable that if you are not cautious enough you end up sleeping with them. FGD, male fish trader, 30-year-old, Yao, married, dropped out of school in primary standard 4

These two quotes highlight a number of important elements relating to male and female fish traders’ economic and social position. The position of female fish traders was often more precarious than male fish traders and it is clear from these

quotes that despite undertaking ostensibly the same economic activity, male and female fish traders often experienced different lived realities in relation to their economic position. In the quote above the male fish trader also demonstrates that male fish traders could feel socially marginalised at the lake where the fishing took place but that their social position was stronger at the market where a wide range of groups came together to buy and sell goods and they were perceived by other groups to have access to money. From his discussion it is clear that women would seek him out because of the potential financial benefits they were likely to gain from having sex with him. Finally the discussion by the female fish trader in the quote above, demonstrates that male fish traders could, and at times would, exploit their stronger economic position as a way of pressuring women into having sex with them.

5.5.5 Sex for money

Sex in exchange for money was discussed in a number of ways. In the section above, I discussed how female fish traders would use transactional sex at the market as a way to recoup losses. Male boat crew members and fish male traders reported paying women for sex. These exchanges were often with bar workers after drinking to excess and often took place when both groups were travelling for work, although, they were also reported to take place once they had returned to their home villages. In Village 2, where there were a large number of bars, boat crew members and fish traders would often spend periods of time in the bars after they returned and had made money from their work, drinking and spending money on bar workers. Men not only reported paying bar workers, but they also reported paying local women in the villages and landing sites they visited for sex.

Fishermen have opportunities with women, because the more money they have the less women resist their advances [laughter], when we go to catch fish we find beautiful women whom we propose while camped there for several days, these women know that fishermen make more money, yes. FGD, boat crew member, 19-year-old, Chewa, single, attending school (Form 3)

When men discussed paying local women for sex, they made a clear distinction between these transactions and those that they undertook with bar workers, even when the terms of exchange were the same (i.e. sex for money occurred just once). The following respondent articulates this point:

R: We find mahule [sex workers] ... (laughing) sometimes we hook a casual intimate relationship, but most people, like me I don't go for mahule, when I have sexual desires I find village ladies to sleep with

I: Is there any gift giving after the meeting with these ladies?

R: Yes, it is money that we give them of course to those who demand, while others who are in serious love do not give ladies money, but I give them money because the relationship does not continue” IDI, boat crew member, 21-year-old, Chewa, divorced, dropped out in Standard 6 primary school

This quote is important in highlighting how normal it was for boat crew members to discuss paying women for sex while they were away.

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have focused on findings relating to gender power relations and transactional sex in the two study villages. In the two villages we found that engagement in transactional sex was shaped by the highly gendered context of the fishing industry. Women's position and access to fish was mediated by both their economic position (often their ability to access capital), and their sexual relationships. Female fish traders could improve their access to fish through their sexual relationships with men within the fishing industry.

Gradations of power within the male groups also shaped their involvement in transactional sex. Boat crew members, male fish traders and boat managers were seen as desirable sexual partners by both women living in the study communities and female fish traders hoping to access fish. Younger boat crew members who undertook the fishing faced physical danger and less economic reward than boat owners. Their engagement in transactional sex was seen as normal within the villages, particularly when they travelled away from home. Women who sold sex in bars were often motivated by economic need. This economic need had often resulted from marital break up due to intimate partner violence or the death of a parent. Working in bars and selling sex increased these women's exposure to violence. The violence that bar workers experienced was often perpetrated by male boat crew members. These men were in turn often exposed to violence in their work. This highlights the endemicity of violence that men and women working in the fishing environment were exposed to.

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This violence frequently continued once they joined the industry by their clients who were often male boat crew members who also frequently experienced violence in their work.

In conclusion, we observed considerable heterogeneity in the patterns of transactional sex occurring in fishing communities in southern Malawi. These appeared to be driven by socio-economic position and prevalent gender power relations. In the following chapter I move on to focus the discussion on HIV risk and the development of HIV interventions.

6 “I trust her... why should I use a condom?” Understanding of HIV risk and interventions to reduce HIV vulnerability in fishing communities

6.1 Introduction

In the previous results chapter, I explored gender power relations and identified the key drivers and facilitators of participation in transactional sex in the two study villages. In this chapter I present findings addressing the third and fourth study objectives:

- (3) To document individual and community perceptions of HIV risk and transactional sex in the study villages;
- (4) To develop an HIV prevention strategy to address HIV/AIDS among the fishing communities in southern Lake Malawi

This chapter is divided into two sections. In the first section I discuss community and individual understandings of HIV risk in the two villages. In particular, I focus on transactional sex and how participants (at the individual and community levels) viewed risk in these relationships. Key themes across both these areas included good knowledge and understanding of HIV transmission; gender power relations; blame, trust and denial; high levels of mobility; poverty and social marginalisation. In the second section 6.8, I present a discussion of interventions for preventing HIV.

In this section I draw on the data we collected and analysed from the participatory workshops as well as more broadly from the focus group discussions and interviews with key informants.

6.2 HIV and the study villages

In Village 2, there was a much larger and busier fish-landing site than in Village 1, which resulted in a very high level of internal and external migration. When we discussed HIV in the focus groups, men and women in both study villages described that they felt HIV was a major health problem. Key informants described how they had run out of space in the village burial site because there were so many people dying from HIV. While, participants spontaneously described HIV as being a major problem, there were other diseases that were also seen as presenting serious risk to ill health in the villages. We explored these in focus group discussions and the diseases most frequently discussed were malaria, TB and cholera. Cholera was viewed as a particularly severe problem in Village 2 due to the sandy soil that meant laying sufficiently deep pit latrines was very challenging. The high levels of inward migration also put pressure on the limited sanitation provision.

All the study participants articulated a good understanding of the ways HIV could be transmitted and which behaviours were risky. An example of how men and women discussed HIV is provided in the following two quotes:

That is the life that everyone is doing here [engaging in transactional sex] since it is a remote area, far from town, it is small [geographically] with a large population you see, that is why you can see that there is rampant spread of HIV because we are having multiple sex partners in our community IDI, boat manager, tumbuka, engaged, 21 years old, completed secondary school

R9: HIV/AIDs is a very big problem and it is terrifying us a lot because in a marriage if one person is not faithful he/she may destroy the other one by transmitting the infection to another one and even children can also become infected and this can affect how they are raised up. FGD, female fish trader, 55-years-old, Tonga, widow, attends adult education classes but did not attend school as a child

In the first quote the boat manager emphasises the ubiquitous nature of transactional sex and how this is a key driver of HIV. In this second quote, the female fish trader emphasises how devastating HIV can be on those it affects. She also highlights that while one partner can remain faithful the other partner can bring HIV into the relationship by being unfaithful.

The two risk factors for HIV infection that were most frequently identified by men and women were unprotected sex and blood-to-blood contact with a person who had HIV. Participants (both male and female) discussed how using condoms when having sex, and using gloves if you were touching the blood of someone

who was infected, could prevent HIV. In general there was less discussion of mother-to-child transmission. However, many of the female participants did discuss having a HIV test during pregnancy. Participants spoke about HIV being a common topic of discussion within the village. Men and women identified the main sources of HIV educational messages as community meetings and the radio.

6.3 Individual perceptions of risk and HIV

During the in-depth interviews we explored participants' own perceptions of HIV risk. We did this by asking questions in relation to participants' lives broadly and then HIV risk specifically. Few participants were comfortable discussing their own risk of HIV, reflecting some of the male and female participants distancing themselves from their own involvement in transactional sex,. There were only a few male or female participants who openly discussed seeing themselves as being at risk of HIV.

This silence around participants' discussion of their own HIV risk emphasised that men and women did not always view themselves as at risk of HIV or if they did view themselves as at risk, they did not want to openly acknowledge this. In a similar strategy to discussing transactional sex, if the research assistants felt that participants were uncomfortable with the questions relating to HIV risk, then they modified the questions to ask about HIV risk in the community more broadly. This meant that we had more data on broader community perceptions of risk than individual perceptions of risk.

6.3.1 Women and HIV risk

Very few of the women we interviewed identified HIV as the prime risk in their lives. For female fish traders, theft of property, accidents during travel (often in cars and lorries when transporting their fish to the market), illness and making a financial loss in their businesses were identified as the main risks they faced. In the following quote a female fish trader describes three areas that she sees as risks in her life (theft, accident and illness). These were recurring themes that came out in other interviews with female participants.

I: what is the riskiest aspect of your life?

R: Eeeh, in my life there are three aspects that I take to be risky. One of the risks that I faced was travelling to market. I was going to the market on our way there the lorry we boarded collapsed. We were taken to hospital while I was there I lost consciousness by the time I regained consciousness I found that I am at the hospital, my business I bought fish worth K 40,000 plus transport I was expecting to have K 60,000 as my profit but I came back home with sickness and I stopped the business that is when I experienced hunger at my home because I had no money. This is my first aspect. The second aspect was that I was chronically ill I was having a headache pain and it reached the point that it was connected to my eyes and I went to Nkhoma Hospital in Lilongwe where I was transferred to Queen Elizabeth Hospital where I was admitted for a month. Coming back home I found that my goods had been stolen this is because there was only my children at home. The third aspect was that I borrowed money from someone else and I used it to buy usipa. I dried the usipa on the drying bench outside my house. During

the night while I was sleeping thieves came and stole the whole of the usipa on the drying benches. That time I was sick so when I think of how little I gave back to the owner I feel terrible. Yeah, these are the riskiest aspects of my life I have met with accident, sickness and theft. IDI, female fish trader, 54-year-old, Tonga, divorced, dropped out of school in S2

For female fish traders, theft was a serious risk they faced. Women reported fish being stolen during the night from the drying benches; during transportation to the market; and finally at the market. In the following quote a female fish trader narrates how threats of violence could be used during these events.

I: If you think about it what is the risk you face in your life?

The risk in the business I am doing... I will talk about what happened to me. You might leave here in the evening for market without being accompanied by anyone. If I could give an example of the time I left for market in the evening, by this time [around 4:00 o'clock pm] then I had not departed. I took a motorcycle taxi and spent a night at Ntakataka. As I was sleeping, two men came and threatened to stab me with a knife so that they should take hold of my carton of fish. Through God's grace, I screamed from the veranda where I had slept and owners of the house woke up, and the men ran away. This is what I see as a risk in my business. I can't leave for market by myself. I fear people might take away my carton from me, or I might even lose my life. To do the business well, I need to leave home accompanied by two or three friends so that we are together on the trip. IDI
Female fish trader, 37-year-old, Tonga, widowed and then divorced, dropped out of school in S8,

When we specifically asked about HIV, women gave varied responses. Some participants responded that HIV was not a risk in their own lives but in the lives of others who lacked “self-control.” The quote below provides some insight into how some women distanced themselves from HIV when they discussed risk:

I: in your job do you consider HIV as a risk?

R: yes, one can consider HIV as a risk in your life if you lack self-control because the problem which is here is when there is high catches of fish fishermen also have a lot of money so they just move around in the village to look for a lady they can have sex with, so if you don't have self-control you can experience this problem IDI, female fish trader, 27-year-old, married, Ngoni, dropped out in S5

Participants also described how other groups such as women who were older or younger than them were at risk of HIV. Some female participants discussed why they did not consider HIV a risk in their lives. In the following quote, a female beer brewer emphasises the reasons she does not view HIV as a risk in her own life:

R: To my life I don't think there is a problem with HIV in my family because I and my husband are faithful to each other and when I was pregnant we go for HIV test so I can not consider it a risk in my life. IDI, beer brewer, 34-years-old, married, Nkhonde, dropped out of school in Standard 3

This participant did not travel for her business and her husband worked locally. However, female fish traders who travelled were more likely to see themselves as

at risk of HIV. One participant described how she did not know the HIV status of the men she had relationships with. In the discussion below, a female fish trader discussed HIV as a risk in her life:

I: What do you see as the riskiest aspects of your life?

P: What I see as the greatest risk is the disease I mentioned, the AIDS disease, and the other former disease called 'Chizonono'. Taking another person's property is also a risk.

I: How is HIV a risk in your life?

P: HIV is a risk because it is a disease which is being transmitted from one person to another. IDI, female fish trader, 50-years-old, Tonga, widowed, dropped out of school in Standard 4

In the quote, she sees HIV as a serious risk in her life however, she does not go on to openly discuss transactional sex; she leaves this and discusses in broader terms how HIV can be transmitted.

The female group who most openly discussed their risk of HIV were female bar workers. All the women who we interviewed from this group saw themselves as at risk of HIV. This also reflected the findings I presented in Chapter 5 with female bar workers openly discussed their involvement in transactional sex. One female bar worker reflects on how HIV risk made working in bars risky:

R: The riskiest time is now because our friends who have been in this previously had nothing to fear because there was no HIV, but because we are used to this work we fail to abstain from doing this work, however, if we can find some other things to do we can change our behaviour. IDI, female bar worker, 28-years-old, Chewa, divorced, dropped out in Standard 8

The female bar workers also discussed how they tried to mitigate this risk by insisting that all their customers used condoms. In the following quote a female bar worker emphasises this point:

I always insist on condom use because I don't want to contract HIV and also I do not want to be pregnant. People can mock me because they will want to know who impregnated me and also I will be suffering while the one who impregnated me is at peace. IDI 21-year-old sex worker, in a relationship, dropped out of school in F2

She also emphasises that condom use will prevent her from falling pregnant.

While, all the female bar workers talked about insisting on condom use, some of the boat crew members discussed how some bar workers offered to have sex with them without a condom for more money. This suggests that some bar workers did not use condoms with some clients if they were able to make more money.

Bar workers also talked about how there were times they were unable to negotiate condom use with their male clients. Men often became violent if bar workers tried

to insist on them. In the quote below a bar worker describes how trying to insist on condoms can lead to violence.

I: what are the challenges you encounter in your work?

R: the most challenging encounter is that men insist on having unprotected sex with us, so in order to protect ourselves from contracting diseases we use condoms. Sometimes we start quarrelling and they end up beating us because of this. IDI, 28-year-old, female bar worker, divorced

Bar workers also discussed how condoms failed either because rough sex led to condoms becoming damaged or because their clients cut off the tips. Men's tampering with condoms was something that came up in most of the interviews with female bar workers. Boat crew members were reported to most do this. It was unclear what the motivations were for this behaviour but perhaps related to young men asserting control during these exchanges.

It was clear from the interviews that female bar workers faced difficult dilemmas over condom use. Women feared contracting HIV but also risked violence if they tried to insist on using them. In addition, economic need was a strong driver to sell sex and therefore, there were times when economic need may have also driven them to engage in risky sex. The combination of these factors meant that bar workers lacked the power to always negotiate safer sex.

6.3.2 Men and HIV risk

When men working in the fishing industry discussed risk, their responses mirrored those of the female fish traders and included theft, car travel, illness. For boat crew members the risk of drowning was seen as a serious risk. In the quote below a *siginala* discusses this:

When there is wind at the lake, when there is strong wind, some of our fellow fishermen die because of this, yes because there is strong wind huge waves, and signals we have the riskiest job in the boat crew because we may be carried away by the wind to other parts of the lake and since it is at night if the lamp light goes out no one will see you from the boat, you are gone. IDI, siginala/boat crew member, 27-year-old, married, Tonga, dropped out in Standard 6

The quote also emphasises that *siginala* faced the greatest risk in the boat because they were the ones that moved into smaller canoes. However, all boat crew members faced the risk of drowning when there were high winds.

Men's view of their own risk of HIV depended, to some degree, on the role and economic position they occupied in the fishing industry. Younger men such as boat crew members and fish traders discussed HIV risk. This could be contrasted with older, richer men such as boat owners who were more likely to distance themselves from HIV risk and not discuss their own HIV risk.

I: During this time you faced these challenges in your fishing work how risky did you consider HIV to the challenges?

R: There is a risky connection, because this work of ours involves moving from one fishing village to another and because they move from place to place searching for money and during this period they are forced to stay in other fishing communities for quite a long period of time, this then forces people to enter into activities which may put them at risk of HIV. IDI, boat owner, 40-year-old, Chewa, married, dropped out in Form 3

In this quote the boat owner does not directly address the question and instead speaks about HIV risk and fishing more broadly rather than his own. Another example of men distancing themselves from HIV was a 44-year-old man who worked as a boat painter. Five years previously, he had moved from Zimbabwe to Malawi, leaving his wife and three children in Zimbabwe. During the periods of observation, we saw him frequently going home with bar workers. When we interviewed him he openly discussed having multiple sexual partners. However, when we asked him about HIV risk and his life he avoided answering the question.

These findings reflect some of the discussion on transactional sex that I presented in Chapter 5. Boat owners did not openly discuss engaging in transactional sex. As respected members of the villages they may not have wanted to be associated with behaviours that were viewed as socially inappropriate. Some boat crew members did discuss HIV risk. Although, it is important to note that not all boat crew members viewed themselves as at risk of HIV.

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In the following quote a boat crew member openly discussed having multiple sexual relationships, including paying bar workers for sex. He reported regularly going for HIV tests but also discussed how he rarely used condoms with any of his sexual partners. When he discussed HIV risk he did say:

R: The riskiest are women, female fish traders from other places, because female fish traders from within we know who is receiving ARVs, and not women and girls from far place, who are looking healthy, but still we do not know their background, where they come from, I just look at the face and try my luck with her.

IDI, 22-year-old, Nyanja, boat crew member, in a relationship, dropped out of school in Standard 6

In this quote the young boat crew member describes how he recognises the risk he faces but still “tries his luck” and has risky sex with women. This may have been because of his young age. Older participants discussed how they engaged in riskier activities when they were younger but changed their behaviour, as they got older. However, it may also have been shaped by his occupation. As a boat crew member he was exposed to a number of risks in his life including the risk of drowning. I discussed in Chapter 5, the difficult living situations and the physically demanding nature of conducting the fishing. In, section 5.3.3, one participant describes how having sex when working away from home was a form of medication for their job. The risk of drowning was also something that boat crew members constantly faced. In the following quote a boat crew member also emphasises the need to live in the moment rather than worry about getting the women he has sex with to have a HIV test:

P6: The problem is when we meet strange girls we don't want to go for a HIV test first, we look only at their face, "if you are to die today there is no tomorrow, come what may after all I will receive medicine at the hospital" FGD, boat crew member, 25-year-old, Tumbuka, married, completed school

What he also emphasises is that access to ARVs also meant that HIV did not have to be a death sentence. Other young male participants highlighted that if they did contract HIV, then they could access treatment to save their lives. This seems to suggest that the advent of ARV treatment had left some men less fearful of HIV. However, this is a very new phenomenon and other participants also discussed the fear of contracting HIV and the worry of how they would be viewed by the wider community.

6.4 Key drivers of HIV

Despite men and women's good knowledge and understanding of HIV, there were a number of factors that continued to drive HIV transmission in the villages.

These drivers included the fishing industry, gender power relations, transactional sex, poverty and the high levels of inward and outward mobility. There was also very low acceptance of condom use for men and some women in most sexual relationships.

6.4.1 Transactional sex and HIV risk

In Chapter 5, I explored in detail gender power relations and how they shaped different men and women's engagement in transactional sex. Participants

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frequently discussed how engagement in transactional sex could place men and women at risk of HIV. In the quote below which I also provide in full in section 5.3.3, the female fish trader highlights that transactional sex for fish left women vulnerable to HIV:

“...But when you are buying you will be knowing that even though I am buying this [fish] my boyfriend has transmitted the disease to me, and that is a bad thing with fishing communities” IDI, female fish trader, 54-years-old, Tonga, divorced, dropped out of primary school Standard 2

Participants saw that poverty and deprivation within households drove women to engage in transactional sex and in turn left them vulnerable to transmission of HIV. The following quote illustrates one discussion women had about this during the participatory workshop:

R5: Poverty is what is causing HIV/AIDS to continue spreading. PW, farmer, 36 years old, chewa, widow, dropped out in Standard 5

I: you are saying poverty causes the spread of HIV/AIDS (R5: yes) why?

R6: it happens that there is a certain person who does not have any assistance at her home and when she meets with a man and he coaxes her with money for sex she just accept because she knows that she will be given some money. PW, fritter seller, 32 years old, chewa, married, dropped out in Standard 3

This association between women's poverty and HIV was also echoed in the male participatory workshops:

I: How does lack of money cause the problem of HIV here in your community?

P2: The lack of money causes HIV in that when a girl or woman has problems meeting household needs, and if they meet fishermen who have money, because you really earn money when fishing is successful, they don't resist when the fishermen proposes because they want to have support from them. PW, male fish trader, 32-years-old, Tumbuka, married, finished school

What remains unspoken in both of the above quotes is condom use. We explored condom use and relationships with different groups during the focus group discussions and participatory workshops. What arose from these discussions was that participants felt condom use was difficult to negotiate within sexual relationships, including those motivated by economic need. In section 6.5, I return to discuss condom use and the barriers that prevented men and women from using condoms.

6.4.2 Mobility and the fishing industry

Men and women's involvement in the fishing industry was viewed as risky for both men and women. One of the central reasons for this was the high level of travel required. As discussed in Chapter 5, different roles in the fishing industry required long periods of time away from home. During these periods away men

and women had different sexual partners. Having these additional sexual partners was seen as a key reason why HIV transmission was high. In Chapter 5, I discussed why travel led to additional sexual partners and that men and women had different motivations for having these concurrent relationships.

For women, financial need was the prime motivation for engagement in transactional sex. For men, it was fulfilment of sexual and physical needs (i.e. having food cooked for them) while they were away from home. These points are illustrated in the following quote:

Sometimes when men go away from home in search of work or business, because they stay away from home for a long time, they find temporary intimate relationships while there, and besides that women at home when left for a long time without support and food, they also find other means to source money to buy their needs. This does not go well for the couple, as both can be the source of problems as well as diseases in the house. PW, labourer/brick layer, 24-years-old, Chewa, married, dropped out in Standard 8

Again, as I discussed in Chapter 5, fishing could be highly unpredictable. This unpredictability could mean that men and women were away from home for long periods of time. The female participant in the following quote provides a good example of how participants viewed the unpredictable nature of work:

R7: What happens is that the fishermen are not stable if they hear that high fish catches are being done in Salima it means that they will go to Salima and when they hear about Makanjira it means that they will also go to Makanjira where they also find other women which they do not know their sero status, they do sex with them and then they come here where they transmit the disease to their wives and other women, that is the meaning of fishing from one area to the other.

Wherever men go they do sex with other women when they come back they do sex with their wives and other women. PW, fish trader/farmer, 49 years old, Tumbuka, married dropped out Form 2

As discussed in Chapter 5, women's travel to buy and sell fish was seen as a driver for engagement in transactional sex and participants frequently discussed transactional sex as a driver. As noted above transactional sex was viewed as a driver for HIV. In the following quote the Vice-Chairperson of the village health committee discussed this point:

R10: what happens is that they may buy fish with an aim of selling to far markets and they do not go there with an aim of selling fish alone. But instead they meet a fish trader who may say let us go to the rest house where they have plain sex [sex without a condom] and when she comes back she transmit the disease to her husband, and her husband may also transmit the disease to someone whom he is also having a sexual relationship with, and in that way the disease continues to spread, the male fish traders also does the same, those women who lack self control do accept to do such things PW, vice-chairperson of the village health committee, 44-years-old, Chewa, married, dropped out in Standard 6

In the quote, she highlights the fact that condoms were not used in these relationships. The way this participant discusses the scenario also highlights two key themes we identified in the data when participants discussed HIV risk: distance and blame. In the quote, she emphasises that women's lack of self-control meant they engaged in transactional sex and used phrases such as "lack of self-control" for explaining women's behaviour. By doing this, she, like other participants, blamed women's socially inappropriate behaviour for HIV transmission in the villages. However, this was in contrast to the way participants discussed men's behaviour – they did not blame men's lack of self-control when they engaged in sexual relationships outside their primary one.

Young men, often boat crew members and male fish traders, paying to have sex with bar workers were seen as driving HIV transmission. As discussed in Chapter 5, this often occurred when men were away either conducting fishing expeditions or accessing and selling fish. As noted in Chapter 5, there was a general acceptance that boat crew members need to do this to fulfil their sexual desires. However, there was as an acknowledgement that being married to boat crew members, particularly young ones, could place women at an increased risk. This is highlighted in the quote below:

When they are married, they depend on fishing. However, when the boy goes out fishing and makes money, he doesn't use the money for providing household needs. He uses it for sleeping with sex workers at the bar. When he comes home, he

transmits to the wife everything he contracted from the bar. IDI, female fish trader, 37 years old, divorced, Tonga, dropped out of school in Standard 8

What the fish trader emphasises in the quote is that young men in these situations engage in unprotected sex with both their wives and bar workers. She also emphasises that young boat crew members were not reliable husbands. Other participants (both male and female) highlighted the negative behaviours that boat crew members would engage in and this is likely to have added to their social marginalisation.

Another factor that participants identified in the communities was the high level of inward migration of men into the villages (often due to the fishing industry). Participants discussed how these men did not behave in a socially appropriate way – paying many local women and bar workers for sex and this was driving HIV transmission. In the exchange below two participants discuss this:

P2: The coming of many people causes people to contract HIV in that when they are here not all of them show good behaviour. Some of them are very promiscuous. And they stay for quite some time when they come here. Since they stay for some time before they return, they begin to propose sex to different girls from the community. PW, fish trader, 32 years old, Tumbuka, married, completed school

P1: On the same issue, these [external migrants] people earn a lot of money and they don't know what to do with it. So they sleep with girls or women who receive

money from them. PW, Head of boat/boat crew member, 57 years old, Tumbuka, married, dropped out in Standard 8

It was not only men who moved into the villages who were reported to behave in this way. However, by blaming external migrants these men may be distancing themselves from HIV risk and blaming others for the spread of HIV. However, other participants did report that men behaved differently when they were away from home. This was because they were able to have sex without their spouses finding out. In the village, spouses of highly mobile men were more likely to find out that their husbands were sleeping with other people because community members would tell them. This suggests that travelling away from home and spending time in other villages also provided men with the opportunity to have more sexual partners. The money they earned strengthened the opportunity provided to them. As noted in the above quotes women slept with them because they wanted money.

Much of the discussion around drivers of HIV reflected the discussion of the drivers of transactional sex that I presented in Chapter 5. The synergy between the findings in the two areas - participants' understandings of engagement in transactional sex and HIV vulnerability - demonstrates the good understanding that participants had about the risk of HIV but also highlights the challenges that men and women faced in changing their behaviour to protect themselves from HIV.

6.5 Condom use and HIV

Men and women living in the communities identified condom use as an important strategy to prevent HIV. However, men and women cited a number of barriers that prevented condoms from being used. The barriers included trust, sexual pleasure, desire for children and limited access. In the next section I provide further detail and each of these factors.

6.5.1 Trust, suspicion and sexual relationships

One of the themes that came out strongly in relation to condom use was how condoms could introduce suspicion and doubt into a relationship. Both men and women discussed how asking to use a condom would mean you did not trust your partner. It could also suggest that you had a lot of additional sexual partners. In the following quote a younger married man discusses condom use, HIV and relationships:

Many times we people contract infections because we want to feel the woman to the fullest. That's what kills us. When you are sexually aroused, it becomes very difficult to think of buying a condom so that you can be protected. What comes to your mind is the question, "Will I die today if I contract the disease? I will know what to do when the time comes." That's the reason why many people are dying from this disease [HIV/AIDS]. That's the same thing that happened to me at that time, "I trust her, then why should I use a condom? She won't trust me if I use condom." You see now what happens? If you have just proposed to a girl/woman, and you want to use a condom right away, she will put a question mark to it, "Why does he sleep with me using a condom?" That's why this disease might

spread further because of the things we believe might get us into trouble or cause our relationships to end if we do them. That's why I didn't bother [using a condom]. If my wife is infected, I would have been infected too. IDI, fish trader/carpenter, 26-year-old, Lomwe, married, left school in Form 4

In the quote, the young man begins by emphasising that having sex without a condom maximised sexual pleasure or allowed him to “feel a woman to the fullest.” Men’s sexual pleasure came up in many instances and I will return to this theme. He also articulates how wanting to be viewed as trustworthy acted as a barrier for him to use condoms in his relationship. He articulates that by suggesting condom use would be asking his girlfriend to “put a question mark” to the relationship. The question mark would be a suspicion that he was also sleeping with other women.

In the following quote a younger man echoes the above discussion about trust and condom use. The participant also highlights the rumours women internalised, and the fears they held, had about condoms, and how these may be a key driver towards unsafe sex.

P17: You feel shy to put on the condom not because the woman is watching. You feel shy because you fear she might think you sleep with so many sexual partners, or you are being suspicious about her. To tell a woman to use a condom here in the village, she will ask where you learnt about condom use. The problem lies in how to tell her that you want to use a condom. She can easily refuse if you just put

on the condom. She will tell you about condoms cause infections. We hear about the condom lubricant being infectious and women are afraid of that. They fear the lubricant would cause them to develop infections. PW, vendor, 26 years old, Nyanja, single, dropped out in F2

Older men also discussed how suggesting condom use to your wife could introduce doubt into the relationship. In the following quote an older man who worked as head of the boat raises this issue. He is responding to a participant who has suggested using condoms in marriage would be a way of preventing HIV transmission:

R3: I will agree in one way and disagree in another, if couples use condoms and then the point is there is no trust among the two, because if I trust my wife there is no need to use condoms in our relationships or marriage, a condom is not good in a married couple, yes

I: *Why are condoms not good in a marriage setup?*

P3: *The reason is mistrust, if you do not trust one another, yes you will use condoms, but if not why use them?* FGD Head of the boat, 60, Tumbuka, married, dropped out of school in S8

This participant in the same focus group also described how he would have sex with young women when he travelled to conduct fishing expeditions. Comparing these statements suggest that there were complex understandings of trust in relationships.

Women also acknowledged that if they were seen to be carrying condoms then they would not be trusted:

R10: Some girls do fear keeping and moving with condoms, because they think when they meet with a men they will be asked the reason they are stocking condoms and they do plain sex with an aim of promoting their trust. PW, vice secretary of the village health committee, 44 years old, Chewa, married, dropped out of school in S6

Female bar workers talked about the implications of using condoms with their various partners. By using condoms with their clients and not their boyfriends they were able to mark the relationships as different. In the quote below the participant is emphasising that sex without a condom with her boyfriend was about pleasure not money:

The place where I work everyone has her own boyfriend and these ones we have plain sex with but those short time ones we do it for business it's not a matter of wanting to feel good but we want the money. But when we are having plain sex with my boyfriend it is when I enjoy sex. IDI, female bar worker, divorced, 19 years old

Other bar workers talked about how not using condoms demonstrated trust and therefore marked the relationship as different. Women working in the bars often had boyfriends who had begun as customers and then become boyfriends later.

The transition from using condoms to not using condoms was seen as a pivotal moment in these relationships.

6.5.2 Sexual pleasure and condom use

Men's sexual pleasure was often seen as inhibited by using condoms. This was highlighted in the earlier quote where the carpenter/fish trader discusses how sex without a condom allows a man to feel a woman at her fullest. This sentiment was also echoed in the following quote from another younger man:

R3: It is very hard for the younger people to use condoms these days. They usually say 'sweet yampepala simakoma' [sweet eaten while still wrapped never tastes as good]. That's why men usually don't use condoms. Women also ask why are you being suspicious about them if you want to use a condom. Also, when a girl sees you with condoms, she feels you have sex with so many other girls. So you feel ashamed about that and you disregard using condoms. FGD boat crew member, 22, single Tumbuka, stopped school in Form 3

The term “the sweet eaten when wrapped never tastes as good” was a phrase that came up in a number of the focus group discussions and in the participatory workshops. Men used the statement often as a justification for not wanting to use condoms. Women also reported men using the statement to justify unsafe sex.

When there was a transactional element to the sexual relationship women discussed how men's sexual pleasure came first because they did not want to feel they had lost their money:

R8: Men prefer plain sex, they say that if they will use a condom they will not be real men and it means that they have lost their money. But plain sex makes them feel like they are real men according to their natural being. That is why we feel it is the reason why HIV/AIDS is also affecting marriages FGD, female fish trader, 41 years old, Ngoni, married, dropped out of school in Standard 7

6.5.3 Reproduction and condom use

Participants argued that condoms could not be used if a couple wanted to have children. Once families had had children, some men and women spoke about using condoms as a strategy for preventing pregnancy but not before they had reached the size of family they wanted. Some younger men discussed their desire for their girlfriends or wives to be pregnant while they travelled as a way of ensuring their partners were faithful to them while they were away:

R9: What happens is you can propose a woman and fail to support her financially, while she asks for financial assistance from other guys which she is provided with. Because of jealousy we force the girls to have sex with us, yes that is how it happens, [Laughing], you force her to have sex with you in order to have security over her. You force to have early sex with and impregnate her so that she should only be yours. You are protecting your property (All laughing) FGD, boat crew member, 18, Chewa, single, still attending school (Form 2)

This quote highlights issues of trust when one member of a couple travelled. In this quote the boat crew members suggests that by impregnating his girlfriend this will stop her from going with other men while he is away. He wasn't the only participant who articulated this fear: other men talked about the need to have many children as a way of ensuring their wives remained faithful while they were away.

6.5.4 Access to condoms

A final barrier that participants described was access to condoms. Men working in the fishing industry described how it could be difficult to access condoms when they travelled to remote areas where the stores did not sell them. In the following quote a male boat owner discusses this:

I: Would you explain what happens when you are in other fishing villages away from your homes?

R: What happens in most of the time ... ah... [coughing] when men go fishing to other fishing villages where we cannot know the behaviour of other people [women] and besides most of the small shops in the village we go fishing to do not stock protection [condoms] yes, however, because men are not satisfied and cannot abstain they end up being tempted and end of contracting HIV and AIDS disease. IDI, boat owner, 40 year old, Chewa, married, completed secondary school

A barrier that married boat crew members discussed was that they could not be seen to buy condoms or be found carrying them because it would lead to suspicion

from their wives. They discussed how they did not trust shopkeepers not to tell their wives:

P18: some [shopkeepers] are confidential while others do not keep the secret they may tell everyone in the village that Mr X came to buy condoms here, they can even tell your wife, [Laughing] PW, boat crew member, 26 years old, Tonga, married, dropped out of school in Form 1

For other men they felt embarrassed to buy condoms from female shopkeepers:

P6: The reason people feel shy to buy condoms from grocery shops is because the shop attendants are mostly women. You fail to go to the shop because you fear the woman might know that you are going to have sex. PW, boat crew member, 24 years old, Nyanja, married, dropped out of school in Form 2

Women also discussed how accessing condoms could be challenging. Throughout the data collection female bar workers asked the research team to bring them condoms (both female and male). They asked for them because they said it was challenging for them to source.

6.6 Fishing, marriage and HIV

Participants often noted the fragility of marriage in the fishing industry, with high levels of travel seen as a contributing factor. Having a child together was usually the defining feature of a marriage in both villages. Traditional marriage

ceremonies, including the appointment of marriage counsellors (people who could advise the couple if there were problems in the marriage) did exist, however ceremonies often did not take place. Some female participants felt relationships were more fragile without the performance of marriage ceremonies. .

Most of the older participants we interviewed had been separated or divorced at least once, highlighting the high level of relationship change. Many of the women we interviewed had dropped out of school because they had fallen pregnant, but few of these participants had remained with the fathers of their first child. Travel and extended periods of time away from home were often blamed for the break up of marriages. Participants discussed how they that saw marriage had changed over time: people generally now saw marriage as less permanent and more fragile than in the past. In the following quote a female fish trader describes marriages in her community in very negative terms:

...but with the state of marriages these days, we fail to have concrete evidence that someone is really married. The marriages are kind of treacherous. The husband is seen only when coming out of the house in the morning, but during the day is nowhere to be seen. IDI, female fish trader, 40-year-old, Tonga married for a second time, dropped out of school in Standard 8

Women married to highly mobile men saw themselves as at risk of HIV. In one focus group discussion, women discussed the dilemmas they could face when their husbands returned from fishing expeditions because they knew their husbands had not been faithful while they were away; they recognised this could put them at risk of HIV.

R1: ... some men do force their wives to have sex with them even when their wives do not want to. There are some knowledgeable women who know much about HIV/AIDS they are interested in their husband's activities, because some operate their work either at Salima, Makanjira or Makawa. Some men say that they cannot manage to spend a week without having sex with a woman. When he comes back you ask him to go for HCT [HIV counselling and testing] and he refuses, however he leaves you with a dilemma you start thinking about your life to whether to have sex with him or not and you already know that if you have sex with him, then you are risking your life at the end the woman is forced to have sex with her husband, and it is terrible. And at the end when you go for HCT you may be tested HIV/AIDS positive because you slept with your husband. FGD, female fish trader, 39 years old, Yao, married, Standard 8

In this focus group another participant goes on to clarify that rape happens in this situation:

R8: I am saying yes what I am saying is that as she has explained that you are telling your husband to go for HCT [HIV counselling and testing] and in response the man is saying, whether you like it or not sex will be done in this house, he is refusing to go for HCT [HIV counselling and testing] but he is forcing you to have sex, and because he is more powerful than you it happens that he raped you. You cannot do anything to inform people because he is your husband in that case you are forced to have sex. FGD, Female fish trader, 41 years old, married, Ngoni, dropped out of school in S5

Both these quotes demonstrate that women were knowledgeable about HIV and rape. However, what both women reflect upon is that despite this knowledge they lacked the power to negotiate safer sex. What the quotes also emphasise is that the power dynamics favoured men both within relationships and at the community level where structural norms meant that women could not report rape if it was committed by their husbands.

Women could not always negotiate the terms of sex during their marriages. However some women did discuss divorcing their husbands as one way of protecting themselves from HIV. In the quote below a female fish trader discusses this:

I: why did you separate from your husband?

R: Eeh, my husband was a womaniser so with the coming of the dangerous disease I decided to live alone with my children because we have four children
IDI, 54-year-old, fish trader, Tonga, divorced, dropped out in S2

What this quote demonstrates is that while women might not be able to negotiate condom use, some women could, and did, leave their husbands if they viewed HIV as a risk to themselves and their children. However, this female fish trader owned her own house and had an independent income from fish trading. Other women who lacked an independent income may have been less able to leave their husbands.

6.7 Access to HIV testing and treatment services

Testing and treatment facilities for HIV were available for free in the government run hospital in Monkey Bay and from an NGO located in the village of Cape Maclear. In Village 1, the Monkey Bay hospital was situated much closer to the village (3km from the village) than in Village 2 (20km from the village). The NGO clinic was also 18km away along a very rough dirt track. Testing and treatment was available from doctors working in the private clinics in Monkey Bay. Participants discussed how in general they found accessing medical treatment in Village 2 both challenging and expensive.

In the focus group discussions one participant discussed how community members had failed to access treatment or stopped taking treatment because they lacked money for transportation. To access the public facilities, participants had to pay very high transportation costs and many discussed only seeking treatment at the hospital when they or their relatives were very sick. In the wet season, the journey to the hospital could be very challenging because of the condition of the roads.

P2: The major problem causing people to stop accessing treatment is lack of transport. If they don't have enough money for transport, they find it difficult to travel to Monkey bay to get treatment. When they postpone visiting the hospital, they end up not visiting the hospital for good. That becomes the end of taking treatment for them. FGD, Boat crew member, 24-years old, married tumbuka, dropped out of school in S8

Participants also stopped treatment because the experiences they received at the clinic. These included the attitude of the staff, the long waiting times and the short distribution times. In the quote below the participant emphasises the attitude of the staff and the treatment received at the clinic:

R1: The other reason people stop accessing treatment is how they are received at the hospital. Sometimes they receive an unfriendly reception by the service providers and they find it hard to continue with the treatment. Other people stop accessing treatment also because of the long distance to the hospital and so much time they spend at the hospital. Monkey bay health center is the only clinic around, but there are so many areas which are served by it. People from Cape Maclear, Msaka, Mvunguti, Mbwadzulu and even from as far as Tsauya and Malembo rely on this hospital. Sometimes they arrive at the hospital when it is already closed for the distribution of the ARVs. With transport problems, patients feel disappointed and they just decide to stop accessing the treatment. FGD, fish trader, 27-years old, single, tumbuka, dropped out in F4

While participants discussed the physical challenges of accessing services and experiences at the clinic, stigma was also a key theme raised. Participants spoke about the fear that receiving a positive HIV test result could invoke. Men were seen as particularly scared of getting a positive test result. Participants reported that if they could afford it, men and women would travel to clinics far from Monkey Bay to prevent them from being seen as having HIV. At the government funded hospital in Monkey Bay Hospital, there was a clinic dedicated to providing HIV testing and treatment services. However, treatment was only dispensed on

certain days. Participants talked about how people were afraid to be seen going to the clinic on these days and being seen in this part of the hospital. Participants discussed how other community members preferred to go to Mangochi District Hospital, 70kms away, to access treatment so they wouldn't be seen in the queue.

In the following quote a male member of the village health committee discusses this point.

R1: A lot of people when they want to go for HCT [HIV counselling and testing] they go to hospitals as far away as Zomba [approximately 200kms away from Monkey Bay] and even when they are starting treatment they go as far Zomba so that it may not be known in the community that they are positive. These people are also a group of people that are living promiscuous. FGD, male ground labourer, Lomwe, married

Older men were perceived to be the most reluctant community members to go for testing. In the following quote a younger man in a focus group discussion highlights what he sees as the barriers for older men accessing testing services:

R3: On the part of older men, many of them fail to get tested for fear of being laughed at. They feel people will see them going for a blood test. Also, from what we hear in the community, older men feel it is hard to marry or to find a sexual partner when you are found with the virus [HIV]. So they feel it is better not to get tested because their relationships will continue regardless of whether they have the virus or not. But mostly they are afraid of stigma when found with the virus. They are also discouraged by the duration ARVs are taken; they feel they would

get tired of the treatment if they had HIV. So they say they will know what to do when get sick from the virus. FGD, boat crew member, 22-years-old, Tumbuka, dropped out of school in Form 3

Highlighted in this quote, and mirroring other participants' discussions around HIV testing, was the sense that people wanted to hide their status. In Village 2, a female key informant described how richer community members paid for the local private doctor to deliver their antiretroviral (ARV) medication at night so people would not see them going to collect drugs. None of the participants who discussed this were reporting their own behaviour and instead reported what they had heard other people did to access treatment. What these rumours suggested was that not everyone was comfortable openly living with HIV.

While there was evidence that stigma and fear prevented people from getting tested and seeking treatment, we also met men and women living openly with HIV in both of the villages and participants did discuss how there was more acceptance of people who were doing this. A female fish trader in the following quote articulates this situation:

I: are there many who are living with HIV?

R: yeah, because there are many who are on ART treatment that they live freely without any discrimination. So I have the courage that even if I was found HIV positive today I can live a long time. IDI, female petty trader, 32-year-old, Nyanja, married (for a second time), dropped out of school in S7

This quote and the others earlier in this section highlight the diversity in opinion that existed within the community around HIV stigma. The section also highlights the challenges that participants encountered when trying to access HIV services.

6.8 Suggested intervention strategies to prevent HIV

As it can be seen from the discussion earlier in this chapter, men and women living in the fishing communities had a good knowledge of HIV risk and the specific ways their communities were at risk from HIV. This highlighted that HIV prevention messages were being accessed and understood in the community. However, despite this understanding both men and women were still engaging in high-risk behaviour. In Chapter 5, I discussed how widespread transactional sex was occurring within the fishing communities and how specific groups were at risk due to their broader structural environment. Boat crew members, male fish traders, female fish traders new to the industry and female bar workers were all groups at risk of engaging in risky sex. Factors at the institutional/environmental, community, and household levels drove these groups to engage in high-risk behaviour. These included the gendered division of labour within the fishing industry; the social norms that condoned men having concurrent relationships; and the inward and outward migration that provided men with the opportunity to engage in transactional sex. The high risks involved in physically undertaking the fishing and the difficult living conditions that men and women faced when they travelled. All these factors are inter-related and shape involvement of both men and women in risky sexual behaviour. The wide number of factors that drive

risky behaviour means that a single intervention is unlikely to be successful and instead, successful interventions would need to aim at altering factors at multiple levels.

In the following section, I present findings on different strategies to prevent HIV in the fishing communities. These findings are based primarily on data collected during the participatory workshops. However, I have also included suggestions that were made by participants during other data collection methods. In Chapter 8 (Section 8.7), I return to the suggested interventions I present and discuss how they relate to my empirical findings, the wider academic literature and practical considerations of implementation.

6.8.1 Policy interventions in the fishing industry

Participants identified factors in the broader fishing environment that address vulnerability to HIV. There were a number of interventions that were suggested by participants to improve the environment. These included enforcing fishing regulations to preserve fish stocks; providing safety equipment for boat crew members and ensuring fishing boats and engines were maintained and seaworthy.

All the participants we interviewed talked about the changing nature of the fishing industry and about the level of fish-stocks in the water. Participants working in the fishing industry felt that fish were becoming scarce and more difficult to

locate. In the quote below an older female fish trader discusses the change in the industry:

R: Yeah, there is a great change in the fishing industry mainly on fish catches. In the past fishermen were not going to the far areas for fishing. They were catching around our beach and there were higher catches of fish than nowadays. People now go far in order to catch fish because fish is scarce. IDI, female fish trader, 59-years-old, Tumbuka, widow, dropped out in Standard 5

They discussed how there were more and more fishing boats being registered in the villages. All groups working in the fishing industry (male and female) felt that this combination of increasing numbers of fishing boats and lowering levels of fish stocks was driving boat crew members to travel much longer distances to access fish. As one participant notes *“The reason people travel in fishing is because fish is scarce.”* The participant then went on to discuss strategies to improve fish stocks:

P12: Therefore, the fisheries should teach us about how we can preserve the fish in the lake so that we don't travel. When the government orders that no boat should go onto the water to fish, when fish is breeding, everyone should abide by it. That way fish will be preserved in the lake. PW, Male Bar worker/labourer 28 years old, Chewa, married, dropped out of school in Form 2

As the participant in this quote notes, there were regulations in place to protect fish stocks. These included a closed season when fishing was banned. The closed

season was during the fish-breeding season (December and January) and was intended to protect the fish stocks. Certain types of nets were also banned as they caught very small fish and impacted on fish breeding. The beach village committees, which were elected by the communities, and in conjunction with the Fisheries Department, were responsible for enforcing the regulation. However, when we interviewed key informants at the village level they discussed how there were insufficient resources or tools to enforce these regulations.

At the beginning of my fieldwork, key informants told me about three policemen (who were working with the Fisheries department) drowning on Lake Chilwa (a fresh water lake situated in the Southern District) while they were trying to enforce fishing regulations. In their account of the event, the key informants discussed how faulty equipment had led to the men falling into the water and drowning (not all of the group could swim). One key informant described the consequences of this event as a “free for all” in terms of fishermen ignoring the fishing regulations on all Lakes in Malawi. This incident highlights how difficult, and at times, dangerous the enforcement of these regulations could be.

Participants linked the preservation of fish stocks and the prevention of HIV to improvements in the working conditions of fishermen by reducing the amount of travel required. Key informants also discussed how reducing this pressure could lead to less competition between female fish traders to access fish. Participants discussed dedicating resources and providing support services to members of the Village Beach Committees was one way to ensure regulations were enforced.

During the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, boat crew members often discussed their fear of drowning when they were out fishing. This was because the fishing took place at night and wind or poorly maintained boats could leave men vulnerable to falling into the water and being difficult to locate. During the periods of observation key informants discussed providing lifejackets and whistles to the boat crews could prevent men from drowning. As well as introducing regulation that ensured fishing boats were seaworthy and able to withstand heavy wind and rain would prevent boat crew members from drowning. Key informants saw that the aim of introducing these policies would be to lessen the risks boat crew members faced when they went fishing and therefore reduce the likelihood that they would drink to excess and engage in risky sex.

6.8.2 Strategies to improve condom use

As discussed earlier in this chapter (Section 6.5) there was distrust of condoms by both men and women within the study communities. There was also a perception that condoms could not be used in longer term, trusting relationships. However, there was more acceptance of condom use in casual relationships. Boat crew members, fish traders and female bar workers openly reported engaging in these relationships. These three groups also discussed the barriers that existed in accessing condoms. These barriers included shyness or fear of being seen buying condoms from local shopkeepers; limited access in rural areas; and the cost of buying condoms.

In the participatory workshops men and women identified a number of strategies to encourage men to use condoms. In one female participatory workshop the discussion focused on access and in particular providing access to condoms through to boat managers to men travelling for fishing expeditions:

R10: The government must provide condoms to the boat managers so that boat crews can move with them wherever they travel. There are some who are shy of getting condoms from the health providers and I feel like they cannot be shy to access them from the boat manager. This will mean that everyone will be able to move with a condom when going to do fishing. PW, vice-secretary of the village health committee, 44 years old, married, Chewa, dropped out of school in S6

Participants also identified the need to address rumours relating to condoms, particularly rumours that suggested condoms could be very harmful. Participants felt that the messages that were communicated both by health groups and by the radio were only positive and this allowed rumours to circulate without being addressed. One strategy that men discussed was through radio broadcasts.

P4: The radios should broadcast HIV and condom use messages, it is important PW, boat crew member/farmer, 48-year-old, married, Tumbuka, completed school

P17: The problem is they only give positive messages and not negative ones, now this comes out badly when the community hear about the negatives by themselves, and it becomes difficult to dispel them. They should start to talk about the

negatives and end with the positives so that the community should compare the two PW, petty trader, 26 years old, single, Chewa dropped out in Form 2

Men and women also discussed how changing social norms around trust and condom use would be challenging. One strategy that participants stressed was encouraging couples to go for HIV tests before they had sex so they did not have to always use condoms.

P7: The couple should go for HIV test so that they can trust each other, yes PW, boat crew member, 32 years old, married, Tumbuka, dropped out of school in Standard 6

Participants also felt this would be an important strategy if couples wanted to have children. Although this was in contrast to other findings I presented earlier in this Chapter (6.7) relating to the challenges women experienced persuading their husbands to go for testing.

6.8.3 Improving access to financial education and access to services

Throughout the data collection, boat crew members' inability to invest or save their money was frequently discussed by men and women. Participants discussed how boat crew members spent money on beer and having sex rather than saving

or using the money within their households. In the quote below a participant in a focus group discussion highlights that boat crew members did not save because they believe they would be paid more the following day:

R2: A fisherman is a 'bon-voyage' [actual words of the speaker]. Whenever he gets paid for the day, he thinks of spending the money on a woman. He does that because tomorrow he knows he is getting paid again. What he earns the next day is what he plans to take home. This happens because they earn a lot of money at once such that they don't know what to do with it. FGD, fish trader, 30-years-old, married, Yao, dropped out of school in Standard 7

In a male participatory workshop, one area that male participants identified to potentially intervene was by providing financial education and banking services particularly to the younger boat crew members. This is discussed in the quote below:

P4: I think the boat owners should be taught to help fishermen save money when they get paid instead of just spending money anyhow, try to at least organise them to get their wages through the local banks. PW, boat crew member/farmer, 48-year-old, married, Tumbuka, completed school

The emphasis in this discussion was that boat owners should be the group who provided this support and education. Another male participant in the participatory workshop discussed the idea of only giving men a small amount of money while they were on fishing expeditions and then the rest of the money when they returned home. Participants discussed how this intervention had the potential to

prevent HIV through providing men with less disposal income when they were away from home to spend on alcohol and women. This in turn would stop them from engaging in risky sex.

6.8.4 Improving living conditions for men and women when they travel

Men and women working in the fishing industry often experienced difficult living situations when they travelled. They slept on the beach or in cramped temporary housing. For men, forming temporary relationships or paying for sex was a way of seeking physical comfort. It was also practical because the gendered division of labour in the villages meant women and not men were responsible for food preparation. By having additional relationships men were able to have food cooked for them when they returned from fishing expeditions.

One key informant suggested the building of rest houses with good sanitation facilities in villages with large beach landings sites such as Village 2. The participant felt this would provide safe accommodation for men and women when they travelled away from home. If they had cooking facilities, this could allow men and women the opportunity to cook. If accommodation was large enough, it could allow for longer term migrant men to travel with their families.

6.8.5 Improving women's economic position

As discussed in Chapter 5 and earlier in this chapter, economic need was a driver for women's engagement in transactional sex. This included women who sold sex in bars as well as for female fish traders who were trying to build capital for their businesses. The gendered division of labour within the industry meant that women accessed money and fish through men. This meant that women had less power than men in their relationships. Women had fewer options that could generate capital and the options that were available often generated only small amounts of money. Men, particularly those involved in the fishing industry, had access to money and fish and as discussed in Chapter 5, they did at times use their position to pressure women into having sex with them. In the quote below the female participant discusses how women's limited access to capital drove engagement in transactional exchanges:

R19: Indeed we do business but we do have limited capital and because of limited capital, a woman does enter into a relationship so that he must help her to boost up her capital and then she gets HIV/AIDS. PW, female fish trader, 37-years-old, Chewa, married, dropped out of school in Standard 8

Men and women discussed a potential way of overcoming these imbalances was through strengthening women's economic position. The argument participants made was that by strengthening women's economic position, they would not need to depend on sexual relationships for their businesses or basic needs. One intervention that male and female participants identified as a possible way of improving women's economic position was microfinance loans. When

participants discussed microfinance loans, they were describing small loans that were offered mostly to poor rural women to help them develop income generation activities. In the quote below a female participant discusses how loans could be used to stop bar workers selling sex:

R15: To my side I was thinking that had it been that the government or NGOs help us in a way that of giving some loans to sex workers so that they can start other business and move them away from the bars. PW, firewood seller, 31-years-old, married, Tumbuka, dropped out of school in Standard 7

Women discussed how through accessing the loan they could improve the economic position of their families:

R16: I want to disagree with what R4 is saying, a person can not only survive through piece work. We are human being we get tired, if we can force ourselves in doing these piece works we can end up sick. Our request is still on money lending institutions please help us, in our village we have also a problem that only those people who are rich are the ones who are capable of getting loans. Even us who are poor we need to have access to loans so that things can change in our families. PW, female fish trader, 25-years-old, married, Tonga, dropped out of school in Standard 7

While, participants discussed how microfinance could improve women's economic position, other participants also discussed how microfinance could have

a negative impact on women because of the short repayment periods and high interest rates that were charged by the organisations. Participants also discussed how the poorest women were not able to access loans because they could not afford the deposits that were required. In Chapter 7, I provide a much more detailed account of microfinance and how it operated within the villages and how it shaped female fish traders vulnerability and resilience to HIV. I focused on microfinance because it was frequently mentioned throughout the data collection (not just during the participatory workshops). It was an area of current activity within the villages and there was a diverse range of viewpoints about the benefits but also the potential vulnerabilities in using it.

6.8.6 Interventions to support education and skills development

As discussed in Chapter 3, educational attainment in the Magochi district was very low. Very few of the study participants had completed school. In the participatory workshops, dropping out of school early was seen to be detrimental to both boys and girls. Participants discussed how this encouraged girls to have sexual relationships and boys to go into fishing. In the quote below a participant in the participatory workshop describes how this encouraged girls to engage in sexual relationships:

P11: Because of poverty you will find that a child fails to proceed with school. When she drops from school, she just stays in the community. And because she lacks something to do, the closest thing she can do is to engage in sexual activities.

PW, male fish trader, 53 years old, Tonga, married, left school in S7

Orphans were seen as a particularly vulnerable group and were discussed in both the male and female workshops:

P4: When children are in school, they have support from their parents. So when either the father or mother passes away, they lack someone to pay for their school fees. So many children here in our community lack school fees and the level of illiteracy keeps on rising. PW, boat crew member, 27 years old, Chewa, married, completed school

There were a number of strategies suggested by participants to encourage men and women from completing school or gaining technical skills later. There were two suggestions for helping boys and girls who cannot afford to attend school:

R9: We are still in need of an organization that can provide bursaries to children who cannot afford to pay their school fees PW, female fish trader, 24 years old, Tumbuka, single, dropped out of school in Standard 4

The second suggestion was to provide tailored support to orphans by providing them with school fees or establishing schools that could provide them with education and holistic support.

Participants also emphasised the need to provide educational opportunities for men and women who had already dropped out of school and already entered fishing. In one participatory workshop the male participants discussed one way to help this group:

P7: The problem can be addressed if organizations could equip them [school going children who drop from school to start fishing] with technical skills. Currently, when a child fails to pass standard, he is not allowed to redo the class. He has nowhere else to go if he fails to go to a community secondary school. He could go to a private secondary school but without money he can't go there. The only way he can raise money is if he goes onto the water to fish. His parents are poor and sometimes encourage him to go fishing because he can't proceed with school. So it could help if organizations could encourage them by providing them with them different technical skills. PW, male fish trader, 36 years old, Ngoni, married, dropped out of school in Form 4

In the quote below the participant discusses how the government could provide adult literacy classes:

R4: There are also other older people they drop out from school but still they have the desire to being classes again. So we are requesting that the government provide us with adult literacy classes. PW, firewood seller, 27 years old, Chewa, married, dropped out of school in S8

6.8.7 Improving access to HIV testing and treatment services

In Village 2, access to health services was both challenging and expensive for community members. During the male participatory workshop in Village 2, participants discussed strategies to overcome these barriers to accessing treatment. The emphasis during these discussions was on situating services much closer to the community. One participant suggested that a mobile clinic could come to the village and provide testing. However, other participants argued that the services

should be permanent to allow access all year round rather than for short windows that mobile services would provide. The quotes below highlight some of this discussion.

P14: That is true. But it shouldn't be a mobile clinic as such. It should be something like a fixed health unit where people can go and get tested. And it is our request that this thing should be done here in our village because mobile clinics come here only once in a year. The distance to the hospital is too long. There would be more people getting tested if the hospital was within the community. PW, fish trader/politician, 44-years-old, married, Tonga, dropped out in Form 2

P6: To add on that, if it could be possible, ARVs should also be available there [if the clinic could be established within the community]. Because, when you go out, other people will know that you are taking ARVs. PW, boat crew member/fish trader, 32-years-old, married, Chewa, dropped out in Standard 7

What the second participant also emphasises is that providing treatment services at the village level would improve uptake of treatment. In the participatory workshop with female participants in Village 2, women also discussed the importance of providing services within the village.

6.8.8 Preventing excessive alcohol consumption

Throughout the periods of observation we frequently witnessed men drinking to excesses. We often saw fights breaking out in and outside the bars and men were often drunk from very early in the morning. Participants in the interviews and focus group discussions reported excessive alcohol consumption with younger men being the group most likely to do this. Drinking to excess was seen as one of the reasons men slept with women working in the bars.

Key informants reported that women in Village 2 were so unhappy with their husbands drinking all night they had petitioned the Chief to insist that the bars were shut at midnight. There was a short period when the ban was upheld but it was quickly lifted. These key informants also discussed how re-instating this ban would be one way of limiting men's alcohol consumption.

6.9 Conclusion

In the study communities, participants had a good understanding of the modes of HIV transmission. Women living in poverty, high-levels of inward and outward mobility and transactional sex were all viewed as key drivers. However, participants did not always view themselves as at risk, despite engaging at times in high-risk behaviours. All female bar workers discussed how fearful they were of HIV, however, they faced challenges negotiating condom use with their clients. Men and women saw suggesting the use of a condom with a steady partner

introduced doubt and suspicion into that relationship. Men discussed their strong dislike of condoms because they felt they inhibited sexual pleasure. Mens' sexual desire and pleasure took precedence over womens', which often left women with difficult dilemmas in their relationships.

Participants identified important areas for intervening to prevent HIV. One of the key areas was changing the broader structural environment by enforcing fishing regulation and improving the safety of fishing expeditions. Women's economic dependence on men was seen as a key driver and one solution participants identified was the offering of microfinance loans. However, other participants had discussed how microfinance increased HIV vulnerability. In the following chapter I present the findings from additional research we conducted to explore the challenges and opportunities that microfinance offered men and women.

7 “You think you can manage to feed your family, while you are selling your life by taking a loan” Understanding microfinance and HIV in fishing communities in Southern Malawi

7.1 Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, access to, and ability to maintain capital was a central reason why some female fish traders engaged in transactional sex.

Throughout the data collection, microfinance¹⁶ emerged as a tool that both provided women with economic independence from their male partners, but also created economic vulnerability and increased risk of HIV. As discussed in Chapter 4 (section 4.7), to explore this further, we conducted a second series of in-depth interviews with purposefully sampled female and male fish traders who had taken microfinance loans from a range of microfinance (MF) organisations working in the two villages. The data presented in this chapter is mainly drawn from the second round of in-depth interviews.

In this chapter I focus the discussion on the presence of microfinance organisations within the two study villages and how these operations shaped both vulnerability and resilience for female fish traders. I decided to do this because of the importance that the study participants placed on microfinance and also because of the complex ways it played out in the fishing communities.

This chapter is structured in the following way:

¹⁶ In this discussion I am using the term microfinance to refer to the provision of small loans (called “micro-credit”) or savings services for people excluded from the formal banking system.

In section 7.2, I discuss the presence of different microfinance organisations, the administration of the loans including policies relating to group formation and repayment periods. In section 7.3, I discuss participants' experiences of receiving microfinance loans. In this section I also discuss both the benefits that participants reported from receiving the loan and the ways in which microfinance could make participants economically vulnerable. In section 7.4, I discuss how this economic vulnerability could at times drive female fish traders to engage in transactional sex and in turn place them at an increased risk of HIV. In section 7.5 I discuss a different lending approach that women within the village have established and used as an alternative to microfinance.

7.2 Microfinance organisations within the study communities

There were many microfinance organisations in the two study villages. This situation was reflected in most of the other eleven MAFESSTA study villages, particularly those with a considerable involvement in fishing. Participants identified eight organisations that were currently operating or had previously operated in the villages. Of these, participants most frequently discussed five organisations. Participants perceived the organisations to have slightly different procedures in terms of repayment, saving, deposit required to take the loan, loan size, interest rates and timing for distribution of the loan and I have outlined these differences in Table 7.1. To ensure anonymity of the participants we have not included the names of the MF organisations.

Table 7.1: Reported differences between microfinance organisations

Organisation	Reported differences
Lender A	Repayment within 2 weeks of loan disbursement; Deposit required; Progressively larger loan sizes; Viewed to have high interest rates and less flexibility; Savings kept within the organisation; Provided loans to women and men (although majority women); NGO
Lender B	Were seen to be more flexible with a 3 month lag between the loan and the first repayment; Perceived to have lower interest rates than Lender A; Provided smaller loans; Slower to distribute the money Hard for participants to get subsequent loans quickly; NGO
Lender C	Monthly repayments; Seen as requiring a larger deposit; Participants discussed losing this deposit when their groups were unable to make the repayments; Government owned and run
Lender D	Provides a grace period of approximately a month and a half before repayments began; No flexibility once repayments had begun Allowed participants to gain larger loans once they had successfully repaid Provided loans to both male and female participants; NGO
Lender E	Only lend to women; Repayment due every two weeks; Viewed as having higher interest rates; NGO

In this chapter the majority of the data presented is drawn from the second round of in-depth interviews that we conducted with 12 participants (8 female and 4 male). In [Appendix A](#), I present the demographic details of these participants. We conducted one or two interviews with each of these participants, holding a second interview with participants if we felt there were subsequent questions to follow up with. We purposively sampled individuals who had received a loan from a range

of organisations. When participants discussed their experiences, they had often taken loans from at least two of the five main organisations operating and spoke about their different experiences with these organisations. Their decision to change organisations was often shaped by their experiences of borrowing from one organisation and their perception of the different policies that another organisation had.

7.2.1 Different constituents using microfinance

In all the discussions relating to microfinance, participants reported borrowing money in groups rather than as individuals. Participants joined MF organizations in groups of between 10 and 20 and received the loan together on the same day. The group assumed responsibility for repaying the whole loan rather than just their own portion of the money.

In the sampling frame we initially wanted older and younger groups of men and women taking loans from a range of MF organisations operating in the village. We only identified one younger male participant who was borrowing from an organisation that was established to offer loans to youth groups. The rest of the participants reported receiving loans from the five main organisations and were all over 30 and all had been married (although not all of them were still with their husbands or wives). When we asked key informants why MF organisations did not have younger clients they discussed how young people were not viewed as serious about business and therefore were not able to join lending groups.

Participants saw women as the preferred target group for microfinance organisations and they were the group most likely to have taken a loan. The male participants we interviewed were all in the minority in their loan groups.

Participants reported that Lender E exclusively lent money to women. When we explored why participants felt that women were the targets of these programmes, most participants felt that women needed the loans more than men. This need was shaped by their limited access to other livelihood strategies that could generate business capital. As discussed in Chapter 5, women were often limited to fetching and selling firewood or selling cooked food (such as fritters or selling *nsima*). These activities only generated small financial returns. If men required business funds they could, and often did, generate them through fishing.

One central reason that participants felt the MF organisations focused their activities on women was that they trusted women but not men to repay the loans. In the quote below the 40-year-old female fish trader discusses why she thinks MF organisations only lend money to women:

What they found bad about giving a loan to a man is that if he brings the loan home, the wife fails to have power over it. He just spends the money on beer and sleeping with women. But if he fails to pay back the loan, the wife is the one who faces the problems, because a woman is the one who spends full time at home. IDI, female fish trader, 40-year-old, Tonga, married, traded larger fresh fish on a large scale, dropped out of school in Standard 8.

In the quote the female fish trader highlights both how men's lifestyles were not viewed as conducive to taking a loan. The participant also highlights that if men took the loan and failed to pay it back, it is their wives who took responsibility and face the consequences.

Participants discussed men being perceived as untrustworthy with money for a number of reasons. Men were not viewed as being serious about the loans and could use them for spending time at the bar drinking and having sex with bar workers. They were also seen as highly mobile because of their fishing activities and could be away from home for long periods of time, which could prevent them from repaying the loan. These perceptions were also reflected in the broader community perceptions about men, particularly men who travelled to fish, as being untrustworthy with money because they spent it on alcohol and women and not within their household. Instead women were viewed as more serious about building fish trading businesses because they were the ones who provided food for the family.

In the following quote a male fish trader who took a loan from Lender A provides a typical discussion of how participants discussed this:

I: Also, women are the ones mostly interested to do business. That's why they are also mostly involved in taking loans from organizations. Also, most of the organizations trust women more than men. They feel we men are crooks so they prefer women to men.

I: What do they exactly mean when they say men are crooks?

P: They say men are crooks because a man could take a loan today and suddenly start thinking about going to a bar to drink. So, as you go out to drink,

you will realise you have spent half of the money. But women can't take money to a bar, no. [When they have received a loan], they will directly bring it home. IDI male fish trader, 39-years-old, Tumbuka, married, dropped out of school in Form 3,

To overcome this barrier, participants reported that men would use their wives to access the loan and then they took control of the loan for their business. In the following quote the same male participant as above discusses how some men use their wives as a way of overcoming this barrier of access:

Also, in other households, there are husbands who ask their wives to go and take a loan. They don't want the public to know that they are taking a loan, but they mutually agree in the house that the wife should go and take a loan. IDI male fish trader, 39-years-old Tumbuka, married, dropped out of school in Form 3, Village 1

In this situation the male fish trader described a process that was undertaken with mutual consent. However, men could also pressure women into taking loans on their behalf and then leave them with the responsibility of repaying.

7.2.2 Group formation and procedures

The formation of groups was an important step before individuals could receive loans. Participants discussed forming their groups independently from the MF organisations and then presenting themselves as a group to the organisation once this had happened. The MF loan officers then required a written affidavit from the Chief to confirm that all the members of the group were known to be residents

and not temporarily staying in the village. Participants felt that MF organisations required this because of the highly mobile nature of the fishing industry and that previously MF organisations had lent money to men and women who had relocated once they had received their loans and failed to repay the money. When we explored further the MF practices for recruitment a 40-year-old key informant felt that there had been a proliferation of MF organisations working in the communities and this had led to greater competition for clients which in turn had led to relaxation of their regulations.

The power to decide who was included within the group came from other group members. A 27-year-old female fish trader who engaged in small scale trading described in an IDI how she felt her friends hid their involvement in MF organisations from her because of her financial situation. She felt they did this because they didn't want her in their group because she would not be able to repay the loan. While she was the only participant who discussed feeling like this; other participants discussed how groups could discriminate against other groups such as younger unmarried women. This was because of fear that they wouldn't be able to repay. In the following quote a 40-year-old female fish trader who took a loan with Lender D, and had previously used Lender A, described this:

Now, with the loans we are allowed to take, we normally don't accept to have into the groups a woman who is unmarried and just a youth because we fear that she might not manage a loan considering the terms of the loan providers IDI, female fish trader, 40-year-old, Tonga, married, traded larger fresh fish on a large scale, dropped out of school in Standard 8.

The MF organisations were also reported to require a deposit for the loan. This deposit acted as a barrier for poorer women from borrowing money. In an FGD with women who traded fish on a small scale (and were therefore poorer), women discussed being unable to afford the deposit, which was reported to be approximately 10% of the value of the loan.

R10: We don't join these groups because of the deposit they expect one to pay before getting the loan. The deposit is more than our capital that is why we decide not to join these groups FGD, small-scale fish trader, 42-year-old Chewa, separated from husband, dropped out of school in primary standard 6

One aspect of group formation that came up consistently was that groups required members to register their household property at the start of the loan cycle. Some of the participants discussed groups appointing an auditor to confirm that the property they had registered was in their possession and that it was worth what the participant had claimed it to be. Participants reported registering items such as livestock, kitchen utensils, bedding and furniture. Some participants also described other people registering their houses with the group. The purpose of this property registration was that if the participants were unable to repay their loans then the group could confiscate the property and sell it to recover the money to repay their loan.

Another component of the group formation that participants discussed was the process of vouching for another member. If, when the group was being formed, other members of the group were unsure about whether a participant would be able to repay the loan, they would ask a participant in the group to vouch for the member. By vouching for the person they were agreeing to repay the other

participant's loan, either with money or with the property they had registered if the participant had been unable to do so. It was usually a friend or relative who vouched for that person.

The microfinance organisations did not seem to be involved in this process and instead it was the group's members who came up with their own practices for running the groups, although, it did appear the loan officers were aware of the registering of property because some of the participants reported providing the loan officer with written copies of these forms. Given how consistently this practice was described, it is likely that the loan officers who worked directly with the groups encouraged the practice. At the beginning of the loan cycles, participants also described being told that they could face arrest by the police if they did not repay their loans.

7.2.3 Repayment procedures

In Table 6.1, I outlined the differences participants reported between the five MF organisations that were most discussed in the villages. The organisation that was perceived to have the least flexibility in their repayment policies was Lender A. Participants were required to repay the money within two weeks of the loan being disbursed to the group. Most participants said that with Lender A the repayment date was fixed, although one 36-year old male participant described being able to negotiate for monthly repayments with Lender A for his group. In the quote below he describes this and why Lender A would not consider this for other groups:

The reliability of our group was that ever since we had formed the group, loan officers never came to follow up on us. When the repayment date was due, on the 26th of a month, we would all come together, pay back our loans and then bank the money. So, we complained to the loan officers and asked if they could change the repayment to a month [from two weeks] for us. They [loan officer from Lender A] said our group was number one [in terms of meeting loan repayments] and therefore could not reject our request. Then they started offering us monthly repayments. But they refuse to consider other groups because they want the money to give them pressure. They want them to start looking for money as soon as they see the two weeks approaching the end. But for us, because of our credibility, they don't think we would have problems, they have had trust in us up to now. IDI, male fish trader, 39-years-old Tumbuka, married, dropped out of school in Form 3

Lender D was also reported to have very fixed repayment dates but provided participants with a longer grace period. A 40-year-old female fish trader reported this being a month and a half. She felt this allowed her time to develop her business rather than with Lender A where repayment was required immediately.

Lender E was also reported to have bi-monthly repayment schedules. Lender C was reported to have the most flexibility in their repayment schedules.

Participants reported being given 3 months before repayment was due and that there was often flexibility when the participants had to repay if the group was struggling they were given more time. Participants also reported that they had smaller loan sizes and once participants had repaid one loan they had to wait a period of up to a year to access another one.

7.2.4 Use of the loan

All the participants we interviewed who received loans were involved in fish trading. For the female participants this was their primary mode of income generation although some would use the profits to buy tomatoes or beans and sell them in their local area. All the female participants discussed travelling to buy and sell fish. They often travelled to markets further than their home areas. For the male participants they also had other businesses that they developed in addition to fish trading. These businesses included carpentry, butchery and building and renting dwellings in the village.

7.3 Participants experiences of taking microfinance loans

Participants reported complex interactions between themselves and the microfinance organisations. In the following section I explore these interactions and how they shaped men and women's economic resilience and vulnerability.

7.3.1 Benefits of receiving a microfinance loan

While none of the participants reported overwhelmingly positive experiences with microfinance, there were a number of participants who felt their lives had been improved by taking the loans. Examples included the loans allowing them to grow their businesses and improving the economic position of their households, including allowing them to pay for their children's school fees, buying clothes and food and in some cases building houses. For this reason participants often expressed gratitude at being able to access loans. In the quote below one 34-year-old female fish trader describes how using microfinance helped her:

Borrowing money has helped me. As I don't have a mother or a husband, the money from the organization is what is helping me. It is serving as my mother, father and husband. It assists me in everything I do IDI, female fish trader, 34 year-old, Tumbuka, divorced from husband for second time, dropped out standard 8

In this quote the participant discusses using microfinance in very positive terms. I have included it because it is illustrative of the high esteem some (although not all) participants held for microfinance organisations and the personal connections they felt they had with the organisations. The quote also demonstrates that female participants felt that microfinance provided economic support when this was absent in their lives. This participant also went on to discuss that access to loans provided her with financial freedom from male sexual partners and stopped her from engaging in what she termed “promiscuous behaviour” as a means of accessing money.

A final way that participants felt they gained from microfinance was the group aspect of the loans. Some (again not all) of the participants reported gaining solidarity from being part of the groups and one 50-year old female participant who was a client of Lender E reported that borrowing as a group had enabled her to learn good business practices from the other group members.

7.3.2 Challenges of repayment

While participants did speak positively about having access to microfinance loans there were consistent testimonies that the loans increased economic vulnerability. This economic vulnerability was shaped by both the administration of the loans

and the unpredictable nature of the fishing industry. As discussed in Chapter 5, the fishing industry could be highly unpredictable with constant variations in the supply and demand of fish. Women faced hierarchies of access where wealthier and socially better-connected women had more secure access to fish. Women who were poorer or had less social connections found access harder. Processing fish could be challenging particularly during the rainy season, when fish could rot on the drying benches. Traders also faced challenges with realising profit at the market. Microfinance provided women and men with temporarily better access to business capital but it did not change the broader structures and inequalities that existed within the fishing industry. Further, microfinance could at times make fish trader's livelihood strategies more stressful and at times more difficult. The period between MF organisations providing participants with a loan and the participant having to repay the loan was very short. Buying fish, processing it and then selling it were all time consuming activities. At each point in this process the buying of fish, especially if travel was required, the processing of fish and the selling at market were time consuming and fraught with potential challenges. Microfinance loans placed incredible pressure on fish traders by giving tight deadlines with the consequence of property confiscation. This was particularly difficult for women, who had fewer alternative income generation opportunities than men. Women also reported that when loans were given to a large number of people in the community, this increased pressure for fish traders to buy and could lead to increases in fish prices. Higher fish prices meant that there was further pressure on fish traders to make a profit at the market.

In the following quote about the challenges of selling fish at the market this 28-year-old bar tender and boat crew member discusses how he saw this affected female fish traders' ability to repay their loans:

It is true.. fish catches these days change from time to time. They could buy fish but they find the market full of fish when they get there. They also find the price lower than the price at which they bought the fish. When they come back to buy more fish, they find that the price has also gone up. With this, the loan cannot benefit you. Some of them end up having their property forfeited because you initially consent to give your property should you fail to repay the loan. PW, bar tender/boat crew member, 28-year-old, Chewa, married, dropped out of school in Form 2

Lender A's very short repayment policies were most often cited as creating challenges for participants. They required participants to repay the loan within two weeks after receiving it and this could create problems especially during periods of low fish catches. In the following quote a 54-year-old female fish trader described receiving a loan and being unable to repay it because there were low fish catches:

I once joined Lender A but what was happening was at the time I took the loan there was no catches throughout that time. My children were going to school they needed fees so I just used some of the money I took from Lender A. After some days you hear that Lender A personnel they need the money from us so I just decided to quit Lender A because I was having problems. IDI 54-year-old, Tonga,

divorced, female fish trader and collects firewood, dropped out of school at Standard 2

This was not the only participant who discussed using the loan for household expenses such as school fees and food rather than developing their business.

When fish catches were low fish traders would use the loan for immediate household expenses that they needed to pay and were then unable to use the loan for income generation activities making it difficult to repay the loan. Participants discussed how these short repayment periods made them feel that taking a loan did not help them to improve their financial situation or support their families and at times made them poorer. The high interest rates that the organisations charged loan recipients were also viewed as contributing to participants feeling poorer.

If the microfinance organisations were slow to distribute the loan then participants also struggled to access fish:

Sometimes you plan to get a loan during a period of high fish catches but they [the microfinance organization] release very late. They release the loan when the season has passed. You feel happy just because you have received the loan but you can't use it for business that time. After three weeks of getting the loan, you are expected to start repaying the loan, but there is no fish to buy. It becomes painful. PW, boat crew member/fish trader, 38-year-old, Tumbuka, married, dropped out in Standard 6

The quote above shows that there were only limited windows of opportunity when a loan would enable female fish traders to improve their economic position. It was

not always possible for fish traders to predict when this timing would occur and if MF were slow to distribute but quick to enforce repayment, female fish traders experienced challenges in repaying.

When participants were struggling to repay the loan, almost universal in this study, they discussed various coping strategies to find the money. These included using business capital that they had saved in addition to the loan, savings they had built up with the microfinance organisation, borrowing from relatives, spouses and friends, borrowing from money lenders, selling their household goods or livestock and engaging in transactional sex. I will return to discuss transactional sex and HIV vulnerability later in the chapter.

Only one of all the participants who discussed microfinance reported never having problems with repayment. He was a male fish trader who in an earlier quote described how his group was able to negotiate longer repayment periods with Lender A. He also had a number of businesses that he ran apart from the fish trading business including butchery and the renting of properties that he built. He was therefore one of the wealthiest participants we interviewed and was able to use profits from businesses that were less dependent on the fish trade. All other participants discussed how challenging repayment could be.

7.3.3 Stress and anxiety relating to repayments

Most of the participants who we interviewed discussed feeling stressed and anxious when they were trying to repay their loans. This worry was experienced regardless of whether the participant had been able to repay their loan or not. The participant in the quote above that described microfinance organisations as being a replacement for her husband and family members also discussed the stress and worry that repaying the loan can cause.

I did the business frequently trying to make money because you don't sleep if you borrow somebody's money. You always think about returning it... I managed because I am afraid..... When a repayment day becomes due, or I should say when a repayment day is a week away, you can start looking for the money until you have enough to repay IDI, female fish trader, 34-years-old, Tumbuka, divorced from husband for second time, dropped out standard 8

One female participant who had taken a total of five loans from Lender A articulated the consequences of this worry for the loan recipient:

I: What do you think are the challenges associated with taking a loan?

P: You meet many, so many challenges that you end up hanging yourself because of having so many worries about how to repay a loan. You don't have any relatives to turn to start wondering where you are going to find the money to pay back the loan. IDI, female fish trader 37-years-old, Tonga, widowed then divorced, dropped out of school in standard 8

This female fish trader cited a very extreme reaction to dealing with the challenges of taking a loan and we did not find any participants discussing anyone

who had actually killed themselves because they had been unable to repay the loan. Yet, this was not the only female participant who discussed suicide and highlights how worried participants could feel about repaying their loans. Other participants also discussed the risk of arrest if they were unable to repay the loan and one participant discussed being told by the group at the beginning of the loan cycle that this could be a consequence of her failing to repay the loan.

7.3.4 Consequences of failing to repay

The stress and anxiety that participants felt about repaying their loans was directly related to the consequences they would face if they were unable to meet their repayments. Confiscation of property, including their houses, was most feared by participants. The group nature of the borrowing created extra pressure for participants to repay. All their members had to repay for groups to gain access to further loans (often of a higher value) and if the group failed to repay, then the members who had paid back would not be able to access another loan. It was also the groups and not the microfinance organisations that were responsible for collecting money when repayments were due. If a group member was unable to repay the loan then other members of the group would often have to provide the shortfall.

Groups were often made up of neighbours, friends and sometimes relatives and the public aspect of failing to repay could be very humiliating for the loan recipients. Groups could also make decisions on whether to help a participant with their repayments on the basis of how the group viewed the participant's behaviour. If the participant was not deemed to be behaving correctly then the

groups might not help them with the outstanding repayments. This misbehaviour related to how the participant was seen to use the loan. If the group did not believe the participant was using the loan to grow their business but instead spent the money in the household on school fees or food then the group may not help to repay the loan. The power to confiscate property gave the groups power over all its members, yet, it tended to be the poorest and least well socially connected who had their property confiscated. This was because they were the ones who were least likely to be able to find extra money if they were struggling with repayment.

In the following quote, a female fish trader discusses how some groups could be very aggressive in pursuing participants who were struggling to make their repayments. While, this was a theme that was discussed by many of the participants, I included this quote because the participant was particularly eloquent at discussing this.

I feel there is always a risk because if someone doesn't have any money to pay the loan back, the kind of punishment they give him/her is too much. Because if the group has a meeting today on Wednesday, and you don't have any money to pay back, you start moving around the community trying to see if you can borrow money from someone. If you don't find the money and when you turn up at the meeting, you are not really respected. Many say, "We are coming to your house". There is a Lender A group which I usually see gathering under that tree over there. They really show no respect for one another because they might go to somebody's house may be around 6am and remain there until 10am. They are doing that to you even when you don't have any means of raising the money on

that particular day. You may have tried to borrow from people but failed, but they insist that they get money from you so that they can bank it. So, even though people have not done it before, some of them run away from their houses escaping to another place leaving their children behind. They run away because of a challenge like this one which they might have encountered at that particular time.

IDI, female fish trader, 33-year-old, Tonga, married, dropped out in primary standard 6

When we explored issues about property confiscation further, the 40-year-old female fish trader who had experience of taking loans with both Lender A and Lender D described the process. She said that property confiscation was only done as a final recourse if the participant had been struggling to repay the loan throughout the loan cycle. She described this as occurring at ‘injury time’ when members of the group had tried to help with all other options and the time had run out for repayment of the whole loan. Other participants also discussed property confiscation happening at the end of the repayment period rather than something that happened throughout the loan cycle. In the following quote the 36-year-old male participant who reported not having challenges repaying his loan described the process of property confiscation by the group. I have included this quote as it provides some insight into how group members who confiscate property come to this decision. This was one of the few incidents that a participant narrated their role in confiscating other group members’ property.

Well, if I had no money...we encourage every group member to save money with the organization so that if you have problems, the loan officer can write a letter

signed by the Chairman and Secretary of the group and send it to the headquarters. At the headquarters, they can then transfer that person's savings to Lender A for the required repayment. If the savings of the person are not enough to meet the repayment, then every group member has to contribute so that the amount being owed to the organization is raised. Or else, we the group members should go to that person's house to take away and sell the property which they registered and declared to the group that could be sold out if they had problems paying back their loan. Not grabbing the property by force and without their consent. When they show the group the property, we ask them, "Are you willingly surrendering the property from the bottom of your heart? Maybe you have other means of raising the money?" Then they tell you saying, "No, I have tried several means of raising the money but I am not finding it. I am willingly releasing this property." That's when we now look for someone to buy the property. If any of the group members wants to buy it, they buy it. We then use the money for meeting the repayment so that we don't owe the organization any money, IDI male fish trader, 36-year-old, Tumbuka, married for a second time, graduated from secondary school

In this discussion, he emphasises that the person who is having their property confiscated gives the group their consent: this could be interpreted as suggesting that he is not altogether comfortable with this practice. In this description he is part of the group who is doing the confiscating and participants who had their property confiscated described how stressful, publicly humiliating and economically ruinous it could be. In the quote he also discussed how other members could buy the confiscated property. In other interviews participants

discussed how confiscated property might be sold cheaply to ensure the money was found quickly. This suggests that group members could actually have an economic incentive to confiscate the property of other members.

One challenge that came up in a number of interviews in relation to property confiscation was the issue of participants who had their property confiscated because they had vouched for another group member; participants had been able to repay their own loans but had been unable to repay the loan of the participant they had vouched for. In this following quote a 47-year-old female fish trader discusses this scenario.

I: How much was the money that you failed to repay?

P: I had this property grabbed not because I had failed to repay my loan, but rather because of bearing witness for someone. I bore witness for someone who I had trusted but later ran away and escaped to the northern region. When the person had gone to the northern region, the property which was confiscated was mine, because the person was not reliably settled. She had no house. IDI, female fish trader, 47-year-old, Tumbuka, divorced (second time), dropped out of school at Standard 8

In this situation the person who had trusted a relative or friend was economically penalised. The property confiscated usually included items such as bedding, cooking utensils, clothes and livestock. In the household women were responsible for providing food and having this property confiscated affected them more than their husbands.

When considering whether to take a loan, participants (both male and female) often reported a period of reflection and discussion with other family members. They usually discussed it with their sexual partner or close family member although this depended on how much trust they had within this relationship. One of the female participants described scenarios where participants didn't inform their partners. In the following case a 40-year-old fish trader described how the first time a wife discovered her husband had taken a loan was when the group confiscated her property.

When you are moving with other women, people whisper to one another, "You have seen her? Her husband took a loan, but he did not inform her. Today, she has been grabbed of her clothes. All the clothes and the suits she was being boastful about have been taken away by the group, and are being sold out now. This affects you so much." IDI, Female fish trader, 40-year-old, Tonga married for a second time, dropped out of school in standard 8

Again this shows how publically humiliating this process could be, particularly for a women who had not known that there was a loan outstanding and that her property could be confiscated if it wasn't repaid.

One female fish trader who was half way through her fifth loan cycle when the interview took place discussed the fear of property confiscation. She had successfully repaid four loans. She was married to a man that she had believed was divorced from his first wife. When she collected her fifth loan, her husband stole the money and returned to his first wife. She described how stressful and painful she was finding it, trying to repay this loan and how she was now struggling economically. She was not the only participant who discussed the way

loans could have a negative impact on family relations. Other participants discussed hiding their loans from their husbands for fear they would use the money for either drinking or sex and subsequently leaving their wives to make the repayments.

7.4 Microfinance, transactional sex and HIV

From the earliest interviews participants reported microfinance as contributing to the vulnerability of some women to HIV. In Chapter 5, I discussed how female fish traders used transactional sex to access fish or generate capital for their businesses. Female fish traders' engagement in transactional sexual exchanges was often shaped by the unpredictability of the supply of fish at the lake and the demand for fish at the market. Female fish traders who were poorer or less well socially connected could struggle to access fish and lacked economic resources to cushion their income generation activities if they made a loss either during the processing or the selling of the fish. This situation, particularly when loans were given with very short repayment periods, increased the pressure for women to access fish quickly and to sell fish at a profit at the market. Given that both of these were areas for risk for female fish traders, taking loans could increase the chances of female fish traders engaging in transactional sex. The threat of property confiscation which was both publically humiliating and worsened women's economic position, increased the pressure on women to make money and repay the loan. Generating money outside the fish trade was not an option in the study villages: income generation was almost completely dependent on fish

catches and where there were very few alternative livelihood strategies, especially for women.

Both female and male participants discussed female fish traders' engagement in transactional sex as a consequence of taking a loan. When it was discussed it was often seen as a last resort particularly when a repayment was due. In the following quote a 40-year-old female fish trader discussed how this pressure to repay a loan could force women into engaging in transactional sex:

Agreement is a painful thing. If you promise to pay back K17,500 by the 30th of a month, you must do so no matter what. But you will find that you have been to the market three times and made losses on all the trips, and the repayment date may only be a few days away. There you decide to do something unacceptable which cannot help your life. You can put yourself at a certain risk. You will decide to do that so that perhaps you can raise K17,500... You can have sex with any man when you actually don't want it. You can sleep with him thinking that perhaps he can give you K2000. You think that if he can give K2000, and if you could add it with the K2500 [remaining after removing K17,500 from K20000 that may be left in the house], you take the loan so that you can manage to feed your family, while you are actually selling your life because of taking a loan. IDI, Female fish trader,

40-year-old, Tonga, married for a second time, dropped out of school in standard

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This quote highlights how women were driven to engage in transactional sex because of the pressure to repay their microfinance loan. In the quote the pressure that is created by the unpredictability of the fishing industry also comes across

when the fish trader described the continual trips to the market and the inability to sell the fish. When she describes how sleeping with a man may provide Kw2000 she is also suggesting that this may not happen (i.e. the man may not be prepared to give her money even if she slept with him). This again demonstrates the multiple uncertainties that fish traders have to negotiate when they take a loan. She also described having sex as something that one had to do to ensure the loan is repaid. What is also clearly articulated is the relationship between taking a loan, engaging in transactional sex and becoming infected with HIV. This female fish trader was not the only participant who articulated this link. It also emerged during the earlier interviews and focus group discussions.

Participants also scrutinised women's conduct when they took a loan. This was discussed earlier when groups were deciding to provide economic support for one of their members who was unable to make the repayment. This perceived mismanagement of the loan was also seen as a key driver for women engaging in transactional sex. In the quote below a female fish trader describes how this happened.

Some of them just squander the loan, but they lack means of raising the money back. So they end up being proposed by a 'child' or someone else or even 'cabana' (bosses), "Woman, I am interested in you". When she sees that she has a loan to pay back, she offers to sell her body in order to raise money to pay back to the group, when she actually doesn't know about the health status of the man like whether he is infected or not. If the man is infected, it means she is going to

contract the infection IDI Female fish trader, 33-year-old, Tonga, married, dropped out of school in primary standard

This participant also clearly articulates the relationship between engaging in transactional sex, taking a loan and contracting HIV. This was a common observation which showed that while taking a loan could be beneficial to some participants, it increased vulnerability in others.

From the data overwhelmingly, participants felt microfinance placed women in a vulnerable position and increased the likelihood that they would engage in transactional sex and in turn contract HIV. This was because of the multiple uncertainties that women had to negotiate when working within the fishing industry. The pressure and uncertainty was exacerbated by the microfinance loans, particularly ones with very short repayment windows that meant women had to repay the loans or face the humiliation of having their property confiscated.

Transactional sex was an option if female fish traders failed to access fish or made a loss at the market. However, not all female fish traders engaged in the practice and some did return to their homes and slowly build up their lost capital through other income generation activities. However, when women took the loans they had much more pressure to make a profit and much harder to return from the market having made a loss. This increased the likelihood that women would engage in transactional sex and therefore increased vulnerability to HIV.

7.5 Alternative lending strategies

During the data collection participants also discussed establishing their own lending groups as an alternative to the microfinance organisations. When discussing this method of lending, participants described how they would support each other with longer repayment periods and that they wouldn't confiscate group members' property. As a way of providing more detailed information about this form of lending I have constructed a case study from one female fish trader. The data was taken from an in-depth interview.

Case study of Alinafe

Alinafe was a 33-year-old female fish trader who practiced *kamtuteni* or small-scale fish trading. She was Anglican, from the Tonga tribe and was originally from Nkhata Bay, in the Northern Region of Malawi. Like many other people living in Village 1 she had relocated from the Northern Region with her family. They were attracted to the high fish yields that were found on the Southern-arm of Lake Malawi where the water is shallower and better suited to the artisan fishing techniques that the Tonga and Tumbuka have traditionally used.

At the age of 16 she dropped out of school when she was in primary school Standard 6 because she fell pregnant with her first child. She described how her sexual partner would give her money – up to Kw200 as a way of luring her to have sex with him. Alinafe said she was receiving money from her family but that she took the money because she enjoyed having more.

Her sexual partner was at school in Makanjira a town in Mangochi approximately 50kms away. They met when at a football match at her school. She remained living at home with her baby while he completed secondary school. When he finished she moved to Makanjira where he got a job teaching with an NGO and they had a second child together. She described how the salary was very low and they decided together in 2008 that he would go to South Africa to find work. This

situation was similar to many other men (and some women), often with higher levels of education, who left to find work in South Africa because the salaries were much higher. Unlike other participants we interviewed, her husband had continued to provide her and her children with economic support and they had communicated regularly. When discussing whether she had any other sexual partners she said men had propositioned her but she had not been tempted to have other sexual relationships. She discussed how having other sexual relationships would create trouble for her. She also talked openly about not knowing whether her husband was with other sexual partners but that she did not want him to hear from his family or other people that she was having other sexual relationships. When men went away for work (either to work in South Africa or for the fishing business) family members would often monitor the behaviour of their spouses. If they were suspected of being unfaithful this behaviour would be reported to their partner.

After her husband left for South Africa, Alinafe returned to Village 1 to be closer to her family. As a way of earning money she began undertaking small-scale fish trading. Like other women in the fish trade her female relatives supported her entry by showing her how to process and sell fish. Although she discussed receiving money from her husband this could be irregular and trading fish helped her.

When Alinafe moved to Village 1 she joined a group of 20 women who lend money to each other. The group was called '*Tithandizane*' (which means let's help one another) Group. At the beginning of each year the women would decide what business activities they wanted to pursue and were given a loan based on this. Alinafe borrowed Kw10,000 one year and Kw20,000 another year. She also described how other group members borrowed Kw30,000. The group members had to make repayments throughout the year (plus interest). The loan and interest repayments were then used to give loans for the following year. The profits were also shared with those who were able to repay the loans. One of the key reasons Alinafe said she joined the group was because they did not confiscate property from each other like Lender A or Lender C. Instead if women were struggling to repay the loan they just rested that month and tried to find the money the following month.

Alinafe described how they spoke nicely to one another and understood how challenging fish trading could be and how some months were more profitable than others. Paying the loan back over a one-year period with flexibility allowed participants to make the repayments that reflected the unreliability of the fishing industry.

Adapted from an in-depth interview

Throughout the interviews Alinafe stressed how *Tithandizane* allowed women to borrow money and repay this money in a much less pressured environment than microfinance loan groups allowed. This was because repayments took place over a one-year period, with fish traders paying back as and when they could rather than in a fixed time period. This allowed small-scale fish traders to grow their businesses without the threat of property confiscation or very tight windows for repayment. Alinafe saw this as an alternative way of accessing capital for her business, either through microfinance or moneylenders in the village. Participants discussed these groups, as an alternative way of getting capital however, there was also an acknowledgement that the loan sizes were small and were not an option for fish traders who required larger capital.

7.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed microfinance and the complex ways it shaped female fish traders' lives. At times it could be economically beneficial and provided women with independence from sexual partners. However, microfinance loans did not alter the gendered division of labour and women often continued to depend on sexual partners. In practice, microfinance organisations tight

repayment schedules and intense pressure from groups to repay loans often left female fish traders in a highly pressured and precarious position. This pressure was exacerbated by the unpredictable nature of the fishing industry that was both time consuming and irregular. In times when women had taken loans and were unable to repay them, engaging in transactional sex was one way of overcoming this economic challenge. However, it also increased women's vulnerability to HIV.

8 Discussion and Recommendations

8.1 *Outline of discussion*

In the last three chapters I presented the empirical findings of this thesis. In this final chapter I present a summary of my findings (8.2). I then discuss the main issues that emerged from the empirical work and relate them to the relevant international literature I presented in Chapter 2 (8.3-8.6). In Section 8.7, I return to the interventions that I presented in Chapter 7, contextualise them in the international literature and present potential structural interventions that could be used in fishing communities in Southern Malawi. At the end of this section I present a diagram that draws together the conceptual framework I presented in Chapter 2 and relate it to the structural interventions I discussed in this section. I then discuss the limitations of the study including the strengths and weaknesses of my methodological approach. I end this chapter (in section 8.9) by discussing the original contribution that this thesis has made to academic knowledge in three key areas. In this section I also discuss how these findings relate to the key theories I have drawn upon including social relations theory.

8.2 *Summarising the research findings*

This descriptive study used qualitative and participatory research methods to provide an in-depth exploration of how gender power relations shaped engagement in transactional sex and vulnerability to HIV in two fishing communities in rural Malawi. The overall aim of the study was to understand

structural drivers of HIV in fishing communities in Southern Malawi and develop interventions to address these.

In the fishing communities I found that gender structured the roles and relations between men and women. Overwhelmingly, these divisions benefited men and not women. In particular, in the fishing industry women were not allowed to fish, meaning that their livelihoods depended on men (and often their sexual relationships with men). However, gender intersected with other social characteristics including socio-economic position and age to shape roles in the fishing industry. Younger and poorer men were clustered in roles that found them assuming the physical risk of fishing with the least economic remuneration. However, these boat crew members worked in a context where poverty was pervasive. The pay they received for their work gave them power, particularly over poorer women.

The highly gendered context of fishing shaped engagement in transactional sex. Female fish traders' access to fish was restricted by the roles they could occupy, as well as their economic position. One way to improve their access to fish was through sexual relationships with men. Female bar workers engaged in transactional sex out of economic need often to support themselves or their families. In these exchanges, women lacked the power to negotiate condom use and this left them at an increased risk of HIV. Womens' engagement in transactional sex both within bars and to secure access to fish was widely viewed as socially unacceptable.

Gradations of power within the male groups working in the fishing industry also influenced their engagement in transactional sex. Boat managers were seen as desirable sexual partners by women living in the fishing communities and female fish traders hoping to access fish. As a group, boat crew members, also drank excessively. The physical danger, difficult living conditions and alcohol use all shaped their engagement in transactional sex. Sex following excessive alcohol consumption often results in risky sex.

Pathways to HIV transmission were well understood by all members of the communities, but it was evident that this knowledge was not changing behaviour. In relationships, women acknowledged the risks they faced when having unprotected sex but also described the challenges encountered negotiating condom use with their partners. Men and women described how suggesting condom use would introduce doubt and mistrust into the relationship.

There was inequitable access to HIV testing and treatment services. In Village 2 long distances and high transport costs prevented poorer men and women from accessing services. Fear of stigma was also seen as stopping men and women from getting tested for HIV in both villages. These factors limited uptake of both testing and treatment.

Participants identified factors including the high levels of mobility and poverty that increased their HIV risk. During the workshops, participants identified key areas to intervene including: improving the living and working conditions for boat crew members; improving access to HIV testing and treatment services; improving access to condoms and intervening to improve women's economic position.

Throughout the data collection, female fish traders discussed the opportunities but also the constraints microfinance offered. To explore these complex experiences in more detail, we conducted a second round of in-depth interviews with women and men working in the fishing industry and receiving microfinance loans.

Findings from these interviews highlighted that microfinance provided female fish traders with opportunities to expand their businesses without relying on male sexual partners. However, there were consistent testimonies of the ways microfinance left female fish traders in vulnerable positions both economically and to HIV. This vulnerability was related to the highly unpredictable nature of the fishing industry where women faced multiple uncertainties when trying to make a profit within the fishing industry. Buying, processing and selling fish were all time consuming and, during times of low fish catches, highly competitive. During these periods of time, female fish traders who lacked social connections or economic assets found making a profit very difficult. The gendered division of labour also constrained female fish traders' access to fish and meant that even with a microfinance loan, female fish traders were still required to rely on their sexual partners to access fish during low fish catches. These challenges were coupled with the policies of the microfinance organisations that expected rapid

repayment of the loan (with high levels of interest) within loan groups which, at times, could place undue pressure on women to make repayments confiscating property if they were unable to do so. With these conditions some women were driven to engage in transactional sex to repay their microfinance loans, increasing their vulnerability to HIV.

The way social and economic structures are constructed in fishing communities creates social inequalities that perpetrate structural violence. Preventing harm, in this case vulnerability to HIV requires an exceptional, targeted response that aims at addressing and reconfigures these economic and social structures.

8.3 Power, gender and fishing

Rowlands (1997) notes “[m]ost frameworks for understanding power are apparently neutral: they make no comment about how power is distributed within society. There is no consideration of the power dynamics of gender, or of race, class, or any other force of oppression” (Rowlands 1997: 11). She goes on to note that feminist theorists have made important contributions to address this silence through gender analysis frameworks (Rowlands 1997). As I discussed in Chapter 4, the research methodology for this thesis drew on key concepts within the gender, health and development literatures including Kabeer’s social relations approach (a gender analysis framework) and her concept of empowerment (Kabeer 1994) to inform the data collection and analysis. This ensured the data collection moved beyond the individual to explore how broader structural factors limited men and women’s choices.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Kabeer (1999) argues that someone who is empowered is able to make strategic life choices in their lives. The implication of this is that disempowerment means a lack of choice. Kabeer (1999) states empowerment encompasses three inter-related concepts (resources, agency and achievements). She sees resources as more than economic resources and also includes human and social resources. For Kabeer (1999) the way resources are distributed reflects the rules and norms that govern different social contexts. These rules and norms give certain actors authority over others in determining the principles of exchange (Kabeer 1999). Agency refers to the ability of an individual to define their own goals and act upon them (Kabeer 1999). Like resources, she defines agency as more than observable actions and instead sees it as encompassing the meaning, motivation and purpose, which individuals bring to their activity and their sense of agency (or the *power within*¹⁷). In its positive sense, agency can give actors power to act but agency can also be used in a negative sense to control others or “*power over*” where actors can limit other people’s agency through domination or the threat of violence. Finally, the term achievement refers to the well being of individuals, shaped by the combination of resources and agency. These concepts provided a framework for the examination of relationships between people; what rules and norms shaped the activities and roles people could carry out and how their relationships to resources and agency influenced their ability to make meaningful choices within their lives.

¹⁷ As discussed in Chapter 2, the concept of *power within* and *power over* draws on Lukes (1974) definitions of the different dimensions of power

In the fishing communities, social norms dictated that women were responsible for all reproductive tasks including cooking, fetching water and collecting firewood and taking care of children and sick relatives. Taking care of the children often included finding money for school fees and food. Girls were socialised from an early age to help with their female relatives with these tasks. If women travelled, it was often younger girls who assumed responsibility for these roles. All these tasks were time consuming, physically demanding and rarely economically valued. Boys and men within households were not expected to undertake these tasks but they were expected to provide economically for the household. For younger boys in poorer families, this included undertaking small roles within the fishing industry such as helping to untangle nets on the beach. For men and women who did not have access to land, there were few livelihood options outside the fishing industry. The socialisation of girls and boys into these roles ensured that younger generations internalised and continued propagating these social norms.

In sexual relationships men's needs, desires and pleasure often took preference to women's. One area where this was evident was men's reluctance to use condoms because they limited sexual pleasure. Despite some women (including bar workers) trying to negotiate condom use, they were often unable to (discussed below). There was general acceptance that women provided sex for men to fulfil men's rather than women's needs.

In the fishing industry, gender structured the roles and responsibilities men and women were able to perform. Men undertook the fishing whereas prevailing social norms dictated that women could not undertake fishing. This meant women's roles were limited to the processing and selling of the fish. Another prevailing social norm dictated that women could not paddle boats. This prevented women from trading fresh fish. Fresh fish trading was better economically rewarded than selling dried fish and was dominated by men.

The exclusion of women from these roles meant they had less choice in the roles they could occupy. This limited women's agency as well as access to further resources because it limited them to less profitable avenues for their income generation activities. When women attempted to perform these roles (such as physically undertaking the fishing), male authority figures intervened to prevent this and ensured the prevailing social norms. In this situation, male authority figures were implicit in limiting women's access to resources and in turn their agency. Therefore, within the fishing industry social norms ensured men had a privileged position over women and these rules and norms were maintained by male authority figures.

However, resources were not equally distributed to all men. Men who had access to economic resources and social connections occupied privileged positions within the fishing industry. These positions included boat owners and boat managers. Nevertheless, younger, poorer men who had limited resources were disadvantaged and experienced constraints on their agency. In their positions as boat crew

members, they were exposed to physical danger and experienced hardships in their living conditions. Young men often spent large portions of their income on alcohol and sex as a way of countering the dangers and risks in their day-to-day lives. Working as boat crew members when they were very young often led to men dropping out of school and this limited their capacity to enter skilled employment, reinforcing their lower-socio economic position, constraining their agency and their future access to resources. The physical labour that boat crew members undertook reinforced the privileges of the more affluent groups within the fishing industry. This more privileged group decided how well fishing boats were maintained. This had a direct impact on the safety of the fishing expeditions and placed men in dangerous situations. The dangerous and difficult conditions of the fishing industry often shaped men's sexual behaviour driving them to engage in risky sexual relationships, which left them vulnerable to HIV. In the fishing boats, there were strict hierarchies that could expose younger men to violence. Order in boat crews was maintained through these hierarchies with the Head of the boat, an older more experienced man resorting to physical violence if younger men were seen as not behaving correctly.

8.3.1 Agency and engagement in transactional sex

In Chapter 2 (Section (2.5.9), I discussed the debates that have taken place in the academic literature relating to transactional sex and women's agency and motivation. On one side of the debate, authors have represented all transactional sex as survival sex (Preston-Whyte, Varga et al. 2000). Other scholars have challenged the notion that transactional sex is solely about survival; instead some scholars have argued that in these exchanges, women are active social agents who

exploit sexual relationships to gain consumer goods (Leclerc-Madlala 2003, Hawkins, Price et al. 2009). In recent years the debate has become more nuanced with authors emphasising the constraints of women's agency and the importance of providing context and definition of the notions of survival and consumption (Béné and Merten 2008, Norris, Kitali et al. 2009, Wamoyi, Fenwick et al. 2011).

In the fishing communities, both access to resources and agency played important roles in shaping the motivation and context of engagement in transactional sex. Engaging in transactional sex provided female sex workers with an opportunity to improve their access to resources (often fish, money or social connections). All the men working in the fishing industry discussed how women would seek them out for sexual relationships, highlighting that women used their agency to improve their access to resources. The gifts that women, particularly younger women, were given in relationships, were rarely related to their basic needs. Instead the gifts which men gave women, such as lotion or clothes, were about providing girls with status rather than basic needs. I return to this point later in this section.

At the heart of the concept of agency is the ability of a person to make a meaningful choice. The notion of choice in itself implies that there are alternatives. As Kabeer (1999) notes an "insufficiency of the means for meeting one's basic needs often rules out the ability to exercise meaningful choice" (Kabeer 1999: 437). In Chapter 5, a number of female fish traders describe how the limited access to fish gave women little choice but to engage in transactional sex. This was also reflected in the position of female bar workers who sold sex in the bars. Their

access to resources was often limited due to the death of a family member or the separation from their husbands. To sell sex in the bar was one of the few livelihood options available to them. The work they undertook also exposed them to violence on a daily basis. In this context they lacked alternatives and these limited choices led to their wellbeing being harmed. This harm was in the form of increased risk of HIV for female fish traders; for female bar workers, it was both violence and the risk of HIV.

As discussed above, for younger women sometimes the gifts or money gave them status within their peer groups. This was also observed in Hawkings and colleagues work in Mozambique and Wamoyi and colleagues work (2011) in rural Tanzania. In these studies, younger women who engaged in transactional sex did not always do so for economic need. However, as Wamoyi and colleagues (2011) note, once girls entered relationships they had less control to negotiate the terms of the sexual relationships. As I discussed in Chapter 5 (Section 5.5.1.) younger men discussed how men would end relationships with girls if girls refused to have sex when they wanted it. Further, sex in exchange for relish was also frequently discussed. This usually involved younger girls in the community receiving fish for home consumption, highlighting how limited access to resources drove engagement in transactional sex for some.

Male fish traders and boat crew members described the way they could use their access to fish or money as a way of pressuring women to have sex with them. In these exchanges men were able to use their agency or “*power over*” to control

women. They used the threat of violence to force bar workers to have sex without condoms. In some households, men also used the threat of violence to force their wives to have unprotected sex with them. Younger men and particularly those who worked as boat crew members and fish traders often faced social marginalisation. For boat crew members their agency was often constrained by their limited access to resource (including education) and the conditions in which they work. Sexual domination over women provided them with an opportunity to exercise power.

8.4 Contextualising transactional sex within the international literature

As I noted in the literature review chapter, there is a wide academic literature dedicated to transactional sex. This literature has primarily been conducted in urban and peri-urban areas with girls attending secondary school (Macintyre and Ellaway 2000, Nyanzi, Pool et al. 2001, Maganja, Maman et al. 2007, Moore, Biddlecom et al. 2007, Masvawure 2010). There has been less research conducted in rural communities or with men and older women. This thesis provides clear evidence that it is not only younger women that engage in transactional: we found evidence of older women engaging to gain access to fish as well as for capital or accommodation at the market.

8.4.1 Female bar workers and engagement in transactional sex

Sex workers have been identified as a group at a high risk of HIV in studies conducted throughout sub-Saharan Africa, (Piot and Laga 1988, Karim, Karim et

al. 1995, Wechsberg, Luseno et al. 2005, Mbonye, Nakamanya et al. 2013). The high numbers of sex partners, a structural environment that exposes sex workers to high levels of violence, social isolation and difficulties in negotiating condom use all contribute to this vulnerability (Gupta, Weiss et al. 1996). In many countries sex work is illegal and this further exacerbates a difficult working environment for sex workers (Karim et al 1995).

In most studies economic need is seen as an important driver for women selling sex. For example in Nigeria, Oyefara (2007) working with commercial sex workers in Lagos found that economic need including hunger and malnutrition drove engagement in transactional sex and hindered women from practicing safer sex (Oyefara 2007). These experiences were reflected in Campbell's (2000) work with commercial sex workers in mining communities in South Africa. She found that commercial sex workers were living a hand to mouth existence, surviving on the proceeds of each day's encounters and frequently experiencing violence and struggling to negotiate condom use with men (Campbell 2000).

All of the female bar workers we interviewed worked in very difficult environments. They faced violence on a daily basis and frequently struggled to negotiate condom use with the men they had sex with. Despite the high levels of violence, they rarely felt they could report these crimes to police or people in authority. The threats of violence they faced also acted as a barrier to negotiations around condom use.

In our study female bar workers did not self-identify as commercial sex workers. They instead saw themselves as bar workers and distanced themselves from sex workers who worked on the street. However, all the women openly discussed receiving money in exchange for sleeping with men. Women did describe more permanent relationships with boyfriends: they had often met these men in the bar and had sex with them as customers first. When these men became boyfriends women no longer used condoms as this signified a more permanent relationship and these men would provide some economic support.

This was also reflected in van den Borne (2003) research with “bar girls” in four urban trading centres in four districts of Malawi including Mangochi. The women in this study were based in bars; they sold sex to the male patrons but did not view themselves as sex workers. Instead van den Borne found that women’s sexual networking “was neither purely commercial nor purely social: they tried to keep the relationship fuzzy and undefined” (van den Borne 2003: 29). She found this allowed the women to avoid stigma and being blamed for the “killer disease” and enabled them to try and find “helpers”, men who became more permanent partners. She questions the effectiveness of interventions that only target “prostitutes” as this ignores the cultural and politico-economical context that shaped women having multiple partner sex (van den Borne 2003: 29).

8.4.2 Men and transactional sex

There has been less academic attention given to men's motivations for engagement in transactional sex. As noted above, the broader environment in which they worked and lived were key drivers for engagement for boat crew members and male fish traders. This was exacerbated by heavy alcohol consumption. Engagement in transactional sex provided men with comfort or "warmth" once they returned from fishing expeditions. The ability to pressure women into having sex also gave power to these men who were often socially marginalised.

I discussed in Chapter 2, how dominant forms of masculinity in some contexts equate "being a man" with sexual conquest and risk taking (Greg, Peacock et al. 2008). In the literature this has been presented in relation to HIV risk more broadly. How different groups and men construct masculinity is highly dependent on the position that men occupy within the social structures. Men who are socially and economically marginalised may attempt to compensate for their status by adopting hyper or more extreme forms of masculine identities (Ragnarsson, Townsend et al. 2010). My findings clearly demonstrate that boat crew members and fish traders, who were often socially marginalised, engaged in transactional sex as a way of proving their manhood. This was also found in Allison and Seeley (2004) review which notes that for some fishermen masculinity was proved by having multiple sexual partners.

The experience of boat crew members in Malawi was similar to some of the experiences of Campbell's (2000) work with South African gold miners. She found that these men lived in large single sex dormitories, some distance from their family. Like boat crew members, mineworkers lived in difficult social conditions and faced physical danger. Campbell (2000) found social constructions of masculinity were an important determinant of sexual behaviour with masculine identities serving as a coping mechanism for the risks and dangers of working as a miner. Sex with sex workers provided men with intimacy that was often missing in the dormitories they inhabited.

Not all men within the fishing community are equally powerful and the power dynamics between different groups such as boat crews and boat owners influenced men's position, both within the fishing industry and within the wider community. Therefore, rather than viewing fishermen as a homogenous group who are all equally at risk of HIV, it is important to design HIV prevention strategies which consider how men's different socio-economic position may influence their sexual behaviour. I will return to this discussion in Section 8.7 where I discuss structural factors and HIV risk.

8.4.3 Transactional sex and fishing communities

Research in fishing communities in Southern and Eastern Africa has highlighted that women enter transactional sexual relationships in the fishing industry as one way of ensuring they are able to secure fish to sell (Merten and Haller 2007, Béné and Merten 2008, Seeley, Tumwekwase et al. 2009, Nagoli, Holvoet et al. 2010,

Mojola 2011, Kwena, Bukusi et al. 2012). In all these studies, female fish traders received fish from fishermen. As in our study, most of the authors found fish was not given for free; sex only secured the right to purchase the fish.

Kwena and colleagues conducted work in fishing communities around Lake Victoria in Kenya. Their study found high levels of competition for fish was a key driver for female fish traders to engage in transactional sex with fishermen. They also describe how sex in these exchanges was often hurried and with little time for women to become physiologically prepared. The hurried nature of the exchanges meant that condoms were rarely used. Finally they found that both men and women engaged in a web of these relationships and this placed men and women at an increased risk of HIV. Some of the male fish traders and boat crew members in our study discussed the hurried and often clandestine nature of the exchanges.

Seeley and Allison describe how the migratory nature of fishing means that when young men are away from home, the social structures and hierarchies that guide sexual norms are no longer observed (Seeley and Allison 2005). Reviewing the literature on fishing communities and HIV risk, Kissling and colleagues (2005) discuss how social ties on fishing beaches are based on economic relationships. These interactions provide unrestricted opportunities that determine sexual and behaviour norms (Kissling et al. 2005). We also found that the high levels of migration and travel required for fishing provided men with an opportunity to engage in transactional sex without their wives and girlfriends finding out.

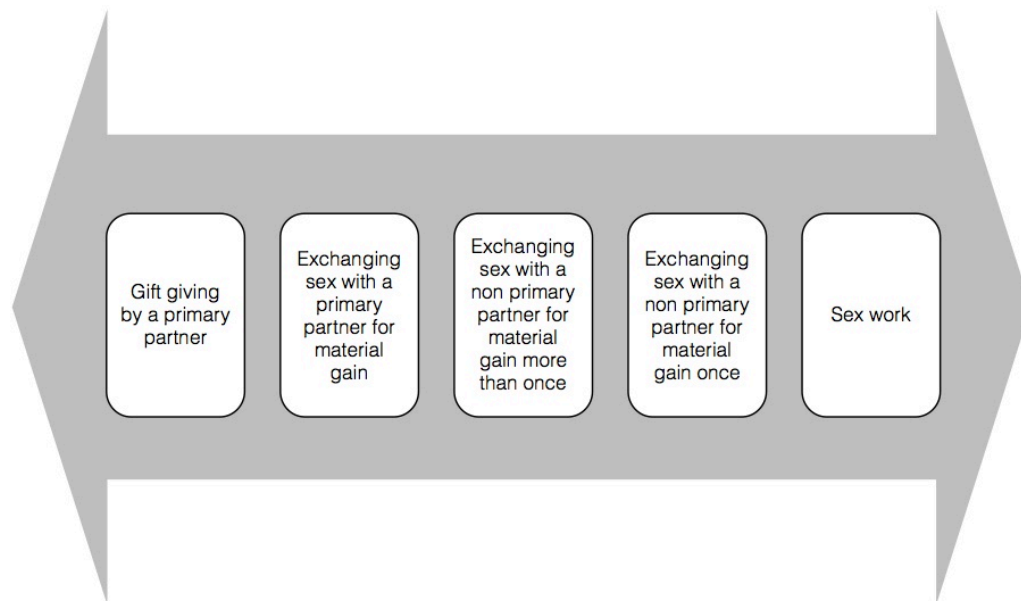
Participants discussed how external migrants “behaved badly” when they came to the village, having sex with many women because they were able to. The broader structural factors such as difficult living conditions, access to cash and opportunity to engage all led to men working in the fishing industry engaging in transactional sex.

8.4.4 Spectrum of transactional sex

The literature to date has made a key distinction between “sex-for-fish exchanges” and what is defined as more traditional sex work involving exchange of money (Merten and Haller 2007, Béné and Merten 2008). Béné and Merten (2008) argue that female fish traders are economically productive agents within the fishing industry, whereas female sex workers are not and therefore sex work and fish-for-sex should be seen as separate phenomenon. In other academic literature on sex work, there has been little attention paid to how it is distinguished from other social and sexual relationships (Hunter 2002, Harcourt and Donovan 2005). Hunter (2002) argues that “[t]ransactional sex has a number of similarities to prostitution. ...[yet] Transactional sex differs in important ways: participants are constructed as “girlfriends” and “boyfriends” ... and the exchange of gifts for sex is part of a broader set of obligations that might not involve a predetermined payment. (Hunter 2002: 100-101).

In contrast, we saw a much more nuanced picture regarding transactional sex and paid sex work. In the fishing communities, we found a wide range of transactional sex occurring, including sex for fish, sex for capital, sex for relish and sex for

accommodation. These exchanges did not always occur in relationships where participants saw themselves as boyfriend and girlfriend but were often one-off encounters for immediate economic benefit. An example of this was boat crew members paying local women for sex with a one-off payment, or female fish traders receiving money or food at the market in exchange for sex. At the fish landing sites there were a high number of mobile bar workers who came to the villages when fish catches were high and left when fish catches were lower. Paying for sex with bar workers was widely reported and viewed as a common occurrence in the fishing industry by key informants living in the sites. Therefore, I suggest that there was considerable degree of blurring in the definition of “economically productive agents”, and as such, there was a less clear-cut divide between “sex-work” and “fish-for-sex exchanges” than has previously been suggested. Further, rather than viewing sex for fish exchanges as a separate phenomenon in fishing communities it should be viewed as part of the prevalent spectrum of transactional sex. At one end of the spectrum there is gift giving by a primary partner and at the other end sex work. In Figure 8.1, I have adapted categories used by Dunkle, Jewkes et al. (2004) to conceptualises the spectrum of transactional sex we observed in the fishing communities.

Figure 8.1: Spectrum of transactional sex

Different women may be placed at different points on the spectrum at different times depending on a number of external factors. If women have concurrent partnerships, they could also occupy two points on the spectrum simultaneously. For instance, if a female fish trader wants to buy fish she might engage in a transactional sexual relationship with a male boat owner to secure access to the fish and therefore would be positioned closer to gift giving on the spectrum. However, if the female fish trader then visits the market and is unable to sell her fish for the price she initially bought the fish for, she may exchange sex with a man at the market in a one off trade to ensure her food and accommodation for that time she is away and would therefore fall closer to sex work on the spectrum.

8.5 Understanding HIV risk

Female and male participants showed a good understanding of the HIV risk and the ways fishing communities were at risk from HIV. This highlighted that HIV

prevention messages were being accessed and understood in the community.

However, despite this understanding both men and women continued to engage in high-risk behaviour. Numerous studies have found that knowledge and understanding of HIV risk has not translated into change of behaviour (Campbell and Currey 2003, Dunkle, Jewkes et al. 2004, Dworkin and Ehrhardt 2007, Epstein and Kim 2007, Epstein 2008).

Men and women discussed how roles within the fishing industry – including the long periods that men spent away from home and the unpredictable nature of the industry – drove men and women to engage in behaviours that placed them at an increased risk of HIV. Working in environments where men are exposed to high risks in their work has also been identified as leading to engagement in transactional and risky sex. These professions include long distance truck drivers and gold miners (Carswell, Lloyd et al. 1989, Campbell 1997, Bing, Cheng et al. 2008, Pandey, Benara et al. 2008).

8.5.1 Condom use and relationships

While participants acknowledged condom use was an important strategy for preventing HIV, they also identified a number of barriers to condom use. Men felt using condoms seriously inhibited sexual pleasure. Women voiced fears about condoms including that they could cause infections. When condom use was discussed, all participants felt that by suggesting condoms you were signifying that you were not serious about a relationship. For bar workers, moving from

using a condom with a partner to unprotected sex signified the relationship had moved from a commercial exchange to a relationship.

These findings have been reflected in other academic studies conducted in Malawi. In her study analysing condom use in different partnerships Chimbiri (2007) reported that the rates of condom use within marriage were negligible. Condoms were viewed with suspicion and only seen as a way of preventing HIV/AIDS in extramarital partnerships. Married women in her study described how suggesting condom use in marriage was like bringing an intruder into the domestic space.

Kaler (2004) describes the widespread suspicion participants had about condom use. She argues that Malawians' concerns about coercive population control policies imposed by the national government and international organisations working in Malawi provided a moral lens through which condoms and other health promotions were viewed with suspicion. The author states that condoms did not enter communities in Malawi as neutral, value-free objects; rather they entered a social setting permeated with ideas about health, self-protection and danger. She also notes that little is being done to counter the rumours about the dangers of using condoms. Participants in our study reported how negatively condoms were viewed. When discussing interventions the participants highlighted the need to discuss both the positive and negative aspects of condom use, which further echoes Kaler's (2004) discussion of the need to counter condom related rumours in Malawi.

Tavory and Swidler (2009) examined the widespread resistance to condom use in Malawi. Drawing on conversational diaries that recorded rural Malawians' everyday conversations, they found that condom use signified a risky, less serious and less intimate partner. Even when people believed that condom use was appropriate, wise, or even a matter of life or death the statement that condom use makes about a relationship usually trumped decisions to use them. The authors explored narratives of sex without condoms and how this made sex sweeter. Reflecting on findings in this thesis, men described how plain sex was sweeter. The authors found that the sweetness was a metaphor that refers to semen having contact with vaginal fluid during sex. This process was viewed as the essence of sexual pleasure itself. Therefore the use of condoms did not simply dull sexual sensation, it eliminated its essential element (Tavory and Swidler 2009). This cultural meaning may explain why bar workers reported men cutting the tips off the condoms to enhance their sexual pleasure (Tavory and Swidler 2009). Moreover, Tavory and Swidler (2009) discussed how participants saw condoms as dangerous and something that could cause sores or cancer. These findings reflect participants' discussions within our study. Men and women discussed how women were afraid that condoms would give women infections or sores. Managing rumours around condom use is likely to be an important strategy to encourage men and women to use them. I return to this point in the structural interventions section (8.8).

8.6 *Microfinance and vulnerability*

Throughout the data collection participants frequently discussed the opportunities and constraints that microfinance presented for female fish traders. During the participatory workshop, microfinance was suggested as a possible intervention for female fish traders as a way of providing women with access to economic resources and social connections (though the group lending). As I noted in the literature review (Section 2.4) there has been both an evangelical zeal for the multiple ways microfinance can improve poor rural women's lives and a strong critique in the development literature because of the way microfinance programmes operate in the field.

Drawing on empirical data from South Asia a number of authors have argued that microfinance can be disempowering for its female loan recipients (Goetz and Gupta 1996, Rahman 1999, Karim 2011). Critics argue that one of the key reasons for the negative outcomes is the way microfinance organisations view success in their programmes. Principally success in MF organisations is measured by loan recovery rates rather than in more holistic measures of impact within the household or to participants' lives. Our study participants reported intense pressure from fellow loan group members to repay loans. The registering of property by the loan group at the beginning of the loan cycle is likely to be a reflection of the importance that the microfinance organisation placed on recovering their loans. The confiscation and selling of property was both publically humiliating and economically ruinous and supported the argument that microfinance can be disempowering to its borrowers.

In her monograph, Karim (2011) describes harrowing cases of loan recipients in Bangladesh having their homes dismantled and the pieces being sold bit by bit to repay their outstanding debt (Karim 2011: 117-123). This scenario was reflected in the experiences of the female fish traders taking loans in our study and perhaps reflects a worrying systematic policy across MF organisations to recover their debts.

The group lending process has also attracted criticism, particularly the Grameen Bank's model where groups are responsible for repaying the whole loan rather than just their own proportion (Visvanthan and Yoder 2011). The concern with group lending is that MF organisations use group members as social collateral and exert undue pressure on borrowers to make repayments (Visvanthan and Yoder 2011: 53). This pressure can result in women borrowing money from money lenders and using subsequent loans to repay old debts creating a spiral of indebtedness that women struggle to break (Visvanthan and Yoder 2011: 53). This was reflected in our research with some participants reporting intense pressure from each other to repay the loan. Participants also described how loan officers would only become involved after participants had tried hard to pressure their fellow loan recipients to repay. The only way participants could default on loans was to leave the village. However, this meant that other participants who had vouched for the member had to clear that group member's debt. This created heavy economic penalties for other group members and tense relationships in loan groups. When participants vouch for other members, it is that participant not the microfinance company who experiences a loss if the participant defaults on the

loan. If MF organisations measure success on the grounds of loan repayments, these dynamics may mask the true success (or lack of it) of programmes.

As I noted in Chapter 2 (Section 2.4) there is significant evidence in South Asia that women did not always retain control of their loan or profits from the loan (Goetz and Gupta 1996). Reflecting dominant social norms male relatives often took control of the loan or profits from the loan. In the fishing communities, female fish traders required access to capital to perform their business. While, male partners could and did provide financial support or access to fish it was the female fish traders who retained control of the profits from their businesses. This extended to microfinance loans with women taking responsibility for repaying the loan but also any financial benefits that were realised from it. Our study reflects findings from other studies in Africa where women are reported to retain control of their loans (Mayoux 1999). This finding provides some evidence that in circumstances when women are able to successfully make a profit from their loan they are provided with economic independence.

However, the provision of the microfinance loan did not fundamentally alter the structural environment in which fish trading took place. The challenges of accessing fish in periods of low fish stock and the competition for access to fish remained. Women who lacked access to resources, including social resources, still needed to engage in transactional sex as a way of accessing fish. The interest women had to pay on their loans and the tight repayment schedules coupled with the risk of property confiscation could make female fish trader's lives more difficult and constrain their agency further (at times driving them to engage in

transactional sex). This provides further support for Cornwall and Edwards's (2010) view that empowering women is complex and requires more than a single intervention to achieve.

I did not identify any literature that explored microfinance in fishing communities. However, as I noted in Chapter 2, microfinance has been identified as a potential structural intervention that improves women's economic position and in turn prevents HIV. The intense pressure that microfinance placed on female fish traders drove some women to engage in transactional sex in an environment with high HIV prevalence rate increasing their vulnerability to HIV. This reflects Dunbar and colleagues (2010) work in Zimbabwe that also found that microfinance, rather than being empowering, could place young women at risk of HIV. This research demonstrates the potential for microfinance to increase risk of HIV and therefore should not be used by public health programmes aiming to prevent HIV in vulnerable groups.

The findings also provide weight to Kabeer (2005) and Matin and Hulme (2003) argument that for microfinance to be successful, the product needs to be tailored to the needs, interests and realities of the recipients. If microfinance is to be used in fishing communities it requires modification to reflect the contexts in which it is used. Female fish traders feared their property being confiscated. Stopping the confiscation of the property by groups would ease pressure on female fish traders. Furthermore, allowing fish traders more flexibility with their repayment schedules, reflecting the unpredictable nature of the fishing industry, would improve women's ability to use their loans.

8.7 Structural Interventions to prevent HIV in fishing communities

In Chapter 6 I discussed suggested strategies to reduce vulnerability to HIV in the two fishing communities. These suggested strategies were based on findings from both during the participatory workshops as well as through discussions with key informants. In this section I return to the suggested interventions to discuss how they relate to my empirical findings, the wider academic literature and practical considerations of implementation.

As I discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.7.2), Blankenship and colleagues (2000) note that structural interventions locate the source of public-health problems in the social, economic and political environmental factors that shape and constrain individuals, communities and societies ability to prevent ill-health. Structural interventions therefore work to alter the context in which health is produced and reproduced. Over the past two decades, there has been increasing recognition of the need to develop interventions that address these drivers (Sweat and Denison 1995, Sumartojo 2000, Rao Gupta, Parkhurst et al. 2008).

Designing and evaluating interventions that address structural factors can be challenging (Rao Gupta, Parkhurst et al. 2008) and structural factors have been poorly addressed in the global response (Pronyk and Lutz 2013). This inaction could be explained by the fact that addressing structural drivers often requires

engaging with socially excluded groups including sex workers, men who have sex with men and people who inject drugs (Pronyk and Lutz 2013). Transforming structural environments also requires intervening to transform power imbalances in societies. To achieve this, sensitive social and cultural norms need to be changed and deeply entrenched legal and political systems need to be reformed.

8.7.1 Previous interventions conducted in fishing communities

Despite being a group at an increased risk of HIV, fishing communities have largely been ignored in the global response to HIV. I did not identify published reports in the academic literature on HIV interventions that have taken place in Southern or Eastern Africa. However, I did identify a small number of interventions published in the grey literature (Gordon 2005). In the following section I describe these reports. I was unable to identify formal assessments of impact for these interventions.

One project worked within the health sector to improve access to HIV testing to fishing communities in Zambia. This project was run by *Medecins San Frontieres* with communities living close to Lake Mweru (Gordon 2005). The project offered voluntary counselling and testing as well as support for HIV affected families. This was targeted at increasing access to HIV testing in fishing communities, however no evaluation was reported.

Most of the interventions were outside the health sector and community based these included the Women in Fishing Industry Project used radios to broadcast HIV prevention messages to women and other marginalised groups in fishing communities in Lake Victoria, Kenya (FAO 2005). Two other projects provided help and support to HIV affected people living in fishing communities. In Lake Edward in Uganda, the beach management unit donated a proportion of the workers daily salaries to pay for the education of AIDS orphans in the communities. The second project has been developed by the WorldFish centres in Malawi and Zambia where they have been working with local NGOs and farmers to adopt integrated labour-saving tools to support HIV affected people living in fishing communities. I was unable to identify formal assessments of impact for these interventions. They also highlight how limited and uncoordinated the response has been to the HIV epidemic in these communities.

8.7.2 Transforming gender roles and relations

Dunkle and Jewkes (2007) note that broad socially transformative programmes that promote gender equality and discourage perpetration of gender-based violence are needed to combat the global HIV pandemic (Dunkle, Jewkes et al. 2007). During the participatory workshops participants did not directly identify the need to change the gendered roles and relations that structured many aspects of the fishing industry. Rowlands (1997) describes how people who have been systematically denied power and influence by the dominant within society may internalise the messages they receive about how they are supposed to behave. She terms this “internalised oppression” and argues that these beliefs could be so ingrained in a person’s consciousness that it could be mistaken for reality

(Rowlands 1997: 84). Internalised oppression may explain why participants in the participatory workshops did not identify gendered divisions of labour as requiring change when addressing vulnerability to HIV (Rowlands 1997).

However, during the participant checking in the workshops, participants agreed with the findings that divisions in access to resources and power based on gender shaped vulnerability to HIV for men and women living in the fishing communities). Therefore programmes that transform these power dynamics are required. Stepping Stones is a gender-transformative programme that was developed in Uganda and has been used in over forty countries. The programme is delivered over fifty hours and uses participatory learning to change the way men and women view themselves as gendered individuals and how they relate to each other (Jewkes 2010). During the programme participants discuss their experiences, act them out, analyse them, explore and consider alternative outcomes, develop strategies for achieving them and then rehearse these together and reflect on them in a safe, supportive group (Stepping Stones 2013).

The programme was tested in rural South Africa in a cluster randomised controlled trial. The study found that men significantly changed their sexual behaviour and reported less perpetration of intimate partner violence. There was also a significant reduction in transactional sex and problem drinking over a twelve-month period (Jewkes et al. 2008). Transactional sex, gender based violence and problem drinking are all factors that shape vulnerability to HIV in the fishing industry. Therefore, using a transformative approach that emphasises

changing social relations is likely to be an important prevention strategy for fishing communities and one I feel would be both feasible and acceptable.

8.7.3 Structural interventions using microfinance

As discussed in the literature review and earlier in this chapter, microfinance has been viewed as a potential intervention to prevent HIV. I also found that for female fish traders, limited access to capital was a key driver for engagement in transactional sex. During the participatory workshops, participants discussed increasing access to credit, in particular microfinance, as an intervention option. This reflects the IMAGE study, a recent structural intervention conducted in mining communities in South Africa that I discussed in the literature review. The IMAGE study combined microfinance with gender training to prevent HIV in mining communities (Pronyk, Hargreaves et al. 2006). The intervention was successful at reducing experiences of intimate partner violence but not HIV transmission in the timeframe the research was conducted. As noted earlier in this Chapter, mining and fishing communities share some similarities in regards to men's exposure to risk and social marginalisation. This therefore provides evidence that microfinance maybe a useful intervention in the fishing communities. However, as I noted earlier in this Chapter, I found a more nuanced and complex situation regarding male and female fish traders when these groups used microfinance. At times, women were able to make profits and have economic independence from their sexual partners. But loans often placed women in a vulnerable position. The female fish traders we interviewed were required to rapidly repay their loans with interest and loan groups could place undue pressure on women. This could at times drive women to engage in risky sex to access fish.

The microfinance loans also failed to alter the broader structures within the fishing industry and women continued to rely on men for access to fish and money. My research findings and insights from the literature highlight that, I do not believe that, without serious modification of the way microfinance is administered to female fish traders, it could be used as an intervention to prevent HIV.

Some potential modifications to the microfinance lending model that was used in the villages were identified that would be applicable in similar settings. In Chapter 7 (Section 7.5) I presented Alinafe's case study and discussed an alternative lending strategy. In our findings of alternative successful models, repayments were made over the whole year instead of short periods, reflecting highs and lows of profit making for female fish traders. Further, property was not registered or confiscated, which relieved the pressure on women. While, the sums women loaned each other were low and this could be a problem for fish traders requiring higher amounts, small group lending is a more appropriate solution to women's lack of access to capital.

8.7.4 Intervening to alter the ecological environment

In the broader ecological literature, there have been interventions to protect fish stocks in Southern and Eastern Africa. However, there have not been interventions that specifically use fish stock management as a way of preventing HIV. In her work in fishing communities in Kenya, Mojola (2011) identified the eco-structural context as driving vulnerability to HIV. She found that the eco-

social environment, including the heavy use of fertilizers, was having a negative impact on the ecology of the lake. This in turn was leading to lower fish stocks, increasing competition between female fish traders and driving engagement in risky sex.

In the participatory workshops, participants discussed the ramifications of overfishing and the impact it was having on HIV vulnerability. In particular, participants saw the dwindling fish stocks was leading to boat crew's travelling longer distances and increasing competition with female fish traders. This in turn led to risky sex and increased vulnerability to HIV. Participants noted the need to enforce fishing regulation as an intervention. As noted in Chapter 3 (Section 3.6.2) in Malawi there has been a failure of conventional fisheries management systems to protect fish stocks. Therefore, intervening to enforce fishing regulations is likely to be an important step in reducing some of the vulnerability of HIV to fishing communities. However policy in this area is failing; and effective enforcement requires resources which in turn brings challenges. However, the benefits of improving fish stocks in the Lake are likely to have positive ramifications not just for health but other sectors strengthening the case for intervention. Targeted education to fishing communities supplemented by alternative livelihood strategies could also be considered.

8.7.5 Improving working environment for boat crew members

Boat crew members' engagement in transactional sex was shaped by their social marginalisation and their high exposure to risks in their jobs. Improving their

living and working conditions, including providing safety equipment and ensuring boats are seaworthy and improving the living conditions on the beaches when they are away from home, would help reduce HIV vulnerability. While, I was unable to identify other interventions that have attempted to do this, it would seem to be an important intervention to alter the broader risk environment in which boat crew members live and work. Again, this type of intervention would require dedication of resources and training by government to enforce. It would also require government or local cooperative funding to build rest houses or provide safety equipment. Boat owners (who while relatively wealthy in relation to others within the fishing communities still very poor) would require economic support or help to ensure their boats were seaworthy.

8.7.6 Improving education and livelihood options for young people

Baird and colleagues (2012) reported a successful structural intervention in Malawi involving conditional cash transfers. In the intervention, never-married women between the ages of 13 and 22 in the Zomba district were given cash transfers of between \$4 and \$10 a month. The aim of the intervention was to alter sexual behaviour by providing money to at risk young women. The intervention group was found to have a lower HIV prevalence than those in the control group.

As noted in Chapter 6 (Section 6.8.6) in the participatory workshops, participants discussed how young men and women (particularly those who are orphaned or from poor families) had very limited access to education. This was due to pressure to provide financially for families and often led to younger boys and girls

dropping out of school and joining the fishing industry. Younger women also dropped out because they fell pregnant. Providing cash transfers to boys and girls in the study villages could potentially encourage girls and boys to remain in school. For boys this might discourage them from entering the fishing industry at a young age, making them less socially marginalised and providing them with more livelihood options. For girls it may mean they are less likely to rely on sexual partners to meet their basic and material needs, leaving them less vulnerable to HIV and pregnancy.

8.7.7 Condom distribution

In the academic literature, condom use as a tool to prevent HIV has been well established (Holmes, Levine et al. 2004). However, a number of academic studies have noted how challenging it is to achieve consistent condom use (Sarkar 2008). Participants in long term relationships found it difficult to negotiate condom use, but there was a greater acceptance that condoms could be used in riskier, less permanent relationships. As boat crew members often engaged in sex with both bar workers and female fish traders in one-off encounters, targeting condoms provision at this group may be a good entry point to prevent HIV. Another area that condoms should be distributed is in the bars. All of the female bar workers asked us to bring condoms highlighting how challenging accessing condoms could be. I envisage this model being based around nominated boat managers who act as condom distributors and who are responsible for ensuring availability of condoms to all boat crew members. A number of different distribution models could be employed including issuing each boat crew member with a condom pack at the start of fishing expedition and each boat crew manager could be responsible

for supplying rest houses and temporary bars. Boat crew managers should be supported with education and training. Other groups to target include female bar workers and bar owners to ensure supply of condoms to these groups. Again these groups should be supported with support and training.

8.7.8 Sex worker interventions

Female sex workers are clearly at an increased risk of HIV (Baral, Beyrer et al. 2012). In the fishing communities, high numbers of female bar workers travelled to the communities when there were high fish catches. Male fish traders and boat crew members frequently reported having sex with bar workers. Female bar workers discussed how difficult it could be to negotiate condom use with some of their clients and the threat of violence often hung over these exchanges.

One intervention in India, the Sonagachi Project, worked with female sex workers and had a positive impact on HIV prevalence rates. The intervention was sex-worker-led and used social mobilisation to empower sex workers. The sex worker established groups who then organised supportive activities (Cohen 2004). In the fishing communities female bar workers, despite often working as commercial sex workers, rarely self-identified as sex workers. They were also highly mobile moving from rural to urban areas depending on the quantity of fish caught. Therefore, interventions working with this group would need to be modified to ensure they reflected the context and lived realities of these women.

8.7.9 Interventions to reduce problem drinking

In Chapter 6 (Section 6.8.8.) participants saw excessive alcohol use as a driver of HIV in communities. In Chapter 2 (Section 2.5.7.) I presented evidence from the international literature that excessive alcohol consumption could increase men and women's risk of HIV and that sub-Saharan Africa has the highest level of annual consumption per alcohol drinker. Fritz (2009) notes that programmes designed specifically to address the link between alcohol and HIV are extremely rare anywhere in the world. In her review she identified three types of interventions that have been previously used:

1. Curriculum-based alcohol and HIV interventions with school going youth in South Africa; increasing knowledge about alcohol and HIV; develop skills in recognising and avoiding risks associated with alcohol and sex; randomised control trials of intervention found that the programme significantly reduced the frequency of alcohol use before or during sex; girls felt more confident to refuse sex
2. Brief 60 minute alcohol and HIV risk reduction counselling session delivered in STI Clinic in Cape Town, South Africa; a randomised control trial found that intervention participants had a 25% increase in condom use and a 65% reduction in unprotected sex in the six months after the session
3. Bar based HIV intervention using popular opinion leaders as peer educators in wine bars in Chennai India; impact assessment was not presented

In the fishing communities the men who discussed drinking to excess were boat crew members and fish traders. These men had often dropped out of primary school. Therefore, a school-based intervention may not be useful in this context. Providing counselling sessions at primary health centres and training opinion leaders to be peer educators may also be useful.

Boat crew members and male fish traders often drank to excess to mediate the stress they encountered in their work and living conditions. Therefore interventions discussed earlier including improving living and working conditions may have an impact on problem drinking. However, legislation to limit the ready availability of alcohol may also be important in reducing problem drinking. As noted in Chapter 6 (Section 6.8.8.) women in Village 2 village had taken action to try and limit the number of hours bars were open within the village. The type of alcohol that can be brewed may also prevent men from drinking alcohol with very high alcoholic content.

8.7.10 Intervening to improve access to HIV testing, care and prevention

In the participatory workshops and the focus group discussions, participants discussed the barriers that prevented them from accessing HIV testing and treatment. These barriers included fear of receiving a positive test result, their experiences at the clinic including limited operating hours and unwelcoming staff. Offering training and support to staff could help ensure patients feel welcomed at the clinics. Another suggestion from the participants was bringing testing and

treatment services closer to the community either by using mobile clinics or by building a permanent clinic in the community.

The 2012 WHO guidelines on HIV testing identify two approaches to HIV testing: community-based and facility-based testing. In the facility-based approach, anyone attending a health facility should be offered a HIV test. In her systematic review of uptake at health facilities in sub-Saharan Africa, Roura and colleagues (2012) found that in study clinics there was a high uptake of facility based testing (Roura, Watson-Jones et al. 2013). However, under routine conditions there were much lower rates of completion (MacPherson, Lalloo et al. 2012). As fishing communities are more rural and challenging to access with health services, rates of HIV testing may be even lower.

In the fishing communities, many groups discussed how they were unable or unwilling to attend the health facilities. This was due both to the transportation cost but also to the stigma of attending the facilities. Therefore, bringing services closer to the community is likely to have a greater impact particularly for hard to reach communities. Providing door-to-door services or mobile camps on the beach may be two strategies that increase the uptake of HIV testing. Door-to-door testing is expensive and difficult to maintain. Providing mobile camps may be more sustainable. There is very limited evidence available for the effectiveness of workplace HIV testing, however a trial from Zimbabwe showed that factory workers were more likely to test where testing was offered on site. This

strengthens the argument for increasing availability of testing within the fishing industry (Corbett, Makamure et al. 2007).

However, while improving access to treatment is important getting people initiated on to ARVs can also be challenging. Three systematic reviews highlight that a gap remains between access to HIV testing and initiation of treatment - only one fifth of those who test positive link to treatment (Rosen and Fox 2011, Kranzer, Govindasamy et al. 2012, Mugglin, Estill et al. 2012).

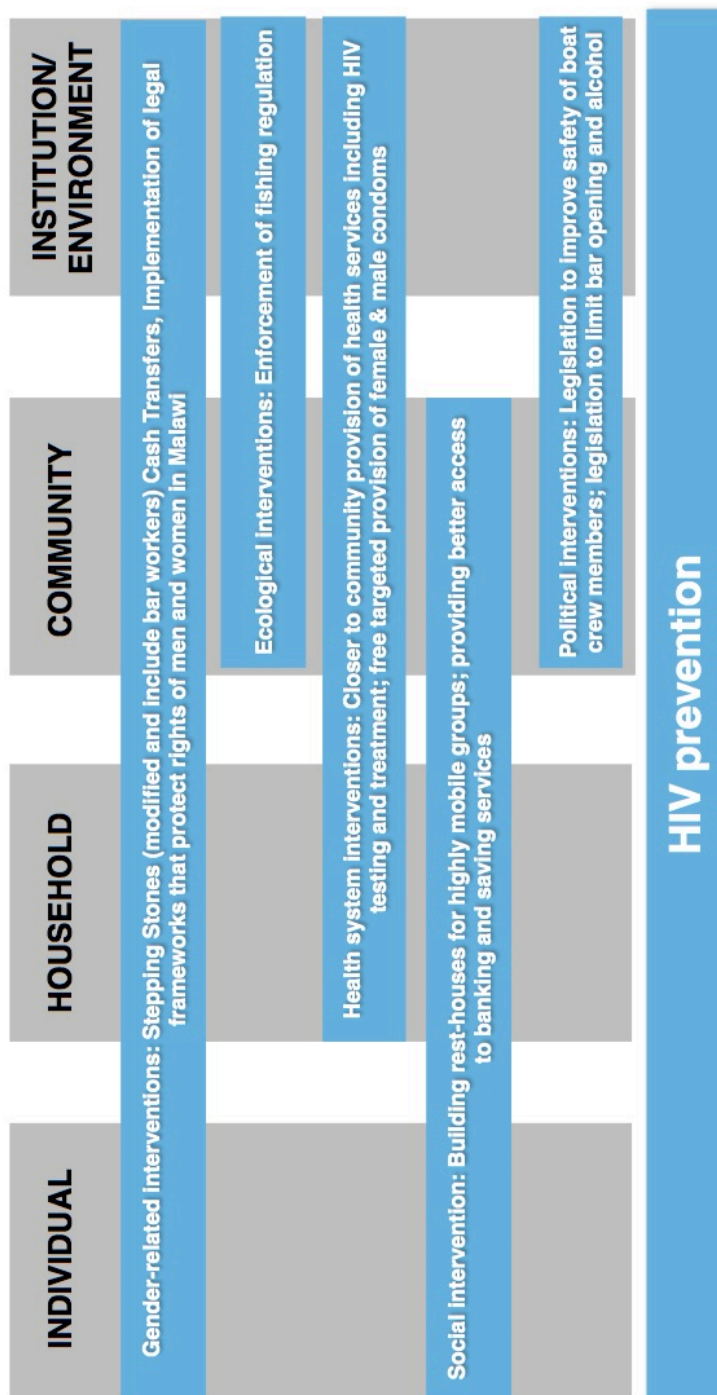
Seeley and Allison (2005) in their study assessing the challenges of providing ART in fishing communities point out that “the very life-style characteristics of many fisherfolk, which help them face the risky nature of their work, may make them among the hardest people to reach with long-term therapy and support” (Seeley and Allison 2005: 693). However, as the authors point out in their paper, ignoring this group is likely to lead to consequences for the wider population in a country “if there is a high prevalence ‘enclave group’ that acts as a reservoir of untreated infections” (Seeley and Allison 2005: 693). Therefore, strategies that bring testing and treatment services closer to fishing communities are important.

8.7.11 Conclusion

In the conceptual framework I presented in Chapter 2 (Section 2.8) I brought together concepts from the literature on social relations, structural drivers and the ecological framework to highlight the ways in which factors at the individual,

household, community and institutional/environmental can shape men and women's vulnerability to HIV. In the sections above I discussed potential structural interventions that could be used in fishing communities to reduce vulnerability. From my work it is clear that multi-sectoral approaches that work both within and outside the health system are required to address the complex social environment that shapes men and women's vulnerability to HIV. In Figure 8.2 below I present a diagram that reflects both the conceptual framework and the interventions discussed above to demonstrate at which levels the interventions would operate.

Figure 8.2: Structural interventions to prevent HIV in fishing communities in Southern Malawi



8.8 Limitations of the study

8.8.1 Lack of discussion around HIV risk and transactional sex

One of the limitations of the study is the lack of discussion by women engaging in transactional sex (apart from sex work in bars). Men and female bar workers discussed their participation in transactional sex whereas women outside sex work only discussed this in regard to other women's behaviour not their own. Given that women's open involvement in transactional sexual networks was viewed in negatively it is unsurprising this was the case. Both men and women were also reluctant to discuss their own HIV risk openly. Again, this is likely to reflect the stigma that still existed within the villages of people living with HIV.

8.8.2 Limitations on using participatory research methods

We used participatory research methods in a very limited way in this study. A central component of action research is enacting the findings. The very limited economic resources in this study meant that we were only able to explore participant's solutions rather than moving through the whole project cycle. However, I tried to use a number of strategies to ensure the findings were disseminated widely in a number of ways:

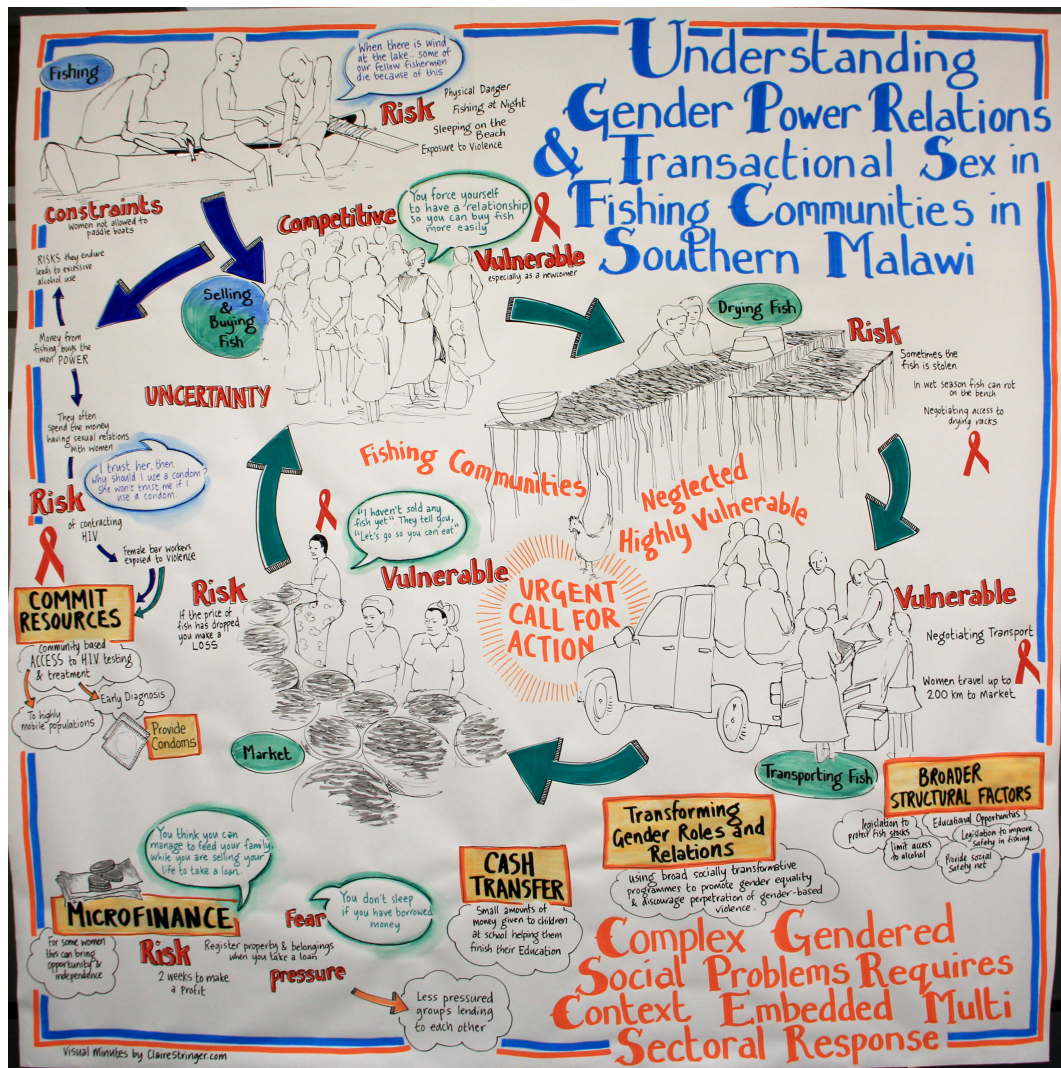
- Community meetings within all the MAFESSTA study villages
- Talking at the MAFESSTA findings meeting at Mangochi District Assembly
- Through dialogue with national NGOs in Malawi
- Through presentation of the findings at the 2nd Malawi College of Medicine Research Dissemination Conference

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- At international conferences regionally in Ethiopia and internationally in the UK and Paris
- Through peer review publications including one that is in preparation for the Malawi Medical Journal

In January 2014, I also worked with a local artist to produce visual representation of key findings from the research study. She drew on the voices of the participants, pictures and descriptions of the research to present a piece of visual work. The aim of the work was to develop another medium in which research findings could be presented. I am planning to use this to develop a policy brief and printed copy to share with key stakeholders on my next visit to Malawi. In Figure 8.3, I have provided a photo of the work.

Figure 8.3: Visual representation of research findings



8.8.3 Generalisability of findings

This study was based in only two fishing villages in one district of rural Malawi. Both communities were selected because they had a heavy involvement in the fishing industry and would provide the best opportunity to explore transactional sex and gender power relations in the communities. However, the two communities are very close geographically and quite homogenous. There are therefore likely to be limitations to how generalisable and transferable these

findings will be to other settings. However, I hope that by providing a detailed description of the villages and the context in which the research was conducted there is sufficient information for others to judge the extent to which the findings are generalisable and transferable to other settings.

8.8.4 Skills of the research team

As I discussed in Chapter 4, when we began conducting the research, the research assistant's qualitative research skills were quite limited. This was combined with my very limited Chichewa language skills. Asking men and women to divulge information on HIV, transactional sex and violence was quite difficult. Further, conducting interviews with women who worked in bars required very careful handling. There are likely to be times during interviews, focus groups and participatory workshops that I would have probed further, meaning that sometimes limited data were collected. However, we used a number of strategies to ensure the quality of the data. Firstly, I provided intensive training throughout the data collection process. This included delivering gender training to the RAs. This training provided opportunities for the RAs to reflect and discuss gender power relations and how they could impact their own lives as well as in society more broadly. I also delivered intensive training in qualitative data collection throughout the data collection. We also met as a group after each interview, focus group and participatory workshop. This provided us with the chance as a group to reflect on the quality of the data, identify any potential gaps or missed opportunities and any new or unexpected findings. I found that this process improved the quality of all aspects of the data collection including my own understanding of the data as well as the RAs' skills.

8.9 Conclusion

Fishing communities have unique social and epidemiological characteristics that mean they are at the epicentre of the HIV epidemic in Southern and Eastern Africa. People participating in the fishing industry and living in these communities, are highly vulnerable and this is reflected in the high prevalence of HIV infection that has been recorded. However, fishing communities have largely been ignored in national and international responses to HIV with very few interventions being conducted with this group. This thesis highlights the urgent need to remedy this situation and widen global and national responses to include fishing communities.

In the following sections I provide conclusions on the three key ways this thesis makes an important and original contribution to this body of academic work:

1. Providing new learning on the theoretical understanding of gender and structural drivers in previously neglected fishing communities;
2. Generated new knowledge through empirical data relating to gender, HIV and transactional sex in fishing communities in Southern Malawi. By drawing upon examples from these communities, to also provides new insights into the ways that that microfinance can in promulgate vulnerability to HIV;
3. Developed structural interventions that could be taken forward to prevent HIV. These interventions were developed using participatory research

methods that allowed for the incorporation of voices that have not always been heard.

8.9.1 New learning on theoretical understanding of gender and structural drivers in neglected fishing communities

Within the international literature on fishing communities and HIV risk, transactional sex and the gendered division of labour have been highlighted as important factors in driving HIV transmission. However, the ways in which gender intersects with other social markers such as age, socio-economic position and occupation in the fishing industry has not previously received the same level of attention. By drawing on social relations and gender theory this thesis provides new learning on the ways gender interacts with other social drivers. In particular, I demonstrate that gendered power relations structure relationships both between men and women but also between different groups of men and women.

What these insights demonstrate is that not all men and women in fishing communities are equally powerful, and that power dynamics between different groups of men such as boat crews and boat owners influenced men's position within the fishing industry and within the wider community. Similarly, not all female fish traders had equal access to fish and not all fish traders travelled to sell their fish. Therefore, rather than viewing fishing communities as homogenous groups who are all equally at risk of HIV, it will be important to design HIV prevention strategies which consider how men and women's different socio-economic positions influence their sexual behaviour.

8.9.2 Empirical data relating to gender, HIV, transactional sex and microfinance in fishing communities in Southern Malawi

There has been extensive discussion of transactional sex in the international literature due to the associated risk of HIV. However, the focus of the international literature has predominately been on young women living in urban or peri-urban areas. This thesis adds further to the literature by providing discussion of men and older women's engagement in transactional sex, their motivation to engage, and how HIV risk was perceived in these exchanges. For poor men with positions in the fishing industry that carried high physical risk such as boat crew members paying for sex provided them with physical comfort. Men in all positions could also exploit their access to better resources to pressure poorer women into having sex. For older women the unpredictable nature of the fishing industry and their high levels of economic insecurity were also drivers for engaging in transactional.

The extremely high level of poverty in rural Malawi was an important factor in explaining engagement in transactional sex particularly for women. Women were reported to engage in transactional sex even for very small pieces of fish - "sex for relish." Sex for relish is not a phenomenon that has been previously discussed within the literature and highlights the high levels of food insecurity that existed within the villages. One of the key debates that have been presented within the literature is whether transactional sex is always about survival or whether women use their agency to enter these exchanges willingly. In the Malawian fishing communities context with such grinding poverty and food insecurity transactional sex was a part of survival particularly for those engaging in "sex-for-relish" where agency was extremely constrained. These findings provide weight to the argument

that once agency becomes extremely constrained women have limited choice but to engage in transactional sex. These findings add further weight to the need to explore the context and motivation of engagement in transactional sex rather than viewing it dichotomously as either survival or an empowered decision.

A further aspect of my research that adds to the research on transactional sex relates to the division that has previously been made in the literature between transactional sex and sex work. In the literature there has been clear distinctions made between the two. However, within the Malawian fishing villages there was considerable blurring in the definition of transactional and sex work. By conceptualising transactional sex as a spectrum rather than separate phenomena, I further emphasise the need to ensure understanding of the context and motivation for engagement in transactional sex in all its forms is required.

The constrained agency that both men and women experienced within the fishing communities contributed to both men and women's engagement in transactional sex and their increased vulnerability. For women who had limited options other than engaging in transactional sex (including sex workers), their power to negotiate condom use was limited, leaving them vulnerable to HIV. The structural violence that shaped women's vulnerability to HIV also shaped men's motivation for engagement in transactional sex. For HIV interventions to be successful they need to alter the broader social environments in which men and women live and work.

In the international literature there has been intense discussions relating to the potential benefits and harms of microfinance for poor rural women. Microfinance has been seen as a potential intervention for preventing HIV in high prevalence

countries in Southern Africa. I found that women working in the fishing industry experienced high levels of economic risk. Microfinance did not fundamentally alter the broader environment that female fish traders worked within. At times microfinance increased female fish traders' economic vulnerability and their risk to HIV. This provides clear evidence that in fishing communities in Malawi there is an urgent need to modify MF products to protect highly vulnerable women. It also provides evidence that microfinance should not be used as a tool to prevent HIV in fishing communities. While, there are context specific factors that may exacerbate the vulnerability of female fish traders in Malawi using MF, these findings do highlight the need for further interrogation of the impact of MF services on the women and men who use them. When MF organisations focus on the rates borrowers repay the loans rather than exploring the potential impact of these services on men and women's wellbeing they are potentially doing more harm. Further, in high HIV prevalence settings they may further increase women's vulnerability to HIV.

8.9.3 Development of structural interventions to prevent HIV

Interventions that address the structural environment have been found in the international literature to be more effective in preventing HIV than behavioural interventions. Therefore, there has been an emphasis within the international literature of the need to intervene at the structural level but there has been less emphasis on the specific details and ways of doing this. This thesis provides clear insights into the structural drivers of HIV and draws upon the knowledge and understanding of people living in these communities to develop potential interventions. Yet, for structural interventions to be effective they need to be

context specific and respond to the risk and vulnerability that different group's experience. To date there have been very limited interventions to prevent HIV in fishing communities and none in the published literature that have been developed to be used within fishing communities in Southern Malawi. This thesis responds to this challenge through an in-depth analysis that moved beyond the individual to explore factors at the household, community and environmental/structural level.

However, there are a number of factors that are likely to make implementing such interventions difficult. Men and women working in the fishing industry are highly mobile and reaching them with interventions is likely to be challenging. While these interventions have been developed in an inclusive and context specific manner it is still unclear whether they will reduce HIV vulnerability therefore further research would be required to fully evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions in fishing communities.

Some of these interventions involve working with socially marginalised groups and changing deeply entrenched power relations. For these interventions to be successful they will require a commitment from people in politically powerful positions. They also require economic resources to be committed. Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world and remains highly dependent on international aid to provide even basic social services. Economic resources are likely to be limited. However, this thesis makes a strong case for the inclusion of fishing communities in global responses to HIV and this message needs to be better articulated at the national and international level.

8.9.4 Social relations and gender theory

Social relations theory provides a way of examining existing social relationships at the individual, household and institutional level. The theory explicitly includes analysis of how other social differences such as class, race and ethnicity can interact with gender. The findings demonstrate that gender power relations often disadvantaged women. However, there were also gender power relations also shaped the relations between different groups of men and women with socio-economic position and age being key social axis that structured the distribution of resources, responsibilities and power between different groups of men and different groups of women.

Due to the high levels of travel involved in both catching and processing fish men and women were often away from the household for long periods of time.

Providing food and money for children often fell to women. For many women living in the villages their involvement in income generation activities within the fishing industry funded this. However, men and women's income generation activities were often seen as separate businesses and women often had to purchase fish for sale even from their intimate partners. At the household level this often left women at a more disadvantaged position because their income generation roles often provided them with less money and the money they did generate was often used to meet the basic needs of the household. Men were often able to use the profits from their work to either fund leisure activities such as drinking or to fund other businesses. This means that within the household there was less pooling of resources than has often been viewed in the application of gender theory in different context.

Intersectionality theory conceptualises gender as fluid, intersecting form of inequality and encourages researchers to investigate the numerous ways different social axis interact to shape vulnerability. It was been developed in part because gender theory has often in practice translated into the examination of differences between men and women. Throughout the planning, data collection and analysis I explicitly drew on Kabeer's theory of social relations and how distribution of resources, responsibilities and power shaped men and women's lives. By using this theory I was able to interrogate how different social axes interacted and shaped vulnerability. This highlights that when social relations theory is implemented fully it is possible to explore different social axes and how they intersect with gender. However, what intersectionality does is to provide further evidence for the need to look explicitly for these intersections. However, one challenge that remains is how to operationalise intersectionality theory and perhaps drawing on gender frameworks may provide further assistance in this.

Within the fishing communities it was clear that men in more socially marginalised positions such as boat crew members adopted more extreme forms of masculine identity as an attempt to compensate for their subordinate position (including the risks they experienced within their work). Female bar workers reported the high levels of violence perpetrated by this group of men. During the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions boat crew members used the most negative terminology to describe women and girls and often described their relationships with women in very negative terms. These findings provide further evidence that masculine ideas are often more extreme for socially marginalised men (in the fishing context this was often young men). Further, the way these men

exert power to compensate for their subordinate positions (having multiple sexual partner, selling with women working in bars and drinking excessively) increased their vulnerability to HIV. Again highlighting the need to alter the broader structural factors that left men in socially marginalised positions.

To conclude, this thesis provides new knowledge on the ways gender and social inequalities shape vulnerability to HIV in fishing communities in Southern Malawi. It also provides recommendations for taking forward interventions to alter the social environment in which HIV vulnerability is created in fishing communities.

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9 Appendices

Appendix A: Socio-demographic information for the in-depth interviews

In this appendix I have included key socio-demographic information for all the in-depth interviews. In Table 9.1. I present the socio-demographic data for female in-depth interviews. In Table 9.2. I present brief socio-demographic data for the male in-depth interviews. In Table 9.3. I present more detailed data from the in-depth interviews with male and female fish traders borrowing microfinance loans.

Table 9.1: Brief socio-demographic data for female in-depth interviews

Interview code	Sex	Profession	Age group
F1IDI	Female	Female fish trader (large scale)	55-59
F2IDI	Female	Fish trader (large scale)	30-34
F3IDI	Female	Bar worker (Chibuka bar)	15-19
F4IDI	Female	Beer brewer	30-34
F5IDI	Female	Fish trader large scale	30-34
F6IDI	Female	Fish trader small scale	25-29
F7IDI	Female	Fish trader large scale	50-54
F8IDI	Female	Female bar worker	20-24
F9IDI	Female	Female bar worker	20-24
F10IDI	Female	Fish trader small scale	25-29
F11IDI	Female	Fish trader large scale	30-34
F12IDI	Female	Girl secondary school	15-19
F13IDI	Female	Farmer	40-44
F14IDI	Female	Petty trader	30-34
F15IDI	Female	Beer brewer	50-54
F16IDI	Female	Fish trader large scale	15-19
F17IDI	Female	Beer brewer	40-44
F18IDI	Female	<i>Amayi phikani</i>	45-49
F19IDI	Female	Farmer	30-34
F20IDI	Female	<i>Amayi phikani</i>	30-34
F21IDI	Female	Petty trader	25-29
F22IDI	Female	Female fish trader (large scale)	25-29
F23IDI	Female	Female bar worker (bottle bar)	25-29
F24IDI	Female	Female bar worker (bottle bar)	25-29
F25IDI	Female	Fish trader (large scale)	55-59
F26IDI	Female	Fish trader (large scale)	35-39

F27IDI	Female	Female fish trader (using MF loan)	30-34
F28IDI	Female	Female fish trader (using MF loan)	50-54
F29IDI	Female	Female fish trader (using MF loan)	30-34
F30IDI	Female	Female fish trader (using MF loan)	35-39
F31IDI	Female	Female fish trader (using MF loan)	30-34
F32IDI	Female	Female fish trader (using MF loan)	45-49
F33IDI	Female	Female fish trader (using MF loan)	30-34
F34IDI	Female	Female fish trader (using MF loan)	40-44

Table 9.2: Brief socio-demographic data for male in-depth interviews

Interview code	Sex	Profession	Age range
M1IDI	Male	Boat owner	40-45
M2IDI	Male	Boat painter/casual labourer	40-45
M3IDI	Male	Fish trader	50-55
M4IDI	Male	Boat crew member/fish trader	25-29
M5IDI	Male	Boat crew member	15-19
M6IDI	Male	Boat crew member	25-29
M7IDI	Male	Boat manager	25-29
M8IDI	Male	Boat crew member	20-24
M9IDI	Male	Boat crew member	20-24
M10IDI	Male	Boat crew member	15-19
M11IDI	Male	Boat driver	20-24
M12IDI	Male	Casual labourer	15-19
M13IDI	Male	Boat driver	20-24
M14IDI	Male	Motor bike taxis	35-39
M15IDI	Male	Boat manager	20-24
M16IDI	Male	Farmer	45-49
M17IDI	Male	Bicycle taxis	25-29
M18IDI	Male	Boat owner	30-34
M19IDI	Male	School going boy over 15	15-19
M20IDI	Male	Truck driver	30-35
M21	Male	Boat Owner	30-35
M22	Male	Fish trader	50-55
M23	Male	Fish trader (using micro finance loan)	35-39
M24	Male	Fish trader (using micro finance loan)	30-34
M25	Male	Fish trader (using micro finance loan)	25-29
M26	Male	Fish trader (using microfinance loan)	35-39

Appendix A

Table 9.3: In-depth socio-demographic data for microfinance interviews

Interview code and village	Demographic information
M1, Village 2	Female, 34, Tumbuka, Anglican, divorced from husband for second time, fish trader, sold fish at far markets, dropped out S8,
M2, Village 2	Female, 50, Tonga, CAP, widowed in 2005 (married twice), fish trader, sold fish at far markets, dropped out of school in S4,
M3, Village 2	Female, 30, Tonga, CAP, married for a second time still with her husband a fisherman, trades fish, sold fish at far market, dropped out of school in S7,
M4, Village 2	Female, 37, Tonga, Holy Pentecostal Church, widowed and then divorced, trades fish, sells at far away markets; dropped out of school in S8,
M5, Village 1	Female, 32, Chewa, Anglican, married, fish trader; sells fish at far markets; usually accesses fish from her husbands boat dropped out of school in S6,
M6, Village 1	Female, 47, Tumbuka, divorced female fish trader (second time), fish trader at far markets dropped out of school at S8,
M7, Village 1	Female, 33, Tonga, Anglican, married but husband left for South Africa in 2008, undertakes small-scale fish trading; dropped out of school in S6
M8, Village 1	Female, 40, Tonga married for a second time, female fish trader, traded larger fresh fish not smaller dried fish, parents owned boats and fishing gear and well connected, dropped out of school in S8
M9, Village 1	Male, 39, Tumbuka, African International Church, married for a second time, fishes and trades fish using MF loan, dropped out of school in Form 3
M10, Village 2	Male, 34, Tonga, married for second time, fish trader who works with his wife; completed school and trained as an engineer
M11, Village 2	Male, 26, Lomwe, CCAP, carpenter and fish trader, married, left school in secondary form 4
M12, Village 1	Male, 36, Tumbuka, male fish trader (although also butcher and land lord), married for a second time; completed school

Appendix B: Sample Frame for In-depth Interviews

In the tables below I provide sample frames for the male and female in-depth interviews.

Table 9.4: Sample frame for male in-depth interviews

Profession	Village 2		Village 1	
	Older	Younger	Older	Younger
Boat owners	1		1	
Boat Managers		1		1
Boat Crew	2	2	2	2
Fish traders and fish processors	2	2	2	2
Male fish traders borrowing loans	1	1	1	1
Farmer	1		1	
Business owner	1		1	
Bar tender	1		1	
Motorbike/ bicycle taxis driver	1	1	1	1
Boy attending secondary	1	1	1	1

Appendix C

Table 9.5: Sample frame for female in-depth interviews

Profession	Village 2		Village 1	
	Older	Younger	Older	Younger
Female bar worker in bottle bar	1	1	1	1
Female bar worker in chibuku bar	1	1	1	1
Female fish trader selling fish in village	2	2	2	2
Female fish trader selling outside the village	2-3	2-3	2-3	2-3
Female fish trader borrowing microfinance loan (ensuring a range of MF providers are included)	2	2	2	2
Beer brewer				
Mayi Phikani	1		1	
Farmer	1		1	
Petty trader	1	1	1	1
Girls attending secondary school		1		1

Appendix C: Topic guides

Topic Guide A: Insider Men IDI

This topic guide should be used with Insider Men – these are men who work explicitly in the fishing industry.

Topic 1: Biographical information

This section may take a long time to cover and you want to get as much detail as possible particularly about sexual partnerships. One way of exploring and keeping track of current and previous sexual partnerships is through the outlines of the women.

Age

Place of birth (if not the village of birth probe around why they moved to the current place)

Tribe

Religion

Education: Number of years of education, attainment level, if dropped out early, why did they drop out early?

Relationship History – Using the 4 female digammas ask the participants to describe their previous and current relationships. *Give each of the pictures a name and using the colouring pens colour a key aspect of their clothing and refer back to the drawings if these relationships come up again in the later interviews. The drawings are there as a way of exploring the sexual relationships in a none threatening way*

Establish whether someone is married during this discussion and how many times.

Make sure you ask which tribe their wife belongs to, and where she lives.

How did he meet the partners? Does he have casual relationships?

How did they meet each partner?

How would you describe the relationship?

How old was each partner?

When did they begin seeing them?

Why did they begin seeing each other?

Why did they break up?

Appendix C

How long did the relationship last?
What was their partner's occupation?
Did they help with the household finances?
Are you still supporting her?
Do you still communicate with this partner?

No. of children: Probe around ages of children and mother/mothers try to remember what they have said about previous relationships and relate them to the drawings. Probe around what they want for their children when they grow up. Do they want their boys to go into fishing? What about the girls?

Household structure: Probe around who they live with? Probe around why they live with these people

Topic 2: Livelihood

Household finance:

- How does your household make a living? Who contributes to the finances?

Individual contribution: What is your contribution to the household?

Current occupation:

What is your current occupation? How did you get to be in this job?

Earnings: When do you earn the most money? Which month/time of the year?
When do you earn the least amount of money? Why?

Fishing industry: Can you describe your work? How do you normally buy fish? (find out if they have regular boats he buy from? How does he become a customer for a boat?) How do you normally source capital? – How do women normally source capital? What happens when fish catches are low? What do women do when fish catches are low? Do you travel to access fish?

Where do you travel to?
How long are you normally away for?
Where do you sleep? Where do women sleep?
What are the challenges you encounter buying fish?

Market

Do you travel to sell fish?
How often do you travel?
Where do you normally go?

How long do you normally stay?

What are the challenges you encounter selling fish?

Leisure activities:

Where do you spend your money?

What do you do for leisure?

Is this different when you travel?

Who do you spend your money on? (you need to really probe around these questions to ensure you capture who and how they spend their money)

Risk:

What do you see as the riskiest aspects of your life? Why? (make sure you probe around their personal lives as well as their jobs) and then how risky they consider HIV to be given these. Who in the community is at risk of HIV?

Topic Guide B: Insider Women IDI

This topic guide should be used with Insider Women – these are women who work explicitly in the sex industry

Topic 1: Biographical information

This section may take a long time to cover and you want to get as much detail as possible particularly about sexual partnerships. One way of exploring and keeping track of current and previous sexual partnerships is through the outlines of the men.

Age

Place of birth (if not the village of birth probe around why they moved to the current place)

Tribe

Religion

Education: Number of years of education, attainment level, if dropped out early, why did they drop out early?

Marital Status probe around whether current spouse is 1st/2nd/3rd wife and why marriage broke up, what is the wife's tribe

Relationship History – Using the 4 male diagrams ask the participants to describe their previous and current relationships. *Give each of the pictures a name and using the coloring pens colour a key aspect of their clothing and refer back to the drawings if these relationships come up again in the later interviews. The drawings are there as a way of exploring the sexual relationships in an unthreatening way. What is important here is to establish the motivational factors involved with each relationship and whether these were concurrent or not i.e. some women may have a full-time partner but may seek to make up additional income through either one less regular who may travel or several irregular partners.*

How did they meet each partner?

How old was each partner?

When did they begin seeing them?

Why did they begin seeing each other?

Why did they break up?

Was violence an issue?

What did you get out of the relationship? (probe around money/material support)

Why did you have the relationship?

How would you describe the relationship?

Did they receive any gifts or money in these relationships?

What was the occupation of the previous partners?

How long did the relationship last?

No. of children: Probe around ages of children and father/fathers try to remember what they have said about previous relationships and relate them to the drawings

Do the children live with them?

What do you want for your children when they grow up?

Do you want the boys to be involved in the fishing? What do you want for the girls?

Household structure: Probe around who they live with? Do you like who you live with and why

Topic 2: Livelihood

Household finance: Where do you get most of your money from? Does anyone outside the household contribute to household income? In what ways? You need to make sure you explore all sources of income and keep probing around how they are obtained.

Individual contribution: What is your contribution to the household?

Current occupation: What is your current occupation? How did you get to be in this job?

Previous employment: what did you previously do? When did you start? Why did you leave the previous job?

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Earnings: When do you earn the most money? Which month/time of the year? When do you earn the least amount of money? Why do you earn little at that point?

Risk and current occupation: What do you see as the riskiest aspects of your life? Why? (make sure you probe around their personal lives as well as their jobs) and then how risky they consider HIV to be given these other concerns they have? How do you protect yourself? (if they are open ask about condom use with clients/partners?)

Clientele: Do you have a typical client? Where do they usually come from?

Mobility and work: How often do you travel with your work? Where do you travel to? How long are you normally away for? Why do you travel? Where do you generally sleep when you are away? Do they stay in one place or do they move around?

Challenges: What are the challenges you encounter in your work? (probe around violence)

Topic Guide C: Outsider Men IDI

This topic guide should be used with Insider Men – these are men who live in the village but who do not work in the fishing industry.

Age

Place of birth (if not the village of birth probe around why they moved to the current place)

Tribe

Religion

Education: Number of years of education, attainment level, if dropped out early, why did they drop out early?

Parents:

Where do your parents live? (if they are separated probe around why they separated)

What job so your parents do (if retired what did they do)

Relationship History – Establish whether someone is married during this discussion and how many times. Make sure you ask which tribe their wife belongs to, and where she lives. *What is important here is to establish the motivational factors involved with each relationship and whether these were concurrent or not i.e. some women may have a full-time partner but may seek to make up additional income through either one less regular who may travel or several irregular partners.*

How did they meet each partner?

How would you describe the relationship?

How old was each partner?

When did they begin seeing them?

Why did they begin seeing each other?

Why did they break up?

How long did the relationship last?

What was their partner's occupation?

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Did they help with the household finances?

Are you still supporting her?

Do you still communicate with this partner?

No. of children:

Probe around ages of children and mother/mothers try to remember what they have said about previous relationships

What do you want for your children when they grow up?

Do you want the boys to be involved in the fishing?

What do you want for the girls?

Household structure: Probe around who they live with?

What is the relationship like with the people you live with?

Topic 2: Livelihood

Household finance:

How does your household make a living?

Who contributes to the finances?

Individual contribution: What is your contribution to the household?

Current occupation:

What is your current occupation?

How did you get to be in this job?

Previous employment:

What did you previously do?

When did you start?

Why did you leave the previous job?

Earnings:

When do you earn the most money?

Which month/time of the year?

When do you earn the least amount of money? Why?

Mobility and work: How often do you travel with your work? Where do you travel to? How long are you normally away for? Why do you travel? Where do you generally sleep when you are away? Do they stay in one place or do they move around?

Risk and current occupation: What do you see as the riskiest aspects of your life? Why? (make sure you probe around their personal lives as well as their jobs) and then how risky they consider HIV to be given these other concerns they have? How do you protect yourself? (if they are open ask about condom use with clients/partners?)

Leisure activities: Where do you spend your money? What do you do for leisure? Is this different when you travel? Who do you spend your money on? (you need to really probe around these questions to ensure you capture who and how they spend their money)

Topic Guide D: Insider Women: Fishing Industry

This topic guide should be used with Insider Women in the fishing industry

Topic 1: Biographical information

This section may take a long time to cover and you want to get as much detail as possible particularly about sexual partnerships.

Age

Place of birth (if not the village of birth probe around why they moved to the current place)

Tribe

Religion

Education: Number of years of education, attainment level, if dropped out early, why did they drop out early?

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Parents:

Where do your parents live? (if they are separated probe around why they separated)

What job so your parents do (if retired what did they do)

Relationship History

Establish whether someone is married during this discussion and how many times. Make sure you ask which tribe their husband belonged to. Find out where the husband currently lives.

What is important here is to establish the motivational factors involved with each relationship and whether these were concurrent or not i.e. some women may have a full-time partner but may seek to make up additional income through either one less regular who may travel or several irregular partners.

What was the purpose of the relationship? (probe around money/material support)

How did they meet each partner?

How old was each partner?

When did they begin seeing them?

Why did they begin seeing each other?

Why did they break up?

Was violence an issue?

How would you describe the relationship?

Did they receive any gifts or money in these relationships?

What was the occupation of the previous partners?

How long did the relationship last?

Do you still communicate?

No. of children: Probe around ages of children and father/fathers try to remember what they have said about previous relationships

Do the children live with them?

What do you want for your children when they grow up?

Do you want the boys to be involved in the fishing? What do you want for the girls?

Household structure: Probe around who they live with?

What is the relationship like with the people you live with?

Topic 2: Livelihood

Household finance: How does your household make a living? Who contributes to the finances?

Individual contribution: What is your contribution to the household?

Current occupation:

What is your current occupation?

How did you get to be in this job?

Previous employment:

What did you previously do?

When did you start?

Why did you leave the previous job?

Earnings:

When do you earn the most money?

Which month/time of the year?

When do you earn the least amount of money? Why?

Women and fish trading:

What is women's role in the fishing industry (probe why don't women go into the water to fish?)

How old are women when they begin fish trading? (probe when do they start going to far away markets?)

How do women access fish? Do fishermen prefer to sell to certain people?)

What happens when there is a shortage of money?

What are the challenges that women working in the fish trade face?

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What opportunities do women in the fishing industry face?

Mobility and work:

How often do you travel with your work?

Where do you travel to?

How long are you normally away for?

Why do you travel? Where do you generally sleep when you are away?

Do you stay in one place or do you move around? What happens if there are challenges i.e. if you are unable to sell your fish?)

Challenges:

What are the challenges you encounter in your work? (if involved in fishing probe specifically around the challenges of seasonality, changing fish stocks, access to fish – how do they access fish?)

When are the hunger periods?

What are people's coping strategies when the fish catches are low?

Risk and current occupation:

What do you see as the riskiest aspects of your life? Why? (make sure you probe around their personal lives as well as their jobs) and then how risky they consider HIV to be given these other concerns they have?

Below is an example of a topic guide we used in the focus group discussions.

Topic Guide: Focus group discussion

Topic guide: Women working inside the fishing industry

Before you start you the focus group you need to capture data key demographic data on each of the participants this includes. You also need to get each participant to sign the written consent form (these have been provided attached to this sheet).

Topic 1: Introduction to the discussion

1. Introduce the study and explain the objective of the FGD – will be discussing the fish trade and women’s position within the fish trade, relationships within the community, HIV and contraception
2. Emphasis the importance of confidentiality
3. Explain that there are no wrong answers
4. Ask each participant to introduce themselves

Topic 2: Women and the fishing industry

1. How do women become involved in the fishing industry? (probe around family and community influence)
2. Why do women work in the fishing industry? (probe around alternative options i.e. other work women in the industry can do?)
3. What type of women work in the fishing industry? (probe around young, old and the different tribes they belong to – make sure you PROBE WHY it is different groups)
4. At what age do women become involved in the fishing industry (probe around different roles including fish trading)
5. What are the different types of fish do women trade? (Why?)
6. What are the different types of fish do men trade? (Is it different to women? Why is this?)
7. How do women source fish? (Do they buy from the boat? From fishermen? From husbands?)
8. What happens when there low catches? How do women access fish?

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9. How do women normally source capital? (Probe around family – who is it within the family – husbands? Siblings? Parents? Microfinance organisations?)
10. How do women become successful in the fishing industry?
11. What are the challenges facing women in the fishing industry?
12. What are the opportunities for women in the fishing industry?

Topic 2: Mobility and women

1. Where do women in the fish trade travel to? (probing why they travel?)
2. Where do women stay when they travel? (How long do they normally stay? What type of transport do they use? What time do they leave?)
3. How does the community view women traveling?
4. Does travel affect relationships within households? (Between husbands and wives?)
5. What are the challenges of fish selling away from home? (probe around what happens when these events occur?)
5. Are fishing practices/livelihoods changing through time? (if so how is this different for men than for women?)

Topic 3: Relationships and the community

1. What are the different types of relationships in the community? (probe around marriage, when do couples get married, why do couples get married? What about younger people what do they do? What about affairs and sex workers?)
2. What motivates women to enter into relationships?
3. What motivates men to enter into relationships?
4. What are men's expectations of women in relationships? (does this change over time are younger men's expectations different from older men's)
5. What are women's expectations of men in relationships? (does tis change over time? Are younger women's expectations different from older women's?)
6. Why do relationships end?

Topic 4: Contraception and Relationships

1. What contraception is available in the village?
2. Who is responsible for deciding which type of contraception can be used?
3. Do different relationships change the type of contraception that can be used?
4. Who uses condoms in relationships? Can married women use condoms? Can younger people use condoms?

Topic 5: Leisure activities in the community

1. What do women do for leisure in the community?
2. What do men do for leisure in the community? (probe around drinking and why men drink but women do not)

Topic 6: Violence and the village

1. What do you understand as violence? (probe for different types of violence)
2. Is violence an issue in the community? (probe how and why)
3. How does the community respond to violence? (probe in different cases e.g. rape – probe by women, men, girls and boys as appropriate)
4. Who is the violence reported to? (Probe around police, chief, traditional leaders)
5. If the violence is reported what happens?

Topic 7: HIV and the Community

1. What risks are in the community?
2. What are the health problems in the community?
3. Where do they get information about health in the community? (probe around
4. Do you think HIV is a problem in the community?(if yes why do they feel it is a problem?)
5. What do you think the reasons are for HIV being within the community?
6. Are there certain groups who are more likely to be affected with HIV?

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7. Where do people go to get tested? PROBE around who is likely to get test – is this men, women younger older – if they say women ask why not men
8. What stops people from getting tested?
9. Where do people go to get treated? PROBE around who is likely to go for treatment - is this men, women younger older - if they say women ask why not men
10. What stops people from accessing treatment?

Ending discussion

1. Thank the participants for their contributions
2. Ask if the participants want to add anything else?
3. Ask if the participants have any questions
4. Remind the participants about confidentiality

Appendix D: Stages of analysis

In this appendix I provide a brief insight into the stages of the analysis I undertook.

These include thematic framework and an example of a chart.

The thematic framework presented in Table 9.6 was developed initially using the topic guides and going through a selection of the in-depth interview transcripts.

The framework has then been updated as the indexing has been conducted to ensure all new themes are covered.

Table 9.6: Thematic framework

Themes	Index
Alcohol use	Alcohol
	Different types of alcohol
	Groups using
	Consequences
Aspirations for children	Aspirations for children
	Education level
	Type of employment
Capital	Men and capital
	Women and capital
Relocation	Reasons for relocation
Education	Dropping out
	Completing school
	School and fishing
Household dynamics	Financial
	Household structure
	Men's leisure activities
	Women's leisure activities
Marriage	Age of marriage
	Community perceptions
	Marital break up
	Drivers for getting married
Relationships	Types
	Expectations
	Reasons to enter
	Reasons to end
	Community perception
Men's roles in the fishing industry	Different roles in fishing
	Fish trading

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	Different types of fish caught
	Different types of fishing
	Drivers for entry
	Age
	Benefits
	Challenges
	Family response
	Process of entry
	Money
	Stigma
	Tribe
Women's role in the fishing industry	Age
	Benefits
	Challenges
	Different roles
	Stigma
	Tribe
	Drivers for entry
Women's income outside the fishing industry	Roles
	Benefits
	Challenges
Microfinance	Decision to take loan
	Use of loan
	Strategies for repaying the loan
	Benefits of taking loan
	Challenges in repaying
	Confiscation of property
	Risks of taking a loan
	Types of people taking loans
Transactional sex	Gift giving
	Sex for money
	Sex for capital
	Sex for fish
	Sex and travel
	Sex for money
	Sex for relish
	Drivers
	Impact on relationship
Fish trade	Accessing fish
	Challenges of selling
	Fish processing
	Making most money
	Making least money
	Types of fish
	Success in the fish trade
	Temporal changes
	Market
	Places to sell fish
Mobility	Reasons for travel
	Length of time away
	Challenges
	Community views
	Into village
	Sleeping
Sex work	Challenges

	Drivers for entry
	Relationships
	Violence
	Types of men engaging
	Types of sex work
HIV	Risks
	Stigma
	Fear
	Testing
	Treatment
Health problems	Decision to seek care
	Death
	Malaria
	TB
	Stroke
	Traditional medicine
	Problems with seeking care
Witchcraft	
Violence	Definitions of violence
	Intimate partner
	Rape
	Motivations of violence
	Reporting violence
Contraceptive use	Different types of contraceptive
	Decision making for use
	Condoms
	Access to
Changes in the fishing industry	Changes in fish catches
	Reason for changes
	Impact of changes
Community	Challenges
	Coping strategies
	Hunger periods
Gender	
Interventions	Fishing industry
	Health system
	Community
	Condom distribution
	Microfinance
Risks	Theft
	Travel
	Illness
	Livelihoods

Example of charting

I developed charts for a number of key themes including transactional sex, HIV risk and experiences of using microfinance. The chart below is taken from a larger chart that mapped men's discussions of transactional sex.

Table 9.7: Example of charting

Demographic info: gender, age, marital status, livelihood	Transactional sex	Motivation for engagement	Types of people involved	Consequences
L10, married, male, 24, boat crew member	<p>Discusses engaging in transactional sex with local women. Makes a distinction between paying local women and paying sex workers. Says if you are really in love you don't pay. But if you just want sex you can meet a village lady and give her money. Then the matter is finished</p> <p>He says all men have different behaviours – some have sex like him, others abstain until they see their wives while others have a marriage within the village – temporary marriages</p> <p>He also discusses female fish traders having sex with members of the boat crew like the boat manager or the head of the boat</p> <p>He also discusses women begging for fish for relish and sometimes having sexual relationships with the boat manager or leader as a way</p>	<p>Satisfying sexual desires when he is away from his wife</p> <p>Women entice men with sexual favours to access fish quickly</p>	Boat crew members	

	<p>of securing this</p> <p>Drinking and having sex with sex workers was discussed also. Although he says some men do not take part in this he says other do</p>			
L9, married male fish trader	<p>Discusses the strong link between drinking and men paying for sex. He says that sex workers are the cause of the HIV spreading within the communities. He says there are too many women in Village 2 village</p> <p>Discusses female fish traders having sex to ensure access to fish for sale</p>	Men being drunk and spending their money on women in bars	Men have a desire for sex when they travel	HIV – men having sex without concern for the consequences
L11, 22 boat driver, local to the village from the Chewa tribe, dropped out of school because liked the money he received from fishing	<p>Reports frequently engaging in transactional sex.</p> <p>Reports one woman paying him for sex. She is the wife of a wealthy fisherman who drinks a lot and she pays him for sex</p> <p>Discusses pressuring female fish traders who are new to the village to have sex with him and also for use of the fish drying racks</p> <p>He also acts as a go between with older more established men</p>	Sexual desire; discussed throughout his strong desire for sex with as many women as he can “hock”	Boat owners, boat crew	Says he frequently tests for HIV
L15, 21 divorced, chewa, Muslim, dropped out of school because of fishing	<p>Was married then his wife divorced him because he had sex with her too soon after a miscarriage. His parents shouted and chased her away.</p> <p>Says he still sees and has sex with</p>	“these women warm us when we catch cold at the lake you see” Physically keeping warm and being comforted		Fishermen feel their money is wasted if they use a condom

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	<p>her but not like the old days “I use condoms because I don’t trust her status”</p> <p>Says he doesn’t have intimate relationships just sex with sex workers that he meets in the bars</p> <p>Discusses the chief intervening to prevent the boat crew from receiving their wages the night of the catch and instead given it in the morning. Also the chief tried to make the bars close at midnight. He says this is in response to the reports from the wives of the boat crew members</p>	<p>by having sex with women particularly when away from their home villages</p> <p>Boat crews sleep on the beach or they hock up with a sex worker and sleep in her room</p>		
<p>L14, 19 years old, chewa dropped out of school in Form 4 because the brother who was paying his school fees died in a car accident, then parents decide to educate his sister because they were worried she would drop out and get married but he didn’t agree with the decision</p>	<p>Says the problem with fishermen is they don’t think to keep their money. They just use it on women and beer</p> <p>Says fishermen see beer and sex with mahule as a competition</p> <p>Says he has seen men lining up to have sex with the sex workers. They say “do it fast, I also want to do, I am coming from the lake, I am cold”</p> <p>He comes from the Balaka district and says that the situation with fishermen having sex with sex workers in Village 2 is extreme, he doesn’t see these types of activities everywhere</p> <p>Selling fish to relatives rather than different fish traders is a common practice</p>	<p>He says people at the Lake don’t believe in god and therefore just spend all the money on women and drink. He says you never find these young men in church</p> <p>Says people have no leader and no religion that is why they misbehave</p> <p>“We have a mixture of cultures in our place, this has formed a new culture of its own”</p>		

	<p>Also discusses the begging of fish by both men and women. Although more frequently women.</p> <p>He says that the selling of the catch if done properly does not lead to people having intimate partnerships. Needs to have all the representatives present when the fish catch is sold</p> <p>Describes men coming to work drunk and falling into the lake also the wind as a challenge</p> <p>Says they frequently sleeps on the sand because renting a house can be expensive – often more than they earn from the fishing expedition. He says they frequently stay in one place to process and sell the catch because it saves fuel</p> <p>Says people are used to money on the lakeshore – if you show a kid 500 he just laughs at you. This doesn't happen in other areas</p> <p>Security of property and copying of bad behaviour are seen as challenges</p>			
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Appendix E: Letters of ethical approval

Eleanor MacPherson
Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine
Pembroke Place
Liverpool
L3 5QA

Thursday, 04 November 2010

Dear Eleanor MacPherson

Re: Research Protocol (10.71) HIV transmission and transactional sex in fishing communities in southern Malawi

Thank you for your letter dated 20 October 2010 responding to the points raised by the Research Ethics Committee. The protocol now has formal ethical approval from the Chair of LSTM Research Ethics Committee.

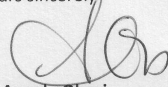
The approval is for a fixed period of three years, renewable annually thereafter. The committee may suspend or withdraw ethical approval at any time if appropriate.

Approval is conditional upon:

- Submission of ethical approval from other ethics committees.
- Notification of all amendments to the protocol for approval before implementation.
- Notification of when the project actually starts.
- Provision of an annual update to the Committee. Failure to do so could result in suspension of the study without further notice.
- Reporting of all severe unexpected Adverse Events to the Committee
- Reporting of new information relevant to patient safety to the Committee
- Provision of Data Monitoring Committee reports (if applicable) to the Committee

Failure to comply with these requirements will result in withdrawal of approval. The Committee would also like to receive copies of the final report once the study is completed.

Yours sincerely



Dr Angela Obasi
Deputy Chair, Research Ethics Committee



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

Principal
K.M Maleta MBBS, PhD
Our Ref.: COMREC/16
Your Ref.: P.09/10/977

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11th February 2011

Dr. E. MacPherson
Wellcome Trust Research and Laboratories
P.O Box 30096
BLANTYRE 3

Dear Dr. MacPherson,

RE: P.09/10/977 – HIV Transmission and Transactional Sex in Fishing Communities in Southern Malawi

I write to inform you that COMREC reviewed your proposal mentioned above which you resubmitted for expedited review. The following points have been dealt with:

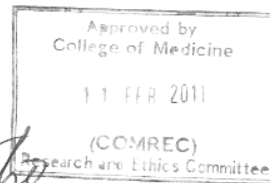
1. The recruitment of a female and male research assistant to conduct the FGDs with women and men respectively.
2. Revision and justification of the budget.
3. Separation of the objectives from the methodology section 4.
4. A letter of support from Dr Mbewe has been provided.

1

I am pleased to inform you that your protocol **was approved** after considering that you addressed all the queries raised in the initial review.

As you proceed with the implementation of your study we would like you to adhere the amended protocol ICH GCP requirements and the College of Medicine Research requirements as indicated on the attached page.

Yours sincerely,



Prof. J. M Mfutso-Bengo
CHAIRMAN – COMREC

JMMB/ck

Appendix F: Consent Form In-depth interviews

Principal Investigator: Eleanor MacPherson

Name of Organisations: Malawi College of Medicine and Liverpool University

Project Name: MAFESSTA Study

This informed consent form has two parts:

1. Information Sheet (to share information about the study with you)
2. Certificate of Consent (for signatures if you choose to participate)

You will be given a copy of the informed consent sheet.

Part I: Information Sheet

I am _____, working for the College of Medicine. I am doing research on the disease HIV that is common in Malawi and Mangochi. I am going to give you information and invite you to be part of this research. You do not have to decide today whether or not you will participate in the study. Before you decide, you can talk to anyone you feel comfortable with about the research. You can ask questions at any time.

What is the purpose of the study?

HIV is causing people in your community to be sick. We want to find ways to stop this from happening. We believe that you can help by telling us what you know about HIV. We want to learn what people who live or work here know about the causes of HIV and why some people get it. We are also interested about you and your life. In particular we are interested to know about what you do for a living, whether you travel around for work and what are your sexual practices. We believe this will give us a better understanding of who is at risk of getting HIV and why.

Why have I been invited to participate in the study?

You have been asked to take part in the study because you are living in a community that is known to have high levels of HIV infection. By interviewing people living in the community, we hope to understand the reasons why the HIV infection level is so high and develop strategies to help fight it.

What will the study involve?

This research will involve your participation in one interview now and we may ask you to participate in one further interview during the next year. If you are under 15 and living with your parents or a guardian we will also be asking you and your parents to consent to your participation in the study. If you are under 15 and living with your husband or have a child we will only be asking for your consent.

What will be done during the study?

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in an in-depth interview, which will last approximately one and a half hours. I will interview you. During the interview you will be asked questions relating to your life and will

include questions that relate to your livelihood, your mobility and your own sexual practices. You will also be asked about your knowledge of HIV and how it relates to the community. We would like to record our discussions. These tapes will be kept confidentially and used for writing reports.

For how long will the study last?

The research will take place over a 12-month period. During that time, we will visit you at least once to conduct an interview each interview will last approximately one and a half hours.

Are there any risks to taking part in the study?

We do not feel that there are any major risks to taking part in this study. However, some people may find it challenging or upsetting to discuss HIV and their sexual behaviours.

What are the benefits to taking part in the study?

There will be no direct benefit to you of participating in this study. However, your interview will provide valuable findings that might help your community to fight the spread of HIV/AIDS. In addition, the study findings will help in the planning and implementation of future health research studies and interventions in this community.

Reimbursements

You will not receive any money to take part in the study. However, you will be provided with a drink and a snack at the end of the interview.

Confidentiality

Any information about you will have a number on it instead of your name. Only the researcher will know what your number is and we will lock information up safely.

Sharing the Results

Nothing that you tell us today will be shared with anybody outside the research team, and your name will not appear anywhere. There will also be small meetings in the community to discuss the study results and these will be announced. Following the meetings, we will publish the results so that other people interested in the topic may learn from the research.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

You may stop participating in the interview at any time that you wish without any consequence or penalty. I will give you an opportunity at the end of the interview to review your remarks, and you can ask to modify or remove portions of those, if you do not agree with my notes or if I did not understand you correctly.

Part II: Certificate of Consent

I have been informed about purpose and procedures of this study and I fully understand these. I voluntarily accept to participate in the study. I also understand that my participation does not have any monetary or material reward and that I have the right to withdraw at any time.

Appendix F

Respondent AGREES / DOES NOT AGREE to participate in the interview.

Signature:..... Or Thumb print.....

Date:

I understand that it is helpful to the researcher to record the interview with a tape recorder.

Respondent AGREES / DOES NOT AGREE for the interview to be taped

Signature:..... Or Thumb print.....

Date:

For participants under 15 years who are not married and do not have a child the guardian AGREES / DOES NOT AGREE to for child to participate in the interview.

Signature:..... Or Thumb print.....

Date:

If the participant gave verbal consent, please enter the name of person who witnessed the consent here, and their signature:

Signature:.....

Date:

If you have any concerns with this study contact the principal investigator Eleanor MacPherson at the Malawi Liverpool Wellcome Research Centre, Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital, Blantyre on 0187 6444 or the Secretary of the College of Medicine Research and Ethics Committee on 01 871 911.

Appendix G: Consent Form Focus group discussions and participatory workshops

Principal Investigator: Eleanor MacPherson

Name of Organisations: Malawi College of Medicine and Liverpool University

Project Name: MAFESSTA Study

This informed consent form has two parts:

1. Information Sheet (to share information about the study with you)
2. Certificate of Consent (for signatures if you choose to participate)

You will be given a copy of the informed consent sheet.

Part I: Information Sheet

I am _____, working for the College of Medicine. I am doing research on the disease HIV that is common in Malawi and Mangochi. I am going to give you information and invite you to be part of this research. You do not have to decide today whether or not you will participate in the research. Before you decide, you can talk to anyone you feel comfortable with about the research. You can ask questions at any time.

What is the purpose of the study?

HIV is causing people in your community to be sick. We want to find ways to stop this from happening. We believe that you can help by telling us what you know about HIV. We want to learn what people who live or work here know about the causes of HIV and why some people get it. We are also interested about you and your life. In particular we are interested to know what you do for a living, whether you travel around for work and what are your sexual practices. We believe this will give us a better understanding of who is at risk of getting HIV and why.

Why have I been invited to participate in the study?

You have been asked to take part in the study because you are living in a community that is known to have high levels of HIV infection. By interviewing people living in the community, we hope to understand the reasons why the HIV infection level is so high and develop strategies to help fight it.

What will the study involve?

This research will involve your participation in one focus group discussion now and we may ask you to participate in one further focus group discussion during the next year. If you are under 15 and living with your parents or guardian we will also be asking you and your parents to consent to your participation in the study. If you are under 15 and living with your husband or have a child we will only be asking for your consent.

What will be done during the study?

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in a focus group discussion which will last approximately one and a half hours. The discussion will be led by me. During the discussion you and the other participants will be asked to discuss life in the village these will include questions around sexual practices. You will also be asked about your knowledge of HIV and how it relates to the community. We would like to record these discussions. These tapes will be kept confidentially and used for writing reports.

For how long will the study last?

The study will take place over a 12-month period. During that time, we will invite to participate in one focus group discussion. Each discussion will take approximately one and a half hours.

Are there any risks to taking part in the study?

We do not feel that there are any major risks to taking part in this study. However, some people may find it challenging or upsetting to discuss HIV and their sexual behaviours.

It is important that whatever is talked about during the discussion is kept confidential and not discussed with people who are not present during the discussion. We cannot promise that some individuals will not discuss these issues outside this group. However, on our part, we will keep recorded data securely and only the research team will have access to the data. Your name will not be used in any of the research reports.

What are the benefits to taking part in the study?

There will be no direct benefit to you of participating in this study. However, your contribution to the focus group discussion will provide valuable findings that might help your community to fight the spread of HIV/AIDS. In addition, the study findings will help in the planning and implementation of future health research studies and interventions in this community.

Reimbursements

You will not receive any money to take part in the study. However, you will be provided with a drink and a snack at the end of the discussion.

Confidentiality

Any information about you will have a number on instead of your name. Only the researcher will know what your number is and we will lock information up safely.

Sharing the Results

Nothing that you tell us today will be shared with anybody outside the research team, and your name will not appear anywhere. There will also be small meetings in the community to discuss the study results and these will be announced. Following the meetings, we will publish the results so that other people interested in the topic may learn from the research.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

You may stop participating in the discussion at any time that you wish without any consequence or penalty. I will give you an opportunity at the end of the discussion to review your remarks, and you can ask to modify or remove portions of those, if you do not agree with my notes or if I did not understand you correctly.

Part II: Certificate of Consent

I have been informed about purpose and procedures of this study and I fully understand these. I voluntarily accept to participate in the study. I also understand that my participation does not have any monetary or material reward and that I have the right to withdraw at any time.

Respondent AGREES / DOES NOT AGREE to participate in the focus group discussion.

Signature:..... Or Thumb print.....

Date:

I understand that it is helpful to the researcher to record the discussion with a tape recorder.

Respondent AGREES / DOES NOT AGREE for the discussion to be taped

Signature:..... Or Thumb print.....

Date:

For participants under 15 years who are not married and do not have a child the guardian AGREES / DOES NOT AGREE to the child's participation in the focus group discussion.

Signature:..... Or Thumb print.....

Date:

If the participant gave verbal consent, please enter the name of person who witnessed the consent here, and their signature:

Signature:.....

Date:

If you have any concerns with this study contact the principal investigator Eleanor MacPherson at the Malawi Liverpool Wellcome Research Centre, Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital, Blantyre on 0187 6444 or the Secretary of the College of Medicine Research and Ethics Committee on 01 871 911.