Contesting and Reinforcing Patriarchy:
An Analysis of Domestic Violence
in the Dzaleka Refugee Camp

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Acknowledgements

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INTRODUCTION

Despite the implication of the term, "domestic violence" does not happen in the vacuum of the home. It is a violence that is influenced and caused by many factors—structural, cultural and individual. The phenomenon of domestic violence is reinforced and contested through multiple, competing discourses—within development, within cultures and between cultures. Exploring domestic violence in a refugee camp is particularly valuable, in that it is an arena in which all of these influences and competing discourses are more concentrated and visible. As a site in which populations seek refuge from conflict in their home countries, it is often a situation in which many different cultures must live together in a concentrated area. It is also always administered and monitored by a government, development NGOs and institutions, all with interests of their own. In examining domestic violence in the refugee camp, one must examine the power relations between man and woman and how the refugee experience affects their relationship, but must also acknowledge that the camp is an arena in which multiple power struggles with respect to how to handle domestic violence are taking place. Relations between man and woman, refugee and community leader, camp personnel, and NGOs and UNHCR all must be considered, as each agent has different notions of what domestic violence is and how to handle the problem. Indeed, domestic violence in the refugee home is complex and multi-faceted.

Unfortunately, domestic violence in the refugee context is severely underexamined and undertheorized. This has often resulted in one-sided explorations of domestic violence, simplifying the problem into either individual or social terms. Further, much of the literature that focuses on refugee families concentrates on the trauma the family has experienced as a result of conflict and flight. The refugee is viewed as vulnerable and traumatized—an image that ignores the effects of the camp situation in which they live. Domestic violence should be discussed in a manner that takes structural violence, culture and individual influences and causes into account. Structures, cultures and individuals all influence each other, negotiating and reworking understandings of gender and domestic issues. In this sense, an examination of the roles discourse, knowledge and power play with regard to relations within the refugee household is particularly useful, in that it illuminates how patriarchy and the practice of domestic violence is both reinforced and contested. An individual, a home, a community, indeed the global discussion of refugee and gender issues are all arenas within which discourse and power struggles are realized. Because of this, it is important to examine refugee domestic violence in each of these arenas. The following is an examination of domestic violence in the Dzaleka refugee camp. The paper only begins to explore this issue and there will be many questions that remain unanswered at the end. However, this discussion will hopefully show that refugee domestic violence deserves to be examined more thoroughly and with a broad lens.

Section 1 will briefly discuss the background of the Dzaleka refugee camp in Malawi and its population. Included in this discussion will be a short review of the conflicts that created the refugee populations. This Section is brief, however, because it is not the aim of this paper to concentrate on the conflictual past of refugees. Too often, the 'trauma' a refugee has experienced during war and flight is what shapes one's understanding of refugee issues. Regarding domestic violence in the refugee camp context, a conflictual past is only a small part of what shapes the refugee experience.

Section 2 will discuss three approaches used to explain domestic violence in Western and African contexts: structural violence, culture and individual reasons. Because there are no specific approaches that effectively theorize refugee domestic violence, these three approaches will be used together to fashion an explanation relevant to refugee domestic violence. This Section will also examine ideas of discourse, power and representation, particularly in the contexts of development and culture. The theoretical explanations of domestic violence, as well as the focus on discourse, power and representation, will carry through as themes throughout the rest of the paper.

Section 3 will introduce findings from fieldwork in Dzaleka, concentrating on the act of domestic violence in the home and considering the dynamics in the relationship between husband and wife. This Section will primarily focus on the individual reasons behind domestic violence, such as alcohol, jealousy, stress and household responsibilities, but will also examine how structure and culture influence domestic relations.

Section 4 will adopt a broader view of domestic violence, expanding out from the home and examining the fieldwork findings that illustrate the community and camp personnel's role in domestic violence. The community plays a large part in resolving domestic violence by facilitating justice and healing, but it can also legitimate domestic violence as justifiable within the home. Camp personnel, such as police, health care practitioners, administration and social services are all involved in refugee domestic issues as well. It is in this discussion that the influence of the host, in this case Malawi, on the refugee home becomes apparent.

Section 5 will broaden the discussion of domestic violence in the refugee camp context further to encompass Western development and humanitarian agencies, as well as international institutions, such as UNHCR. Western development agencies have claimed places in the discussion of refugee domestic affairs and their interests are played out in culture and through discourse. Despite being an international institution, it will be argued that UNHCR is often dominated by Western discourse. The incorporation of gender into UNHCR training and discourse not only serves to legitimize UNHCR's position in the international political arena, it also reinforces power structures of patriarchy and Western modernity. International agents influence the refugee home in attempting to teach what is acceptable domestic behaviour as well as by dictating what are considered proper gender roles. These influences can be both positive and negative. This Section will attempt to explore the influences international institutions and Western development have through culture and discourse and examines some of their effects.

There are four appendices following this paper's conclusions. The first appendix explains the research methods used during fieldwork, including discussion of challenges, perceptions and ethical considerations with a sensitive topic such as domestic violence, as well as assumptions that can or cannot be made from the information collected. The second appendix is the template that was used for the semi-structured interviews at Dzaleka. The third appendix is a table, which outlines some statistical characteristics of the refugee women interviewed. Finally, the fourth appendix features some of the pictures that resulted from the photo journals the refugee community leaders and translators created, as well as maps of Dzaleka, drawn by some of the participants.

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND

"If you understand the beginning well, the end will not trouble you." – African proverb

"Where I make my living, there is my home." – Somali proverb

Introduction

Dzaleka is a temporary home to refugees from Rwanda, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Somalia. Numbers retrieved from UNHCR's recent headcount estimate that Rwandese refugees comprise the majority of the camp's population, numbering at approximately 6,153. There are approximately 1,991 Burundian refugees, 1,481 Congolese and 87 Somalis (UNHCR 2003). The purpose of this Section is to introduce the reader to Malawi and the Dzaleka refugee camp and to provide a brief background on the conflicts and conditions that drove the refugees there.

Malawi and the Dzaleka Refugee Camp

Malawi has a long history of hosting refugees. From the 1970s through to the early 1990s, Malawi hosted approximately 1.2 million refugees from Mozambique (Muluzi 2000). As a small country, this large influx of people put a significant strain on Malawi's citizens and natural resources. The Mozambican refugee camps took a heavy toll on the environment around them. In addition, Malawian residents in the areas surrounding the camps complained of land shortages and increased crime rates (Worldwide Faith News 2003). Most of the Mozambicans were repatriated by 1992, the refugee camps that accommodated them were closed and Malawi was allowed to recuperate from the damage. Despite this experience, Malawi generally tries to welcome new refugees, however it struggles to accommodate their needs while keeping the Malawian citizens happy. As a poor nation, Malawi is politically and economically limited in the freedoms it feels it can allow refugees. UNHCR guidelines request the host country allow refugees to pursue employment, but as Bartolomei *et al* explain, "… (the) guidelines … are not enforceable because refugee camps are not sites of citizenship" (Bartolomei *et al* 2003: 91). Malawi has placed reservations on its obligations as host, such that refugees are not allowed freedom of movement and access to the Malawian economy through employment (UNHCR 2000: 107). This restriction is understandable, given the fact that approximately 65% of Malawi's population is below the poverty line and 40% cannot satisfy their basic nutritional needs (United Nations System in Malawi 2001: vii). The competition that refugees would add to the economy could have serious political and economic ramifications. Malawi's restrictions have prevented many refugees from finding reliable employment, perpetuating poverty within the camp. As will be seen in the forthcoming Sections, poverty is a source of stress in Dzaleka and plays a role in domestic violence.

Dzaleka lies outside of Dowa, approximately 45 km north of the capital of Lilongwe. The camp itself was initially a notorious prison under Dr. Banda's rule. Political dissidents and criminals were sent there, subjected to torture and other human rights abuses (Amnesty International 1998). After years of political pressure and criticism from churches, human rights organizations and other governments, Dr. Banda's rule of Malawi ended in May of 1994 with the first democratic election the country had since 1961 (ibid). Baliki Muluzi became president and immediately closed three prisons, one being Dzaleka, in which human rights abuses were taking place. All political prisoners were granted amnesty and death sentences were commuted to life sentences (Brown 2003: 614). In 1994, Dzaleka was converted into a refugee camp to accommodate new influxes of refugees. The prison administration and staff housing was converted into camp administration buildings and the homes of the first refugees from Somalia. At the time of my fieldwork, Dzaleka was the only refugee camp in Malawi and

was significantly overcrowded. There are approximately 10,000 refugees residing at the camp, however the camp itself is only meant to accommodate 4,000 people (Worldwide Faith News 2003). At the time fieldwork was conducted, UNHCR was planning on opening another camp in southern Malawi within the next few weeks.

UNHCR and NGOs at Dzaleka

The Malawian government is formally responsible for running the camp. This includes filling the positions of camp administrators and camp security, providing police officers and health care practitioners, as well as allowing refugees access to the Malawian judicial system. The Malawi branch of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) assists the governments in these roles, funding various needs of the camp, acting as a liaison between the Malawian government and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in the camp, as well as monitoring and facilitating refugee security and the resettlement process.

The Malawian Red Cross was designated to provide social services to the camp's refugees, such as counseling and monitoring the material needs of the refugees. At the time the fieldwork was conducted, there were two male counselors and one female counselor on the Red Cross counseling staff, along with two other staff members, who administered the Red Cross message service and assisted with food distribution. Jesuit Refugee Services is responsible for education in the camp, employing refugees from the camp as teachers for the schools. The World Food Programme coordinates food distributions to the refugees. In general, UNHCR, the Malawian government and NGOs try to work together to provide a variety of services for those in the camp. Coordination of these services is always complicated and, at times, despite the genuine concern and interest of all parties involved, the delivery of some services can suffer. UNHCR has expressed a strong interest in improving the coordination and quality of services delivered wherever necessary, however budget and staff restraints make this a difficult goal to realize.

Rwanda and Burundi Background

The Republics of Rwanda and Burundi have a great deal in common. They are neighbors, are virtually the same size and have almost exactly the same ethnic composition. At the time of independence, colonial surveys estimated that both countries had approximately 85% Hutus, 14% Tutsis and 1% Twa (Ofcansky 2003: 868 and Mthembu-Salter 2003: 134). Because the conflicts in both countries have had a strong ethnic component, it is perhaps useful to first briefly discuss these ethnicities and how they came to foster such intense hostilities. I will then review the some of the main conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi after independence.

The Hutus and the Tutsis: the construction and exaggeration of cultural identities

It is difficult to define exactly how the distinction between the Hutu people and the Tutsi people actually came to be, because prior to the German and Belgian colonial administration in Rwanda and Burundi the people's history was maintained orally. Scholars believe that John Hanning Speke was the first to document Hutu and Tutsi as separate ethic groups (Melvern, 2000: 8). During his first visit, Speke observed divisions in the societies, as well as physical differences between peoples. He determined that the Tutsis looked more European, being taller and having smaller noses, and were therefore a superior race, considered more 'beautiful' and 'intelligent' (ibid). These beliefs contributed greatly to the administrative approach both the German and Belgian colonists later used. Belgian authorities assigned most roles with responsibility during their indirect rule to the Tutsi elite (Malkki, 1995: 27). Concerning education, Hutus were severely underrepresented in the educational system during colonialism. Hutu families were often obligated to produce cash crops to fulfill taxation requirements, and therefore required their children's help in working the land (Melvern, 2000: 11). Tutsi families

more often paid their taxes with the income earned in administrative positions. Clearly, the Hutu and Tutsi constructed cultural identities were reinforced by colonial discourse and practices. Both Hutus and Tutsis internalized these constructed identities and the use of these constructed identities did not end with colonialism. The political and economic reinforcement of these identities, along with the notion that Tutsis were inherently more beautiful and intelligent, have created animosity between these two groups, ultimately leading to violence.

The Rwandan Conflicts

As Belgium distanced itself from Rwanda and independence approached, the large Hutu presence and diminishing Tutsi authority resulted in violent outbreaks against the Tutsi. Resentment against former Tutsi chiefs escalated from riots into violent massacres that killed more than 20,000 Tutsi in 1959 (Destexhe 1994: 43). This massacre was the first of many that were to come in following decades. Political wrangling after independence combined with the long-standing social and economic inequalities between the two groups fostered the ethnic hatred that underpinned these violent clashes. The most serious and well-known incident was the genocide of 1994. The genocide was triggered when, on 6 April 1994, the aircraft transporting both the President of Rwanda and the President of Burundi was shot down. Following the President's assassination, Hutu extremist government officials, with support of the media, began a campaign throughout the country promoting the killing of any Tutsis or moderate Hutus. This was largely done by the Interahamwe, a group of Hutu militia numbering about 30,000 (Ofcansky 2003a: 871). By July of 1994, an estimated 500,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu were killed, along with the creation of approximately 2 million refugees, or about 30% of the country's population (Clayton 1999: 187). The West hesitated to react, waiting until May 1994 to deploy a small number of UN troops to protect refugees and create safe areas. Unfortunately, by this time their action was too late. The genocide was eventually stopped by the Front patriotique rwandais (FPR), a 10,000-strong force of guerrillas representing exiled Rwandan Tutsis (Ofcansky 2003a: 869). Many thousands of Hutus fled into neighboring countries such as Uganda and the DRC.

FPR members took over a majority of positions in the new government, which was immediately recognized by the international community (Ofcansky 2003a: 871). The new government made assurances that Hutu refugees could safely return to their homes, however there was and still is a great deal of fear of retribution and prosecution by many Hutu refugees. Despite efforts at justice and government reform, it has been reported that Hutus were incarcerated and prosecuted without evidence of having participated in the genocide. Violent clashes still occur in Rwanda between Tutsis and Hutus (Clayton 1999: 188) and there is fear of another major incident. Today, Rwanda's government is still Tutsi-dominated and many Hutus are afraid to return. Indeed, at the beginning of 2003, it was estimated that there were approximately 50,000 Rwandan refugees in the region (Ofcansky 2003a: 874).

The Burundian Conflicts

As in Rwanda, the Tutsi had both an economic and social advantage over the Hutu at the time of independence. In 1972, a group of Hutus attempted a coup of the Tutsi-dominated government, which amounted to killing an estimated 1,000 Tutsis near the capital. The government reacted using a largely Tutsi-dominated army, resulting in nearly 200,000 deaths (Clayton 1999: 75). An additional 200,000 Hutus fled into exile (Mthembu-Salter 2003: 134). Many of the Burundians in Dzaleka are refugees from this incident.

There were two coups following the 1972 coup attempt and massacre, however the Tutsis retained political power. In 1988, a group of Hutus massacred several hundred Tutsi, claiming that they had been provoked (Mthembu-Salter 2003: 135). The government responded by

killing approximately 20,000 Hutus, which in turn created an estimated 100,000 refugees (Clayton 1999: 183). Despite their overreactions and human rights abuses, the government made some attempts at curbing the tension between the Hutus and Tutsis. When Ntaryamira, the Burundian Head of State, was killed in the plane crash that instigated the Rwandan genocide, the Burundian government made appeals to their public for calm. Fortunately, Burundians responded to this appeal and a massacre was avoided. Nevertheless, the Rwandan genocide, along with the massive influx of refugees, did exacerbate ethnic tensions in Burundi. These tensions still exist in Burundi and violent clashes have occurred frequently over the subsequent years. Ethnic fighting has continued in and around Burundi, despite the many attempts of mediators such as Nelson Mandela, to find resolution and peace. It is estimated that there could be up to 1 million Burundian refugees in East Africa (Mthembu-Salter 2003: 143) with little hope of being repatriated in the near future.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) Background

The DRC, formerly Zaire, is the second largest country south of the Sahara, encompassing a population of over 50 million with numerous ethnic groups (Gourou 2003: 245). As it neighbors Rwanda and Burundi, the country has been greatly affected by their conflicts. After the Rwandan genocide, numerous Hutu refugees came to eastern Zaire (Mthembu-Salter 2003: 250). The eastern portion of Zaire was generally not patrolled by the military and was therefore a relatively safe place for Hutu civilian refugees as well as the Interahamwe militia to reside. Hutu militia groups used this safety to collect themselves and plan for return. By 1996, these groups had also started expelling and killing Congolese Tutsis in the area (Mthembu-Salter 2003: 250). At the same time, regional opposition to President Mobutu was building. In 1996, the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL) was formed out of Tutsi military leaders and insurgents. Laurent-Désiré Kabila started this movement in eastern Zaire and, alongside many Tutsi soldiers from Rwanda and Uganda, moved through Zaire and overthrew the Mobutu regime by May of 1997. During this military campaign, many of the Hutus residing in eastern DRC were killed (Clayton 1999: 190). Kabila named himself President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which was the name used for the country between 1964 and 1971 (Mthembu-Salter 2003: 251).

However, Kabila's political autonomy was not secure. He had used Rwandan and Ugandan support and, as he tried to excuse their military leaders and soldiers from duty, he discovered they were not willing to leave. By August of 1998, conflict in the DRC had started again. This time, the conflict was between the Kabila regime and rebel groups that were supported by Rwanda and Uganda (Marysse 2001: 21). Kabila again sought support, this time from Namibia, Zimbabwe and Angola, and essentially split the country—the government and their new allies controlled the southern and western areas; rebel groups dominated the northern and eastern areas. Various governments and international actors have repeatedly confronted Rwanda and Uganda regarding their role in this conflict. Their official explanation has been that they need to secure their borders. However, Rwandan and Ugandan forces were found deep in the DRC, which calls this explanation into question. Most analysts suspect their interests in the great natural wealth of the region (Amnesty International 2003). Eastern DRC is an area rich in resources such as fertile land, forests, diamonds, copper and other metals (Gourou 2003: 245). It is estimated that Rwanda and Uganda have extracted materials from eastern DRC that exceed the total revenue of the state (Marysse 2001: 21). Despite multiple ceasefire agreements and promises of troop withdrawal, conflict in the eastern DRC has remained. It is estimated that close to 3.5 million people have died (Amnesty International 2003) and over 2.5 million people have been displaced due to the conflict (Amnesty International 2003b).

Somalia Background

Somalia has been a stateless region since the downfall of the Barré government in the late 1980s. Barré's government was ousted, after having lost the confidence of the Somali people, as well as having strategically misplayed both the USSR and the US late in the Cold War. Since the fall of Barré, the country has reverted back to a clan-based governing system, as clans have historically been a strong form of organization in the area. Most of the conflict in Somalia has been between clans seeking control of regions. Unfortunately, warlords have found it fairly easy to arm their followers, thanks to a surplus of arms from both the USSR and the US (Clayton 1999: 182). As a result, at the end of 1992 it was estimated that 350,000 Somalis had died from either the conflict or starvation (ibid).

There have been numerous attempts, both internal and external, at finding compromise and peaceful resolution. The UN, United States and a collective of 30 other nations intervened in Somalia in the early 1990s (Ofcansky 2003b: 993). The initial goal was to deliver aid, however the mission later changed to disarmament and peace enforcement. This intervention ultimately failed for a number of reasons too complex to explore in the scope of this paper. Regardless, the failed international intervention in Somalia had significant influence on Western policy towards Africa in subsequent conflicts. The West's hesitation to intervene in Rwanda during the 1994 genocide is believed to be largely due to the disaster in Somalia. Today, Somalia is still without a state and most refugees from the conflicts are being repatriated elsewhere. The small number of Somalis at Dzaleka continues to decrease as they are sent to the United States, Canada and South Africa.

Summary

The refugees from Rwanda, Burundi, the DRC and Somalia at the Dzaleka refugee camp have identities that were shaped by their exposure to conflict. However, this Section is brief, because all too often, refugees are discussed in a way that focuses on their conflictual past. This focus on the past presents the refugee as traumatized and, in so doing, does not pay enough attention to the refugee's daily experiences in the camp. As the following Sections will attempt to show, a refugee's conflictual past is only part of what shapes their experience. With regard to domestic violence, there are many existing factors, both inside the refugee community and outside the camp that affect refugee domestic relations.

SECTION 2: THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

"No knowledge is true knowledge, knowledge is to know
how to live with our fellow human beings." – Congolese proverb

Introduction

Domestic violence, despite the fact that it has only started to be examined in recent decades, has been theorized considerably in the West. It is also gaining attention in developing countries. However, domestic violence in the refugee context is severely underexamined and undertheorized. This has often resulted in one-sided explorations of refugee domestic violence, drawing broad assumptions and simplifying the problem into either individual or social terms. Because there is a lack of material that directly theorizes domestic violence in the refugee context, this Section will attempt to fashion an explanation that draws upon existing theories of domestic violence used in the West as well as in developing countries. The following segment will introduce and discuss three general approaches used to explain domestic violence: structural violence, culture and individual explanations. The theories that fall under these approaches all have value, but better explain domestic violence in a refugee camp when used together. Following this discussion, it will be helpful to examine ideas of discourse, power and representation, particularly in the contexts of development and culture. The theoretical explanations of domestic violence, as well as the focus on discourse, power and representation, will carry through as themes throughout the rest of this paper's exploration of domestic violence in a refugee context.

What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is not a clearly defined concept, there is no international consensus about what it means. A Western definition of domestic violence typically includes abuses such as emotional cruelty (including verbal and financial abuse) and sexual abuse (such as marital rape), or physical abuse[1] between any members of the family network, including between husband and wife, parent and child, child and elderly parent, and siblings. A definition of domestic violence can also encompass violence between partners, such as between boyfriend and girlfriend or between same sex partners. In the context of fieldwork in the Dzaleka refugee camp, I operated with a very limited definition of domestic violence. According to the common Western definition of domestic violence, hitting or slapping one's spouse or partner is deemed physical abuse. Such a definition was not common among the women and men in Dzaleka refugee camp. 'Domestic violence' was not a term commonly used in the camp. Indeed, using the term in an interview would usually cause confusion and result in unclear answers. Many did not view a man hitting his wife as abusive, but rather as a corrective action to be used when the wife does something wrong. Hitting one's wife became 'abusive' when she was severely physically injured. This way of viewing domestic violence was also used by the Malawian police. According to a security officer in the camp, domestic violence was not regarded as criminal unless the wife sustained considerable injury. The officer illustrated this in an example: if a wife has a bruise on her cheek or arm as a result of being beaten, the husband is not guilty of criminal abuse. But, if the wife has lost an eye or has a broken arm as a result of being beaten, the abuse is deemed criminal and the husband could be placed in jail.[2] The complexity of discussing domestic violence in a cross-cultural setting becomes apparent in

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[1] For a common definition of domestic violence used in the United States, see the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence at http://www.ncadv.org/problem/what.htm (accessed January, 2003). A similar definition of domestic violence can be found at the website for The Campaign Against Domestic Violence in the United Kingdom at http://www.cadv.org.uk/domesticViolence.html (accessed January, 2003).

[2] Interview with security officer, October 9, 2003.

trying to define the concept, as there are different meanings tied to the act of hitting one's spouse, depending on the cultural and social context. This will be explored further in the discussion of discourse and representation. For the purposes of this paper, domestic violence will primarily be discussed as the physical violence between a husband and wife. This is an extremely narrow definition; however the complexity of the issue paired with the space allowed does not allow for a broader definition.

Approaches to Domestic Violence

To my knowledge, there is no literature that adequately theorizes domestic violence specifically in a refugee context. Despite the lack of theory, it is possible to pull aspects out of various approaches and begin to fashion a relevant approach. For the purpose of this discussion, the approaches to domestic violence can be divided into three groups: structural violence, approaches that focus on the cultural reasons for domestic violence and approaches that focus on the individual reasons for domestic violence. Despite this division, it will also become apparent that there is a great deal of overlap between these three approaches.

Structural Violence

Johan Galtung first introduced the concept of structural violence in 1969, using the idea to help explain the many negative effects of inequalities on human potential (Galtung 1969). Structural violence stems from social, political and economic systems, creating disparities between groups of people. Patriarchy, apartheid and colonialism are all examples of structural violence (Brand-Jacobsen 2002: 17), as they are structures that cannot be seen, yet they cause a great deal of suffering and death. According to Galtung, structural violence is not inevitable; it can be avoided by changing behavior (Galtung 2002: 4). The more difficult question is whose behavior should change.

Galtung maintains that structural violence causes direct violence (Galtung 2002: 6). Those that are exploited or oppressed often see violence as a way of communicating or even the only option for change. The genocide in Rwanda, due largely to the political, social and economic inequalities between the Hutus and Tutsis, is a result of structural violence and exemplifies how structures that perpetuate inequalities create bitterness and anger. Gang violence in areas in which poverty and poor schooling are predominant, is an example of how structural violence can create direct violence amongst the poor. It can be argued that the 11 September 2001 attacks on New York and Washington D.C. were attacks on Western hegemony by attacking the economic (World Trade Center) and political (Pentagon) symbols of Western global dominance (Chomsky 2001). Structural violence is indeed dangerous.

Feminist arguments could also be grouped under the structural violence approach. By criticizing social patriarchy as the cause of women's suffering, feminists are identifying structural constraints that repress women (Sweetman 1998: 3). Caroline Sweetman of Oxfam GB has argued that patriarchy diminishes women's participation in public life by valuing men as better leaders and marginalizes women in the workplace by labeling inferior and low-paying work as 'women's work' thereby limiting women's ability to earn money and independence. Patriarchy also can permit "intimidation, fear, and violent 'punishment' within marriage, if husbands judge wives as not making the grade" (ibid). Recommendations from the feminist approach often involve addressing the socialization process of women and men, as well as promoting girls' education and women-owned businesses (Bowman 2003). However, feminist criticisms of cultural or social patriarchy must also be regarded with caution. Chandra Talpade Mohanty argues that Western feminist writings have a tendency to homogenize the women in developing countries, "producing/re-presenting a composite, singular 'third world woman' – an image which appears arbitrarily constructed, but nevertheless carries with it the authorizing

signature of Western humanist discourse" (Mohanty 2000: 53). Mohanty considers this a form of colonization such that Western feminist discourse reinforces the West's hegemony (ibid). Also, as Pam Simmons has argued, we cannot assume that Western women have made more progress towards equality with men (Simmons 1997: 246). Feminists have made valuable contributions to combating global patriarchy, however in using this approach, one must be aware that it can create a hierarchy of its own.

Using a structural approach is valuable in examining domestic violence, because it brings to light the more ambiguous causes of the violence, such as poverty and patriarchy. The structural approach also gives us a better idea of the scale of the problem of domestic violence, which is something that could not necessarily be seen using an individualistic or even a cultural approach to the problem. For instance, in honor of International Women's Day 2004, Amnesty International published a fact sheet, including a description of how the world would look if it were scaled down to 1,000 people. In this "global village", 500 would be women and of those, "167 of the women will be beaten or in some other way exposed to violence during their lifetime" (Amnesty International, 5 March 2004). The global and structural rights disparities between men and women are apparent in considering facts such as that in general, "(u)p to 70% of female murder victims are killed by their male partners", "(i)n Pakistan 42% of women accept violence as part of their fate; 33% feel too helpless to stand up against it; 19% protested and 4% took action against it" and "(i)n the USA a woman is battered, usually by her husband/partner, every 15 seconds" (ibid). Analyses of domestic violence such as this display the ubiquity of the problem.

The refugee camp is a setting that reflects a great deal of structural violence. Prior to arriving in the camp, the refugee has often experienced the effects of multiple forms of violence. Many refugees have experienced direct violence before and during flight from their homes. We can also safely assume that all refugees have experienced heavy disruption in their lives, having left their permanent homes, often losing family members in the process. Upon arrival in the camp, refugees generally do not have the freedom to leave the camp, move about the area and gain formal employment. Under these conditions, poverty and dependency on host governments and NGOs is a given. Camps themselves are often not pleasant places to live, the are usually cramped, often situated in areas with depleted natural resources and in host countries that are not necessarily welcoming to refugees. The nature of the refugee camp, as will be seen in the subsequent Sections, plays a role in creating the conditions that facilitate domestic violence.

Cultural Approaches

Many analyses of domestic violence in the African context tend to look at the problem by focusing on culture. Less emphasis is placed on the individual's agency; rather, the individual is seen largely to be acting under the influence of tradition and cultural norms. This type of approach can overlap a great deal with the structural approach discussed above. For instance, patriarchy has been referred to as a form of structural violence, but patriarchy can also be a cultural norm. Indeed, it is not always possible to disentangle structure from culture. Culture can also contest structural violence. For example, with regard to the refugees, maintenance of tradition and culture in the refugee camp can be seen as a way of dealing with the loss of identity, dealing with loss or familial disruption, or even creating a community within the camp with fellow refugees.

A recent study of South African nurses and their perceptions of domestic violence provides an example of an approach that focuses on culture (Kim and Motsei 2002). After conducting a series of focus groups, Kim and Motsei concluded that the nurses, both male and female, had

rather lenient views towards the practice of domestic violence. For instance, Kim and Motsei discovered that "(a)mong the (male nurses), references to physical abuse were frequently described using terms such as 'discipline' or 'punishment'. In discussing when they felt it was 'justified to beat a woman, there was a general consensus among men that 'when they don't listen' or 'when they stand for their rights', they get beaten" (Kim and Motsei 2002: 1245-6). They also discovered that female nurses would generally consider beating with approval, if the wife needed correction (ibid). The researchers attributed these attitudes largely to culturally accepted patriarchy in South Africa, stating, "…the nurses (women, as well as men) have to a great extent internalized dominant cultural values and beliefs regarding gender and gender-based violence" (Kim and Motsei 2002: 1251). This study is a valuable exploration of gender-based violence, because it shows how deeply engrained cultural norms and beliefs can reinforce the violence, despite the fact that nurses are generally trained to be sensitive to these issues.

Relying on approaches that focus purely on the cultural reasons behind domestic violence can be problematic in that there is a danger of overrelativizing domestic violence in cultural terms. Cultural relativization has justified non-intervention in issues of domestic violence. However, as Purna Sen argues with regard to intervention and domestic violence, "(c)ulture also does not define whether or not violence against women is accepted or acceptable, just as culture does not determine whether or not economic exploitation, absolute poverty, or high infant mortality should be accepted" (Sen 1998: 14). Culture is not an excuse for domestic violence, but the cultural explanations for domestic violence must be understood before attempting to prevent further violence. Further, as Amali Philips has pointed out, culture is dynamic and ever-changing. She argues that cultural beliefs should not be immune to criticism, especially when women's rights are in question (Philips 2003: 20). Culture is also permeable and can be influenced from many different sources. Variety in cultural approaches to domestic violence is encouraging. Caroline Sweetman has noted, "… differences in the form and pattern of male violence against women in different societies does give hope that social policy and practice can lessen or end such violence" (Sweetman 1998: 3). Domestic violence is not a universal behavior, but rather it varies with culture and context.

Another danger of using the cultural approach to explaining domestic violence is that a cultural explanation can be wrongly applied universally to specific populations, indeed even refugee populations. For instance, in her essay on rape and domestic violence in the refugee context, Amy Friedman claims of refugee women in the United States that,

> "Although (domestic violence) is widespread, it is often kept a secret as the result of the social, political and religious customs in which refugees have been raised. Women believe that domestic problems are private and should not be discussed with non-familial members. Since such silence exists, refugee women feel isolated and are unaware of how widespread domestic violence actually is" (Friedman 1992: 73).

These are broad statements to make with regard to refugee women. Such analyses fail to see the differences in how refugee women of different cultures or situations, or even as individuals, experience and handle domestic violence differently. Instead, refugee women are homogenized and represented as alone, vulnerable and helpless. Indeed, Friedman does not allow space for the refugee woman to even communicate the violence she has experienced or her needs. In her discussion of rape and refugee women she states,

> "When families learn that a woman has been raped, she is considered worthless and a source of humiliation for them. Listening closely to community members can reveal whether a woman is

being ostracized or isolated by her community. This is a good sign that she has been raped" (Friedman 1992: 74).

Linking domestic violence and rape in the same discussion of the experience of refugee women is also dangerous. Although both rape and domestic violence are considered 'gender-based violence' or 'violence against women', these acts are often committed in completely different situations, by different actors with different motivations. It is common for both the husband and the wife involved to see domestic violence as an action correcting a wrong within the household. Rape, on the other hand, may be an act of violence committed outside the home, often by a stranger. By linking the two types of violence, the husband is linked with the rapist and, in that linkage, becomes criminalized. The meanings behind the acts of rape and domestic violence are then merged and lost. When using culture to explain domestic violence, one must use extreme caution. Nevertheless, culture does often play an important role and should be carefully considered.

Individual Approaches

Analyses of domestic violence that focus on the individual are predominant in Western contexts, but are also sometimes used in the African context. The focus on the individual looks at factors such as alcohol or drugs, stress, the wife's actions, history of abuse and mental illness (United Nations 1994: 6). The result is a tendency for recommendations to largely focus on counseling and other psychological interventions (Bowman 2003). Counseling for both the abuser and the abused is a popular technique that considers the possibility that the abuser can stop beating and that the abused can build capacity to identify and leave or stop potentially abusive situations. Recommending counseling is often not an option, especially in developing countries, as it can be very expensive, requiring extensive human resources and training. This approach also places a great deal of agency with the individual and tends not to focus on the environment in which the individual is situated in as a primary cause of abuse. Bowman has argued, in her analysis of domestic violence theories in the African context, that the tendency to focus on the individual in Western contexts and on cultural reasons for domestic violence in the African context can be racist. Bowman maintains,

> "…explanations based on individual psychology suggest that the actor is in fact capable of rational behavior, while cultural explanations based on individual psychology suggest a limited capacity for agency, will, or rational thought. In other words, the psychology versus culture dichotomy recapitulates the traditional, and racist, stereotype that associates the West with reason and depicts non-Western people as driven by irrational forces" (Bowman 2003).

Too often, individual explanations of domestic violence are ignored in the African context. The focus on the individual should also be tied to structural violence and culture. Hoffman, Demo and Edwards, in their study of domestic violence in Thailand, used structural, cultural and individual explanations for the problem. They linked individual stress levels to domestic violence, but also attributed high stress levels to larger social issues, stating that "(s)tress results when there is a discrepancy between demands and response capabilities, with social norms allowing for wives to be seen as acceptable targets upon whom to vent these frustrations" (Hoffman 1994: 133). Their study also showed that alcohol abuse is also linked to domestic violence, however they could not ascertain the strength of this link (ibid).

Focusing on individual reasons behind domestic violence without giving due credit to structural and cultural reasons also risks criminalizing the individual. An example of this can be seen in Sarah Maguire's study of domestic violence in Yugoslavia and Albania. She discovered that domestic violence was more prevalent before conflict, dropping dramatically during actual conflict (Maguire 1998: 64). Although her study did take factors such as a

nationalist environment, propaganda, notions of male honor and group aggression into account, she ultimately attributed the prevalence of domestic violence to individual choice, stating,

> "To argue that domestic violence is a choice men make is at odds with understandings of male violence against women which often attribute it to external reasons including men's unemployment or poverty, or to pathological reasons including alcoholism, sickness, or post-traumatic stress disorder. It is undoubtedly true that the disinhibiting effects of alcohol or drugs may have a negative effect upon men's ability or willingness to control their aggression. However, if it is the case that domestic violence actually decreased during the period of conflict, I am forced to conclude that violence is a choice—that men are choosing to inflict violence on the women they purport to love" (Maguire 1998: 65).

A conclusion such as this does not give due credit to the structural and cultural influences on an individual. Maguire gives the sense that the men of Yugoslavia and Albania are masochistic, and goes so far as to question that these men love their women. This is a broad claim and could potentially do more harm than good. However, despite the risks of criminalizing individuals and its narrow focus, individual explanations for domestic violence can show the effects structural violence and culture can have on the home. There is value in understanding how individuals can react differently under the same structural and cultural influences.

The structural, cultural and individual explanations for domestic violence are clearly not mutually exclusive. Culture can sometimes perpetuate structural violence; structural violence and culture, as illustrated above, have very real effects on the individual. The fact that these approaches to domestic violence overlap underlines the fact that they should be considered together when discussing domestic violence. Their influence is also clear in discourse. As will be seen, the effects of discourse reinforce hegemonies that exist in political, economic and social structures, as well as within and between cultures.

Domestic Violence within Development and Cultural Discourses

Domestic violence has recently been gaining attention in development studies (Surtees 2003: 30). However, domestic violence happens in homes all over the world—in both developing and developed countries—so what makes this issue of specific concern to development practitioners? Violence against women is seen to deter development by restricting the efficiency of development projects, hindering women's participation and generally constraining human development and violating human rights (Sen 1998: 7). The new focus on "engendering development" (World Bank 2001) and bringing women's issues to the fore has opened the African household up to new scrutiny and analysis. For instance, in their recent report, *Engendering Development*, the World Bank stated,

> "Factors that change the institutional and policy environment inevitably alter the constraints, opportunities, and incentives that women and men face and respond to in their households. Even when these changes are not inherently gender-specific, they commonly affect women and men and girls and boys differently" (World Bank 2001: 147).

Within the household, the World Bank argues that factors such as education, knowledge and skills, as well as a person's physical stature, affect an individual's bargaining power. It is for this reason that "…community attitudes toward domestic violence and how the legal and institutional environment punishes or condones perpetrators affect the influence violence has on household allocation decisions" (World Bank 2001: 156). Western development practitioners can justify scrutinizing the African home by using the approaches that explain domestic violence in structural and cultural terms. The theories that treat domestic violence in

Africa as a result of cultural factors, such as patriarchy, and structural factors, such as poverty, imply that there are widespread social problems that need to be addressed. As a structural and cultural problem that can be dealt with in a large-scale way rather than an individualistic way, domestic violence in Africa becomes an issue on which development practitioners can advise and consult. However, as Pam Simmons argues, development itself is patriarchal,

> "…not only because all of the major institutions are strongholds of power wielded by men but also because of what development represents. By implying that the Third World is underdeveloped, the development ideology establishes hierarchy; and by making use of unjust terms of trade and debt to control national policies, it enforces exploitation. Development promotes over all other cultures a single culture which has shown itself to be both destructive and unjust" (Simmons 1997: 251).

In assessing patriarchy in other societies, the patriarchy within development itself can be forgotten. Further, despite development practitioners' noble intentions of addressing the structural and cultural restraints to empowering women, one can link these intentions with colonial justifications. Colonial regimes justified their domination as a moral duty, 'The White Man's Burden', in other words (Mascia-Lees and Black 2000: 87). By claiming cultural, technological and intellectual superiority, colonial administrations could claim to be moving simple societies to higher stages (Ferguson 1997: 153). The West depicted those they colonized as 'Others', people starkly different from themselves. In so doing, as Edward Said has discussed in his pivotal work, *Orientalism*, this action of othering has marginalized and eroticized non-Western people (Said 1978). Franz Fanon was one of the first critics of colonial othering, criticizing French depictions of Algerian women. He argued that the veil represented a point of contention for the French colonizers, as they viewed veiling the woman as backward and degrading to women (Fanon 1965: 36). During their occupation of Algeria, the French started a campaign to free the Algerian woman from what they perceived as the constraint of the veil:

> "The dominant administration solemnly undertook to defend this woman, pictured as humiliated, sequestered, cloistered … It described the immense possibilities of woman, unfortunately transformed by the Algerian man into an inert, demonized, indeed dehumanized object" (Fanon 1965: 38).

This campaign to empower the Algerian woman by un-veiling her may have been noble in its motivations, however, as Fanon has explained, it was at the cost of criminalizing the Algerian man and portraying the Algerian woman as a passive victim.

The act of othering can also be found in the development context. The notion of the 'Other' helps the development practitioner to justify his or her place in the discussion, as well as to justify change itself. In their discussion of violence in developing countries, Harvey and Gow emphasize that the Western preoccupation with 'changing the other' is a form of cultural domination:

> "…imagery of other cultural possibilities has always functioned for western people as the source of another type of action: changing the other. Western culture is intrinsically bound up with doing something about the other. … Times have changed, and we might be reluctant to send missionaries to clear away the gross moral darkness of their religions, but we would not be reluctant to insist that development projects must address the position and interests of women, even when these conflict with those of men or of traditional cultural practices. Western people, often uneasy about the domination intrinsic to their modes of action, are happiest when domination is done to empower the dominated" (Harvey and Gow 1994: 4).

'Empowering' women can justify development and social intervention but can also be a form of cultural domination. Further, othering can marginalize and eroticize non-Western women. With regard to domestic violence in non-Western cultures, othering can feed a tendency toward emotional voyeurism, in which the West can marvel and gawk at the cultural and social shortcomings of non-Western societies. This cultural domination seems more problematic, indeed hypocritical, when we consider that the theories development practitioners generally rely on consider domestic violence to be a structural or cultural problem in Africa, while domestic violence is often considered an individualistic problem in developed countries. By considering domestic violence a problem of individuals in the West, the assumption is that Western societies are decent and the West's social-structural problems go unacknowledged; by attributing domestic violence to social problems in the African context, the assumption is that African societies are flawed and need the guidance of the West. In addition, treating domestic violence as a result of structural violence and cultural norms removes the agency of the individual, attributing his or her actions to larger forces.

There is a tension here, between development as a force for positive change and development as a force of cultural and social domination. Much of this tension is played out through discourse. Development, as seen above, justifies its position in addressing domestic violence by framing the problem in structural and cultural contexts—by viewing non-Western people as 'Others'—and acting to change the behavior within those other cultures. Development is playing a role within a larger framework: a framework of competing discourses between Western and non-Western cultures. Explaining the problem of domestic violence, especially in the African context, has often involved a Western ethnographer or academic analyzing the problem using Western values and assumptions, which can be extremely narrow. Harvey and Gow argue that this is especially problematic in feminist scholarship:

> "The objectification and disassociation involved in the politics of naming and revealing requires the imposition of absolute values on particular practices regardless of how these are understood by those involved. What are the political and theoretical consequences of relativizing or not relativizing violent acts and their motivations?" (Harvey and Gow 1994: 5).

The politics of naming with regard to gender and violence, as Harvey and Gow point out, is indeed powerful, as there can be very real political and social consequences. As discussed at the beginning of this Section, Western definitions and values regarding domestic violence are certainly not universal. The tension between development as a positive force for change and development as cultural domination is realized in the tension between universalizing the problem and culturally relativizing domestic violence. The difficulty lies in trying to find the balance between the two.

It has been argued that development practitioners, in an effort to empower women and facilitate development, give advice on ways to prevent domestic violence in African societies. In other words, it is assumed that development practitioners know the 'truth' about how men and women should interact and how domestic violence should ultimately be handled. Michel Foucault has argued that 'truth', instead of being fact, is rather manipulated and changed to serve the purposes of power. In *Power/Knowledge*, he defined 'truth' as follows:

> "Truth is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements. Truth is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it. A 'régime' of truth" (Foucault 1980: 133).

Truth, in this sense, is created and manipulated to reinforce power. Truth is then distributed throughout that society by means of discourse, therefore, Foucault maintains, discourses have power in influencing how the social world is organized.

Arturo Escobar also addresses the power of discourse, but with respect to development. He argues,

> "…development discourse is a rule-governed system held together by a set of statements that the discursive practice continues to reproduce" (Escobar 1997: 154).

And further:
> "To bring people into discourse—as in the case of development—is similarly to consign them to fields of vision. (…) The aim is not simply to discipline individuals but to transform the conditions under which they live into a productive, normalized social environment: in short, to create modernity" (Escobar 1997: 156).

These two views on the power of discourse illuminate the deeper effects development efforts can have within a society. Foucault and Escobar's post-modernist insights show that Western discourse can act to reinforce the power structures of patriarchy and Western notions of modernity. With regard to domestic violence and development, it could be argued that development practitioners attempt to impose a Western 'truth' about domestic relations on those being 'developed'. This act can result in disrupting power relations within that group of people being 'developed'. In addition, being a developer in itself is holding a powerful position, as those developing have the license to name what needs to be developed and changed and how that change should take place. The contestation between Western and non-Western discourses on domestic violence can reinforce or change existing power structures.

The practice of domestic violence is contested not only between Western and non-Western discourses, but also within a culture itself. A given society will have a dominant discourse on gender relations, such as notions of the husband as the head of the household and the highest in the family hierarchy and these notions are created by forces within society and serve to reinforce patriarchal structures. As Foucault elaborates,

> "Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true" (Foucault 1984: 72-73).

Patriarchy can be supported through a society's dominant discourse. Identities are constructed within these regimes of truth and discourses create and maintain categories that sustain power relations (Mascia-Lees and Black 2000: 82). In his book, Masculine Domination, Pierre Bourdieu examines patriarchy and gender divisions in a study of the Berbers of Kabylia (Bourdieu 2001). According to him, masculine domination is a "gentle" and "symbolic" violence that is exercised through everyday practices. Those that are subordinated by this gentle violence are complicit, as they have been socialized within the patriarchical system. Bourdieu explains,

> "…the foundation of symbolic violence lies not in mystified consciousness that only need to be enlightened but in dispositions attuned to the structure of domination of which they are the product …" (Bourdieu 2001: 41).

Discourses in patriarchal societies define what it means to be a man or woman and subsequently what gender roles are then tied to those meanings. By differentiating the man from the woman, the roles they are then assigned are different and, in patriarchical societies, ordered in a hierarchy. If we accept that this assigned difference exists, Henrietta Moore argues,

> "…we have to acknowledge the different ways in which the categories woman and man, and the discourses which employ those categories, are involved in the production and reproduction of notions of personhood and agency. We have to recognize in addition the ways in which the categories, discourses and practices of gender are involved in the production and reproduction of engendered subjects who use them to produce both representations and self-representations, as part of the process of constructing themselves as persons and agents" (Moore 1994: 139).

As Moore points out, dominant discourse drives not only the way in which men and women are represented to each other, but also how they perceive themselves. Self-representation and representation have very real effects on the relationships between man and woman—how they value each other, the power and authority they perceive the other to have, as well as how this power and authority is contested. Moore argues that we need to somehow come to understand how people become "engendered subjects", acquiring gendered representations and self-representations, as well as how social practices are then created to support and "reproduce dominant categories, discourses and practices" (Moore 1994: 139). In addition, we must account for resistance and change within these arenas. Moore's observations on gender and conflict within a given society are useful in that she moves beyond Foucault's idea of society as a site where power is contested through discourse, and shows how an individual can be a site of contestation herself. A woman can be represented as having certain characteristics and certain roles; she can also have a self-representation that agrees with aspects of that representation, but she can also contest those gendered assignments. As Moore explains, the notion of an individual being the site of multiple subjectivities is constructive:

> "If subjectivity is seen as singular, fixed and coherent, it becomes very difficult to explain how it is that individuals constitute their sense of self—their self-representations as subjects— through several, often mutually contradictory subject positions, rather than through one singular subject position" (Moore 1994: 141).

By acknowledging that the society and the individual are both sites of multiple competing discourses, we can begin to understand the prevalence of domestic violence as well as the possibilities for changing violent practices within the home. In examining discourse, culture and power relations, it becomes apparent that discourse and culture overlap. Indeed, Lila Abu-Lughod proposes that the notion of 'culture' should be replaced with 'discourse', as discourse implies an understanding of the forces that form identities (Abu-Lughod 1990). This approach allows for understanding how an individual falls in a social hierarchy as a result of competing discourses such as race, gender and class. Culture, on the other hand, homogenizes people that in fact have greatly differing levels of power. The discussion in this paper keeps 'discourse' and 'culture' separate, however acknowledges there is a great deal of overlap between the two concepts.

Summary

Because there is a lack of material that directly theorizes domestic violence in the refugee context, this Section drew upon three existing approaches to domestic violence used both in the West as well as in developing countries to fashion a relevant explanation for domestic violence in the refugee camp context. Structural violence stems from social, political and economic

systems, creating disparities between groups of people. Patriarchy and poverty, forms of structural violence, are examples of factors that can have a direct effect on a household's domestic relations. Approaches to domestic violence that use cultural explanations portray the individual as largely acting under the influence of tradition and cultural norms. Cultural explanations can also overlap with the structural explanations discussed above. Individual reasons for domestic violence, such as alcohol, stress or a wife's actions, focus on agency rather than the environment in which the individual is situated. The structural, cultural and individual approaches overlap considerably and, with regard to refugee domestic violence, clearly should be used together in explanations. However, an explanation of refugee domestic violence also needs to consider notions of discourse, power and representation, particularly in the contexts of development and culture. Discourses within development and cultures have biases and motivations of their own. Development has a need to maintain a space for itself in discussions of third world social issues. Dominant discourse in patriarchical cultures has a motivation to maintain the status quo. Fortunately, there is space within these discourses for contestation and social change. As the next Section will demonstrate, the refugee woman and the refugee home are both sites where patriarchy is contested and reinforced.

SECTION 3: THE ACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

"Your woman should be in the house or in the grave." – Somali proverb

"Mother is God number two." – Malawian proverb

Introduction

This Section will address the act of domestic violence within the refugee home, examining the dynamics in the relationship between husband and wife. The discussion will primarily focus on the individual and the underlying meaning and reasons behind his or her actions, but will also examine how structure and culture influence domestic relations. To do this, one must first revisit the definition of domestic violence, delving more deeply into how this concept is defined amongst the refugees within Dzaleka. Examining how domestic violence is defined in the discourse amongst Dzaleka refugees will help clarify how men and women impose and internalize gendered identities through representation and self-representation. Following this discussion, I will present the findings from fieldwork in Dzaleka, paying particular attention to how gendered roles are contested and negotiated in the domestic sphere. It will be seen that patriarchy is both contested and reinforced within the refugee home and that the act of domestic violence is in itself a form of violent gendered negotiation of power.

Definition Revisited

In Section 2, it was mentioned that domestic violence was defined using very restricted parameters in Dzaleka. Further, in examining the answers of those interviewed in Dzaleka, there appears to be a contradiction within how domestic violence is defined. When asked if it was acceptable to hit one's spouse, all refugee women in each of the communities initially responded that it was not. However, when the interview moved into discussing the reasons why a husband might beat his wife, some women said that beating one's wife might be necessary if she does not submit to her husband. These statements usually had the caveat that it is better to solve the problem through discussion. An assumption frequently made by many of the refugees interviewed was that in situations where a wife has been hit, the woman made a mistake or needed to change her behavior. As one Rwandese woman stated, "It is not OK to hit the wife, because she can change by talking with her."[3] In response to the question of whether it is common to hit one's wife, a Somali man answered, "Sometimes, but he will first try to advise. If she still refuses, he must beat her or divorce. […] If a woman refuses to change, a husband can hit his wife."[4] With the exception of a few women interviewed, it was not common to state that a woman should never be hit, under any circumstances. Rather, there were situations most women pointed out in which it was justified for a man to hit his wife. It was also common to hear remarks regarding how a woman is beaten in the discussion of domestic violence. Some women stated that if a wife is hit, she should only be hit in certain places and with limited intensity. A Congolese woman explained, "We ladies are weak…something can happen to the woman if she is hit in a bad area."[5] This woman was certainly not physically weak. Rather, her comment seemed to allude to a perception of weakness in comparison to her husband. Generally, the women interviewed in Dzaleka considered violent behavior by the husband to be legitimate under certain contexts. It should be noted, however, that not all women assumed that hitting one's wife is a justified corrective action in response to a wife's mistake. A Rwandese woman's reason for domestic violence

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[3] Rwandese interviews, Sept. 24, 2003.
[4] Male Somali refugee, Sept. 30, 2003.
[5] Congolese interviews, Sept. 29, 2003.

was, "(t)he boy might have forced her to marry him and then there is no love and they fight."[6] Another Rwandese woman commented, "…(domestic violence) can happen if a wife does not respect her husband. […] This is not the right decision, but this is the reason in his mind."[7] Despite these remarks, most interviewees assumed the woman needed to change in order to prevent being hit in the future.

Penelope Harvey argues in her study of domestic violence in the Andes that legitimization of domestic violence by women renders the violence 'non-violent', stating,

> "… we cannot simply disaggregate facts from their representation and (must) rather … articulate the links between situational experience and representational knowledge, by drawing attention to the notion of contestation as the defining yet variable aspect of the situational experience of violence. Individual women contest their treatment and thus render it violent. Nevertheless, both men and women acknowledge a husband's right to hit his wife. This attitude produces a situation in which women can experience 'violence' while accepting, at the level of representational knowledge, that such acts could be legitimate and thus 'non-violent'" (Harvey 1994: 68-69).

The act of domestic violence is violent, because the husband is seeking to reinforce his power and the wife is contesting this power. But, as Harvey points out, because women accept violence as legitimate, they reinforce and internalize this patriarchy as well. It is in this sense that the woman, as mentioned in Section 2, becomes the site of multiple and conflicting identities. Many of the refugee women interviewed reflect these conflicting identities as well, since in many of their answers violent corrective actions were justified. Further, during the interviews, corrective actions in themselves were not questioned. But this does not mean that husbands' actions have not been challenged, as the violent aspect of domestic violence is often the result of contestation and power struggle. The act of domestic violence is at once a contestation and negotiation of power between husband and wife. In this broader sense, a husband hitting his wife is not simply correcting lax household duties, but rather reinforcing power dynamics within the relationship. As Harvey explains,

> "Beatings are not about revenge or punishment but about establishing and expressing particular kinds of appropriate relationships" (Harvey 1994: 75).

The nature of the 'appropriate relationship'—what constitutes a 'good' husband or wife—is determined by culturally accepted rules created by gender-oriented socialization. These social rules of gendered relationships are also contested and negotiated within the home. Foucault's notion of a "battle around truth" is useful in this regard. He explains:

> "There is a battle "for truth," or at least "around truth"—it being understood once again that by truth I do not mean "the ensemble of truths which are to be discovered and accepted," but rather "the ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true," it being understood also that it's a matter not of a battle "on behalf" of the truth, but of a battle about the status of truth and the economic and political role it plays" (Foucault 1984: 74).

The notion of determining rules as a battleground is fitting within the context of domestic violence, however rules can be negotiated as well. Further, the battle around gendered rules helps to illustrate that the 'private sphere' of the home is linked to the cultural and social norms in public, because it is often in private that these norms are determined.

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[6] Conversation with Rwandese woman, Oct. 8, 2003.
[7] Rwandese interviews, Oct. 2, 2003.

Most interviewees acknowledged that domestic violence was widespread within all the communities. Hitting one's wife was considered more common than hitting one's husband in all of the communities, in particular, the Rwandese community rarely answered that wives ever hit their husbands. Despite the fact that domestic violence was considered to be a common occurrence, many women were reluctant to acknowledge that it happens in their own home. When our discussions approached the topic of conflict within the home, a common initial response was that conflict does not happen in this home, but in other neighbors' homes. Only later in the interview or through information from the community leader would it become apparent that the woman interviewed experienced some level of physical violence in her home. Because many saw the act of hitting one's wife as a corrective action, many women felt ashamed to admit they had been hit, as they feared being seen as a inferior wife. Conflict within a household could also mean that the household is unstable which, as some of the community leaders informed me, was frowned upon in the community.[8] Again, here one sees how publicly accepted norms affect the activities in the private sphere. The remainder of this Section will explore specific situations of domestic violence that surfaced during the fieldwork.

Findings

The women and men interviewed in Dzaleka were asked to give explanations as to why a husband might beat his wife. The most common reasons given for domestic violence were:

- The wife's actions; namely if the wife is not submitted to the husband. This reason was often justified in biblical terms. As a Congolese woman explained, "(t)he Bible says that a wife must submit. The wife might force a husband to beat her by the mistakes she makes."[9] Related to this, both men and women often stated that laziness, messy home or unprepared meals were reasons for domestic violence.

- Jealousy. Infidelity, including using prostitutes or taking lovers, by both husbands and wives were cited as possible reasons for jealousy.

- Alcohol. This reason was common with all communities, except for the Somali community.

- Boredom and a feeling of uselessness.

- Hunger and poverty.

- Being a refugee.

These four final reasons are related and were often cited together as reasons for domestic violence. Many refugees stated that there is not much for an adult to do in the camp. Employment options are severely limited within the camp and employment is illegal for most refugees outside the camp. Unemployment and boredom often leads to a feeling of uselessness, because those that made a living prior to coming to the camp are no longer able to do so. The many bars in the camp offer an option for filling this time as well as easing the feeling of uselessness. Many women stated that conflicts within the home started after the husband would come home drunk. Beer and home-brewed alcohol is extremely cheap, often brewed by refugee women for extra money. Unfortunately, even though alcohol creates problems for some women in the camp, it is an ironic tragedy that women are brewing what many link to the domestic violence problem. Hunger, poverty and 'being a refugee' were also given as reasons for domestic violence, because, as one Rwandese woman explained, "these things affect a man's mood."[10] In general, women communicated that alcoholism, boredom,

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[8] Congolese interviews, Sept. 29, 2003 and Burundian interviews, Oct. 1, 2003.
[9] Congolese interviews, Sept. 29, 2003.
[10] Rwandese interviews, Sept. 24, 2003.

feeling useless and unable to address a family's hunger and poverty, as well as 'being a refugee' create a great deal of stress within a family, which then leads to domestic violence. While the reasons for domestic violence discussed above were stated by many refugees, it is helpful to examine them within the context of larger personal stories, as these stories can help illustrate how individual reasons for domestic violence are influenced by larger factors.

BOX 1: PERSONAL ACCOUNT

B, a 42-year-old Burundian woman, came to Dzaleka in 2002 with her husband and two children. Her extended family is in the camp along with her husband's family. She maintains that the Lord says a family should work to have a peaceful home. However B believes that some people to not follow the Lord's rules and because of this, domestic violence is common in the camp. As a general rule, B stated it is not acceptable for a woman to reject sex with her husband, but if she believes there is a risk of HIV, she can reject sex. Personally, B is struggling with her husband's promiscuity and drinking. Her husband often comes home from the bar and insults her while either a Malawian woman or refugee woman waits for him outside. B is worried that he has HIV or will contract it soon. Her husband has beaten her for refusing to have sex with him. They both have been tested for HIV multiple times, but because his promiscuous behavior has not changed, the fighting between them will continue.

(From 1 October 2003 interview)

B's fears of contracting HIV from her promiscuous husband are not unfounded. Approximately 16.4% of Malawians between 15-49 have HIV/AIDS and women are the majority (United Nations 2002: 15). Promiscuity seems to be a widespread problem, both among refugees and between refugees and local Malawians. Many men and women find sexual partners at the local bars. As mentioned above, alcohol abuse is also fairly common in Dzaleka, many attributing this to the fact that there is nothing to do. Although promiscuity and alcohol abuse are the direct causes of domestic violence in B's home, these factors are in turn caused by larger issues such as unemployment, alcoholism due perhaps to stress or frustration (UNHCR 1991: 30), as well as refugee relationships with the local Malawian population.

BOX 2: PERSONAL ACCOUNT

C, a 30-year-old Burundian woman, arrived at Dzaleka in 2000 with her two children after staying for a time in a refugee camp in Burundi. C was following her husband, who came in 1999. Her husband was a bureaucrat in the Burundian government, but was also trained as a teacher. They decided to flee their home after rebels attacked him with panga knives. During the attack, his hands and arms were severely cut, as he had used them to protect his face.

Both the husband and wife explain that many of their problems started after they arrived in the camp. C's husband became sick with diabetes after arriving in Dzaleka and is also a frequent and heavy drinker. When he is drunk, he beats her. C believes that their domestic problems became much worse after arriving in the camp, as her husband has been unable to find work, is feeling useless and is depressed. He started drinking as a way of passing time and dealing with his new life. She has had a difficult time dealing with the change in her husband and, because she has no family in the camp, feels there is no one for her to talk with or stand up for her interests. C says the camp administrator does not help her and she attributes this to an attitude in Malawi that it is acceptable to beat your wife.

Both C and her husband are particularly frustrated with the fact that they cannot get employment. C is a hairdresser by trade. When they built their home in the camp, they *(cont.)*

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built an extra room to act as a hair salon. However, there are no materials for her to use to run this business, so the room acts as a family room. She has also received training to make soap. C, along with a group of other women from the camp, went through the UNHCR-funded training as part of the preparation for Refugee Day, June 2003. They made hundreds of bars of soap, the intention being to show that refugees' talents can be utilized for the camp's benefit. Unfortunately, the soap is currently sitting in the social service counselor's office. (UNHCR stated that they cannot distribute the soap to the refugees until it is approved by a governmental health body. No one has had the soap reviewed.) C would like to continue making soap to make extra money, but since the current soap has not been approved for distribution, there is no reason to make more. She also creates tie-dyed materials for sale, such as bags, sheets and dresses. She has attempted to receive funding for this project, but as of yet, her micro-loan proposals have gone unanswered. C has been able to sell a few items and make some money, but the money disappears little by little, as her husband uses it to pay for alcohol.

(From 25 September 2003 interview)

The second time I spoke with C, she showed me her photo album. One of the photos, taken in 1999, was of her family in front of their home in Burundi. Her husband, dressed for church and looking healthy, was laughing and kissing their baby. C was smiling at the camera, holding her other child. At the time the picture was taken, C and her husband were both employed and her husband did not drink. Their situation as refugees in Malawi is drastically different. Comparing the picture with their lives now, it is understandable how C's husband is feeling a sense of uselessness and a loss of identity. C's husband is no longer a bureaucrat and it is illegal for him to get a job outside the camp. Within the camp, their resources are so limited, C cannot style hair. Both C and her husband were fully aware of how the quality of their lives had declined; yet despite multiple attempts at finding new occupations, both felt helpless to change their situation. Her husband's reaction to their change in lifestyle is not unusual.   In their study of refugees in Achol-pii, Ondeko and Purdin identified domestic violence as a result of frustration and "enforced idleness", adding that alcohol abuse is also common when money is available from (predominantly female-driven) market activities (Ondeko and Purdin 2004: 30).

BOX 3: PERSONAL ACCOUNT

D, a young Burundian woman came to Dzaleka with two children and her Rwandan husband in 2002. Even though she is married, D does not live with her husband, as he has taken another wife in the camp. He gives her no money, no food and no support. When D's husband visits her, she welcomes and feeds him, but then their interaction quickly turns sour. He beats her often and has repeatedly threatened her life with a panga knife. D does not consider leaving him an option, as she still loves him and has no family at the camp to support her.

(From 25 September 2003 interview)

There are many sad aspects to D's story, however what makes D particularly vulnerable to heavy domestic violence is the fact that her family is not around to act as an advocate for her interests and safety. In D's case, domestic violence has moved beyond justification as simply 'corrective actions' and D's husband is terrorizing her. Yet, she has nowhere to go and considers her home and her husband her only option. Familial disruption is common among refugees, as during conflict and flight, one can lose or lose track of any number of loved ones. Regarding life at the camp, an incomplete family can have very serious consequences for a person, especially a woman. D exemplifies one aspect of this vulnerability. In addition, as Ager, Ager and Long have pointed out,

> "When a woman heading a household is a 'second wife' of a man, for instance, she will be expected to regularly feed him, even though she will receive no allocation for him in her household's food ration" (Ager, Ager and Long 1991: 60).

This was also true for D, making her extremely economically vulnerable as well. The refugee camp food rations system often does not take this type of relationship into account.

BOX 4: PERSONAL ACCOUNT

E, a married Burundian woman with four children, arrived at Dzaleka in July 2000. The year after arriving, while working in her garden at the edge of the camp, E was raped by a Malawian. She became pregnant shortly after the incident and the child is believed to be fathered by the Malawian. E has also been raped again since then. The police have said they would take her to Dowa, but as of yet, they have not. This situation has angered her husband and he has rejected the child. In addition, the neighbors call her 'the Malawian's woman'. E does not consider her neighbors a source of support, because they worsen her problems by validating her husband's anger towards her and the child. She no longer walks around the camp alone, waiting for her husband to accompany her everywhere. This is a cause of fighting, as her husband gets frustrated that he is needed for all her movement. Anger about the rape, the child, as well as E's and her husband's fear that it will happen again has been stressful and has perpetuated violent conflict in the house.

(From 25 September 2003 interview)

E's example shows that relations with the host community are not always amicable and indeed are sometimes dangerous. E experienced hostility from the host community and this hostility has had a direct effect on her relationship with her husband. Further, the inaction of the camp police has prevented this situation from reaching closure. This is an example of how structural violence can perpetuate domestic violence by creating direct violence, such as rape, as well as by creating stress and anger. Unfortunately, E is experiencing the majority of the effects of both the structural and direct violence.

The structural violence of the camp can also inhibit a refugee couple's ability to reconcile after a fight. F explains how a refugee camp's constrictions, along with the poverty a refugee often experiences, limits the way a couple can forgive each other after a fight.

BOX 5: PERSONAL ACCOUNT

F, a Somali woman, recently arrived at Dzaleka with three of her children. During her move to Dzaleka, she was separated from her husband and two of her children. They are still missing. F stated that in her household, "there was much love". She and her husband would discuss their issues. If they did have a fight, they would take a break from each other for maybe a day or two and then perhaps go out to dinner. At dinner, F's husband might give her a small surprise gift. Sometimes they would go to the cinema. The fun they had together would heal the feelings created from the fight. She supposed that in Dzaleka, reconciliation after a fight might be difficult, because there is no place to go out and have fun. (Women sitting in the room nodded in agreement at this point.)

(From 26 September 2003 interview)

F explains how a couple's surroundings, can also have an affect on how they reconcile. Because the camp does not have many of the comforts and freedoms a couple could have at home, it restricts how a couple can console each other and reconcile. The next Section, in looking at the community's role in domestic conflict resolution, will explore the conditions outside the refugee home more thoroughly, however will concentrate more on how others, such as extended family and community leaders play a role in a couple's reconciliation. Nevertheless, F's account displays again that domestic conflict and reconciliation is not confined to the private sphere.

Too often, domestic violence is considered a private affair. However, the personal accounts discussed above demonstrate that domestic violence, despite its occurrence within the home, is often influenced by factors outside the home. Surtees, in her study of domestic violence in Cambodia, has argued that there are many dangers with viewing domestic violence as a private issue, as it is viewed as a family issue rather than a social problem. She states that this view is problematic for three reasons,

> "First, it suggests domestic violence can be understood in isolation, outside of the social and political context in which it is perpetrated. … Second, seeing domestic violence as a private affair permits society to ignore the specific, gendered nature of domestic violence. … Of course, domestic violence is not simply an issue of sanctioning men's violence against women. Were a man to beat or kill his neighbour's wife, there would be repercussions. Domestic violence is violence within marriage and the family, which has everything to do with the sexual nature of the relationship between (abusing) man and (abused) woman. … Third, seeing domestic violence as 'private' implies that the state has no duty or ability to intervene" (Surtees 2003: 33).

Domestic violence cannot be understood without examining social and political influences. The fact that domestic violence is gendered violence means that it acts to support patriarchy within a society. Finally, as Surtees points out, the state frequently intervenes in the domestic sphere, such as with taxation. Therefore, to excuse state inaction with the argument that the state does not belong in the private sphere can be construed as hypocrisy. The next two Sections will be examining the public side of refugee domestic violence.

Summary

This initial findings Section has focused on individual explanations for domestic violence in Dzaleka, such as the wife's actions, jealousy, alcohol, idleness, poverty and stress. However, all of these reasons for domestic violence are linked to larger, structural and cultural influences as well. Not only is the private space of the refugee home not immune to outside influences, the public can directly intervene in domestic affairs in the refugee camp. As will be seen in the following Section, the public sphere in Dzaleka refugee camp is very involved in domestic relations in some ways, and attempts to distance itself from domestic conflict in other ways. In determining when to intervene and when not to intervene, the community is also contesting and reinforcing gender roles within the family, patriarchy and the practice of domestic violence.

SECTION 4: THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROCESS WITHIN THE CAMP

"The elders is the bush where the fire will stop." – Malawian proverb

Introduction

This Section moves to a broader view of domestic violence, expanding out from the home and encompassing the public factors that affect domestic violence, such as the refugee community and camp personnel. The refugee community plays a large role in resolving domestic violence by facilitating justice and healing, but it can also act to justify and legitimate the practice of domestic violence within the home. Camp personnel, such as police and health care practitioners, also can act to legitimate the practice of domestic violence. Further, camp employees can reflect host country attitudes towards refugees as well as elements of the host culture. In a host country that accepts patriarchy, camp personnel can have real effects on refugee women's issues. This Section will also present findings from fieldwork, however concentrating on the refugee community and camp personnel. It will be seen that, as between husband and wife within the home, there are elements within the refugee community and refugee camp that both contest and reinforce patriarchy.

The Process

In talking with the women and men at Dzaleka, it quickly became apparent that there is a definite process that couples follow to resolve conflict in the home, involving family members, neighbors, refugee community leaders and camp personnel. The process is widespread, but varies slightly between the different ethnic groups in the camp. In this process, the couple first tries to work through their problem alone. This could involve discussions or physical disputes. If their problem is still unresolved, the husband and wife each talk with their respective parents, who then come together to find a resolution. Neighbors and other relatives sometimes get involved in these discussions as well. If the problem still persists, the family approaches the refugee community leaders who then counsel the couple. Finally, if the refugee community leaders are unable to change behavior or resolve the problem, the couple is brought before the camp administrator. This final option usually only happens in severe cases and is fairly rare. As one of the translators explained, the camp administrator can act as a judge would in a court and make a formal decision regarding the conflict. The police may also be called if the problem is particularly violent. The police may arrest the husband if the beating is severe, however many women stated that this was not preferable, because while the husband is in jail, the wife has diminished financial support and help with their household.

The Family

Extended family is the first level of support for women in the conflict resolution process. Family provides a forum for a couple to work through the conflict and they can also bolster the woman's case, if she needs backing. Women who are in violent situations at home have limited resources if they are orphans or if their family does not reside at the camp. Unless she has influential neighbors, a woman without family is without strong advocates. G's story illustrates the importance of family for support and as advocates.

In a conflict resolution process that is heavily dependent on family, those without family to act as advocates are particularly vulnerable to severe domestic violence. A family can monitor domestic disputes to ensure they do not become too dangerous or excessive, they can counsel both husband and wife to help facilitate a peaceful resolution and family can also ensure that a woman has a place to reside and food to eat, should she need to flee her husband. However, families can also reinforce domestic violence within the home, should they hold beliefs that hitting one's wife can be justified in certain circumstances. As mentioned in Section 3, many refugees interviewed, both women and men, believed that hitting one's wife was sometimes justified. If a woman's family has internalized a socially and culturally accepted patriarchy, her general social standing and empowerment within the community can be limited. Research on women's standing in Malawian culture, for instance, has shown that Malawian women in comparison to men generally have low political participation rates, low education levels and endure detrimental "traditional cultural practices" (United Nations System in Malawi 2001: 29) such as inferior widowhood rites, early marriage and femicide (Republic of Malawi 2000: 12). Families can internalize and reinforce women's lower social status in their community. In determining to what extent girl children are educated, by socializing boys and girls into certain gendered roles and by reinforcing these gendered roles in interactions between adults, such as between husband and wife, a family can act to marginalize women in general. However, as an arena in which domestic violence can also be hindered and contested, the family can play a role in elevating women's status in their society. Nevertheless, because the family is in itself an arena of power struggles, as seen in Section 3, its influence on women's social standing is by no means uniform.

Counseling From Refugee Community Leaders

Each refugee community in Dzaleka—Rwandan, Burundian, Congolese and Somali—elects one male and one female leader. The refugee community leaders liaise between regular refugees and camp personnel, as well as help resolve conflicts amongst members of their community. Female community leaders are considered by UNHCR, NGOs and camp

administrators to be a valuable resource with regard to refugee women's issues. Over the years, according to UNHCR, "(w)omen leaders, when trained as awareness campaign promoters or peer counselors, have acted as a social force raising SGBV [sex and gender-based violence] issues in the community and ensuring that gender issues are not left aside" (UNHCR 2001: 9). In Dzaleka, the female community leaders are often the next resource for women when family support fails to resolve the domestic conflict.

BOX 7: CONVERSATION WITH A COMMUNITY LEADER

H's neighbor had recently kicked his wife out of the house and H was called to help solve the couple's problem. She first spoke to the husband, who informed her that his wife was being disrespectful and not fulfilling all her household duties. H then went to the wife and, after hearing her story, advised her to not talk back to her husband, stating, "if a husband tells his wife to do something, she should do it and not make such a fuss." The husband took his wife back into the home and according to the leader, "now they live very well." Both the husband and the wife thanked H for her help and advice.

(From 1 October 2003 interview)

During the counseling stage of the conflict resolution process, it seems as though the main goal of the counseling is to resolve the conflict and stop the fighting within the home. However, this often means that the woman is advised to adhere more closely to her domestic tasks and to obey her husband. H often solves couples' domestic problems and prevents domestic violence, but in doing so, she reinforces the social patriarchy and does not contest the practice of violence within the home. Counseling does not involve discussing gender roles or addressing any of the ethical problems of hitting one's wife. The result is that the practice of hitting one's spouse is reinforced and continues to be seen as acceptable. As seen in Section 2's discussion of Kim and Motsei's study of South African nurses (Kim and Motsei 2002), there are members of a community that can play a pivotal role in the plight of women. The nurses' acceptance of domestic violence, Kim and Motsei believed, resulted in a reaffirmation and perpetuation of patriarchy. The same can be argued with regard to the refugee community leaders of Dzaleka. Nevertheless, counseling from community leaders does facilitate emotional healing after a domestic incident. Many women interviewed in Dzaleka mentioned the community leaders as people that could provide comfort and consolation. Further, despite the fact that the female community leaders reinforced patriarchical practices, these leaders were also interested in seeing a halt to domestic violence. The four community leaders involved in the fieldwork stated that domestic violence is wrong. I believe their statements were honest; the contradiction between their statements and actions reflects, again, the fact that an individual can be a site of contradicting identities.

Camp Administrators, Police and Social Services

Camp administrators and the police are the last stage in the process of domestic conflict resolution. Both camp administrators and police are local Malawians and, although part of the camp, straddle the refugee community and the host community. Because of this, administrators and police both reflect and regulate tensions between refugees and their hosts. As seen in Section 3, refugee relationships with local Malawians have been friendly as well as dangerous. In examining domestic violence in a refugee camp context, it is important to keep in mind that relations with the host community can affect the stress levels within refugee homes. Host animosity can create a structurally violent environment within the camp. Further, one cannot assume that the cultural aspects of Malawian, Rwandan, Burundian, Congolese and Somali communities are the same (Watters 2001: 1712). In Dzaleka, Malawian camp officials

held ethnicity-based stereotypes of each of the refugee groups. For instance, the Congolese were generally considered lazy, whereas the Rwandans were considered hard working, yet heavy drinkers. These stereotypes had real effects on how crime was handled within each of the communities. Congolese sometimes stated that they have been ignored by the police (Fieldwork notes, Sept. 18, 2003). J's case below also illustrates cultural tensions between refugees and their Malawian hosts.

BOX 8: PERSONAL ACCOUNT

J, a 35-year-old Congolese woman has been at Dzaleka since 1995. She arrived with her husband and two children, but now has three children. J's husband also has one child with a Malawian woman and is now living with the Malawian woman. J's husband recently came back and brought his new wife with him. J fought with the woman and then went to see a camp security officer. He was supposed to make the Malawian woman leave, but she believes he did not, because she was Malawian. The Malawian woman stayed for three days, then finally left with J's husband.

(From 29 September 2003 interview)

Refugee relations with the host community complicate an examination of gender relations, because one must not only take gender into account, but nationality as well. Again, a woman is a site of multiple, conflicting identities; this idea is expanded when ethnicity is included into a woman's identity. As Bartolomei explains,

> "Although all women are subject in some manner to discrimination based on gender, this is compounded for some women when gender discrimination 'intersects' with discrimination on other grounds. …(N)ot only do we all bear multiple identities, but the response from the external world to these identities shifts and changes depending on the situation in which we find ourselves. These responses further shape our own perception of our identity as a person of worth. … Refugee women suffer from both the internalized and external consequences of their often already marginalized identities as women and ethnic, national or racial minorities. They become someone who, rather than being protected by the state, is someone who the state oppresses" (Bartolomei 2003: 89-90).

Refugee women in Dzaleka experience patriarchy, but also experience other forms of structural violence that compound the negative effects. The choice of the Malawian police not to react to J's case is an example of domestic violence compounded with ethnic discrimination.

An interview with a Malawian camp security officer also illustrates how the host community and camp officials can have a significant effect on domestic violence.

BOX 9: INTERVIEW WITH A SECURITY OFFICER

The security officer had understood my topic to be violence against women. When asked about the most common crimes he deals with in Dzaleka, the officer pulled out a piece of paper with notes he had prepared for the interview, listing the three most common crimes at the camp: 1) theft, 2) assault/fighting, and 3) violence against women. When asked about violence against women, he had also prepared two examples. The first example was a story of a woman who had been raped in a Zambian camp, but the rape was reported in Dzaleka. The Dzaleka security officers were working through how to prosecute the rapist. The second example was the story of a Burundian girl who was raped by two young Somali men, the rapes *(cont.)*

occurring two years apart. They are still investigating this case, although the officer stated that he did not believe this to be an actual rape case, as the girl reported the rape because her father beat her. The officer believes the father would like to use the incidents to bolster a case for resettlement in South Africa. When asked about rape cases in general, the officer stated that he thinks all cases of rape are reported because refugees want to be resettled. He also believes that many cases are exaggerated because of the desire for resettlement. Generally, he does not consider rape to be a significant problem in the camp. The officer stated domestic violence is a rare occurrence and that he can remember only one case from earlier that year. Security personnel do not consider cases unless they are criminal. Domestic violence becomes criminal when the woman is injured. For instance, as the security officer explained, a bruise is not considered an injury, but a broken arm is considered an injury. Therefore, if a broken arm results from domestic violence, it is considered criminal, but if only bruises result, then it is not criminal. He has never seen a case of a wife injuring her husband, but he does see husbands injuring their wives. If a domestic violence case is filed, camp social services are supposed to get the police reports, but this has not happened as of yet.

(From fieldnotes of two scheduled interviews with a security officer regarding crime in the camp on 22 September and 9 October 2003)

The security officer prepared for the interview, knowing my interests. Presumably, it is for this reason that he incorporated 'violence against women' in his planned answers. However, when asked for more detail regarding 'violence against women' in the camp, he dismissed the cases as exaggerated or trivial for one reason or another. Indeed, despite having 'violence against women' as the third type of crime seen in the camp, the officer gave the impression that violence against women does not often occur. This could be due to a desire to present the camp administration in a positive light. This could also be due to an attitude that violence against women is sometimes not important. Given the ambiguity of the definition of domestic violence in Dzaleka the officer could also believe that true violence does not often happen to women in the home. Therefore, the inaction on the part of the Malawian police is not necessarily due to the tension between refugees and their hosts, but rather a passive acceptance of patriarchical practices. Nevertheless, the police's lack of action against violence against women has a direct affect on women in Dzaleka. In general, Malawian police have been criticized for a lack of action with regard to violence against women in Malawian society. A recent study of the prevalence of rape in Malawi stated,

"In relation to rape and defilement there has been an unpleasant tendency on the part of both police officers and the judiciary in Malawi to downplay the seriousness of the offence or to blame the victim for all or part of the circumstances surrounding her plight. From the findings of this study, even convicted rapists in Malawi are not likely to receive sentences greater than six years of hard labour" (Kakhongwe and Mkandawire 1999: 6).

And further:

"The police response to crimes by males against females is a reflection of deeply entrenched social attitudes that tend to trivialize such conduct. The police must be provided with clear policy and legal guidelines to ensure that the rest of the criminal justice system is coordinated for a much more effective response" (Kakhongwe and Mkandawire 1999: 13).

Even in the context of the workplace, violence against women is considered common yet rarely reported. In their study of violence against women in the Malawian workplace, the Malawian Human Rights Resource Center (MHRRC) explains,

"Rarely do the victims of violence and other forms of abuse report to institutions such as the NGOs, the police and the labour offices. … The victims either feel too powerless to report, or

they are afraid of aggravating the situation. They also lack confidence in these institutions" (Malawi Human Rights Resource Center (MHRRC 2003: 3).

Police inaction with regard to domestic violence and other forms of violence against women can be considered a cultural acceptance and passive reinforcement of the practice of domestic violence. This can also sometimes be seen in attitudes regarding the camp health care practitioners and social services.

In describing how domestic conflicts were resolved, women typically ended the process with the camp administrator and the police. Health care practitioners and social services usually were not mentioned in the process. Most women interviewed considered the health clinic as a necessity only if severely injured. As discussed above, many women felt ashamed to expose injuries that resulted from a domestic squabble. Therefore, minor injuries inflicted in domestic violence were not typically reported. However, in discussing the healing process, women often said that if the woman was injured, their husband could bring his wife to the clinic, which could help reconcile the couple. As Kim and Motsei's study of South African nurses showed (Kim and Motsei 2002), health care provider attitudes are not necessarily sympathetic to battered women. UNHCR has noted that "(p)rovider attitudes can be an obstacle to care for survivors. Health-worker training at all levels has not consistently included an examination of and challenge to attitudes and beliefs (sensitization and awareness raising). Rather, it has tended to focus on building clinical skills" (UNHCR 2001: 18). Indeed, there are not counseling services at the Dzaleka health clinic and only physical injuries are treated in cases of violence against women. When asked if counseling from social services was an option, the women's answers varied. Some women said they were unaware that social services provided counseling services, but commented that this could be helpful. Because a Red Cross counselor attended some of the interviews, it was sometimes difficult to gauge whether or not answers regarding social services were honest. Yet, criticisms were voiced in the absence of the Red Cross counselor. Many women stated that they did not consider social services to be a useful option for domestic conflict resolution. A Congolese woman explained, "I am not sure what Red Cross is for. I see that they distribute food, kotex (sanitary napkins) once a year, and blankets once a year. They are often not at their post. They do not look at the problems in the homes."[11] A Burundian woman commented, "The Red Cross asks the questions (about domestic violence), but there is no follow up."[12] The Red Cross currently staffs only one female counselor, which is not sufficient to sustain an effective domestic counseling program in the camp. Further, this counselor is also occupied with other counseling needs as well as material and food distribution. Administration and coordination of services in a refugee camp is complicated, particularly when financial and human resources are severely limited. The Red Cross counselors are meant to be counseling refugees; however they are being drawn in different directions, as other services call for their assistance. Regardless of the reasons, the health care practitioners and social services do not often address the problem of violence against women. Other issues in the camp take priority. It should also be noted that shortly before I left Dzaleka, the Malawian Red Cross informed me that they had hired another male counselor, increasing the number of counselors to four (three men and one woman). The female Red Cross counselor had expressed a desire for another woman to be hired to help her better address refugee women's needs, but another male counselor was hired instead. This is most likely not a conscious decision to promote violence against women; however, this also could be seen as a form of passive acceptance of patriarchy.

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[11] Congolese interviews, Sept. 29, 2003.
[12] Burundian interviews, Oct. 1, 2003.

The Malawian government has formally acknowledged patriarchy as a social problem. A Malawian government report stated,

> "Several studies on violence against women have blamed the law enforcement system and culture for a lot of the injustice done to the victims of violence. Usually cases of domestic violence have not received the attention they deserve from the traditional authorities, the police and the courts because they have been regarded as domestic affairs worth to be settled at family level" (Republic of Malawi 2000: 28).

Patriarchy's prominence in Malawian society is a fact that is accepted by the Malawian government, yet it is a problem that persists. The government explains this is due largely to lack of funding. Their report states,

> "To curb violence perpetuated by culture and traditional beliefs, the Government and NGOs have sensitized the religious and traditional leaders and communities at large on issues of violence against women and children. There has been a reduction in some elements of traditional norms, beliefs and practices that victimize women and children. However, due to inadequate financial resources it has not been easy to support sensitization and civic education programmes" (Republic of Malawi 2000: vi).

Lack of action against domestic violence, the Republic of Malawi claims, is due to lack of money to create education programs. A recent report from the Malawi-based Centre for Social Research alluded to a belief that government gender policies were insincere, stating, "…unless there is political and administrative will in terms of policies, action plans, resource allocation and implementation the international and national bases will be but rhetoric" (Tsoka 1999: 1). The United Nations has also assessed patriarchy in Malawian society and attributed the problem to other factors, such as an "inadequate understanding of gender", lack of planning in social development, and "lack of policy, coordination and monitoring mechanisms" (UN Agencies 1996: 2). More recently, the United Nations dismissed poverty as a poor excuse for the existence of patriarchy, stating,

> "Successful efforts at gender equality are not decisively contingent on national income, political ideology or stages of development. What is required is a strong political commitment and will to remove disparities" (United Nations 2002: 1).

The UN's statements regarding patriarchy in Malawian society are interesting in that they seem to place the blame on the Malawian government for the problems, but they also create a space for outside intervention through better planning and policymaking. The next Section will explore this more thoroughly in a discussion of Western intervention in planning and policymaking, as it too has claimed a space in the refugee domestic violence discussion.

Summary

This Section has attempted to illuminate some of the many levels that are relevant to refugee domestic violence. Extended family, the refugee community and camp personnel all play significant roles in the resolution of domestic conflict and promoting healing after an incident. These agents also play a role in both contesting and reinforcing the practice of domestic violence in general. The camp itself is a site in which various power struggles occur, not only between man and woman, but also between cultures and between the refugee and host. To completely examine the influences on the refugee home this discussion must also be broadened further to examine international influences, such as Western international development and humanitarian institutions.

SECTION 5: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND GLOBAL INFLUENCES

"Knowledge is not the main thing, but deeds." – African proverb

Introduction

As seen in Section 4, the home of the refugee is greatly influenced by the surrounding refugee community, camp personnel and the host country in general. This Section will attempt to broaden the discussion of domestic violence in the refugee camp context further to encompass international agents. Western development agencies and international institutions have claimed places in the discussion of refugee domestic affairs and their interests are played out through culture and discourse. UNHCR is an international institution, but in many ways is dominated by Western discourse. As seen in Section 2, intervention in developing countries often draws from an institutional discourse on gender, which stems from Western notions of modernity. The incorporation of gender into UNHCR training and discourse not only serves to legitimize UNHCR's position in the international humanitarian and political arena, it also reinforces power structures of patriarchy and Western modernity. International agents influence the refugee home in an attempt to teach acceptable domestic behaviour as well as to dictate what they consider proper gender roles. These influences can be both positive and negative; this Section will attempt to explore how international institutions and Western development influence through culture and discourse, as well as to examine some of the affects of these influences.

Gender Training at Dzaleka

A starting point from which one can examine how Western institutional gender discourse attempts to influence within the Dzaleka refugee camp can be found in an account from one of the female community leaders regarding a recent 'gender training'.

BOX 10: CONVERSATION WITH A REFUGEE COMMUNITY LEADER

Trainers were brought into the camp from an outside organization to conduct a 'gender training', sponsored by UNHCR and the Malawian Red Cross. The lessons lasted over a few days. As a refugee community leader, K was invited to attend the training. K found that she did learn from the lessons, but felt there was a discrepancy between what was being taught in the training and what was being practiced in the camp. As K explained, "(they) put us through gender training, but they don't apply what they are teaching. … (We) were taught that it is not good to insult a tribe or nationality, but the administration and camp workers do this all the time. … (We) learned about rights in the training—that human beings have the right to eat— but they don't give us food for two months. … If a woman is attacked and has proof, the police need to punish (the attacker). (They) should not just favor certain people or accept bribes, … (because) tomorrow you find the same perpetrator that did something today with the same knife. … If you go to the hospital, and you are seriously sick, the doctor can say, 'just go… you look healthy'. The way they treat people is dehumanizing."

(From 29 September 2003 interview)

UNHCR introduced the idea of the gender training, presumably based on the organization's global initiatives for women's empowerment. The Malawian Red Cross, a national organization loosely under the umbrella of the International Red Cross, followed UNHCR's lead and organized the local logistics of the training. The Red Cross also created the list of both camp personnel and refugee invitees to the training. Women's advocates from a local

Malawian NGO came to provide the training. The disconnection that K senses between what is being communicated to her in training and what she experiences in daily life at the camp reflects the difficulty of forced social change, especially considering how many actors are involved. It is clear from the discussion of domestic violence thus far that notions of gender roles and relations are certainly not uniform. A training that tries to put a uniform approach to gender into place, while noble in its intentions, has a difficult task. Each agent involved in the training has a different level of receptivity to the concepts that would accompany gender training.

Ultimately, the training was an accomplishment for UNHCR and the Red Cross to cite, as it showed a proactive effort to combat violence against women. The training also introduced ideas and terms such as 'violence against women' and 'empowerment' to some refugees. However, if one asked those that attended the training about domestic violence, many would often say that hitting one's wife could be justified. Recall the interview with the security officer in Section 4, in which he cited 'violence against women' as one of the camp's main problems, yet did not treat the problem seriously in practice. 'Violence against women' had become empty rhetoric, likely used to appease an interviewer he felt might appreciate its use. In daily interactions within the camp, traditional gender roles generally go unquestioned. The ideas and terms were taught in the training, but are not acted on within the camp. Clearly, as K sensed, there is a general discrepancy between the message of the training, the beliefs and practices of many refugees, the beliefs and practices of camp personnel and police, the formal discourse of UNHCR and the practices of UNHCR.

Western Discourse, International Institutions and UNHCR

The 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees, a document that outlines UN guidelines on the treatment of refugees, was created in response to an increasing number of Cold War asylum seekers (Loescher 2001). UNHCR, established in 1958, was created to formally institutionalize and support this mandate. As a 'non-political' institution with roots in the Cold War, UNHCR had to change and adapt to a growing concern for refugees from developing countries in the 1980s. Yet, at the same time, UNHCR has had to address issues put forward by its powerful Western donor countries. As Chimni maintains, this "explains why UNHCR is an uncritical consumer of concepts and theories which support a particular (Northern) vision of the global refugee order" (Chimni 1998: 368). Chimni's observation applies to gender discourse within UNHCR as well. United Nations agencies have written extensively on gender issues in developing countries. This Western-dominated discourse on gender policy has trickled down to influence the goals of UNHCR regional offices. The reports at the end of Section 4 come from a cache of UN commentary on Malawi, including several reports on policy and development. For instance, the UN issued a report on Malawian gender policy in 1996 (UN Agencies 1996) and included gender in their development plans for 2002 through 2006 (United Nations 2002). These reports are meant to not only guide the UN agencies, but also the Malawian government and NGOs. It should be noted that humanitarian agencies have also been criticized along a similar vein. For instance, Mark Duffield has argued that aid is increasingly becoming a form of global governance (Duffield 2001: 308). According to Duffield, "aid practice, that is, the public-private contractual networks that link donor governments, UN agencies, military establishments, NGOs, private companies and others…" is a way for large Western donors to "govern at a distance" (ibid). Humanitarian agencies are not immune to the dominance of Western discourse either.

Combating patriarchy is a noble goal of development, humanitarian agencies and policymakers and many argue that development is necessary to achieve gender equality. For instance, with regard to eradicating domestic violence in developing countries, Sen argues that "…education,

networking and employment…are of central relevance to development initiatives. Together these three factors form a basket of resources which I found to be of central importance in the resolution of domestic violence" (Sen 1998: 13). Development is a means of combating the structural violence and culturally accepted forms of patriarchy that perpetuate domestic violence. Goals such as alleviating poverty, creating employment opportunities, educating girls and boys equally can help to equalize the status of women with that of men.

However, these noble intentions need to be balanced with the realization that development agencies and international institutions also have a motivation to create a space for themselves in Third World social discussions and policymaking. In Section 2, it was seen that critics such as Arturo Escobar and Pam Simmons have argued that Western discourse of gender and gender roles can act to reinforce patriarchy and Western notions of modernity by defining what it means to be a 'third world woman'. Critics maintain that the picture that Western discourse paints of third world women is grounded in colonialist hegemonic discourse (Parpart 1995; Yuval-Davis 1997; de Groot 1991). Third world women are presented as poor, vulnerable, burdened victims of a repressive patriarchal society. Western women, on the other hand, are presented as "modern, educated, (and) sexually liberated" (Parpart 1995: 255). As Section 2 discussed, this view is related to the notion of 'changing the other'. While gender training attempts and gendered rhetoric within Western discourse are needed on one level, on another, they serve to promote the power structures of patriarchy and Western modernity. A contradiction in gender discourse emerges: gendered perspectives do need to be incorporated into development and humanitarian efforts on a fundamental level, but the process in which this is done reinforces notions of third world women as victims and needing saving.

With regard to refugee issues, some academics are becoming more critical of how Western development and humanitarian agencies are presenting their problems. Prem Kumar Rajaram has argued that Oxfam GB has used testimonies of refugees in fundraising campaigns to suit "… the priorities and agenda of Oxfam as an aid or development agency", restricting the scope of the refugee stories in the process (Rajaram 2002: 250). Derek Summerfield, a vocal critic of Western psychosocial treatment programmes in the refugee context questions,

> "To what extent are humanitarian agencies reproducing definitions of war that suit their institutional interests, and which seem attractive to donors and the Western public? There is too often a one-way transfer, generally north-south, and the question is who has the power to define the problem and make these definitions stick?" (Summerfield 1999: 1459).

He argues Western psychosocial interventions are attractive for donors, because they are 'fashionable' and limited in time, but avoid more vital issues that arise during conflict, such as justice and protection (ibid). With regard to refugees and domestic violence, Vanessa Pupavac, another vocal critic of Western psychosocial intervention, has criticized Western assumptions that war escalates the occurrences of domestic violence. She states,

> "International intervention is not confined to inter-ethnic relations, but because of the notion of a continuum of violence, is becoming involved in relations at all levels of society. Populations are not trusted psychologically in their most intimate relationships. For example, the report *Child Mental Health and Psycho-social Services in Kosovo* contends that the situation has meant a rise in child abuse and domestic violence. … Neither report presents evidence of an increase, but the belief arises from the deterministic cycle of trauma and violence thesis" (Pupavac 2002: 12).

Western development and international humanitarian agencies, in their attempts to assist refugee women, can sometimes marginalize them further by using assumptions and stereotypes of vulnerability and trauma. As Rajaram illustrated above in his example of Oxfam

communications, this marginalized image can be perpetuated in the publications of development and humanitarian agencies. The United Nations is not only a development and humanitarian agency; it is a resource that many go to for information, including material on refugee women in developing countries. Chimni has stated that academics and legal experts have failed to reflect deeply on the role UNHCR has played in maintaining a particular conception of the world. He states,

> "A key omission has been the failure to study … the knowledge production and dissemination functions of UNHCR" (Chimni 1998: 366).

As an educator of the Western public, the UNHCR is in a particularly powerful position to communicate discourse regarding the status of refugee women. As sponsor and educator of refugees and camp personnel through gender trainings, the UNHCR is in a powerful position to affect gender roles in refugee camps. Foucault's notion of 'regimes of truth' is relevant in this context, as the gender discourse that stems from Western discourse contests domestic violence in the refugee context, but it also supports the West as a source of 'truth'. Foucault's insight on discourse does not suggest that this patriarchy is promoted on purpose, but he does show us how power structures are reinforced through discourse and the 'knowledge' those power structures create. Arturo Escobar and Pam Simmons suggested above that Western intervention purposefully promotes patriarchy. Therefore, it can be argued that, because UNHCR gender discourse supports the hegemonic position of the West, and because Western development and international intervention has been argued to be patriarchical, UNHCR discourse also supports patriarchy.

Western-dominated gender discourse contradicts the reality of patriarchy in Western development agencies and international institutions. This contradiction is mirrored in the discrepancy K sensed and indeed experienced between the discourse of the UNHCR-sponsored gender training and the reality of patriarchy within the camp. To reconcile this discrepancy between discourse and practice seems an impossible task. However, perhaps Foucault has given us a starting point. According to Foucault,

> "The problem is not changing people's consciousness—or what's in their heads—but the political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth. It's not a matter of emancipating truth from every system of power (which would be a chimera, for truth is already power), but of detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social, economic, and cultural, within which it operates at the present time." (Foucault 1984: 74-75)

We first need to understand how 'truth' and discourse reinforce forms of hegemony and then act to disable this relationship—a difficult task in itself.

Summary
The broad focus of this Section has shown that refugee domestic violence is both contested and reinforced on a global, discursive level. On the one hand, Western gender discourse formally contests patriarchy and the practice of domestic violence. On the other hand, Western development and humanitarian agencies, along with international institutions, are still predominantly patriarchical structures. This struggle is even more apparent in the discrepancy between gender discourse and practice at the local level, such as between the message communicated during gender training at Dzaleka and the patriarchical practices within the camp. In trying to rectify this discrepancy, we are faced with a seemingly impossible task, yet, as Foucault suggests, we must begin with identifying how regimes of truth support hegemony and then act to end this relationship.

CONCLUSION

This exploration of domestic violence in a refugee camp has hopefully shown the various levels of influence acting on the refugee home. Refugee domestic violence occurs between a husband and wife, however the extended family, the community, community leaders, camp personnel, the host country and international institutions all act to both reinforce and contest patriarchy and the practice of domestic violence. In order to understand how these levels interact with each other, one must examine domestic violence in a way that appreciates overlapping structural, cultural and individual aspects. Further, in such an examination, one must also be aware of the power of discourse. With respect to refugee domestic violence, discourses within development and within cultures are particularly important in the struggle between contesting and reinforcing patriarchy. These ideas were illustrated in examining domestic violence in the Dzaleka refugee camp.

As the stories from the Dzaleka refugees have shown, domestic violence that occurs between a husband and wife is typically linked to reasons such as a wife's actions, stress, alcohol and infidelity, however all of these reasons are ultimately influenced by the larger forces of structural violence and culture. Delving further into the stories of those interviewed, it was shown that stress and alcohol abuse were often perpetuated by poverty, the enforced idleness a refugee in Malawi must endure and simply the state of 'being a refugee', which seemed to reflect a loss of identity. These factors are all part of the structural violence of the camp. Further, it was shown that individuals are sites of multiple and conflicting identities. A refugee woman could verbally acknowledge that domestic violence was at times justified, but can also contest this patriarchy in the violence of the act. Examining the process of addressing domestic violence in Dzaleka has demonstrated that the family, neighbors, community leaders and camp personnel all bring aspects that also both contest and reinforce patriarchy and the practice of domestic violence. Culturally accepted forms of patriarchy, including attitudes that domestic violence is not an issue that deserves extensive attention, surfaced in the actions of the Dzaleka community leaders and camp personnel. However, it was seen that patriarchical practices are contested in these arenas as well. The community leaders of Dzaleka, despite sometimes reinforcing the practice of domestic violence, were actively interested in seeing a halt to the practice. This contradictory behavior reflected, again, the individual as a site of multiple and conflicting identities. Finally, international institutions, development and humanitarian agencies have also claimed a space in influencing the refugee home. Many of these agencies, such as UNHCR, are largely dominated by Western discourse, as powerful Western donors can often dictate the direction and focus of institutional discourse. However, even though Western gender discourse formally contests patriarchy and the practice of domestic violence, the international development and humanitarian institutions that circulate this discourse are still predominantly patriarchical agencies. This discrepancy between institutional gender discourse and institutional practices at the global level is also apparent at a local level. The example of the UNHCR-sponsored gender training in Dzaleka illustrated a similar discrepancy between discourse and practice. The gender training discussed notions of human rights and respect, yet some refugees felt that camp practices did not treat gender issues seriously and often did not respect the rights of refugees.

Two immediate needs have emerged from this discussion. First, refugee domestic violence deserves to be theorized and examined more thoroughly. As Section 5 has shown, we do not yet have the solutions to this global problem, but this does not mean that patriarchy and the practice of domestic violence is inevitable. There is a need for further research of refugee domestic violence in various contexts and situations. Further, this fieldwork primarily concentrated on the stories and inputs from refugee women's perspectives, however refugee men must also be extensively interviewed regarding domestic relations. We need to better

understand the roles masculinity and identity play in the practice of domestic violence. Identity, and a feeling of loss of identity, is particularly important with regard to refugee issues.

Secondly, this paper has questioned the roles international development and humanitarian agencies play in the discussion of refugee domestic violence. I am fairly skeptical about how effective current international efforts are at combating patriarchy. It is unknown if international intervention can be effective in eradicating patriarchy when many of these agencies are in themselves patriarchical. It is certain that development and humanitarian agencies will continue to maintain the space they have created for themselves in the discussion of refugee domestic issues, however these institutions need to be more self-critical and aware of the discrepancy between the discourse they circulate and their practices in reality.

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APPENDIX I: RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

Conducting fieldwork in the Dzaleka refugee camp proved to be a challenge, but ultimately was a very rewarding experience. The following account will discuss the research methods used during the fieldwork, as well as the challenges and occasional windfalls that affected the quality and nature of my fieldwork data. After explaining my reasons for conducting fieldwork in a refugee camp and my choice of topic, I will address the fieldwork in four areas: initial challenges, perceptions, gender-based violence as a sensitive topic and the experience of working with the refugee community leaders and refugee translators. Following this, I will discuss my use of semi-structured interviews as the primary means for gathering data. Finally, I will explain the other approaches used to stimulate discussion amongst the refugees and add depth to the interviews.

The Topic of Domestic Violence in the Refugee Camp Context

The refugee camp is an atypical, but fitting, arena to examine the issue of domestic violence. Domestic violence is hardly a problem unique to refugees, but the refugee camp setting changes the nature of the problem. It is an arena in which one realizes the power dynamics in various relationships: between husband and wife, refugee and community leader, refugee and host country, and finally between developing country and developed country, or the 'West'.

I initially embarked on the fieldwork with the intention of exploring the general topic of violence against women in the refugee camp. To do this, I split the interview questions into two sections. The first section addressed refugee women's safety within the camp, but outside of the home. I wanted to explore what exactly made women vulnerable to attacks and how violence committed by strangers was handled by the community and the camp. The second section addressed violence against women within the domestic sphere. However, during the course of the fieldwork, I realized that it could be problematic to pair the topic of violence against women outside the home with violence against women within the home. Although gender-based violence in both cases can reflect an underlying patriarchy within a given setting, the actors involved and the intentions behind their actions are often completely different. I discovered that it was common for both the husband and the wife involved to see domestic violence as an action correcting a wrong within the household. On the other hand, rape, a typical example of a violent act outside of the home, may be committed by a stranger. By linking these two types of violence, the husband is linked with the rapist and is then criminalized. The underlying meanings behind the acts of rape and domestic violence are then merged and obscured. Also, I found that talking about violence committed against women by strangers is a much more sensitive topic that domestic violence. As a result, I was able to collect much more information regarding domestic violence. I ultimately narrowed the focus of the thesis to domestic violence.

Initial Challenges

Obtaining a location and permission to conduct fieldwork on gender-based violence in an East African refugee camp proved to be difficult. Much of my spring and early summer was spent pursuing contacts, sending emails and letters with pleas for approval to UNHCR and other refugee-focused NGOs. By a stroke of good fortune, I was finally able to contact the Chief of Mission in the Malawian UNHCR office, who agreed to allow me to conduct fieldwork in Dzaleka. I had initially planned to allow eight to ten weeks in Dzaleka for fieldwork; however my arrival in Dzaleka was delayed multiple times because of a UNHCR-sponsored refugee headcount. The process of conducting a headcount is a lengthy one; Dzaleka's taking

approximately two months. During this time, camp personnel count the members in each household, record personal data and link each child to a parent. On paper, the process seems to be a fairly straightforward one, however in reality, it is extremely complicated as trying to reconcile often incorrect camp records with suspected exaggerations of refugees can be nearly impossible. As a result, the process is fraught with mistrust and resentment on both sides. UNHCR thought it best that I not arrive during the headcount, as I would not have access to any camp personnel for assistance. In addition, UNHCR felt that I could potentially face animosity from the refugees if I came during the headcount, as they would assume I played a role in the process. By the time the headcount was finished, it was early September. I arrived in Malawi on September 13th and the camp was still recovering from the count: camp personnel appeared tired and refugees seemed wary of questions. With only four weeks to conduct fieldwork, I had the challenge of doing research on a sensitive topic in a short timeframe at a fraught moment. This created many interesting methodological issues, along with some fortunate discoveries.

Perceptions

As mentioned above, the mood in Dzaleka was initially not a welcoming one. I was particularly aware of the suspicions and resentment created by the headcount when I arrived in Dzaleka the first day. I came to the camp with UNHCR in one of their large white vehicles, was immediately brought to the camp administrator for introductions and was given a tour of the camp. My arrival was not quiet or subtle and I feared that this would create a perception of me as an agent of UNHCR. Rubin and Rubin have observed that "how (the interviewer is) seen by the person being interviewed will affect what is said," (Rubin and Rubin 1995: 3) and a perception of me as under the hire of UNHCR could build mistrust. Mistrust, I feared, would result in refugees refusing to speak with me or distorting their stories. To counteract this perception, I arranged to arrive with the schoolteachers in my subsequent trips to the camp. Their car would stop at the periphery of the camp by the schools and I would walk alone into the heart of the camp. This, along with my numerous claims of independence, helped to change the perception that I was an agent of UNHCR.

Also, because I was a Westerner, many refugees initially assumed that I had extensive financial resources. This assumption may have affected the answers in the first interviews as well as my day-to-day interactions with other refugees. This was a difficult assumption to disprove; however the community leaders and translators helped me to curb refugee expectations by explaining that I was an independent student. As Lee recommends, I did try to offer help in non-monetary ways (Lee 1993: 138), for instance by sending letters to relatives of refugees in Britain and the United States. When appropriate, I would give photos, artwork and cards, expressing my gratitude to participants as well. My hope is that even though I could not spend a great deal of money, I demonstrated through my actions that I did indeed care about those I interviewed.

In general, my initial days and interactions in Dzaleka were filled with explanations of my motives and intentions, as well as concerted efforts to build trust and rapport among the refugees and camp personnel. I expected that no one would talk to me given the general mistrust created by the recent headcount and short amount of time for fieldwork, however I was pleasantly surprised by the eventual general openness of people, especially the refugees, and their willingness to talk. I would like to credit this to my approachable demeanor; however ultimately, I believe this openness is due mostly to the good fortune of meeting friendly and open-minded people.

Gender-based Violence as a Sensitive Topic

Clearly, discussing violence against women, particularly in a refugee camp, can be highly sensitive. As the Rwandese translator once mused to me regarding interviewing the women

about domestic issues, "many of these women are talking about men they have loved and lost." My foremost concerns regarding our behaviour during the interviews were to avoid offending or judging the interviewees, try to prevent them from feeling uncomfortable, and to maintain confidentiality at all times. My concerns were shared by the community leaders and translators and this general attitude helped us in establishing what Lee calls a "framework of trust" with the women, which made it easier for us to tackle potentially painful topics (Lee 1993: 98). As I will show later, the community leaders and translators were essential to maintaining a sensitive approach to our interviews; however there were other tactics we used to ensure the women felt comfortable during the interview. Researchers have suggested approaching sensitive topics in a general way to avoid hostility or embarrassment (May 2001: 129, Devereux and Hoddinott 1992: 34). With this in mind, the conversations about domestic violence were always started purely in the hypothetical sense. We did not ask the woman to refer specifically to herself in her answers, but only to offer her opinions on domestic violence in general. Nevertheless, many women volunteered information on their personal experiences once they felt comfortable in the interview. Women sometimes stated that it was good to discuss these issues and bring such topics in the open. We also took our time interviewing the women. I did not have a set schedule of interviewing a certain number of people per day. Rather, each interview took the amount of time needed to make the interviewee feel comfortable and unrushed. Finally, a Red Cross counselor initially escorted us to each house, however I sensed that the interviewees felt uncomfortable discussing domestic issues in her presence. I later learned that there was sometimes fear of the counselor reporting the findings to camp authorities. The counselor intended to help and was concerned about the issues related to violence against women, however I gently asked her to refrain from attending the interviews.

Despite the general sensitivity of the topic, I discovered that not all the topics discussed were as sensitive as I had anticipated. Devereux and Hoddinott maintain that one of the first problems in doing fieldwork is determining "what is sensitive and what is not", as "(i)ndividuals and cultures do not all share the same sensitivities, and different information is public and private in different societies" (Devereux and Hoddinott 1992: 33). After my first day of interviewing with the Congolese community, my translator joked with me that Americans and Canadians tend to tiptoe around certain topics when it is unnecessary. "You can ask us anything," she told me. And, indeed, it seemed we could discuss many topics with the Congolese women, such as marital rape, that we could not discuss in the other communities. However, this openness could also have been due to the fact that I was an outsider, as the Congolese did not seem to be open with everyone, such as the social services counselor.

A final ethical dilemma in conducting fieldwork in gender-based violence was finding a balance between the desire to influence how gender-based violence is perceived and treated with maintaining intellectual objectivity (May, 2001: 127, Monaghan and Just 2000: 31). I came to the realization early on that I would not be able to emotionally detach myself from the topic or the people that participated in the project. However, according to Rubin and Rubin, this emotional involvement in qualitative research is commonplace and can even be helpful (Rubin and Rubin 1995: 12). As they explain, "the researcher's empathy, sympathy, humor, and sincerity are important tools for the research. The researcher is asking for a lot of openness from the interviewees; he or she is unlikely to get that openness by being closed and impersonal" (Rubin and Rubin 1995: 12). I was and still am emotionally connected to those that contributed their stories and opinions to my fieldwork this summer. However, I believe this emotion can add depth and sensitivity to the discussion of domestic violence. Coming from a Western perspective of domestic violence, it would be easy to assume that wife battering is perpetuated by violent men, or that domestic violence occurs in refugee households because of the hegemonic gender discrepancies in African societies. But Ken Wilson warns,

"(r)esearch too easily becomes the desire to expose the smallness of people, the meanness of power, and the inability of societies to create systems sustaining their values (especially their better ones) and binding their members" (Wilson 1992: 182). The women and men that participated in this study demonstrated that gender-based violence is extremely complicated with multiple causes. It would be both disrespectful to the participants as well as academically careless to lay the blame on cultural shortcomings. Only by discovering the true nature of domestic violence in the refugee home, including the many factors that cause it, can one hope to eventually stop its occurrence.

Working with the Community Leaders and Translators

As mentioned above, my limited time in Dzaleka meant that I had to meet and interview people quickly and I concluded that finding people through statistical random sampling was not a viable option. Camp administration was lacking in data on the refugees (the headcount information had not yet been synthesized) and there was no up-to-date map of the camp to plot out a sample strategy. I determined the best way to carry out the interviews was by working with the female refugee community leaders, as they were well-connected, would give me an air of credibility with the interviewees and would be able to provide insight into the camp treatment of gender-based violence. Shortly after I arrived at the camp, I became acquainted with the Rwandese, Burundian, Congolese and Somali refugee community leaders. These women then connected me with female translators: English teachers from the DRC and Rwanda, and an exceptional student of English from Burundi.[13] I came to rely a great deal on the community leaders and translators. Bernard argues that a few competent informants can provide adequate information about a community's culture (Bernard 1995: 165). As informants, these women were extremely knowledgeable about the issues in the camp, had broad relations within their communities, and the leaders played an integral role in resolving domestic conflicts. As people, they were pleasant and easy to spend time with, which also eased our work and the flow of information.

Working with a female translator from each community, along with the female community leaders proved immensely helpful for more reasons than I had anticipated. As I had hoped, the community leaders were able to find participants quickly and, because they were acquainted with most of the interviewees, were able to shorten the time used for introductions and establishing trust. Devereux and Hoddinott caution that using local people as research aides can be risky, as they have local affiliations and interests, which could result in compromising the quality of the data (Devereux and Hoddinott 1992: 27). This certainly was a risk, however it was a situation that was in large part unavoidable, given time-constraints and I believe their contributions to the fieldwork outweighed the potential distortions. The community leaders and translators were aware of the current issues in the camp, understood the general concerns of the community, and knew the local 'gossip'. Their knowledge and opinions added depth to the responses and stories of the women interviewed. In addition, the translator and community leader acted as useful gauges to help determine when an interviewee might be exaggerating or understating an issue. They also gave insight into sensitive ways to approach certain women and helpful questions to ask, adding remarkable profundity and sensitivity to the interviews. Finally, in having extended exposure to the community leaders, I had ample time to observe how violence against women was perceived and handled by the refugee communities and the leaders. Community leaders are an integral part of the domestic conflict resolution process, so their perceptions of domestic violence were particularly pertinent.

There was, of course, a downside to relying so heavily on these few women as well. Specifically, the interviewees were not randomly selected—they were selected by decision of

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[13] In the case of the Somali community, the female community leader acted as the translator as well.

the community leader and translator. By interviewing women that were predominantly within the leader's social network, otherwise known as snowball sampling, there was a significant risk of ignoring important opinions of women that did not fall in the populations the leaders and translators had selected (Lee 1993: 67-68). Despite the considerable participation of various members of the Dzaleka community, this paper does not pretend to represent the views of the entire refugee community. David Mosse criticizes development practitioners in participatory projects that try to present a "unitary view of interests which underplay difference …(presenting) the 'community's official view'" (Mosse 1994: 508). This paper attempts to identify trends in the results from the fieldwork, however with the aim of exploring the topic of domestic violence, rather than of drawing conclusions about what refugee women think about gender-based violence in general. Women cannot be treated as a homogenous group (Mosse 1994: 513) and, as Ken Wilson has observed, "there is no single authentic indigenous voice or reality that the researcher can discover and present to the world" (Wilson 1992: 181). I believe these statements hold true for the refugees of Dzaleka as well.

The Semi-structured Interviews

There are four main ethnic communities in the camp: Rwandese, Burundians, Congolese and Somalis. The interviews with refugee women were conducted in blocks, each interviewing day concentrating on only one ethnic community in the camp. Two days were devoted to interviews in each of the Rwandese, Burundian and Congolese communities and one day was devoted to talking with Somali women. We conducted approximately fifty interviews with refugee women, as well as a focus group of refugee men. I also conducted interviews with camp administrators, security personnel, health care practitioners in both the camp and the nearby town of Dowa, social services counselors and primary and secondary school teachers. All interviews began with introductions and an explanation of what the fieldwork was looking to address with a subsequent request for consent to be interviewed.

The formal interviews were semi-structured, following an interview guide of general questions and topics (see Appendix II). Interviewing seemed the most appropriate approach, given the sensitive nature of the topic. Lee argues that "… (in depth interviews) provide a means of getting beyond surface appearances and permit greater sensitivity to the meaning contexts surrounding informant utterances. This is particularly so when sensitive topics are studied" (Lee 1993: 104). We could tailor the questions to fit the personal situation of the interviewee, stay purely hypothetical in our discussions or switch to a personal conversation, or skip over entire topics altogether, if it was appropriate. The semi-structured format was used because, given the short amount of time allowed for fieldwork, it was clear that we would generally not be able to interview people twice (Bernard 1995: 209). Our interviews were able to reach fairly deep into the topics explored in one sitting. Also, given the flexible nature of semi-structured interviews, we were allowed to deviate from the template when interesting tangents surfaced. Conversations often went in many different directions, covering issues such as poverty, food security, unemployment, alcohol, infidelity, children, stress and personal experiences, all related in various ways to refugee domestic violence.

Not all refugee women preferred to be interviewed alone. There were a few instances in which we interviewed women in small groups. Sue Wilkinson, in her discussion of using focus groups for feminist research, finds group discussions to be both non-threatening to individuals and non-hierarchical, such that the balance of power is shifted from the interviewer to the interviewees (Wilkinson 1999: 64-65). I found this to be true while interviewing women in groups as well. Group interviews were a refreshing change from the personal interviews, as they tended to be more lighthearted and the interviewees took more control of the flow of our conversation. These conversations most often stayed in the hypothetical discussions of domestic conflict and camp safety, but interesting personal revelations were revealed as well.

The men's focus group was also conducted using an interview template to guide the discussion. Like the group interviews with women, the men's group was lively and generally non-threatening. In their analysis of whether focus groups can reveal community views, Waterton and Wynne claim that focus groups can show the "relational aspects" of how a community approaches an issue (Waterton and Wynne 1999:132-133). By interviewing men of all four ethnicities at once, it was easier to see the commonalities between the communities. The men would share with each other and me how their community addressed domestic conflicts or violence outside a family's home, receiving feedback from the other participants as to how these processes differed or were similar to the others. On the other hand, there was a drawback to interviewing men in a focus group as well. The group conversation could have exaggerated commonalities amongst the men. If more time were allowed for fieldwork, a combination of individual interviews along with focus groups would have been preferable.

Other Approaches

Semi-structured interviews comprised the majority of information gathered during fieldwork; however I used other approaches as well to allow the participants and myself space to explore the topic of gender-based violence in different ways. After our first day of interviewing, the community leader and translator pairs each received a disposable camera with which to create a photo journal for the week. They were instructed to take pictures of whatever they decided was important with regard to women's issues in the camp. After a week of taking pictures, the women had created thoughtful and revealing accounts of life in Dzaleka. The photo journal was a way for the women to communicate daily issues, without having to write them down. This was particularly convenient, as we dealt with language differences. In addition, not all of the participants were literate; therefore the photo journals allowed a freedom that writing could not. According to Lee, a journal is particularly effective in researching sensitive topics. By using "the informant as an observer of the social scene in which he or she participates … the researcher is allowed a vicarious entrée into the temporal, spatial and interactional facets of subcultural behaviour in natural settings" (Lee 1993: 116). After the pictures were developed and they received their copies, we discussed the pictures and what issues they felt were important. It was in these discussions that the issues of poverty, alcohol and boredom as indirect causes of domestic violence became especially apparent. Their pictures helped me to visualize the issues that were expressed during the interviews and gain a better understanding of life in the camp while I was not there. Taking pictures also gave the community leaders and translators more opportunity to express themselves, but in an entertaining way. I noticed that after the women started their photo journals, they became more engaged in the project, offered more insights and were generally excited about the discoveries we made while interviewing. Some of these pictures, along with a few of my own, can be seen in Appendix IV.

Finally, in some of the interviews, I asked the participants to draw a map of the camp. My original aim was to gain a better understanding of camp security, for instance where women felt safe or unsafe, however this activity tended to reveal less about the camp security and more about the woman drawing the map and how she perceived her community. For instance, it was in these activities that I started to understand the cohesiveness of the small Somali community in the camp, and the Somali support network as opposed to the other communities in the camp. Mapping also added a fun element to the interviews. The women who drew maps often laughed at their results and each other. Drawing also provided a means to entertain their children while we were talking and allowed me to give something to the interviewees' children, even if it was just colored pencils and paper. A formal map of the camp was available, however it was extremely out of date and inaccurate. The maps drawn by the interview participants and their children provide a much better representation of the camp. Some of these maps are also featured in Appendix IV.

Conclusion

The information I was able to gather from fieldwork in Dzaleka is certainly incomplete in many ways. Four weeks is not enough time to thoroughly explore the sensitive topic of gender-based violence in the refugee camp context, as it is a sensitive topic and deserves the input of many more refugees and camp personnel. Further, the headcount, my relationship to UNHCR and my identity as a Westerner most likely hampered data collection. Indeed, there are many questions that go unanswered in this thesis. However, in the short time I was in Dzaleka, many refugees and camp personnel shared important and pertinent insights into violence against women in the camp during the interviews we were able to conduct. Finally, the use of photo journals allowed some women to engage further in the project, showing issues that are of concern to them. The success of this fieldwork is largely due to the openness and cooperation of the refugee women and men, as well as camp personnel and UNHCR staff that participated in this project. My principal hope is that this paper is an accurate and fair representation of and exploration into the issues they presented.

APPENDIX II: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW TEMPLATE

The interviews with women in the refugee camp were semi-structured, all loosely following a basic set of questions, however deviating from the set questions when interesting topics surfaced.

Basic questions asked all participants were:

1) How old are you?
2) What is your marital status?
3) How many children do you have?
4) How long have you been at the camp?
5) Have you been to any other camps?

Also, all women were asked how safe they felt in the camp and outside of their home. Questions asked in relation to camp safety were:

1) When do you feel safe at the camp and when do you feel unsafe?
2) What makes you feel unsafe?
3) What do you do in these circumstances? To whom do you go?
4) If a woman is attacked, what are her options after the attack? What happens if the woman reports the attack? To whom would she report the attack?
5) How does a woman recover physically from the attack?
6) How does a woman recover emotionally from the attack?

With regard to domestic violence, women were asked:

1) Do you think it is fine for a husband to hit his wife? Why or why not?
2) Is it common for a husband to hit his wife?
3) Do you think it is acceptable for a wife to hit her husband? Why or why not?
4) Is it common for a wife to hit her husband?
5) What are some of the reasons a husband may hit his wife?
6) Where does a woman go after she is beaten?
7) How does a woman heal physically?
8) How does a woman heal emotionally?
9) What do neighbors do if they witness a husband beating his wife (or a wife beating her husband)? What do you think neighbors should do?

The way these questions were asked varied, depending on the comfort level of the translator and interviewee as well as the interviewee's personal situation.

APPENDIX III: INTERVIEWEE CHARACTERISTICS

FEMALE REFUGEE INTERVIEWEES

	Number of women interviewed	Average age	Oldest woman interviewed	Youngest woman interviewed	Women w/out husbands present w/children	Average number of children	Woman w/greatest number of children
Rwandese	16	37.4	64	22	12	3.7	10
Burundians	11	32.7	48	16	2	3.5	10
Congolese	15	35	63	19	3	3.2	13
Somalis	6	40.6	60	30	3	5.5	8
TOTAL	**48**	**36.1**	**64**	**16**	**20**	**3.7**	**13**

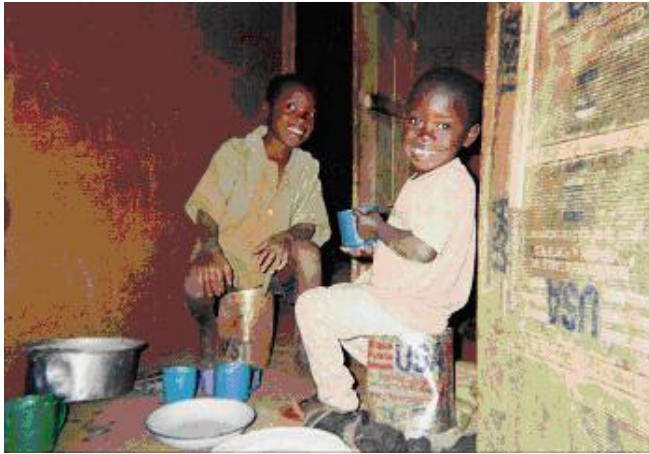# APPENDIX IV: PHOTOS AND MAPS

Helping a neighbor fix her stove.
- Burundian Photo Journal

A Rwandese woman with her children.
- Rwandese Photo Journal

Neighbors counseling a woman.
- Rwandese Photo Journal

Children in their kitchen.
- Burundian Photo Journal

Locked Food Warehouse.
- Congolese Photo Journal

Burundian Community Leader at the
end of her food rations.
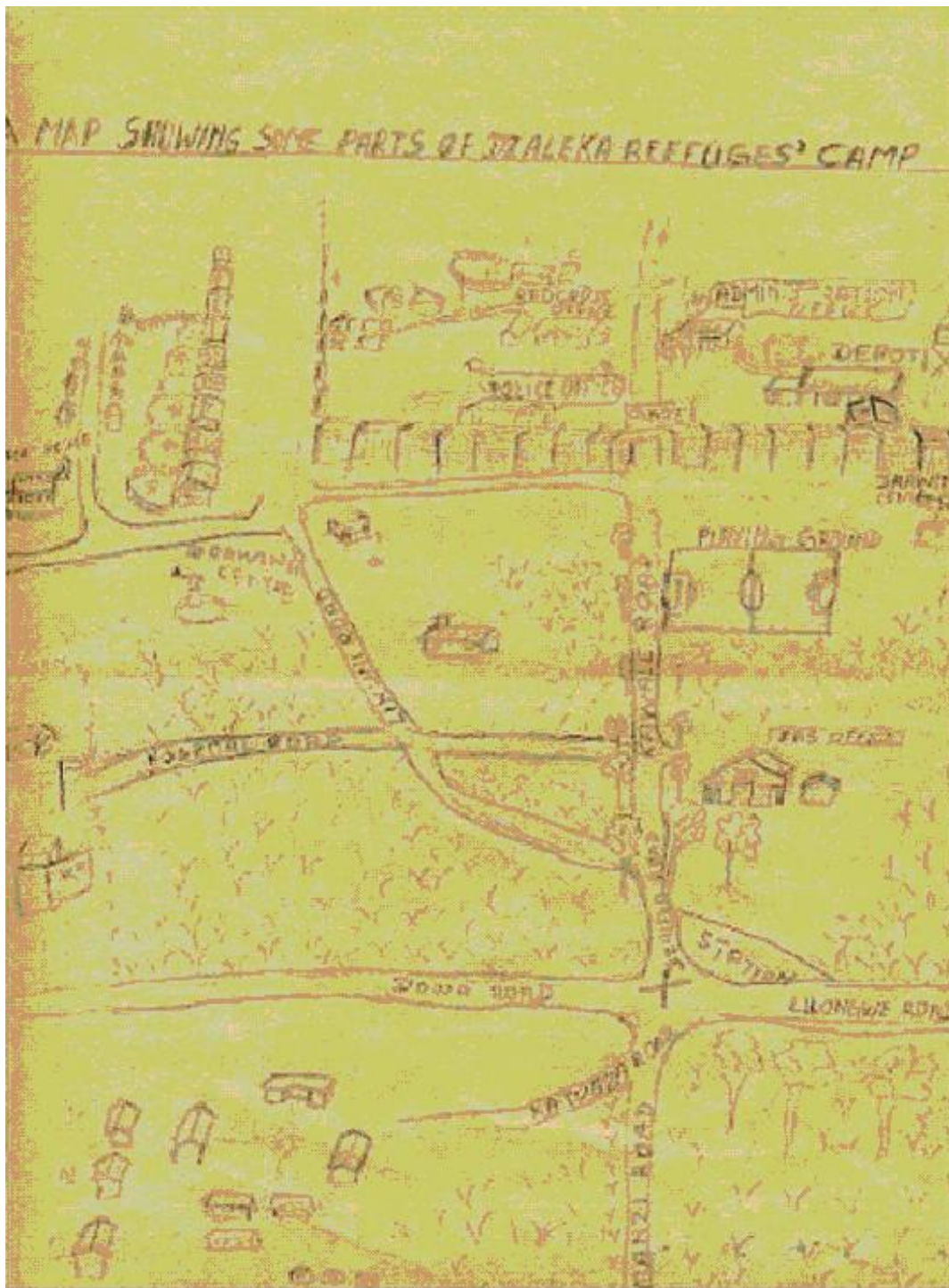- Burundian Photo Journal

Long-awaited food distribution.
- Photo from author.

Making soap.
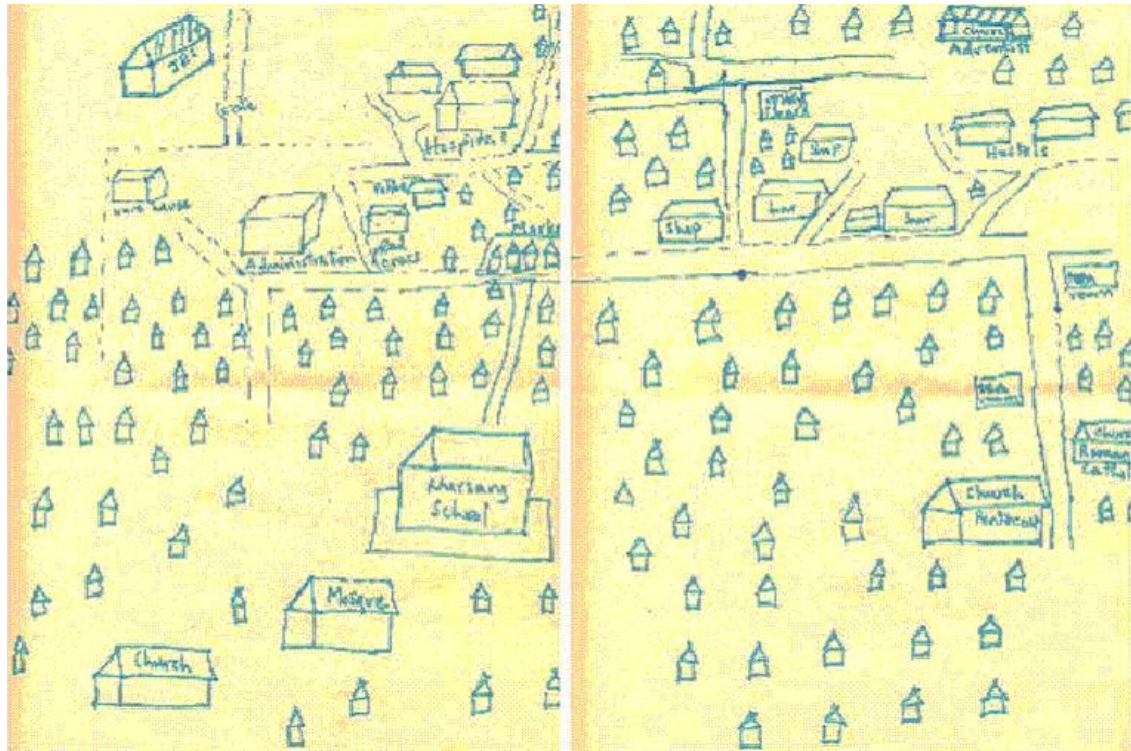- Burundian Photo Journal

A Dzaleka bar.
- Photo from author

Map of Dzaleka's administration buildings, entrance and some homes.
- Drawn by 14-year-old Congolese boy.

Map of Dzaleka

- Drawn by Rwandese Woman