ARTICULATE.

Undergraduate Research Applied to International Development

Volume II Fall 2008

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Articulate: Undergraduate Research Applied to International Development is an undergraduate scholarly journal that publishes academic papers and writings online and in-print on issues in international development and healthcare in Africa.

Articulate is a sub-division and publication of the non-profit, SCOUT BANANA, which seeks to educate, motivate, and activate the public about the healthcare crisis in Africa. This journal will provide a forum for students to contribute to, as well as make, the debates in international development. We believe undergraduate students are a vital, untapped force to bring new ideas, perspectives, and concepts into the development dialogue. Our goal is to spark, share, and spread knowledge for the sake of innovative change now.

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Letter From the Editor

Dear *Articulate* Readers,

With our first issue behind us, our staff is proud to showcase the second issue of *Articulate: Undergraduate Research Applied to International Development.* Supported by the Michigan State University African Studies Center and the MSU Office of International Development, *Articulate* is an extension of the youth-led non-profit, SCOUT BANANA. Hand in hand with *Articulate*, SCOUT BANANA aims to instill change across the field of international development in Africa by investing in the work of young people. Our journal gives voice to undergraduates and challenges them to clarify myths, invent new policies, and reframe old ideas in innovative ways on the topics of Africa, development, and healthcare.

In this issue, Ellie Emery deconstructs and problematizes the two primary lenses used to explain the conflict in Darfur—one of 'genocide' between 'Arab' militias against 'black' Darfurians and the other of 'tribal warfare' that naturalizes communal divisions as a 'domestic' issue for the Sudanese government to handle. Bethany Stipe investigates how evangelical Christianity and development programs at churches and church-based NGOs encourage integration and religious faith within the contemporary Sudanese refugee youth community of Cairo, Egypt. Ramya Naraharisetti explores how participation in the South African grassroots organization, Rural Women's Movement, illuminates the numerous difficulties rural women in the village of amaHlubi face while also empowering them to create their own solutions.

To make Africa and development more tangible for readers, this issue also includes reflective essays by two young people who have recently worked in the field. Based on his engineering experiences in Lesotho and Sri Lanka, Matt Zedler contemplates the optimism and disillusionment that he faced as a young person engaging in development projects. Meg Towle concludes this issue with a poignant piece on the futility and hope she felt as she encountered the relics of death from HIV/AIDS in Lesotho.

This issue is a testament to the direction that *Articulate* aims to pave in the future—of participation and collaboration from authors, peer reviewers, and young professionals from universities and cities around the world with a common purpose for change. I hope you thoroughly enjoy this issue, and we would love to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Monica Mukerjee, Editor-in-Chief
University of Oxford
February 2009

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Foreword

As this promising new student driven initiative, Articulate: Undergraduate Research Applied to International Development takes on its second issue, the world is abuzz in the aftermath of the 2008 historic U.S. election. While pollsters and pundits debate the various reasons for the second highest turn out in U.S. voter history, it is clear that young people (ages 18-29) played a pivotal role. Two-thirds of this group voted for Barack Obama--who they hope will be the platform of change. Perhaps even more hopeful is the numbers engaged in "netroots" voter registration and issues education. Young people have used the Internet to exchange views and make connections with their counterparts throughout the country and world. The unprecedented global response to the U.S. election captured these connections and demonstrated that many understood the outcome would matter to their lives. Youth around the world are undoubtedly on the move. Now there is much buzz about whether this can be sustained.

The young authors in this journal represent a fine example of those who have committed their scholarly inquiry of sustainable social change in what they have come to know as an increasingly unequal "globalized" world. Whether it is new knowledge, a personal experience or a combination of both that sparked their interest; they have chosen to take a deeper look into pressing issues facing countries and regions on the African continent. These works signify a critically important development in undergraduate education whereby students recognize and act upon their ability to contribute to scholarship and activism and the interconnectedness thereof. Engaged scholarship at the earliest stages of their career may open doors of understanding as they grow to challenge traditional binary systems: us/them, first world/third world, developed/developing. They may also develop a critical consciousness that guides them to understand macro forces that set up and fuel structural inequality. Given an encouraging environment, this consciousness leads to a great desire to change what doesn't work for so many.

During a recent study abroad program in South Africa, a 17-year-old youth wrote and performed a poem for the MSU visitors. We listened in awe to a visceral interrogation of why some have a chance at life and others do not. She ended her poem asking: "how is that you are and I am not, that you live and I die, that our worlds are so different and yet so close?" She challenged faculty and students in such a way that we were rendered speechless, acutely aware that there is no just answer. The authors in this series and those to follow can honor this question by commitment to scholarship and activism that will address the conditions that polarize our worlds.

Jeanne Gazel, Ph.D.
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Genocide or Tribal Warfare

Politics of Misrepresentation and the Humanitarian Crisis in Darfur

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Abstract

Since 2003, Sudan's westernmost province of Darfur has been immersed in a bloodbath that has claimed more than 300,000 lives and displaced an estimated 2.7 million people from their homes. The representation of this conflict in the international arena has been polarized according to its examination through one of two lenses, both myopic and distorting in their analysis. The first of these lenses, the "genocide" lens, depicts the conflict as a government-sponsored genocide in which Arab militias epitomized by the Janjaweed are carrying out a campaign of violence against the black African population of Darfur at the behest of the government in Khartoum. The second lens, the "tribal warfare" lens, portrays the violence as warfare between Darfur's many ethnic communities, and thus as a domestic issue that should be dealt with by the government of Sudan. Though there is truth in both perspectives, each fails to address the complex historical framework from which the conflict emerged either accurately or in its entirely. Consequently, an analysis through either of these lenses alone will not yield an effective solution to the conflict in Darfur. The resolution of this crisis requires an unraveling of the politics of representation surrounding the polarized depiction of the conflict, a complication of both lenses through the demystification of the conflict's complex history, and an analysis of how misrepresentation has hindered the process of conflict resolution in Darfur.

Introduction

In February 2003, Dafur's complex history of colonialism, political power struggles, conflict between ethnic groups, and contention over access to limited resources erupted into one of the greatest humanitarian crises of our time. Over the course of its five year span, the violence in this region of Western Sudan has claimed more than 300,000 civilian lives and displaced an more than 2.5 million people, according to United Nations Undersecretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, John Holmes.[1, 2] Despite the continually rising death toll, a feasible and effective proposal for achieving peace in Darfur has yet to be placed on the table. While the joint UN-African Union mission in Darfur (UNAMID) flounders in its attempts to bring peace to the region[3] the future of the victims of the violence in Darfur is being decided thousands of miles away, in the chambers of the UN Security Council.[4]

Unraveling the Politics of Representation

1 CNN.com. "U.N.: 100,000 More Dead in Darfur Than Reported." 22 April 2008. http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/africa/04/22/darfur.holmes/index.html.

2 There is a significant amount of controversy surrounding this mortality figure, which was extrapolated from a 2006 survey by the WHO and was not based on new research. The Sudanese government claims that only 10,000 have died, though this number is based only on those who have died in actual combat and not as a result of horrific living conditions in internally displaced persons and refugee camps. Other scholars and humanitarian organizations argue that the UN's estimates are to low, including Eric Reeves, the American author of a book on Darfur entitled A Long Day's Dying, who puts the mortality figures closer to 500,000.

3 Fowler, Jerry , and John Prendergast. "Keeping Our World: Fulfilling the Mandate to Protect Civilians in Darfur." (June 2008).

4 Straus, Scott. "Darfur and the Genocide Debate." Foreign Affairs (Jan 2005), http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20050101faessay84111-p30/scott-straus/darfur-and-the-genocide-debate.html.

As the world's superpowers debate the proper action to take regarding the crisis in Darfur, their representation of the conflict is politically motivated. Each stakeholder portrays the conflict in the terms that are most congruent with its own agenda, and that are most likely to result in access to the resources, either physical or intangible, that it wishes to procure from Sudan. Despite the immense complexity of the roots of this humanitarian crisis, it is perceived by the members of this forum through one of two myopic and distorting lenses, which can be described as the "genocide" lens and the "tribal warfare" lens. The lens to which stakeholders subscribe influences how they choose to represent the conflict in the discourse surrounding Darfur, which in turn influences the global community's response to the conflict. In this way, the use of either perspective by influential stakeholders has profound and distinctly different ramifications for the parties directly involved in the violence.

As neither lens accurately or entirely recognizes the historical framework from which the conflict emerged, the situation in Darfur cannot be adequately addressed by an analysis through either of these lenses alone. Similarly, any action taken as a compromise between the two interpretations of the violence, such as the UNAMID civilian protection force for Darfur that was approved by the UN Security Council in 2007,[5] will be even more ineffectual because it must appease the assumptions and bear the limitations of both lenses. Only by deconstructing the misrepresentation of the crises will the failures of these lenses be manifested and addressed; simply compromising between the two will not root out the distortions inherent in them. Without this process of deconstruction, the polarized representation of the crisis that currently pervades the discourse on Darfur will continue to prevent the region from achieving sustainable peace.

The first step in developing a solution to the conflict in Darfur is a description and analysis of the "genocide" and "tribal warfare" lenses. The key element of this analysis is an investigation into the agenda that has motivated each stakeholder's subscription to one of the two lenses, and its consequent representation of the conflict according to that perspective. The unraveling of these "politics of representation" will set the stage for the diagnosis of the failure of each lens to adequately address the issues at the root of the conflict.

The "Genocide" Lens

In May of 2007, President Bush urged the UN Security Council to take a stronger stance against the Sudanese government. He declared, "For too long, the people of Darfur have suffered at the hands of a government that is complicit in the bombing, murder, and rape of innocent civilians. The world has a responsibility to help put an end to it." [6] Regardless of the extent to which the Bush administration has acted on this statement, [7] it nevertheless exemplifies the perspective of the first lens, which can be termed the "genocide" lens. This lens was conceived in March 2004, roughly a year after violence erupted in Darfur, when New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof published a series of articles that referred to the emerging crisis as "genocide." [8, 9] In making this claim, Kristof invoked the Genocide Convention, a treaty drawn up after the Holocaust with the intention of "never again" allowing the targeted destruction of a particular ethnic, racial, or religious group.[10] Proponents of the word "genocide" to describe the current crisis in Darfur argue that the conflict meets the standard for this label because the violence is targeted at eradicating a particular ethnic group, is systematic and intentional, and is state-sponsored.

In a report submitted in January 2005, a commission appointed by the U.N. Security Council rejected these claims, stating that the conflict can not be labeled as "genocide" because the intention has not been to completely eliminate a particular ethnic group, and thus that the violence consti-

5 Fowler, 2008.

6 Dinmore, Guy, Mark Turner, and Andrew Ward. "Us Tightens Us Sanctions on Sudan." Financial Times, 29 May 2007.

7 Whether or not the Bush administration has done enough to address the crisis in Darfur and place pressure on the government in Khartoum to end the violence is a contentious issue.

8 Kristof, Nicholas D. "Will We Say 'Never Again' yet Again?" New York Times, 27 March 2004.

9 Nicholas Kristof is internationally recognized as one of the most influential spokesman for the humanitarian crisis in Darfur. In 2006, he won the Pulitzer Prize for his writing on the conflict.

10 Straus, 2005.

tuted "crimes against humanity" instead.[11] Despite this finding, humanitarian organizations such as the Save Darfur Coalition continue to use the term when referring to the crisis in Darfur, either because they disagree with the commission's conclusion on an evidentiary basis, or because they believe that the use of this loaded label is the most effective way to encourage international action, regardless of how accurate it is. Through this strategic word choice, these and other proponents of the "genocide" lens appeal to the collective conscious of the international community by invoking the conditions of the Genocide Convention, which states that contracting parties are required to "undertake to prevent and to punish" genocide.[12]

Since Kristof's articles appeared in the New York Times, the U.S. and other governments have backed the description of the conflict in Darfur as genocide for their own, often more pragmatic reasons. The Bush administration in particular has capitalized on the crisis in Darfur a means for furthering its own evangelical and political agenda. In an address to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 2004, then Secretary of State Colin Powell declared, "We concluded that genocide has been committed and that the Government of Sudan and the Janjaweed bear the responsibility."[13] Since that time, the representation of the violence in Darfur by this and other proponents of the "genocide" lens has become hinged, not only on a description of the violence as being state-sponsored, but moreover on a portrayal of the agents acting on behalf of the government as "Arab" militias that are committing atrocities against the "African" population of the region.[14, 15] The polarization of the conflict into one that pits Arabs against Africans, though genealogically problematic, has been seized upon by the Bush administration and many of its evangelical supporters as further justification for a modern crusade against the Muslim world. The Muslim community targeted by this anti-Islamic sentiment is comprised of the Arabic nomads of northern Sudan, who are portrayed as persecutors of African Christians in the south.[16] When polarized in this manner, the conflict serves as a proxy war for Bush's foreign policy initiatives in the Middle East, because its demonization of the Arab resonates with the ethnic connotations surrounding the War on Terror. Indeed, this may be a reason why the Bush administration has chosen to label Darfur as "genocide," while the civil war in the Congo, a conflict with a much higher death toll but lacking an apparent Arab-African dimension, has gotten very little attention.[17] At the center of this polarization of the conflict lies an arsenal of sweeping generalizations regarding the ethnic and religious character of these supposedly cohesive and distinct groups. In reality, such generalizations are vast over-simplifications of the complex reality on the ground in Darfur, where a significant portion of the indigenous population is not Christian and the vast majority of the Muslim community of Middle Eastern decent does not engage in violence. [18]

The "Tribal Warfare" Lens

Across the bargaining table from the United States and other proponents of the "genocide" lens sits China, defending its subscription to the second lens, the "tribal warfare" lens. Along with Russia and several other members of the Security Council, China has continually thwarted efforts to step-up the scale of the global intervention in Darfur by arguing a "non-interference" approach.[19] The Chinese government has consistently understated the role of the Sudanese government in the

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11 Mamdani, Mahmood. "The Politics of Naming: Genocide, Civil War, Insurgency." London Review of Books (8 March 2007).

12 Straus, 2005.

13 Brennan, Robert Mark. "The Complex Humanitarian Crisis in Sudan: Context and Options." Journal of International Relations 8, (2006).

14 De Walle, Alex. "Who Are the Darfurians? Arab and African Identities, Violence and External Engagement." SSRC Contemporary Conflicts (2004).

15 Throughout the paper, the use of the terms "Arab" and "African" in any context should be considered somewhat problematic, as Arabs from the Middle East regard the Northern Sudanese as only marginally "Arab," and to the extent that they are Sudanese citizens, the "Arab" communities of Sudan are also "Africans."

16 Straus, 2005.

17 Mamdani, 2007.

18 O'Fahey, R.S. "Conflict in Darfur: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives." In Environmental Degradation as a Cause of Conflict in Darfur, 23-32. Switzerland: University for Peace, 2006.

19 Taylor, Ian. "China's Oil Diplomacy in Africa." International Affairs 82, no. 5 (2006): 937.

conflict, and has attributed the violence to warfare between tribes in Darfur that, while unfortunate, is a domestic issue that Sudan as a sovereign nation should address of its own accord.[20, 21] This lens is fueled by the stereotype that depicts the African "native" as innately warring and uncivilized, and consequently rationalizes the reduction of the violence in Darfur to a type of conflict that is thought of as commonplace on the African continent. In an interview published on the front page of China Daily in 2007, China's special envoy to Darfur, Lui Guijin, defended the Sudanese government's ability to deal with this issue, stating that the international community should remember that Khartoum is a legitimate government that "deserves respect."[22] Proponents of this lens argue that any action taken in Darfur without the approval of the Sudanese government would undermine the authority of the current administration at a time when its leadership is most needed.

There is no doubt, however, that the Chinese administration has a vested interest in the use of the "tribal conflict" lens, which diminishes the need for global intervention to stop the violence in Darfur, both by suggesting that this violence is not abnormal and by legitimizing the Sudanese government and its capability to deal with the situation. Since the 1960s, China has been the main arms supplier for the Sudanese government, and thus has been indirectly arming the very militias that are perpetrating the acts of violence against the civilians of Darfur.[23] Additionally, China's 3.5 billion dollar investment in Sudanese oil production has proved to be extremely lucrative.[24] In 1999, an article in the Wall Street Journal revealed that China's oil industry in Sudan accounted for $500 million of the $710 million that the China Petroleum Engineering & Construction Corporation made in profit that year.[25] China's investments in Sudan will undoubtedly suffer in the event that sanctions are placed on the government in Khartoum. This concern has been a significant motivator for the Chinese government's loyalty to the "tribal warfare" lens, despite considerable international pressure to force Khartoum's hand through tactics such as divestment.

Demystifying the Roots of the Conflict: The Historical Framework

The process of complicating both the "genocide" and "tribal warfare" lenses involves an examination of the historical framework from which the conflict has emerged. This examination allows for the demystification of the complex causal network at the root of the violence, and also manifests the failure of both lenses to adequately capture this network in their analysis of the crisis.

Since the 14th century, the ethnic landscape of Sudan's westernmost province, Darfur, has been as diverse as its physical geography. Within this region, the ethnic lines distinguishing black African tribes, native Arab tribes, and foreign Arab tribes from one another are extremely ambiguous, and the relationships between these groups are continually in flux.[26] Traditionally, the northern part of the country has been occupied by camel nomads of various ethnic affiliations, including both Arabs and non-Arabs. The south is inhabited mainly by Arabic-speaking nomadic cattle herders from a plethora of tribes collectively referred to as the Baqqara. The central part of the region is home to a heterogeneous population of non-Arab sedentary farmers, including the Fur, Masalit, Tama, Qimr, and Mima.[27, 28] Although ethnic divisions are an integral part of the modern conflict in this region, the concept of ethnicity is Darfur has historically been more a matter of personal identification with a certain culture than actual genealogy.[29] In many cases, a family's

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20 Proponents of the "tribal warfare" lens use the term "tribe" to distinguish between small communities of differing ethnic and cultural affiliations, such as the Fur and the Masalit. However, many scholars have emphasized that this term has negative connotations of backwardness and primitiveness, and thus is sometimes considered derogatory.

21 Large, Daniel. "China and the Contraindication of 'Non-Interference' in Sudan." Review of African Political Economy 135, no. 115 (March 2008): 93-106.

22 Dickie, Mure. "China Defends Its Stance on Darfur." Financial Times, 27 July 2007.

23 Brennan, 2006.

24 O'Fahey, 2006.

25 Brennan, 2006.

26 Ibid.

27 This term can also be spelled "Massalit."

28 O'Fahey, 2006.

29 Brennan, 2006.

affiliation with a particular ethnic group is financially motivated. For example, if a Masalit farmer from the central region chooses to invest in cattle and becomes successful, he may elect to "become" Baqqara, and thus transform his future lineage into one that is authentically "Arab," despite his non-Arab heritage.[30]

In examining both the "genocide" and "tribal warfare" lenses, it is important to keep in mind that any discussion of distinct ethnic or racial groups in Darfur problematic. This does not imply, however, that ethnic affiliations are not considered a key element of the collective identity of various communities in Darfur, however historically inaccurate they may be. Indeed, these affiliations, whether attached to the identity of a community by others or perceived by the community itself, have played an important role in the conflict in Darfur, as both lenses suggest. A key point of analysis is the category of divisions that each lens chooses to highlight and even exaggerate--the Arab-African racial division in the case of the "genocide" lens and ethnic divisions between distinct communities or tribes in the case of the "tribal warfare" lens--often to the complete exclusion of the other category.

Since its establishment as a state around 1650, Darfur has been both a Muslim sultanate and an African sacral kingship associated with two non-Arab ethnic groups, the Daju and the Tunjur, which date back to the 12th century.[31] Between 1650 and 1916, the sultanate was ruled by an elite body comprised of representatives from all the major ethnic groups in the region. This complex form of administration was highly efficient and particularly effective at monitoring significant ecological factors, such as rainfall from year to year and rights to land, water and grazing.[32] During this period of sultanate rule, the administrative body was historically dominated by the Fur, who defended the interests of the sedentary, non-Arab farmers of the central region of Darfur against their nomadic Arab neighbors in the northern and southern parts of the region.[33] The nomadic communities were continually forced off their normal grazing routes as sedentary farming communities, with the backing of the sultanate's ruling elite, laid claim to increasingly large tracts of land. Thus, it is clear that from early on in Darfur's history, relationships between the region's ethnic groups that associate themselves with either an Arab or an African heritage have been tense and imbalanced. It is upon this perception of a volatile Arab-African relationship that the "genocide" lens is founded, though the lens neglects to recognize that Darfur's early history was characterized by an exploitation of the Arab communities by Africans, and not the other way around.

In 1916, British troops assassinated the sitting sultanate and established Darfur as a part of the Anglo-Egyptian colony of Sudan.[34] Under this decentralized form of governance, the situation in Darfur remained largely unchanged. The ruling class remained in power and the nomads continued to be forced off their grazing routes by encroaching farming communities. Elsewhere in the country, however, the British colonial regime took a more hands-on approach to governance. In eastern Sudan, the British government promoted an agenda focused on modernization that led to technological advancements and improved education and healthcare in Khartoum, but largely bypassed Darfur.[35] The result was the formation of a well-defined hierarchy in which colonial agents and their appointees from the Sudanese elite casually oversaw the activities of the increasingly marginalized population of Darfur.[36]

Darfur's history of Western attempts to ethnically categorize its population and associate the categories with distinct geographic areas dates back to the colonial period. Although British policy largely ignored Darfur while organizing social programs, attempts were made to politically organize the region by assigning specific ethnic groups to homelands called dars.[37] This tendency towards ethnic categorization—accurate or otherwise—is manifest in both lenses, which, as previously stated, rely on racial and ethnic categories that are largely constructed in the interpretation

30 O'Fahey, 2006.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 Brennan, 2006.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid, 25.

and representation of the conflict by various stakeholders.

In the 1970s, a group of young pan-Arabists, communist sympathizers, and intellectuals took control of Sudan in a military coup led by Ja'far al-Numayri.[38] The new regime focused on modernization, nationalization, and elimination of indirect rule, "tribalism", and "sectarianism" in the country. As Sudan's most independent province and the only area still governed by a sultanate system that had been in place for centuries, the implications of this agenda for Darfur were profound. The ancient systems of governance, including Native courts and chiefdoms, that had historically prevented conflict between ethnic groups in the region from escalating into full-scale violence, were abolished as the new regime attempted to unite the country under a new, more "civilized" form of rule.[39] The effects of this unfortunate attempt at unification contributed to the rapid pace at which the situation in Darfur deteriorated from a contained conflict to a humanitarian crisis of epic proportions several decades later. Both the "genocide" and the "tribal warfare" lenses have overlooked this point, which highlights the role that the legacy of colonialism has played in the current crisis.

In the mid-1980s, the situation in Darfur worsened as desertification in the northern and southern regions exacerbated conflict over limited water and grazing resources.[40] During this period, the entire population of the province became increasingly concentrated in its southern region, and disputes between ethnic groups intensified. Those who subscribe to the "tribal warfare" lens often cite this period of conflict over limited resources as evidence that tribal warring is at the root of the present crisis. The shortcoming of this analysis is that conflict over limited resources is by no means a new issue in Darfur.[41] As was discussed previously, since the period of sultanate rule in Sudan, Arabic nomads and African sedentary farmers have vied for access to the best grazing land for their livestock. The situation in the 1980s was unique in that these clashes were exacerbated by other factors, including a collapse of the ancient systems of order under the al-Numayri regime, a general neglect of the region on the part of the government in Khartoum, and an influx of guns from Chad and Libya.[42] Instead of being resolved through mediation by Native courts or traditional displays of military strength as disagreements had been in the past, the clashes rapidly evolved into the large-scale campaign of violence that can be seen today. Consequently, though conflict between ethnic groups is undoubtedly a component of the current crisis in Darfur, it is problematic to explain away the violence by reducing it to a type of conflict that has been present in Darfur throughout its history. There are explanations for why Darfur's endemic problems have only recently erupted into a humanitarian crisis; it is these factors that the "tribal warfare" lens overlooks.

As environmental pressures were taking their toll in Darfur, the government in Khartoum became engaged in armed conflict against the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA) of southern Sudan. This civil war was the climax of decades of conflict between northern Sudan, which is largely populated by Arab Islamists, and southern Sudan, which is inhabited primarily by African Christians and followers of traditional African religions.[43,44] In the mid-1980s, Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi made a colossal miscalculation when he chose to arm the Baqqara of southern Darfur, who were largely Arabic-speaking, against the SPLA, who were anti-Arab in orientation.[45] Before long, the weapons intended to protect the Baqqara from the SPLA were being used in conflicts with the Fur, the Masalit, and the Baqqara's other black African neighbors in central Darfur. It is clear therefore that the "tribal warfare" within Darfur and the government-sponsored Arab-African clashes in Sudan are historically interconnected, particularly to the extent that arms

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38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid.

43 Brennan, 2006.

44 Do not confuse these divisions of Sudan in general with those in Darfur, where the southern part and, to a lesser extent, the northern part of the region are occupied nomadic Arabs and the central region is inhabited primarily by African sedentary farmers. As is the case in Darfur, though the genealogical accuracy of these ethnic classifications is questionable, they are nevertheless important affiliations for the communities that identify with them.

45 O'Fahey, 2006.

intended by the government for use in the latter conflicts are often funneled into the former. This reality complicates the use of any lens that focuses solely on one of these forms of violent conflict.

The polarization of the violence in Darfur into an Arab-African conflict intensified under the Islamist regime of President Omar al-Bashir, who has ruled Sudan since coming to power by military coup in 1989. Al-Bashir's Arabo-centric regime has strong philosophical ties to northern Sudanese nationalism, which dates back to the 1920s.[46] Consequently, throughout its reign the al-Bashir regime has regarded the non-Arab sedentary communities of Sudan, including the Fur and Masalit of central Darfur, as the subordinate to the country's Arab population. Racist attitudes that were historically targeted at Sudan's slave population were redirected at these communities, which were considered subordinate to the Arab elite.[47] These racist sentiments have lent credence to the "genocide" lens' Arab-African polarization of the current conflict.

In 1995, al-Bashir's government redrew the boundaries of Darfur that had been demarcated during the colonial era.[48] The new boundaries divided Darfur's black African communities into separate provinces and allotted more territory to the Arab nomads, who had been driven off their grazing routes by the black African farming communities of central Darfur. In this way, the ideological shift of the al-Bashir regime marked a turning of the tables in Darfur, where the Arab communities of the region's northern and southern sections began to assert their dominance. To assist the Arabs in protecting their new land allotments and asserting their authority in the region, the al-Bashir government began arming Arab militias known as the murahilin.[49] In response, two rebel groups, the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) were formed to contest the government's use of the Arabic nomads to control Darfur and marginalize the non-Arab population. Both rebel goups continue to draw the majority of their members from the Fur, Masalit, and Zaghawa tribes.[50]

By February 2003, the Khartoum government and the SPLA were close to reaching a peace settlement to end the civil war in which they had been engaged since the 1980s.[51] Though the international community was eager to accept any agreement that would bring peace to Sudan, non-Arab Darfurians viewed the settlement as the culmination of a history of neglect of their region that had been harshly evident since the period of British colonial rule. In earlier times, the non-Arab population of Darfur had been willing to tolerate the national government's disregard for their region because, in the power vacuum that it created, they had been able assert their dominance over the region's Arab communities. Now that the al-Bashir's Arabo-centric regime had stripped them of even this sliver of authority by allocating large tracts of land to the Arabs, the non-Arab communities decided that they were unwilling to endure the neglect of the national government any longer. In February 2003, determined to send a message to Khartoum, the SLA and the JEM launched a joint attack on a Sudanese military airfield. The "genocide" lens often fails to acknowledge this role of the black African rebel groups in instigating the armed conflict, preferring instead to portray Darfur's black African community as passive victims of a government-sponsored campaign of violence.

The government responded to the attack by forming the Janjaweed, a militia comprised of Islamic, Arabic-speaking recruits from northern Sudan, which is most often associated by the "genocide" lens with the violence that is currently taking place in Darfur.[52,53] Though the primary mission of this militia upon its conception was to quash the rebel groups, its increasing tendency has been to target black African civilians, particularly from the Fur, Masalit, and Zaghawa communities.[54] The Janjaweed have continually lived up to their name, which translates to "evil men

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 Brennan, 2006.

49 O'Fahey, 2006.

50 Brennan, 2006.

51 O'Fahey, 2006.

52 This term is a colloquialism translated from Arabic, and consequently has a variety of spellings, including Janjaweed, which is used in this paper, and Janjawid, both of which are sometimes not capitalized.

53 Meo, Nick. "Sudanese Government Backed Darfur Attacks, Says Janjaweed Commander." Telegraph, 18 July 2008.

54 Brennan, 2006.

on horseback," by setting fire to villages, killing unarmed men and children, raping women, and wreaking havoc across the region. In 2008, more than five years after the violence first began, Darfur is still submersed in this bloodbath.

Though the Sudanese government has categorically denied any affiliation with the Janjaweed, a substantial body of evidence suggests otherwise. Perhaps the most damning evidence of Khartoum's involvement in the violence has been provided by Arbab Idries, the commander of the Janjaweed between 2003 and 2007, who has since had a falling out with the al-Bashir regime and is in hiding. In interviews, Idries has claimed that he took his instructions as commander of the Janjaweed from a senior government official and has provided a compelling account of the al-Bashir regime's silent backing of the militia's campaign of violence.[55] In his testimony, Idries describes leading attacks on villages of black African civilians, and then states, "These instructions came from Khartoum."[56] This ruling is a testament to the legitimate cornerstone of the case made by proponents of the "genocide" lens, which highlights the active role of the Sudanese government in the violence.

The Consequences of Misrepresentation

It is very difficult to share a brief history of Darfur, because the reality is that there isn't one. Darfur is a region the size of Texas in a country that is slightly larger than a quarter of the U.S., and is home to six million people from a tremendous array of heritages that may or may not relate to their self-proclaimed ethnic affiliations.[57] Tribal conflict over access to limited resources has undoubtedly played a key role in the current crisis in Darfur, as it has throughout the region's history. Regardless of the genealogical accuracy of the Arab-African polarization of the conflict, there is no question that the violence that is taking place in Darfur is also characterized in part by the intolerance of these two racial categories for one another. To this extent, the antithetical representations of the conflict by both the "tribal warfare" and the "genocide" lenses are based in actuality. However, in choosing to highlight one of these angles at the exclusion of all other analyses, both lenses fail to appreciate the complexity of the conflict in Darfur--one that has roots in both the policies of the colonial era that neglected the region and exacerbated inequality in Sudan, and one that has roots in the policies of the al-Numayri regime, whose poorly planned attempts at modernization destroyed the region's traditional venues for mediation and conflict resolution. They ignore that roots of the conflict that extend as far back as the advent of Islam in the region in the 14th century, when the sedentary, black African farmers of central Darfur oppressed their nomadic Arab neighbors, and those contributing factors that have occurred as recently as the 20th century, when arms from the civil war in Chad flooded across the Dafurian border. It is this complex causal network that both the "genocide" and the "tribal warfare" lenses neglect, preferring instead their own myopic and distorted interpretations of the conflict.

The "tribal warfare" lens blames the victim. It resurrects the image of the warring, unruly "native" that is unable to conduct "itself" with dignity and suggests that this type of conflict will continue to be commonplace in Africa so long as the "third world" body is haunted by its "uncivilized" past. It alleviates the obligation of the international community to involve itself in the crisis by emphasizing the need for African governments to find their own solutions to these "African" issues, while ignoring entirely the role that such governments may be playing in the violence. The "non-interference" approach advocated for by proponents of this lens is convenient for those international players, such as the Chinese government, who are currently benefiting from their relationship with Khartoum, and thus begs the question whether it is Sudan's sovereignty or their own neo-imperialist interests that they are trying to protect.

The "genocide" lens, on the other hand, removes agency from Darfurians entirely by placing the blame for the violence solely on the Sudanese government. While it is clear that the al-Bashir administration must be held accountable for its role in the conflict, simply cutting off the government's sponsorship of the Janjaweed will not bring peace to Darfur. The disorder created by the

55 Meo, 2008.

56 Ibid.

57 Straus, 2005.

collapse of the traditional mediation structures in Darfur during the reign of the al-Numayri regime must be collaboratively addressed by the Sudanese government and the people of Darfur, and a system of order that does not require enforcement by armed militias must be agreed upon.[58] A commitment to internal cooperation on the part of the region's ethnic groups is essential if Darfurians are ever going to have their collective voice heard in Sudan's political arena. In the absence of this cooperation, competition for scarce resources and the general neglect of the region by the Sudanese government will continue.

Proponents of the "genocide" lens must recognize that invoking the Genocide Convention has not produced its desired effect by triggering immediate international action, and it continues to be unlikely that simply sitting back and crying "genocide" will elicit this response in the future.[59] Furthermore, this bloc must consider the fact that, while unquestionably atrocious, the UN Security Council may have been accurate in its ruling that the crisis in Darfur does not constitute genocide according to its definition in the Genocide Convention. This Convention requires that the violence that constitutes genocide be targeted at wiping out a particular ethnic, racial, or religious group.[60] In a place as genealogically and culturally mottled as Darfur, proving that the individuals targeted by this campaign of violence constitute a uniform makeup by any definition is extremely problematic, if not entirely impossible. Ultimately, Darfur's diversity and the extremely intricate ethnic, racial, and cultural dimensions of its current crisis may actually undermine the effectiveness of the argument for labeling it "genocide."

Rather than continuing to argue the case for genocide, proponents of the this lens may find it more effective to remind the international community that "crimes against humanity," which the a commission appointed by the UN Security Council has determined conflict in Darfur to be, falls under the framework for action of the UN's "Responsibility to Protect" along with genocide. The General Assembly's 2005 World Summit Outcome Document states, "The international community, through the United Nations, also has the responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian, and other peaceful means… to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity."[61] Thus, the use of the word "genocide" to provoke international action may be unnecessary, because, although it may not have as much shock value, the term "crimes against humanity" necessitates the same level of obligation from the global community.

Taking these points into consideration, the "genocide" lens camp needs to rethink its plan for motivating the international community to take an active role in the resolution of the crisis in Darfur. In doing so, proponents of this lens need to put some thought into clarifying the type of intervention for which they are advocating. Though the UN's Responsibility to Protect clause allows "collective action" should "peaceful means be inadequate and national authorities manifestly fail to protect their populations," the War in Iraq has shown just how devastating military intervention in a country with a complex history and political situation can be.[62, 63] Use of the term "genocide" to encourage this form of intervention in Darfur has the potential to prove equally as devastating. A truly effective resolution to the violence must be supported by the international community, but must be derived and instituted internally. Those who best understand the context within which the conflict began must be empowered to address it.[64]

Finally, proponents of the "genocide" lens must be cautious about the extent to which the Arab-African polarization of the conflict demonizes the Arab population of Sudan as a whole, and thus may exacerbate the residual tensions between generalized ethnic groups, as opposed to specific mi-

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58 By "the Sudanese government," I am referring to the al-Bashir regime's successor. The current administration has already lost too much credibility in the eyes of those affected by the violence to make the formation of a mutually respectful relationship between this regime and the generalized population of Darfur possible.

59 Straus, 2005.

60 Ibid.

61 United Nations General Assembly. 2005. "2005 World Summit Outcome Document." Paragraph 139.

62 Ibid.

63 Mamdani, 2007.

64 Ibid.

litias, that remain once the violence ceases.[65] For this same reason, the role that the Darfurian rebel groups have played in the violence must be recognized by the international community so that they can be held accountable, along with the Janjaweed and the government, for the atrocities that have been committed. Currently, the "genocide" lens largely overlooks the transgressions of these rebel militias, just as the "tribal warfare" lens overlooks those of the al-Bashir regime. Ultimately, however, the role of all parties involved in the conflict must be recognized in order to begin the process of reconciliation that is fundamental to the achievement of sustainable peace.

The complexities of the crisis in Darfur are difficult for even the most astute scholar to comprehend. It is understandable that, when presenting the history of the conflict to the public, a stakeholder such as Amnesty International or the Chinese government must be concise, and that the use of a lens that brings only the most important elements of the conflict into sharper focus may be justified by this need for simplicity. Rather than merely summarizing the conflict, however, these stakeholders have actually reconstructed it in a manner more conducive to their individual agendas by exaggerating certain aspects while ignoring others entirely. Not abridging, but actually misrepresenting the circumstances surrounding the conflict perpetuates a sense of confusion about the facts that further mystifies the already complex history of the current crisis. This mystification creates a sense of apathy amongst the element of the global population that has not been polarized into either the "genocide" or the "tribal warfare" camps. It creates the impression that the crisis is simply too complicated to be resolvable. The result is that the majority of the global population that is paying attention is too overwhelmed by the conflict to become involved, and those who are being proactive are too limited and inaccurate in their polarized analysis to be effect any positive change.

Conclusion

The conflict in Darfur is one of the greatest humanitarian crises of our day. It has claimed over 300,000 lives and displaced millions more from their homes, forcing them to eek out the starkest form of survival in ill-equipped and overcrowded camps for refugees and internally displaced persons.[66] Despite being labeled "genocide" by the U.S. government and several international organizations, the violence in Darfur has raged on for five long years, proving the few measures that the international community has compromised on implementing to protect the Darfurians ineffectual. If sustainable peace is to come to Darfur, the politics of misrepresentation, including the ulterior motives of stakeholders in both the "tribal warfare" and the "genocide lens" camps, must be unraveled and a demystification of the complex history surrounding its roots must be undertaken. This transparency will allow for a clearer investigation of the options available to the people of Darfur, the Sudanese population as a whole, and the international community. It is clear that Darfurians must play a major role in the resolution of the conflict if the issues at its root are to be effectively addressed. It is also clear that the international community has a role to play in the process of empowering Darfurians to embrace a collective agency and in holding the perpetrators of the violence accountable.

The world's physical response to the crisis in Darfur--be it economic sanctions, military intervention, continued inaction, or otherwise- is dictated by the way in which the global community perceives the conflict. Thus, it is imperative that the global community addresses the villains inherent in our own distorted and myopic analyses of the crisis, before we can address the villains in Sudan. It is our responsibility to deconstruct the politics of misrepresentation surrounding the current humanitarian crisis and demystify the complex historical roots of the conflict. It is our responsibility to adopt a wider lens.

65 Ibid.

66 CNN.com, 2008.

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The Intersection of Religion and Development Programs
A Study of Sudanese Youth Refugees in Cairo

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Abstract

This article examines the intersection of evangelical Christianity and development programs at churches and church-based NGOs within the contemporary Sudanese refugee youth community of Cairo, Egypt. By contextualizing and analyzing three examples of youth-led music programs, this article demonstrates how young Sudanese leaders integrate Christian beliefs and development initiatives, effectively widening and reshaping the meaning of development to include religious faith as a primary gauge of communal advancement. This study is based on personal interviews and testimonies gathered from Sudanese refugees in Cairo from September 2006 to January 2008, as well as data collected from newspapers, published articles, and field experience. The article challenges the notion that development is universally viewed through a secular framework. It argues that African youth defy the limitations of this definition of development as they actively strive to shape their communities under the immense pressures of poverty, racism, trauma, and social conflict. Moreover, the youth-led initiatives that aim to meet the deep needs of the African refugee population are part of a larger network of religious and non-religious aid organizations, whose aims and approaches toward refugees in Cairo vary immensely, even within the Christian community.[1]

Introduction

For more than two decades, conflict in Sudan has significantly contributed to the large numbers of African refugees who flee their homes and seek asylum in countries around the globe. Millions of southern Sudanese refugees have searched for safety in surrounding countries such as Chad, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, and the Central African Republic since civil war broke out in 1983. Moreover, increasing numbers of Sudanese are now choosing Cairo as a place of protection, because Egypt offers refugees a unique set of resources in their circumstances. This environment enables refugees to access valuable opportunities, but it also presents new legal, cultural, and social burdens on both a communal and individual level.

As a host country, Egypt presents numerous challenges to the Sudanese. The predominantly Christian and darker skinned southerners, whom Egyptians view as "African" rather than "Arab," face daily discrimination. Poverty and a lack of legal rights place this population at a social disadvantage, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has been unable to compensate for this problem, due to the sheer numbers of refugees seeking its limited services. Furthermore, a new generation of Sudanese youth is coming of age in this context. Not only does this group carry the burden of a traumatic past, but many of the youth also lack stable family structures, access to educational and personal development resources, and hope for a better future. Young refugees without close family frequently choose to band together for protection and provision, sharing salaries, apartments, food, and basic necessities with one another. In the past two years, many of these social groups have developed into increasingly violent gangs, which further undermine the social stability of the Sudanese refugee population.

Facing these hardships has driven the Sudanese, and particularly the youth, to search for meaning and purpose in their suffering. As they have done in the past, Christian refugees in Cairo

1 Abridged and modified excerpt of Purpose in Displacement: Sudanese Youth Engaging Christianity in Cairo, which was submitted as requirement for the author's senior thesis.

cling to scripture and their faith as a way to orient themselves and their community in the face of disaster. Scholars frequently overlook the significance of religion and its effect on African youths' perceptions of development; nevertheless, churches and church-based organizations clearly impact development efforts within the Sudanese refugee community of Cairo.

Not only do these organizations function as key providers of secular "development" resources, such as job skills training, education, and health care programs, but they also allow refugee leaders to incorporate their religious beliefs into such programs in order to accomplish larger community goals. In fact, marginalized but deeply religious Christian youth within this community have begun to use church resources to lead new development initiatives, which aim to meet the physical, intellectual, and emotional needs of the young African refugees.

Although such programs address a variety of needs, ultimately their aim is spiritual. Religious youth design such initiatives in order to facilitate individual and communal reconciliation with the Christian God. Secular development projects, such as educational opportunities, become a forum for connecting with others in deeper and more spiritual ways. Not only are these youth utilizing development programs to meet what they perceive as religious needs, however, but they are, in effect, redefining "development" itself. In other words, Christian Sudanese youth in Cairo are using non-religious development programs for what they consider a higher aim—conveying a Christian evangelical message—because they view the progress of their community primarily through its spiritual health, rather than through the advancement of education, physical health, or other external indicators of communal growth. Three case studies of youth-led music programs reveal how the youth use development resources to exercise leadership and initiate spiritual change within Cairo's Sudanese population.

Personal interviews and testimonies from southern Sudanese Christians form the core elements of my research, along with my own personal observations. I spent eleven months, from September 2006 to July 2007, in Egypt working with Sudanese refugee youth at an organization that provides aid to thousands of Sudanese refugees in Cairo. I began interviewing youth toward the end of my stay in Cairo, and I returned in January 2008 in order to conduct more research and to attain a wider sample of personal stories and reflections. The interviews were generally open-ended and conversational. Most of the interviewees spoke in English, but I conducted several interviews in Arabic as well. All of the interviewees in this paper have been given fictitious names.

Churches and Refugee Aid

In Cairo, churches and Christian NGOs play a crucial role in the lives of Sudanese youth by providing resources and social support, which enable young refugees to initiate and lead programs that encourage the personal development of their peers. One key resource that churches offer refugees in this context is physical space. Throughout the city, church buildings and compounds have become primary gathering places for African refugees of multiple religious and ethnic backgrounds. Many refugees find church compounds ideal for socializing, because they may safely gather within the gates without paying for the venue or raising the concerns of wary Egyptian neighbors. Often, these buildings become natural gathering spots because they also house important services that aid adjustment to life in the city and enable refugees to gain critical skills for future employment. Thus, churches are a significant part of daily life in Cairo for refugees, both Christians and non-Christians alike.

In terms of non-religious aid, there are a number of Christian NGOs and churches meeting refugee needs in Cairo, along with a number of non-religious NGOs and community associations. In seeking to understand churches' role in this context, it is necessary to understand the broader context of aid organizations as a whole. Some of the larger and better known organizations providing aid include Africa and Middle East Refugee Assistance (AMERA), Caritas, Refuge Egypt at All Saints' Cathedral, and St. Andrew's St. Andrew's United Church's education program.[2]

AMERA primarily offers free legal services to help asylum seekers as they deal with the UNHCR, whereas Caritas offers medical and social assistance, including financial assistance for

2 There are numerous other organizations and churches that could be listed here; I have chosen a few that were mentioned frequently among the Sudanese community and serve large numbers of refugees

"extremely vulnerable persons," job placement, a nursery, and skills training. St. Andrew's United Church offers an adult education program, a children's education and breakfast program, and the African Refugee Co-Op for teaching and learning African handicrafts. Refuge Egypt at All Saints' Cathedral handles emergency food and clothing, medical care, skills training, small business loans, a handicraft center, counseling, and a school for refugee children. Furthermore, this organization is one of the few NGOs offering a program that specifically caters to older teenagers and young adults through spiritually focused conferences and seminars, a sports program that gives refugees access to soccer fields and tournaments, a Hip Hop music program, and two English language schools.[3]

All of these major service providers aid Sudanese refugees regardless of their religious backgrounds; however, the ultimate aims of these organizations and the specific populations they accommodate may differ. Even within the scope of Christian and church organizations, approaches to refugee services and the atmosphere and demographic makeup of these programs vary. For example, while All Saints' Cathedral only serves African refugees, St. Andrew's serves refugees of other nationalities as well, including Iraqi refugees. Although Refuge Egypt's services are wide ranging, it directs many of them, such as food and clothing resources, toward aiding newer refugees during their first two years in Cairo.[4] On the other hand, St. Andrews focuses its services on long term preparation for the purpose of aiding refugees' future return to Sudan.[5] Nevertheless, new arrivals and longer term refugees frequent both of these locations, and although Refuge Egypt limits some of their services strictly to newer refugees, other services remain open to anyone.

In addition to differences in policies and the populations they serve, a key difference between these two church-based organizations lies in their approaches to ministry. Although these organizations serve both Christian and Muslim refugees, Refuge Egypt has a clear evangelistic component to many of its programs.[6] It is, however, important to note that although Refuge Egypt serves a large number of Muslims, most of them only access services such as the cafeteria, the medical clinic, emergency food and clothing supplies, vocational training, and other programs that do not include a religious teaching component. On the other hand, the Refuge Egypt programs that primarily cater to the southern Sudanese refugee community while aiming to educate them about important social issues, particularly the counseling and youth programs that host seminars, conferences, retreats, and training events, include a strong Christian evangelistic message. Events often open and close with Christian praise and worship songs and prayers, and include a key lecture that generally centers on the message of salvation through Jesus Christ or an aspect of Christian life. Furthermore, the work environment, including daily devotional staff meetings, is connected deeply to this Christian message and spiritual perspective. The Sudanese who attend these Christian-focused events generally come from a Christian background, and church networks are used as a primary method to advertise such programs.

St. Andrew's offers a different model of Christian ministry through development programs. According to the current director of the Refugee Program, whom I interviewed at the church on July 5, 2007, half of the refugees utilizing church services are Muslim, and few of the refugee services offered at St. Andrews include religious instruction.6 The director further emphasized that the church programs could only "lead by example" because of the legal repercussions of converting from Islam to Christianity. Because Muslim refugees are students in the program, communicating a message that encourages conversion to Christianity is illegal. Therefore, the St. Andrew's program is careful to respect this sensitive issue and not include Christian teachings as a component of its classes. The director also indicated a personal preference for this form of ministry as a way to

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3 "I am Musa:" An Introduction to Cairo for Refugees (Africa and Middle East Refugee Assistance, 2007).

4 According to a handout entitled: "Emergency Policy Changes at RE: Effective as of 1st Aug. 2006," the Refuge Egypt card is valid for two years, and newcomers can only register for a card within one year of their arrival in Egypt. After two years they may still access certain programs but no longer have emergency resources.

5 "Refugee Ministry" in St Andrew's United Church (2006), 4.

6 Evangelism in this context refers to activity that attempts to convey the message that salvation may only be obtained by following the Christian God through Jesus Christ. Evangelism may aim to convert non-Christians to Christianity, or to encourage "nominal" Christians (those who identify as Christians externally but may not have a personal commitment to the Christian God) to commit fully to following Jesus Christ.

create a welcoming environment for refugees of all faiths.

Clearly, individual organizations vary immensely in their aims, approaches, and working atmospheres, even within the Christian church community. All Saints' Cathedral and St. Andrew's are merely two examples of churches offering general services to refugees, and several other churches offer aid on a more limited scale. Numerous refugee and international churches also provide spiritual teaching and development through church meetings, small groups, and Bible studies. The role of churches in these more traditional forms, as opposed to its related NGOs or refugee aid programs, is significant in the context of many Sudanese refugees' experiences in Cairo as well.

The Role of Music Programs

Several churches and Christian NGOs offering development resources to the African refugee community cater to youth through music programs. When I asked the Sudanese youth leaders of Maadi Community Church why they thought music was important, Chol, a singer, spoke about how he viewed music as a catalyst for change among Sudanese refugees. He responded: "People always have things to say, and [when you sing songs], people listen and sing with you. In Sudanese culture, people like music, and in every home you find a lot of African music video clips, but the Sudanese don't have [their own music clips] so we thought this was one way to reach people's homes [with the message]."

Chol expressed the difficulty of being heard in the Sudanese community, and he emphasized the possibility of obtaining people's attention and agreement through music. He went on to explain that his youth group was working on an album called "God is Good," in which they combined Christian lyrics and Sudanese songs, with each song in a different tribe's language. This project aims to reach out to the wider Sudanese community with the message that "God is good [even] after the war." For the youth, this group is also making a Christian CD with music that will appeal to the Sudanese interested in hip hop.[7] Thus, the Maadi Community Church youth are trying to use this forum to send a positive message about God's love and faithfulness to a community struggling under the pressures of their circumstances.

Indeed, among Sudanese youth, music tailored to suit specific audiences has become a popular form of evangelism. According to Maadi Community Church youth leaders, the majority of their peers in the wider Sudanese population are not involved in church or in the gangs, and most of them prefer secular African music and hip hop. The Sudanese refugee youth who are involved with the gangs generally identify with Western rap culture and many have chosen to model themselves off of Western rappers, most popularly Tupac. Therefore, some Christian youth, including those at Maadi Community Church, are using hip hop and rap music to communicate evangelical messages to refugees who have embraced these Western forms.

Evangelical musical expression also has a strong historical basis within the Sudanese Dinka community.[8] The first missionary of the Gordon Memorial Sudan Mission, Archibald Shaw, recognized the Dinka people's ability to use traditional songs to convey profound messages. In his work, Shaw not only translated hymns into the Dinka language, but also supported Christian converts as they wrote their own Christian songs. These songs eventually became famous within Christian communities. Moreover, when floods in the1960s pushed many Sudanese youth north in search of work, Christian clubs, in which the migrants could sing such songs in their native Dinka language, became a popular way to affirm their identity as Dinka as well as to affirm their faith.[9] Although the contemporary circumstances of Sudanese youth are quite different, music retains the same role as a vehicle for self expression and communicating religious messages.

The Maadi Community Church group uses music similarly, as it attempts to aid Sudanese spiritual growth within this new Egyptian context. Likewise, examining other music programs in Cairo reveals how marginalized Christian refugee youth use resources at church based NGOs to run their own development initiatives, which are also based on communicating through Christian

7 This meeting with Maadi Community Church youth leaders took place at a KFC restaurant in Maadi, Cairo on January 15th, 2008.

8 The Dinka comprise the largest tribe in Sudan, and many of the Sudanese refugees in Cairo come from this tribe.

9 Marc R. Nikkel, "Aspects of Contemporary Religious Change among the Dinka," Journal of Religion in Africa, 22, no.3 (1992): 80.

rap or hip hop. These programs, which attract young artists desiring to hone their skills, view spiritual growth as a primary goal and standard for gauging communal development.

One example of this type of initiative is Refuge Egypt's Hip Hop Music Program. In this program, youth receive a room at the cathedral, speakers, microphones, a keyboard, a guitar, and a sound system for several hours. The youth play various hip hop beats through the speakers, and they take turns rapping to the music with their own created lyrics. One teenager, Akech, leads the program and ensures that lyrics express a point of view in line with the Christian perspective. For example, the program prohibits vulgar language, songs glorifying violence, etc. Some of the participants create songs meant for the group to sing together as a whole, but most of the time individuals rap their own lyrics. The program benefits the youth psychologically and emotionally by offering them an outlet for creative expression, social interaction, and verbalization of traumatic experiences. It also serves as an opportunity to develop and practice rapping skills.

The rapping is a key part of the hip hop program, but equally important is the Bible teaching that undergirds and guides the formation of lyrics. Each week, an American pastor working primarily within the Sudanese community in Cairo comes to the hip hop program and reads a chapter of the Bible. During the lesson I observed, he taught from Genesis, the first book of the Bible, using three to four minute long stories that follow in chronological order. The pastor repeated the story several times in English, and a bilingual youth translated it into Arabic. The missionary then asked the group to participate in remembering each part in order. His aim is to help build a spiritual foundation for people of oral culture, and the program's immediate goal is to create an oral Bible in rap. Each week, he asks rappers to think about these narratives and create lyrics using them as a basis.

Here is an example of one song's lyrics, which Akech created for the group to sing together:

> Our God is the Prince of Peace, for the Holy Bible says
> And the peace of God will surpass all understanding
> Will guide your heart and mind in the love of Jesus Christ
> "I love you," Jesus Christ says, "I love you," Jesus Christ says
> When I remember you are the king,
> I will never return back again.
> When I remember you are the Lord,
> I will never return back again. (repeat)
> King of Kings, I love you,
> Lord of Lords, I love you.
> King of Kings, I love you,
> Lord of Lords, I love you.
> Don't worry for nothing, and everything by prayer,
> Supplication, and thanksgiving, present all your needs to the Lord
> Rejoice in the Lord always and I will say,
> Rejoice in the Lord of Lords.
> Rejoice in the King always and I will say,
> Rejoice in the King of Kings.[10]

This song originates from a scripture passage in Philippians: "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." The Biblical nature of this song demonstrates how the youth running this program are utilizing development resources to encourage Christian spiritual development. Ultimately, such songs are meant to teach and establish a specific religious perspective. Rather than requiring an elimination of secular goals from the program, however, such initia-

10 This example of lyrics from the Hip Hop Music Program were recorded in January 2008 at a number of Friday night meetings held at Refuge Egypt.

tives allow the youth to engage both spiritual and secular aims simultaneously. The music program enables young refugees to develop music skills, express their creativity, verbalize their emotions, and release energy, while it also teaches Christian principles. Through this religious knowledge, the leaders of this program hope to advance the development of the Sudanese community.

Refuge Egypt's Hip Hop program is only one example of how Sudanese believer youth in Cairo are using music as a method of evangelism and as a way to impact Sudanese youths' lives with scripture and Christian concepts. Another example is the African United Drama Society (AUDS), led by a teen named Samuel who grew up in a Christian family and talks of the miracles that God is performing daily in his life. One example Samuel gives of God's miracles is AUDS, which is primarily a music group supported by Maadi Community Church, although they have also created a sports program. This is an excerpt from his interview about the group:

> We just want to compete with each other in doing good, not bad. This is the goal of my group. How can we change people? We have to do what they like or accept. We [realized] that [the Sudanese youth] like the black American music like 50 Cent. So we have to take that music and those beats and take words of encouragement from the Bible and put it to the same tune. The first church we were presenting in was in the Redeemed Church in Maadi, and after that numbers of people who wanted to join us were increasing. Nothing could be done without 2 sexes: boys and girls. When we got those girls, they were in a celebration in Victoria. When we presented there we let people know that we need girls in our group and now there are 10 girls and 15 guys. And after 5 or 7 months (two months ago) we saw that there is another way to bring people in. We saw that boys like to play football or basketball. So we [made] a plan and [came] together and prayed:"Lord, come to help us." It's not easy because the Lost Boys or Outlaws will come in and destroy it if they find out that is happening and the man will kick us out. So we prayed that God would give us a place in a location where they would not get to us and he gave a place…If someone is thinking of doing bad in our group they will prevent them for doing bad. Once the devil tempted guys who came to the practicing place to fight. I chased them away and said no one will be beat here as long as I am here. They came to the church on Sunday and beat me. They stoned me here—I still have a scar. Then they told me sorry and I forgive them. But I told them if we are to be friends please don't come to the practicing place and they promised me and to this day no one comes there.[11]

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[11] This interview took place at Refuge Egypt's Teenager's Conference on July 16th, 2007.

According to Samuel, AUDS reaches out to their peers by dressing in imitation of American rappers similarly to the gang youth. They also take popular hip hop music and change the lyrics to create Christian and biblically based songs. In spite of their imitation of gang culture, Samuel holds the members of the group to strict behavioral standards and does not allow group members to attend parties. He values practical reliance on God, which he shows through in his description of how he and his group came together and prayed for football and basketball activities to become possible.

This group's form of evangelism clearly relates to the Hip Hop Program at Refuge Egypt and the Maadi Community Church youth music program, as all of them use adapted hip hop or rap music to gain the attention of secular youth and influence them with scripture. However, there are distinct differences in the aims of these ministries and in the way they function.

For example, the Maadi Community Church youth, who are creating hip hop praise songs to minister to other youth, view themselves as Christian "believers."[12] Their primary aim is to reach out to "nonbelievers" who listen to their songs through lyrics that encourage the Sudanese to remember God's goodness and faithfulness to his promises. On the other hand, the Hip Hop Music Program is not focused on musical quality or the production and distribution of an album. Rather, it is focused on giving all youth, both "believers" and "nonbelievers," an alternative to gang-related activities; the resources to express themselves creatively in a positive way; and increased spiritual growth and Biblical knowledge.

In comparison, AUDS is a Christian group that primarily works as a replacement for gang involvement. Although producing music that conveys Christian principles through scripture is a major part of the group, which aims to communicate Christian ideas to the listener similarly to the Maadi Community Church youth program, the group's primary focus is on bringing other youth to join them. In dressing like gang members and using hip hop music, AUDS attracts youth who are in gangs or who are vulnerable to gang involvement. As a social group, it offers a community which seeks to follow Christian morality, such as avoiding violence, sexual promiscuity, etc., while also allowing youth to engage in popular cultural trends.

All of these programs have relationships with churches in Cairo, either through financial support, the use of church possessions, or a more formal tie. For example, the youth at Maadi Community Church are members of the church. One major impact of churches on these programs is their physical resources, which enable the programs to function. In some cases, such as in Refuge Egypt's Hip Hop Program, an adult church member, such as the American missionary, has a significant role in the course of the meetings. Nevertheless, in all three of these programs the primary leadership comes from "believer" youths themselves.

This illuminates a crucial role that the churches play in the context of the lives of Christian refugee youth in Cairo: churches function as a source of empowerment, enabling the youth to take initiative and serve what they believe are the spiritual, social, and psychological needs of other youth. By providing the money, the materials, the space, and, when necessary, the adult support needed to pursue such programs, the church offers youth an opportunity to engage in activities that aid the development of their communities and allow them to exercise leadership skills. Moreover, these music programs show that the meaning of development in the minds of youth leaders is not limited to traditional interpretations, but also includes religious faith as an important component of their community's progress.

Other Church-Based Opportunities

Music programs are only one way in which Christian youth access resources through churches and Christian NGOs in order to perform evangelism and aid the spiritual development of other believers. For example, young Sudanese refugees have created education and sports programs not only to aid the development intellectual or physical skills, but also to increase their opportunities

[12] For the purposes of this paper I use the term "believer" to describe the evangelical youth, because this is the term I heard most often within the Sudanese Christian community itself. The term draws an important distinction between youth who are nominally Christian (that is, they identify as Christians from a cultural perspective but may not follow Christian beliefs or teachings) and the youth who have a strong religious and spiritual identification with Christianity, regardless of the religion they were born into.

for building relationships with "nonbelievers" and subsequently sharing the Christian message with them. Thus, Sudanese youth use secular development goals to engage their community spiritually.

There are also many church-based opportunities that Christian youth do not place within larger secular development initiatives. Akech mentioned, for example, that churches offer spiritual conferences or send their youth on events, seminars, or retreats hosted by other Christian organizations and churches. Refuge Egypt is one example of an NGO that frequently hosts such activities through its youth program, which prepares annual retreats for church youth as well as conferences. They invite approximately one hundred people to their retreats, with several youth representing each Sudanese church. The first major conference, "Extreme Living in the 21st Century" saw an attendance of approximately seven hundred youth on October 13th, 2006.

Most such events include music in the form of more traditional praise and worship songs as well as in the form of talent performances, which may include Christian rap. Lectures about Christian concepts relevant to youth, such as sex, failure, and addiction, "testimonies" about what Jesus Christ has done in different people's lives, and renewed commitment to following God are common components of these programs. In their interviews, a few youth mentioned one particular Refuge Egypt conference called "Never Again" as a particularly successful event. It safely brought youth from major gangs as well as youth from the churches together, a feat that typically cannot happen without ending in violence. Akech stated about this conference: "One [youth] said the "Never Again" conference was the best four days he had in Cairo; both gang and church youth came together and they stood as one group." Similarly to the music programs mentioned, such conferences not only promote building relationships within the youth community, but they also offer Sudanese refugee youth a weekend activity as an alternative to violence, criminal behavior, roaming the streets, watching TV, or partying. Furthermore, because the youth conduct much of the planning, these activities enable some of them to take on leadership roles They also provide an outlet for self-expression through drama and music performances, as well as a place for the discussion of important spiritual and social issues.

Of course, Christian organizations and churches offer other opportunities for youth as well. I am most familiar with Refuge Egypt's Youth Program, which also provides access to soccer fields in five areas of Cairo and two English language schools. Additionally, the Youth Program developed a model for a small group program called "Brother 2 Brother," whose aim is to provide a supportive alternative community that will help youths successfully leave the gangs, but Refuge Egypt has not yet implemented the program.

Conclusion: Sudanese Youth in the Global Context

It is clear that, although Sudanese youth face numerous difficulties in Cairo on a daily basis, churches and Christian NGOs play a powerful role in the youth experience through their provision of a safe socializing space, money, resources, and other forms of support, including Christian leaders for teaching and the endorsement of events. In turn, Christian youth utilize church resources to promote spiritual growth and evangelize their peers. Using these tools, they have taken on leadership roles and have created programs and activities that benefit other Sudanese youth socially, psychologically, and, most importantly in the minds of believer youth, spiritually.

In the study of development in Africa, one must not ignore the powerful intersection of religion and NGOs offering development resources in the lives of refugee youth. In Cairo, religious institutions are often the primary sources of such programs, and Christian youth take advantage of the opportunities they have through these organizations to expand the meaning of development. In such cases, religious youth define "development" primarily spiritually, while education, physical health, skills training, and other traditional indicators of communal advancement and growth become secondary.

Christianity plays a broader role socially and psychologically among other young African refugee populations as well, such as the Burundi refugee community in Tanzania. In fact, in the article "Young, Male, and Pentecostal: Urban Refugees in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania," Marc Sommers describes Pentecostal teachings as a "path to quiet success" for refugees, and notes the importance of personal faith and Christian social networks for the mobility of Pentecostal youth. Moreover, he states, "understanding and recognizing the dynamic role of refugee and other alienated, mobile ur-

ban youth as catalysts for transformation is an essential step in the development of peaceful, civil, and truly inclusive postwar African societies."18 My research, which has explored the dynamic role of Sudanese believer youth who are catalysts for transformation in their own context, very much supports this statement.

In Cairo, African youth are actively changing their communities through their engagement with development resources and faith-based networks; however, the depth of the impact of religious dynamics on the greater Sudanese community is yet unknown. Many refugees believe that Cairo is a place of communal and individual change, healing, and growth, and, for believing Christians, religion is the central lens through which they perceive this. As increasing numbers of refugees consider returning to Sudan, Cairo's lasting legacy remains to be seen.

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"Give Women the Power to Face and Strategize About Tomorrow"

Examining the Experiences of South African Women in Rural Women's Movement

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Abstract

Although South African women participated in the overthrow of the Apartheid regime, they seldom shared the same privileges as their male counterparts. Establishing the nation's new constitution created a unique situation which guaranteed women rights. However, women still experience adverse affects of discrimination on multiple levels due to high rates of unemployment, HIV/AIDS and poverty. This research seeks to better understand the current ability of grassroots women in challenging social injustices and inequalities in one rural community. Forty-one socially active rural women were interviewed, all of whom were members of Rural Women's Movement (RWM) and lived in the remote village of amaHlubi in the province of KwaZulu Natal. The members' lived experiences are analyzed emphasizing two main points: (1) specific aspects of RWM women's experiences including a) education and unemployment, b) HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS orphans, and c) gender inequality; and (2) the effects of RWM on women's lives since joining the organization. Through interview analysis, it is understood that RWM members are negatively impacted by decreased access to education and employment; they suffer from high rates of HIV/AIDS, play a large role in the care of HIV/AIDS orphans, and experience adverse effects of gender inequality. Their membership with RWM, however, has positively affected their lives and others within the community, by providing them leadership roles in activism.

Introduction

Although South African women participated in the overthrow of the Apartheid regime, they seldom shared the same privileges as their male counterparts. Women activists fought for a role in the most prominent (male dominated) anti-Apartheid organization, the African National Congress (ANC). Even though women were active in every aspect of revolution, their presence was most visible in the female-led Anti-Pass Law Movement of the 1950s. After a long and strenuous revolution, South Africa established a new constitution in 1994 which guaranteed rights to all people, including women. But the progressive changes under the new ANC-led government had little benefit for poor women, resulting in inequalities apparent today. South Africa has a clear tension between the notion of equal citizenship and the fact that in reality citizenship is based on power which is exercised through social, economic, and political structures that perpetuate the exclusion of members of certain groups.[1] For instance, women still experience adverse affects of discrimination on multiple levels due to high rates of unemployment, HIV/AIDS and poverty under South Africa's new democracy. Activists have exposed the false universalism of citizenship and continue to make their rights as 'women' a reality.[2]

Today, there are over 60 women's organizations in South Africa that seek to address the years of discrimination that African[3] people have suffered in the public and private spheres. The people's needs that women address are a response to the most visible consequences of social

1 Cheryl McEwan, "Engendering Citizenship: Gendered Spaces of Democracy in South Africa," Political Geography 19 (2000): 627-657.

2 Ibid., 639.

3 In this paper I use the terms 'African' and 'black' interchangeably to refer to people of African descent within South Africa.

fragmentation, poor social services, and economic marginality.[4] For example, unemployment hits women the hardest on the African continent. In 2007, 36% of African men and 50% of African women aged 15-65 did not have a job.[5] These statistics illustrate that South African and Africans in general are suffering from unemployment, but African women are suffering the most.[6] Because women are especially at risk for being debilitated by such difficult conditions, they have tended to work together in an effort to strengthen their agency.

This paper seeks to better understand the current ability of grassroots women in challenging social injustices and inequalities in the rural community of amaHlubi, South Africa. This paper first provides a historical context for the importance of women's organizations and their role in revolutionary movements within South Africa. It next describes the community of amaHlubi and the role of the organization, Rural Women's Movment (RWM), has had in addressing the needs of women in its community. Interviews of RWM members were collected and analyzed to understand how they have been impacted by RWM. Their responses emphasize two main points: (1) specific aspects of RWM women's experiences including, a) education and unemployment, b) HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS orphans, and c) gender inequality; (2) the effects of RWM on women's lives since joining the organization. Through analysis, it is understood that RWM members have negative effects due to decreased access to education and employment; they suffer high rates of HIV/AIDS, play a large role in the care of HIV/AIDS orphans and experience adverse effects of gender inequality. Their membership with RWM has positively affected their lives and others within the community, by providing them leadership roles in activism. I conclude that because RWM serves the social, economic, and political needs of women and consequentially men and children, it is vital to the execution of South Africa's goals to create a more egalitarian society.

History of South Africa Women's Movements

The state of South Africa today is a reflection of its racialized and gendered past. For over three hundred years, African women and men were subjected to brutal treatment by white Europeans, culminating by 1948 in oppressive systems of racial segregation during the Apartheid era.[7] Women were always a part of the liberation movement towards a free South Africa, although their contribution is often unrecognized. Black South African women had the ability to organize in ways that men were severely restricted from due to the stricter laws against black men initially. Some scholars proclaim a new feminism, divergent from conventional "Western" feminism, formed from black South African women's intersectional experiences with multiple oppressions.[8]

Shireen Hassim distinguishes between women's movements, which she describes as women organizing on the basis of their identities in being women, and feminism, which not only recognizes women's oppression but prepares to directly confront patriarchal power.[9] Further, social feminists refuse differentiating struggles against patriarchy and struggles against capitalism, which they see as linked to apartheid. A fluid definition of movements allows for these multiple perspectives to coexist. Movements will be defined according to Maxine Molynuex, where it implies social or political phenomena of some significance, that significance being given both by its numerical strength and its capacity to affect change in some way, whether it be in legal, social, cultural, or political terms.[10]

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4 Hassim, Shireen. Women's Organizations and Democracy in South Africa. (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006).

5 Statistics South Africa, "Labor Force Survey 2007," Government of South Africa, http://www.statssa.gov.za/PublicationsHTML/P0210September2007/html/P0210September2007.html (accessed December 8th, 2008).

6 Budlende, D. "Rising unemployment hits women the hardest" The Election Bulletin 1, no 3 (1999). www.womensnet.org.za/election/eb-job.htm

7 Beck,Roger B. The History of South Africa. (London: Greenwood Press, 2000).

8 Kemp, Amanda, Nozizwe Madlala, Asha Moodley and Elain Salo, "The Dawn of a New Day: Redefining South African Feminism" in The Challenge of Local Feminisms: Women's Movements in Global Perspective, Amrita Basu, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995): 131.

9 Hassim, Shireen. "Gender, Social Location and Feminist Politics in South Africa," Transformation 15 (1991): 65-83.

10 Molyneux, Maxine. "Analyzing women's movements" Development and Change 29 (1998): 219-245.

An illustration of women's historical role in larger anti-Apartheid movements is the female-led Anti-Pass Law Movement, which made great strides in 1955 after pass laws were extended to women. The legislation, which was consolidated in the Natives (Urban Areas) Act, entrenched urban segregation and controlled African mobility by means of pass laws. Pass laws sanctioned cheap labor by disenfranchising black Africans from wage bargaining and housing them in severely under resourced areas. 'Passes' were the vehicle through which the Apartheid government and businesses in S.A. manipulated the labor and movement of African people.[11] Kimble and Ulterhalter (1982) explain that "women clearly felt ahead of their men in the struggle."[12] The Federation of South African Women (FSAW) observed that "women awaited with patience the active entry of men into the anti-pass campaign."[13] During the 1950s, women came together to fight against the inherent sexism within the anti-Apartheid movements, such as inside the ANC. Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Albertina Sisulu, Sophia Williams-De Bruyn were among many other women who created the FSAW. After the creation of the ANC women's league, women organized a mass demonstration again the pass laws. In 1956, 20,000 women marched to the office of the Prime Minister J.G. Strijdom with a petition against the introduction of new pass laws and the Group Areas Act No. 41 of 1950, which allowed the removal of black people from "white" areas and enforced different residential areas for different races. During the march women chanted an African proverb, which translates, "You strike a woman, you strike a rock." The petition was eventually accepted by the PM's secretary.

However, the passive movements of the 1950s by both men and women were largely ignored by the Apartheid government. Eventually violence from the Apartheid regime erupted against the protests against pass laws in the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960. Pass laws were finally repealed in 1986. The strength and resilience of women activists during this period is captured by the phrase, "Strike us and you will be crushed," which is still used today in support of women's movements.[14]

After the fall of the Apartheid regime in 1994, African women fought to establish their rights in their own communities as South African citizens that had endured both racist and sexist oppression. Women activists played a surprisingly important role in the negotiations, the elections, and the designing of the state.[15] Throughout South Africa, women emerged yet again as a powerful force in community level political issues that stifled their community's growth.[16] South Africa's new Constitution is pivotal to the work of many women's organizations. For the first time, they were guaranteed rights and due process as citizens regardless of gender or race.

The legal rights and restructuring of the state that women fought for are of real significance, but cultural barriers and localized patriarchies have remained largely untouched by the political changes that have swept South Africa.[17] As McEwan explains:

> The fruits of democracy have not been extended to the majority of women who are black, poor, subjected to private patriarchies and vulnerable to violence. However, it is perhaps not to the state, government policy or institutional change that one should look for future possibilities of transforming private patriarchies, but to those everyday resistances in homes, communities and neighborhoods.[18]

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11 Kumba, M. "You've Struck a Rock: Comparing Gender, Social Movements, and Transformation in the United States and South Africa" Gender and Society 16 (2002): 504-523.

12 Kimble, J. and E. Unterhalter, "We opened the road for you, you must go forward: ANC women's struggles, 1912-1982." Feminist Review 12 (1982): 27.

13 Ibid.

14 Tripp, A., I. Casimiro, J. Kwesiga and A. Mungwa, African women's movements: changing political landscapes (London: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

15 Seidman, G. "Gendered Citizenship: South Africa's Democratic Transition and the Construction of a Gendered State," Gender and Society 13, no.3 (1999): 287-307.

16 Hassim, Shireen. Women's organizations and democracy in South Africa. Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006.

17 McEwan, 2000: 643.

18 Ibid.

Ewan means that more women should occupy the middle and upper echelons of state structures and popular organizations--but more importantly that women's movements also need to bridge the gap between the two.[19] As feminists elsewhere have demonstrated, homes and communities are the places where contestations over rights may be more effective than state policies.[20] In the following sections, this paper will examine how like other previous South African women's movements, the organization Rural Women's Movement continues to promote egalitarianism in South Africa by focusing on women and providing services in the community of amaHlubi.

Current Challenges within amaHlubi

The village amaHlubi is in the province of KwaZulu Natal, which has the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rate (16.5%) of all provinces in South Africa. Women between the ages 25 and 29 years old are almost 3 times as likely to be infected as men of the same age, with prevalence rates of 33.3% and 12.1% respectively. In addition, there were more than 2,531,810 orphans (14.2% of children between the ages of 2-18) in South Africa as of 2005. The highest rates of orphanhood were in rural informal sectors throughout the country. Furthermore, the highest rates (19.8%) of orphanhood were in the province of KwaZulu Natal.[21, 22]

AmaHlubi is located 80 kilometers outside of the city of Pietermaritzburg, and the tribe there is one of the largest in KwaZulu Natal with a population of 20,000 people.[23] The lack of resources is immense in the amaHlubi community. Many of the houses are isolated, and the land is barren. There is little land to cultivate in the amaHlubi area, especially because of the lack of water. There is a single well, which women must walk up to seven miles each day to fetch water.[24] There is also only one medical clinic, and villagers, usually women, must walk five to six miles to take their children for healthcare. If the people in the village are not satisfied with the clinic's services, they must travel to Pietermaritzburg. The only mode of transportation other than personal car is a taxi cab, which seldom comes inside of the community unless requested. For educational opportunities, AmaHlubi has only two elementary schools and one high school in the area. There is also one professional school near amaHlubi where students can pursue education past the 12th grade, but there are few options at this school other than blue-collar employment training. If community members want to pursue higher education, they must travel to Pietermaritzburg or Durban. The location of this isolated rural area, however, does not allow community members to easily commute to their place of employment or colleges.

Community perceptions suggest that there is a high degree of crime, rape, and unemployment in amaHlubi compared to averages for South Africa as a whole. These perceptions, combined with the limited access to resources, illustrate the needs that RWM has aimed to address since its creation. RWM had answered to these needs directly and indirectly by maintaining international support, empowering women and creating avenues for leadership and employment.

Rural Women's Movement: A Support System in amaHlubi

In 1998, Sizani Ngubane founded the networking organization, the Rural Women's Movement (RWM) in the large village of amaHlubi.[25] It can be defined as an independent movement characterized by independent actions, where women organize on the basis of self-activity, set their own goals, and decide their own forms of organization and struggle.[26] RWM helps to better the lives of both men and women in rural areas and forces South Africa to examine the

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19 Marais, H. South Africa, limits to change: the political economy of transition (London: Zed, 1998).

20 McEwen, 2000: 641.

21 Statistics South Africa, 2007.

22 RWM serves locations throughout KwaZulu Natal, but this paper specifically focuses on a branch of RWM in the village of amaHlubi.

23 This number is a very rough estimation of amaHlubi's population. Due to the lack of census reports for specific rural communities, it is difficult to get a population number for the amaHlubi village alone.

24 Personal Communication, May 2007.

25 AmaHlubi is closest to the established town of Escourt in the province of KwaZulu Natal.

26 Molyneux, 1998: 226.

policies and structures that allow such injustices. RWM specifically seeks to prove that universal injustices are gendered and that a gender-oriented social work organization has the potential to serve the needs of the entire community. By supplying the necessary tools to its members, RWM empowers women to face the issues that affect them the most by addressing general community needs, women's rights and unemployment.

When the organization started, the degree of rejection from the community was vast because men did not allow their wives to attend RWM's monthly meetings. Ngubane has memories of men throwing rocks at the center to demonstrate their opposition to RWM, because it was the first women's organization in their community.[27] As one woman explained, people in the community have since reacted positively because "this organization is going to change the lives of women and the community, they know that they are going to gain more with RWM."[28]

Due to the expansive size of amaHlubi, RWM set up two community centers on both sides of the village. The two community centers and the area around them will be referred to as amaHlubi Community One and amaHlubi Community Two.[29] The community centers serve as a meeting place for RWM members and as a community hall for all village members. They are the sites for monthly meetings and a food program for HIV/AIDS orphans..

Monthly meetings are the site of most of RWM's activism. The time and voluntary labor of members is critical to RWM. Approximately 100 a hundred women attend the general monthly meetings at each site. Other meetings and workshops are conducted when the need arises. There are ten administrators who run the meetings and task members who accomplish specific goals between meetings. These meetings serve to raise awareness about critical issues in the community, such as the obstruction of particular women's or children's rights and plans to improve the living conditions of member in need. For example, when women are fighting for their land rights after their husbands have passed, they seek support from RWM members in the form of knowledge, funds and emotional support. Meetings also allow for coalition around long-term goals such as educating each other on constitutional rights in regards to gender relations, land rights and HIV/AIDS. For example, RWM translated the entire South African constitution into isiZulu because many women in the community did not read English. Gender-focused workshops also have been established to empower women on issues such as HIV/AIDS, domestic violence, gender roles and patriarchy.

The services RWM provides to the community of amaHlubi appear to be as vast as its membership of women and networked organizations. RWM serves as the sole social work agency for the amaHlubi community. RWM supports education for orphaned children by supplying food, school fees, and school uniforms. It also gives legal assistance in regards to land rights, communal meetings to allow women to network, access to knowledge such as a translated version of the South African Constitution. It further promotes income generation through the provision of books, computer training for women, job skill improvement through RWM administrative work, and assistance in income generating activities. As community advocates, members of RWM support families and children in need in multiple ways. RWM women cook meals for children made vulnerable by poverty and HIV/AIDS when funds are available. They also provide school uniforms, clothes and blankets to families that cannot afford to buy them. This becomes especially important in the winter, when the dry cold season creates a harsh living environment. There is a strong sense of family amongst the members. They support and encourage each other daily. More than anything, the members build a sense of community in the village, allowing for mutual support and encouragement between people.

RWM also has prioritized bringing technology and communication to amaHlubi in order make women more employable. RWM has implemented Information and Communications Technology (ICT) training. The donation of six refurbished computers to the amaHlubi community centers from a local cell phone company, called MTN, has brought internet to the community for the first time. These computers are available for the communities' use at a rate of

27 Personal Communication, May 2007.

28 Individual Interview 2e, May 2007.

29 This is a distinction that is made by the people of amaHlubi themselves.

10 randan hour.[30] In addition, a donated phone booth from MTN, housed in amaHlubi Community One is an income generating facility of RWM while providing a cheaper alternative to expensive cell phone usage for community members.

Although finances are a constant concern for RWM, the organization always manages to secure necessary funds by convincing fellow groups that their framework is promising and liberating to women in rural areas. RWM has received financial aid from organizations such as Dougherty Foundation, Global Fund for Women, Mama Cash, Open Networks Group, and the Firelight Foundation. Many of these organizations provide grants for specific projects and workshops. While these groups' support is beneficial, it also means that RWM does not receive consistent funding. The South African government provides meager compensation for Ngubane, the most active member and founding director. Outside of Ngubane, no other member of RWM is paid, so the organization must be powered through the work of volunteers.

To better understand the impact of RWM on women's actual experiences in amHlubi, over forty members of RWM were interviewed. The research methodology of this project is explained in the next section.

Methodology of Research

This research project was conducted by two undergraduate students (Jen Flood and I) from Michigan State University, one alumnus (Rachel Frank) and one faculty member (Dr. Jeanne Gazel). The research was not funded by a particular organization. Instead, it was a collective effort between the students.

We conducted qualitative field interviews in amaHlubi Community One. Due to the similarities[31] between the two communities, amaHlubi Community One was chosen randomly, which was where we interviewed. The personal interview and focus group inquiries identified 1) women's demographics, 2) their lived experiences and to evaluate 3) RWM's role in their lives. The focus groups questions were identical to the personal interview questions so the women were able to further discuss their answers in a group discussion format facilitated by the research team.

Interviews were done under a community-based action research framework that allowed our research team to develop an honest dialogue with the interviewees. Stinger explains that action research "seeks to change the social and personal dynamics of the research situation so that it is non-competitive and non-exploitive and enhances the lives of all of those who participate."[32] This form of research allows the community to develop their own analysis of their social and economic environment and the role of RWM in their community.

Over two days, forty-one women participated in either interviews or focus groups, with some participating in both. There were nine individual interviews consisting of women between 24 and 56 years of age. A large number of the interviewed women consistently attended the monthly meetings in RWM's amaHlubi Community One. Focus Group A: included 15 women between the ages of 21 and 37. Focus Groups B: included 25 women from 41 to 67 years old. The younger women were able to speak English more fluently and thus placed in separate groups.

Translators were provided to remedy the language barrier for some of the older women. Our three translators (Ngubane – the organization founder, a professional translator, and a South African woman who spoke both languages) translated from isiZulu to English. Using Ngubane could have caused biased answers from women, but they also trusted her more than any other translator. Due to Ngubane's previous relationship with almost all of the women we interviewed, we were able to establish a degree of trust that would not have otherwise existed. This actually allowed for more in-depth interviews, where participants shared more personal stories. The interviews were recorded on tape, reviewed and later were transcribed by the researchers.

We provided interviewees with questions that stimulated conversation on the topics that af-

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30 A US dollar is equivalent to about seven rand.

31 AmaHlubi Community One and amaHlubi Community two are identical in nature. Although minor differences are present, such as a slightly larger population in amaHlubi Community One, they were not significant.

32 Stinger, E. 1996. Action Research: A Handbook for Practitioners. California, USA: SAGE publication: 19.

fected the interviewees the most. Many women stated that the instrument questions seemed to have been written with them in mind, and others mentioned that they were able to 'heal' because they were given a safe environment to talk about their personal struggles. This is the main goal of action research: to provide a place to exchange information and create a positive change in the community.[33]

The women in RWM were also able to use the questions we provided in more individualized interviews that analyzed and shared their stories with people within and outside of their community. The exchange of ideas and tools allows both parties an opportunity to improve RWM and the amaHlubi Community. By allowing for a venue to record and analyze women's concerns, RWM is better able to address these concerns. For example, women felt that the high rates of HIV in the community were out of their control. This could lead RWM to create workshops on HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness in order to make women agents of change rather than bystanders.

The following section analyzes and explains the key findings of our interviews and focus groups. Responses emphasized two main points: (1) specific aspects of RWM women's experiences including, a) education and unemployment, b) HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS orphans, and c) gender inequality; (2) the effects of RWM on women's lives since joining the organization. Through analysis, it is understood that RWM members are negatively impacted due to decreased access to education and employment; they suffer high rates of HIV/AIDS, play a large role in the care of HIV/AIDS orphans and experience adverse effects of gender inequality. Their membership with RWM has positively affected their lives and others within the community, by providing them leadership roles in activism.

Key Findings of the Research

By analyzing the responses to the interview questions, we were able to identify four aspects of women's lived experiences that most affected and shaped their daily decisions:

1. Education and unemployment
2. HIV/AIDS
3. HIV/AIDS orphans
4. The role of men in their lives

1. Education and other barriers to employment for women in amaHlubi

Many interviewed women felt that education was the key to employment in South Africa, but they were unable pursue the amount of education they desired and needed. Five of the thirty-six individually interviewed women finished their schooling to grade 12. Women stated many barriers preventing them from completing their education, including taking care of children in their home, a need to work full time, a lack of school transportation, age discrimination, and a deficit of funds to pay for school fees, uniforms, and other associated costs. Some women claimed that it is easier to get an education now than during South Africa's apartheid era, but there were new barriers that prevented women and men from gaining steady employment in the 21st century. Even if women received an education, employment was still limited for them because of obligations such as taking care of sick family members and taking care of household chores, which severely limited their ability to find employment and keep it.

One woman stated, "It was easier for my mother [to get employed] because [employers] did not ask for experience, now they ask for education, experience and qualifications." One woman stated that older women are not looking for employment because "[employers] want standard 10," which is equivalent to grade 10 in the United States,[34] and workers under the age of 40.[35]

On the other hand, some women felt that employment and education had fewer barriers than before. A woman said, "In [my] mother's time, women would get married and stayed at home,

[33] Stinger, 1996.

[34] The completion of standard ten is a new phenomenon for women in rural amaHlubi with the implementation of proper schooling facilities within the last decade.

[35] Focus group, May 2007.

like slaves; now it is better."[36] Despite their perception of barriers to employment, a majority of the women (83%) were unemployed and were either looking for a job or losing hope in finding any employment. None of the women interviewed had steady full-time employment status.[37] Some women had started their own income-generating activities (such as basket weaving, tailoring, or farming) and others worked a few hours each week for local companies. It is apparent that the barriers to employment for RWM women include education, transportation, lack of experience, and lack of local job opportunities.[38]

2. Effects of HIV/AIDS on women's lives in amaHlubi

HIV/AIDS was often stated in both the interviews and focus groups as the most challenging issue in the amaHlubi community. One woman stated, "HIV/AIDS is the biggest problem in this province and in particular our community…Not a single house has not lost a family member [to HIV/AIDS]."[39] Another explained that her weekends are so consumed with funerals that she is unable to get any free time to do her chores.[40] Although no explicit questions were included in the instrument in regards to the HIV/AIDS-status of the interviewee, when the issue arose in the focus groups it was implied that many women sitting in the room were either HIV-positive or had dealt with the consequences of HIV/AIDS within their immediate families. Almost all women mentioned they lost a family member due to HIV/AIDS.

There was often a disagreement in regards to the cause of HIV/AIDS-related stigma. Many women explained that certain aspects of the clinic led to stigma about HIV/AIDS. They said this because clinical procedures made the condition evident through separate patient beds for HIV-positive patients and the delivery of food packets and medicine to HIV-positive individuals. Alternately, a more micro-level stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS was stated as well: "[People] didn't have sex like they do now. Now people have more sex and that is why you have so many diseases."[41, 42] Most interviewees said that the community often sees men as victims and women as perpetrators when HIV/AIDS strikes a family. One woman stated, "Even in marriage if my husband dies, then the family does not want to accept that he [contracted] HIV/AIDS. When he gets ill it is suspected that I have infected him".[43]

Many of the women talked about when a family member gets sick (either due to an HIV/AIDS-related disease or other diseases), the women are forced to halt their lives and take care of the patient. One woman stated that when there were two family members sick in her house, she was on the verge of suicide because it became very difficult for her to bear the emotional and physical pain of taking care of several sick family members.[44] RWM members frequently depend on communal help because they get no assistance from other sources. As one woman said, "When my mother was sick, [clinic workers] did not come and help us. They didn't do anything."[45]

3. Effects of HIV/AIDS orphans on women's lives in amaHlubi

The growing number of HIV/AIDS orphans in the amaHlubi community often dominated our discussion on HIV/AIDS. The community itself has simply been unable to accommodate

36 Individual interview 2b, May 2007.

37 Many women work or have worked on farms. When women were employed in the technical, business, or management positions they often worked part-time or a couple of times a week.

38 Focus group A, May 2007.

39 Individual Interview 3a, May 2007.

40 Focus Group B, May 2007.

41 Focus Group A, May 2007.

42 This woman was between the ages of 21 and 37. It was striking to hear that a younger woman was under the impression that the increased HIV/AIDS infections were due to heightened sexual activity. There is no way to measure the amount of sexual activity which the people in amaHlubi participate in. Although this may be a minute reason for increased HIV/AIDS infections, this argument would disregard the lack of social infrastructure to deal.

43 Focus Group B, May 2007.

44 Individual Interview 3a, May 2007.

45 Focus Group A, May 2007.

the vast amount of orphans due to the lack of monetary assistance from government. Thus, the care of orphaned children in the amaHlubi community has been left in the hands of these gracious women. Younger women are increasingly becoming caretakers, but the majority is over 35 years of age. The women in our study were responsible for anywhere between one and twenty-one dependents, with most being orphans. One 24-year-old woman stated, "At home our orphans are too many because I am so young. I am staying with orphans with AIDS and my one child is nine. We don't have money to buy food, to buy salt, so we need people that can help us [with] those children. I am not working".[46] More than half (55%) of the women are currently taking care of HIV/AIDS orphans in their homes. Women estimated that there are approximately 1000 to 2000 orphaned children (up to 10% of the community's population) in the amaHlubi community. Between the forty-one women interviewed there were fifty orphaned children under their care. Women recognize the importance of orphan care despite its challenges because as one very active older woman stated, "The challenges that we are faced with as parents is to take care of the orphans and show them the way [otherwise] we are going to have serious crime in our country". Another woman stated, "Next door to our place we have [girl] orphans that are being beaten by their boyfriends and they are taking the beating because [boyfriends] are seen as the source of income.[47]

RWM members help women and youth as much as possible, but resources often limit their ability to assist others. RWM aids HIV/AIDS orphans and community members that care of orphans in small ways. Women stated that RWM buys school uniforms and meals for the orphaned children. Furthermore, one woman stated that RWM assists her in raising orphaned girls because now she teaches them to empower themselves as women and community members.[48]

4. Effects of gender inequality on women's lives in amaHlubi

Gender inequality is a reigning issue in members' lives. Several women explained that not only husbands, but also male and female family members had little understanding of gender equality. One woman stated that when she moved into her husband's paternal house, her brother-in-law used to beat her and her mother-in-law would treat her like a servant. Many women explained that they saw no way out of the cycle of abuse when their own family members mistreated them. One woman explained that her "husband's pension plan is the only source of income [in their family], and he spends all his money on liquor."[49]

Another woman explains the life of her late brother:

> My brother who passed on was very abusive. He used to abuse [my] children and he used to abuse me; he would throw things at me. My typical day involves reminding the children of how my brother was treating us…and that he was like that because of peer pressure. He started drinking at an early age [and it eventually caused his death]. I always tell my children, if they don't go to school they will die like my brother.[50]

Although women are often mistreated in the amaHlubi community there have been strides to improve the attitudes of men in regards to gender equality. As one woman stated, "Through RWM I am able to do anything regardless of my gender. People used to look down upon women that participate [in the public sphere]".[51] The changing of men's perception of gender equality is illustrated in the amaHlubi community's struggle to change customary law regarding community government. According to the traditional law, upon the amaHlubi king's death, another man will replace him even if the queen is still alive. According to our interviews the customary law is now

46 Focus Group B, May 2007.

47 Focus Group A, May 2007.

48 Focus Group B, May 2007.

49 Focus Group B, May 2007.

50 Individual Interview 3a, May 2007.

51 Focus group B, May 2007.

changed so that the queen[52] will take the throne upon her husband's death. One woman elaborates, "We managed [to convince the men] that women can be counselors in the community".[53]

The HIV/AIDS epidemic affected family structure as well. Women who grew up in the HIV/AIDS epidemic were must less likely to be married than those born in previous generations. All of the older women (35 years and older) were married by their early 20s. But none of the women between the ages of 18-30 were married. This indicates that there is a decreasing rate of marriage in the amaHlubi community due to high rates of AIDS-related death of 18-34 year olds. The older women between the ages of 30-50 were widows, most losing their husbands due to HIV/AIDS.

The Role of RWM as a Support System for amaHlubi

All but one of the women interviewed[54] explained that their lives have improved significantly since joining RWM. Many of the interviewees explained that the social sisterhood that RWM provides gives women a support system to navigate though daily struggles. One woman said, "Before becoming a member there was nobody to speak to. One would just sit at home and think of all these difficulties…but now because of RWM we have so many people to speak to… it can be very healing."[55]

Most of the women explained that their family reacted positively to their membership in RWM. Women often stated that after joining RWM they were able to better express their feelings and not feel ashamed to give their opinions especially to males:

> Before joining RWM I did not have a good relationship with my husband. Now when I advise him he listens to me. In the past when I went to RWM meetings he never used to like it, but now when I come back from meetings he looks forwards to hearing what we talked about in the meeting.[56]

Women said that after joining RWM and attending the meetings where open dialogue is encouraged, they felt more confident and assertive.

RWM members recognize that women are entitled to the rights of South Africa's Constitution, and they are provided translated version (from English to isiZulu) by RWM. Many of the women explained that knowing their rights was the single most important step towards becoming empowered as rural women. As one woman explained, knowledge gained through RWM has changed the way many women live their lives: "For me RWM means knowledge. By being involved in the RWM I have gained a lot of knowledge and I am sharing that with other people."[57]

To many women, in addition to social support and empowerment, RWM serves as a political tool, especially in regards to land rights. After the women become knowledgeable about their rights to own property, RWM assists women in executing the laws of their country: "For almost all the members of the South Africa's Rural Women's Movement (RWM), land offers a means of alleviating poverty, generating income, and paying for their children's education."[58] One woman stated that when she joined the movement she was evicted from her house due to her husband's death. She said, "My property was taken from me and I could not speak in a meeting like this; I just wanted to die."[59] She explained that she was in "big trouble" and she "couldn't talk to anybody." RWM was able to give her the social support that she lacked by provided legal assistance, educating her on the legal process and emotional support. "[RWM] helped [me] when [I] lost

52 The Queen of the amaHlubi community has been an active chairperson of RWM for the past 7 years.

53 Individual Interview 2e, May 2007.

54 The remaining woman had recently joined RWM and said she could not make this judgment.

55 Individual Interview 3a, May 2007.

56 Individual Interview 3b, May 2007.

57 Focus Group B, May 2007.

58 Ngubane, Sizani. "Rural Women's Movement," Rural Women's Movement, www.rwm.org.za/articles/rwmarticle (accessed October 9, 2007).

59 Focus Group B, May 2007.

[my] house. Sizani [founding director of RWM] called [me] and told [me] to join RWM. They introduced [me] to a human rights group. They supported [me]." After her daughter passed away in 2005, she was told by RWM and the human rights group of her right to bury her daughter on her reclaimed property. Women often emphasized the social support network that RWM provided in legal settings, which encouraged them to pursue the necessary legal actions.

Many of the women were able to explicitly state the connections between the lack of diverse female representation in government and the state of their current lives. One woman explained this in relation to South Africa's expanding capitalistic economy: "[The government] uses the women in parliament to make the decisions for us. They don't know our needs, Winnie Mandela[60] doesn't know our needs, they need to let us go there and express our own feelings."[61]

Furthermore, customary law, which resides over the immediate community, has strong patriarchal influences, and fighting against it has proven very difficult. As McEwan explains, these debates are viewed as a contest between feminism and South African tradition.[62]

When women were asked where they see themselves in ten years, they often stated that they would be in some line of social or public work. One RWM member explained that after joining RWM in the amaHlubi community, she moved to another community where she was able to set up committees of women to generate income and provide for the social welfare needs of the area.[63] Women also stated that members of RWM have taken the initiative to provide home based care to bedridden HIV/AIDS patients including food provision when necessary. Some women have taken leadership roles in providing services, while others have taken the role of recruiting more RWM members.

Research Limitations

There were limitations in this study which should be accounted for. First, since RWM is such a dynamic and progressive movement that women greatly benefit from, it may have been difficult for the women we interviewed to analyze the negative implications of RWM. Cross-sectional and comparative methods could have addressed this issue, but they were inaccessible to us due to time constraints. Additionally, the question "What are the weaknesses of RWM?" could have been better worded to "Do you feel that RWM can improve?" so that women could feel more obligated to think of the organization's weaknesses as potential rather than as setbacks. Second, RWM is a geographically isolated women's organization, and as a result women may be unable to compare it to other similar organizations. Including members with activism experience outside of amaHlubi could have assisted this situation. These members were very limited and difficult to recruit. Third, the presence of Ngubane may lead women to feel that they could not share negative feelings about RWM. Nonetheless, Ngubane is a trusted person in the amaHlubi community, and she was an ally to us during the process of this research. And as explained previously, her presence led to heightened insight into the women's lives. Fourth, some of the interview questions could have been worded to better suit the needs of non-English speaking interviewees. The question "What is your role outside of your house?" seemed to be ambiguous and often misunderstood because many women were not able to separate their public and private lives.

Conclusion

In conclusion, RWM can be used as an effective framework organization to address the social, political, and economic needs of women in rural South Africa. Our research raised questions and stimulated conversation about the issues that affect RWM's women the most. Their struggle is one with great barriers, and through dialogue we were able to illustrate the activist roles.

The results of this study indicate that there are South Africans who seek to apply their time

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60 Winnie Mandela is the wife of the first democratic president of South Africa. She took part in many women's lobbying groups, and has great influence on policy, especially in regards to women's rights.

61 Focus Group A, May 2007.

62 McEwen, 2000: 641-2.

63 Focus Group B, May 2007.

and energy to better their communities. Many women are currently doing 'social work' throughout South Africa without recognition and support because of the lack of consistent funding. In South Africa [women] comprise the majority of participants in community organizations and care activities for the sick.[64] Women in South Africa have been spearheading initiatives to improve HIV/AIDS education, eradicate HIV/AIDS-related stigma, and provide welfare services to HIV/AIDS orphans.[65] The lack of pay for the traditional roles of women in rural communities as caretakers of orphans and vulnerable children severely stifles the welfare of South African citizens.

Rural South African women face sexism and poverty on a daily basis, and these themes resonate in their women's organizations. The lack of proper schooling facilities, government representation, and transportation from rural areas to urban areas has led to a gross amount of poverty throughout many rural communities. Although changes are occurring to improve their rights, there are necessary strides that must be taken by South African communities themselves. RWM is an example of an organization that seeks to "give women the power to face and strategize about tomorrow."[66] It serves as the sole social work agency for the amaHlubi community by supporting orphaned children through education, food, school fees, and school uniforms. It also gives legal assistance in regards to land rights, communal meetings to allow women to network, and access to knowledge such as a translated version of the South African Constitution. Traditional or customary law is being questioned for its patriarchal influence. As McEwen explains, rural South African society must transform as well as legitimize discourses of 'tradition', 'custom' and 'African culture.'[67] Furthermore, RWM promotes income generation through the provision of books, computer training for women, job skill improvement through RWM administrative work, and assistance in income generating activities. I conclude that RWM, which serves the social, economic, and political needs of women and consequentially men and children, is vital to the execution of South Africa's goals to create a more egalitarian society.

Women in amaHlubi are taking on the role of community welfare workers, and their work is seldom recognized. As Ngubane stated, "Sometimes we need to be clear about whether we are employed or unemployed. Our male counterparts look down upon us because they say that we are not working. All of us are formally unemployed but we are working three times more than employed persons, [but we are] unpaid."[68] Women in South Africa's rural areas feel the greatest impact of South Africa's economy with the highest rates of unemployment, but they often contribute more than men to South Africa's welfare.[69] Women are frequently looking after their own children as well as several orphaned children. In addition, women are often subject to these labor-intensive roles, which restrict them from becoming employed or represented politically in the community.

These women could be trained and utilized by government as welfare workers, orphan care administrators, employment coordinators, and HIV/AIDS consultants. By properly funding women in these communities, we will be able to utilize the valuable skills that they have acquired to address the needs of their community and South Africa as a whole.

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64 Suich, A. "Women and AIDS in South Africa: A Conflicted History Leads to a Dispiriting" UN Chronicle, 2 (2006). http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/2006/issue2/0206p12.html.

65 Of the $3.8Billion from the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), 10% is designated for HIV/AIDS orphans and vulnerable children.

66 Individual Interview 2d, May 2007.

67 McEwan, 2000: 642.

68 Personal Communication, May 2007.

69 Pollin, R, G. Epstein, J. Heintz and L. Ndikumana, An Employment Targeted Economic Program for South Africa. (Cheltenham: Edward Edgar Publishing, 2007).

Women in organizations such as RWM regain the power to fight for their communities and for themselves. RWM has proven that by addressing the social, physical and emotional needs of female community members, women are able to lead their communities to better social, political and economic welfare. RWM is a women's movement with elements of feminism. Many of the women that participate in RWM have tremendous hope for the future because they are confident that empowered women can have a positive role in addressing the needs of their communities.

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DEVELOPMENT DISILLUSIONMENT

Reflections on Traditional Development Work

Matt Zedler

It was over 90°F. The sun burned down on my exposed flesh, and I was sitting in a hole full of muddy water, flicking the occasional leech off my leg. Another student and I were testing small-scale hydropower turbine and generator systems in Sri Lanka, hoping to determine why overall energy conversion efficiency was an abysmally low 15 percent. Practical Action, an international non-governmental organization that uses simple technology to improve lives in developing countries, had asked us, members of Engineers Without Borders, for help in understanding the performance of the small-scale hydropower units.[1] These units, which put out less than 100W of reliable power, were large enough to satisfy a family's energy needs by running a few light bulbs, a small radio, and perhaps a black & white television. The locals made the systems, dubbed "picohydro" by the two of us for their miniscule power output, from pieces of steel pipe and plate welded together and attached to a motorcycle alternator providing the mechanical-electrical conversion.

We had been working in the rural village of Illumbekanda for just over a week, trying to measure and quantify the power output of real units in the field. By the end of the summer, we would have written a four-part series on picohydro, designed a test apparatus for turbines in the front yard of one of the Practical Action engineers, and determined the low generator efficiency was really the limiting part of the simple system.

My summer in Sri Lanka was my second spent in a "developing" country. During my sophomore year at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), I first got interested in international development through a series of classes organized by former Peace Corps volunteer and MIT alumnus Amy Smith. Development was something I thought I could feel good about doing, by which I could sidestep the evils of the capitalist rat race and help "save the world." It sounded so good--simple technologies, like hand-driven water pumps, paper brick presses, and biogas generators, could vastly improve the lives of millions who lack the opulent lifestyle most of us enjoy here in the United States

For some perspective on the use of the word "opulence," the World Bank estimates that 1.4 billion people were living in "extreme poverty," defined as below $1.25 US per day, in 2005.[2] This number of people is slightly larger than the 2008 estimated population of China and 4.5 times the estimated population of the United States. In the words of a conservative talk-show host, I became a "liberal do-gooder," selflessly foregoing the comforts of home to travel to "exotic" countries, naively expecting to change the world for the better by doing so. By showing up for a few months in one place and then returning to the comforts of the West, I thought I could gather enough information to devise an ingenious solution to the basic problems of sanitation, water, energy, and food supply that accost billions across the globe.

Of course, no one told me that many of those "poor souls" whom I felt needed my help would already have devised their own solutions to fulfill their basic needs. To them, I was an over-eager tourist rather than as a savior who had come to rescue them from the ravages of their "traditional" lifestyle. The people I lived and worked with in Lesotho and Sri Lanka were as innovative and creative as any I have met in the United States or Europe, using their resources effectively to design fruit dryers and bread ovens from scrap steel, building solar water heaters from pipe and glass,

1 More information on Practical Action can be found on their website at http://practicalaction.org.

2 Tuck, M., "New Data Show 1.4 Billion Live On Less Than US$1.25 A Day, But Progress Against Poverty Remains Strong," The World Bank (2008 Aug 26), http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:21881954~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html

pressing briquettes from waste paper, and generally showing how simple technologies can succeed. In some ways, my most valuable contribution was as a source of entertainment – who would have guessed that a digital camera or a calculator could enthrall grown men and women for hours on end?

My summers in Lesotho and Sri Lanka slowly showed me that development is something that takes time and cultural investment. The local engineers working for Practical Action in Sri Lanka and Appropriate Technology Services in Lesotho were just that – locals. They knew how to deal with the people in way that my Western heritage could never fully fathom. Instead of simply building a road or constructing a microhydro unit, they would "waste" time holding community meetings, religious ceremonies, sand all sorts of process-slowing events. Even as I got frustrated with the inefficiencies, I started to understand that such "waste" was in fact cultural appreciation that would take a lifetime living in the local community to fully understand. Without such "investment," these projects wouldn't succeed because the local community was not involved. I found that my own development in terms of self-awareness, global awareness, and skills as an engineer far exceeded the benefit to anyone I met in the developing countries. I wasn't able to accomplish nearly as much world salvation as I had hoped, though I gained a greater appreciation for life in the US and found clearer perspectives on several issues.

Some of the luster has worn from my "do-gooder" attitude, and I have even acquired a few conservative ideas. Money does drive things, and even--or, especially--in a developing country, one must consider the economic feasibility of an idea. Private sector investment and small-scale entrepreneurship have a large, if not paramount, role in stimulating economic and social development. I now believe that individual dependence on government welfare must decrease for a country to prosper, and capitalist business sense can be used to improve NGO efficiency. In many developing countries, I can see capitalism emerging from the masses even as the US government turns towards socialist bailouts of failing enterprises. It is ironic that the steamed bun seller in Communist China lives in a free-market system that allows failure while the Wall Street banker who gambled on mortgage-backed securities gets a bailout check from the government of the greatest capitalist nation in the world. To me, it is clear that people will work to take advantage of the situation and become entrepreneurs if a hospitable environment is present.

Organizations such as the Gates Charitable Trust are rooted in capitalist business successes, and they can have a substantial impact on solving large-scale, world-changing problems. Without private sector profits, I wouldn't have even been able to afford visits to developing countries, as the majority of grants used for such projects are either sponsored by the private sector, or funded by hard-working taxpayers through government programs.

The purpose of this article is not to dissuade those interested in international development from pursuing that passion. Instead, I hope to impart a kernel of wisdom into some other young "do-gooder," highlighting the importance of looking at a larger picture of how to approach development. Changing the world demands a sense of global understanding and self-awareness. International development work is an exciting, often frustrating, and sometimes rewarding way to start on that path. As with most things, there are multiple ways to make a difference. The best way may not be the one that involves going to a developing country--instead, a Westerner may be much more effective working in the West through a local contact in the developing country.

Many fall prey to the myth that international development is an exhausting, fruitless career path that leaves one destitute, disillusioned and far from one's home country, but the reality can be quite different. There are four billion people who earn less than $1,500 annually, while only 100 million earn more than $20,000 annually. For those of us who have recently graduated from college, we should look at the alternatives to the seemingly more lucrative world of high-end technology and consultancy. Instead, simple, cheap solutions marketed to the people at the bottom of the financial pyramid could prove even more profitable. The number who could purchase such products is significantly greater. Examples abound, from drip irrigation systems made of recycled plastic to single-use shampoos and medicines marketed in India.[3]

While a career in international development may not be for everyone, my experience under the

3 I would highly recommend C.K. Prahalad's The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid (2004) for those wanting more examples of the large market that exists.

burning sun in Africa and Asia lit a passion in me. I realized that an impact can be made in the lives of the rural poor in many ways. In this increasingly connected world, global partnerships and creative capitalism can both serve as alternatives to the traditional development track and enhance the lives of those in developing countries.

A version of this article first appeared in MIT's Tech newspaper in 2006. Matt Zedler has since graduated from MIT (2007) with a degree in mechanical engineering, gone to work as an energy consultant in China, and returned to the technical side of energy through GE Energy's Edison Engineering Development program. He is currently living and working in Houston, Texas, while researching ways to truly make a difference in the developing world.

Coffins on Horses

Reflections on HIV/AIDS and Action

Meg Towie

I teeter as the river's frigid water swirls around my legs. Treading across a freezing mountain stream in Lesotho, southern Africa, the stinging pains that shock my bare skin fade into a throbbing numbness. With one slippery misstep, my traveling partner, Amy, crashes into the water, shrieking as she scrambles up, soaking. Our tiny Masotho companion, Nthabeleng, having effortlessly darted across the water, watches us from the bank, entertained by our antics. As we stumble toward her, a pack of men on horses ramble down the dusty path and splash through the water, heading into town.

Several hours and some very tired legs later, we reach a village perched impossibly high on the mountain to visit a young boy and his grandmother. Months ago, Mathathene would have lain, wasting, in a dark corner of his home; today, he dances outside with one foot in an old leather shoe. The healthy, giggling boy lives because of the outreach efforts of Touching Tiny Lives, my home in Lesotho this summer.

After weighing Mathathene, delivering medicine and canned food, and catching up on family news, Nthabeleng, Amy and I head back down the mountain and once again reach the dreaded river. As I tread back through the numbing waters, the same group of men rides over the embankment, startling me. I shield my eyes to watch them against the sunlight; in the silhouette I see large boxes being held against the horses' backs as they stomp towards us. In a millisecond flash, I chuckle, thinking the box is a TV that they have bought at the hardware store in town. The lines of horses and men cut the sun and snort along the crest of the hill. No longer against the sun, I see that the boxes are coffins. I feel ridiculous for my first reaction, that they were television boxes. Of course they wouldn't be. (It is those flashes that make me ashamed, perhaps, that no matter how long I live or work in a particular setting, my mind is always grounded in the relative luxury of my past.)

Nthabeleng throws herself on the dusty ground as the horses with their coffins stomp toward us. The brilliantly polished boxes look to be the work of Peter, one of many carpenters-turned-coffin-makers in town. Their lean-to shops along Mokhotlong's main dusty street once displayed shelves, now coffins. Peter's coffins are particularly beautiful, so glossy that when I walk by his shop, I am always tempted to run my hands over the coffins stacked by the tens. (Where does he find the wood? I wonder. There are no trees in these barren mountains. Probably why the coffins are expensive, why families go broke on a funeral. Why the funeral services' building is the only massive, freshly painted cement complex in town). Nowadays coffin-making is the only business making a profit in Lesotho's desolate mountains. Tiny coffins for babies, little coffins for children, big coffins for mothers and fathers. If you sit on one of the town's outer roads starting Thursday, the horses arrive and leave piled with coffins, heading high into the villages for weekend funerals. HIV/AIDS has turned Lesotho's economy into an economy of death.

Amy and I exchange panicked looks—should we prostrate ourselves like Nthabeleng? Say something? Pray? Weep? Instead, I stand, now frozen to the scene, as a heavy, devastating numbness turns my breathing shallow. I eye the horses as they splash alongside me and tread up the dry path toward the village I am returning from. I stand in a stream in southern Africa, half the world away from my home, and watch HIV/AIDS' economy of death proliferate.

I never spoke to Nthabeleng about the coffins in the river. Even being fabulous friends, there were some moments we could not fully understand—why I found passing coffins so deeply disturbing, why she did not. Why she gets her hair braided for weekend funeral hopping, one of the best ways to socialize nowadays. Why I refused to go to funerals.

While I become further entangled in issues like HIV/AIDS, places like Mokhotlong, phenomenal women like Nthabeleng, I try to abandon my emotional state, my American angle. I attempt to understand things like Nthabeleng might (which of course, I will never be able to, so maybe it's a fruitless struggle). I inadvertently think it will help me better work amidst such despair. A few days after the coffins crossed the river, I snapped at Amy when she cried about something in front of Nthabeleng who was cuddling a whimpering Leboheng. I was sure Nthabeleng would think we were ridiculous for our crying, for our unnecessary worries, for our shocked emotional systems. I later felt bad for scolding Amy.

(Leboheng died the next day in Nthabeleng's arms, in line at a hospital with no oxygen tanks for the tuberculosis treatment they had run out of. She called me crying; I had just reached a pediatric clinic in the capital city. Lebo was the child I had fallen in love with, there's always one. I screamed, cursed loudly, ran into the clinic bathroom sobbing. I didn't want the doctors to see me making such a scene. It happens every day to them. Baby coffins. Lebo's tiny coffin.)

A year after Lebo passed away, I was wandering through Altos de Cazúca, a scattering of informal homes clinging to the outskirts of Bogotá, Colombia. My host had fled violent mountains, building a home of plastic wrap and quivering tin for her family, the children that huddled on a mattress next to me. Sitting in that home, as we chatted in Spanish about family, work, water supplies, school—I realized that this did not bother me anymore. It was a tremendously disturbing moment. I didn't feel shaken, outraged by a family torn from their home, now scraping through absolute poverty.

I've become less unsettled upon further reflection of this moment. I think.

On one hand, I was almost glad that I do not respond in shock, something I associate with naïveté about the way (too) many people in this world live. That's probably very arrogant of me to say.

On the other hand, I want to work in health and development (whatever that means) for the rest of my life. I worry about how I will do this work if—in an attempt to embrace hard realities, to fade into the emotional scenery—I will abandon my anguish at coffins crossing rivers on horses. At violence tearing communities apart. At families and children in agony that (try as I might) I may never fully understand. I am afraid I will lose my sense of outrage at tiny baby coffins, at the staggering pandemics of inequality, at the political, social, and economic pathogens that consume much of the world's population.

I want to be jaded just right. So that I am realistic enough to not be quickly disillusioned by terrible scenes, by corruption, by hardship, by bureaucracy, by indifference. So that I am encouraged by small steps, small victories, small relationships, small amounts of healing and health and happiness. I want to be motivated by the inequities that can and should change. I want to be enraged that health is a human right most do not have, and that social justice is not realized. I want to be pragmatically idealistic.

I've been studying international development, humanitarian management, and public health for years now. I am so grateful for the opportunity to use these studies for reflection on field experiences, on relationships, on coffins crossing rivers. But maybe it's been too much school. My mind is fraught with debates about humanitarian intervention, about implementation ills, about contextually appropriate and culturally sensitive programming, about participation and power, about doing no harm (and if we're lucky, doing some good). I sense paralysis by analysis.

I do not want my analyzing, or the reality of devastating pandemics of poverty and illness, to freeze me in that river. The facts, the horrifying nature of HIV/AIDS, of massive inequity, have frozen responses for far too long—how do we not go numb? How do we not despair?

I do not have the answers to solve a pandemic. But I do know that there is something profoundly wrong with tiny baby coffins. And it probably doesn't matter if I am shocked or care too much or am emotionally hardened or disillusioned or cry when I need to. I'll just try to make something happen. Small steps. One healthy child at a time. One fewer tiny coffin at a time.

Meg Towle is studying community health in the UK as a 2007 Marshall Scholar. She graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 2007 with degrees in anthropology and international peace studies. Meg continues to work with Touching Tiny Lives' initiatives for HIV/AIDS-impacted children and families in Lesotho. To learn more about the organization, visit www.touchingtinylives.org.

Call for Papers

SCOUT BANANA, in conjunction with Michigan State University's African Studies Center and Office of International Development, invites you to submit a manuscript to *Articulate: Undergraduate Research Applied to International Development.*

Articulate is an undergraduate journal that publishes academic papers and writings (research papers, field work, interviews, etc.) on issues in international development, focusing primarily on African studies and healthcare issues. Our journal focuses on relationships between development, healthcare, and the African continent. *Articulate* is a forum for students to contribute to, as well as make, the debates in international development. Undergraduate students remain a vital, untapped force that can bring new ideas, perspectives, and concepts into the development dialogue. Our goal is to spark, share, and spread knowledge to create innovative change now.

Articulate is peer-reviewed by fellow undergraduate students and an appointed editorial board. Publication is based on relevance, quality, and originality. We ask for submissions that are 10-15 pages long and formatted in the Chicago Manual of Style with 200-word abstracts. In addition, we ask that the author's name, major, college, and university appear on a separate cover sheet, with no reference to the author within the manuscript.

Potential topics include, but are not limited to:

- The effectiveness of foreign aid, microfinance, and social enterprise in Africa
- Intersections of gender, religion, ethnicity, and sexuality in African development
- Ethics and development in African countries
- Historical analyses and case studies of healthcare programs in Africa
- Politics of water and medicine in Africa
- The role of African youth in development programs and projects
- Effects of conflict and forced migration on healthcare and development

In addition, *Articulate* is also seeking brief reflective essays on young peoples' experiences in Africa. Ideally, these pieces are 2-3 single-spaced pages and can take a variety of creative forms. These essays should explore how development work is from the perspective of a young person from the Global North, entering the Global South. Is it how you thought it would be? What did you enjoy and hate about it? What do you wish you'd known when you were just 'studying' as opposed to working in Africa on health-related issues? Other themes may be considered with consultation from the editor-in-chief.

Papers will be accepted until March 15th, 2009 with an intended publication date during Spring 2009. For submissions, please contact the editor-in-chief at articulate@scoutbanana.org. For more information on SCOUT BANANA, check out www.scoutbanana.org.

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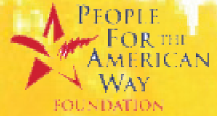
www.scoutbanana.org

YOUNG PEOPLE FOR

A PROJECT OF



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