“We are Human Beings:” Humanitarian Confinement, Refugee Bodies, and Human Rights

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ABSTRACT

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Aditi Surie von Czechowski

Focusing on humanitarian aid to refugees in the Nyarugusu Refugee Camp in Western Tanzania, this dissertation argues that humanitarianism has shifted from the care of the bodily and immediate material needs to a form of moral care inflected by contemporary human rights discourse. The camp, in operation for over 17 years, became the site of a pedagogical intervention aimed at teaching refugees human rights. Informed by essentialist understandings of Congolese culture, aid agencies enforce a version of human rights in which only women’s rights are human rights. Refugees respond to this in a variety of ways, by contesting, appropriating, or exiting the framework of rights entirely. In reading human rights discourse as a site for an anthropology of ethics, this dissertation argues against simply understanding humanitarian confinement in terms of biopolitics, and looks to black feminist theorizations of the “human” to gesture beyond human rights. It shows how Nyarugusu residents make claims based on bodily vulnerability to decolonize the “human” of “human rights,” and how, in doing so, they point us towards a politics of vulnerability grounded in an ethics of sincerity.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS:

ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AGDM	Age, Gender, Diversity Mainstreaming
AIRD	African Initiatives for Relief and Development
BID	Best Interest Determination
CCCM	Camp Coordination, Camp Management, and Governance
CEMDO	Community Environmental Management and Development Organization Tanzania
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EMAP	Engaging Men in Accountable Practices
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GBVIMS	GBV Information Monitoring System
GNI	Good Neighbors International
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IP	Implementing Partner
IRC	International Rescue Committee
MHA	The Tanzanian Ministry of Home Affairs
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Mission de l'Organisation des Nations unies pour la stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo)
OP	Operational Partner
PRM	United States Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
RCD	Rally for Congolese Democracy
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SWG	Sub Working Group
TOR	Terms of Reference
TRCS	Tanzanian Red Cross Society
TWESA	Tanzanian Water and Sanitation Authority
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VE	Verification Exercise
WASH	Water Sanitation and Health
WFP	World Food Program
WLAC	Women’s Legal Aid Commission

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DEDICATION:

To Piotr and Biko

To the residents of Nyarugusu Camp

INTRODUCTION

It takes three days to drive from Dar es Salaam on the Eastern coast of Tanzania, to Kasulu, a town in its westernmost region. The drive might be shorter if you travel by bus, if you're brave enough to drive through the night, or lucky enough not to be stranded by thunderstorms that suddenly produce walls of rain. Once you fight past traffic in Dar, you might see some meat farms, remark on the urban sprawl, the houses getting bigger, before finally trailing off to vast space in between villages. You'd see rolling blue hills near Morogoro, surrounded by tea plantations, encounter beautiful rock formations thereafter, pass through the comparatively dull capital of Dodoma, home to a smattering of vineyards. You would pass by lake Singida, make your way to Shinyanga, with its growing industrial infrastructure, then Kahama, which has surprisingly big hotels for a small town, marveling at the tubular wooden beehives attached to trees, and the sprawling but orderly fields of spiky sisal beside the highway. Passing through the Kigosi Game Reserve, you'd arrive at greener Nyakanazi, where the somewhat reliable two-lane tarmac road gives way to red dust. You'd bounce over a concrete bridge on the way to Kibondo, where the road narrows and flowers line the trees that loom over it like walls of color hewing you in. You might marvel at the beauty and diversity of the landscape, but also at the sheer amount of open space you've encountered.

And then you'd begin to see fading signposts of the humanitarian infrastructure that once dotted the Western part of the country. Former camps repurposed as clinics, schools reclaimed for local use. You would notice the white wooden posts with peeling red paint, signs with a single diagonal line through them to announce disuse, new signs announcing new incarnations right beside them. You might even miss the abrupt right turn off to the Nyarugusu refugee camp, since the half dozen or so signs bearing country flags and the logos of various aid agencies would be facing the other way. Further on, where the turns get sharper, the troughs in the road get deeper and the hills get steeper, you'd pass a military checkpoint, then catch a glimpse of part of the former camp of Mtabila, now also consigned to military use. You'd drive by farmers wheeling bicycles laden with sugarcane, or traders with an astonishing number of mattresses compactly piled onto their two-wheeled transports. You'd pass a corner dubbed "Kosovo" by locals for its deadliness. Later, you might receive news about armed robberies on that stretch of the road.

Finally, you'd arrive in the town of Kasulu, passing the creatively named "Kasulu Motel," the guesthouse that houses humanitarian delegates, and signs for various secondary schools or clinics, eventually hitting a T-junction. Turning left down a single road flanked by ditches beneath awkwardly constructed shop fronts, you would be in the center of Kasulu. If you took a right, you'd be back on an extremely short stretch of paved road that took you up a hill. On one side of the asphalt are the offices of the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and on the other, two sets of dull robin's egg blue corrugated sheet metal gates leading to the compound of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

If you drove straight through Kasulu and continued for two more hours, you'd reach the town of the Kigoma, affectionately called "*mwisho wa reli*," or, the end of the railway. Or you might skip the drive altogether, and arrive by a tiny propeller plane, swanning over gorgeous swaths of forest, then bumpily descend shockingly close to the water of Lake Tanganyika, catching sight of bright rust-red soil, a surfeit of lushness, clay-brick houses and tin roofs as you thunder down on the burnt sienna runway – half of which is gravel – and then stroll into the small two-roomed airport terminal within a few minutes.

At the edge of the clear waters of Lake Kigoma, a stone's throw from Jane Goodall's Institute, and just down the road from both the Burundian and Congolese embassies, is the UNHCR's regional office. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) too, has a presence in Kigoma, along with Doctors Without Borders (MSF), Oxfam, and other agencies that arrived when cholera broke out amongst Burundian refugees in 2015, and a former World War I German ship, the MV Liemba, already in service for over a hundred years, ferried those seeking asylum from Burundi safely onto shore. In 1997, it had been wooden boats that brought Congolese refugees to Kibirizi port, who were then shuttled to the National Milling Corporation and Lake Tanganyika stadium, and in 2017, many were still arriving the same way. In 1972, refugees from Burundi fled to Kigoma and neighboring regions. Nearly 30 years earlier, Greek refugees in transit to and from refugee camps in the Congo and Polish refugees "caused many difficulties."[1] Displacement had thus long affected the region.

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[1] Reports from Kigoma District 1943 and 1945 in District Officer's Reports - Kigoma District 1938-1955 (Tanzania National Archives). Item 16. in 1945 Report. This dissertation is constrained by the difficulty of access to archival material, places, and people. I consulted records in the Tanzanian National Archives. In theory, documents from 30 years ago are available, but in practice, delayed processing means that I was only able to access records until the mid-1970s. Ministry archives were unavailable to me. The archives of the Center for the Study of Forced Migration had moved, and were also inaccessible at the time of my research stay. However, their publications – mostly policy reports - were available, and I was informed that no studies on Congolese refugees had been conducted. The Tanzanian Christian Refugee Services (TCRS) had also moved; their archival material was locked in a shipping container that stood in front of their new offices, but the key to the container had been lost. In seeking to gain additional context for the refugee situation, I visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but upon crossing the border at Uvira, was informed that I would not be allowed to stay in the country, and was thus unable to carry out research there. My access to UN workers, offices, and meetings was often withdrawn at whim. Meetings with aid workers and officials took months to organize and often fell through. Though different discursive traditions no doubt existed within the camp, "political activity" was prohibited in the camp, which made it difficult and dangerous for refugees to speak openly about certain sensitive matters. Though local concerns about citizenship and refugee hosting no doubt inflected Tanzanian politics and inflected the way in which humanitarian governance was imposed,

I recall these journeys to situate the humanitarian presence in Western Tanzania and to remark on how Nyarugusu struck me as extraordinarily compact. Some of the camps north of it that had long been shut were re-opened last year in the face of another influx of refugees from Burundi fleeing political violence.[2] The half dozen or so signs in front of Nyarugusu doubled in number as new aid agencies arrived in the face of this new humanitarian emergency. The resources of the camp – situated on an extraordinarily small plot of land in an extraordinarily large country – were already stretched to capacity. Food rations and medical care were already inadequate. Infrastructure was already crumbling. In an earlier era, another batch of refugees from Burundi in 1972 had been housed not only in camps, but on settlements. The older refugee settlements of Mishamo, Ulyankulu, and Katumba allowed for greater access to livelihoods activities like farming.[3] Forty-odd years later, those Burundians were beginning to receive Tanzanian citizenship, itself an incomplete and problematic solution.[4] Nyarugusu offered neither the space nor the possibility for large scale farming, nor hope for eventual integration or naturalization. My research took place before the population swelled from approximately 68,000

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my interest is in focusing on the conditions created in the camp as a result. For an explanation of the effects of the humanitarian apparatus in the region, see Loren B. Landau, The Humanitarian Hangover: Displacement, Aid and Transformation in Western Tanzania. (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008).

[2] https://www.oxfam.org/en/burundi/nduta-refugee-camp-reopens-welcome-thousands-burundian-refugees; http://www.unhcr.org/afr/news/press/2015/10/56153da96/tanzania-opens-new-camps-burundian-refugees-ease-conditions-nyarugusu-camp.html

[3] Liisa H. Malkki, Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). pp. 304 – refugees may have referred to these as camps; they have also been subject to many of the restrictions on movement imposed on those in Nyarugusu.

[4] International Refugee Rights Initiative, I Can't Be a Citizen If I Am Still a Refugee: Former Burundian Refugees Struggle to Assert Their New Tanzanian Citizenship (2013). In 2007, the Tanzanian government announced that it was willing to naturalize Burundian refugees who had been in the country for almost 40 years. Approximately 162,000 Burundians were to be naturalized and moved to various parts of the country. This process was halted in 2010, and again restarted in 2014 when refugees were allowed to remain in the settlements. In July of 2017, the President of Tanzania, John Magufuli, suspended the granting of citizenship to Burundians.

to around 150,000, then decreased gradually to about 130,000, after other camps were reopened.[5] In 2013, out of a total camp population of 68,323, there were 22,652 pupils in primary school, and 8,081 in secondary school.[6] Many young people in the camp were born there, and have only ever known life under humanitarian governance. Though the school curriculum is Congolese, and elders in the community pass down stories, commemorate important historical dates, and remind them about life in the Congo, the world of the camp is the only one that they have experienced. The temporality of this "protracted situation" and that of the attendant concern with "durable solutions" deeply informed humanitarian practice in Nyarugusu. The history of refugee presence in Tanzania due to regional conflict meant that it was an ever-present component of Tanzanian government policy, and shaped local and regional concerns about citizenship, violence, and belonging.

While Tanzania had previously had a relatively welcoming approach to displaced peoples in the postcolonial era, the language of crisis and security has framed the conversation around recent refugee influxes; this has naturally had an impact on possibilities for local integration and citizenship. Despite colonial prohibitions on assimilated vast influxes of displaced peoples, Tanganyikans often welcomed migrants, whether due to natural affiliations or matters of expedience. In other cases, settler farms welcomed migrant labor. In the postcolonial era, Julius Nyerere articulated the principles of pan-African solidarity, hospitality, and "*utu*" (humanity) that underpinned a new program of openness to refugees. This included an expanded definition of "refugees" that included anti-colonial freedom fighters in exile, such as those from

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[5] UNHCR Fact Sheet – Tanzania, December 2016; https://data2.unhcr.org/fr/documents/download/53119

[6] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Joint Assessment Mission (Jam), Nyarugusu Camp, Tanzania, Final Report (August 2013).

Mozambique, Namibia, and South Africa. Refugees from independent countries like Rwanda, Zaire, Burundi, Zambia, and Malawi were welcomed both out of altruism and due to their capacity for labor under the *Ujamaa* development program. During this period, refugees were treated as “displaced” peoples, and the focus was on integrating them into the population.

Tens of thousands of Burundian refugees arrived in 1972 and were settled in Ulyankulu and Katumba, and later, after 1977, in Mishamo. This followed a series of debates in the 1960s and 70s about self-settlement for refugees (wherein they would settle independently wherever they chose to and integrate locally) vs. organized settlement. But with the Arusha and Khartoum conferences, opinion leaned towards organizing settlements.[7] These arguments persisted when it came to Zairean refugees settled in the Lake Kigoma region.

Between roughly 1961 and 1985, Tanzania had an “open door” policy to refugees. In 1990, 36,000 Rwandan refugees were naturalized.[8] After 1985, however, refugee policy began to tighten alongside liberalization, and previous attempts at sustainable solutions for refugees gave way to encampment and bare humanitarian assistance from international organizations, and even to refoulement and forced repatriation. This shift from permanent solutions was also driven by the Great lakes refugee crisis.[9] In the mid-1990s, hundreds of thousands of refugees fled conflict in Rwanda, Burundi and Zaire. Within the country, concerns about environmental degradation, violence, and the impact of refugees on host communities grew. The Tanzanian government began expressing concerns about security and instability, and a new Refugee Control Act was passed in 1998.[10] This further curtailed the rights of refugees, constrained their movements, and eliminated the prospect of local integration. Though the government gave citizenship to a number of Burundian and Somalian refugees resident in Tanzania for decades, the drive to give citizenship to those who had settled in Tanzania faced many issues and, in 2017, was discontinued entirely. Whereas the principles of Pan-African solidarity and local integration had prevailed in Tanzania for the better part of the 20th century, the move towards encampment curtailed political possibilities and futures for those who had sought refuge within its borders. [11] (Gasarasi "The Mass Naturalization and Further Integration of Rwandese Refugees in Tanzania: Process, Problems and Prospects"; Gasarasi *The Tripartite Approach to the Resettlement and Integration of Rural Refugees in Tanzania;* O. L. Kweka; Rutinwa; Van Hoyweghen; Chol; Rutinwa and Kamanga; Musoke *The Negative Environmental Impacts of the Influx of Refugees in the Kagera and Kigoma Regions of Tanzania;* Whitaker; Musoke *From Hospitality to Total Hostility: Peasant Response to the Influex [Sic] of Rwandan and Burundi*

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[7] Benson C Nindi, "Africa's Refugee Crisis in a Historical Perspective," Transafrican Journal of History 15 (1986). Pp. 101.

[8] Charles P Gasarasi, "The Mass Naturalization and Further Integration of Rwandese Refugees in Tanzania: Process, Problems and Prospects," Journal of Refugee Studies 3.2 (1990).

[9] Sreeram Sundar Chaulia, "The Politics of Refugee Hosting in Tanzania: From Open Door to Unsustainability, Insecurity and Receding Receptivity," Journal of Refugee Studies 16.2 (2003). Pp. 160. The

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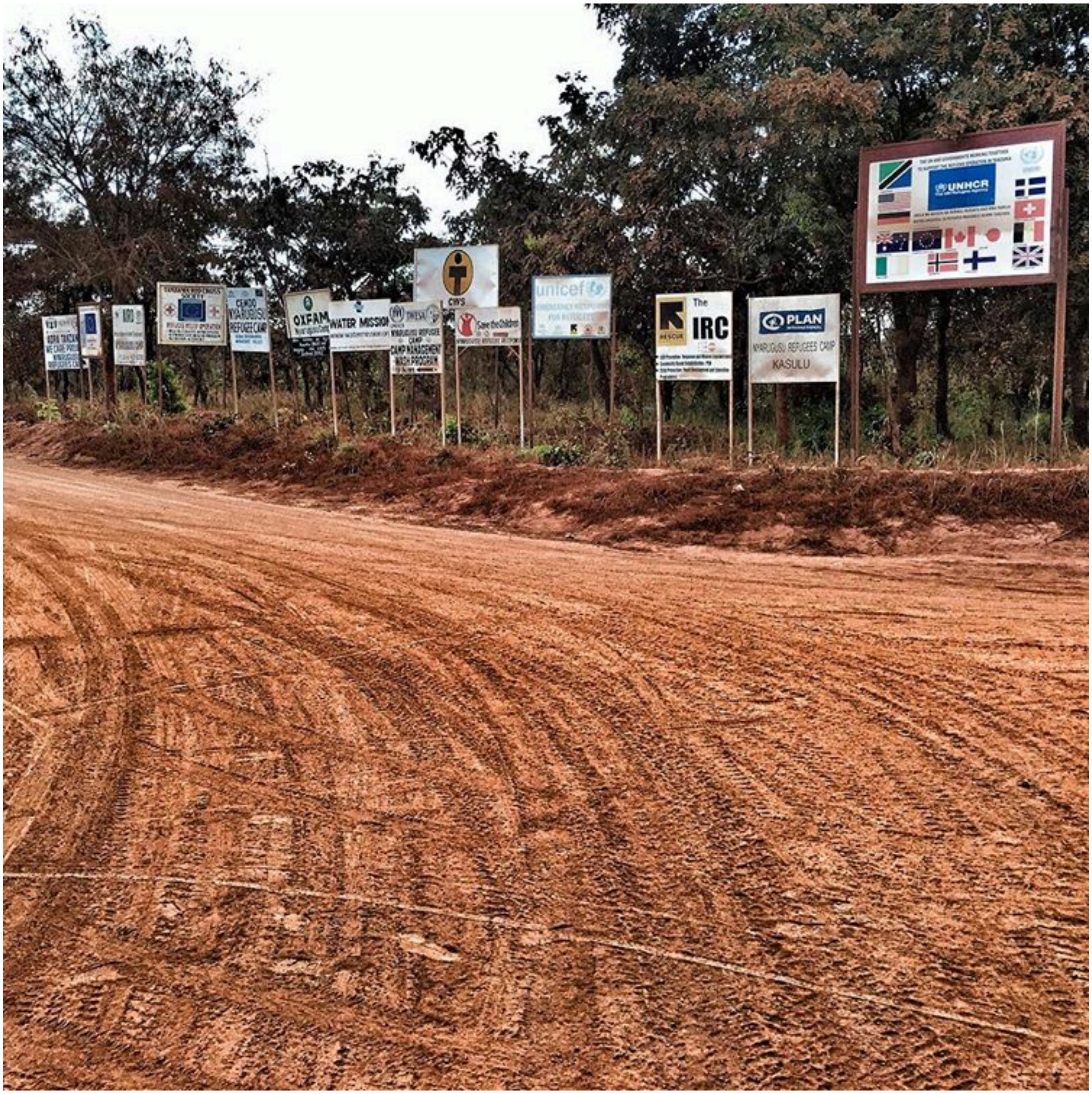
[10] For an overview of the shift in refugee policy in Tanzania, see: James Milner, "Two Steps Forward, One Step Back: Understanding the Shifting Politics of Refugee Policy in Tanzania," New Issues in Refugee Research; Policy Development and Evaluation Service,
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Research Paper No. 255 (2013).

[11] See also: Gasarasi, "The Mass Naturalization and Further Integration of Rwandese Refugees in Tanzania: Process, Problems and Prospects.", Charles P Gasarasi, The Tripartite Approach to the Resettlement and Integration of Rural Refugees in Tanzania (Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1984), Opportuna Leo Kweka, The Impact of Structural Adjustment Program on the Refugee Policy in Tanzania: Implications for Survival Strategies of Burundian Refugees in Camps (ProQuest, 2007), Bonaventure Rutinwa, "The Tanzanian Government's Response to the Rwandan Emergency," Journal of Refugee Studies 9 (1996), Saskia Van Hoyweghen, "Document. Mobility, Territoriality and Sovereignty in Post-Colonial Tanzania," Refugee Survey Quarterly 21.1 and 2 (2002), Anthony Ayok Chol, "The Influence of Law and Related Factors in the Integration of Refugees in Tanzania," International Journal of Refugee Law 4.2 (1992), B Rutinwa and K Kamanga, "Impact of Refugees in Northwestern Tanzania," Center for Study of Forced Migration, University of Dar es Salaam. (2003), , The Negative Environmental Impacts of the Influx of Refugees in the Kagera and Kigoma Regions of Tanzania, Beth Elise Whitaker, "Refugees in Western Tanzania: The Distribution of Burdens and Benefits among Local Hosts," Journal of Refugee Studies 15.4 (2002), Issa Kaboko Musoke, From Hospitality to Total Hostility: Peasant Response to the Influex [Sic] of Rwandan and Burundi Refugees in the Kagera and Kigoma Regions of Tanzania (1997), Malkki, Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania, Loren B. Landau, "Challenge without Transformation: Refugees, Aid and Trade in Western Tanzania," The Journal of Modern African Studies 42.1 (2004), Landau, The Humanitarian Hangover: Displacement, Aid and Transformation in Western Tanzania.

Refugees in the Kagera and Kigoma Regions of Tanzania; Liisa H. Malkki; Landau "Challenge without Transformation: Refugees, Aid and Trade in Western Tanzania"; Landau *The Humanitarian Hangover: Displacement, Aid and Transformation in Western Tanzania.*)



OXFAM
WATER MISSION
unicef
The IRC
PLAN
NYARUGUSU REFUGEES CAMP KASULU
UNHCR

Figure 1: Entrance to Nyarugusu. Photo: Joanne Mariner (reproduced with permission)

At first glance Nyarugusu is not different to other refugee camps. The architecture and the layout of the camp fit the prototypical image of a temporary refugee camp. It features hatched or tin-roofed mud-brick huts arranged in lines within plots, then clusters, villages, and zones in an arid, 28 square kilometer patch of isolated land. In the humanitarian catalog of camps, it seems unremarkable. But a closer look at camp life – the experience of everyday life and the interactions between humanitarian aid workers, refugees, and asylum seekers – reveals something new about humanitarianism itself. This dissertation contributes to our understanding of both humanitarianism and contemporary human rights discourse and practice.

I argue that humanitarianism has shifted from the care of the bodily and immediate material needs to a form of moral care inflected by contemporary human rights discourse. This new form of care is most evident in situations of protracted displacement and encompasses a primary concern central to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR): Protection. Looking at the ways in which protection efforts actually work also reveals a second troubling trend within humanitarian aid: offloading responsibility for care onto vulnerable people themselves, informed by discourses of "participatory development," "resilience," or "protection."

The histories of human rights and humanitarianism have always been entangled.[12] By the 2000s, the call for humanitarian responses already appealed to the doctrine of human rights. More obviously manifested in "para-humanitarian" questions surrounding military intervention and political maneuvering, it now became a part of humanitarian missions themselves.[13] "New" humanitarianism was to be "human-rights based." This rights-based approach demanded that "all humanitarian aid be judged on how it contributes to the protection and promotion of human rights."[14] Thus humanitarian aid – in no way neutral to begin with - was to promote the doctrine of human rights.

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[12] Keith David. Watenpaugh, Bread from Stones: The Middle East and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015). On the history of humanitarianism, see also: Michael Barnett, Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism (Cornell University Press, 2011), Emily Baughan and Bronwen Everill, "Empire and Humanitarianism: A Preface," The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History 40.5 (2012), Eleanor Davey, John Borton and Matthew Foley, "A History of the Humanitarian System: Western Origins and Foundations," (2013), Bronwen Everill and Josiah Kaplan, The History and Practice of Humanitarian Intervention and Aid in Africa (Springer, 2013), Didier Fassin, Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), Rob Skinner and Alan Lester, "Humanitarianism and Empire: New Research Agendas," The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History 40.5 (2012). On the affinities between writing history, humanitarianism, and the spaces of refugee camps, see Daniel Bertrand Monk The Editors, Andrew Hirscher, Miriam Ticktin, Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, Lucia Allais, M. Ijlal Muzaffar, Mark Jarzombek, Swati Chattopadhyay, "A Discussion on the Global and the Universal," Grey Room 61 (2015).

Protecting human rights became an integral part of humanitarian missions, manifested in doctrines of "do no harm" and written into "Protection" manuals. Thus the presence of human rights within humanitarian discourse – and the imperative to protect, uphold, and promote human rights – was being cemented in the early part of the aughts. Protection is not simply legal protection, i.e. upholding refugee law, recognizing refugee status, and preventing forced repatriation or *refoulement*, but also physical, extending to emergency aid and minimizing violence in countries of asylum.[15]

Furthermore, the protracted situation in Nyarugusu is by no means unique, and both the number of refugees living in protracted situations as well as the duration of protracted refugee situations has increased in recent years.[16] The Daadab refugee complex in Kenya has been open since 1991 and hosts over 200,000 Somali refugees in four camps. Palestinian refugees in the Middle East, too have been subject to humanitarian governance over the course of decades. In Lebanon, and perhaps in other Middle Eastern countries hosting Syrian refugees, where roughly 1-2% will get resettled to Europe or America, there is a growing consensus that the refugees will remain for many years to come.[17] In the case of Palestinian refugees, whose lives have been structured by the discursive and practical effects of humanitarian governance, humanitarianism does not simply constitute a "politics of life" but a "politics of living."[18] Living under long-term humanitarianism, Palestinian refugees articulate their claim to "humanitarian rights" in order to better their conditions of living.[19]

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[13] Didier Fassin, and Mariella Pandolfi, ed., Contemporary States of Emergency: The Politics of Military and Humanitarian Interventions (New York: Zone, 2010).

[14] Renée C Fox, "Medical Humanitarianism and Human Rights: Reflections on Doctors without Borders and Doctors of the World," Social Science & Medicine 41.12 (1995), Fiona Fox, "New Humanitarianism: Does It Provide a Moral Banner for the 21st Century?," Disasters 25.4 (2001), David G Chandler, "The Road to Military Humanitarianism: How the Human Rights Ngos Shaped a New Humanitarian Agenda," Human Rights Quarterly 23.3 (2001), Didier Fassin, and Mariella Pandolfi, ed., Contemporary States of Emergency: The Politics of Military and Humanitarian Interventions (New York: Zone, 2010).

[15] See United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Protection, Available: http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/protection.html, April 17, 2017.

[16] Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Program, Protracted Refugee Situations (2004).

Humanitarian aid is thus no longer simply a response to crisis, but a long-term project in many cases. The Humanitarian Grand Bargain Initiative of 2016, in which various humanitarian actors came together to articulate an agenda for changing aid to address the "humanitarian funding gap" and make aid more relevant and transparent, declares a commitment to multi-year planning.[20] Goal 10, which aims to "Enhance engagement between humanitarian and development actors," includes commitments to investing in durable solutions for refugees and displaced people, to increase social protection programs, and to invest in local and national responders. This goal points to the recognition that many contemporary situations of displacement are long term, while also displacing responsibility on to national governments and actors. Humanitarian aid becomes entwined with development aid and border control is practiced further afield; humanitarian actors may transform, but humanitarian practice continues. Under the umbrella of social protection and vulnerability, aid programs foreground concerns around rights, violence, and stability. The confluence of humanitarian aid and human rights in Nyarugusu is thus representative of a larger trend in humanitarianism.

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[17] Personal Communication, March 25, Samuel Dinger.

[18] Ilana Feldman, "The Humanitarian Condition: Palestinian Refugees and the Politics of Living," Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development 3.2 (2012).

[19] Feldman, "The Humanitarian Condition: Palestinian Refugees and the Politics of Living," 158.

[20] Agenda For Humanity, Initiative: Grand Bargain, 2018, Available: https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/3861, March 28 2018.

In Nyarugusu, this new humanitarianism became extended in yet more ways. Human rights training had already become a part of humanitarian programming in the Burundian refugee camps in the early 2000s; NGOs and observers noted the importance of human rights based programming and the "potential for the integration of human rights norms and even human rights training initiatives within the context of assistance, education, and social service activities in the camps;" this was especially true in the context of "education for repatriation."[21] The protection of human rights through both temporary and durable solutions and the design of the humanitarian apparatus created the right conditions for human rights education to emerge as part of this new humanitarian philosophy. Whereas the experience of living under humanitarian aid generated rights-based claims in places like Palestine, in Nyarugusu, humanitarian work *centered* around disseminating the language of human rights. One would no longer simply protect individuals and populations as part of the humanitarian effort, but teach them "human rights." This meant an ongoing pedagogical campaign to instill the abstract values of human rights, often seen as being at odds with Congolese "customs and traditions," in the refugee population in Nyarugusu.

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[21] Jennifer Moore, "Alchemy of Exile: Strengthening a Culture of Human Rights in the Burundian Refugee Camps in Tanzania, The," Wash. UJL & Pol'y 27 (2008). pp. 159

But this educational effort wasn't simply about teaching people *their own* rights. It was meant to teach them about the rights of others, specifically, the rights of women and children. Feminists have long sought to include women in human rights; "Women's rights are human rights" became a rallying cry and led to the promulgation of new legal norms and instruments.[22] Lila Abu-Lughod has argued that this framing of women's rights as universal human rights became successful.[23] I argue that in Nyarugusu, *only* women's (and children's) rights are human rights. These rights were those that were encompassed in the sphere of "human rights" and "gender based violence." They aimed to protect children from excessively harsh disciplining, early marriage, and work, and to save women from sexual harassment and abuse, intimate partner violence, forced marriage, widow-inheritance, dowry related violence, and human compensation. Human compensation (*fidia*) – the practice of giving a female child up to repay a debt - figured as a particularly problematic practice that demanded societal awareness and moral correction. Huge emphasis was placed on reporting gender based violence to the appropriate aid agency sector and accountability; i.e. pursuing legal action against perpetrators. Interventions were not simply limited to legal education and rights-talk but extended to the sphere of sexuality and care. The International Rescue Committee held "parenting" classes that encouraged parents to nurture their children in specific ways, while young boys and girls were advised on healthy forms of courtship.

So what does this "human rights aid" *do*? In this dissertation, I look at facets of the humanitarian operation in Nyarugusu to illustrate how the need for human rights education is rationalized, and how the process of educating refugees about rights unfolds. I follow what happens to refugees, particularly women, in their encounters with aid agencies within the context of gender based violence, and ask how the material conditions of the camp structure behavioral norms, social relationships, and anxieties. I look at the ways in which camp residents respond to or "poach" from human rights language to make new meanings, and examine some of the narratives they employ to describe their condition.

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[22] Charlotte Bunch and Niamh Reilly, Demanding Accountability: The Global Campaign and Vienna Tribunal for Women's Human Rights (United Nations Development, 1994), Julie Peters and Andrea Wolper, ed., Women's Rights, Human Rights: International Feminist Perspectives (New York: Routledge, 1995).

[23] Lila Abu-Lughod, "Dialects of Women's Empowerment: The International Circuitry of the Arab Human Development Report 2005," International Journal of Middle East Studies 41.01 (2009).

I suggest that the claims that emerge within the parameters of refugee/aid worker interactions point to a differential set of understandings about what something like "fair treatment" or adequate humanitarian aid should look like. These claims draw from across a spatio-temporal imaginary of well-being to center vulnerability, especially bodily precarity, as the grounds for being truly human. It is by looking at the "human" of "human rights" that we might be able to open up questions anchored in decolonial thought that could begin to undo the fact of lives mattering unevenly across the world.

The first three chapters in the dissertation focus on the mechanics and discourse of aid intervention. The final three chapters attempt to describe refugee experiences of humanitarian aid and confinement. Chapter one sketches the contours of aid work related to human rights in the camp. It details what I call "human rights aid" - the ongoing pedagogical activities aimed at cultivating a rights-upholding camp resident. This chapter explains the fora within which refugees come into contact with human rights language and training. It shows how abstract rights are privileged over material ones, and examines some of the ways in which refugees respond to this new training. Following discussions about gender based violence and how they intersect with ideas about “culture and tradition,” I show how women have become the focal point for human rights education in the camp.

Chapter two shows how the mandate for protection is transformed into a demand for greater complicity and collaboration. It shows how refugees are now expected to take part in their own care and protection. Following the infrastructure of gender based violence programs in the camp and the case of a woman seeking to avoid being given to another family as compensation (*fidia*), it portrays the impossible demands made on refugees. This logic of partipication is not simply limited to showing up and doing the work; not only must they help themselves, they must also know how to help themselves, and express this knowledge adequately in interactions with aid agencies.

The next chapter also has to do with the construction of knowledge. It describes how knowledge produced on refugees has been informed by policy concerns within Tanzania, and how the repetition of certain understandings of refugee life has informed humanitarian attitudes. It revisits a new genre of humanitarian operations: the meeting. Closely tracking meetings – amongst aid workers, between aid workers and camp residents, and amongst residents – I show how these formalized gatherings produce different sensibilities and forms of knowledge amongst the parties involved. Again, such meetings also form part of the humanitarian demand for participation. They reinscribe the demand for refugees to participate in the humanitarian apparatus of which they are subjects, and require a new kind of sociality in the camp: meetings.

The conditions of humanitarian confinement also give rise to a set of dangers and ethical concerns. Chapter four examines spatio-temporal and historical narratives of the Democratic Republic of Congo that inflect camp life. Looking closely at cases involving resettlement and refugee incentive workers who disseminate discourses of human rights amongst their peers, it portrays the norms and ethical orientations that are structured by ordinary life in Nyarugusu. It looks to the field of possibility generated by ethical language, and what that can tell us about human rights.

Having described the exilic imaginaries that inform life and ethics in Nyarugusu, I move to a discussion of how refugees understand the condition of refugeehood. The circulating discourse of human rights language in the camp also sheds light on how refugees make claims on humanitarian agencies. I look at narratives the draw from and interrupt biographies to show how the poaching of aspects of human rights language informs new kinds of claims to dignity that do not fit within the parameters of liberal rights, but are based on a reciprocal sociality and grounded in the body. Chapter five begins to make moves towards a different political register that becomes evident through refugee claims in the face of the humanitarian failure to uphold human rights. It shows how refugees insist that their vulnerable bodies form the basis of a response to them as human beings. Both chapters four and five draw on narratives of animality, witchcraft, and zombie life that unsettle understandings of refugee life based on the concept of biopolitics.

The final chapter dwells on moments of dark laughter in the camp. I consider laughter and concomitant exhalations of breath as invitational moments that gesture towards vulnerability and openness. Relating the laughter in the camp that emerges in relation to violent moments, whether present or past, I argue that it recalls the grotesque realism of non-liberal thought that sought to destroy abstractions by pulling them back into the realm of the fleshly. I suggest that a politics of vulnerability might provide an alternative to human rights discourse, and sketch the limits of empathy as a mode of relating to others.

Throughout this dissertation, my work has been guided by black feminist scholarship, in particular, the work of Sylvia Wynter on what it means to be human, and Hortense Spillers' differentiation between the flesh and the body.[24] Much thinking on refugees has focused on notions of home, belonging, and identity. Contributions that aim to center the refugee as a political figure have tended to frame their objects in terms of biopolitics. Black feminism(s)' focus on the human provides an alternative to 'bare life' discourse; it challenges the universality of biopolitics as an explanatory framework while allowing us to understand the ways in which such discourse constructs its object of analysis. Christina Sharpe's meditation on the "wake" and the continuing reverberations of slavery, social and physical death is also an instructive way of seeing the forms of historical violence that persist into the present and thinking about how to approach the question of the human.[25] I should pause to note that in presenting my work at various stages, I have never been asked to justify references to thinkers like Agamben, Foucault, or Asad. Nor have I been asked to justify my references to "feminist theory." But I have always been asked to justify my use of "black feminist theory." And despite the overwhelming consensus in the academe that intersectionality "is a thing," I have nevertheless found it necessary to provide a detailed explanation of why black feminist thought is relevant to and appropriate to my work.[26]

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[24] Sylvia Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, after Man, Its Overrepresentation--an Argument," CR: The New Centennial Review 3.3 (2003), Hortense J. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," Diacritics (1987).

[25] Christina Sharpe, In the Wake: On Blackness and Being (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016).

Perhaps these demands stem not simply from the dismissal of the lived experience of marginalized populations as well as ways of theorizing that don't hew to rationalist assumptions or traditionalist scholarship (I am thinking of the kinds of theoretical contributions in black studies that take the shape of new narrative forms), but also from the misconception that black studies is simply the study of black people, which is an incredibly reductive view. On the other hand, within Black studies, scholarship has tended to focus on the experience of diasporic blackness in America (including the Caribbean), and to some extent, in Britain, less so in Europe. But this geographical restriction runs the risk of erasing the kind of racialization at work on a planetary scale. The always already racialized practices of humanitarianism are also always already gendered. Black feminist thought provides the tools with which to understand the intersection of race and gender within the context of humanitarian care that foregrounds African refugee women as the victims of gendered violence, as well as the conceptual and methodological entry points that would allow us to examine the experiences of a a diasporic, forcibly displaced, non-white population under the governance of an international (read Western) regime of power. I take up the contributions of this scholarship that seeks to undiscipline more as a methodological approach than a theoretical basis for understanding what Nyarugusu means. This is especially true because the history of human rights is always already a history of "the human."

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[26] Brittney Cooper has written eloquently on the justifications demanded of black feminist theorists, its attention to survival in the face of continued violence and assault, as well as the kinds of critical questions it must attend to now. Brittney C. Cooper, "Love No Limit: Towards a Black Feminist Future (in Theory)," The Black Scholar 45.4 (2015). Cooper also reminds us of the dangers of "putting black feminism on a pedestal" and of treating it as simply an intervention into feminism (pp. 13-16); inasmuch as it reveals the nature of institutional power, its strength also lies in revealing the kinds of epistemological dilemmas that haunt the work of humanitarianism as well as its critique. Though I have tried my best to avoid these pitfalls, I remain aware of my position in writing about black feminism as a non-black woman of color. Indeed, we must continue to ask, as Katherine McKittrick has, "what happens when black (social) death is theorized by non-black scholars?" Katherine McKittrick, (14 March, 2018), vol. On intersectionality, see Kimberle Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," U. Chi. Legal F. (1989).

Keguro Macharia argues that we must pay attention to discourses and practices that seek to "un-human" others and to insistently pose questions about the "human" that have been obscured by them, because "to cede the human to disposability's logics and practices risks ceding all claims based on the status of human, be they enshrined in national or international law, taught as forms of ethics or morality, or practiced as kinds of common sense."[27] My colocuters in Nyarugusu engaged not only in ethical autopoesis but also articulated a philosophy of humanness that refused the notion of human in human rights, and it is thus to them that I owe my greatest theoretical debt.

In thinking of the so-called universals expressed within articulations of human rights, I also want to explore the question of how we might address this question of humanness. Kwasi Wiredu writes of the human thus: "The human constitution of flesh and bones, quickened by electrical charges and wrapped up in variously pigmented integument, is the same everywhere; while there is only one world in which we all live, move, and have our struggles…"[28] The human is thought of as essentially biological, and therefore, able to share conceptual universals.[29] I argue not only against a "biological" (as distinct from bodily) notion of the human, but also for the kind of epistemological decolonization that Wiredu calls for in his larger project. I do so by taking ideas of humanness that emerge in the crucible of humanitarian confinement very seriously, as well as by drawing on the work of those like Wynter who seek to decouple "Man" from "the human."

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[27] Macharia writes this in the context of violence against Somali communities in Kenya. Keguro Macharia, "Disposability and to Un-Human," Gukira: With(out) Predicates (Nairobi: 2014), vol.

[28] Kwasi Wiredu, Cultural Universals and Particulars (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996). pp. 23

Wynter thinks about being human as praxis; i.e. not as a static state of being but something that is constantly being (re)made. Human beings are not biocentric, but hybrid creatures.[30] In fact, "… the West, over the last five hundred years, has brought the *whole* human species into its *hegemonic*, now purely secular (post-monotheistic, post civic-monohumanist, therefore, itself also transumptively liberal *monohumanist*) model of being *human*. This is the version in whose terms the human has now been redefined, since the nineteenth century, on the *natural scientific model* of a *natural* organism."[31] This model of the human is also said to preexist other models of human societies, in which things like culture or tradition or religion are superstructural.[32] "All the peoples in the world, whatever their religions/cultures, are drawn into the homogenizing global structures that are based on the-model-of-a-natural-organism world-systemic order. This is the enacting of a uniquely secular liberal monohumanist *conception* of the human – Man-as-*homo oeconomicus* – as well as of its rhetorical overrepresenting of that member-class conception of being human (as if it is the *class of classes* of being human itself)."[33] Wynter conceives of the human as *homo narrans* – "a hybrid-auto-instituting-languaging-storytelling species"[34] – in other words, "we are *simultaneously* storytelling *and* biological beings."[35] This is both problem and solution; *homo narrans* itself constructed an origin story of humanity that posed *homo oeconomicus* at its center, but it is the recognition of human as Fanonian bios/mythoi that will allow us to deconstruct the epistemological project that cast black, poor, non-white, and queer bodies outside of "human." Instead of talking about being human, we should be talking about genres of being human, and the ways in which the human is "overrepresented;" for example, in formulations like 'human rights' and 'crimes against humanity.'[36] As in the case of female genital mutilation/circumcision, the practice of *fidia* in the camp (in which a female child is given in compensation for a debt, whether that of a human life or a monetary debt) underscores the ways in which "humanity" is narrowly conceived; "the very deployment of humanity functions as a juridical political device, precisely because it ignores the effects of the category."[37]

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[29] Wiredu's project of conceptual decolonization, nevertheless, is a crucial one. For a critique of his notion of cultural universals, see Ademola Kazeem Fayemi, "A Critique of Cultural Universals and Particulars in Kwasi Wiredu's Philosophy," TRAMES 15(65/60).3 (2011).

[30] Katherine McKittrick, ed., Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2015). pp. 17.

[31] McKittrick, ed., Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis. Pp. 21

[32] McKittrick, ed., Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis. Pp. 21

This conception of human as essence plus superstructure (of race, culture, religion, etc.) is what allows for abstractions like human rights to be used in a universal and universalizing sense and thus also on a global scale:

> "our conceptualizations of the human are produced within an autopoetic system. The problem of the Human is thus not identity based per se but in the *enunciations* of

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[33] McKittrick, ed., Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis. Pp. 21

[34] McKittrick, ed., Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis. Pp. 25

[35] McKittrick, ed., Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis. Pp. 29

[36] McKittrick, ed., Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis. Pp. 37-39

[37] McKittrick, ed., Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis. Pp. 103-104

> what it means to be Human…enunciations that are concocted and circulated by those who most convincingly (and powerfully) imagine the "right" or "noble" or "moral" characteristics of Human [sic] and in this project their *own* image-experience of the Human into the sphere of universal Humanness. The Human is therefore the product of a particular epistemology, yet it appears to be (and is accepted as) a naturally independent identity existing in the world."[38]

The natural-seeming but not actually natural human being conjured as universally Human is thus foregrounded as the "human" of "human rights" in Nyarugusu. The language of human rights does not allow for differences in kinship or societal practices such as polygamy, tribal authority, or differing senses of relational value. As an absolute abstraction, "human rights" is that which we must not refuse, reconfigure, or tinker with. Its authority derives juridically, insofar as it is codified in national law, and morally, cast within differential relations of power within the humanitarian sphere.

Those who are excluded as less than human or non-human must also define themselves, but, as Walter Mignolo writes, "The epistemologies of les damnés do not seek to arrive at a perfect or true definition of the human, for there is no human "out there" beyond the Western imperial concept of Man/Human from the Renaissance on."[39] However, in making claims based on their humanity, refugees and asylum seekers in Nyarugusu are not simply insisting on inclusion within the category. They are articulating a notion of humanness based on praxis. This notion is based on one's relationship to both human and non-human environments and on the fleshly self, itself imbricated in networks of care, infrastructure, and nourishment.

If Wynter's oeuvre can be read as a rejection of disciplinary thought, it also forces us to think outside a narrative of teleological economic progress; by re-writing the past of humanness not as a biological story but as the hybridity of man as storytelling and communal, Wynter also opens up new possibilities for the future of the human. These possibilities become clear when we look at the different ways in which refugees in Nyarugusu open up the question of the human. Their claims to humanness based on embodied knowledge, careful listening, telling stories, and a general ethic of openness are instructive.

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[38] McKittrick, ed., Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis. Pp. 108
[39] McKittrick, ed., Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis. pp. 108

This effort is as much an epistemological one as an ontological one, but it has a different tenor than the kind of project of historicizing the world that casts those like Nyarugusu residents as “conscripts” of a modern, civilizing mission.[40] David Scott writes that we need a new history of the post-colonial present, and that “…what is at stake here is not whether the colonized accommodated or resisted but how colonial power transformed the ground on which accommodation or resistance was possible in the first place, how colonial power reshaped or reorganized the conceptual and institutional conditions of possibility of social action and its understanding.”[41] Though Nyarugusu is naturally embedded within a specific context with a specific history – that of the history of aid for refugees in postcolonial Tanzania, the conflict in Kivu and the DRC as well as regional political developments, the colonial history of humanitarianism and violence in the DRC, and the larger history of humanitarian aid and human rights – I wish to look at how people tell stories about their heterotemporal present(s). Many accounts of humanitarianism have detailed how it is depoliticizing and dehistoricizing, or even how it constructs different narratives of the political present.[42] These efforts are worthwhile and informative, but my intention here is less to historicize than to look at everyday interactions and narratives that reveal the moralizing demands of humanitarian aid as well as alternatives to supposedly universal concepts. One such demand sprung from the insistence that forms of community organization prevalent in the Congo and based on tribal authority were adequate ways of dealing with moral and ethical transgressions, as opposed to the language of human rights. Many framed their experiences in the Congo and their rejection of grassroots violence through the lens of religious belief. Others adopted the language but in doing so nevertheless gestured towards interstices where "the human" and "rights" began to peel apart. There is a rich poetic and literary tradition in Swahili, but the conditions of Nyarugusu give rise to narratives in direct response to humanitarianism, and it is these narratives that I take as the basis for theorizing the human and questions of rights. I do not try to interpret these, but to describe accurately the plural and heterogenous ways in which people narrate their own conditions and philosophize the world. Refugees consciously reflected on the differences between forms of life and justice in the Congo versus in the camp, as well as the implications of rights discourse and humanitarian confinement.

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[40] Talal Asad, "Conscripts of Western Civilization," Dialectical Anthropology: Essays in Honor of Stanley Diamond,, ed. Christine Gailey (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992), David Scott, Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment (Duke University Press, 2004).

[41] Scott, Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment. pp. 119

These stories are naturally inflected by histories unique to each person, but also reveal something that may be obscured by the idea that the modern world is totalizing in its circumscription of individual choices and ethical orientations. Black feminist theory that foregrounds *homo narrans* also insists on the *space for action* (and I am not talking about agency or resistance here) in the face of impossible constraints. In addition to its failure to capture the multiple registers of time, embodiment, and life, this is also why the discourse of biopolitics is inadequate to describe humanitarian power and camp life. In other words, regimes of power can never be inescapably totalizing. In the camp, despite the ubiquity of human rights discourse and the insistence on human rights as the only acceptable form of justice, refugees breathed and talked other possibilities.

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[42] See, for example Liisa H Malkki, "Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization," Cultural Anthropology 11.3 (1996), Mahmood Mamdani, Saviours and Survivors: Darfur, Politics and the War on Terror (New York: Pantheon, 2009). Chapter 1 introduces the literature on humanitarianism in more detail.

Nyarugusu residents most often gestured towards ways of openness by expressing anxieties about vulnerability (communal, temporal, spiritual, and bodily). The ways in which the experience of vulnerability is talked about in the camp also points to the possibility of rupturing secular liberal discourse surrounding rights. Contrary to the liberal insistence on equality and dignity that grounds justice in belonging to the abstract category of human beings, ideas of dignity and equality (in the general, rather than legal sense) are not tethered to an abstract sense of being human but to the visceral condition of having a body that is vulnerable. It is this sense of being human that I wish to foreground in this dissertation.

Chapter 1: Teaching Human Rights in Nyarugusu Camp

> "[The] understanding of protection means that humanitarian work is as much about ensuring respect for international humanitarian and human rights norms as it is about giving aid… This is why we have dug wells and lobbied governments at the same time, provided food aid and educated soldiers on humanitarian law, vaccinated children and reported abuses they have suffered."[43]

The "16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence Campaign" begins on the 25th November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and ends on December 10th, International Human Rights Day.[44] The goal of the campaign is to bring attention to violence against women as a human rights abuse. In Nyarugusu camp, the campaign was being run by a handful of aid organizations and refugee volunteer workers. A makeshift pavilion was set up in front of a big clay field, with neatly arranged chairs and banners bearing slogans against violence against women. Just outside of the pavilion, a band played, and school children were marching past, jaunty in their bright white and blue uniforms, each parade carrying a thin, wonky, handmade sign relating to the campaign. On the far perimeter of the field, other camp dwellers, mostly children, sat watching, unprotected from the heat and sun. As the music played, the atmosphere became cheerier, and kids broke out of their parades to show off their dance moves to the "honoured guests." Refugee volunteer health workers at the Tanzanian Red Cross performed a song and dance. A group of school girls stood nearby, giggling and speculating about me; they burst into embarrassed laughter when I addressed them. "*Kiduku!,"* they screamed, cheering on the men.[45] Finally, the performances were over, and official matters began. The Camp Commandant – a Tanzanian government official responsible for overseeing the entire camp - stepped up to the microphone, and began a speech urging everyone to respect women's rights. He yelled about child compensation, violence against women, and ending AIDS. He warned that "*fidia za watoto*" – the practice of giving up a female child in compensation for a debt - must stop, and warned that if people thought they could come and make claims about it and get resettlement they were sorely mistaken.

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[43] Hugo and Luis Enrique Eguren Slim, Humanitarian Protection: A Guidance Booklet (Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action, 2004). pp. 21.

[44] This campaign was initiated by the Center for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers University in New Jersey. The center also coordinated the campaign "Women's rights ARE human rights" at the 1993 2nd World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna. For a history of organizing, see: Bunch and Reilly, Demanding Accountability: The Global Campaign and Vienna Tribunal for Women's Human Rights.

After the merriment and the speech there were a few races: one each for girls, boys, old people and disabled people, followed by a women's football match, then a men's football match between the *sungu sungu* (community police officers – clearly much more well outfitted) and *baiskeli* (bicycle taxi drivers) teams. The disabled race was painful, almost farcical to watch, and everyone seemed highly aware of this. By now we'd been standing for almost four hours.

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[45] A style of dance popular in Tanzania involving extremely fast and complex leg and footwork.

Suddenly, the sky broke. It was pouring rain and thundering, and while the footballers were playing on, the audience took shelter under the pavilion, the holes in its plastic cover and thatched roof making it completely inadequate shelter. Everyone howled with laughter when a player slipped and fell, and cowered momentarily when thunder and lightning made their way across the skies. I had an umbrella, and huddled under it, shivering, with some children and a lawyer from one of the aid organizations. Looking across the field I wondered how the thatched roofs could possibly protect from this much rain, much less days of it.

The winners of the football match received a live goat, with much fanfare and picture taking. As I stepped to the front to get a better view, spattering myself with mud in the process, someone shouted at me to take a picture, assuming that I would have a camera. The rain had let up, but the lawyer and I knew what would happen next. “They will all get sick,” she said, shaking her head.[46]

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[46] The above description draws on Field notes, November 29, 2013

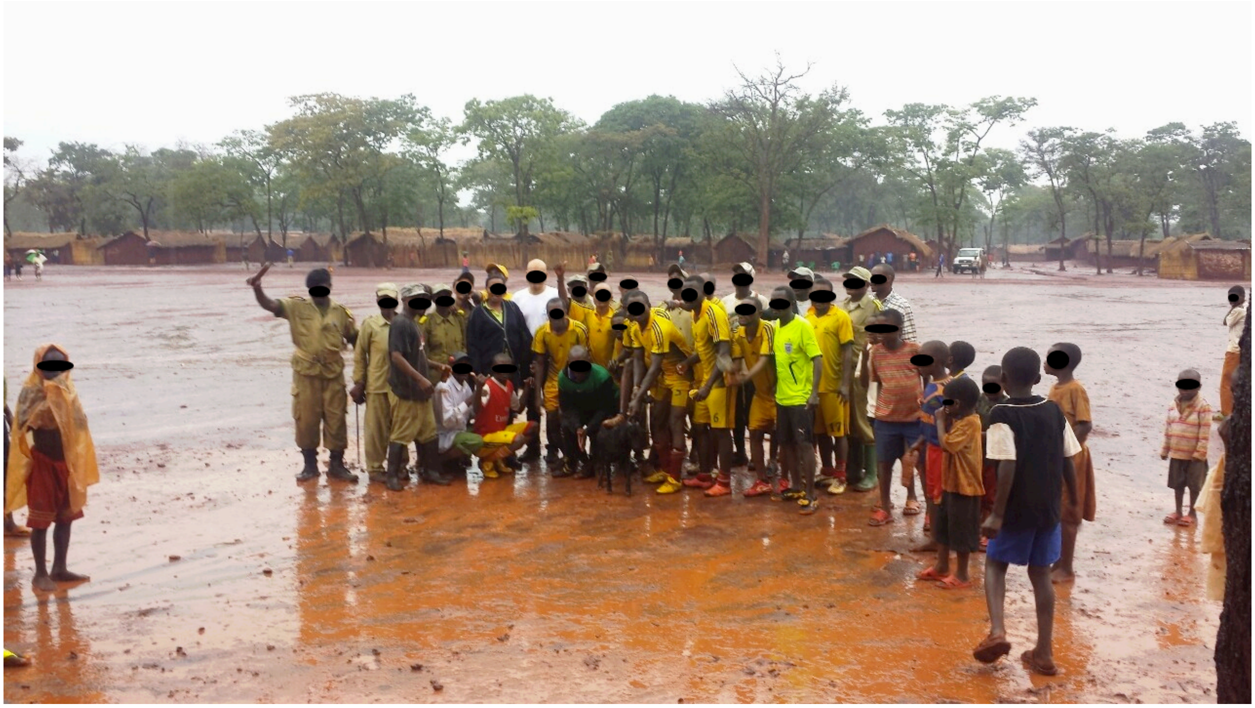

Figure 2: Winners of the 16 Day Match. Photo by author.

Life in Nyarugusu was punctuated by events like this, most, if not all, with a focus on human rights and violence against women and children. In this chapter, I will examine humanitarian interventions to alleviate the suffering of women under the auspices of human rights. Drawing on interviews and observations in the Nyarugusu refugee camp, I examine what I call “human rights aid,” which attempts to correct undesirable behavior by “teaching” human rights. Human rights are taught qua women’s rights and the rights of children. Under the umbrella of “protection,” humanitarianism has shifted from emphasizing immediate and bodily necessities to alleviate suffering to a more complicated form of moral care for its suffering objects expressed in and through the language of human rights.

Recent writing on humanitarianism has linked it to problems of biopower, the transformation of sovereignty, and global governance. Humanitarianism, taken as a whole, is "characterized by the mobilization of moral sentiments in the political sphere," and the depoliticization of suffering and history.[47] Human rights, by circumscribing injury and delineating human wrongs are guilty of the same; the increased appearance and influence of rights is tied to the expansion and entrenchment of neoliberal market philosophies.[48] There was also the matter of where human rights actually came from, and whether they could or should be genuinely universal. Josiah Cobbah argues that scholarship on human rights in Africa tends to interrogate whether human rights is an inherently Western concept and/or show that the concept of human rights (or human dignity) exists in Africa. Through examining human rights through natural rights, he argues that it "denies culture in a very fundamental sense," and thus, we should talk about rights in cultural contexts and in a manner informed by an "Africentric conception of human dignity."[49] grounded in a "communal structure whereby a person's dignity and honor flow from his or her transcendental role as a cultural being," rather than the individualist framework underpinning the concept of natural rights; this would give rise to "authentic international human rights norms."[50]

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[47] Nicolas Guilhot, "The Anthropologist as Witness: Humanitarianism between Ethnography and Critique," Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development 3.1 (2012). pp. 84 On humanitarianism, see also: Adam Branch, Displacing Human Rights (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). Miriam Ticktin, "Where Ethics and Politics Meet: The Violence of Humanitarianism in France," American Ethnologist 33.1 (2006), David Rieff, A Bed for the Night: Humanitarianism in Crisis (Simon & Schuster, 2003), Landau, The Humanitarian Hangover: Displacement, Aid and Transformation in Western Tanzania, Julian Reid, "The Biopoliticization of Humanitarianism: From Saving Bare Life to Securing the Biohuman in Post-Interventionary Societies," Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding 4.4 (2010), Didier Fassin, "Humanitarianism as a Politics of Life. ," Public Culture 19.3 (2007), Peter Piot, Medical Humanitarianism: Ethnographies of Practice (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), Chandler, "The Road to Military Humanitarianism: How the Human Rights Ngos Shaped a New Humanitarian Agenda.", Manuel Schwab, "Speculative Humanitarianism; Political Economies of Aid and Disputed Notions of Crisis," Columbia University, 2013, Michael Barnett and Thomas G Weiss, Humanitarianism Contested: Where Angels Fear to Tread, vol. 51 (Routledge, 2013), Michael Barnett and Thomas G Weiss, Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics (Cornell University Press, 2008), Alex de Waal, Famine Crimes : Politics and the Disaster Relief Industry in Africa (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), Eyal Weizmann, The Least of All Possible Evils: Humanitarian Violence from Arendt to Gaza (London and New York: Verso, 2012), Fassin, ed., Contemporary States of Emergency: The Politics of Military and Humanitarian Interventions, Didier Fassin, and Richard Rechtman, The Empire of Trauma: An Inquiry into the Condition of Victimhood (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), Barbara Harrell-Bond, and Guglielmo Verdirame, with Zachary Lomo and Hannah Garry, Rights in Exile: Janus-Faced Humanitarianism (New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2005), Fassin, Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present. João Biehl, "The Activist State: Global Pharmaceuticals, Aids, and Citizenship in Brazil. ," Social Text 80 (2004), Jean Comaroff, "Beyond Bare Life: Aids, (Bio)Politics, and the Neoliberal Order. ," Public Culture 19.1 (2007), Ilana Feldman, and Miriam Ticktin ed., In the Name of Humanity: The Government of Threat and Care. (Durham , NC: Duke University Press., 2010), Ramah McKay, "Afterlives: Humanitarian Histories and Critical Subjects in Mozambique," Cultural Anthropology 27.2 (2012). For an overview, see Miriam Ticktin, "Transnational Humanitarianism," Annual Review of Anthropology 43 (2014).

[48] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Righting Wrongs," The South Atlantic Quarterly 103.2 (2004). On limiting human rights to bodily injury, see: Robert Meister, After Evil: A Politics of Human Rights (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012). The connection between neoliberalism and human rights has been an oft-repeated, if ill-substantiated refrain in the scholarship on rights; see Samuel Moyn, Theses on the Philosophy of Human Rights History, 2015, Available: http://humanityjournal.org/blog/theses-on-the-philosophy-of-human-rights-history/. Last accessed October 12, 2015. For other critiques of rights, see: Branch, Displacing Human Rights, Jennifer Curtis, Human Rights as War by Other Means: Peace Politics in Northern Ireland (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), Harri Englund, Prisoners of Freedom: Human Rights and the African Poor (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), Jacques Ranciere, "Who Is the Subject of the Rights of Man?," South Atlantic Quarterly 103.2-3 (2004), Hannah Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1979), Issa Shivji, The Concept of Human Rights in Africa (Oxford: African Books Collective, 2007), Shivji, The Concept of Human Rights in Africa. Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question," (1844). For a problematization of human rights as imperialist and anti-political, see Talal Asad, "What Do Human Rights Do? An Anthropological Enquiry," Theory and Event 4.4 (2000).; Mamdani, Saviours and Survivors: Darfur, Politics and the War on Terror.; Jasbir Puar, Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007). Though not critical, Elizabeth Borgwardt, A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005)., shows the entanglement of discourses of rights with those of security and the ethical bases

For the philosopher Paulin Hountoundji, the fact of struggling in the face of oppression meant that one could interpret human rights as a universal concept; "Europe certainly did not

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of military and economic interventionism. On the paradoxes of rights and the subjects of rights, see: Wendy Brown, States of Injury : Power and Freedom in Late Modernity (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), Wendy Brown, "Suffering Rights as Paradoxes," Constellations 7.2 (2000), Judith Butler, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (New York: Routledge, 1990), Saidiya Hartman, Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), Elizabeth Povinelli, The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture, ed. Cary Nelson, and Lawrence Grossberg (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), Miriam Ticktin, Casualties of Care: Immigration and the Politics of Humanitarianism in France (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

[49] Josiah AM Cobbah, "African Values and the Human Rights Debate: An African Perspective," Human Rights Quarterly 9.3 (1987). pp. 309-310

[50] Cobbah, "African Values and the Human Rights Debate: An African Perspective." pp. 331. See also Josiah Cobbah and Munyonzwe Hamalengwa, "The Human Rights Literature on Africa: A Bibliography," Human Rights Quarterly 8.1 (1986). For more on the debate on cultural relativism and universalism, see Part 1 of Paul Tiyambe Zeleza and Philp J. McConnaughay, ed., Human Rights, the Rule of Law, and Development in Africa (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

invent human rights, any more than it invented the idea of human dignity."[51] Drawing our attention to the history of violence and oppression in Europe, Hountondji writes that the only real foundation for rights are human beings "who for millennia have suffered at the hands of human beings, in all countries, and throughout all cultures."[52] Mahmood Mamdani has argued that human rights are not simply Western but a "contested terrain." The real force of rights lay in achieving a meaningful definition of their agenda and the injustices they were to address. This would be done by adequately conceptualizing the issues leading to suffering in Africa.[53] Issa Shivji argued that human rights needed to be revolutionized and expanded keeping in mind the struggles of the working class.[54]

Wamba dia Wamba, on the other hand, had written that though the expansion of human rights may be positive, he remained skeptical given that the precursors to this "modern global consciousness" saw the world in racializing and dehumanizing terms.[55] The answer to contemporary challenges of inequality lay in true, global, democracy, not only influenced by Western concepts, but inflected by local needs and concepts. He writes "The deminoritisation of peoples, groups and the recognition of full individual rights is ultimately a form of emancipatory politics against the submissive consciousness of accommodation to the violation of human rights world-wide. PanAfricanism must internalise these gains to be able to become a truly emancipatory political movement."[56] Other scholars attempted to reformulate a notion of rights drawing on an alternative heritage. Kwasi Wiredu drew on the Akan notion of personhood to articulate an indigenous notion of rights.[57] An Afrocentric conception of human rights too, was possible, and need not be in conflict with universal human rights.[58]

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[51] Paulin J. Hountondji, "The Master's Voice—Remarks on the Problem of Human Rights in Africa," Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights, ed. Alwin Diemer (Paris: UNESCO, 1986). pp. 323

[52] Hountondji, "The Master's Voice—Remarks on the Problem of Human Rights in Africa." Pp. 325

[53] Mahmood Mamdani, "Social Movements and Constitutionalism : The African Context," Constitutionalism and Democracy: Transitions in the Contemporary World, ed. Stanley N. Katz Douglas Greenberg, Melanie Beth Oliviero, Steven C. Wheatley (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). Pp. 172-176

[54] Shivji, The Concept of Human Rights in Africa.

[55] Ernest Wamba dia Wamba, "Pan Africanism, Democracy, Social Movements and Mass Struggles," African Journal of Political Science 1.1 (1996). pp. 10

Writing about this internationalization of women's rights as human rights, Oloka-Onyango and Tamale pose the question of whether Western feminism determines women's human rights.[59] They are interested in the dialectic between the local and the global, and, like intersectional feminists of color, argue that "third world feminism must confront directly and become engaged in the formulation of any international women's human rights agenda and the elaboration of a cogent theory or theories in the area."[60] Feminism must recognize the socio-political structures that affect African women; "the failure to fully integrate third world perspectives into theoretical analyses of international feminism will lead only to partial solutions to the problem of the universal marginalization of women."[61] They believe that "that there are also common aspects to the phenomenon [of human rights] that transcend *all* cultures and *all* societies" and that one should endeavor to "achieve genuine universality" by sustained cross-cultural dialogue.[62] In other words, feminism that takes accounts of differing global perspectives can actually achieve a human rights that is truly universal. More recently, critiquing human rights as an alien imposition, Makau Mutua insists that it needs to be multicultural, inclusive, and assume that all cultures are morally equivalent.[63] In the same vein as Hountondji, some argue that we need a more solid ground for human rights than culture - the idea of basic dignity.[64]

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[56] Wamba, "Pan Africanism, Democracy, Social Movements and Mass Struggles." pp. 15. See also Akwasi Aidoo, "Africa: Democracy without Human Rights?," Human Rights Quarterly 15.4 (1993).

[57] Wiredu, Cultural Universals and Particulars., Kwadwo Appiagyei-Atua, "A Rights-Centred Critique of African Philosophy in the Context of Development," African Human Rights Law Journal 5.2 (2005).

[58] Bonny Ibhawoh, "Cultural Relativism and Human Rights: Reconsidering the Africanist Discourse," Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights 19.1 (2001).

[59] Sylvia Tamale and Joseph Oloka-Onyango, "" The Personal Is Political," or Why Women's Rights Are Indeed Human Rights: An African Perspective on International Feminism," Human Rights Quarterly 17.4 (1995). Pp. 693

[60] Tamale and Oloka-Onyango, "" The Personal Is Political," or Why Women's Rights Are Indeed Human Rights: An African Perspective on International Feminism." 699-700

[61] Tamale and Oloka-Onyango, "" The Personal Is Political," or Why Women's Rights Are Indeed Human Rights: An African Perspective on International Feminism." 709

Souleymane Bachir Diagne poses the question of whether an "African philosophy of what it means to be human, and as such, to have rights be caught up in a communitarian approach?" For him, the answer is a resounding no.[65] He looks to the Oath of Manden ("perhaps the most important and ancient documents on human rights in Africa") and Wiredu's Akan concept of personhood (which Diagne reads as the process of becoming a person in society but nevertheless always remaining an individual).[66] These are to inform the important task at hand, which is "critically elaborating a Charter of Human Rights by which Africa recognizes the universal and herself as a part of it. More generally, we need to create a global public square founded on public reasoning and our common humanity."[67]

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[62] Tamale and Oloka-Onyango, "" The Personal Is Political," or Why Women's Rights Are Indeed Human Rights: An African Perspective on International Feminism." 708

[63] Makau Mutua, "Savages, Victims, and Saviours: The Metaphor of Human Rights," Harvard International Law Journal 42.1 (2001). pp. 207-208. On human rights in East Africa, see Makau Mutua, Human Rights Ngos in East Africa: Political and Normative Tensions (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

[64] Simeon O. Ilesanmi, Universalism and Relativism in Human Rights Debate in Africa: A Critique of Cultural Essentialism (Talk given at a gathering of Wake Forest University Endowed Professors, November 4: 2009).

[65] Souleymane Bachir Diagne, "Individual, Community, and Human Rights: A Lesson from Kwasi Wiredu's Philosophy of Personhood," Transition.101 (2009). pp. 12

[66] Diagne, "Individual, Community, and Human Rights: A Lesson from Kwasi Wiredu's Philosophy of Personhood." pp. 14-15

Notwithstanding the critique to be made of reading human rights into history where there were none in more than one of the critiques described above, what strikes me about Diagne's call to action is that it still insists on the need for a "charter of human rights," i.e. the problem is not with human rights (as tied to law, legality, and legal instruments like charters – leaving aside their effectiveness) itself as a concept, but of an impoverished human rights that isn't properly articulated or draws on a fallacious sort of communitarianism. While foregrounding the notion of "becoming-person" within society is compelling, I remain unconvinced that such a task – including the task of articulating any kind of common humanity without undoing or redressing the historical un-humaning of large swaths of the world's population – remains possible. Arguments like those of Cobbah, Oloka-Onyango and Tamale espouse the notion that by incorporating all perspectives adequately, a truly universal human rights could be achieved. But this would not help us get out of the conundrum we currently find ourselves in with regards to the aporias and paradoxes of human rights; a better version of human rights would still be human rights.

Humanitarianism and human rights have always been linked to ideas of progress. Humaneness – the underlying principle of humanitarian struggles – was seen as a marker of evolution; humanitarian endeavors were to bring those lower on the hierarchy of development up to speed.[68] Liberal ideas of rights and self-determination legitimized imperial endeavors and civilizing missions.[69] The continuing drive to "modernize" non-European locales under the rubric of extractive capitalism also encompassed attempts to expel "traditional" practices seen as inhumane; as Gayatri Spivak has argued, women formed the ground upon which such debates took place.[70] These debates continue today: in the wider world in the context of female genital mutilation, secularization and veiling, forced and child marriage, and in the DRC, as elsewhere, specifically in terms of sexual violence, particularly in the context of conflict.[71] The attempt to stem practices like widow inheritance, child marriage, rape, and other forms of sexual violence in Nyarugusu grows out of the continual writing and enacting of the world as divided into those that are modern and those who are not, and the effort to bring the latter up to speed.

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[67] Diagne, "Individual, Community, and Human Rights: A Lesson from Kwasi Wiredu's Philosophy of Personhood." pp. 15

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[68] See Henry Stephens Salt, "Humanitarianism: Its General Principles and Progress," Humanitarian League Publications.1 (1906), Aditi Surie von Czechowski, "Humanitarianism: Histories, Erasures, Repetitions," Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East (Forthcoming), Peter Stamatov, The Origins of Global Humanitarianism: Religion, Empires and Advocacy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[69] Uday Singh Mehta, Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

[70] See Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?.", Lata Mani, "Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India," Cultural Critique.7 (1987)., on attempts to modernize India. On the eradication of footbinding as a traditional practice, see Dorothy Ko, "The Body as Attire: The Shifting Meanings of Footbinding in Seventeenth-Century China," Journal of Women's History 8.4 (1997). On child marriage, see: Eleanor Florence Rathbone, Child Marriage: The Indian Minotaur (George Allen And Unwin, 1934), Judy Whitehead, "Modernising the Motherhood Archetype: Public Health Models and the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929," Contributions to Indian Sociology 29.1-2 (1995). On dowry, see: Veena Talwar Oldenburg, Dowry Murder: The Imperial Origins of a Cultural Crime (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[71] These practices are still described in terms of "tradition" that is specifically harmful to women and children. United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Fact Sheet No. 23, Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (OHCHR, 1995). On female genital mutilation, see: Toubia Naheed, "Female Genital Mutilation," Women's Rights: Human Rights: International Feminist Perspectives, ed. Julie Peters and Andrea Wolper (New York: Routledge, 1995). On child marriage, see: UNICEF, Ending Child Marriage: Progress and Prospects (2014), Geraldine H Forbes, "Women and Modernity: The Issue of Child Marriage in India," Women's Studies International Quarterly 2.4 (1979). On religion, see: Sirma Bilge, "Beyond Subordination Vs. Resistance: An Intersectional Approach to the Agency of Veiled Muslim Women," Journal of Intercultural Studies 31.1 (2010), Sylvie Tissot, "Excluding Muslim Women: From Hijab to Niqab, from School to Public Space," Public Culture 23.1 (2011), Lila Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others," American Anthropologist 104.3 (2002), Saba Mahmood, Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004). On sexual violence, see: Poorna Sen and Claudia Garcia-Moreno Rachel Jewkes, "Sexual Violence," World Report on Violence and Health, ed. Linda L. Dahlberg Etienne G. Krug, James A. Mercy, Anthony B. Zwi and Rafael Lozano. (Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization (WHO), 2002), Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern, Sexual Violence as a Weapon of War?: Perceptions, Prescriptions, Problems in the Congo and Beyond (Zed Books Ltd., 2013). This is by no means an exhaustive list of the categorizations of sexual violence.

There has been considerable space devoted to excavating the origins and history of human rights, but I am interested in the question of what exactly it is that human rights *do*. Talal Asad takes up the issue of human rights as a liberal, secular philosophy that appeals to the state and asks just this.[72] Asad reveals the dark side of contemporary human rights philosophy and activism; it legitimizes military intervention, and reinscribes liberal understandings of suffering, pain, and subjectivity. Asad's critique of rights focuses on their global repercussions and speaks of rights at a more general level. Like most critiques of humanitarianism, it focuses on military humanitarianism.[73] My work extends upon this critique, as well as ethnographies of human rights, to show what it is that human rights do in the specific humanitarian context of Nyarugusu refugee camp, in the trenches of everyday life.[74] It looks at where human rights discursively and practically fit into larger humanitarian conversations about helping refugees and other 'people of concern,' and describes how abstractions of human rights saturate camp life and have begun to take precedence over material needs. It shows how aid workers and refugees disseminate the discourse of human rights, and how it is complexly received. Finally, it shows how the discourse of human rights is positioned as a response to “sexual and gender based violence,” and is centered on women and children. Where women in the camp see their difficulties in the context of humanitarian confinement that increases poverty and undoes social bonds through the mixing of populations from different areas, aid agencies describe this specifically as a “harmful traditional practice” that *may* be exacerbated in the camp. Though refugee critiques of humanitarianism in the camp summoned echoes of the arguments sketched above about the inappropriateness of a supposedly universal but actually provincial concept of rights, others improvised with the language of rights, not only trying to expand it, but to make it different. Some refugees rejected the ideas that rights could be useful to their lives, and others moved past the discourse of rights entirely. This dissertation will explore the multiplicity of such narratives and responses to rights in the camp. Finally, it makes gestures away from human rights towards a different kind of politics.

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[72] Asad, "What Do Human Rights Do? An Anthropological Enquiry." See also Talal Asad, "Reflections on Violence, Law, and Humanitarianism," Critical Inquiry 41.2 (2015).

[73] Fassin, ed., Contemporary States of Emergency: The Politics of Military and Humanitarian Interventions.

[74] See Curtis, Human Rights as War by Other Means: Peace Politics in Northern Ireland, Englund, Prisoners of Freedom: Human Rights and the African Poor., Sally Engle Merry, Human Rights and Gender Violence: Translating International Law into Local Justice (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006). Curtis describes the NGO'ization of local community groups and the way in which human rights discourse was mobilized to continue political disputes in Northern Ireland. Englund's thorough ethnographic and linguistic study of how human rights is (mis)translated in Malawi shows that the abstraction of human rights as freedom can disempower people. Though I do not engage explicitly with the concept of "the camp," I follow recent scholars in examining humanitarian governance in situations of encampment. See Maja Janmyr and Are J. Knudsen, "Introduction: Hybrid Spaces," Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development 7.3 (2016)., and the special section entitled "Dossier on Humanitarianism in Refugee Camps."

Nyarugusu refugee camp is located in the Kigoma region of Western Tanzania, close to the borders of Burundi and Rwanda and buffeted from the Democratic Republic of Congo by Lake Tanganyika. The nearest village is 66km away on compacted, heavily potholed dirt roads. In the dry season, thick red dust obscures visibility, and in the rainy season, the road dissolves, making driving a treacherous enterprise. From the 1970s onwards, the region had been home to a large number of refugee camps host to Burundian refugees, but from 2012 until the 2015 influx of Burundian refugees, Nyarugusu was the only remaining camp.[75] It has been open since 1996, with a steady stream of arrivals from the DRC as well as other camps, and aid workers and refugees alike referenced its 17-year history of neglect, due both to the attention given to repatriating Burundian refugees, as well as its relative isolation compared to other camps in Tanzania.

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[75] During my research, Nyarugusu was the last refugee camp in Tanzania and hosted approximately 55,000 Congolese refugees and 3000 Burundian refugees, until the recent influx of over 100,000 Burundian refugees following election violence, and the subsequent reopening of former refugee camps in the North West. For an account of Burundian refuge in Tanzania, see Malkki, Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania., and Simon Turner, Politics of Innocence: Hutu Identity, Conflict and Camp Life (Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 2010).

In the mornings, UNHCR vehicles make the hour and a half journey from the Kasulu field office. Just past the small hamlet of Makere, home to a crumbling Catholic church, a primary school, and a few small food stalls, signs with peeling paint announce the aid apparatus and the generosity of various donor countries, as well as the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Home Affairs. At the entrance to the camp, a guard lifts a makeshift log and chain barrier, allowing passage to the mostly barren stretches of the camp. Most of the trees have been cut down, either for firewood, or because they posed a storm hazard to flimsy buildings. Makeshift booths sell a smattering of fruit and mobile phone vouchers, though the remoteness of the camp means that getting a signal is a most frustrating endeavor. Women and children crowd water pumps, carrying loads back to homes of handmade brick, with roofs made of plastic sheeting and thatch, many of which leak or blow away during heavy downpours. House doors are fashioned out of salvaged wood and unfurled food aid tins or logoed flour sacks. Keeping things clean is a constant battle, for there is nowhere in the camp one can avoid the bright red soil.

Nyarugusu is what humanitarian practitioners refer to as a “protracted situation,” requiring “durable solutions.”[76] Repatriation to the home country, resettlement to a third country, and local integration are the three “durable solutions” described by UNHCR. With conflict ongoing in the DRC, repatriation is currently not possible. Resettlement quotas are limited, and the vetting process to determine who is most vulnerable (and thus prioritized for resettlement) is slow. Unlike the older Burundian settlements in Mishamo, Katumba and Ulyankulu, Nyarugusu residents have no land to farm on, and given the Tanzanian government policy of encampment and the law restricting movement to no more than four kilometers beyond camp borders, as well as the prohibition of employment, local integration is not a feasible option. Many are thus stuck in Nyarugusu indefinitely; in my time at Nyarugusu, I met a number of Burundian and Congolese refugees who had had held that status in Tanzania for the last 40 years. It is this very longevity that has created the conditions for a sustained pedagogical intervention based on human rights – a feature of aid unique to this camp. It matters too, that camp residents are mostly Congolese, because the humanitarian intervention is informed by knowledge produced about the conflict in the DRC; specifically, a narrative of the conflict as produced by ongoing and indelible ethnic rivalries and marked by horrific sexual violence.[77]

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[76] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Durable Solutions, Available: http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646cf8.html., Last Accessed October 20, 2015.

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[77] This has been a key theme in public campaigns that seek to end violence in the Congo. For more on sexual violence in the DRC, see: Lisa Ann Richey and Alexandra Cosima Budabin, "Celebritizing Conflict: How Ben Affleck Sells the Congo to Americans," Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development 7.1 (2016), Baaz and Stern, Sexual Violence as a Weapon of War?: Perceptions, Prescriptions, Problems in the Congo and Beyond, Kirsten Johnson, Jennifer Scott, Bigy Rughita, Michael Kisielewski, Jana Asher, Ricardo Ong and Lynn Lawry, "Association of Sexual Violence and Human Rights Violations with Physical and Mental Health in Territories of the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo," Jama 304.5 (2010), JT Kelly, TS Betancourt, Denis Mukwege, Robert Lipton and Michael J VanRooyen, "Experiences of Female Survivors of Sexual Violence in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo: A Mixed-Methods Study," Conflict and Health 5.1 (2011), Sara Meger, "Rape of the Congo: Understanding Sexual Violence in the Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo," Journal of Contemporary African Studies 28.2 (2010), Amber Peterman, Tia Palermo and Caryn Bredenkamp, "Estimates and Determinants of Sexual Violence against Women in the Democratic Republic of Congo," American Journal of Public Health 101.6 (2011), Harald Hinkel Thomas Elbert, Anna Maedl, Katharin Hermenau, Tobias Hecker, Maggie Schauer, Heike Riedke, Nina Winkler, and Philip Lancaster, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in the Kivu Provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo: Insights from Former Combatants (Konstanz: LOGICA: Learning on Gender and Conflict in Africa, September 2013), Llezlie Green Coleman, "Gender Hate Propaganda and Sexual Violence in the Rwandan Genocide: An Argument for Intersectionality in International Law," Columbia Human Rights Law Review 33.733 (2002).

Nyarugusu straddles the divide between precarity and stability; it is a permanently inhabited space, but given fears that it may be closed at any minute, is marked by uncertainty. It is simultaneously pronounced a space of violence and of peace, constantly under evaluation, but also fixed in the humanitarian understanding. An oft heard refrain in the camp was "*Nyarugusu ni kambi ya amani and usalama*" (Nyarugusu is a peaceful and safe camp). Aid workers and refugees repeated this phrase often to mark the contrast with previous camps, particularly the Mtabila camp for Burundians, where there were known Burundian militants, and refugees were hesitant to leave their homes after 8 pm. At the same time, they constantly raised the issue of the high incidence of violence against women. These temporal and existential conditions produce the framework for a continuous, yet fractured humanitarian intervention that depends on the ongoing (re)construction of expert knowledge about human rights, gender-based violence, and the refugee condition.

In Nyarugusu, "human rights" actually becomes a key component of humanitarian content and strategy as well as refugee protection. Upholding rights, or at the very least educating people about them, is gradually displacing classical humanitarian assistance as the raison d'etre of humanitarian operations, which were generally directed at saving lives and alleviating suffering due to crises and involved only material and logistical assistance.[78] The 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Rights of Refugees were considered the key documents pertaining to refugee protection. The preamble to the Convention begins:

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[78] See, for example the UN General Assembly Resolution Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations: http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/46/a46r182.htm, Last accessed January 3, 2016

“considering that the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights approved on 10 December 1948 by the General Assembly have affirmed the principle that human beings shall enjoy fundamental rights and freedoms without discrimination, considering that the United Nations has, on various occasions, manifested its profound concern for refugees and endeavoured to assure refugees the widest possible exercise of these fundamental rights and freedoms…” then sets forth provisions (definition of a refugee) and obligations (rights to be upheld).[79]

Now, in Nyarugusu, human rights and humanitarianism are no longer simply loosely linked, whether through the general humanitarian concern with rights and dignity, or the co-application of international humanitarian law and human rights law[80], but integrally fused. In the space of the camp, the focus on women and children’s rights along with sexual and gender based violence serves as a handmaiden, paradoxically, to reinforcing coda of patriarchal male behavior as well as instituting a new system of beliefs and community relations. Human rights is deployed by the aid apparatus as an instrument for change at both the individual and collective level, as well as taken up by camp residents in ways that exceed its intended mandate. This is not simply the story of the “vernacularization of rights,” or their outright rejection, but a more complex tale of ethical re-orientation and the emergence of new understandings of justice and “good behavior.”

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[79] 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees: http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.html last accessed Jan 3, 2016.

[80] Naz K. Modirzadeh, "The Dark Sides of Convergence: A Pro-Civilian Critique of the Extraterritorial Application of Human Rights Law in Armed Conflict," U.S. Naval War College International Law Studies (Blue Book) Series 86 (2010).

In what follows, I will narrate how human rights for women take center stage in the humanitarian efforts at Nyarugusu, and how refugees respond to this. What does it look like when one-size-fits-all humanitarian policies formulated around best practices, benchmarks, and standard operating procedures are implemented in a specific context? And how do the problems in Nyarugusu structure the discourse of human rights that is meant to fix those very issues?

The Context of Aid Work

I arrive in Kasulu on my birthday. One of the staff members from WLAC informs me that I shared a birthday with their office manager, and arranges for me to join her for drinks. A *bodaboda* (motorcycle) ferries me in pitch black to the Kasudeco club to meet Jasmine, a lawyer at WLAC from Dar, and Jenny, the office manager from Kilimanjaro. They are both pounding back medium bottles of Smirnoff and insist that I drink, because Kasulu is boring and drinking more makes it fun at the disco. Gina, who teaches at the local school, joins us. It is also her birthday. After a couple of drinks and heavily salted grilled pork, we walk to the street to take a couple of bodabodas. Jasmine and Jenny expertly deflect unwanted attention from men standing at the entrance. Then we head to the village disco, Club FM, a tin roofed hall with an old pool table and some plastic chairs on either side of a fairly large dance floor.

The women are wasted by now, pulling me on the dance floor and into many sweaty hugs. We meet a UN Volunteer doctor, a project manager, both from nearby countries, and a resettlement officer, all from UNHCR. I am already curious and probing for information; the project manager has been here for six years (longer than almost anyone in the operation), and the doctor expresses his joy at being able to "do something good." I sing along with the catchy songs, the lyrics to which I've learned while in Dar, and they are surprised that I can even speak Swahili. One of them pinches my cheek: it is everything I can do to withhold a slap, but I tell him off angrily. I play pool on the sad-looking table. The felt is a sad, muted brown, bubbling and uneven, which requires that all shots be hit extremely softly. The game is naturally, as a result, exceptionally slow. But the music is excellent; I dance my legs off and sing along loudly with my birthday twins to a techno-Swahili-auto-tuned rendition of happy birthday, before taking a motorcycle taxi home and falling asleep instantly. I do not know this at the time, but this is where aid workers congregate every weekend, drinking heavily to let off steam. Jasmine pulls me aside and explains which one of the aid workers has already made a pass at her earlier, her tone scandalous. The man who pinched my cheek is now sitting, drunkenly slumped in a chair. A Tanzanian woman is on his lap, and she slaps away his hand as he tries to enter her shirt.[81]

FM Disco is one of three hotspots in town. The other two are Kasudeco, the local *kitimoto* (pork) joint, and Break Point, a slightly nicer bar that opened mid-way through my tenure in Kasulu, and featured an excellent Congolese band with backup dancers. Four, if you count Quick Bites, a tiny shop with homemade cakes, ice cream, and "luxury" items like canned goods, chocolate, olive oil, real butter, and bread. There is a single paved road running through the length of the town, which takes no more than 20 minutes to traverse on foot. There are two markets, one with general things, clothes, shoes, and foodstuffs, the other with *dagaa* (dried fish from Lake Tanganyika), fruit, and vegetables, lots of tiny shops, most with signs for mobile phone related services, bars, and vendors at the sides of roads. Aid workers often bemoaned the lack of goods they were used to, and took weekend rest and relaxation (R&R) trips to Kigoma, where they'd stay at the luxurious Lake Tanganyika hotel, enjoying daytime swims and poolside drinks. Travels abroad by one of them generated lists of desired commodities; if they were lucky, they'd "inherit" household goods and foodstuffs from colleagues who had completed their assignments or were leaving their posts.[82]

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[81] Field notes, November 16, 2013

For the first few months that I lived in Kasulu, I cooked over a double decker steamer-cum rice cooker, becoming adept at converting recipes, but usually just eating rice with some steamed carrots, having left too early to grab chapatis in the market, and returned too exhausted. The child protection officer who was my next door neighbor acquired an electric kettle and boiled eggs and sweet potatoes in it. This kind of ingenuity was a common topic of conversation in Kasulu. I stayed in a motel named after love – "Upendo." It also houses consultants and aid workers who can't find accomodations in any of the compounds, and is nicknamed "Stupendo" by a UNHCR aid worker with an ironic sense of humor. Upendo, was, in fact, fairly luxurious compared to other accommodation in the area. Many with longer term postings waited impatiently for more permanent housing.

But it would be unfair to say the aid workers aren't dedicated. Daily trips to the camp were grueling, and often terrifying. The verification staff traveled on a large bus, which was more prone to getting stuck in the mud during the rainy season. In the dry heat, the red dust would infiltrate the bus, getting all over clothes and bags. The bumpy roads were hard on the spine, and the stomach, even if one traveled in an SUV, buckled in and clinging to the handlebars above the windows. Case filing requirements meant that work was never done after a long day at the camp; everything was always a high priority.

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[82] Lisa Smirl's book on the spatial aspects of humanitarian aid and the material conditions under which aid workers labor discusses how the space of the field structures humanitarian solutions and imaginaries. My own discussion is more concerned with the "other worlds" and sensibilities that inflect aid worker's orientations to their positions; in other words, the imaginaries of aid work in general, the memories of other spaces that they carry with them, and their interpersonal experiences in the field. See Lisa Smirl, Spaces of Aid: How Cars, Hotels, and Compounds Shape Humanitarianism (London: Zed Books, 2015).

I have many chances to interact with aid workers in Kasulu, as well as in Nyarugusu. I distribute consent forms, and obtain permission, but still feel an oscillating tension between being seen as a safe person to talk to and someone who is not fully authorized to have certain kinds of information. Proximity reveals that people are unhappy with their postings - Kasulu is dire, but it is not dire enough, and thus not exciting enough. There are no comforts, but it lacks the adrenaline that accompanies emergency postings. In the mini-van that shuttles resettlement officers from Kasulu to Nyarugusu, I sit behind an American who is there on a short term posting from RSC Africa. He asks what kind of research I'm doing with "the 'fugees." The Tanzanian staff are more interested in my personal background, and how I speak Swahili.

There is a great deal of ambivalence in the way in which people conceive of the work they do. Many of the foreign aid workers here have been drawn to the job by visions of "doing something right." Once they get here, however, some of them understand that they might, in fact, be making the situation worse: "Sometimes I ask myself, are we part of the problem?" And yet they remain in place, bound partially by determination and optimism, and partially by careerism. Sometimes, their disillusionment and cynicism is clearer, like when they talk about "picking their battles," in negotiating with difficult Tanzanian government officials. One vents to me on our way to the camp. She links her desire to do humanitarian work as an adolescent "dream" nurtured during her college years. But she also has a specific conception of what real humanitarian work should look like: “Nyarugusu is a protracted situation - it's boring. I want to go to an emergency situation like Syria.”[83] Fatima, the protection officer who lives next to me, muses: “I wonder – is it they who are violating human rights, or is it us?” Fatima had previously worked in West Africa – a much “crazier” situation, she tells me. She accepted this post thinking that she would be closer to home. Though she is only from a neighboring country, the journey home is incredibly time-consuming, and she is upset that she is physically but not actually closer.

Aid workers live, work, travel, and socialize together, and this creates interpersonal entanglements that bleed into the workplace. A child protection specialist from Britain who is roughly my age shares stories of two ongoing romantic encounters with UNHCR staff: one desired, the other persistent, but unwanted. She is incredibly frustrated with the organizational setup in Kasulu and her working environment, and even after a month, she finds it difficult to map out the services provided in the camp. Like me, she runs on the Kasulu airstrip, followed around by curious children from the village.[84] Another child protection specialist reflects on the fact that she feels comfortable in Kasulu because of her upbringing in a similarly poor part of the Caribbean. An international aid worker from IRC has arrived with two dogs that she rescued from another East African country. The head of the local office, who also lives in the same compound with her, does not like the dogs. This becomes a major point of contention. I hear about her previous compound-mates in Ethiopia – a far more affable group. They were like a family, and she misses the collegiality of that field-location.

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[83] Field notes, January 26, 2014

[84] Field notes, January 25, 2014

Later, I get invited to a UN staff member's farewell party. The atmosphere is congenial, a multinational buzz of conversation fueled by Heineken beers and the occasional Konyagi, a clear, gin-like local spirit, perhaps derived from the word cognac. The party is a microcosm of the aid world. Aid staffers, especially those from the UN, are accustomed to being in international groups; they pick up phrases from each other's native languages, talk excitedly about poaching spices from each others kitchens. Cultural knowledge is a marker not simply of cosmopolitanism, but of one's worldliness as aid worker. A West African aid worker wagers that I cannot understand his local dialect of Pidgin-English (I can). Discussions include locales for R&R, foreign cities that offered the comforts one could not get in the field, comparisons of the best places to eat and shop, and the best airports. Aid workers operate upon a cosmopolitan imaginary in which they are citizens of the world; cultural differences could and should be assimilated into their world-view, as long as those differences were not class-based.[85]

In the spring I meet with an aid worker who is about to leave Kasulu. We rendezvous at a hotel with darkened windows, entering and leaving separately. She worked at a non-profit serving refugees in Dar es Salaam, and prior to that, at the Lughufu camp. The Kasulu office is "totally different," and that the atmosphere is unlike that of other similar postings she's had in the aid world. She relays this, voice dropping, as she looks around to make sure no one is watching us: "International and national staff don't mix. They segregate themselves. Communication in the office is really bad. [*name retracted*] is not a good boss. Everything depends on the personality of the boss. This office has lots of gossip. Maybe because people are thinking about their jobs – they are selfish and don't help each other. There are a lot of [sexual and romantic] relationships. There is a lot of sexual harassment I have heard of. International staff like that kind of thing, especially Africans, I don't know why. Even the national staff have their own clique. They are… tribalish."[86]

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[85] There are a number of studies of the life-worlds of aid workers. See: David Mosse, Adventures in Aidland: The Anthropology of Professionals in International Development, vol. 6 (Berghahn Books, 2011), Dorothea Hilhorst and Bram J Jansen, "Humanitarian Space as Arena: A Perspective on the Everyday Politics of Aid," Development and Change 41.6 (2010), Anne-Meike Fechter and Heather Hindman, Inside the Everyday Lives of Development Workers: The Challenges and Futures of Aidland (Kumarian Press Sterling, VA, 2011), Smirl, Spaces of Aid: How Cars, Hotels, and Compounds Shape Humanitarianism. For a critique of "aidnography," see: Elizabeth Harrison, "Beyond the Looking Glass?'Aidland' Reconsidered," Critique of Anthropology 33.3 (2013).

International staff in Kasulu were paid much more, usually had shorter tenures, and lived in UNHCR humanitarian compounds or guesthouses. Tanzanian aid workers were more likely to live amongst the local community in Kasulu, with a few exceptions, including IRC, TWESA and TRCS staff who lived in much less well appointed compounds just outside the camp in Makere. Whereas Tanzanian aid workers tended to talk more about family life, pop culture, and other topics unrelated to humanitarian work, international aid workers' conversations often either focused on their work within Nyarugusu or other humanitarian locations they had experienced. They saw Nyarugusu through the lens of previous humanitarian work, often comparing the levels of hardship and suffering between these spaces. At an IRC staff meeting I observed, I learned that national staff salaries had been cut without their information. Insurance provision was unclear, and there were demands for leave allowances. Local staff complained that IRC's policies were not in agreement with Tanzanian labor law.[87]

Many of the aid workers posted in Kasulu also complain about the bureaucratic incompetence of their agencies, and of their managers. Almost everyone seems to think the current management is inadequate. I hear many complaints of staff negligence, usually in the form of outbursts, which are hastily retracted or covered up once they realize that I am not one of them.

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[86] Interview with UNHCR GBV Officer, April 30, 2014

[87] Field notes, May 6, 2014

In the camp, the verification area was where the logics of international hierarchy became clear on three separate levels: that of the camp resident, the national aid worker, and the international aid worker. The workers who have been recruited for the population verification exercise (*sensa*) are local, temporary staff. The national origin of aid workers is a point of concern for many refugees, who perceive Tanzanians as discriminating against Congolese. I hear stories about Tanzanian aid workers who have taken opportunities meant for refugees, from third-country resettlement to education grants. Bribery is talked about openly amongst refugees. Midway through my research, anti-corrruption signs appear in the UNHCR field office protection interview rooms in the camp, and an aid worker is secretly fired for taking bribes.[88] Tanzanian aid workers, for their part, often express doubts about the truthfulness of Congolese refugees.[89] But this is not a blanket indictment; my interlocutors often talked about specific aid workers they thought were especially committed to their work and actually cared about refugees.

Every morning at the camp canteen I return to my notes from the previous day, reviewing what happened and finishing up what I was too exhausted to write after returning from the camp. I have the first few minutes mostly to myself, and everything is quiet save for a few birdcalls and the scraping of plastic tables and chairs as the food is set up. The air has not yet turned hot; my skin feels slightly cool. The temporary *sensa* workers file in to have breakfast, jumping across the small muddy ditch that separates the *sensa* building from the canteen. Both are fenced off by chicken wire. I abandon my notes momentarily as we grab hot black tea and small fried snacks and boiled eggs. Sometimes I am joined by one of them and answer their questions through oily lips. At other times they join up in their usual cliques; the veterans laughing and clapping each other on the back as they catch up on family life outside the camp. When I sit alone, I can see everything but also have the feeling that the others are wary of me. The oscillation between camaraderie and blankness gives me pause, and I set out for one or the other zone as soon as possible. Since the first few weeks, I've avoided returning for lunch; the thin chicken wire surrounding the canteen is buffered on one side by children gazing longingly at the food; the smell of fresh rice, stewed collard greens, and kidney beans wafts through the air and permeates the entire area.

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[88] Field notes, September 13, 2014

[89] Field notes, January 29, 2014

Occasionally monitoring and evaluation experts will visit the camp. They come from the regional office in Nairobi, or from as far afield as donor countries like the USA or Japan. A grants officer from Dar es Salaam accompanies them to Nyarugusu, where they are shuttled in between main points of interest – a school, a hospital, the verification center. They arrive via Kigoma, or, if they are Very Important People or celebrity visitors, touch down in a small plane at the mud airstrip at Kasulu. What strikes me most about these visitors is their corpulence. It would have been noticeable anywhere in the world, but was perhaps magnified in contrast with the refugees who sat in front of them during various meetings and "community consultations." One can imagine that the lifestyle of a "circuit rider" – the colloquialism referring to US immigration and customs officials who would travel to camps and cities around the world to conduct refugee resettlement interviews – or other delegates who conducted at least a dozen such trips annually precluded living healthfully. But one might also imagine what camp residents, confronted with bodily excess in the face of personal destitution, feel.

For the first few months, I ride with the verification team, who are the first to arrive and the last to leave. I overhear the frustrations voiced by the two UNHCR staff in charge of organizing the *sensa.* The pace of the sensa is frantic and unrelenting, and I can feel their exhaustion at the end of the day. Most of the time, they talk to each other, but sometimes, they share their opinions about the camp with me. "It makes me so happy when I see a man carrying his baby," one of them gushes, as we pass the camp hospital. "The men, they don't do anything." At other times, they discuss individual cases, each neatly tucked away in a brown cardboard folder. How did someone who looked totally different from the picture of person in a file a get past every stage of the verification exercise? Who was that guy who claimed to be Tanzanian and abducted to the camp? They used the word "imposter" often. "Some of these people have 14 or 15 different cards! I mean, I would understand - if I were a refugee, of course I would try to get as many ration cards as possible." The woman laughs in frustration, and wearily, but impatiently declares: "They think that we don't trust them, but actually it is them who doesn't trust us."[90] This sentiment pervaded most of the interactions between aid-workers and refugees in the camp. Though most of my fieldwork focused on refugee experiences of aid, I provide these details to explain the context in which aid workers operated and some of the assumptions that informed their work. The effort to help refugees was sometimes inflected by the strange idea that refugees were always trying to "cheat" the system or operating in bad faith, making the relationship oppositional rather than collaborative. This affective orientation had consequences for the way in which day to day humanitarian operations unfolded, and structured the humanitarian insistence on greater cooperation and self-reliance.

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[90] This paragraph draws on Field notes, January 27 and 28, 2014

Women's Rights ARE Human Rights; Human Rights are ONLY Women's Rights:

My arrival in Kasulu also coincided with the 16 days campaign mentioned above, the beginning of a population verification exercise (*sensa*), and a visit from a delegate from ECHO (European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations), who was there to assess the situation and make sure funding was being used well. On a cool morning in November I walked up the hill from my lodge to the UNHCR office, signed my name in a battered ledger at the gate, and received a temporary pass on a lanyard. Finding my way past shiny white SUVs and up a stone staircase on a perfectly landscaped slope, I stepped into a large shipping container on stilts, where staff in the Kasulu office had gathered around formica topped tables. The ECHO delegate sat in the center of the C-shaped table formation, introduced herself as a "protection expert" there for a "monitoring and evaluation visit." She notes that it is a crucial moment in time because ECHO is assessing needs and making decisions on what to fund next year related to the Democratic Republic of Congo. As everyone settled into swiveling office chairs, with the ECHO delegate at the head of the tables, the screen in front of us fired up with a Powerpoint presentation. "Some of our children in the camp," announced a staff member, waving over towards the cover picture that had just appeared.

The presenter introduced key statistics about the camp, briefly outlining its history and current composition. But the general focus of her presentation, by and large, was on sexual and gender based violence (SGBV).[91] As she went through the sectors – Protection, SGBV, Education, Capacity Building, Health, Water and Sanitation, Shelter, Non-Food Items, and the Verification Exercise – each activity was linked back to SGBV. Education, in particular, was an "area of great concern;" Nearly 50% of the camp population was in schools, however, there was a 60% drop out rate, which, according to the presenter, "becomes the bed for SGBV and all other antisocial behaviors." Because of their lack of school attendance and coincidental early marriage and transactional sex, children then became a population at risk, she noted, and so there was a need for a child protection officer. UNHCR was thus to use education "as a tool for protection against SGBV."[92]

Infrastructure too, was reframed as an SGBV issue. Only 70% of the camp population had access to adequate and secure shelter. Shelter "is needed to ensure the physical protection of refugees, thus shielding them from the security threat and the risk of SGBV." A pilot project on solar street lights was to be implemented as an "SGBV preventative measure." Adequate cooking tools were necessary too, because women were at risk while collecting firewood.

Between January and September of 2013, 390 cases of SGBV were reported to agencies in the camp. The presenter explained how they were tackling the issue by trying to bring attention to the problem amongst refugees: "We believe that number is higher than last year; we're working with stakeholders. 6464 people including 2764 males are taking part in an awareness campaign. The campaigns focus on *harmful traditional practices* such as wife inheritance, child human compensation, rape, and tribalism."[93]

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[91] Currently, the proper term is GBV (gender based violence). Aid workers and refuges used SGBV and GBV interchangeably.

[92] There were other infrastructural issues with schools; there was only one textbook per twelve children, and teachers had been paid the same salary since 2004, approximately 17 US dollars per month. UNHCR did not fund secondary school, and with refugees unable to see a future education, the effort to get more people into primary school was defeated; at the meeting, there was some talk of getting UNICEF involved to address these issues.

The aid agencies also saw sexual and gender based violence as a specifically "cultural" problem, but also one that needed to be addressed from within. The UNHCR staff noted that the IRC and UNHCR reports needed to be compared, and that there were already 6 or 7 community based committees working on SGBV prevention and response. Members were chosen from the community, by the community, based on their reputation, and the UNHCR worked with them on "awareness raising." They were unpaid, but provided with food and drink during meetings, and were trained to "try to help us change the community's behavior… because their culture is a little bit problem in SGBV (sic)." It was this "cultural" aspect that was blamed for cases relating to dowry disputes and compensation, beliefs associated with witchcraft that led to SGBV, and the "trend to monetize every aspect of traditional practice."

The aid workers were specifically referring to what they called "human compensation," in which a girl child was given to another family to repay a debt. The presenter explained to the delegate: "It's related to economic issues. For example, if a parent takes a loan, and fails to pay, he can compensate with a girl, and the creditor recovers the money through dowry. Or in the case of common law marriage in the camp, if a husband failed to pay dowry and the wife died, the husband would have to pay his wife's family with a daughter." She added that it sometimes affected women who were already married.

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[93] Emphasis added

There was some debate as to whether this practice is unique to the camp or not. Two workers who have been stationed in the DRC before say they haven't seen this there. Someone else interjects that it is in fact a serious problem in the Congo. The Head of the Kasulu field office (HFO) expresses skepticism: “But to the extent where you start trading in children…” it is “exacerbated [in the camp].” In Nyarugusu, the situation was seen as egregious: “We have cultures” she added, “but I have never seen a situation like this. Traditional marriage customs are very demeaning for women…The refugee camp is a protected environment. You cannot just do business as usual, even if it is your tradition. We cannot allow harmful practices to just carry on… we have to devise… the SGBV strategy, the child protection strategy.” Strategy and standard operating procedures were to be the panacea for “tradition,” “culture,” and “customs.”

Along with the linking of SGBV to every sector of UNHCR activity, there was also a preoccupation with codifying, monitoring, and evaluating problems and progress. An abundance of precise information would clarify the situation and lead to more effective aid. The manual reporting format to register SGBV incidents and lack of a database was seen as a problem. The delegate insisted that more detailed statistics on SGBV cases needed to be collected, along with categories so that the report didn’t look so bad. She opined that the enormity of protection issues was not reflected in the UNHCR report. The delegate had a monitoring form to fill out, and asked about "feedback mechanisms." Someone stammers that the camp offices are open for refugee visits, and that they have suggestion boxes. It is clear that they are woefully inadequate.

The last review of the SOP’s (Standard Operating Procedures) had been conducted in 2007. “We need to increase our monitoring capacity,” declared the HFO. Referring to camp management and coordination, “we have to make it clear for everyone” so that more information could be collected and that data would be more accurate. “If we have the problem of discrimination, we should be able to say – what is the nature of it, what exactly it is.” One of the two UNHCR GBV officers explained that the situation was difficult to understand given staff turnover and issues with data collection: “Well, we don’t really know what’s going on, and it’s difficult to measure.” She spoke deliberately, unaware of all the other staff members exchanging glances with each other and shifting uncomfortably in their seats. At a meeting later that day, angry at no one in particular, the HFO snapped: “We should be writing reports, these are not rumors, these people are giving us money, they want to know what you are doing with their cents!”

Narrow definitions of problems, internationally agreed-upon “indicators,” and funding concerns dictated the minimum standards that informed the provision of humanitarian aid. During the course of the meeting, it also emerged that WFP had stopped supplementary feeding for HIV patients in May of 2013. They argued that it was unnecessary, since the prevalence was less than 2%, and it wasn't covered in their program objective. A WFP report from 2011 noted that food availability and consumption had decreased over the past 2 years. Food rations meant for two weeks only lasted approximately 10 days. Over half the refugees in the camp ate fewer meals to make their food last longer, and one in five reported not eating for entire days at a time.[94] 46.2% of children under the age of five had stunted growth.[95] Almost 80% of the camp population was comprised of children. A third of residents in the camp didn't have latrines. This was partly because "in an effort to rationalize, the latrine slabs were reduced in size leading to collapse of latrines as the slabs are unable to sustain the size of the latrine."[96]

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[94] World Food Programme (WFP) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Community and Household Surveillance in North Western Tanzania: Programme Outcome Monitoring in Nyarugusu Refugee Camp (June 2011).

[95] Refugees, Joint Assessment Mission (Jam), Nyarugusu Camp, Tanzania, Final Report.

Alas, improvements to these areas could not be made with funds from ECHO. "ECHO is pure humanitarian funding," the delegate clarified. "The organization is even questioning its decision to fund protracted situations." In a later meeting with the Tanzanian camp commandant at Nyarugusu, she expressed her regrets that ECHO could not pay for activities like road maintenance in the camp, noting that their focus was only on "protection." Protection, thus, fell under the umbrella of purely humanitarian activities, and in its inclusion of SGBV prevention and response campaigns, brought human rights pedagogy squarely into the realm of humanitarian aid.

Briefing completed, the ECHO delegate headed to the camp with the HFO and a few other key staff members. They sat down with Tanzanian and refugee incentive staff at the IRC GBV center in the camp. The Tanzanian staff are mostly new, and have arrived between two and four months ago. Echoing a concern expressed by the camp commandant earlier, the IRC staff brings up the question of managing idleness. The absence of work is seen as posing a moral danger, in which the lack of being occupied leads to criminal activity and having a lot of sex (and thus a lot of children). There have been 28 cases of human compensation that year, something that represents a "cultural barrier." The Women's Refugee Commission, no longer active in the camp, had had a life skills training program, including batik, hairdressing, tailoring, and knitting. Participants were selected based on how vulnerable they were; pregnant children, orphans, children with chronic illnesses, elderly people, GBV survivors, sex workers, and “sex survivors” were given priority.

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[96] Field notes, November 19, 2013

The HOF asks: “this all sounds more like a response. What is the prevention? What are we doing for adult children?” The response is sobering: “If you're not a victim already you have no chance.” Nevertheless, the coordinator of the meeting notes their prevention activities: “capacity building for parents,” campaigns, organized leagues, all with a general theme of “breaking the silence,” and reporting cases of abuse. The HOF seems incensed: “"This is not a traditional African village… not every practice is good. International protection gives some norms and standards regarding food and calories, but also, practices. The same international community also decided that we need to protect the integrity of the individual. You cannot select and pick, take the food and say, it's my culture. If it's harmful it's harmful. You can't ask the international community to protect and start doing things that are against individual dignity…we don't want to hear about [human compensation].” Another staff members comments about the condition of exile, suggesting that Congolese refugees are sticking to extremely old practices, and asks whether the closed environment encourages this. Another person suggests bringing in a Congolese lawyer to explain that such practices are not acceptable under Congolese law. The HOF responds: "International norms and standards are important. For me international norms are higher than national norms. The international convention on eliminating violence against women, even Congo signed it. [Referring to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, CEDAW] If we have the water, food, etc., we have that one [CEDAW] too. IT'S WRONG.”

The ECHO delegate shifts the conversation to GBV. She asks what hinders people from coming forward. What are the challenges? Is there fear of retaliation or revenge if they reconcile?

An IRC staff member elaborates on the constraints faced by GBV survivors: "Culturally a woman is not allowed to say anything about what is happening in the house…. so they're afraid. So if they report, conflict arises, there could be revenge, because you are Congolese and you'll face the consequences when you go back. Some survivors need to take legal action, but sometimes rapes are committed by relatives, so going to court means jailing the family. So they talk amongst the family, hold a case, and decide to pay. But when the person cannot pay, the case comes to court. Also there is a fear of death - being killed by the person accused of rape." The HOF, irritated, asks rhetorically: "So why should we even campaign?"

Reacting to the information that only 10% of SGBV survivors had received clinical care, the ECHO delegate asked why people were not coming forward and how they could address this problem. "Why are victims not coming for medical aid?" The answer was simply that the SGBV situation was "not known," and that therefore protection activities were lower over the last two years. Finally, the delegate suggested that the success of campaigns could be measured by an increase in the number of survivors willing to take their cases to court. Particularly in the case of rape, willingness to take legal action would mean a "change in culture." The HOF added: "Stakeholders want to see results!" The IRC staff member notes again that perpetrators might be extended family, which poses a problem. Staff turnover at IRC and UNHCR is high, and SGBV cases need aggressive follow up in cooperation with the police, magistrate, and courts in Kasulu.

The meeting ended inconclusively after a few more questions on the number of survivors who reported to GBV offices. But the conversation on GBV was not over. The next day, in a small concrete hall filled with banners bearing slogans against gender-based violence, they met with elected refugee leaders from all seven zones, who begged for increased educational facilities, additional health and domestic infrastructure, and healthier, fresher food. They explained that the lack of employment opportunities was posing serious challenges to people. People were engaging in *fidia* because of poverty, only because they had no way of obtaining money. If they had jobs, they would be able to repay their debts in cash.

The HFO got straight to the point in her opening sentence:

"Are you aware of human rights? You are aware also that women have human rights?

Crowd (murmurs): Yes.

HFO: There is a convention for rights of women. Have you ever heard of it?

Crowd: Yes, we were trained.

HFO: There is another convention also to protect children. That convention is so strong, it has led three or four international missions here. You ask for microscopes, etcetera – it means you know you have the right to health, and you are very confident to the extent that you are asking for a microscope, and I am sure you will get it. Why is it that you allow yourself to live in a community where… those [women's] rights are being violated?

Someone interjects to complain about the inadequacy of the soap supplied. The HFO again redirects the conversation.

HFO: It is important to talk about soap, but can we talk about the rights of women, the rights of children? We will go and look for the water and the soap but what will you as leaders do about girls who are being sold as human compensation?

(Male) leaders respond that the problem is rooted in poverty.

Leader one: We will start with their families after training, to neighbours. (sic) the only challenge is that the refugees are poor. What can I do to earn money? If it is possible for us to open up income generating activities and groups, maybe it will reduce such violence. The problem is poverty.

Leader two: We also talk about harmful traditional practices in our meetings (after human rights training), like human child compensation, wife inheritance, widows issues, preventing girls from going to school, etc.

Leader three: I have three girls and I am a parent. Being a leader I know how I protect my family. Girls are attracted to several things. I can not support the things she wants, so eventually she will become a victim. We are enclosed in a camp… we are trying our best to educate others but look how we are living.

HFO: You have responsibilities that even if you're refugees you cannot afford not to have. If we give food…. and we realize that basic human rights are being violated by the very people we are providing assistance to…."[97]

She ended abruptly, accusingly looking at the camp residents assembled around her. The meeting ended shortly thereafter, since the ECHO delegate was on a tight schedule and had to visit another site in the camp. But the message was simple: international aid organizations prioritize abstract rights over tangible needs, even if fulfilling basic needs would create better conditions for everyone. Indeed, after the meeting, the ECHO representative stressed that they would provide aid only for "protection"[98] needs; expenses like schooling, however important, were not in their budget.

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[97] Field notes, November 18, 2013

This was the opening scene to what I saw repeatedly over the next few months: Nyarugusu camp was not just a large scale, protracted, humanitarian operation for approximately 68,000 refugees, it was also a crucible where the lines between humanitarianism and human rights melted away through a continuous pedagogical experiment. This experiment focused mostly on women and children, under the rubric of children's rights and SGBV (sexual and gender based violence) "prevention and response."[99] The aid apparatus emphasized the rule of law, idealizing access to legal aid and recourse to justice as the best possible solution to violations. Whereas most discourses of human rights have been directed at state-led abuses of human rights, the case of the Congo – both in Kivu, where most Nyarugusu residents come from, and in the camp – is more diffuse. Multiple non-state actors and militia groups are the perpetrators of rights abuses, and in the camp, human rights discourse is directed at individual perpetrators or at the level of "Congolese society" in exile.

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[98] A UNHCR handout on refugee protection notes: "Protection is defined according to its purpose and its activities. The purpose of protection is defined as: "The concept of protection encompasses all activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law (i.e. human rights, humanitarian and refugee law). "Human rights and humanitarian actors shall conduct these activities impartially and not on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, language, gender etc…. Protection activity is defined as: Any activity – consistent with the above-mentioned purpose – aimed at creating an environment conducive to respect for human beings, preventing and/or alleviating the immediate effects of a specific pattern of abuse, and restoring dignified conditions of life through reparation, restitution, or rehabilitation." Reach Out Refugee Protection Training Project, Handouts on Refugee Protection (2005). pp. 38

[99] Lila Abu-Lughod has written about how women's rights have come to be seen as universal human rights and framed in international rather than national terms. Abu-Lughod, "Dialects of Women's Empowerment: The International Circuitry of the Arab Human Development Report 2005."

The aid agencies' focus on the issue of human rights and the education of the camp population about the "right" way to treat people obscured other pressing needs, reinforced stereotypes about the refugee population, violently enforced a "universal" set of norms and beliefs on to a much more complicated local situation, and generated a robust debate about the language of claim-making and the role of certain customs and tradition (*mila na desturi*) amongst Congolese refugees.

The UNHCR's obsession with human rights, arranged around issues of child human compensation and gender-based violence (GBV) revealed itself in several scenes where rights violations were blamed explicitly on *mila na desturi*. Rather than a "politics of compassion" or a "politics of testimony,"[100] Nyarugusu represented a "politics of disapprobation,[101]" in which the aid apparatus condemned unacceptable acts while linking them to the fundamental character of the Congolese people. Though aid workers reluctantly acknowledged in occasional private conversations with me that many of these problems stemmed from destitution, the official explanation tethered itself to "culture," and "the way they are." Aid workers, particularly those from Tanzania, often noted that the Congolese "used" their stories to get whatever aid they could, and accused them of making things up in order to get resettlement. Though they frequently spoke of protecting women from violence, they simultaneously questioned whether reports of sexual violence were genuine or instrumentally deployed.[102]

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[100] Miriam Ticktin and Didier Fassin's terms, respectively. Didier Fassin, "The Humanitarian Politics of Testimony: Subjectification through Trauma in the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict," Cultural Anthropology 23.3 (2008)., Ticktin, Casualties of Care: Immigration and the Politics of Humanitarianism in France.

[101] Thanks to Casey Primel for suggesting this formulation (vs. outrage)

Camp residents, meanwhile, recognized that violence stemmed in large part from economic deprivation, but this was rarely addressed. Aid agencies paid lip service to "livelihoods programs," implementing workshops and vocational classes with no real effect and no actual possibility of employment; in fact, the Tanzanian government had banned all "income generating activities" in the camp and had recently closed down a common market where camp residents could trade with or buy and sell goods to locals.[103]

The recognition of rights abuses went hand in hand with the organization of innumerable workshops, training program, meetings, and peer-groups focused at educating the population about human rights. Refugees responded to this by adopting, reproducing, and subverting the language of rights, within the framework of aid-sponsored/mandated meetings and workshops as well as in their daily lives. This uneven assimilation of "human rights" discourse, as we will see, leads to different and unexpected outcomes.

Gender Based Violence: Theory and Praxis

That almost every aspect of humanitarian aid had a gender-based violence component was driven in part by donor requirements. For instance, the Bureau of Population and Refugee

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[102] Field notes, January 31, 2014. It was not uncommon to hear Tanzanian aid workers say things like "Congolese are liars," or point to their character as a people to explain their behavior.

[103] (UNHCR), Community and Household Surveillance in North Western Tanzania: Programme Outcome Monitoring in Nyarugusu Refugee Camp.

Management (PRM) of the U.S. Department of State's "FY 2014 Funding Opportunity Announcement for NGO Programs Benefiting Refugees in Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Tanzania" announces that in Tanzania, "Proposals should focus on life-saving basic preventative and curative healthcare assistance, including reproductive health, and prevention of and response to GBV, in Nyarugusu refugee camp in western Tanzania." In addition, all proposals are to prepare a gender analysis. The 2015 announcement notes: "Proposals must focus on the following sector in the Nyarugusu refugee camp in western Tanzania:(i) Life-saving basic preventative and curative healthcare assistance, including prevention of and response to gender-based violence."[104]

Violence against women was defined as a human rights violation in the 1990s following decades of women's activism, with the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) including the issue in 1992; women's rights were officially declared human rights at the 1993 world conference on human rights in Vienna.[105] The issue of gender-based violence was also taken up by feminist anthropology, which had sought to highlight sexual violence and "offer culturally resonant ways for ideas about protecting women from gender-based violence."[106] Feminist scholars and activists raised the issue of women's human rights in various fora, also discussing it specifically within the context of "culture."[107] In keeping with a long history of colonial and post-colonial violence in the name of secular liberal modernization, some Western feminist activists offered critiques of multiculturalism as antithetical to women's human rights.[108] Today, culture-as-violent persists as an explanation for violence against women.[109]

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[104] http://www.state.gov/j/prm/funding/fy2014/224645.htm; and
http://www.state.gov/j/prm/funding/fy2015/238659.htm
(Accessed September 20, 2015)

[105] Sally Engle Merry, "Transnational Human Rights and Local Activism: Mapping the Middle," American Anthropologist 108.1 (2006). pp 40. See Engle Merry, Human Rights and Gender Violence: Translating International Law into Local Justice. for an institutional ethnography of CEDAW. See also: Wolper, ed., Women's Rights, Human Rights: International Feminist Perspectives, Elisabeth Friedman, "Women's Human Rights: The Emergence of a Movement," Women's Rights, Human rights: International Feminist Perspectives 23 (1995), Donna J Sullivan, "Women's Human Rights and the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights," American Journal of International Law 88.1 (1994). Saba Bahar has argued that this commitment to women's human rights can contain questionable assumptions about gender and familial relationships, as well as the position of the family vis-à-vis the state. Saba Bahar, "Human Rights Are Women's Right: Amnesty International and the Family," Hypatia 11.1 (1996). Others have critiqued the assumption women's human rights are universal: Dorothy L Hodgson, Gender and Culture at the Limit of Rights (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), Inderpal Grewal, "'Women's Rights as Human Rights': Feminist Practices, Global Feminism, and Human Rights Regimes in Transnationality," Citizenship studies 3.3 (1999), Tamale and Oloka-Onyango, "" The Personal Is Political," or Why Women's Rights Are Indeed Human Rights: An African Perspective on International Feminism."

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[106] Sheila Dauer, "Introduction: Anthropological Approaches to Gender-Based Violence.," Gendered Perspectives on International Development Working Paper 304 (2014), Jennifer R. Wies and Hillary J. Haldane, Anthropology at the Front Lines of Gender-Based Violence (Vanderbilt University Press, 2011). In 2014, IRC Tanzania also hired an anthropologist to examine *fidia* and other forms of GBV in Nyarugusu. The idea was that the anthropologist would be able to understand the "cultural" significance of such practices and find resonant ways of ending them.

[107] Catharine A. MacKinnon, Are Women Human? And Other International Dialogues (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), Wolper, ed., Women's Rights, Human Rights: International Feminist Perspectives, Rebecca J Cook, ed., Human Rights of Women: National and International Perspectives (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994). CWGL organized a symposium in which African women's rights activists articulated strategies for upholding women's human rights and addressing issues like "culture as a human rights concern." Center for Women's Global Leadership, "Gender Violence and Women's Human Rights in Africa," (1994). I have focused here on a more mainstream Western feminism that sought to articulate women's human rights as universal and international; there have been many critiques by black and queer feminists, feminists of color, and feminists from the global south, for example, The Combahee River Collective, "The Combahee River Collective Statement," (1978), Tamale and Oloka-Onyango, "" The Personal Is Political," or Why Women's Rights Are Indeed Human Rights: An African Perspective on International Feminism." Eva Brems has argued that these two approaches can, in fact, be reconciled through the language of the law. Eva Brems, "Enemies or Allies? Feminism and Cultural Relativism as Dissident Voices in Human Rights Discourse," Human Rights Quarterly 19.1 (1997). Janet Halley has problematized Catherine MacKinnon's brand of "power feminism" and feminism as a whole. Janet Halley, Split Decisions: How and Why to Take a Break from Feminism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

[108] Susan Moller Okin, ed., Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women? (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999). The edited collection contains one dissenting essay by Homi Bhabha. Though there have been many critiques of this approach, it nevertheless remains a dominant force in liberal feminism, particularly with regards to Islam. For critiques, see: Leti Volpp, "Feminism Versus Multiculturalism," Columbia. Law Review 101 (2001), Lila Abu-Lughod, Do Muslim Women Need Saving? (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013). Miriam Ticktin has also pointed out that feminist concern with sexual violence has become allied with anti-Islamism and racism. Miriam Ticktin, "Sexual Violence as the Language of Border Control: Where French Feminist and Anti-Immigrant Rhetoric Meet," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 33.4 (2008).

[109] See, for example: Yakin Ertürk, Intersections between Culture and Violence against Women: Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Its Causes and Consequences (A/HRC/4/34, Geneva: United Nations, 2007), Radhika Coomaraswamy, "Are Women's Rights Universal? Re-Engaging the Local," Meridians 3.1 (2002).

Accordingly, UNHCR's GBV policy was intimately tied to human rights discourse in general; UNHCR's 2011 SGBV strategy notes that:

"SGBV entails widespread human rights violations, and is often linked to unequal gender relations within communities and abuses of power. It can take the form of sexual violence or persecution by the authorities, or can be the result of discrimination embedded in legislation or prevailing societal norms and practices. It can be both a cause of forced displacement and an intolerable part of the displacement experience."[110]

Since SGBV entails human rights violations, the solution to SGBV would then be human rights education. The Nyarugusu-specific policy document on standard operating procedures for dealing with SGBV details areas where intervention is to be made:

"analysis of causes and contributing factors of gender based violence led to identifying and designing prevention activities in the following thematic areas: (a) sexual and reproductive health, (b) harmful traditional practices, (c) economic self-reliance, (d) engaging men and boys and (e) safe access to domestic energy." [111]

In 2000, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1325, recognizing the impact of armed conflict on women, linking gender equality and peacekeeping efforts. Section 12 "Calls upon all parties to armed conflict to respect the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements, and to take into account the particular needs of women and girls, including in their design, and recalls its resolutions 1208 (1998) of 19 November 1998 and 1296 (2000) of 19 April 2000." United Nations Landmark resolution on Women, Peace and Security (S/RES/1325) http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1325(2000). Last accessed October 12, 2015.

[110] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Division of International Protection, Action against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence: An Updated Strategy (2011). GBV is now the preferred term, I use SGBV (sexual and gender based violence) where referred to as such in the original text.

[111] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "Standard Operating Procedures for Prevention of and Response to Sgbv in Nyarugusu Camp," (September 2014). PART II – SGBV Prevention

Human rights discourse in Nyarugusu was intensely focused on the rights of women and children as opposed to refugee rights. Gender based violence became the fulcrum upon which pedagogical interventions turned; the prevalence of GBV was attributed to "harmful cultural and traditional practices."[112] In what follows I will briefly explain the nature of rights violations from the perspective of aid agencies operating in Nyarugusu that are not dissimilar from the ways in which liberal feminism conceived of culture as hostile to human rights. Intimate partner violence, the abuse of women and children, and conflicts related to dowry issues (pertaining to the negotiation of dowry or its non-payment), widow inheritance (the practice whereby which widows would be married to the brothers of their deceased husbands), polygamy, and debt were linked to fundamental flaws in Congolese traditional practices seen as inhospitable to liberal values and human rights.

Whereas feminism earlier struggled to articulate women's rights as human rights, today, the institutionalization of feminist ideas has been dubbed "governance feminism," i.e. the way in which feminist ideas have traveled, proliferated, and feminist ideas have been subsumed into state and non-state institutions and structures of power.[113] The emphasis on gender-based violence in Nyarugusu reflects these developments in the field of human rights and their spread into humanitarian aid. But Nyarugusu also represents governance feminism wrought extreme: If women's rights were human rights, in the camp, *only* women's rights – and to some extent, children's rights - were human rights. This also meant that they had to be "taught;" the only way to ensure that Congolese refugees did not abuse the rights of women and children was to educate them morally by teaching them the principles of human rights and provide disincentives to violence: punishment and the possibility of losing resettlement.

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[112] (UNHCR), "Standard Operating Procedures for Prevention of and Response to Sgbv in Nyarugusu Camp."

[113] Janet Halley, Prabha Kotiswaran, Hila Shamir and Chantal Thomas, "From the International to the Local in Feminist Legal Responses to Rape, Prostitution/Sex Work, and Sex Trafficking: Four Studies in Contemporary Governance Feminism," Harv. JL & Gender 29 (2006).

Though I came across the term "human compensation" (translated in Swahili as "*fidia za watoto*,") repeatedly in Nyarugusu, I could locate only one official publication referring to it: a 2014 report entitled "Experiences of Refugee Women and Girls from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): Learning from IRC's Women's Protection and Empowerment Programs in DRC, Tanzania, Burundi, and Uganda." Aimed at providing information about the experiences of Congolese women and girls as a primer for resettlement agencies, it notes:
"Husbands pay a dowry to the future wife's family to complete a marriage and families must return the dowry in the case of divorce. Congolese families commonly use the dowry received for a daughter's marriage to finance a son's marriage, rendering it impossible for them to return the dowry and consequently, there is heavy pressure to keep marriages intact. This practice contributes to the use of human compensation in Nyaragusu camp in Tanzania as families can offer a girl child for present or future marriage in exchange for the debt."[114] Elsewhere, after a paragraph on "transactional sex": "In Nyaragusu camp in Tanzania, human compensation, in which families give women and girls as a form of payment for debts, is practiced."[115]

The report also ties violence against women in the camp to the originary violence of the DRC: "Human rights groups have called Eastern DRC "the most dangerous place in the world to be a woman." A context of impunity for perpetrators combined with the extremely low status of females allows violence against women and girls to occur with alarming frequency. Nearly 40% of women in Eastern DRC have experienced sexual violence."[116]

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[114] "Experiences of Refugee Women and Girls from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): Learning from IRC's Women's Protection and Empowerment Programs in DRC, Tanzania, Burundi, and Uganda." https://ethnomed.org/culture/other-groups/congolese/IRC%20Backgrounder%20on%20Congolese%20Women%20and%20Girls.pdf (pp. 4-5)

[115] Ibid, pp. 4

Impunity would become one of the most important concerns of rights pedagogy in the camp, with numerous workshops and outreach campaigns emphasizing the importance of reporting GBV issues as well as accessing and pursuing legal justice. The report cited above obfuscates two salient points: First, aid agency discourse around human compensation often revolved around compensation given specifically for economic debts not incurred through dowry alone; for example, to repay loans taken out for living expenses or other economic purposes, as well as debts incurred as a result of the condition of being a refugee or the journey to seek asylum. Second, it does not mention the central role of death in the order of indebtedness and compensation. Furthermore, the practices of dowry and compensation are explicitly and problematically linked to ethnicity and origin.[117]

Speaking of GBV, A community services officer noted that it was "The most crucial issue…and this is really bringing the most challenges to the office. Because the office thinks that GBV can be eliminated, can be really tackled, 100%, 90%. But that's not the case. The main challenge is the harmful traditional practices. It's the mentality. It's an issue which is built in the culture of Bembe. So a girl who is 13, who is 14, 15, to get married, for them it's not an issue. And for us from the international point of view, we think that that's not the right way. It's a violation of human rights. Now, taking these international norms, with the culture that they have, probably because of various reasons, maybe poverty, maybe ignorance, maybe [lack] of understanding of what human rights are…it becomes an issue for us to say that we can really tackle 90% of these GBV cases. So it's a process."[118]

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[116] Ibid, pp. 3

[117] Interview with Gender-Based Violence Officer, UNHCR field office. Kasulu, September 30, 2014.

I pressed him to explain more about the program and whether they had seen a change since implementing GBV awareness campaigns. He responded: "It's in two scenarios. One, the indicator tells us that there's a change. It's because of the reporting of incidences. So we have many incidences being reported. Though that one is not enough because reporting of many incidences brings up other controversial questions. Is it because of the awareness campaign that has really stimulated the community members to bring more cases – meaning that they were there before unreported? Or, there has been an increase [in GBV.] So for us we take the first idea. That because of the awareness now the community is reporting cases and we are taking action. So since it's behavioral change, we hope they will change. It will take time, and since they are not here permanently to stay, the knowledge they have they will carry it even to the other side – of their country of origin."[119]

The ECHO delegate had also arranged to meet a number of women refugees. At a meeting organized by IRC, she sat behind a wooden table, a bottle of water propped in front of her. Assisted by a UNHCR translator, she asked: "What are the problems that you experience in the camp?" A woman who has been in the camp since 1998 stands up and offers an ordered list of issues, numbering them as she goes:

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[118] Interview with Community Services Officer, July 30, 2014
[119] Interview with Community Services Officer, July 30, 2014

“1) Problems of traditional culture

2) Incomes (*kipato*) are too low

3) People used to get and sell crops (*mazao*) but this is no longer allowed. Sometimes people would go to Makere or Vube to do small business and earn some money, but now they cannot because immigration may catch them. This is since 2 years ago – the government closed the market 3 years ago.

4) For the last 4 years, we have not had sanitary napkins”

A lot of the women look bored, drawing into themselves and shaking their legs impatiently, but listen to each other with great attention. This is a group exercise; when one of them begins to talk about her personal problems, everyone else shakes their head. It is clear that the meeting is a space to voice a specific kind of concern. There is a litany of complaints: The food doesn’t cook, or takes an extremely long time to cook. Rice and flour are of such poor quality that you can’t sieve them properly. Supplementary food for disabled children is not available. The roofs are thatched, so sometimes there are fires, so a fire extinguisher is needed at the police station. There are no provisions for blood donations: some people suffer from sickle cell anemia, and their families can't keep giving blood.

Another woman tells us that she has four children, two of whom died by poison. She explains that women are being harassed due to their ethnicity, in case they are married to someone of a different ethnicity. “Us women are truly being harassed. I am a Mlebe married to a Mbembe. I think my husband’s family tried to poison me and my children because they don’t want to have my blood in their family. We live a horrible life and we don’t know what to do. We don’t know where we’ll take our children after repatriation because they don’t want mixed children. My family forced us to split our ration cards. His ration is taken by his family. They will give my children in compensation. (*wanafidia watoto wangu)"*

The next woman explains the problems that unmarried or widowed women face: "Those of us who don't have husbands are harassed in one way or another. It's our tradition (*desturi*). Widows who are asked to pay back the dowry have to give away one of their children. When the husband dies, his family wants to inherit the wide. We're not safe at all. We don't have any help. Where can we get money if our husbands are dead? We need protection (*tunahitaji protection*)."

Both of these accounts point to the specificity of forced migration: in many cases, refugees have explained that encountering previously unknown others (e.g. Burundians, or members of other tribes) is what makes the camp situation precarious. Whereas larger networks of family and community members would support women in the Congo, with absent or deceased families and no means of income in the camp, they might have to rely on aid agencies.

"*Fidia* happens to our daughters. Sometimes this compensation goes a long way back - before even she can understand. If it comes to that, and I refuse, it brings a war to my doorstep. If a woman is against *fidia*, all members of the family are against her. If she faces this problem, she reports to IRC, but once she reports, the problem becomes even more difficult. That's when you start living without peace."

The women explain that the economic situation in the camp is difficult. Children are getting married young, around the age of 14 (only girls are used for compensation). Due to poverty sometimes their husbands decide to force their daughter to marry a rich husband so that they can obtain bridewealth. When asked if compensation was a problem in their families, most of the women raised their hands. Four of them had been forced to give up their children. But they clarify that this tradition is limited to the Bembe, who comprise 80% of the camp population.

They agree that people are only scared of the government. "If the government intervenes then something can happen. [People say to us] NGO's make you big headed. Wait until you get back to the Congo." There are very few men who disagree with *fidia*; even those Bembe men who disavow the practice listen to their parents. The ECHO delegate asks, enunciating slowly: "If money was available, would there still be human compensation? A chorus of voices responds that compensation exists to replace money.[120]

While camp residents described certain practices, such as the payment of dowry to the bride's family, as stemming from "*mila na desturi*," and had differing opinions as to their desirability. This is not to say that they uncritically accepted such practices, but that they described them as embedded in kin relationships as well as specific conditions marking the complexity and precarity of life, like war, inadequate access to healthcare, bad luck, accidents and economic hardships. Elders in the camp were also able to pinpoint the historical precedents of such traditions and explain how they had evolved over time and in tandem with social and political developments. UNHCR, on the other hand, had a somewhat paradoxical take on the matter. Even as they sought an "original" tradition within which they could (anthropologically!) locate the social significance of a practice, and thus change it, they uniformly condemned

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[120] The description of the IRC women's meeting with the ECHO delegate draws on Field notes, November 20, 2013

"culture and tradition" as unchanging and harmful, particularly for women. But the problem in Nyarugusu was not so much tradition but impoverishment specifically caused by encampment.

Further complicating the matter was the extremely high turnover of aid workers. Kasulu was an undesirable field posting; it was classified as a "family" station by the UN, but aid workers claimed that since it was remote, relatively unsafe, and devoid of nearby secondary schooling facilities, it should be classified as a "hardship" location (with the commensurate pay differential). With each new arrival, new focus groups and studies were commissioned so that the aid worker in question could start to understand the situation and come up with an appropriate response.[121] I spoke with the most recently appointed GBV officer at UNHCR's Kasulu field office, who explained that UNHCR wanted to approach GBV as stemming from harmful traditional practices:

"… we want to tackle [GBV] in terms of harmful traditional practices and with the anthropology study – we prioritize this thing of dowry. Because the dowry is one of the root causes of different kind – whether it comes to paying debts, to being inherited as a widow, also, how you call that, I mean there are different kinds of things that if you ask, if you ask these disputes in the family come up because of dowry issues." She also explained that camp residents linked these practices to identity: "For example when they say, well, dowry, because we're Congolese, and we're Bembe – I'm Bembe, we do that. So they link it with the ethnicity. If I don't do that, I'm not Bembe anymore."

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[121] Field notes, February 2014

Here, rather than foregrounding concerns surrounding finances or kin relations, she describes dowry in terms of unchanging tradition and ethnicity. Having recently arrived, she had held a number of focus group meetings and surveys to orient herself. She spoke at length about UNHCR's approach to ending such practices, which would depend on educating young people: "So it's a little bit to confront these ideas – what was the original of this tradition, and also to find positive ones, you know, to reinforce those as well. And then to work with that. The idea was to work with these facilitators and then to tackle particularly sometimes young couples, that's what the recommendation was [from the study] because when there is young couples and young people – the majority of the camp is young – it's important. And then for me, it's also to be like this is good mechanisms – or traditional mechanisms, or religious groups, or people that are… to include them in the – I mean once you have some people strong enough in terms of like they have cultural – a reflection to incorporate all the key actors. But for example for me everytime that I hear like no because this is our tradition and the tradition is like that, and it's like what I see, and people cannot change this and you're trying to change it, it's like – it's not us that is trying to change it – it's your people – I mean, if people – it's not us – I mean, how can I put it? Sorry I don't know how – it's like, this is a tradition and the tradition is the same. And it's like full stop. There is no, you know, for these people that have this statement, it's like full stop, and this is it. And it's like, this is not it, you have in these countries people that [are] resistant – you have cases of people that [don't] want to be inherited, or even fathers, I mean, not saying mothers – of fathers that came to report because their in-laws or whatever are forcing to give on human compensation his daughter, and he's refusing. So we have people that do not agree, and it's, you know Congolese people, or refugee people in the camp that do not agree with these practices."

Refugees in Nyarugusu are thus subject to a series of impossible demands. They are expected to let go of "harmful traditions," and embrace "positive traditions" and human rights; aid workers stressed that Congolese cultural practices were not welcome in the camp, and that those vested with traditional, rather than bureaucratic authority, such as the *mtemi* or *mwami* (traditional leaders) would have no say in camp life, either when it came to advising refugees on community matters, or as their representatives. To avoid replicating traditional structures of Congolese authority in the camp, a new system of representation was put forth. The camp was divided into clusters, villages, and zones. Each sub-division had its own elected leader responsible for arbitrating small disputes, bringing issues to the attention of aid agencies, and disseminating aid agency messages. Traditional leaders were often told they had no authority. Yet when it came to disseminating human rights messages, aid workers prevailed upon them to use their traditional authority to educate people about acceptable practices. UNHCR perceived *mila na desturi* as the problem responsible for violence in the camp, but camp residents, particularly women, were able to name it simultaneously as the source material for violence as well as redemption and reparation.

Camp residents keenly observed that issues arose from UNHCR's "universal" orientation towards humanitarian solutions.[122] From November 2013 until August 2014, UNHCR conducted a "verification exercise" to establish the number of refugees in the camp, their ethnic background, and their family composition. Speaking of the ongoing census, Leonard observed:

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[122] Interview with Jafari and Leonard, Nyarugusu Camp, February 23, 2014

> "*Tumeconstitue mafamille yetu selon tradition…. tuletea sisi matatizo. Matatizo ni hayo. famille …UNHCR ni organization mondial. Inasema famille manaake famille biologique. wanalenga famille biologique. sisi hapa - maisha yetu sisis - tunachukua kama enfant biologique ni wako, petit fils biologique ni wako. sasa kwenye sensa, ile wanaomba kutenganisha. na kama ule mtoto hana baba hana mama, unhcr inaona kama ule mtu ni nani? ni orphelain. wanamchukulia kama orphelain! sasa … tsk… ile mtu kutoa katika culture mmoja, kumingiza katika culture ingine, kuna ile …tsk… mareticence. mhmm? watu wanaona, ok, nzuri, lakini wanataka kunitenganisha nini nini?"*
>
> "We've constituted our families according to tradition, and this causes problems. The problem is that family – UNHCR is a global organization - it says that family means biological family. For us here… our lives – we understand that a biological child is yours, a biological son is yours. Now, in the census, they want to separate us. And if a child doesn't have a mother or a father, UNHCR considers the child an orphan. They consider him an orphan! Now… tsk… to take a person out of one culture, and insert him into a different culture, there is a ... tsk… reticence. Mhmm? People think, ok, fine, but they want to disconnect me?"[123]

But camp residents recognized too, that tradition was not fixed. They referred constantly to traditions that had been adapted due to forced displacement, from practices surrounding childbirth to marriage. For example, when a child was born in the DRC, friends and family members of the parents would slaughter animals for feasts and bring specific gifts for the parents. In the camp, this practice was turned on its head, with parents responsible for slaughtering animals and organizing a celebration for their friends and family members. Mike, a WLAC paralegal, noted that there had been many other changes in social norms. He saw some as positive, like the move away from bribery so commonplace in the DRC, and the development and education of women (which also meant an increased willingness on their part to report GBV), but others as signifying increasing isolation and new lines drawn around previously shared property. Whereas people had helped and depended more on each other in the DRC, in the camp it had become a matter of each for himself. In some cases families would help men out by giving them the dowry money they had received when their daughters got married, but more and more, “people are starting to listen to the agencies and think of their families as immediate family only,” and keep to themselves.[124]

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[123] Interview with Jafari and Leonard, Nyarugusu Camp, February 23, 2014

In the case of burials and funerals in the DRC, others would help with costs, but now people had to bear those costs on their own. Camp residents specified that these changes were due to the particular circumstances of life in the camp. They often expressed frustration that they had to follow rules that were alien to them and didn’t make sense in the context of their “tissue sociale.”[125] “Mila sio biblia,” Mike told me. Tradition isn’t the bible. Their traditions could change, but UNHCR was fixed in its approach. One consequence of the insistence on “harmful traditional practices” as the root of all violence meant that educating people about the right way to do things would depend on making a crucial distinction between life in the Congo and life in exile. Whereas the Congo was the site of lawlessness and failed institutions, the camp was home to proper norms and legal infrastructure. Tanzanian law applied because institutions were available, and aid agencies were to enforce new norms of human rights prescribed by international and national law. The GBV officer explained how UNHCR dealt with resistance to human rights talk and aimed at making changes:

“I think well, change takes, it will take time, because not everyone is on the same page obviously, and there is nothing that you can do as an intervention and everyone’s going to be happy. But that’s the issue of opening the debate at least so people, like, whether people can choose. I mean ideally, the crucial thing will be … that people can choose, and their choices will be respected. You know by… that would be like completely success. But at least you know to start with this debate and also to include, to provide information about the Tanzanian law framework, including the Congolese one. Because they have the belief that in the Congo, it’s allowed. And in terms of law, it’s not allowed - in terms of the national law framework. But we know the weaknesses of the Congolese state, and that’s why these communities, these people becomes so important (inaudible) but sometimes they hide behind the fact that, in Congo it’s not like that, the law in Congo doesn't… because you know then it’s some kind of connection, of what’s happening in Congo in terms of law because, so I believe to explain them, to show them the laws are more or less similar in Congo and Tanzania….”

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[124] Interview with M, Nyarugusu Camp, September 13, 2014
[125] Interview with Jafari and Leonard, Nyarugusu Camp, February 23, 2014

Her explanation was revealing: legal framework was positioned as a key part of the solution. The weakness of legal and state institutions in the DRC, the corresponding lack of awareness about what is legal, along with the perceived linkage between identity and practice were defined as the root of the problem, as was a misunderstanding of what exactly human rights entailed. For UNHCR, camp residents aversion to human rights law stemmed from what they perceived as the innate character of Congolese refugees as well as the very nature of the Congolese state.

Teaching Rights, Contesting Rights:

Rights signified both “official” rights (i.e. those described and advocated for by the aid apparatus) as well as what refugees perceived to be fair within the parameters of Congolese practices. Since the perceived problems in the camp stemmed from both the abuse of human rights, and, correspondingly, the lack of a fundamental knowledge of what human rights were, UNHCR and its partners put in place a regime of human rights education. In his work on education in the Kakuma refugee camp, Andrew Epstein uses the term “pedagogical camp” to describe the refugee “education policy multiplex,” through which “dominant international political and economic discourses are chosen, distributed, recontextualized, and transformed by their intended beneficiaries… Purporting to reflect the global values and moral aims of its caretakers, the camp is in fact an enactment of a multiplex of problem-oriented policy prescriptions which attempt to contain, discipline, and normalize refugees (Foucault, 1979; Malkki, 1995; Chimni, 1999), and to ultimately transform them into agents of repair: of themselves, of the “national order of things” and the ruptured state from whence they came.”[126] Epstein’s term is a fitting one for Nyarugusu, where aid discourse is heavily oriented around educating refugees about human rights, with the dual aim of rectifying problems in the camp as well as “back home” in the DRC.

The aid apparatus put in place an extensive network for teaching refugees about rights. Human rights education, however, did not focus on rights in general, or even the rights of refugees. Rather, they were concerned mainly with the rights of women and children, the benefits of legal aid, and the importance of reporting GBV issues. Furthermore, the work of “teaching rights” was to a large extent delegated to refugees themselves. UNHCR had a number of operational and implementation partners: The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), the Women’s Legal Aid Commission (WLAC), the Tanzanian Red Cross Society (TRCS), the Tanzanian Water and Sanitation Authority (TWESA), and the International Rescue Committee (IRC), CEMDO Tanzania (Community Environmental Management and Development

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[126] Andrew Epstein, "Maps of Desire: Refugee Children, Schooling, and Contemporary Dinka Pastoralism in South Sudan," University of Wisconsin- Madison, 2012. pp. 106-107

Organization), ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency), and WFP (the World Food Program). Each organization had a GBV "focal point" and a mandate to bring to light or address GBV problems related to the provision of services in their sector. For example, CEMDO dealt with environmental issues, and was thus responsible for addressing the issue of sexual assault during firewood collection. IRC and WLAC were the two main organizations tasked with prevention and response activities: IRC was responsible for GBV as well as education (and also had a team of lawyers for GBV survivors), while WLAC was responsible for legal aid.

However, the number of aid workers serving Nyarugusu was rather low, and many of them did not speak Swahili; only official "consultations" were held using interpreters and aid workers. Thus messages pertaining to human rights were often disseminated using refugee workers; they received a meager "incentive" rather than a salary. Community organization became a profession; though the economic payoff was paltry, incentive workers benefitted in other ways, like proximity to aid workers and camp management, and access to food and beverages provided at some workshops, a substantial motivation in the context of extreme precarity and scarcity.

Incentive Workers

Incentive workers were to conduct outreach in order to educate community members about rights issues, and many of them worked for more than one organization. Usually outreach took the form of small group meetings (at the village, cluster, and zone level), debates, and video shows, and by distributing informational leaflets and hanging educational banners. WLAC had a number of refugee paralegals, known as *washekanya,* responsible for the intake of GBV complaints and cases, as well as organizing outreach activities. Meetings often happened at 6:30 or 7am, before women and children went to collect water, and before the heat was too scorching to sit outside. The sheer number of workshops and activities organized was impressive; the same message was drilled again and again in local meetings as well as during camp-wide functions and smaller organized around events like World Refugee Day, Day of the African Child, and the 16 Days Campaign to end violence against women.

A flash point of contention was the education of minors; frequent programs were run to teach children about their rights. Parents complained that these programs were contrary to their culture and tradition (*mila na desturi*), that their children's morals were being corrupted and that they were learning "disrespect;" this was both due to the fact that they were shown sexual education videos (under the auspices of GBV prevention programs), as well as due to being informed of their rights. According to parents, this manifested in the household as the refusal to listen in the form of the assertion of individual rights; they saw it as an infringement upon their role as parents and ability to discipline their children. They claimed that human rights (*haki zao*) made their children proud and arrogant (*kiburi*), and insisted that if they were to be given seminars, they should be taught about their responsibilities (*wajibu*). Such conversations were revealing of how refugees thought about rights, but also about the future.

Like other commemorative days, to the Day of the African Child and World Refugee Day provided a focal point for thematic pedagogical interventions based on human rights, organized by aid agencies, and carried out by refugee incentive workers. I attended a number of refugee organized meetings in the run up to these days. The following paragraphs describe aspects of one such campaign.

Right before the crossroads to turn off to the population verification center, not far from a dilapidated church and a water pump, three men and a woman sit around a table in a dark room in late May. They are there for the WLAC paralegal zone leader meeting. They open with a prayer. There is a brief discussion about the upcoming staff-wide meeting and the election of head committee, adherence to internal rules, and a plan of work for paralegals. The conversation is extremely formal; all of them are taking notes. They talk about feedback from the paralegals on education and client service.

Rodney adjusts his glasses, clears his throat, and declares: "We need to pay a lot of attention to education. We found some zones are okay, others have fallen behind. The committee is to set a program for all zones. But now we don't know where to start. Also, the process of *sensa* is going on. What teaching should we go on with? This month, we should focus on children's rights and responsibilities, and refugee law." Machozi responds "We should print [teaching materials] so that we use the same language. We haven't discussed which date to start on. Every zone should get the same education. The most important thing is to grasp fundamental rights."

Rodney agrees. "We should pick the most important rights. Our committee says we are ruining the children by teaching their rights. I think we should teach the rights and responsibilities. WLAC and child protection share the work of these campaigns." Machozi interrupts: “Listen – that campaign is IRC’s own campaign. There are some people that say if you educate a girl she’ll become a prostitute. We need to educate [those people]. We should make sure that people know the meaning of these holidays, and that they uphold the rights of children. When they get this education, they will also understand the meaning of these days *(siku kuu)*.”

There is a brief discussion of which book to use as teaching material. Rodney is reading out rights from a book, over the voices of the others, and Ebondo interjects that they should choose up to seven main rights to focus on. Machozi, who is also a teacher, insists: “We shouldn’t do this campaign [teaching refugee law/rights] only because it’s a day of celebration. We should do it because people need to know the rights of refugees.” Ebondo suggests that they change the timetable: “Listen, people are tired and unable to absorb new information at the end of the day!” As though he has not heard, Rodney reminds everyone: “We have to make sure that what we’re educating is correct!”

Out of the corner of my eye I notice a couple of children carrying heavy water buckets on their heads. Ebondo adds: “There aren’t any organizations teaching people about rights. At least we can learn here and improve our society (*kuboresha jamii*).”[127] Ebondo and his colleagues thought of themselves as serving an important function in the camp: educating others and making society better. But for all this talk about the rights of refugees, I rarely heard anyone explain them at any of the workshops.

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[127] Field notes, May 28, 2014

A few weeks later, I have a chance to visit one of their meetings.[128] It's held in the early morning, right after sunrise, so that people can learn about their rights before it becomes too hot or they have to attend to errands like fetching water, which is only turned on at specific hours. There are about a dozen paralegals sitting in a straight line in plastic chairs, waiting for residents from the neighboring villages to show up. The process of informing residents is long. First WLAC camp leaders write a letter to the camp leader. Then paralegal zone leaders write to regular zone leaders. The Zone leaders then write to village leaders, who inform cluster leaders, who in turn send out "town criers" to tell people about the meetings and campaigns.

A paralegal is up speaking about what exactly rights are. He announces a number of rights, all of them pertaining to women and children, and encourages people to report to WLAC. Around 40 people are sitting, but there's a big distance between them. In between, people cycle or walk past on their way to run other errands. It's chilly; the women are all wrapped up and some people are moving about to ward off the cold. People are sitting in small groups and around a dozen of the mothers have shown up with their children. Ebondo tells me "Refugees are always ready to get information. They're used to these things." The question and answer segment is revealing. There is a great deal of confusion over which agencies do what. People have questions about why the paralegals have not gone over the responsibilities of their children.

This concern with responsibilities became clearer when I attended a meeting at which around 40 paralegal WLAC staff recapped their campaign activities.[129] The leader of the campaign for each zone in the camp reported about activities. The representative for Zone 1 activities stood up and announced that turnout had been uneven, but that those who attended were "very happy that we talked about the responsibilities of children. They say that we are ruining the children by teaching them about rights." But they had expressed reservations. If this was a celebration of African children, why were there so many adults? Why did the training focus on girls? Why were only women given their rights? They were concerned that aid agencies were focusing on the wrong beneficiaries: "Children with early pregnancies are given clothes, solar powered lamps, etc. But those who have good morals should also be taken care of by agencies. Those that don't have good behavior and get pregnant early are the ones who are helped." The WLAC paralegals recommended teaching children about their responsibilities and educating parents about laws pertaining to marriage. "Many complain that the organizations ruin children. We should continue focusing on their responsibilities (*wajibu*). We should teach them about refugee law so that they know what law protects them in the camp."

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[128] The following narrative draws on Field notes, June 10, 2014 and observations of the WLAC "Kelele" (campaign) in Zone Two.

[129] Field notes, June 13, 2014.

One of the campaigners complained that "getting enough people is a challenge." On the first day of the campaign, they had timed the meeting poorly, and all the women were at the water pumps. On the second day, it rained, so attendance was low. Some of the villages didn't inform residents about the campaign. And people also skipped the meetings because of the sheer number of campaigns and were "tired of receiving so much information." The WLAC leader bellowed: "Everyone should have enough information. Education is important for the world of today!"

Village and zone leaders are also in attendance to share the views of their communities. They are roughly split between those who think that this kind of education is not helpful for their children, and others who agree with it. Some ask for leaders and parents to be educated. Someone points out that community leaders do this work for free; there are requests for small favors, material things like pens and paper. Faced with a complaint about only having invited one village leader when they are in fact two, WLAC staff explain that their budget only allowed for one soda.

A village leader suggested that children should be taught about their responsibilities to their parents and to the world. “Some of us can’t think about living here for 20 years. You should teach the youth – they are the new parents, so that the exercise can be taken seriously. People from the West are bringing us bad culture (*mila mbaya*). You should keep teaching them the good morals from the Congo.” Another parent responded: “I don’t agree that organizations are ruining our children. Us parents, we’re ruining their morals. The children are not the children of the organizations. They are our children. We parents should cooperate with the organizations.”

A staff member from WLAC nods at him, clearly pleased. Turning to the others, he announces: “If you all really want the campaigns to continue, come tell this to the UN at the monthly meeting. Education here is very low. Tell them so that they can enable WLAC to do more.” At the end of the meeting the camp leader arrives. He is recognizable by the safari vest he is always wearing, a thick mustache, and his booming voice. “The way the world is, you can explain your ideas to someone, and your ideas can be at a crossroads. I’m sad that the zone leaders didn’t get information. Yes, there are hills and valleys. We are in the camp, and every person has his own character (*tabia yake*). We can’t allow a few to ruin the whole country.” As someone who oversaw parades celebrating Congolese nationalism, advocated for the preservation of home culture, and also interacted regularly with aid agencies, the camp leader's message was suitably vague.

Indeed, anxieties about Congolese "culture" – on the part of both camp residents as well as aid workers - informed a lot of the discussion around teaching rights. In my conversations with aid agency staff members, this insistence on teaching children "responsibilities" was described in terms of "traditional" discipline and a different cultural attitude to parenting. But this is how a WLAC staff member described them to me:

"1. To work to strengthen the unity of the family 2. To respect parents, guardians and elders and to help them whenever they need help. 3. To support his community and nation to the best of his physical and intellectual abilities according to his age and ability. 4. To protect and preserve the future of his society and his nation. 5. To protect and preserve the customs and traditions of his community and nation as a whole and as they are for other community members."[130]

WLAC was just one of the organizations involved a camp-wide children's rights campaign, which culminated in a camp wide performance. The Day of the African Child, held on June 16 every year, is meant to commemorate the Soweto uprising in 1976, in which black school children marched to demand better education in their native language. A big celebration was held at a field not far from the camp verification center. Oddly enough, performers were facing the pavilion, rather than the audience. The UNHCR community service officer was the guest of honor. IRC and UNHCR staff and refugee leaders sat underneath in the shade, and costumed children walked in front of these dignitaries, shouting out slogans, singing, and dancing. “Teacher, we don’t want discrimination! Teacher, we don’t want corruption!” I was impressed by the dancers, and the little kid dressed up as Michael Jackson who could moonwalk with flair. All the songs had lyrics about early pregnancies and children’s rights. In a too-loud microphone on stage, a host name checked all of the organizations and the various child protection programme managers. A panel of “child reporters” comes up to read “news” from the camp, including teacher demands for higher salaries (noting that one of the reasons for poor education is teachers demanding bribes.) They elaborated on the various campaigns in the camp schools, then one of them switched to English to read a poem about education and children’s rights. Sitting in a straight line, with their too-small bodies leaning in towards the microphone, they announced their commitments: “I’m [name redacted] and I’m very passionate about children’s rights.” “I’m very active in advocacy for children’s rights.” “I’m a devoted child advocate.” At the end of the performance, TRCS symbolically distributed a few doses of vitamin A.

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[130] Personal Communication, May 4, 2017

Campaigns like this to educate refugees about rights – the rights of women and the rights of children – took place not only in communities and villages, and on such a continuous basis that people tired of them, but also at a camp-wide level. Human rights had to be learned, but they also had to be performed.

The Congolese Woman Speaks: New Definitions in the Ethical Domain

What, then, was the effect of the above-mentioned pedagogical intervention? Refugees adopt and adapt to this new moral regime in meaningful and often surprising ways. A closer look at these transformations can, I suggest, teach us something important about how ethics, language, and life-worlds interact and about the ways in which supposedly "universal" ideologies like human rights can take hold in specific locations. What kinds of new ethical dispositions are formed in the pedagogical context of the camp, and how? The UNHCR Community Services officer, despite his measured take on the possibility of eliminating GBV, seemed optimistic that attitudes were changing:

"For me I believe it's changing. Why do I believe that? Because of the way we normally talk to them. The feedback that we have from them is really in a positive way. The Congolese woman now stands and speaks what really happens. The girls at school speak. For example, we have school clubs for GBV. And these clubs – they are voicing out the problems that they get. To us, to UNHCR, to the IP [implementing partners], and even to teachers. So for us, there is a level of success."[131]

Ebondo, the refugee incentive worker deeply involved in WLAC campaigns echoed the same sentiment: "There has been a lot of progress [with regards to rights]. Around 1996 no one really reported anything. People thought you were a bad person if you went to file a report. But things have changed. People learned about their rights, then they came to our offices to tell us about what happened to them in DRC, because they knew it was against their rights. Now they can voice their problems (*wanaweza kuvoice matatizo yao*). Now they can file reports and get the help they need. Changing people is a process. Here we can get education. In DRC there's a lot of violence because people aren't educated."[132]

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[131] Interview with Community Services Officer, July 30, 2014

[132] Field notes, June 10, 2014

But the story gets more complicated. Rights signified both "official" rights (i.e. those described and advocated for by the aid apparatus) as well as what refugees perceived to be fair within the parameters of Congolese practices. Human rights were sometimes seen as instrumental: a respected *sungu sungu* (community elected "police" officer), who had previously been the camp leader of the Mtabila camp and was also a WLAC paralegal, insisted that human rights activists had their own interests in mind. As an example, he told me a lengthy story about a judge who was ready to champion human rights in court, but wanted to mete out a harsh (and rights-violating) punishment to an individual who had robbed him.

The contentious nature of human rights appears more clearly when we look at refugee incentive workers. These volunteers frequently expressed concern that they were being targeted (by fellow refugees) because of their "goodness" and their human rights work. This was attributed not only to the fallout from individual cases (where they were targeted because a GBV case they had handled had resulted in a legal conviction) but also due to their status and visibility in promoting and defending human rights. But the language of human rights – both in abstract form, as well as in the jargon of bureaucracy and procedure – began to permeate ordinary speech. Camp residents would refer to "*maperpetrators*" and "*mavictims*," tacking on the Swahili plural prefix, rather than using the words in translation. Official terms like GBV began to acquire novel significance and meaning, and human rights was used in surprising new ways, sometimes to support practices that were decidedly against human rights proper. Sally Engle Merry has written extensively about the "vernacularization" of human rights; in other words, the process by which human rights language is "extracted from the universal and adapted to national and local communities… A key dimension of the process of vernacularization is the people in the middle:

those who translate the discourses and practices from the arena of international law and legal institutions to specific situations of suffering and violation. Intermediaries or translators work at various levels to negotiate between local, regional, national, and global systems of meaning. Translators refashion global rights agendas for local contexts and reframe local grievances in terms of global human rights principles and activities."[133] Merry distinguishes between two forms of vernacularization: "replication" and "hybridization" – the former reflects the imposition of a transnational model that has "local cultural content but imported structure, aims, and methods," whereas the latter is a process by which local institutions, practices and structures remain dominant.[134] This framework is helpful in thinking about the ways in which human rights language is adopted and subverted in Nyarugusu. Yet the vernacularization or indigenization of rights that Merry is referring to is quite a different situation. First, local grievances are refashioned solely in the reflection of rights, and second, indigenized rights claims address themselves decisively to the correction of wrongs in the legal arena.

In Nyarugusu, however, human rights language, unlike other kinds of language, is the kind of language invested with self-referential authority – not something to be improvised with. Speaking about the local tribunal[135] set up to arbitrate disputes in the community, the GBV officer told me:

"And the thing is for example, I don't like how they [the local tribunal], I mean the standards, I have an interview with them, and you can sit for hours, and they will say whatever you want to hear, you know in terms of human rights. I mean these people are very smart. They will talk whatever you want to hear. So sometimes you have to make concrete examples. For example, I remember at the end after spending like three hours with them, I would say: ok ok, now, explain to me what is a human right for you. I mean what is a human right – I don't know what is a human right, can you tell me what it is in your own words? And then the example that they gave me is like, well, you see, if a widow refuses to be inherited - and of course they find this tradition to protect women, you know very romantic ideas about it – if a widow refuses to be inherited she has to pay the dowry back to the in laws, and that is a human right for the in laws that they have. You know, this economical price, they see it as a human right."[136]

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[133] Sally Engle Merry. "Transnational Human Rights and Local Activism: Mapping the Middle." American Anthropologist, Vol. 108, No. 1 (Mar., 2006), pp. 38-51, pp. 39

[134] Sally Engle Merry, "Transnational Human Rights and Local Activism: Mapping the Middle.", pp. 48

[135] Nyarugusu also hosts a local tribunal, comprised of tribal elders who arbitrate community disputes including those relating to debt, witchcraft, marital and familial issues. They are not allowed to deal with GBV cases, which must be referred directly to the International Rescue Committee (IRC) GBV offices.

The contestation, improvisation, and transformation of rights language happened not with a view to the rule of law, but rather, with visions of justice and social organization that, while new, still looked to the past as a referent. When I spoke with a few of the elders in the camp, some of whom were *mtemi* in the DRC, they explained that some of the practices in the camp, including *fidia*, had ancient precedents. Interwoven with thick ethnographic descriptions of pre-colonial traditional authority, they presented a narrative of such practices that located them in Congo's pre-colonial past and traced their evolution all the way into the camp, noting that their form and function had changed over time. Justice was described not in terms of accountability but in terms of reparations and the restoration and protection of familial and social bonds.

Jarrett Zigon has pointed out that though people may use "the moral vocabulary of dominant moral discourses, they may use this vocabulary to indicate an ethical imperative that exceeds that which the former can articulate."[137] Indeed, if we look closely at the usage of terms like "GBV," or "rights," or even "human," the gap between what is meant by the humanitarian usage of the terms and what refugees aim to enunciate becomes clear. Over the course of my research in Nyarugusu I noticed that the language of rights and GBV had been incorporated into daily life: women would refer to all sorts of problems with their husbands as GBV. GBV became a byword for injustice, whether or not it fit official definitions. On one of my first visits to the camp, I met Annette, a cleaner at the refugee leadership office, who told me that she had a "GBV problem." ("*Niko na shida ya GBV.*") She explained that her husband had left her and her child a few years ago and gone to live with another woman. In another instance I was interviewing an incentive worker who had been a GBV counselor in the camp. Explaining GBV to me, she said: "It's an English word that means "gender based violence." Like, you're being harassed because you're of a specific gender. And it affects women much more than men, because of culture and tradition that go against human rights – women are considered second class people."[138] I then asked what she meant by human rights. "Human rights – let's say they are those good things – [there are] things that human beings shouldn't do to other human beings."[139] She used the phrase "*yale mambo mazuri*" – *yale* being the Swahili object preposition denoting distance from both the speaker and addressee and, in this case, abstraction. Fleur was echoing the official definition of GBV – something that affects women more, because they are subject to customs and traditions that constitute violations of human rights. But as she elaborates, she doesn't describe human rights in terms of injury. Instead, they fall under a broader spectrum: things that are both good and do not cause harm to others; in other words, human rights are a positive delimiting acceptable behavior. (However, there were also risks to behaving properly, which I will discuss in Chapter 5.)

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[136] Interview with UNHCR GBV Officer, September 30, 2014

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[137] Jarrett Zigon, "An Ethics of Dwelling and a Politics of World-Building: A Critical Response to Ordinary Ethics," Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 20.4 (2014). pp. 754.

[138] *"Mila na desturi ambao zinageuka haki za binadamu - inachukulia kama mwanamke ni mtu wa second class."* Interview with Fleur, Nyarugusu Camp, September 30, 2014

[139] Interview with Fleur, Nyarugusu Camp, September 30, 2014

My interest in rights is not only linked to the imposition of a supposedly universal paradigm. Lila Abu-Lughod has argued that the legalistic framework of rights can hardly capture or address the complexity of women's social worlds and lives.[140] She explores local discourses around Muslim women's rights promulgated by Islamic feminists to underscore the fact that rights language is always embedded in differential relations written through class, power, and location.[141] Like Leonard, who critiqued the "universalist" underpinnings of UNHCR's approach to refugees, many of the refugees understood that human rights did not apply to their situation, and insisted not only sometimes for an expansion of rights (for example, to have the right to be heard, and to be listened to) but simultaneously gestured towards ways of being that exceeded human-rights-as-justice. By looking at the everyday ways in which rights-talk affected camp life, and by paying attention to responses to this discourse, I aim to move away from rights as the answer to human suffering and towards other possibilities.

Speaking of the imperial force that engendered and imposed new political, economic, and cultural paradigms upon unwilling participants, Talal Asad writes: "changes have taking place as the effect of dominant political power by which new possibilities are constructed and old ones destroyed. The changes do not reflect a simple expansion of the range of individual choice, but the creation of conditions in which only new (i.e., modern) choice can be made."[142] If the imposition of human rights in Nyarugusu reflected a continuation of the effort to "modernize" subjects, the residents for whom old possibilities were destroyed nevertheless found new ways to articulate claims outside of this framework. I contend that despite, to use Asad's term, their "conscription" into the order of rights and gender-based violence, the effort to erase alternative possibilities could never be complete.

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[140] Abu-Lughod, Do Muslim Women Need Saving? pp. 176

[141] Abu-Lughod, Do Muslim Women Need Saving? Chapters 5 and 6. The book also provides an excellent overview of the kinds of work anthropologists and feminists have done with regards to rights, and critiques of women's rights as human rights.

Annette's usage of the term GBV shows us that the concept can be adopted in other ways; to signal a perceived injustice – in this case, abandonment - not covered by the "official" definition of GBV. The aid apparatus was opaque and confusing, and camp residents would often move from agency to agency in search of a solution. Though the moral language of rights provided by humanitarian organizations was incorporated into daily life, refugees relied too on ontological claims and claims that sought to recognize difficulty and dignity. As I have shown above, the responses to human rights programming in the camp was mixed, with some adopting the discourse or infusing it with new meanings, while others remained skeptical. If one did not accept that human rights were the answer, what would be? I suggest that turning the conversation away from "rights" and towards ways of being in the world can help us understand more both about Nyarugusu as well as about other ways of thinking about personhood, ethical dispositions, and justice. In order to do so, I first explain some of the ways in which humanitarianism constructs a particular social world in the camp, by shaping interpersonal encounters and imposing demands about behavior, knowledge, and participation. The next chapter explains how the focus on GBV shapes the humanitarian demand for refugee collaboration, and details the actual experience of a person seeking help through the GBV protection system.

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[142] Asad, "Conscripts of Western Civilization." pp. 337

Chapter 2: “You Have to Work With Us”: Getting Help in Nyarugusu

"Refugees have to … take greater responsibility, take an active role in their own protection." – Head of Field Office, UNHCR Kasulu[143]

On the morning of June 20th, 2014, white SUVs reddened with dust parked next to each other in a barren field not far from a small fruit and vegetable market in Nyarugusu. It was World Refugee Day, and blue-hatted aid workers climbed out of the cars, greeting one another and slowly finding their way to a makeshift stage bordering the field. On stage, there were lines of plastic chairs for aid workers and for the guest of honor, the district commissioner of Kasulu, along with a microphone and loudspeakers stacked atop each other. After a march-past by uniformed school children and a brief introduction by the UNHCR mass information officer, various groups of refugees came up to the stage to perform plays, music, and skits about the hardships of refugeehood. Their performances focused on issues affecting the refugee community, and were loaded with moral and disciplinary messages. Finally, it was time for the head of UNHCR's local office to speak. She had taken the microphone just as a group of Burundian dancers finished their energetic drumming and dance performance, and they knelt in front of her now wearing traditional Burundian costumes and shields, their chests painted.

"It's going to be a long day," she began. "We want to hear you, and we also want you to hear us." She wanted to be heard, so in what follows, I reproduce her speech at length. After an extended thank you to the various organizations working with UNHCR as well as the Tanzanian government, she continued:

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[143] Field notes, November 19, 2013

> “I think the theme is One Family Torn Apart by War is Too Many.[144] Many years ago if people asked what is a refugee it was hard [to answer]. It was extraordinary to have a refugee standing in front of you. But today… everyone is moving… everyone is running away, looking for asylum somewhere. I think it should disturb all of us. A few years ago we thought refugees and asylum was only in Africa. Today it is not only Africa. There are thousands on the road right now seeking asylum. Normally we can’t celebrate because today is going to remind us of something difficult. This commemoration should also be a day for us to reflect… everybody thinks that the solution is in the hands of someone else… *I think we all need to stop one minute today and understand that where you are sitting now, you have a solution*. Because if you don’t want to see this going on, we have to all be concerned, to see what we can do to stop it, whether here in Nyarugusu or Syria. *We recognize you’re human beings*, we want to value you and we value you… but this is not an ordinary situation. We thank again Tanzania for giving you this space where you don’t have to run away – it’s getting rare. In our hearts – we have to work in our communities to preserve peace, so we can live like this. I’ve heard a lot of messages here – that the assistance and food is not enough, we have problems in the schools, families, hospitals. I would like to invite you that each one of us we can do something about it. I’m not speaking from [a] speech, I’m speaking from the heart. I’ve been here for eight months. The things in the skits, the questions and problems that were raised have been raised at every commemoration. I’m asking you today. Let’s not meet again in October and November and say the problems. Let’s come together. Mothers, fathers, etc. and let’s sit down and see how we do things better. It is a shame to have many small young girls and boys sitting here pretending to be MPs asking other children who are also asking – they are not playing a game – they are speaking to us. It’s not a play. We laugh and laugh and come back to these stories. Then we meet again, let’s see what we’re doing right. Is it possible? [the crowd is lukewarm] This for me is watching a movie again and again. I find it boring. Let’s change the movie, okay? And let’s give a new job to the children so next time they’ll bring something else. It has been said that this camp started in November 1996. 18 years. With 18 years and all the closures [of neighboring camps] we have a lot of problems here. So we can talk about the problems… if we don’t do anything about them they won’t go away.”

She talked as though dressing down a small child, pausing for effect now and again, before raising her voice indignantly:

> “We have tried to show you our commitment. We know this is a protracted situation and we need to provide durable solutions [repatriation, resettlement, and local integration]. If we don’t get you one of these solutions these problems will continue. I want you to know that UNHCR – we are working together to get durable solutions. We thought because the camp has been here for 18 years it is important for us to know who is in the camp, what are your problems, so we’ve gone through this very excruciating exercise to do this. We could have counted you for seven days. But *if we didn’t listen to you*, it would be hard for us to bring programs…. Our goal is to have *more specific*

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[144] The official theme was “One Refugee Without Durable Solutions is One Too Many”

information about you and your families so we know how we can implement these solutions. But we also have another commitment, which is to improve services and protection. By July we should be able to implement the data. So this is our aim. We are also trying to improve camp management. *Camp management is all of us.* Camp management cannot succeed by only one NGO doing it. If anybody tells you that, that person is a liar. Camp management requires all the partners, government administration, UNHCR and refugee leadership – everybody together, that is what we call camp management. Let me tell you one thing I realized. In the plays you're doing monitoring. If something is not working, we have a coordination meeting, for example, a water problem. We don't need to hear about it on the day of the refugee celebration – we should have a meeting with TWESA. We don't want to hear problems. This is not the purpose of World Refugee Day. It is very entertaining, don't get me wrong. But I would like you to feel that you have another place to talk to us. I want to know there are other forums… now we have to work with all the various parties to bring up the issues… when I say I want to do camp management I am serious. For 10 days we have a delegate from Nairobi to train organizations regarding camp management. Then he's going to come back to help us to improve… the roles and responsibilities. Mr. MHA we haven't talked about camp structure. We need a leadership which is accountable, elections. We need leadership to get community participation. I have explained to you – UNHCR will not come and say, take, take, take, or you come and tell us, 'It's not good, it's not good.' What I want is for us to *work together* with partners, and the government. We work together. So this is the program I have. One area we've put a lot of attention on is GBV. UNHCR doesn't have the solution for everything. We have partners, we have brought experts, some solar lamps… but you'll have to do a lot more because you live in this camp. I think it's a serious problem and [everyone] has to be concerned with GBV. It is very bad to hear new that people have been raped in Goma. But okay, you can say there is a war in Goma. But why [are people getting raped] in Nyarugusu? You have 50 churches! You're god-fearing people! Why have 400 children been raped in Nyarugusu? *You have to work with us*. The solution is not going to come only from the community. We also have a commitment to education [here she elaborates on plans to build educational facilities and provide classroom furniture]. We are going to need your contribution [when we build]…. Don't sit and think that it is the international community that is building a school. Even if we don't pay you, come help. Mix some cement! It is for your children! We are also committed to improving shelter. By the end of the year we want to be able to construct 2000 houses…. Please [help us]. We are also trying to deal with all the pending cases for asylum seekers [3-5 years]. We have worked on it. NEC [The National Eligibility Commission that reviews applications for asylum] was here last year and they have just finished a session last week. We'll continue to work on that. Of the areas lacking - on the question of access to UNHCR, especially protection staff… we've taken the necessary steps. You have to have access to us. We have put up a list. If it doesn't work, please tell us. If we all work together, one step at a time… I will close by saying this. It is a serious day today. We're happy that you are here and safe. We don't forget that you've left your country in difficult conditions. We don't forget that living in a camp is difficult… we also know and recognize that you have to work with us. And if you don't work with us, please don't come and make any plays. *UNHCR will come to you… you sit with them under a tree, you give them water, you work. If you do your part, I promise you we'll do our part.*

> So today we honor you as refugees. We think that it is not easy to be refugees. Let's make the best of the time that we're here, and ask God to bless all of you."[145]

The UN representative's speech had followed one by the refugee leader of the camp, who made demands relating to food, economic subsistence, education, and basic dignity that were applauded wildly by the audience. I reproduce the former more or less in its entirety to underscore the various humanitarian imaginaries at play. The speech begins with the historical erasure of other large flows of migration, positing this situation as a uniquely contemporary problem. "*We recognize you're human beings*, we want to value you and we value you… but this is not an ordinary situation." Aid workers recognition of humanity often depended on expressing exceptions: allowing refugees to cook food in forbidden areas like the transit center ("after all, they are human beings"), extending them small courtesies, but stopping short of structural improvements.[146] Rather than reading this as a full acknowledgment of humanity, we might consider it an extension of the logic of epidermalization, in which black bodies are always already marked as out of place, thus denying their humanness.[147] The repetition of exceptionality ("this is not an ordinary situation") allowed for a different kind of engagement with bodies in humanitarian confinement.

In the previous chapter I showed how the focus on GBV foregrounds the question of human rights in Nyarugusu. The number of survivors who access services and attempt to receive legal help is a measure of the success of GBV outreach programs. What characterizes the new humanitarian rationality in Nyarugusu? How do those who seek protection within its parameters experience GBV programming? I argue that the GBV apparatus, and the framework of humanitarian aid itself, seeks to push more and more responsibility for flourishing on the refugees themselves, both through moral reform (the repudiation of "harmful traditional practices") as well as by acquiring knowledge specific to their situation. In other words, they needed to know how to help themselves. Empowerment meant self-reliance and political participation in the arena of development, but in the camp, (along with reporting human rights abuses and buying into the legal human rights regime) community participation and responsibility for one's own predicament were born from the same discourse.[148]

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[145] Field notes, Nyarugusu Camp, June 20, 2014 (World Refugee Day)

[146] Interview with Protection Officer, Kigoma NMC, October 3, 2014

[147] Simone Browne, Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness (Duke University Press, 2015). pp. 98

What is most salient about the above speech is the exhortation to self-help. The calls to work with aid agencies, take part in humanitarian care work, and recognize that solutions to problems lie with refugees themselves are all part of a logic of humanitarian governance in which humanitarian subjects ultimately bear responsibility. There have been many critiques of the materiality and paradoxes of contemporary humanitarian aid for refugees.[149] Michel Agier writes of how refugees have been constructed as the "undesirables" of the world and how humanitarian government operates through policing. He argues that the socialization of camp life can lead to political mobilization, making refugees actors rather than simply vulnerable victims.[150]

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[148] See John Friedmann, Empowerment: The Politics of Alternative Development (Blackwell, 1992).

[149] Barbara E Harrell-Bond, Imposing Aid: Emergency Assistance to Refugees (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), Harrell-Bond, Rights in Exile: Janus-Faced Humanitarianism, David Keen, Refugees: Rationing the Right to Life. The Crisis in Emergency Relief (London: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 1992), Katerina Rozakou, "The Biopolitics of Hospitality in Greece: Humanitarianism and the Management of Refugees," American ethnologist 39.3 (2012).

[150] Michel Agier, Managing the Undesirables: Refugee Camps and Humanitarian Government (Cambridge: Polity 2011).

Jennifer Hyndman has critiqued the idea of self-reliance, community involvement, and "refugee self-management" as articulated by humanitarian agencies, in which increased refugee participation and democratic decision-making would set aid priorities. She argues that any community programs that exclude control of material resources would be meaningless, and that such programs would be in name only and not give refugees any significant power.[151] The speech above reproduces the idea prevalent in many discourses of aid and development that refugees have internalized a "culture of dependency."[152] This expectation of self-reliance extends to those vulnerable to gender-based violence as well as its survivors. In what follows I introduce the process of seeking help as a survivor of GBV, as well as the two ways in which refugees are expected to be self-reliant within the context of fighting GBV. Humanitarian aid encourages participatory and community-based approaches, particularly as a vehicle to bring about greater gender parity. Elisabeth Olivius has pointed out the paradoxical nature of such demands, and has shown how the demand for participation functions as a means for governmentality.[153] Ilcan and Rygiel have identified "resiliency humanitarianism" as new trend in which refugees must become entrepreneurial, managerial, and resilient, and participate in the government of the camp.[154] In Nyarugusu, too, refugees police themselves, lead their communities, are elected to represent their peers' concerns, and have a refugee government that manages conflicts and relationships. This was not a new phenomenon, however, and had been true of Mtabila and other camps in the region. I build on these critiques to show the ways in which such demands for participation play out in everyday interactions, as well as the fact that they do not only focus on decision-making, physical participation, or economic resilience, but on a new moral orientation towards both aid and gender based violence, as well as the acquisition of a specific kind of knowledge.

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[151] Jennifer Hyndman, Managing Displacement: Refugees and the Politics of Humanitarianism (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000)., Chapter Five.

[152] See, for example, Gaim Kibreab, "The Myth of Dependency among Camp Refugees in Somalia 1979–1989," Journal of Refugee Studies 6.4 (1993), Awa M Abdi, "In Limbo: Dependency, Insecurity, and Identity Amongst Somali Refugees in Dadaab Camps," Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees 22.2 (2005).

[153] Elisabeth Olivius, "(Un) Governable Subjects: The Limits of Refugee Participation in the Promotion of Gender Equality in Humanitarian Aid," Journal of Refugee Studies 27.1 (2013).

[154] Suzan Ilcan and Kim Rygiel, "“Resiliency Humanitarianism”: Responsibilizing Refugees through Humanitarian Emergency Governance in the Camp," International Political Sociology 9.4 (2015).

A 2014 report from IRC details the gender-based violence prevention and response programming that has been running in Nyarugusu since 2010. It explains the scope of activities meant to curb and respond to gender-based violence in the camp: “The Women’s Protection and Empowerment team runs drop-in centers, psychosocial services, legal support, material support, safe shelter and case management and referrals. Income-generating activities for women in the camp include soap-making, batik, and tailoring…IRC’s experience has shown providing women with safe spaces and networks, offering case management and group therapy for survivors of violence, and providing gender-sensitive economic empowerment activities have made a difference in the lives of Congolese women and girls.” [155] The report does note that engaging in trade is limited because of the lack of a market and the need for permits to exit the camp. But what is less clear is that the effort to provide “economic empowerment activities” – in addition to be inflected by gendered norms – didn’t actually work very well.[156]

I spoke to a number of camp residents who had received various types of vocational training in the camp. Most of them explained that they couldn’t use the skills they’d learned; aid workers provided some income to furniture makers and tailors in the camp, but by and large, the impact of such programs was minimal. I paid a visit to the bare vocational training center behind IRC's office, where I learned that tailoring teachers don't get paid. Two students and their instructor talked to me about the program, lamenting the lack of equipment and resources. They had a handful of sewing machines, one inherited from World Vision and five or six donated by IRC. Students learned for six months, but then weren't able to do anything with their skills because they didn't have tools. They were not given cloth to practice on, and relied on refugees who needed to have clothes tailored. "We don't have enough food and we live in a bad environment. Tanzanian staff don't care about us. They don't treat us like human beings. They treat us like animals. We're imprisoned here." The instructor held up his hands as though they were handcuffed together.[157]

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[155] A report entitled “Experiences of Refugee Women and Girls from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): Learning from IRC’s Women’s Protection and Empowerment Programs in DRC, Tanzania, Burundi and Uganda,” published in April of 2014, explains the IRC’s role in Nyarugusu: pp. 2

[156] See Chapter 3 for an explanation of economic activities in the camp.

Kundjo, an IRC peer educator, saw the push towards self-reliance as a positive thing. "The system that IRC uses is to educate people so that they can empower themselves (*kujiwezeshe wenyewe*) – you'll know how to do [things] yourself.… Because of changes in NGOs the programs keep changing. World Vision used to educate and also give tools, but the new programs only give an education. IRC's education is like Moses' stick [parting the water]. In the past they used to organize sport leagues, but now the people do it themselves. Earlier, they used to give them jerseys, but now they can go and borrow them – [the former] is empowering them (*kuwawezesha*). But it's self-empowerment (*kujiwezesha*) because people feel like they have to go out and buy their own jerseys."[158] For the tailoring instructor and others, however, vocational education was incomplete assistance that provided no serious prospects for improving their lives.

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[157] Field notes, Nyarugusu camp, March 11, 2014
[158] Field notes, Nyarugusu camp, February 13, 2014

Janet, a young woman involved in a number of peer groups to end GBV explained that simply providing education was not enough. “I went to secondary school, [was trained in] soap making, sewing, and batik, but what can I do with that information?” She tapped her head, looking both sad and annoyed. “It’s trapped in here (*Zimebaki kichwani tu*).”[159] Despite taking advantage of all the opportunities available to her, she was unable to see any benefit from them. Aid workers were aware of the constraints posed by encampment: “The response to GBV is the centerpiece of our operations. Through that we can address a lot of other issues. These days we’re talking more and more about self reliance… if we don’t change the general environment… we don’t see any inroads in terms of progress.”[160] Nevertheless, they continued to express the demand that refugees help themselves in various ways, and, even in the absence of substantial programs to actually empower women economically, reiterated the idea that economic empowerment was the solution to gender-based violence.

The idea of self-help wasn’t just limited to economic activities, but was suffused throughout the GBV apparatus and apparent when survivors sought help within its parameters. Miriam Ticktin’s work has explored how a “morally legitimate suffering body” is constituted through a “regime of care,” and argues that this characterization is necessary in order for it to be recognized as "universal". A belief in the universality of suffering is embedded in the politics of care, along with the assumption that suffering can be measured, and understood, and that a response is morally mandated. The suffering body becomes a biological resource; illness becomes a desired condition and sexual violence becomes something to be remembered and retold.[161] Sexual violence is the violence that renders claims to rights and papers legitimate.[162] This hierarchy of suffering is also evident in Nyarugusu, along with the racialised examination of sexual violence. In Nyarugusu the pathologization of Congolese behavior underpinned explanations about GBV. As is often the case in refugee status determinations, a convincing story of suffering could be the difference between receiving protection and not. But it was not simply that refugees had to demonstrate suffering and testify to that suffering repeatedly (and of course, believably); they must also help themselves, and *know how* to help themselves. Furthermore, the process of seeking protection through aid organizations instilled fear and doubt in those who were seeking an escape from violence.

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[159] Field notes, Nyarugusu Camp, March 20, 2014

[160] Field notes, August 29, 2014

Most asylum seekers from the DRC first encounter humanitarian organizations in Kigoma. Many cross Lake Tanganyika and arrive by boat to the tranquil fishing village of Kibirizi. They are taken to a refugee transit center, commonly referred to as "NMC" – an acronym derived from the center's previous life as the National Milling Corporation. Surrounded by barbed wire fences, the NMC consists of one large, barn-like tin-roofed building, only recently subdivided into extremely bare living units. The high ceiling and the dearth of windows contribute to the feeling of starkness. When I visited, there were between 800-1000 residents in 114 tiny rooms. In addition to new arrivals, the NMC houses those with protection cases who have been relocated from Nyarugusu, and refugees who have been granted resettlement and are awaiting final orientation classes and medical checks who stay only briefly. Asylum seekers are bussed to Nyarugusu for refuge status determination interviews with the National Eligibility Committee of the Tanzanian government. Many of them have witnessed extreme violence, been sexually assaulted in the Congo or in transit. IRC provides them with an overview of GBV, counseling, and health services available in NMC. These are deeply necessary, but also produce a new set of challenges: social stigma for male and female survivors and fear of retaliation from one's family or others. From the outset, it introduces a new vocabulary; according to one IRC staff member, asylum seekers "don't know what GBV is before they arrive, even the word rape."[163] In the camp, ongoing outreach programs deliver the message about GBV: what it is, how to prevent it, and how to access services. This coordinated response is relatively new. UNHCR's "Standard Operating Procedures for Prevention of and Response to GBV in Nyarugusu Camp" maps out the pathway for reporting and referrals of GBV incidents.

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[161] Ticktin, Casualties of Care: Immigration and the Politics of Humanitarianism in France.

[162] Ticktin, Casualties of Care: Immigration and the Politics of Humanitarianism in France. pp. 129

"Step 1) Entry points (Police, Community Groups, Community leaders, Sungusungus [sic], Organizations, health centers, Hospital and victims/survivors themselves)

Step 2) Need Assessment: Support Center 1 at Zone 4 and Support Center 2 at Zone 7

Step 3) Interventions and Services: Support Center 1 and 2 (IRC)

- Case management (assessment, documentation, counseling, action plan, implementation and follow up)
- Facilitate access to medical services
- Legal counseling to survivors and their witnesses on criminal law, which includes transportation and escort to and from court, and monitor court sessions.
- NFI [non-food items] on a case by case basis

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[163] Interview with IRC GBV staff, Kigoma, Oct 5, 2014

- Temporary safe shelter

TRCS

- Make a clinical observation (medical observation) on the victim/survivor
- Order for specimen collections and laboratory investigations
- Filling in the PF3, post mortem examination form, other legal medical form
- Medical treatments
- Counseling and guidance
- Testifying in court (expert opinion)

Police

- Receive complaint
- Interrogation of victims/survivors and witnesses
- Issuing of PF 3, post mortem examination form
- Arrest of the perpetrator
- Collect and preserve evidence
- Preliminary investigation and transfer of evidence to the persecution
- Keeping of legal records
- Ensuring security of the victims/survivors
- Testifying before the court of law

WLAC

- Legal counseling on civil law

UNHCR

- Registration
- Ration card management

- Monitoring and liaising with actors for follow up purposes, including relocation of survivors

TWESA

- Constructing shelters for survivors when needed
- Designate and/or relocate plots when requested

Step 4) Referrals: All actors mentioned above refer to service providers according to the victims/survivors' needs and wishes

Step 5) Follow up: IRC SGBV Team plays a coordinator role on SGBV individual case management."

In order to "improve confidentiality, shorten response period, better targeted individual interventions and efficiently carry out follow up of SGBV cases," UNHCR set up new procedural rules for direct service providers and an SGBV case management committee meant to meet bi-weekly. These rules included classifying GBV incidents uniformly and documenting responses to every SGBV case and monitoring their impact. In both the NMC and Nyarugusu, people were discouraged from solving GBV problems within the community and were encouraged to pursue "official" solutions. Many women received crucial support, but for often GBV services could be opaque and confusing. In theory, a survivor might go to any "entry point" to access services. But it was impossible to simply walk into a UNHCR office. In practice, camp residents were expected to follow a hierarchical procedure: starting by complaining to the village leader, the cluster leader, the zone leader, etc. In some cases, frustrated with the lack of support received inside the camp, women with protection needs found their own way to the NMC.[164]

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[164] Interview with Protection Officer, Kigoma NMC, September 2014.

"Help me, For God's Sake!" (Jamani Nisaidie!): Seeking Protection through the GBV Apparatus

The discourse of gender based violence, now a global regime of governance, continues to pose problems of orientalism and racism by reinforcing stereotypes about Islam, communities of color, and of the global south.[165] But in pointing out the problematic nature of GBV, we risk silencing women with very real problems. This chapter acknowledges the difficulty of speaking about violence of women in terms that do not minimize their experiences and shows that the very structure of GBV governance diminishes these experiences while purporting to take them seriously. For the women in Nyarugusu who did not find relief through official channels, claims about kinship and familial responsibility framed their complaints: husbands who abandoned them in the face of fidia-related problems, families who failed them by giving them up as compensation, relatives who did not support them in the context of violence, citing alternate or newly formed familial ties. These complaints were however, not separate from the concerns they voiced "*kule kwa GBV*." Whereas the local tribunal dealt with familial matters, by separating GBV from matters concerning marriage, divorce, and kinship, the GBV program also took away the ability of these women to articulate claims against violence within a different political register. Nevertheless, this chapter also foregrounds the difficulty of speaking of violence against women – of underscoring the problem of the violence experienced by these women as real and urgent, without becoming subsumed by the racialized discourse of "GBV." In what follows I narrate the failures of the GBV program to adequately address the experiences of these women, while recognizing their struggle to find languages within which to articulate these experiences.

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[165] Leti Volpp, "Blaming Culture for Bad Behavior," Yale Journal of Law and the Humanities 12 (2000). Abu-Lughod, Do Muslim Women Need Saving, Sherene Razack, "A Violent Culture or Culturalized Violence?: Feminist Narratives of Sexual Violence against South Asian Women," Studies in Practical Philosophy 3.1 (2003).

Women in the camp were not always willing to go to GBV centers, even if they didn't fear retaliation. This had a lot to do with how they were treated – the fact that they had to repeat the details of their situation over and over again, and yet they could see no tangible results from their complaints. They had to endure long waits, lost case files, and unhelpful, uninterested or sometimes corrupt aid workers.

"You're treated like an animal, not a human being," explained Zakia, when I asked her about her experience reporting at the GBV center.[166] I'd come to visit her with my friend Pascale, who had wanted to propose to her at one point. "She's from the Bembe church! They're straight up crazy! They think Jesus is mBembe!" he had joked as we walked over. But she had brushed him off: "I have too many problems right now." She had a young daughter, but had been abandoned by her partner, and was being sought by a family who wanted to claim her as compensation. We'd been sitting on a log outside, but moved into her house when it rained. She sat with her back to the wall, while a small mouse emerged from the sack of maize perched on a ledge above her and scurried up to the roof. "Over at GBV," (*kule kwa GBV*) they took her report, but didn't follow up. Of course, there were incentive workers who took their jobs very seriously, dutifully filling in intake sheets and case reports, and filing them neatly in labeled folders. But for the women who saw nothing more than the act of producing paperwork, this experience was frustrating at best and humiliating at worst.

Many women who sought to address their problems were met not with solutions, but excessive transcription, and Rosita was no exception. A respected village leader who lived alone and was childless, she explained that she was terrified because the people who wanted to take her as compensation visited her regularly. She'd already survived numerous sexual assaults and violence at the hands of her previous husband and in-laws, to whom she was given as a child in compensation. She laughed heartily throughout our conversation, sometimes pausing to show me various scars. She slowly started to explain her problem, pointing out the discrepancy between the promise of protection offered by the UNHCR and the reality of her situation:

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[166] Field notes, March 20, 2014

> "I'm scared. I'm really, really scared. This is what I'm scared of: our culture is difficult. I'm scared that someone will do something strange to me. So that they can see that I'm no longer alive. Their child died, right? Now I should die. Everyone should lose. This is what I'm scared of. Maybe they'll kill me because their child died. Because (*voice rising*) their child doesn't leave their heart. His death. (*emphatically*) It doesn't leave! They keep remembering their child. Now, when they see me, they think – that's our woman. Now, I'm already worried. I'm already a grown woman with a mind of her own who knows how to solve problems. I don't have any security. I have a little bit of peace of mind because I'm under the protection of UNHCR (*niko chini ya UNHCR*). But if I go to the Congo, I think my life will end pretty soon. It was our country, now every person is going to do what they're going to do. Right? But here, because we're in another country, I'm still living somehow. It's slightly better here. Because even if they come, I'll run away. Because when they come again, I go to GBV. I'll go report it. These problems. But since the day I reported until now, I don't see my case progressing. I ask myself – where should I take this problem?"

I asked what her which agency she reported to. "GBV IRC. They filled out a form for me. They filled it, and filled it, and filled it and just put it aside. They told me to keep reporting. Iiii! I've been there four times already! When they gave me a small paper, I didn't know where to go. It's been lost and lost." In an insistent voice, she asked: "Didn't I say that I have a problem? How am I going to… how can I get away from these people?"

Curious about how the GBV office had explained the process, I asked her what they told her. "They took my description (*maelezo*) like I told you. They keep taking my information, like thiiiiiiis…. They write it down! They take my information, they write it down! They tell me, oooo, when those people come, go to the police, just like you go to the leaders, and come back again to report. Isn't this already a case?! Again, you come and report. I told them, I see you all are not doing right by me, because I want you to give me advice, so that I know how I can live with these two people's relatives!"

She hadn't been to the police station or to the local tribunal. "I've only been to GBV, I cried because of how I was feeling. They kept writing as I cried there. I didn't go back, eeeh. And they haven't visited to ask – how are things going? – even though they're the one's who told me to keep coming to report. I've been around four times. Ah! I wept while going and I'm tired!" (*her voice breaks*).

Rosita had been in the camp for well over a decade already, but had only visited GBV for the first time the previous year. Before that, she explained, she hadn't known where to take her problems. She had been really desperate, even considering suicide. Another woman heard her predicament and told her that many women in the camp go to GBV, then took her to the GBV office. "I came to know that that's where us women can take our problems. So when I took my problems there, like I told you, they just wrote and wrote, they just kept writing when I was there. They started to tell me to keep following up! Now this! (*indignantly*) I asked myself one thing! Why do they keep telling me to follow up when nothing's going on?! Every day I see: follow up. I've already come to describe my problem. I come again. Ehe! It's like this, it's like this, it's like this… but what are the results?! I started to ask myself, what will happen here?" Her voice turned angry. "And I'm in pain over here! I'm tired."

She dug in: "I don't see any follow up. When a person's been to there office four times. Eeeh. If you think it's a lie why don't you call and investigate first? First, you follow up. But they themselves didn't follow up with me. And until now, I'm telling you, I'm exhausted. I said, forget it, let me just stay at home. What God wants is thirst. I'll pray to God for my life here."

I asked if she'd been to any of the other offices, like UNHCR or WLAC. She responded that she hadn't. "They're all chock full of women," she said, slapping an open palm against the spiral on top of her closed fist. "They take their problems there. I started to ask them: when you bring your problems here, my friends, what happens?" She paused, before asserting: "E-eeh?! Others told me that what happens is just coming over and over again." She laughed, and repeated the sentence. "Just bringing your complaints. If you see they're increasing you just come to complain. Just that! Aaah! Me, I think it's hard for you!" She threw her head back and laughed even harder.

Rosita then explained that reporting to WLAC also meant that parents could be jailed. She'd be putting her own elders into a bad situation, and they would retaliate against her, questioning why she'd done so when what they were doing was a matter of *mila na desturi.* "Culture will finish me," she said sadly. "*Utamaduni utanimaliza.*" She might be safe when someone was locked up, but when they got out, they would "try *every* way to take [her] out of this world. These are the problems we're running away from. Of war… I go, I keep taking [my problems] to all these offices. At the end, they'll call those parents, so that they can talk to them, about all these things, about how they can try to take someone. And the father will start to say, where we come from, there are problems. Eeh. I have no peace."[167]

Rosita, like Zakia, had tried to follow the exhortations of so many of the campaigns in the camp – reporting GBV issues to the right offices. But faced with intransigence, and the slow, hand-written bureaucratic measures that passed for real solutions, they thought it better to stay away. Other women were more persistent, and some might be moved to NMC in Kigoma or finally obtain resettlement, but they represented a fraction of the camp population.

I followed the case of a third woman through the GBV apparatus. It revealed not only the kinds of repetitions that Zakia and Rosita perceived as fruitless and humiliating, but also a new responsibility to be borne by the women themselves. In order to be served by the GBV centers, they needed to *have knowledge.* Not only did they need to know how to approach GBV resources, tell their story correctly, and present as a deserving victim, they also needed to know *how to be helped.*

Gabi lived a stones throw from the verification center with her parents, two children, and brother. She was outside with her family when I arrived for our first meeting. Ducking to enter the low door, I was ushered into a small, dark room, where a plastic chair was ceremoniously set aside for me. I sat across from Gabi, whose face was illuminated as though by moonlight. A gauzy curtain hung limply at the door, and the air smelled like damp clay. The walls were covered in paper and decorated with a few Technicolor pictures, but save for the chairs and the shin-level plastic table, it was sparse. Gabi began telling her story in a hushed voice. She preferred that the person who had introduced us stay for the meeting; the happy demeanor of our initial introduction had given way to a grave expression, and she sat with her hands clasped tightly in her lap. Her problem had started four years ago. She told of how her father - a stern man who I later found out was part of a "council of elders" – had fled from the Congo. He had agreed to take another family's child, who died during the journey. That family demanded that his daughter be given in compensation for the child's life. Now, years later, they had come to collect on their debt.[168]

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[167] This narrative draws on an interview with Rosita, February 3, 2014

Gabi described, haltingly, how she had given up going to school out of fear of being kidnapped. Though married with 2 children, her husband had abandoned her three years ago after constant threats. Gabi had not heard from him since, and had no idea where he was. Gabi's case illustrates how the GBV response program – well-intentioned or not – often failed refugee women. Gabi had been in this situation since her early teens, and she was now a married woman with two children in her mid-twenties. At every turn, aid workers berated her parents and shamed her family for having brought her into this situation. She was interrogated to establish the veracity of her case and to determine the severity of the threat against her. And despite her case technically meriting "protection," she was offered none, instead entering into an endless cycle of bureaucratic interactions. Perhaps, as Thomson's (2012) research has shown, the resulting dossier would eventually serve as proof of her suffering and her status as a deserving victim.[169] When I met her, however, she had been in this situation for years. I asked if I could follow her case, and she agreed that I could go with her to WLAC the next time we met. When we emerged from her house, her demeanor changed completely, and she beckoned her children to introduce themselves to me, smiling and laughing as we interacted.

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[168] Field notes, Tuesday, 13 Feb 2014

[169] Marnie Jane Thomson, "Black Boxes of Bureaucracy: Transparency and Opacity in the Resettlement Process of Congolese Refugees," PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review 35.2 (2012).

When I returned the next week, Gabi told me that the other family had come to threaten her, and that knew that I had visited; she was sleeping somewhere else for safety. I was terrified that I'd endangered her, but she insisted that I go with her to WLAC. At the WLAC office – a dark, two roomed building with an uneven mud floor, anti-GBV posters and staff photos on the wall – we waited while paralegals signed in to work. Gabi told me that even though she had not been helped despite visiting many times, she keeps coming back because she hopes they'll give her protection in the camp. Her eyes were downcast, and she wrapped her *kitenge* (cloth covering) tightly around herself, with one corner in her mouth, covering part her face. I ask the WLAC staff member if he will seriously follow up. After I insisted, he brought over a piece of paper and started to take down notes about Gabi's case. She answered his questions almost inaudibly, shrinking into herself, finding new ways to compact her body, and making no eye contact. He began to explain things to me, but I asked him to direct his explanation to Gabi. She looked resigned, tapping her foot and hanging her head. When the staff member asked about reporting to the *devillage*, she became a bit more confident as she retold her story. Finally, he read the case back to her, looking over to check if I was listening. Copies of the complaint would stay in the office.[170]

Five days later Gabi called me in a panic. She was hiding in a field from the family chasing her. She asked me if I would come see her the next day – and not to forget – so we could go to WLAC or to the police again.[171] I picked her up the next morning. She greeted me with a hug, and chatted happily about Hindi films on the way over to WLAC. A WLAC refugee staff member took down another report, and after some pressing on my part, gave us a chit so that Gabi could see one of the Tanzanian WLAC staff the next day. Then we headed over to file a report at the *sungu sungu* office. The Burundian staff member who met us there expressed concern that the other *sungu sungu* members were Congolese, and thus might not take her complaint seriously, or even retaliate. "They all do it," he said in a low voice, and walked us over to the UNHCR field officer's office.[172]

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[170] Field notes, 20 Feb 2014

The field officer insisted that we go straight away to the Community Services Officer, who was working out of an office at the Verification Exercise (popularly called *sensa*) and offered us a ride over in the UN car. This would almost certainly not have happened without my presence, and Gabi, aware of that fact, gave me a knowing look. The Community Services officer was suitably concerned, and suggested that we go to IRC. We explained that Gabi had already been there. Gabi was reticent; she wasn't very talkative in offices. She used the bare minimum of words, spoke in an extremely low voice, and held her hands in her lap, wearing a pained expression. As I sat listening quietly, often responses would be directed at me and not her. The Community Services officer turned to me, and, in English, insisted: "If we resettle, it'll stimulate [this behavior]." Explaining that they were trying to educate the community, he pointed out that they were using "camp mechanisms" like the *sungu sungu* and the police to protect people.[173]

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[171] Field notes, 25 Feb 2014

[172] Field notes, 26 Feb 2014

[173] Field notes, 26 Feb 2014

We went back again the next day. I picked her up from her house, where her mother was cleaning beans outside. She expressed her gratitude at my presence; Gabi was *being listened to* because of me. Again, the CSO directed most of the conversation at me. He'd explain why UNHCR did or did not do certain things, particularly in *fidia* cases, reiterating that their approach was to "educate" people so that the practice would end. The logic that informed this choice was that giving resettlement encouraged *fidia*. Smiling slightly throughout, he gently explained to Gabi what he would do, and that she needed to rely on the police and the *sungu sungu* to protect her. In the meantime, he would speak to the families involved. My presence had been the catalyst for her languishing case to be passed on to UNHCR, but she still had no resolution to her problem.[174]

In early March, it was Gabi's village's turn to go through the population verification exercise (popularly called "*sensa*"). She wanted me to come with her family, thinking I could help her pass the huge line faster (I couldn't). We waited in a big pen while TRCS (Tanzanian Red Cross Society) called out names on a microphone. Her mother walked up to confirm that we were in the right place. We waited again until her name was called, then proceeded to the "intake" section and sat on a long bench. Children darted through the crowd of aid workers and refugees shuffling between rooms, paperwork in hand. Over the constant whirr of the generator, you could hear babies crying and screaming, people sharing information and catching up with each other, UNHCR workers yelling to each other (and sometimes at refugees). It was hard to hear things in the *sensa* rooms. While we were waiting, a group of well-dressed Congolese walked in. We watched as they greeted those around them – they'd come back to the camp just for the *sensa*; one after four years away.

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[174] Field notes, Feb 27, 2014

At intake, the family had to present themselves and prove they were the person pictured in their file. In the second room, Gabi's brother was fingerprinted, since his picture didn't quite match the one in the file. Gabi's family wanted to be on one card, except for one brother registered on his own card, and to cancel a number of people who were no longer there. At Stage 2 of the *sensa*, after a long wait, they were asked who their parents were, where they were born, who their family members were, and whether their parents were alive. What was their level of education and occupation? Were they ready to return to the Congo? We were in a room with a new UNHCR worker – the verification workers were temporary staff from Tanzania – and she kept consulting her files and asking the same questions and names. Gabi would cut in, loudly, annoyed. Her father was almost nervous – I could see his fingers trembling when he was asked about his wife's age. It wasn't clear whether UNHCR had made a mistake the last time – his wife's age was wrong, but they refused to change it. Gabi pressed about the community services worker having asked her to come back. The new worker, scowling, asked her to explain her *fidia* problem, and was having a hard time understanding? "What?!" she exclaimed in disbelief, launching into a tirade, talking about how the family's "*mila na desturi*" was no good at all. In the meantime, the UNHCR officer training her ran off to photocopy Gabi's notes and receipts documenting her aid visits. They were put into the file, and we were told to wait at Community Services. It was 2pm, now, and we'd arrived at 10am. None of them had eaten. Finally, we were told to return the next day.[175]

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[175] Field notes, March 17, 2014

The next day we headed straight to Community Services, where Gabi was forced to retell her story to the same person we'd seen just days prior. "How do you think we can stop this?" asks the Community Services Officer. Turning to her father, he bellowed: "You're a chief? We are going to use you, here in the camp, to stop this and spread the message." Gabi's father utters a painful laugh. "Congo? Where? No way," says Gabi's mother. They both speak enough Swahili to communicate, but don't feel fully comfortable in the language, since their mother tongue is Bembe. When they claim not to know it well enough, the UN staff challenges them. Finally, we were told that the note would go into Gabi's file and in the meantime, the *sungu sungu* and the police should be notified. My name was added to the file when I explained that I'd accompanied her to various offices. Then, Gabi's family was sent back to the photo and fingerprint section of the Verification exercise due to an error. One of their children's fingerprints didn't match, so they were sent back to "Litigation," the office meant to address biometric data errors.

I ask all of the UN officials for consent before sitting in on meetings, and receive it. But a few minutes after we start the litigation interview, a foreign UNHCR staff member overseeing the verification exercise peeks into the office. The door closes briefly before it swings open again forcefully; she angrily asks if I have permission to be there. I explain that I have obtained consent from all parties, as well as general permission from the head of the field operations. She insists that I cannot sit in on the interviews, and slams the door on her way out. When she returns, I'm asked to see the head of field office. I can see the muscles on her face twitching in anger as she waits for me to leave the room. I speak to the head of the field office, who tells me that this is "UNHCR's proprietary data." I am to speak to the coordinator of the verification exercise for permission. In the background, inspectors from the United States Bureau of Refugees and Population Management are being shown around the Verification Exercise tents. They are gawking, blocking doors, and taking pictures of the refugees without asking. I know that this is a run-around, because when I have spoken to the coordinator he has referred me to the head of the office. Gabi's family is upset, but ask me to continue accompanying her through the GBV process.[176]

Despite reporting multiple times to various offices, no one followed up on Gabi's case. Though she lived with her parents, she would often go into hiding with friends and relatives. Once, after Gabi had requested that I accompany her to the IRC GBV center, I visited her home. Her mother told me that the other family had shown up again, and so she had moved to a relative's house. She beckoned Gabi's daughter, a wiry 5 year old much too small for her age. Barefoot, the little girl confidently walked me half an hour across several villages in the camp to find her mother.

After this had gone on for months, I asked Hamisi, another of my colocuters and a refugee incentive worker, whether we could come to see him at IRC field office, located inside the camp's main hospital compound. We walked through a small room packed with women and children watching an educational video on a 10 inch TV screen to enter a small, dark room with walls lined with files and posters of GBV statistics tearing away at the corners. Hamisi inquired about what Gabi had done in the other offices:[177]

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[176] Field notes, March 18, 2014
[177] Field Recording, August 2014

Gabi: I explained my problems… they just wrote them down!

Hamisi: Didn't they give you any advice?

Gabi: They gave me some advice… they sent me to the *washekanya* (WLAC volunteer paralegals)

Hamisi: And what did they do?

Gabi: They just filled out some forms.

Hamisi: When they were filling up the forms, did you tell them what you needed?

Gabi: Yes, one tells them what one needs. They should think about it. We've been troubled, what can we do?

Hamisi: Besides that, what might be done according to your needs to solve your problem?

Gabi, quietly: That's your decision.

Hamisi, clucking: It's YOU who has the problem.

Gabi raises her voice: I brought my complaints to them! For God's sake, help me! (*Si mimi na waletea malalamiko! Jamani nisaidie!)* They might think – how can I help her so that she isn't faced with this problem?

Hamisi: Now, let me tell you frankly. It's that someone has a problem. When you sleep inside a house, do you wait for someone to come and close the door? It's you yourself. Now, when someone has a problem… for example, you're thirsty. What do you use when you're thirsty?

Gabi: I'd look for water.

Hamisi: Very good. So, you'd go home, you know – "if I go home, I'll get some water to drink, I'll wash the cups and the clothes." Now if you go home, do you automatically get water? It's you who get the bucket and goes to collect water. Our main work is to receive your complaints.

It’s not that I’ve come to bring you my problems, but that you’ve brought yours to us. We take down an explanation of your problems. Right?

Gabi agrees.

Hamisi: You’ve already been recorded (*ulishajaziwa*) at various different offices and this problem still exists.

Gabi: It’s still there!

Hamisi: Now, it’s like you go to register your complaints at the offices, so that the problem won’t continue. But all you’re leaving there is explanations (*mafasirio*). You explain and explain and explain. And later, wherever you go back to, the problem remains. In other words, wherever you went, they didn’t help you, because they didn’t know what to help you with. Whoever knows what they should be helped with is someone who recognizes that the problem is their own. “I should be helped like this, so that I can overcome my problem!” Already you can give that person the kind of help that they need. But if you have a problem, and you assume that someone else will know – how will they know, if they don’t know what it’s like to suffer from that problem? Like someone who has *funza* [a chigo flea infection], and knows that he has *funza* - why does he want to get help?

Gabi: Because it hurts!

Hamisi: Exactly! It’s this toe. Now, if you don’t explain which toe it is, how will he know how to treat it? Now, if YOU tell me – this is my problem, and, I ask that you help me in *this way*, so that I can get rid of this problem, if it’s possible! Now, I can look at these ways of helping you, can I help you in this way? So that I know where to point you, so that you can get help. Now, if you told me how I can help you…

Gabi absorbs what he's telling her. Her face is downcast, and she's almost inaudible as she suggests that she stay in the GBV center. She thinks it would be better for her, and she'd be safer from those who were chasing her. Hamisi responds that staying in the compound will not help her, because anyone is allowed to enter. All they'd have to do is say they were sick, or were visiting someone at the hospital.

Gabi: I'd have this one solution. Because if I stay here, you'll look out for my safety. You're not going to leave me here.

Hamisi: If I left you alone, they'd be able to enter easily and even kill you.

Gabi insists: It's better here.

Hamisi: It would be better if you stayed here? You're already found. How will it be better?

Gabi: If they come to track me down again it'll be better than staying at home thinking about what might help me.

Hamisi: We want you to tell us what you want help with. Staying here isn't help, because…

Gabi interrupts: You'll take me where I can be safe.

Hamisi: Where would that be, for example?

Gabi: How can I know? You're the one who can take me wherever you can take me! You can take me somewhere that I can find safety. You decide wherever that is.

Hamisi: Being seen is your help. You're the one who is to say how you will be helped. [You could say] "Take me to, for example, A2 or A3." Then we'll see whom we can take you to. We don't have the ability to just move people around. Let's think through this rationally (*tujadiliane*), so that we can understand each other (*tuelewane*). What exactly do you need? Not, just take me. Why? What is one's need to be taken? Ok? And also, the people who are concerned, first, are the police…

Gabi cuts in again, despondent: I've already been there.

Hamisi: The hierarchy of the camp… the *sungu sungu*, the zone, the village, the cluster. They're concerned with safety. And if you can't get help, you go to the camp leader (*makazi*)… now our job is to explain to you what help you can get, and where you can get it. Our work is to explain things to you. Now, the way to get to UNHCR, you did it, but you weren't able to. We can refer you in writing. This person has needs, and should go to UNHCR protection, or *makazi*, or the police, please listen to them. I can show you a copy of a referral. It must say what a person needs.

Gabi: Well, we already went to [UNHCR] protection.

Hamisi: You already went there? What did they say? Because they have more authority than us.

Gabi: They sent us to the *sungu sungu*.

Hamisi, rhetorically: Why did they send you to the *sungu sungu*? Because of the safety issue.

Gabi: Well, we also already went to the *sungu sungu*.

Hamisi: Let me explain something to you.

Gabi: I have all my papers and IDs.

Hamisi: [Tapping on the table] ID cards don't talk (*vitambulisho haviongei*). You can go somewhere to get help, but if you don't express yourself properly, if you don't explain your needs, they don't know where to begin. How should we help this person? You see? It's like if you go to protection and say, I just need you to take me to a place where I can be safe, how can they know where to take you? You already have something in your head that they don't know. They follow their own protocols….they'll say go back to the leaders of the community. When you're explaining your problems [you think]….what should I do next? I need your help to get safety. Now what are we supposed to do?

Gabi, plaintive: I already explained my problems at protection.

Hamisi: Do you feel that they helped you?

Gabi: I can't say that they've helped me because I haven't received any type of help.

Hamisi: Let's go over this again. Let's do a sort of revision.

Gabi: I said everything. They listened to me.

Hamisi: Let me tell you something. That person helped you. Just by seeing you (*kupokea*), he already helped you, because a person can't meet with you and not give you ideas. When they've given you an idea, they've already helped you. Now, what you need to understand is this. The matter of safety requires a lot of ingredients. And they aren't found quickly. They depend on events. You see? [The community services officer] might have told you the right thing. Why? Let's take an example. What you have in your head is this: "If I get resettled, if I get protection somewhere, my problem will be solved." But your problem won't be solved. Even those who received protection in a third country still have problems. You see? And others might go through the process of UNHCR protection and get resettlement so that they can get protection, but might find that problem continues and they die. That's the case of someone who died…

Gabi: This is true! That's why we come here! [Referring to witchcraft] Because of this problem, we had to take my child to the hospital, when he was all swollen up. He's a bit better now, though. Yes. Things happen. [They think] "We didn't manage to get the mother, so let's go after the child."

Hamisi: That's why I'm telling you… you might say these ways of darkness, or beliefs of darkness, that they've done something. But I'm talking about those bad things. There are people staying in here that were stabbed. You know, the people from there? That girl. And some others stabbed her right there in front of the DG center. The girl – you remember? [*Gabi affirms*]. They died right there. And others were found and stabbed out in the fields – that woman, over in B1 [village]. I don't know if it was last year or the year before. They murdered her. But you come to see the problem, it's the same one that is understood. Some are even killed with poison. A1 [village]. That girl was about to go to Australia. She'd already begun the process. She died four days before using the opportunity to go to Australia. She stayed here in the camp. In the fields. That's why I want to impress on you: being heard… the person that listened to you – it's not that they didn't write down your information and description, or didn't take it. They took your information and they knew that they had to report it. But it's something that goes through many stages, and something that requires time. Now, while they are processing your problem, it's YOU who has the problem, and you need to stop starting with "what are you going to do?" and assuming that you're just the one with the problem. That's why I gave you the example of having a house and securing it at night, so that thieves and others can't come in. Now if it's broken into and someone pushes their way in, it's bad luck, but your mind is already set on what? On your safety. That's why I'm telling you: if you have another problem, go see the *sungu sungu*, if possible. Go see the police, if possible. Go see the *makazi.* Because even if he says – let's help her, he can't help you just like making a phonecall – *brrr!* - and all the assistance is complete. Nope! Even in this place, even if you say move me to Zone 7, move me to America, move me to Australia, move me, I don't know, to Zone 6. You can't move the very same day! Even us – if you tell us, please move me somewhere, we can't just move you. We have to make calls, we have to make all the contacts. [We'll tell you] "Wait! Let's communicate with so-and-so. Wait! This "wait" isn't going to be what you wanted." If it's to move to a zone, we'll write a referral here, which will be taken to camp management, and a copy will go to UNHCR. *They* will be able to see which plot. By change I have this here [pulls out a list and shows it to me]. Now Aditi can read it because it's in English. People who need a plot. See, from which month this is? May. [The plots] aren't available. You can see these that were brought to us day before. They aren't available! We've been asking for them since April or May. They feedback that they gave us, was that only a few could get them. All the others still need them. And we're looking for a place for them to stay. But starting in April, until today, August. It's been four months. We still don't have [enough]. There's someone who was sleeping outside, who already died. That's why there's no help you can receive just by calling. But all help, I'll ask you to wait. Now when you wait for the help, it's you who will build up your environment in order to escape the problem. When I went there to report, they looked for ways to help me, what steps will I take as the person with the problem? Right?

Gabi murmurs in agreement.

Hamisi: That's why I gave you the example… you say… there is a house here. It's got pillows and everything. This house can't help you with food. If you go outside the fence to get food, and you meet them outside, then what? Haven't they found you?[178] So even if someone is here, they've already decided when they'll have to buy food and what tactics they'll use. It's you yourself. This house isn't protected by the police or any guard or the *sungu sungu*. So it's easy for someone to be found here, and it's not a safehouse. There isn't safety here. The same people we listen to here – they might be related to that are bothering you, and we can't forbid them from coming to our office. Once they see you they'll go and tell the people that are looking for you.

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[178] This was not an unusual situation. At the IRC center in Zone ? I met a woman who had been threatened by her husband. She was moved from Zone 2 to Zone 6, but had no security. The house was in a small compound, protected only by a chicken-wire fence, in a compound with no guard. The husband was friends with the police. The woman had never had a chance to tell her side of the story properly. (Field notes, 26 Feb)

You'll be sleeping at night and they'll come to break down the door. This whole fence doesn't have police or *sungu sungu*. We'll have confined you to a place from where you can't even run away. If someone reaches you here, there aren't any doors. Where will you go? They'll get you. It'll be as though we've put you in a situation of even more danger. That's why I'm asking you, after getting advice from the community services officer, what do you yourself think? How will you protect your safety?

Gabi: The same way I told you here…

Hamisi: Yes? Which one?

Gabi: I mean this way. And by the way, I'm already facing these dangers. To live… if they come I will use different ways. [Her voice drops] I'm done… I'm tired…

Hamisi then asked Gabi to give him addresses and dates pertaining to her case, and finally, her account of what had happened in the first place. This took the form of an additional interrogation, with Gabi struggling to remember exact addresses – symptomatic both of the stressful ongoing conversation as well as the sheer number of different places she had lived in to seek shelter from those pursuing her.

As we were leaving, he whispered to me that she had a serious problem, but she simply did not know how to explain it properly. His recourse to hypotheticals to explain why Gabi cannot stay in the center illustrates the actual failure of interventions like IRC's GBV prevention and response programs, which have much to offer in the way of discourse, strategy, and counseling, but cannot provide adequate shelter or protection to those in immediate need. In my other conversations with Hamisi, I came to know him as someone who thought of himself as a defender of society; he often explained that he was not corrupt, and reiterated his commitment to the work he was doing as “improving society” (*kuboresha jamii*). In this interaction with Gabi, Hamisi’s expertise is precisely what precludes her from any kind of meaningful assistance. By positioning himself as the one with knowledge and expertise, he is able to deflect Gabi’s queries on the basis that she lacks the technical vocabulary and the means to effectively convey her issue. When Gabi pushes back against this, for example, by insisting that he can take her where she would be safe, he pretends not to know the answer; she immediately reminds him that he is the one that would know (“how can I know?”).

Hamisi’s oscillation between knowing (as the expert on GBV in the situation) and not-knowing (insisting that it is Gabi that must actually know both how to help herself and be helped) suggests that he is somewhat aware that his position is merely formal. The bureaucratic abstraction of GBV provides for a listening ear, but not for material support. Gabi’s reticence to absorb this fiction and be subsumed within the humanitarian discourse that writes her as a victim who is in fact unable to receive help is noteworthy. She pushes back against Hamisi’s questions on knowledge pertaining to self-help, and, in doing so, also refuses to accept the humanitarian abstraction. She does not break down in the face of his relentless questioning, but removes herself from the conversation, abruptly declaring: “I’m done… I’m tired.” In other words, she exempts herself from the re-writing (in terms of both literal transcription and humanitarian language) of her situation and it’s absorption into bureaucratic discourse.[179] In doing so, she also exempts herself from the logic of human rights that requires testimony in order to act against impunity.

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[179] Though I think Gabi’s move is significant, I am reluctant to describe it in terms of “resistance.”

Gabi's interview with Hamisi came at the tail end of my research in Nyarugusu. Along with the many other reports she'd filed at various offices, it too had had no result. I kept in touch with her sporadically from Dar es Salaam, and when I last heard from her about a year after that meeting, she was still in the camp. The experience of continuously seeking help and instead being patronized and judged wore thin on her. Inside the offices of various agencies, she was quiet, subdued, and extremely uncomfortable. Outside, she was indignant, complaining loudly that they didn't help. The cyclical nature of Gabi's problem was compounded by her experience with GBV offices. The entire process had seemed opaque to her and her family – "It's their secret," (*ni siri yao*) they would say, unable to understand why aid officials operated the way they did, or not at all.[180] The condition of humanitarian confinement multiplied: she was confined to her house, away from school, in hiding. Alienated from her home, her husband, her children, and her peers, the fear of being abducted structured her entire life and required a peripatetic existence. But most of all, the responsibility for her problems were pushed back on her and her family, along with the burden of solving them.

Thus the new humanitarian imperative to pursue freedom from violence and fear through the apparatus of GBV prevention not only channeled women into cycles of bureaucratic repetition, but also required that they already possess certain types of knowledge. Humanitarian rationality in Nyarugusu was thus underpinned by a commitment to human rights; refugees were to participate in their own care by learning about human rights. They were to help themselves, to *know how* to ask for help, as well as to *know how* to help themselves.

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[180] Field notes, March 17, 2014

Chapter 3: Monitoring and Evaluation: Meeting Nyarugusu

On a hot afternoon I hitch a ride with the IRC vehicle out to their offices in Makere to attend a staff meeting. They're just past the long entrance road to Nyarugusu, surrounded by a bit of barbed wire, and not far from the TWESA and TRCS compounds. While we wait for Kasulu based staff to arrive, we sit in a wall-less *makuti* thatched hut, watching the news on a large flat-screen television. Al Jazeera is airing a feature on rape as a weapon of war in the DRC. The programming changes to a documentary on schistosomiasis. The staff are shocked at people bathing in the river. Someone comments indignantly on the fact that they do this right off the highway in Nyachege, one town over. Another staff member informs me of the fact that UNHCR will build 30 houses in a compound right behind IRC; this means that the camp won't close any time soon. It is supposedly meant to house IOM and UNHCR staff working on durable solutions.

The human resources manager opens up the meeting. He goes through logistical details – who will run meetings, what kind of agenda there will be, and announces the obvious fact that meetings are to discuss issues and challenges and to share information. The IRC manager has been in Kasulu for four months, this is his first time visiting the camp. He begins by explaining his priorities: "All eyes are on Kasulu" as the biggest IRC office in Tanzania, and thus "capacity building" will be his main agenda. There will be a mentorship program, so that all managers will have the opportunity to "be exposed to other managers around." IRC is to have a "2025 strategy," and all staff are to contribute to this. I am surprised to hear that IRC is actually under spending. It emerges that UNHCR cannot actually give more money to IRC, because they haven't yet spent 70% of what they were meant to spend by March. A new monitoring and evaluation officer is to develop "activity tracking tools," since they are now relying on BVA's or "budget versus actual [spending]." He continues: "Performance management is one way of demonstrating accountability. We are developing performance objectives. I encourage you to set performance objectives. Documentation of performance is very important. It is not an event (*tukio*), it is a process (*mchakato*)."[181] But this ongoing process was a haphazard one.

A definitive feature of the humanitarian operation – like most bureaucracies - in Tanzania was the abundance of documents. Binders full of reports, case files, intake documents, and statistics filled offices; meeting agendas, lists of stakeholders, donor visit plans, and maps overflowed from desks. Fact sheets, SOP (standard operating procedures) documents, strategy papers, coordination notes, and background papers proliferated, along with minutes, case reports, carbon copies, handwritten notes, memos, and court proceedings. Over the years, aid agencies, donors, and consultants commissioned and produced numerous reports about the nature and effectiveness of humanitarian projects in the region, or, in aid parlance, conducted monitoring and evaluation activities. In short, meetings produced reports, and the production of reports necessitated meetings.

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[181] Field notes, IRC Makere Compound, May 6, 2014

The previous chapter focused on individual attempts to receive services related to gender based violence and to be listened to carefully. This chapter focuses on group-based general demands on humanitarian actors, the constituent parts of humanitarian bureaucracy, and on humanitarian histories and meetings as central to the production of humanitarian knowledge. Rather than producing an ongoing state of emergency which "excludes both past and present,"[182] interactions between humanitarian workers and refugees engender a heterotemporality of consciousness: the concomitant production of narratives of past and present suffering, and the possibility of present and future flourishing. Colin Hoag characterizes bureaucracies as ironic "objectivity machines,"[183] and uses the concept of dereliction to describe bureaucratic operations, arguing that bureaucracy works to orient people to the future.[184] This is certainly true in Nyarugusu, where the unpredictable and impervious nature of protection and resettlement aid as well as the designation of the camp as simultaneously "durable" and "temporary" focus people's attention on present needs and possible futures. Humanitarian bureaucracy as a whole operates on a short timescale of the immediate-to-near future. The production of texts is central to humanitarian operations, and a closer look at the nature of these texts and the circumstances of their production can certainly tell us more about the contingency, opacity and irony of humanitarian bureaucracy. However, in this chapter I pay attention to meetings as a genre constituting the "stuff" of humanitarian bureaucracy. Meetings were meant to inform and gain information from refugees, but they also became a key site for refugees to articulate a claim about inclusion in the category of humanity: the right to be heard/ to be listened to.

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[182] Agier, Managing the Undesirables: Refugee Camps and Humanitarian Government. pp. 79.

[183] Colin Hoag, "Assembling Partial Perspectives: Thoughts on the Anthropology of Bureaucracy," PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review 34.1 (2011).

[184] Colin Hoag, "Dereliction at the South African Department of Home Affairs: Time for the Anthropology of Bureaucracy," Critique of Anthropology 34.4 (2014).

Donors and Evaluation

Located in a residential suburb of Dar es Salaam, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) country office is housed in a bungalow a stone's throw from a fancy nightclub, and just down the road from former President Nyerere's residence. Two SUVs and a small sign outside the heavy, 10-foot high black gates announce its location. There, I spoke with the Grants Coordinator, who explained how IRC planned, funded, and evaluated its projects in Nyarugusu. A high-school student from the nearby international school was shadowing her as part of a school project. No doubt under pressure owing to increased arrivals in the camp, she was curt with me and seemed annoyed by my ignorance of what were (to her) universal monitoring and evaluation standards and acronyms.[185]

IRC is what's known as an IP – an Implementing Partner. Implementing partners are funded by UNHCR (as opposed to Operational Partners, who are not funded directly by UNHCR but have significant involvement in refugee operations). The GBV manager at IRC works with UNHCR field teams, holding regular meetings. At the beginning of a grant cycle, IRC begins planning for the next year. The GBV coordinator, along with national and refugee staff and relevant partners, come up with a budget, which is sent to the grants manager and technical advisors at IRC headquarters, who "frame everything correctly." They look up the literature on what's current in the field, and make sure plans are aligned with the latest evidence-based programming. The grants manager and IRC staff incorporate these suggestions and then send it back for a final approval. Finally, the IRC "Business Development Unit" looks at all UN and US government applications.

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[185] Interview with IRC Grants Coordinator, Dar es Salaam, June 2, 2015.

Determinations on spending for camp operations are shaped by global trends in humanitarian and development aid and reflect the priorities of funding bodies. The actual budgets proposed reflect "wishlists," which are "tweaked down" or sent back to sector leads (e.g. for education or GBV) who decide what they can live without. A few days before the final deadline, allocations are made for sector budgets. Projects are proposed to fit grants, and to "meet IRC's global priorities and donor agendas." Quarterly reports are sent to the US government Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM). UNHCR receives monthly and biannual reports. [These are in addition to weekly and monthly coordination documents at the sector level]. PRM funds a large part of IRC's work in the camp, and is particularly interested in funding GBV and general protection issues.

Once funded, programs must be evaluated. UNHCR grant proposals include indicators and targets at the outset, for example, the number of women who are to be offered case management. IRC "puts benchmarks for [themselves]" that are set by sector leads, and confirmed by technical advisors, who encourage them to "follow universal standards." [These would include SPHERE Project (Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards on Humanitarian Response) and IASC (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance) guidelines].[186] Though IRC typically is meant to employ a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) officer, at the time of my interview, the position was vacant and had been for some time. PRM – like other donors - held focus group discussions to evaluate the work of IRC. Though there was no independent overall evaluator, IRC is audited annually by UNHCR and conducts a self-imposed audit every two years, including a randomized controlled trial and a standard impact evaluation (though neither had been conducted in Nyarugusu). The coordinator explained that there had been "donor fatigue" in Nyarugusu until the recent arrival of Burundian refugees; as a result, there had been little funding for basic programming needs. She pointed out that "no one's looking long term."[187]

Coordinating the Camp

In addition to evaluating humanitarian effectiveness, simply running the camp required reports to be produced on a daily, weekly, monthly, yearly and multi-year basis. Annual reports detailed protection, GBV, WASH, and various other strategies. The professionalization and standardization of humanitarian practices has given rise to innumerable "best practices," "standard operating procedures," and handbooks full of acronyms. UNHCR's Emergency Handbook contains a section on "CCCM" or 'Camp coordination, camp management and governance'. CCCM "refers to standardized coordination mechanisms that may be applied both to refugee operations (through the Refugee Coordination Model) and IDP operations (through the CCCM Cluster). CCCM mechanisms ensure that services are delivered efficiently and that populations of concern are protected in camp or camp-like settings."[188]

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[186] See http://www.sphereproject.org/ and https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/
[187] Interview with IRC Grants Coordinator, Dar es Salaam, June 2, 2015.

The standard model of CCCM includes three coordinated parties, along with representatives from "persons of concern," i.e. camp residents. These are 1) Camp Administration (usually national or local authorities; MHA in Nyarugusu), responsible for supervising the camp response as well as camp security 2) Camp coordination (UNHCR), responsible for "overall strategic and inter-camp operational coordination, covering issues such as setting strategy, setting standards, contingency planning, and information management." 3) Camp management (an NGO partner or local authorities, or rarely, UNHCR; formerly World Vision and now TWESA in Nyarugusu), which coordinates a camp's services and maintenance of infrastructure. The simple fact of CCCM being structured in this way entailed much "inter-agency coordination." There were weekly coordination and information sharing meetings, and weekly reports that circulated along with them. The provision of services and the organizational division of labor in Nyarugusu was complex enough that even aid workers struggled to understand it.[189] Aid workers sometimes even asked me whether I knew the timing and location of agency meetings or other consultations, or whether they were happening at all.

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[188] https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/42975/camp-coordination-camp-management-cccm, Last accessed January 6, 2017

[189] Field notes, February 2014.

Matthew Hull argues that we should "analytically restore the visibility of documents, to look *at* rather than *through* them."[190] He encourages scholars of bureaucracy to ask "how documents engage (or do not engage) with people, places, and things to make (other) bureaucratic objects."[191] Following Hull's insight about not succumbing to an "unproductive dichotomy between real and constructed,"[192] in this chapter I will try to look at some of the practices that both shape and are affected by the production and circulation of paperwork. But rather than looking either *at* or *through* paperwork, I want to look *around* it. In Nyarugusu, this means not only considering how knowledge is constructed and circulated through reports, but also how fora like meetings and monitoring and evaluation missions are necessary to the production of such knowledge.

Humanitarian reports are concerned with i) norms, standards, benchmarks ii) status or progress assessment. Roughly speaking, the common features of humanitarian reports include background, strategy, evaluation and impact. Take, for example, the Nyarugusu Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) of 2013.[193] The TOC lists acknowledgments, a list of acronyms, an executive summary, an introduction, assessment overview, methodology and rationale. These are followed by the JAM objectives, background, Status of Implementation of 2010 JAM Recommendations, assessment finding and recommendations by sector (Health and Nutrition, WASH, Nutrition, Food and Logistics, Self-Reliance, Non-Food Items and Environment, Education, Market Analysis, Environment, Non-Food Items), a joint action plan, and annexes listing participants, team terms of reference (TORs) and areas of focus, and the status of implementation of 2010 recommendations. The status section lists observations and recommendations made in 2010, their level of priority, the agency responsible, and the follow-up action taken.

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[190] Matthew S Hull, Government of Paper: The Materiality of Bureaucracy in Urban Pakistan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012). pp. 13, emphasis in original

[191] Hull, Government of Paper: The Materiality of Bureaucracy in Urban Pakistan. pp. 5

[192] Hull, Government of Paper: The Materiality of Bureaucracy in Urban Pakistan. pp. 5

[193] Refugees, Joint Assessment Mission (Jam), Nyarugusu Camp, Tanzania, Final Report.

Reports like this are thus concerned with fixing (in both senses) a problem in time. The basis of actions are recommendations, which must be implemented by specific partners and people. The temporal orientation of these reports is the immediate to short term future, as determined by the nature of humanitarian aid itself. It is the view towards these “little futures” that precludes any significant structural change; each humanitarian action is meant to solve an immediate problem without much regard for future implications.[194]

Speaking of the “ordering” of humanitarian situations, Jennifer Hyndman writes that the “production [of maps, statistics, and assessments] often occurs without reference to the historical configurations of power that preceded them. In the context of refugee camps, cartography, counting, and recording are all acts of management, if not surveillance. They enact controversial power relations between refugees and humanitarian agencies. These strategic tools represent the field of refugee camps as orderly and comparable to other fields managed in various parts of the globe.”[195] These insights are certainly true of the verification exercise, GBVIMS, and other instruments to standardize data and knowledge about refugees in the camp. But I suggest that rather than having no historical references, humanitarian aid doubles back on its own history to inform future practices, either by carrying forth standardized benchmarks and norms that have been development from cases representing “best practices,” or through prior studies of the same situation. Furthermore, the community involvement described in the previous chapter extended to the production of humanitarian knowledge, which now had to encompass refugee opinions (regardless of whether they were taken seriously or not) gleaned through meetings.

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[194] Hoag, "Dereliction at the South African Department of Home Affairs: Time for the Anthropology of Bureaucracy."

[195] Hyndman, Managing Displacement: Refugees and the Politics of Humanitarianism. pp. 121.

Text production happened at three levels: coordination, strategy, and operating procedures (reports produced by refugee workers and aid agency staff in the camp), policy oriented reports (monitoring and evaluation), and documents produced for refugees (including but not limited to case management, informational documents, and certificates). In Nyarugusu, the humanitarian operation was far from transparent; this opacity demanded that refugees furnish proof of their struggles in the form of documents provided and certified by various aid agencies.[196] I saw many such dossiers, composed of copies of reports made to GBV centers, police, WLAC, and the UNHCR protection office, and health records, among other things. Some of my interviewees produced entire binders of certificates earned by participating in workshops on leadership, human rights, GBV and masculinity. In the course of interviewing people I often found that they had undergone extensive training directed at changing attitudes in the camp. They saved these documents very carefully, both to show that they were, despite their situation in life, educated and cosmopolitan. More importantly, they considered them as gateways to alternative futures: proof of qualifications that might make them more employable after resettlement.

As a humanitarian operation funded by various governments and international organizations, assessments – the holy grail of M&E or monitoring and evaluation - were thus de rigeur in Nyarugusu. These happened at a daily and weekly level with the production of reports by local offices – first at the camp, then in Kasulu – for weekly briefing meetings. Each camp event produced its own massive paper trail, with every agency writing up a summary afterwards for the record. At a larger scale, funding bodies like ECHO and PRM would send a representative or small group of observers. These M&E trips were quite short, lasting only a few days, and most required the use of a translator. Planned by the local offices, they involved meetings with camp leadership, visits to various sites in the camps, and meetings with pre-arranged groups of refugees. I attended a number of such meetings, which sometimes read as farce. Some refugees commented to me that since the missions never went beyond the aid outposts, they could not truly understand their struggles. I saw many of the same participants at various different meetings. Often, refugees complained that aid workers did not truly understand their situation due to their limited engagement within the camp – the fact that they only visited a few locations, and that these visits were brief in nature. For example, because people took great care with their appearance when attending official meetings and delegates only saw people dressed well, the true extent of poverty in the camp could not be known.[197] The documentation of refugee struggles in assessment missions and field reports naturally could not adequately convey the scope of suffering or the affective reverberations of the difficulties of camp life.

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[196] Thomson, "Black Boxes of Bureaucracy: Transparency and Opacity in the Resettlement Process of Congolese Refugees."

The institutional language of the reports generated from these brief visits does not betray the position that Nyarugusu occupies in the humanitarian imaginary. Early in my fieldwork, I met with the head of the UNHCR field office, who was in her first non-war humanitarian situation. She was always impeccably polished, accessorized with an expensive watch and black patent leather pumps. Carefully amending her words throughout our conversation, she expressed her desire for UNHCR to “start thinking outside of the box.” She told me her business law background impacted the way she saw things here. This was the “time to be bold, innovative, test something.” She littered our conversation with analogies and personal examples, ranging from the repair of her old car to her relationship with her mother, telling me in a hushed voice: “The beauty is that we have the resources.” She described the humanitarian intervention in the camp as "dreaming in color;” Nyarugusu represented a “prison door” that needed to be pried open – the humanitarian effort needed to “create a symbiosis where the refugee camp is not held up almost like a ghetto.”[198]

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[197] Field notes, February 24, 2014

The official’s comments were personal, but indicative of how Nyarugusu was seen, on one hand, as an experimental site where new approaches could be tested, and on the other, as a known situation. Humanitarian aid would be tweaked and made better through constant evaluations. These gave rise to new recommendations to be implemented, new approaches drawing on the latest buzzwords in the world of development, and consequently, new programming. “It’s like an experiment,” a TWESA camp management officer told me. “Low participation is a problem. It looks like it was planned from above and imposed; people weren’t involved from the beginning.” He explained that the aid organizations wanted refugees to “participate,” i.e. help to build the new semi-permanent shelters that were planned, but that this was a problem because they saw themselves as contractors and demanded salaries. After lengthy negotiations they began to build, but then, ironically, took up work with another agency that offered higher salaries to build schools. “People deserve to live in better conditions. What does temporary even mean? The involvement in terms of participation isn’t going as planned. A lot of the times we deal with refugee leaders, not directly with the community, so maybe the message ends with the leaders and doesn't reach."[199]

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[198] Field notes, January 29, 2014, Kasulu UNHCR office.

The high turnover rate of aid agency staff contributed to the ongoing production of knowledge such that each new staff member could fully understand the context they were in. At the same time, the fact that it was a "humanitarian" situation meant that textual (and personal) expertise could also be culled from other camps and humanitarian operations and recommendations from the humanitarian "industry." The problem was that in the face of intractable Tanzanian regulations, none of these could be effectively implemented. Every year, studies would recommend that refugees be given access to income generating activities to alleviate economic pressures. Nothing would change, and new reports would be issued the following year recommending exactly the same thing. It was only in 2016, months after the arrival of over 70,000 refugees from Burundi, that the common market was reopened.

The Tanzanian government, for its part, was still relying on a decade-old study. Indeed, the most recent MHA study on refugees in Tanzania I could find recommended economic activities and cash transfers 10 years ago.[200] Tanzanian understandings of the camp were also tied to the Burundian experience; a visit to The Centre for the Study of Forced Migration (CSFM) at the University of Dar es Salaam, revealed a curious discrepancy. CSFM was mainly responsible for research on the refugee situation, but there had been no reports produced on

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[199] Interview with TWESA Camp Management Officer, October 2, 2014

[200] I received a copy of this report in early 2013. The next year, prior to donor meetings, the Director of Refugee Services called me personally to insist that I return the report because it was the only copy and was badly needed.

Congolese refugees or Nyarugusu.[201] Thus concerns surrounding Nyarugusu were informed by the history of Rwandan and Burundian refugees in the country and the literature produced on Burundian camps and settlements, which mainly dealt with the negative impact of refugees on the environment and their host communities.

A Brief History

The UNHCR field officer had readily agreed to talk to me. "I am doing a master's degree myself, so I know what you are going through." Tired from the journey to see his newborn child and family who lived a few hours away, he slumped into a red plastic chair in the thatched hut of the UNHCR canteen. He explained: "This year's focus is to see them as partners, not as beneficiaries. What should we improve? They should tell us. They also have an opportunity to bring change." In our conversation he constantly referenced tools, speaking of the need to "develop tools for local integration."[202] Both the TWESA camp management officer and the UNHCR field officer I spoke with had been working in Tanzanian refugee camps in the region for 15 years. Like other seasoned Tanzanian aid workers, they often referenced the situation with Burundian refugees. The TWESA officer gave me some context for changes in refugee policy and Tanzanian governmental perception of refugees. "In terms of security [Nyarugusu] is great. There are no security problems like with the Burundians – they had a lot of security issues, a lot of movement, especially going to Burundi, banditry, including militia and rebel groups that went, it was chaos, shooting in camps…."[203] I asked if this was the reason for the 1998 Refugees Act, which set limitations on refugee movements and rights.[204] He responded in the affirmative, adding that the camps were close to the borders, and that there were problems amongst Burundian refugees stemming from political differences. "They changed from settlements because the new president didn't believe in pan-Africanism. Also, the lesson learned from DRC – I am referring to Wanyamulenge – it almost happened here with the Rwandans in Bukoba. Almost half a million, including 1994 soldiers, most of them were Hutus. Camp management was hard because there was a military element in the camp; it wasn't easy to differentiate between soldiers and civilians. So I think [the reason for changing the refugee policy after 1972] it was lessons learned. If they stay for many years, how do you know! Like the Wanyamulenge – they came many years ago, and the Congolese claim they are not original!"[205]

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[201] After a number of unsuccessful trips to the University of Dar es Saalam campus, I learned that the CFSM had moved to a new building in the suburb of Mikocheni. I made my way there, but files relating to CSFM research were locked an inaccessible. I did manage to communicate with the Director of the Institute, who informed me that no research had been conducted on Nyarugusu.

[202] Interview with UNHCR field officer, September 30, 2014

Tanzania's first experiment with mass naturalization was with Rwandan refugees. They had arrived in the 1960s and 1970s, and in 1981, Tanzania naturalized approximately 25,000 Rwandan refugees.[206] In 2014, approximately 3000 Somali Bantu refugees were also naturalized; they had fled Somalia in 1991 after Siad Barre was toppled from power. Since the early 1990s, UNHCR had been working with the Tanzanian government to promote "durable solutions." After efforts to voluntarily repatriate Burundian refugees in the early 2000s, in 2007 the government offered to naturalize 1972 Burundians who did not want to repatriate. In 2010, they had naturalized over 162000 Burundians; however, shortly thereafter, they were told that they would have to relocate before receiving their certificates of citizenship. The relocation plan was subsequently put on hold, and the legal status of naturalized Burundians remained unclear. In 2014, the process resumed, with Burundians allowed to remain in their settlements. However, more recently, in July of 2017, President John Magufuli announced a cessation of the naturalization process, without giving a reason. Though the naturalization plan represented an unprecedented move in the region to extend citizenship, in practice, its uneven and problematic implementation has left many unable to practice their rights as citizens and uncertain about their future.[207] Nevertheless, the move was warmly received by international organizations and refugee activists, and continues to provoke debates on the extension of citizenship and the expansion of durable solutions like local integration. The idea of “closing a caseload;” which included shuttering camps like Mtabila, repatriating refugees, and integrating them into the local community were appealing objectives to aid organizations and the Tanzanian government alike. The former were keen to see the resolution of long-standing humanitarian situations, and the latter resolved to maintain peace and avoid problems like those faced in neighbouring countries. In Nyarugusu, however, with the conflict in the Congo ongoing, the conversation about durable solutions was at an impasse. The government was unwilling to promote “local integration,” and still saw their presence as temporary, given that there had been a few convoys of voluntary returns in previous years. Between 2011 and 2013, only 924 refugees were resettled in a third country.[208] As a result, quantification, measurement, and the production of knowledge in order to facilitate durable solutions took the place of actual durable solutions.

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[203] Interview with TWESA Camp Management Officer, October 2, 2014

[204] "The Refugees Act," (Tanzania: Official Gazette, Acts Supplement, 1999-02-05, No. 2, 1998), vol., TZA-1998-L-53877 vols.

[205] Interview with TWESA Camp Management Officer, October 2, 2014

[206] Gasarasi, "The Mass Naturalization and Further Integration of Rwandese Refugees in Tanzania: Process, Problems and Prospects.", Amnesty International, Protecting Their Rights: Rwandese Refugees in the Great Lakes Region (2004). Tanzania had also see large numbers of refugees from Mozambique in the South.

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[207] See: James Milner, "Can Global Refugee Policy Leverage Durable Solutions? Lessons from Tanzania’s Naturalization of Burundian Refugees," Journal of Refugee Studies 27.4 (2014), Janna Miletzki, "Waiting for Citizenship: Pragmatics of Belonging of Burundian Refugees in Protracted Exile. The Case of Ulyankulu Settlement, Tanzania," London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), 2014, Opportuna Kweka, "Citizenship without Integration: The Case of 1972 Burundian Refugees in Tanzania," The African Review 42.2 (2017), Jessie Thomson, "Durable Solutions for Burundian Refugees in Tanzania," Forced Migration Review.33 (2009), Initiative, I Can't Be a Citizen If I Am Still a Refugee: Former Burundian Refugees Struggle to Assert Their New Tanzanian Citizenship, Amelia Kuch, "Naturalization of Burundian Refugees in Tanzania: The Debates on Local Integration and the Meaning of Citizenship Revisited," Journal of Refugee Studies (2016). US Department of State, Field Evaluation of Local Integration of Former Refugees in Tanzania (2014). pp. 20-24.

Meetings

Gathering data for the purposes of policy, monitoring and evaluation, and crafting strategy documents necessitated meetings with camp residents – or in UNHCR parlance "key stakeholders." Regular meetings were held by aid staff to assess the situation and needs in the camp. At a secondary level, donors would also hold focus groups to evaluate the effectiveness of their humanitarian spending. But the term 'meeting' doesn't adequately capture the sentiments or frustrations (or occasionally, the uncertainty) surrounding these encounters. Camp residents saw meetings in a number of ways: as something to do, a nuisance, an opportunity to glean information, or to make claims and be heard. The meetings that I witnessed demonstrated that refugees struggled to obtain information, that they often distrusted the motivations and information provided by aid agencies, and that they felt that their voices, commitments, and problems were not taken into consideration.

We want your cooperation: Call a working meeting

The "Population Verification Exercise," commonly called "*sensa*" has structured many of the conversations in the camp. Camp residents were confused about the nature and purpose of the sensa; many of them had previously resided in the Mtabila camp, where a similar exercise preceded camp closure. The parties involved perceived this closure differently. Refugees told me that it was chaotic and violent; even bullets were used, and that if I wanted to know the truth I should ask locals from the surrounding villages.[209] In an effort to get refugees to voluntarily leave the camp, services like schools were shut down for three years preceding the final closure of the camp. A representative of IRC described what happened in Mtabila as "orderly return," rather than voluntary repatriation.[210]

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[208] Refugees, Joint Assessment Mission (Jam), Nyarugusu Camp, Tanzania, Final Report.

I met with the Acting Director of the Refugee Affairs Department in Dar es Salaam, who had been working with refugees in the country for nearly two decades. He expressed concern that refugees were leading to social instability and security problems; I asked him to give me more details about the push towards repatriation and no longer hosting refugees in Tanzania.

> “Aditi Surie von Czechowski: Because I know you mentioned that you were in the camps for fifteen years, and particularly Nyarugusu. And I also wanted to ask you about the closure of Mtabila. So I know that there must have been a huge amount of planning around it. So can you talk about the planning? How long did it take to decide to close Mtabila, who was involved in closing, and what happened? Did it happen slowly, or, the refugees were moved out in a certain way, or how was the infrastructure dismantled, because from what I understand there is an army base there now? So I would like to know more about the process of closing.
>
> Acting Director: Mtabila. Mtabila first was a big nut to crack. Because it was a camp that actually, to be very honest, whose composition, is what we may term as, what was composed of people who we may call hardliners. People who had decided they were not going to return to Burundi. In the course of your research they may have told you that Mtabila was actually a remnant of all the camps, because as we were closing camps, there is always what we call the residual caseload, what remains of the camp. Those were actually shifted to Mtabila. So eventually Mtabila became a camp that absorbed the remnants of all other camps, all other 13 camps that had been closed. At least people who had actually decided at the back of their mind that they were not going to return to Burundi, so they, it was difficult to close that camp, and to be very honest, the government on more than 3 occasions had pronounced that it was going to close the

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[209] Field notes, January 28, 2014

[210] Field notes, December 16, 2013

camp. For 3 consecutive years – 4 years – from 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, for four years down the line, the government tried and battled in cooperation with UNHCR to close that camp but it was really difficult. So it really needed an approach that was appealing, appealing in the sense that appealing to the international community, it needed an approach that brought all the stakeholders together, so that the entire world will be convinced that there was a reason at least for these people to return back home. That is why we decided at least to begin with the in depth – to undertake what has come to be known as the comprehensive in depth processes, because as you know these people were accepted into Tanzania on a prima facie status. But now we, in order to ascertain whether these people needed continued international protection, we needed to take an *in-depth interview where each individual was interviewed and his all peculiar circumstances analyzed to assess whether he was really in need of international protection*. So this was actually a very tedious process, involving the government and I had to do a lot of debriefing with my superiors, at least to enlist their support. Eventually the minister agreed and we worked out with UNHCR this process, we brought together all the various international donors, international community, we discussed this process in the most transparent manner, the interviews were done in the most transparent way, to the extent that ALL the international donors, including the United States of America, UK, they accepted that the process had been done in the most… and that there was no reason that these people should continue to stay in Tanzania, that their continued presence in Tanzania was a misuse of the international donor funding which was urgently needed in other operations. So it was really a very difficult, tedious process that we went through, but eventually we were able to bring all the stakeholders, eventually these people were told to move out. They decided that… as I told you, they became adamant, and they said they were not going to move, so we decided that in the final analysis perhaps we might be forced to use force. But eventually force was not used. So the presence of the military base there was actually, it's like gunpoint diplomacy, if you've come across the term. It was like to show them now, if you are not going to go voluntarily, then we are going to do it. And that was actually the intention of the government. And eventually they… [he trailed off.]

AS: So how did they leave? Were they left to their own devices, were they escorted, were they given for example bus passage out or…

AD: Yeah they were given some bus passage, some trucks, rolled and then took them to Burundi. It was an operation that was actually successfully managed and I think it has gone down to UNHCR operation as one of the most successful, I mean, operations in the history of UNHCR.

AS: That's a big…..

AD: In fact UNHCR intended to come up with a "lesson learned" so that it can be used perhaps in other operations."[211]

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[211] Interview with Acting Director of Refugee Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, January 10, 2014

Knowledge of past humanitarian efforts thus inflected life in Nyarugusu in two ways: first, in the aid vocabulary of "lessons learned," and secondly, in the experience of refugees who understood the process of the *sensa* in the context of what had happened in Mtabila. Though I noticed that fears about Nyarugusu closing abated over the next year or so, uncertainty hung about, and infused all conversations about the *sensa*.

> The previous verification exercise was more just about the population. This one is about household relationships, level of education, "extensive biodata verification," population and profiles, mother of refugees, in-depth profiling including "community services assessments." UNHCR will issue new ration cards, and give each household individual documentation. There is a new "innovation," which is the shift from giving household ration cards to males to giving them to women, "given the issues of stunting and GBV." The verification exercise is to help fix the ration card "issue" – to reassign the head of the household and to make sure refugees don't have more than one ration card.[212]

The shadow of Mtabila was the first issue that arose in the context of population verification. The second was the way in which it structured interactions between aid workers and refugees, who expected that their stories would be carefully listened to. The third was the problems that arose given the manner in which information was collected, disseminated, and stored. This translated into day-to-day problems for refugees who were not included on food lists, given ID cards in time, or had incorrect information entered into their records. There was plenty of misinformation and opacity with regards to services in the camp; sometimes I would double check with UNHCR staff at Nyarugusu regarding issues/plans I'd heard about from those at the program management level, and they would contradict my information. On other occasions I'd ask about complaints I'd heard from multiple refugees and UNHCR officials would have no idea that services that were supposed to be provided according to UNHCR operational plans were being interrupted or were absent. Finally, concerns about the *sensa* voiced by the refugees were met with pleas for them to help themselves through actively participating in the humanitarian apparatus.

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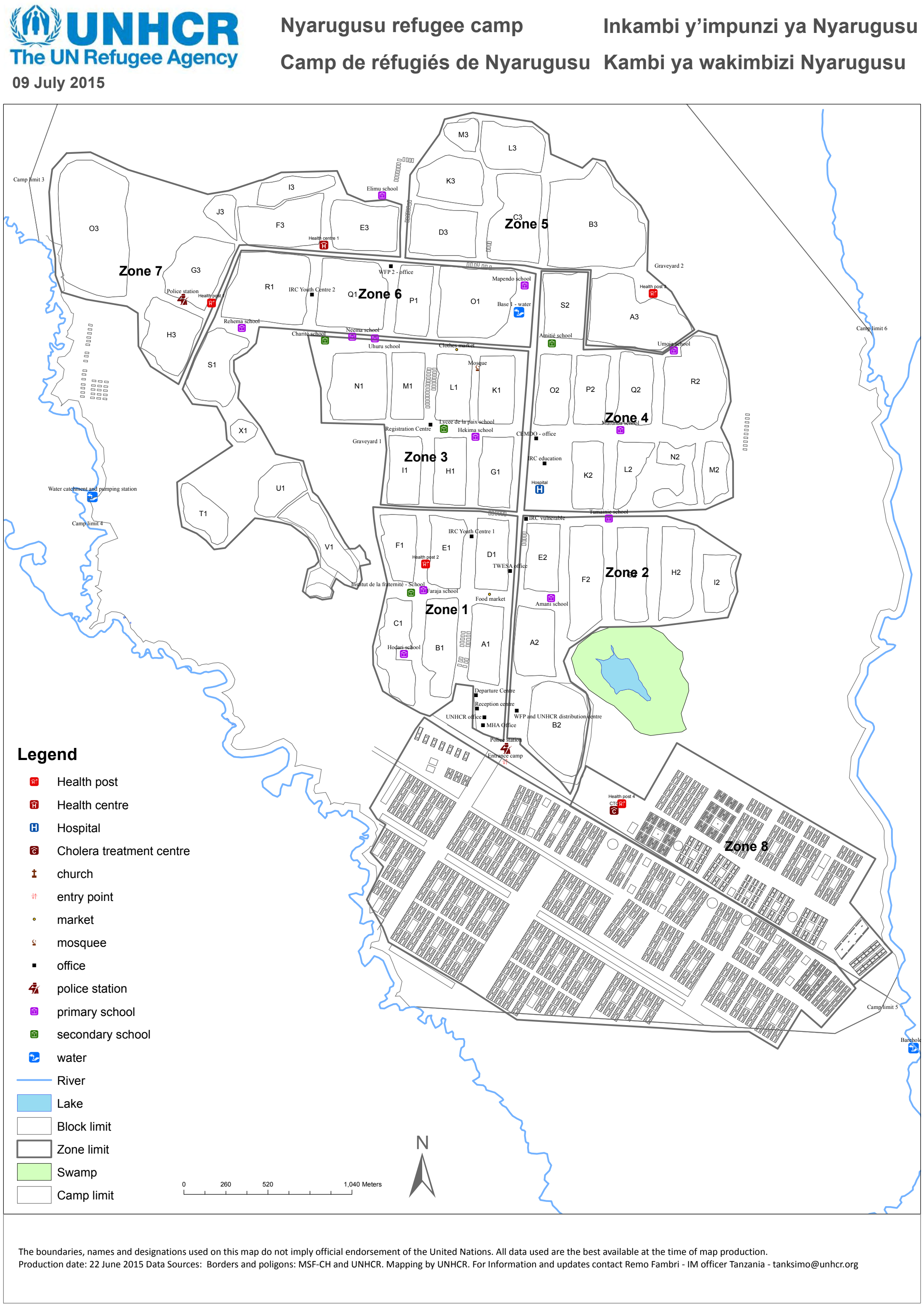
[212] Field notes, November 19, 2013


UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency
09 July 2015
Nyarugusu refugee camp
Camp de réfugiés de Nyarugusu
Inkambi y'impunzi ya Nyarugusu
Kambi ya wakimbizi Nyarugusu
Zone 1
Zone 2
Zone 3
Zone 4
Zone 5
Zone 6
Zone 7
Zone 8
Legend
Health post
Health centre
Hospital
Cholera treatment centre
church
entry point
market
mosquee
office
police station
primary school
secondary school
water
River
Lake
Block limit
Zone limit
Swamp
Camp limit
0
260
520
1,040 Meters
N

The boundaries, names and designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement of the United Nations. All data used are the best available at the time of map production.
Production date: 22 June 2015 Data Sources: Borders and poligons: MSF-CH and UNHCR. Mapping by UNHCR. For Information and updates contact Remo Fambri - IM officer Tanzania - tanksimo@unhcr.org

Figure 3: Map of Nyarugusu Camp. Source: UNHCR. [The map depicts Nyarugusu after the arrival of Burundian refugees in 2015; Zone 8 did not exist when I conducted my fieldwork]

Experiencing Sensa

The smell of body odor mingles with the scent of food; the corridor is noisy with the sound of the generator and children. An IRC staff member is manning the supremely unfriendly "child friendly" area, which is simply a cordoned off, open air, cement corridor. As herd-like as it is, there is also a degree of merriment that surprises me. The ladies in front of me are chatting with a refugee about names being or not being there and the kids in the zone are screaming and playing with skipping ropes and hitting each other with balls. To the left are two dusty wheelchairs. In the narrow, chaotic corridor of the main area, there are hints of repatriation: a picture of a beautiful landscape in the DRC, another photo of greenery is captioned “plot of land for resettlement” in Baraka. The guard tells me that verification for Zone 1 was meant to take two weeks, but three months later, it's still going on. UNHCR staff are wearing bright orange vests emblazoned with "Population Verification 2013 Nyarugusu Camp." Over shouts of “*Sogea! Sogea!*” (move on), two verification officers flip through files, asking each other periodically: “have you found it yet?” Not too far away, the coordinator of the verification exercise too, is looking for files in a disorganized pile. At lunch time, a refugee has a seizure in the canteen and knocks over large pots of food. Everyone looks on in pity, but no one really does anything.

The verification exercise also causes disruptions in services, particularly in cases when someone has been issued a new ID cards, but hasn’t been added to the computerized master list that is now supposed to govern distribution of essential items. The UNHCR field officer has a constant stream of visitors in his office, asking for soap, complaining that they are missing from the census list, or the food list. Several of them say they have received no soap, so we visit two different distribution centers and the TWESA office. Since the departure of World Vision, TWESA has been in charge of camp management. It turns out that they have left the key to the distribution center in Kasulu. They haven't received updated lists, and are already anticipating problems with food distribution in the next few days.[213]

Two months later refugees complain that they have been beaten up while waiting for distribution. "I refuse to be beaten with a stick because of a single bar of soap!" one of them exclaims. Refugees had organized groups for collection, where one person would collect multiple bars on behalf of everyone. But the police were now insisting that each person collect their own bar of soap. When I arrived in the morning, I saw hundreds of people waiting for soap at the main depot. They were all getting soaked, because the lines stretched far beyond the meager shelters in place.[214]

Later that day, there is a meeting at the youth center. The field officer, members of the Ministry of Home Affairs, policemen, and village leaders are in attendance. They are flanked by WLAC and other refugee staff members. They discuss how refugees should approach UNHCR to file complaints. "We don't lodge complaints at *sensa*, we are just bettering information," one of the aid workers responds.

"How is this census exercise different from Mtabila?" a refugee asks, echoing the fears of many of his peers about the closure of the camp. The UNHCR officer barks back: "This exercise isn't about closing the camp! This exercise is a census!" He continues: "About gender based violence. It looks like people don't want to listen! They aren't changing. There are some traditions that we like. We truly need your cooperation. We will improve services, but you can't go on this way, so take this very seriously. Let's get rid of SGBV completely."[215]

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[213] Field notes, January 28, 2014

[214] Field notes, March 17, 2014

But the process of the census was opaque to those who were expected to participate in it.[216] They felt out of the loop and inconvenienced. Problems with food distribution persisted over the next few months, and UNHCR scheduled a "food meeting." I asked the camp leader about it. "We haven't been given any information. We don't really know what the meeting will be about," he responded, resigned. A WLAC incentive worker, Ebondo, was able to give me more information: "On Saturday every single head of household in the camp was told to go to the *sensa* to get food tokens. It was a huge jam. Then they had to go back on Sunday. People are unhappy with the *sensa* and how it's being run. Some of them were planning to burn down the verification site, so a meeting was called with all the leaders to tell them not to do so." The vice president of the camp leaned in to tell me that the meeting would be about protests planned at the verification center.

The zonal coordinator, a thick man with a bushy mustache who always wears a checkered shirt, is here from Kigoma. The head of the UNHCR Kasulu field office, the camp leader, the camp commandant, and TWESA officers sit around long wooden tables. Village leaders, zone leaders, *sungu sungu*, pastors and elders from the community have been invited. The camp commandant opens with a few religious greetings. "If there's any problem, you can say what you want. Our offices are open any time. We're thankful that the exercise is going well. It's possible that people have their own problems, but they could affect the whole camp." His supervisor adds: "I've been getting weekly reports about the exercise. So far so good. Since they time that [the previous camp commandant] was here, he visited all the zones and explained. Even those who didn't have problems with their cards. Others were told they should wait – they'd be listened to later. So where's the problem? The leaders say we've bothered them and caused them troubles. How do you see this exercise? What are your thoughts? Because it's a good exercise. It'll help them. You'll get ID cards. So where's the problem? We don't understand. They're saying this exercise hasn't/isn't being carried out well. There are pastors, elders, and mothers here. So let's do something else."

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[215] Field notes, March 17, 2014

[216] The following paragraphs draw on Field notes, April 30, 2014.

The woman next to me complains that the verification exercise had been started in February, but hadn't finished yet, and that is the problem. Another refugee stood up: "You spoke at length, but you didn't give me any information (*ni kama umeniacha hewa*). Between the organizations, leaders… how do you see it?" The camp commandant cuts in. "If [these rumors] are true, we should be told. If they are rumors, we should be told." The refugee camp leader thanks the visitors and adds: "When got this news we were very surprised. It could never happen. We believe God will help us and we'll be served. Our camp is peaceful, and we'll protect it until we return."

> The refugee camp leader began tentatively:
>
> "When we received this news we were so surprised. A group is preparing protests… To burn down the *sensa*… we were surprised. We questioned ourselves a lot… the list of people, where can we get it from, we don't know? Maybe there are people who are entering the camp from outside and causing disturbances. There are no demonstrations in

> the camp. We were already told that we got a new budget for the year. Protests… it's like people are failing. It's food – we eat. We have all the services, we're going to get more education, etc. Is standing in a queue a demonstration or strike? We don't want [fights]. There are disabled women, mothers, etc. There's nothing about burning down the center. Our camp is one of safety and peace. We're happy that you are here. Our camp is safe and peaceful." The audience erupts into huge applause. Other residents of Nyarugusu backed him up: "When I heard the news I was shocked. Community members were informed before the *sensa* – there is to be no violence. The *sensa* is for your benefit. This matter doesn't exist in the camp. We want a solution, so that we can live in peace and security."

A village leader pointed out that people might simply be suffering: "Maybe there are other people who have different behaviours. If someone is hungry….? Some of us have not gotten food. We have tokens but we're at the *sensa* [during food distribution]. If someone's hungry, they might say something bad. We know the *sensa* is going well until the end."

A Muslim leader stood up confidently. He had been shaking his head while the others spoke. "I wanted to say something different. It's known that everything that is being said is true. I think that information wasn't (shouldn't be) made public. If there is peace, where does this information come from? The leaders say that they don't know the news, but how can they not know? I say that we follow the source of this information. The *sensa* is being carried out differently than we were informed. So people are making noise. A refugee doesn't know where to do. He goes to the zone leader, he isn't helped. He goes to the Ministry of Home Affairs office, he isn't helped. He goes to UNHCR, isn't helped. Maybe this is why this is happening. Amendments must be made. There have been changes in the *sensa* – they produce violence."

The zonal commander snapped impatiently: "Congolese don't have problems. People from various places have come to make sure that the *sensa* is going well. We want a real example of someone who has been to MHA and UNHCR and hasn't been helped. To say that MHA, UNHCR, etc, haven't followed up, this is no small thing. We want a live example. And if you don't have one, say so. We want the truth. We want a real example from a refugee who hasn't been helped, who didn't get food." The thick gold chain around his neck escaped his shirt as he sat down again.

The Muslim leader didn't back down: "The source is the components of the *sensa*. It's different from the terms of the *sensa* we were first informed about." The Zonal Commander responded, not skipping a beat. "Give us an example. If it's true, we'll hold a meeting with the leaders. We'll talk once a month." An aid worker reminds them again of the differences between Mtabila and Nyarugusu. "Refugees are asking - why they aren't being interviewed? Mtabila was closed. Nyarugusu hasn't reached the time of closure. This is totally different from the exercise carried out in Mtabila."

The camp commandant begins again, this time calmly. "Thanks to all the refugees who stood up and talked. Two things: The leaders have assured us that there is peace in Nyarugusu, and that there is no one who wants to destroy the sensa. Maybe we can build coordination (*tutaimarisha coordination*) all the time – speak the same language. Help us to improve this exercise. [You say] 'We've been oppressed, we've been harassed' – tell the leaders how we can improve things. If you don't participate, we won't achieve our goals… If someone tries to ruin the exercise, we won't let them. If there is a problem, we'll fix it. The most important things are the peace and security of the camp, and the peace and security of Tanzania. Everyone has the heart to participate and make things better. Having the whole camp at one center, sometimes there will be problems." The zonal commandant adds: "In life, there isn't a human being that can't make mistakes. Bring your problems to us. We are fixing them. For example, the children's space, and the TV in the verification hall. We want your cooperation. We will continue to hear that the camp is peaceful."

> Via a translator, the head of the UNHCR field office stands up to express her frustration.
>
> "Since November, the beginning of the *sensa*… The verification exercise can be compared to hunting elephants. It's a big risk to go against an elephant. You can be hurt yourself! Even if you succeed in killing and then you have to think about how to cut it, distribute it, ensure that it doesn't rot, it takes a lot of resources. I'm giving this as an example to show the immensity of the work. I'm showing the elephant because it's a very big animal, a very powerful animal. The problem is that we have to undertake this. In Tanzania, we love elephants. I'm not saying go kill an elephant. I'm taking it as an example. There's a lot that we still have to do. And we also know there's a lot to do. We are not surprised [to hear complaints]… we have a vision, we have a plan, and we know that we have to be ready to revise the plan as we implement it. If you want me to tell you a secret, even the government and us we did not agree on everything. We said this is a joint exercise. We are on everything on paper. When we started doing it, we realize there are areas we don't agree on. We stop, we discuss, we continue. It's normal that you have complaints – we are human beings. Otherwise we would be angels. I have to say, please, please, please forgive me – it is the unwise one who goes in the same direction when he knows it is the wrong one. So yes, we've changed a few things here and there. When we change things it's because we want to make things better. We are not changing things because we want to frustrate you. I will agree with you that we haven't communicated with you on every level. I have no problem with apologizing to you. But what we did good from the beginning was we put suggestion boxes, because we knew that we will not always have time to have meetings. Do you know how many times we've moved the wire fence [talking about changes to the infrastructure of the *sensa*]. We realize overnight it's not working, so we call TWESA first thing. It was when everything was done, we thought, oh, the children, so we put something for them. This is human experience [*everyone laughs*]. Let's celebrate the good things we have done. We cannot go and destroy everything – that is unacceptable. When we were planning, we had the option of 6 or 12 months. If we did it in 12 months, I would not have the option to change anything, because we'd all be concentrating on the verification exercise. Forget about water, forget about education, forget about community services. Because of the operation in Tanzania, there was a lot of attention on repatriation in Mtabila. We understand that all the resources were mobilized to go to those activities so many problems in Nyarugusu [were ignored.] If everything had been put on hold for 17 years, we could wait one more year, or we could say, no, we'll try and do everything we can in 2013. So we want to do education, departure center, sanitation, water. Sometimes when I'm running, one book

> falls down – do you want us to stop, because of the few things that aren't working, or do you want us to stop? Because I've seen little girls, with paper, on stones, and writing. I can't take the whole year to do the verification exercise, when there are little girls sitting on stones. If we want to do only the verification exercise, and do a beautiful verification exercise, where everyone is happy, I can assure you, malaria will go up. We're trying to make sure that receptions are resumed – so four protection workers can be there. If we mix the protection work with the verification exercise, we'll be here for five years. We're sensitive to some of the things that aren't working. Fatima has been having more meetings with the zone leaders to find out – we want things to continue. So for me it is perfectly normal that people are not happy. Our objective is not that 65,000 people be happy now, but the few things we've agreed – that those things have to happen within the time. Next year we can add another 10-15, and again… if in the meantime you think there are things that are important, please contact us. The government is here, I am here. Almost every two days, I am here in the camp. If you think that you are frustrated, give it to a driver, give it to someone. I will get it. But we should not stay here until some people are so frustrated that they feel they are justified in destroying what we are doing. My last word is that we are open for consultations. Many of you are more experienced than us, you've been here for 17 years, and some of us for 8 months, tell us. For me I want to leave this place understanding that there is space for dialogue. But I will not tolerate violence. As a representative of UNHCR I want to be sure that the children will go to school. Call a working meeting if you need something. I don't need to say this – but it's important that you go back and talk to your constituencies. Talk to them – for all the zones that have finished the verification exercise, and talk to us. That's all I have, thank you."

The failures of the verification exercise thus had to do with humanitarian priority setting. Refugees were expected to understand that humanitarian aid could be haphazard, rather than making real claims about it. By asserting that humanitarian agents were available to receive complaints and feedback, the head of the field office pushed responsibility for humanitarian failures back on to refugees who had failed to communicate in a correct and timely fashion. In one sense, meetings were thus semantic exercises in excuse-making. But they also provided an important space for refugees to make claims about a true engagement with their opinions.

Meeting in Zone 2

In what follows, I describe a meeting between a UNHCR protection officer and residents of Zone 2 of the camp.[217] The meeting was meant as part of an "outreach" effort, but also to gauge residents' opinions and problems. My aim in describing this and other meetings in length is to provide a fuller picture of the way in which coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating the camp play out in everyday life and human interactions. It is also to show that this key part of humanitarian bureaucracy is a crucial staging ground for refugee claims.

The rain was pouring on that mid-March day, which meant that getting around was a slightly chilly, slow, and sticky endeavor. A group of Zone 2 residents and I had gathered at a small shack at 9am. We huddled under the shelter available, waiting for some news.[218] There was supposed to be an outreach meeting that morning. Finally, someone arrived and told us to proceed to a neighborhood church. We filed in silently. Everyone proceeded to wipe down the benches, gathering their clothes and sitting carefully. The church was still under construction, and the limey smell of whitewash permeated the humid air. After about 5 minutes, we were told to move to a nearby schoolroom, where we all settled down behind the low desks. We waited another 15 minutes before the UNHCR protection worker arrived. In the meantime, the Zone Leader walked in, and people immediately started relating the troubles they were having with soap distribution and leaks due to the rain. He asked them to pause, and surveying the 30 odd attendees gathered, declared that he needed 15 more minutes to round up some more people.

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[217] The following description draws on Field Notes, March 13, Nyarugusu Camp

[218] The UNHCR field officer and refugee outreach workers organized campaigns, focus groups and meetings like this. They would post notices on boards in different zones and areas and meet with zone, village, and cluster leaders, who were meant to inform local residents about meetings.

I had walked there with Kagabo, also a resident of Zone 2, who leaned over to me and admitted that he was both bored and sleepy, but that he wanted to accompany me so that he could “build endurance,” because he knows he will have to work hard abroad. He emphasized that people were very busy in the camp, even though they didn’t have jobs. “Human beings… human beings must imagine a lot. You spend a lot of time imagining!” A few more people have trickled in, and most attendees are male. The UNHCR worker, Fatima, notes that numbers are low. She introduces herself and begins the meeting: “I expect a lot of community participation. I was going to talk about things like rights, responsibilities, limitations… but I think I’ll leave it more open. How many of you have been trained in refugee rights, responsibilities, duties?”

“None of us!” (*Hata mmoja!*) The crowd gets riled up. Kagabo whispers to me about the encampment law, and laughs at the absurdity of talking about rights. I remember that despite innumerable workshops on *human* rights, I have never seen anyone in the camp being taught about *refugee* rights. Later on, a UNHCR worker who had been in the region for a number of years would tell me that Asylum Access had attempted to hold refugee rights workshops, but were denied permission by the Ministry of Home Affairs. I did attend a WLAC incentive worker meeting in which a plan to teach refugee rights was discussed (see chapter 1).

Fatima continues: “Refugee rights are different from rights of the citizen. There are some rights that apply to everyone, whether you’re a refugee or not. Can you mention some of them? Human rights?” Someone pipes up: “The right to life, to eat, to be respected, to be protected – also, *the right to be listened to*.” (emphasis added) Another adds: “The right to freedom, which we’ve been denied [due to the encampment policy].” Fatima continues: “Some of the rights have some limitations. I’m going to mention some of the limitations that come with being a refugee… or when you commit a crime.” She writes on the chalkboard:

- Right to protection
- Right to movement
- Right to live (food)
- Freedom of expression

Turning around, she admonishes them: “You’re forgetting some of the most important rights,” and writes:

- Right to education
- Freedom from violence

The rain is beating on the tin rooftop of the school. The translator urges everyone to be quiet for their own benefit. Fatima continues: “Limitations. When someone leaves their country, foes to another, their rights are limited in certain ways. Movement differs from country to country. Some countries allow refugees to move, others don’t. You can’t vote in the country of asylum. For the issue of the moment, I wanted to expand a little bit on the laws, the rules, the guidelines of the country. The refugees have to respect the laws and rules of the host country. UNHCR doesn’t have rights anywhere. We depend on the country of asylum. The most important thing is the protection of the refugee – the sole responsibility of the state. So UNHCR comes in to support the country. Is that a good lesson for this morning? The right to education is limited to primary school. That’s why you will see… UNHCR is not so much into secondary education. There are very many human rights… we are just touching on a few.”

Someone asks a question about whether they have a right to get a refugee card. Fatima explains that one could get a card of registration that is proof of refugee status. Another woman says they are not allowed to move around with it. The translator holds up an ID card. Kagabo laughs at the number of people on it. Fatima reminds the woman that she needs written authorization to leave the camp. It's not really an ID (*kitambulisho*). She notes that maybe, they would be able to fight for individual IDs. The previous camp commandant had promised that everyone would be given their own ID card after the verification exercise. Someone complains that Burundians from Mtabila (the nearby camp that had been closed after a long struggle) had yet to participate in the verification exercise. Fatima raises her voice: "There are two issues here. We have Burundians who came here, they applied for refugee status, and they were rejected. The second ones were the ones who applied, and were accepted. It has to be the second ones – those who were accepted." She asks for a list. The Zone Leader insists that he already took a list of over a 100 people. Fatima asks him not to worry, saying that she was more concerned about those who were not in resettlement and also have not gone through the verification exercise. Another resident adds that there are people from Mtabila who have gone through the *Sensa* but weren't given cards and are "pending."

Fatima adds: "The government of Tanzania has not yet decided what to do in case of mixed marriages between Burundians and Congolese. If you are one of these, you are still in our database, but your picture will not appear [on the proof of registration card]." The meeting cycles through yet more issues – people who are not on the list and also not up for resettlement, others who appear as having been resettled but are still in the camp. Everyone is keen to have their questions answered, and there are a lot of issues that are unclear.

Another person asks: “What is resettlement exactly?” Fatima responds with the standard UN information: “UNHCR has three durable solutions. What are they? I am sure you know. There is repatriation, which is voluntary, local integration…” Here she is interrupted by an old man, who brings up the question of camp borders for the second time. Everyone laughs at how off-topic he is. They are all making noise, and the Zone Leader scolds them. This constant disciplining of voices and responses runs through the entire meeting. Fatima continues: “The most desirable… is always voluntary repatriation. Home is home, home is best, and at the end of the day, most people go home. Then the second one is local integration, which will only happen if the country of asylum accepts it. Like the Burundians who are about to integrate. One of the grounds is that the people have to fit within the country of integration. That country should have the prospect of you getting citizenship. The most controversial is resettlement. Resettlement is when a refugee is moved to a third country of asylum. It normally looks at countries of the first world. But resettlement becomes a tricky situation because UNHCR does not put demands on third countries. It’s the third countries that say – ‘OK, I want these people from your camp,’ and they come with conditions. For example, they speak a language, or have a certain level of education. Even if you have the biggest protection needs, they will not take you… not everyone qualifies. That’s why they say: resettlement is not a right. You cannot request for resettlement. Is it clear?” Kagabo laughs. “I was waiting for her to say that,” he remarks dryly.

The session turns back to questions and answers. Someone else asks whether UNHCR will split up mixed marriages. Fatima answers: “One of UNHCR’s priority is family unity. I said that we register you as a spouse, make sure that you receive food, so that you don’t have to depend on that person. This is tricky because most of the Burundian cases have been rejected. We want to keep the family unit before the pile is decided. They keep getting food so that there aren't problems in the family. When it comes to [marriages to] Tanzanians, you can't be refugee in your own country. We write [them] as family members. I'm not sure about the food issue."

Another woman stands up. Voice cracking, she says that her young son has been kidnapped by a Tanzanian. Fatima looks sympathetic but dismisses her gently: "Normally when we do these meetings I prefer to hear general cases. Individual cases can be heard in the office." Another person jumps in: "We don't get an opportunity to present our problems at *sensa*." This would be a common refrain over the many months during which the verification exercise was carried out. Fatima shakes her head: "It's impossible, given the way the *sensa* is going."

As the meeting wraps up, people start queuing up front to ask Fatima more questions. Not many of them get the chance to do so. They ask about why refugees don't know more about UN and international law, about separated minors, about food. Another complains about the impossible process of fixing incorrectly issued registration cards. Kagabo asks about people who have been mistreated in previous *sensas* and have not been on the food list in years, and have been told simply to wait. "We refugees believe that if we are told to wait, and it'll happen after, we wait."

Fatima ignores the comment, and instead brings up "Standard Operating Procedures." "I'm hoping that when they were telling you about the Verification Exercise [they explained that] no tribes will be changed. No nationalities will be changed. So please don't blame the verifiers… this is something that was decided at the beginning. They put a small note in the database. All these things are going to be looked into after the verification. A mistake in the year and month isn't a big deal." But what seems like a small administrative error can end up having profound consequences, and a middle-aged man responds angrily: "It's going to be a problem! For example at the hospital – they'll say I'm a liar!" Fatima assures him that she will take the issue to her team.

Turning back to the issue of rights-knowledge, she says: "Normally we do a training for zone leaders, village leaders, to know their rights. We'll see how best to take it up. After 18 years. In my religion – it's never too late to get knowledge. Knowledge is power. If you don't have knowledge, you can't defend yourself. For example, I saw on TV – this old lady was given a bible. She's 55 years old. She said – 'how can I hold a present that I cannot read? If it takes me the rest of my life, I will learn how to read.' The bible is in English. She's in class with small small children. She has started saying some sentences. So please – I don't want to hear the 17 years [excuse]. At the end of the day we cannot force you – it's your choice. Me, I have a problem with too many separated children. Parents are there, [but] they abandon or neglect their children…. I have to give examples of where I worked before. We had all these sisters and brothers go back to Cote D'Ivoire. They brought their brothers and sisters to the camp and began to mistreat them. They were not going to school, they were just doing housework. For me that is not correct. I'm not saying you're all doing it, but we should all look out for it. Especially the leaders. But if a child is new, they have to go through the procedures of registration. I'm a lawyer and we have a saying: justice will come to the vigilant people [laughs]." The translator adds a Burundian saying: "*Hufaidi mpaka siku ya idi*." This tendency to answer questions by insisting on rights-knowledge was not unusual in meetings between UNHCR officials and refugees.

Fatima thanks everyone for their time, and assures them that she has learned a lot and will take their issues back to her team at UNHCR. "*Zone ya Pili OYE!*" she cries, rallying everyone. They all shout back – "*OYE!"* The zone leader asks her to come back again soon, because many people had left due to her lateness and there are many more concerns. Later, T seemed excited, and told me he thought the meeting was great. "She listened to our problems, and left everything open." Others, however, had looked resigned as they shuffled out of the room.

Good Neighbors

Two weeks later I ran into the camp leader, who informed me that there was an "*Ujirani Mwema*" meeting between camp residents and local Tanzanians. As we're standing around, an argument erupts between a Tanzanian staff member and a Congolese refugee both working for Radio Kwizera. "*Kila kitu kambini ni mwanamke*," insists the refugee. "Everything in the camp is about women." He asks why women are suddenly the head of the household. The other tries to persuade him that it is a question of him using language badly, and that in fact, women are simply the heads of ration cards, not designated as heads of the household. Everyone stands around idly chatting, in front of a decaying concrete basketball court devoid of nets in front of one of the IRC youth office structures. The attendees have been specially chosen from various villages, so the meeting isn't open to everyone. Despite a massive delay, people stay anyway, because the meeting is well-known for the refreshments provided (soda and a plate of food). Eventually, five hours later, the meeting starts. Jafari, a judge on the local tribunal court, complains to me – “They don’t respect peoples’ time! They don’t know we have responsibilities – we are busy!”

We all file into the tin-roofed hall where camp leadership meetings usually take place. The camp commandant introduces the meeting with a question about land conflicts. Officials from TWESA, ADRA, Radio Kwizera, TRCS, Police, AIRD and the MHA are present. The UNHCR officials are, as usual, late. By now the wind has picked up speed, and the bolts on the tin roof are clanging loudly. It’s hard to hear the MHA official reading a five-page summary of the previous meeting. The camp commandant notes that there have been conflicts over environmental issues, farming and the borders of the camp, and use of *Mto Kaga*, the nearby river. In February, a refugee volunteer for CEMDO was stabbed after he tried to stop a Tanzanian from cutting a tree. The chairman of the closest hamlet, Makere, notes that they had previously cooperated with World Vision (now no longer operating in the camp) to agree on the camp borders. In 1986, people had already started farming in the area, long before the camp was opened. The camp commandant jumps in. “My worry is that if you allow farming in some places, later people will decide to build permanent houses.” Refugees and Tanzanians from neighboring villages stand to air their grievances and suggestions. The question of farming ruining the environment lingers. The CEMDO representative exhorts people not to cut trees, and asks why people don’t protect the environment in their villages. He berates them for failing to protect the trees.

This glimpse into the community relations is significant, for it points us to the issue of environmental protection. For years, the discipline of refugee studies in Tanzania and policy studies surrounding refugee camps and the Burundian settlements have revolved around the question of impact.[219] In what ways are Burundian refugees impacting the local environment? The studies focused on economy and environment. Many conclude that Burundians are having a detrimental effect on the environment by cutting trees. Though the camp in question is situated in a Miombo woodland – one that replenishes itself – constant felling of trees for firewood has decimated the forest cover.

But what exactly are camp residents to do? At the time of my research, UNHCR did not provide stoves or cooking facilities. The houses that I was invited into all had makeshift brick ovens that were used with firewood. The beans provided as rations were difficult to cook – taking up to three days of soaking and cooking to become edible. In the absence of other cooking solutions, refugees had no choice but to collect firewood to make food. And yet, they were constantly berated for their lack of consideration and their failure to protect the environment. In addition, firewood was usually collected by women, which led them further from the camp as available wood dwindled, and thus vulnerable to abduction or sexual violence.

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[219] See Protection, Action against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence: An Updated Strategy, (UNHCR), Community and Household Surveillance in North Western Tanzania: Programme Outcome Monitoring in Nyarugusu Refugee Camp, Musoke, From Hospitality to Total Hostility: Peasant Response to the Influex [Sic] of Rwandan and Burundi Refugees in the Kagera and Kigoma Regions of Tanzania, Rutinwa and Kamanga, "Impact of Refugees in Northwestern Tanzania.", , Impact of Refugees on Host Communities: The Case of Kasulu, Ngara, and Karagwe Districts in Tanzania, Gasarasi, "The Mass Naturalization and Further Integration of Rwandese Refugees in Tanzania: Process, Problems and Prospects.", , The Negative Environmental Impacts of the Influx of Refugees in the Kagera and Kigoma Regions of Tanzania, K Ghimire, "Refugees and Deforestation," International Migration 32.4 (1994), Whitaker, "Refugees in Western Tanzania: The Distribution of Burdens and Benefits among Local Hosts.", Khoti Kamanga, "The (Tanzania) Refugees Act of 1998: Some Legal and Policy Implications," Journal of Refugee Studies 18.1 (2005), Gasarasi, The Tripartite Approach to the Resettlement and Integration of Rural Refugees in Tanzania. (See also SPRAA report pp. 53, pp. 111.)

In any case, the studies conducted focused on the fact that refugees were negatively affecting their environment and thus constituted a burden on Tanzania. These studies were mostly conducted with Burundian or mixed populations; there were none done specifically on Congolese refugees or Nyarugusu. A field report from Kigoma notes that according to the viewpoint of government officials, "The presence of refugees (be it in camps, spontaneously-settled or by way local integration [sic] is seen by this group as a primary cause for destabilization, insecurity (personal & state), environmental degradation, resource depletion, creeping moral decadence and a demographic time bomb."[220]

The Acting Minister of Refugee Affairs gave the report containing the above study to me at our first meeting in late 2013. Despite many other inquiries, this was the one of only two SPRAA (Special Programme for Refugee Affected Areas) reports I was able to obtain. The research was conducted by the Centre for the Study of Forced Migration (CSFM) at the University of Dar es Salaam, and financed by the European Development Fund, and reviewed refugee related policies and laws in Tanzania. The themes included 1) Refugee Admission and Eligibility Procedures 2) Durable Solution: The Option of Local Integration 3) Education Facilities for Refugees in Tanzania 4) Employment Opportunities for Refugees in Tanzania 5) Refugee Impact on Local Administration: The Police, Judiciary, and Other Law Enforcement Agencies.

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[220] Report on the Field visit to Kigoma – November 12-19, 2000. Review of Refugee related policy and laws; Project report of the field visit to Kigoma region, pp. 73 in Project Report for the Cost Estimate Agreement Number Ce-Csfm01-00. (Dar es Salaam: Special Program for Refugee Affected Areas (SPRAA), 2000). (Hereafter SPRAA Report)

The first section concludes: “despite having a sound refugee policy, Tanzania still lacks an appropriate legislative framework establishing proper, transparent, and verifiable procedures and institutions for admission and refugee status determination in situations of mass influx.”[221] It recommends that Tanzania maintain an open door admission policy, improve reception procedures and standards, and use the Prima Facie approach for all asylum applications. It also recommends that the institutions involved in refugee status determination be overhauled.

The section on local integration acknowledges the obstacles (environmental degradation and cultural differences, mistrust of refugees, etc) but posits it as an attractive solution that should be examined more closely. In the absence of an enthusiastic response from all parties involved, the author suggests that “it would be unwise to set on the path of local integration without the fullest possible national debate and empirical assessment of pros and cons.”[222]

The sections on education and employment make it clear that there is much to be desired in these arenas. Teacher shortages and inadequate infrastructure and materials make it hard for refugees to obtain an education. The section on education recommends that the government pursue education for integration, and that this should emphasize “education for self-reliance, education for environmental awareness and protection, education for peace, conflict resolution and reconciliation, and education for gender equality.”[223] The employment section notes that refugees need employment to supplement dwindling assistance and that the best form of employment given their level of education and possible return home would be self-employment in the agricultural sector (which would naturally entail small land grants), and, where appropriate, trades like carpentry, masonry, tailoring, etc.[224]

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[221] SPRAA Report, pp. 35

[222] SPRAA Report, pp. 68

[223] SPRAA Report, pp. 100-101

The final section describes the impact of refugees on local facilities including hospitals, schools, roads, wildlife (poaching) and prisons. It also attributes increased violence to armed refugees and gangs that cross borders. Most notably, it tackles the issue of sexual and gender based violence. The author attributes SGBV to the following reasons: 1) a "culture" of sexual violence, wherein the "Congolese argue that rape does not exist in their culture." 2) idleness in the camps that leads to "the likelihood of the brain straying to sex" 3) economic reasons, including a 20-40% decrease in WFP rations; this also leads to early or forced marriages to obtain a brideprice.[225] He recommends that SGBV programs, first implemented in April 2000, should be made permanent and that informal solutions to GBV in cultural and family courts be discouraged or criminalized.

The report calls for less autonomy for NGOs and donor institutions in the camps, with increased input from the Government of Tanzania, as well as moving judiciary courts into camps and introducing mobile courts. It insists that the reduction of food rations is inhumane, and that refugee rights should be upheld. It also notes that refugees should be given a durable form of identity cards. Interestingly, it cites cases in which refugees need to convince tax collectors that they are not nationals. (174-6) Refugees living near game reserves should be able to harvest food in a legally controlled manner so that they can withstand food hardships and also so that they have a sense of responsibility to protect wildlife. (178)

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[224] SPRAA Report, pp. 133-4

[225] SPRAA Report pp. 172

I read this report before arriving in Nyarugusu, and returned to it in the course of writing up my field notes. It was striking that the recommendations contained within were not followed; they were simply repeated in many of the memos and subsequent annual and evaluation reports I could find. The question of environmental degradation, which framed the discipline of refugee studies in Tanzania, but also the way in which refugees were perceived, persisted in camp and interagency meetings. No steps were taken to address the structural conditions that necessitated firewood collection for survival. The narrative of culture-as-violent persisted. Despite the recommendation that employment opportunities be improved, the government of Tanzania had disrupted local economic practices by shutting down a common market and trying to curb "income generating activities." No doubt there were political reasons for this; nevertheless, it seemed almost farcical to me to see the same recommendations and assessments repeated ad infinitum, only to be ignored. Adam Branch has observed that humanitarians make their case for continuing operations no matter the outcome: if they fail, they must stay on to ameliorate the situation, if they are succeeding, they must stay to continue the successes.[226]

In an interview with the acting director of refugee services, I asked what the government's position was on refugee livelihoods in a protracted situation like this. He deflected my question with a short monologue on durable solutions. I then asked about the common market in the camp that had been shut down. He explained that the common market had been located just outside the camp. It was meant to be a place where Tanzanian villagers and refugees could meet to exchange goods, but also a point of encounter to "normalize relations" between the two. The market had been shut down because "it was considered to be a security concern to the authorities in Kigoma region," due to banditry and the movement of foreigners across the region. The narrative of refugees as security threat is certainly not limited to this particular situation, but colored popular perceptions and policy prescriptions alike.

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[226] Branch, Displacing Human Rights.

His next comments point to the role of aid agencies in coming up with new programs and the temporal uncertainties surrounding them: "I think one thing to be sure of, the concept of reopening the market has been brought about because of the positive impact that it had on the adjacent economies. And now that WFP is intending to go ahead with a distribution package that involves at least part of the distribution being paid as cash, so that the refugees can buy what they are not able to receive from WFP. And of course our recent discussion has also faced on the fact that, I mean it's something that WFP is still kind of undertaking a research on, of course in close consultation with UNHCR, also they are doing some consultation work, and I think they will come up with a report after that. But of course the idea, the way I think the idea is, I don't think it's going to be a built up area, unless the regions decide it to be that way, but I think the idea would be, it would continue to be an open market, where people come, whether it would be once or twice a week and they lay out their products and exchange. And as I said it's an area that is supposed to be adjacent to the refugee camp, at least a kilometer or so." I asked when the anticipated opening of the market would be. "The WFP I think… I don't remember the last time we met but I think it must have been some 2 or 3 months ago when we last met with the leadership from WFP. I think the intention was, if I'm not mistaken, they had hoped at least the research would take them the better part of 5 or 6 months, after which they would come up with a report, which means we are expecting anything before the end of March, they should be able to come up with…"

He then clarified that he had reservations about the way the camps were being managed now, because the camps had been "commercialized" and the fact that the camp had become "like a marketplace" meant the increased circulation of bodies that could threaten the safety of refugees. I interviewed the director in January of 2014. It took until mid 2016 for the common market to be reopened; this was after the massive influx of Burundian refugees. The new market – along with a new livelihood activities program. The cash transfer project, in initial stages of exploration at the time, has yet to be implemented. A new organization, Good Neighbors International, has taken over livelihood programs and the management of the common market.

A person has the right to talk and be heard

In late September of 2014, a visiting UNHCR representative conducted a field meeting on durable solutions. The meeting took place at the IRC compound, and comprised a mix of students, mothers, men, and women. The conversation reflected the frustration both aid workers and refugees felt surrounding resettlement. The general attitude amongst aid workers was to reiterate that resettlement was only for dire cases and was not a right. Many took action to discourage it, even taking the view that giving resettlement to victims of GBV and human compensation would only increase those practices in the camp. Starting off the meeting, he asks: "[Let's] talk about your needs and desires regarding self sufficiency and livelihoods. What kinds of trainings and activities would you like to see while we are working on durable solutions?"

The first person to answer does so confidently. “Give us money. We know what we need and we can get it. If I had my own money I would eat whatever I wanted.” Another responds: “I can go back home, but there are no conditions allowing my parents to go. I can’t go home while my parents are still here. It is hard to see what we need because we are in the condition of refugeehood.” The UNHCR representative replies: “It sounds like most of you are focused on resettlement, but it’s not always easy. Have you been thinking about what skills you need for a third country? Are you receiving any capacity building and would you like to?”

A mother responds: “Language is one of the challenges. Our culture is also totally different. We find a lot of things that hurt and shock us, especially with regards to our children. African morality is different.” She adds: “We need to develop various skills so we can make money abroad. For example, mothers should be taught how to weave baskets.” The translator doesn’t translate the part about baskets.

The UN representative asks what information they are getting about safety and security for voluntary repatriation. “We get news from the radio, especially for people from South Kivu. The safety situation is not good. Human rights in our area… People’s rights are not respected, rapes have increased… *a person has the right to talk and be heard*. We hear there are a lot of rapes and human rights violations. That indicates that peace is not there in South Kivu. Another thing that shows that the situation is not good is the status of the *Katiba*. The president wants a third term. This means that there won’t be safety. There’s an ongoing discussion about the constitution. The presidency is supposed to be for only two years, but now they want a third term."[227]

Another person stands up. "I'm 52. I've never in my life had peace or security. I've slept in the fields, gone to school amongst garbage. Like this child – how can I help him once I go home? It'll be like I'm abusing him. There's no safety. Where should I build my home when armed men are still present? Maybe the UN can advocate for the DRC. I ask you to push for peace in the DRC."

The UN representative turns to Fatima: "Have you mentioned the peacekeeping efforts? They know that there are other UN Agencies – this is I guess to suss out opinions about *solutions*." Turning back to the audience, he asks about their relationship to the local community. Their answer touches on the impossibility of local integration: "If we pursued citizenship, we don't have a problem. The Tanzanian government does. There are acts we don't want that are happening at home. *We want to be listened to*. We have no problem with the locals. The government policy is the problem because we are facing a lot of restrictions. We aren't given opportunities to speak or be heard outside the camp."[228]

Fatima interjects: "I'd like to hear the women comment on that." A woman from the local tribunal notes that they have no problem with the neighboring villages, but that they need help with schooling in English so that it isn't a problem when they get resettled in a third country. Another explains: "Congolese people ask for a place to farm, and pay for a local spot. But then they are betrayed when the Tanzanian takes their produce. So there's a quarrel (*mgogoro*) between us. For the most part we are okay, but there are some problems. Some are even killed – one man was killed after paying for a cow."

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[227] Emphasis added

[228] Emphasis added

Another woman explains how difficult daily tasks are. "We're refugees. We don't have trees or firewood so we have to walk to get it. We're beaten indiscriminately for cutting trees. You have to exchange soap or flour or soya [to access wood]." The woman next to her confirms: "Everyone who left Congo has problems. *You should talk to every person individually,* instead of making a group decision on us regarding repatriation. We're studying but our teachers are the problem. We're taught with carelessness. [Teachers] say they work too much and don't get paid enough. Please increase their salary. Education is the most important thing in life."[229]

A third woman laments: "When I've been told "We'll help you with third country resettlement" I'm perplexed as to why I'm being asked now why I like this option. So now I think that's my first choice – I didn't know that at the beginning. I didn't know I'd come to Tanzania, or that the government wants to help us like this."

Voice breaking, a slightly older woman adds: "We've been raped. We have cultural problems (*matatizo ya kimila*). *Please listen to us women*. I've been in three camps. They keep asking us this. Women who can't go home – we're traumatized. I think it's better to listen to women because they went through a lot during the war and in transit. If they think about the past they start crying. Why aren't people willing to go home? They were moved from camp to camp, and in the closing process they were given options. They followed the steps and haven't found a way to go home until now."[230] The UN representative, continuing in the dispassionate, matter of fact tone he has had throughout, concludes the meeting: "I have a much clearer picture of what you've explained. That's very helpful. Thanks for sharing."

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[229] Emphasis added. See also: Lynn Stephens, "The Rights to Speak and be Heard: Women's Interpretations of Rights Discourses in Oaxaca Social Movements," in Hodgson, Gender and Culture at the Limit of Rights. pp. 161-180.

The suggestion that the representative talk to every person individually gets at the heart of the refugee condition. Aside from pointing out the inconsistencies and opacity of humanitarian information, refugees insist that a condition of being human is to tell stories – to be *homo narrans*, to be heard, and to be listened to. Aware that they are treated as an indivisible whole, they nevertheless insist on the specificity of each family and each life, and make demands to be treated accordingly. These demands are met during case management for those who are perceived as having serious problems, but for many in the camp, being heard is a pipe dream. The next two chapters describe some of the stories told by refugees. They shed light on the conditions of encampment and how the constraints they face shape their outlook, ethical orientations, and understandings of being in the world.

Chapter 4: Ethical Behavior in Exile

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[230] Emphasis added

I had originally intended to do research on livelihoods programs in the camp. However, upon arrival I learned that such programs did not exist, or, if they did, were ineffectual. I turned my attention to the humanitarian operation itself, which I realized had elevated human rights education above traditional "humanitarian" responsibilities. It was by tracing the contours of this pedagogical project that I began to understand the field of possibilities for refugees, and how the imposition of new regimes of justice changed the social life-world of the camp and highlighted existing ethical imperatives as well as created new ones.[231] In a previous chapter I explained how camp residents understood that their traditions and practices had changed as a result of encampment, as well as how Nyarugusu was unlike most other refugee camps in its focus on teaching human rights. I argue that it is not just the condition of refugeehood, but the specific condition of encampment in Nyarugusu that significantly shapes people's ethical orientations.

The challenges of encampment demanded a particular kind of bodily and moral comportment – one whose rules emerged more clearly by looking at human rights work. I suggest that looking at everyday life, rights-talk, and activism provides insight into the ethical practices prevalent in Nyarugusu. Reflecting on the study of morality and ethics also helps us to move towards an understanding of violence in the camp. How are ethical subjects formed? Where can we locate ethics, and what do they look like? This chapter considers narratives from everyday life in the camp, in other words, the "same stories" that circulate about violence, danger, human rights, and humanitarian aid, in order to locate the ethical. It doubles down on Sylvia Wynter's insistence that the human is a storytelling animal: *homo narrans*.[232]

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[231] Though I did not conduct research in the DRC, I have drawn on narratives that describe certain practices, expectations, or ways of life in the Congo to understand the new demands placed on refugees in the camp.
[232] McKittrick, ed., Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis.

The Reality and the Record: Refugee Narratives

In Hassan Blasim's story "The Reality and the Record"[233] an asylum seeker describes his life to find refuge in Sweden. Blasim describes the performativity of narratives required to gain asylum: "Everyone staying at the refugee reception centre has two stories – the real one and the one for the record. The stories for the record are the ones the new refugees tell to obtain the right to humanitarian asylum, written down in the immigration department and preserved in their private files. The real stories remain locked in the hearts of the refugees, for them to mull over in complete secrecy. That's not to say it's easy to tell the two stories apart. They merge and it becomes impossible to distinguish them." The bureaucratic demand thrust on the individual to produce a coherent and credible narrative is apparent: the new refugee's stories are mostly untrue, sometimes have nothing to do with his request for asylum, and are wild and fantastic and full of horror, because he realizes that "What matters to you is the horror."

The story of the asylum seeker is revealing in two ways: it shows the double-edged potentiality of narrative production, and limns narrative as possession. The duality marked the interaction between aid agencies and camp residents in significant ways. An almost Kurtzian attitude towards anything pertaining to refugees permeates the entire apparatus designed to deal with them. The only thing that matters is suffering, and the ability to make it visible and compelling through a recognizable narrative. The necessity of a "good story" and the ability to tell it well was known in Nyarugusu. But a story couldn't be too good: aid officials often questioned the veracity of refugee narratives and complained that they were making up stories in order to access resettlement. An aid worker overseeing the verification exercise, himself a former refugee from Liberia, remarked: “refugees hold on to their stories. They tell you the same story over and over again. Because it’s the only thing they have.”[234] Indeed, this sameness was not restricted to narratives of asylum but inflected tales of everyday life and humanitarian failure in the camp. Literary theorist J. Hillis Miller suggests that “[we] need the “same” stories over and over, then as one of the most powerful, perhaps the most powerful, of ways to assert the basic ideology of our culture.”[235] The repetition of stories by camp residents signified both the humanitarian “refusal to see” as well as their claim to be acknowledged: to be seen, heard, and taken care of. In this chapter I examine some of the “same stories” told over and over – stories of witchcraft and danger - to provide insight into the condition of encampment, and look to refugee narratives as sites for understanding the emergence of new kinds of ethical imperatives.

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[233] Hassan Blasim, The Corpse Exhibition (Penguin, 2014); Blasim himself left Iraq to live in Finland.

What kinds of narratives should we look at? Studies of refugee situations often draw on narratives of the specific violence they have endured, and accounts of why or how they sought refuge or resettlement, that is, biographical narratives.[236] Drawing on Hannah Arendt’s notion that what makes human life fully human is that it can be narrated specifically in the form of a biography, Didier Fassin notes: “In the case of populations exposed to violence and injustice, narrating stories, which means telling lives, implies changing the politics of biological life to be rescued into a politics of biological life to be heard. Here again it is to make the others closer to oneself: they are not just bodies to be saved but individuals, and these individuals are not just passively inscribed in a story but possess a unique perspective on this story. In the move from biology to biography, politics is supposedly brought back to the victims of war and disasters."[237] Indeed, my respondents would often insist that they had the right to be heard (*haki ya kusikilizwa*).[238]

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[234] Field Notes, marginalia, 2014. J Hillis Miller, "Narrative," Critical Terms for Literary Study, ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990). Hillis Miller defines a narrative as that which contains an initial situation, a sequence leading to a change or reversal of that situation, and a revelation made possible by the reversal of situation, personification, and the repetition of key tropes.

[235] Miller, "Narrative." pp. 72

[236] On refugee narratives, see: Turner, Politics of Innocence: Hutu Identity, Conflict and Camp Life., Thomson, "Black Boxes of Bureaucracy: Transparency and Opacity in the Resettlement Process of Congolese Refugees.", Marita Eastmond, "Stories as Lived Experience: Narratives in Forced Migration Research," Journal of Refugee Studies 20.2 (2007), Maggie O Neill and Ramaswami Harindranath, "Theorising Narratives of Exile and Belonging: The Importance of Biography and Ethno-Mimesis in "Understanding" Asylum," Qualitative Sociology Review 2.1 (2006), Penny Johnson, "Tales of Strength and Danger: Sahar and the Tactics of Everyday Life in Amari Refugee Camp, Palestine," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 32.3 (2007).

However, as I gradually became familiar with Nyarugusu I decided to focus mainly on camp life and day-to-day happenings. I wanted to know more about the encounter between refugees and aid agencies. Given that human rights education structured everyday life in the camp so heavily, I draw on narratives broadly connected to human rights work. This is not to say that I did not elicit biographical narratives: in cases where someone's life work was explicitly tied to their identity in the camp, (for example, incentive workers who identified as human rights activists in the Congo) I asked them to tell me "their story." Some of these narratives appeared as a genre unto themselves, full of precise information about places and dates, down to specific days and hours. Others revealed a complex landscape of human rights intervention stretching across time and borders. Mostly, however, I asked about the experience of life in the camp and of seeking aid, and avoided asking why people were seeking resettlement, or what happened to them right before they left the Congo. In some cases, camp residents would offer up biographical narratives, relate moments from the past, or reflect on the condition of refugeehood. And naturally, over the course of getting to know some of my respondents, biographical details and life stories emerged organically in a patchwork and non-chronological fashion.

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[237] Feldman, ed., In the Name of Humanity: The Government of Threat and Care. . pp. 252

[238] Field notes, June 19, 2014.

These stories were naturally layered with the power dynamics of race and access; I was told, “any time people here see a white person, they think it’s about resettlement.”[239] Often, despite my insistence to the contrary and detailed consent forms, I was seen as someone who might be able to help with their cases (specifically with resettlement), and conversations would open with formal introductions (“My name is ---, case number ---, a native of ---”). As a consequence of the Congolese affinity for Bollywood movies, I often found myself answering questions about my life and country of origin (India). Mostly, however, I visited houses, refugee leadership offices, or aid agency outposts. I would ask questions about the camp and about the humanitarian operations, picking up on topics I had heard refugees talking about and asking about their experiences seeking services provided by aid agencies. I accompanied people at social gatherings, as they ran errands or went to make official requests. I also sat in on many official meetings and trainings. Some days I simply walked, both alone and in the company of other refugees, following the flow of everyday life and observing the camp. These ordinary moments framed by the infrastructure of the camp and the patterns of daily life revealed that violence and danger were intimately connected to ethics and not confined to the required humanitarian drama of teleological biographical narratives. All this is not to say that biographical narratives were not revealing – but that it is only by looking at them in the context of everyday life and other stories that we can begin to understand how people conceive of their lives.

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[239] Field notes, February 3, 2014

US-based researchers will be all too familiar with Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements. Originally designed to ensure ethical scientific and medical research involving human subjects, it extends to any research involving human subjects in any discipline. Part of adhering to IRB requirements meant that I had to clearly explain my research, the risks and benefits of participating, and obtain consent each time I interviewed a new person or group. This process, despite my carefully translated consent form and my best efforts at an uncomplicated explanation in Swahili, often confused my respondents. I explained that there would be no compensation beyond meals or tea, or what the purpose of the study was, and awkwardly dodged requests for help with their cases, given my experience with UNHCR. I told them that I was trying to understand their situation, and that I hoped that the eventual publication of my work would change minds about humanitarian policy, but was pessimistic about a significant impact. But they clearly understood that I was doing "*recherche*" for a "*these*," and knowing that it might ultimately be published and read, asked me to refer to them by specific names or include certain details that would help them to identify themselves in the text later on. I interpreted the IRB's ethical requirements as a narrative responsibility: to engage respectfully, to listen honestly, and to attempt to adequately describe the experiences and opinions that my interlocutors agreed to share with me.

Life in Exile: Between Nyarugusu and the DRC

In order to explain the social world within which ethical practices were located, it is helpful to locate both Nyarugusu and the DRC temporally, affectively and imaginatively. Most residents of the camp were from the Bembe tribe and had fled multi-pronged conflict in the South Kivu region in the eastern part of the DRC.[240] Many refugees had arrived under cover of night by boat, landing in Kiberizi near Kigoma. Their recollections of the DRC were tinged both by recent fighting as well as by the violence of prior regimes, whether Congolese or colonial.

The humanitarian apparatus that attributed sexual violence to Congolese tradition and the ongoing conflict in the Congo was able to do so by dehistoricizing it.[241] Though this dissertation is not concerned with the history of the conflict as an ethnographic analytic, it bears repeating that the conflict could not be reduced to its violent character, but was given shape to by local particularities, including political developments in neighboring Rwanda, Burundi, and Tanzania.[242]

Many of my respondents explained that problems in the Kivu began when Banyamulenge (who they perceived to be Rwandan) entered the Congo and settled in Bembe territory (despite the fact that they had lived there for over a century.) They had arrived in Nyarugusu following the war in 1996, when the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) invaded Congo to attack Hutu militia in hiding and replaced Mobutu Sésé Seko with Laurent-Désiré Kabila; some had arrived in 1998, after the Banyamulenge (ethnic Tutsis who had been armed by the RPF) formed a resistance to Laurent Kabila's government. They referred to these as the first and second wars, and to the conflict of the late 2000s as the third war (*vita vya kwanza, pili, na tatu*). Subsequently, the Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD) supported by the Rwandan government took Uvira and Bukavu in Eastern Congo, territory claimed by Rwanda.[243]

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[240] The majority strongly oppose the presence of foreign troops in RDC, particularly the Rwandan military, and generally support the Kabila government. They oppose the Congolese Rally for Democracy (Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie, RCD), a rebel movement that sided with Rwanda against the government in the early stages of the war in August 1998. However, a minority support the RCD's fight against Kabila's regime. See Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, *Democratic Republic of Congo: The situation of members of the Wabembe ethnic group in South Kivu, including the existence of a group called Emo Imbondo, whose objective is to remove the government, the Banyarwanda (Rwandans) and the rebels, so that peace may be restored to the region; whether two demonstrations were held in Baraka on 6 and 13 May 2004, respectively, and, if so, whether any of the demonstrators were arrested or killed (2004)*, 1 October 2004, RDC43027.FE, available at: http://www.refworld.org/docid/42df616928.html [accessed 14 March 2016]

[241] See also: Malkki, "Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization."

[242] Mahmood Mamdani, When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda (Princeton University Press, 2001)., especially Chapter 8, “Tutsi Power in Rwanda and the Citizenship Crisis in Eastern Congo;” David van Reybrouck, Congo: The Epic History of a People (New York: Harper Collins, 2014). pp. 411-414. See also: Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, The Congo from Leopold to Kabila: A People's History (London: Zed Books, 2002). On political violence, see also: Mahmood Mamdani, "Making Sense of Political Violence in Postcolonial Africa," Socialist Register 39.39 (2009), Branch, Displacing Human Rights, Daniel Hoffman, "Violence, Just in Time: War and Work in Contemporary West Africa," Cultural Anthropology 26.1 (2011), Patricia Daley, "Ethnicity and Political Violence in Africa: The Challenge to the Burundi State," Political Geography 25.6 (2006).

Life in the camp was also affected by the presence of a few thousand Burundian refugees who were unable or unwilling to be repatriated, the shadow of their presence in Mtabila and other Tanzanian settlements established in the 1970s (also rumored training grounds for Burundian Hutu militants in waiting) and subsequently by the arrival of tens of thousands more from 2015 onwards. Though almost all of the Congolese refugees in Nyarugusu were from a single region, Fizi, and many from its main town, Baraka, their lives were also no doubt influenced by events in the neighboring territories of Uvira, Maniema, Katanga, and to a lesser extent, Mwenga and Shabunda. Fizi in particular had been the site of a post-colonial rebel movement led by Laurent Kabila and organized in part from Kigoma.

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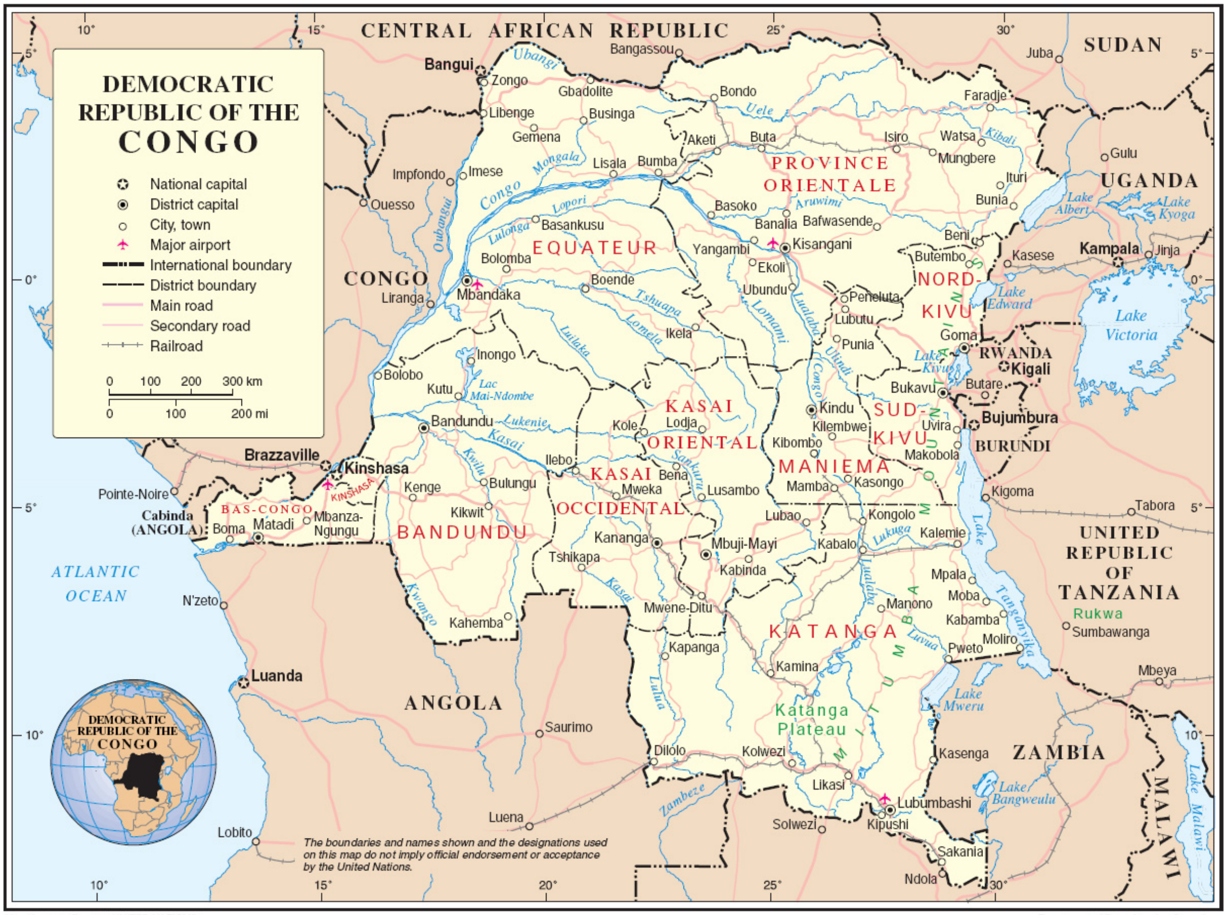
[243] This is, of course, a simple sketch of an extremely complex conflict. See: Mahmood Mamdani, Understanding the Crisis in Kivu: Report of the Codesria Mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo (Dakar: Council for the Development of Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA), 1997). Koen Vlassenroot and Timothy Raeymaekers, ed., Conflict and Social Transformation in Eastern Dr Congo (Ghent: Academia Press, 2004), Wamu Oyatambwe, De Mobutu À Kabila: Avatars D'une Passation Inopinée (Editions L'Harmattan, 1999), Stefaan and Oyatambwe Smis, Wamu, "Complex Political Emergencies, the International Community & the Congo Conflict," Review of African Political Economy 29.93-94 (2002), Gérard Prunier, Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe (Oxford University Press, 2008), Séverine Autesserre, The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding (Cambridge University Press, 2010).


DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
National capital
District capital
City, town
Major airport
International boundary
District boundary
Main road
Secondary road
Railroad
0 100 200 300 km
0 100 200 mi
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
SUDAN
UGANDA
RWANDA
BURUNDI
UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
ZAMBIA
MALAWI
ANGOLA
CONGO
Cabinda (ANGOLA)
ATLANTIC OCEAN
PROVINCE ORIENTALE
EQUATEUR
NORD-KIVU
SUD-KIVU
MANIEMA
KASAI ORIENTAL
KASAI OCCIDENTAL
BANDUNDU
BAS-CONGO
KINSHASA
KATANGA
Katanga Plateau
Kinshasa
Brazzaville
Bangui
Kampala
Kigali
Bujumbura
Luanda
Mbandaka
Kisangani
Goma
Bukavu
Kindu
Kananga
Mbuji-Mayi
Lubumbashi
Kolwezi
Likasi
Kalemie
Uvira
Bunia
Lake Tanganyika
Lake Victoria
Lake Kivu
Lake Edward
Lake Albert
Lake Mweru
Lake Bangweulu
Lake Malawi
Congo
Kasai
Lualaba
Ubangi
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Map No. 4007 Rev. 8 UNITED NATIONS
January 2004

Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Cartographic Section

Figure 4: Map of Democratic Republic of the Congo. Source: United Nations

Not far from the border, Nyarugusu registered simultaneously as a haven of safety and an extension of the violence brought to bear on their lives in the Congo. Many of the camp residents I spoke to claimed that they had fled what were "personal problems" (i.e. familial or community) rather than the war; some of these issues continued when both parties to a dispute found themselves in the same camp. Others suddenly found themselves face to face with their wartime persecutors.

Though it was impossible for me to accurately and fully trace the discursive world that informed the worldview of my colocutors prior to their arrival in Nyarugusu, a few historical traces are worth mentioning. In addition to the conflicts detailed above and the religious landscape of Sud Kivu that encompassed missions of various denominations (my interlocutors cited personal encounters with missionaries frequently) as well as indigenous churches like the *Kanisa la Wabembe,* anti-colonial struggle and national pride, the Katanga secession crisis, the social world of mining, and certainly the insurrection of the *Kitawala* (watchtower) movement, which organized labor protests and a revolt in Masisi in Kivu in 1944-45, contributed to the historical consciousness of those now in Nyarugusu.[244]

How did camp residents understand and think of violence – both colonial and post-colonial in the Congo?[245] Although my research did not explicitly focus on this question, it became clear that there was not a single story: violence was extractive, racialized, political, and familial. Refugees would often bring up colonial extraction, but also understood contemporary violence as being tied to the availability of resources. This was both because the Congo was rich in minerals and thus vulnerable to exploitation and contest over resources, but also because it lacked the capacity and infrastructure to process raw materials, and thus lacked money, and consequently, power. Most importantly, it was *regional*, caused by the interference of armed forces backed by neighboring governments and the arrival of those who were not perceived as originally Congolese. Others described it as a clash of religious, and ethical values, wherein they or their families had refused to help maji maji militia and were thus the targets of violence. More often though, when explaining their arrival in Nyarugusu, people indicated that they had fled because of familial problems (matatizo ya kifamilia). In some of these cases family problems were indeed unrelated to the conflict, but in others the violence seeped into domesticity, most commonly in marriage between members of different tribes. The conflict was also thus described in terms of how it frayed kinship relations, and directly caused the decline of community values due to exile. In the aftermath of seeking refuge, people in Nyarugusu also experienced and described violence as specifically humanitarian, whether in reference to UNCHR or MONUSCO (the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the DRC). In what follows I present a few of these narratives.

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[244] Nancy Rose Hunt, A Nervous State: Violence, Remedies and Reverie in Colonial Congo (Durham, N.C. : Duke University Press, 2016). pp. 170-171.

[245] It should be noted that many of the refugees in Nyarugusu had never even been to the Congo. Others came there as extremely young children. In 2013, approximately 22,000 children were in Nyarugusu primary schools. The schools in Nyarugusu followed the Congolese educational curriculum, and educators from the DRC would occasionally visit to conduct examinations and audits; children were to be educated in order to become proper citizens upon eventual return. For the younger generation in Nyarugusu, camp life was all they had ever known, and their understanding of violence was received as the lived experience of refuge and as tales from their elders.

Many of my respondents talked of the recent wars (*vita vya kwanza na wa pili*) in terms of national identity superimposed on tribal identity. They spoke of the Babembe and Banyamulenge; the latter being considered originally Rwandan. The terms Hutu and Tutsi were used very infrequently; it was more common that they spoke about regional interference. A camp resident who identified as a Mmasanze (and not as Mbembe) told me the following story about seeking refuge in Tanzania:

At the very beginning to flee the first war (*vita vya kwanza*), the first time I was a refugee (*ukimbizi wa kwanza*) was here in Nyarugusu. I was at C3 down there, and when I came I was there for a year [in 1996]… then I went back to the Congo. Then the war came back again with a vengeance, and I was forced to flee again. I fled because of the violence, not because of my politics. The first war was to topple Mobutu from power. It was a coup d'etat. Now at the time of the coup, it was the first war, people were resisting the coup, and President Kabila came with those people who helped him to fight (*waliomsaidia kupigana*). They were from neighboring countries, they were Rwandan and Burundian soldiers. They came to help him get Mobutu out of power, and when he'd done that, when they'd carried out the coup, he announced that all those guests (*wageni*) who came to help [him] had to go back, because he came with people who were from Rwanda and other countries. Now after he finished he told those that came to help him must go back home, but the people who came to see the Congo, and saw that it was like honey… you know when a person has already seen honey, do you understand? Ok, so when a person has had a taste, he sees it's delicious. And he says – it's delicious, give me more! (*laughs*).

So now when they came to see that the Congo was like honey, a beautiful country, with lots of wealth, they begin to think, we can't just leave the country. They refused to go back home, and started their own war. They said if it's like this, then it's better we struggle against this President Kabila - their father - let's get rid of him. The president said: you're guests, and you have to leave, but they said it was impossible, and that they too were children of the country now. There were many reporters, many who joined big groups, and when they joined they began to fight against their father (Kabila), they fought against him until it seemed like it was best to just let them be his children, because otherwise it would look like they invaded us. So the politics were like that, that they needed to be accepted as followers of Joseph Kabila Kabange, and it was they who put him in power. And then he was the one who had the politics to make it so that there was no strife amongst people, exchanging all the tribes so that they would be one. As in, so and so should not be a Mnyarwanda, so and so should not be a Mkongomani, or so and so is this or that, it should be that all people are Congolese. And staying or fleeing happened in the context of this violence."

He then proceeded to explain that Rwandans/Wanyamulenge were herders, and so would move in search of pastures. "You know, a Rwandan is a person who farms cattle, that's his livelihood. Now, his cows ordinarily graze around, you can move and farm somewhere even for a year, and there are times when you move and you see that there's no grass, so you move again, with your family and wife. There was a time when Wanyarwanda came and their cattle grazed in a place called Minembwe. They saw that Minembwe was nice and had nice weather, nice pastures… but now it's just rural, now the government… you know the Congo is so large, Tanzania and Rwanda can fit into it 18 times…. Congo is a big country and it doesn't have that many people, so those Rwandans just came and stayed in Minembwe, in the hills… you know, in the Congo there's no asking where so and so came from, where so and so went, who is so and so…. There's no discrimination (*ubaguzi*), so they stayed and fed their cattle there, and then they had children, and there started to be many of them, and they forgot to return home. They'd had children there, they got used to it, their children began to get married there itself, and they started to call themselves Wanyamulenge. Wanyamulenge because mulenge means mountain, and there is one called Mulenge, so they said, we shall be called Wanyamulenge."[246]

In September of 2014, a Tanzanian WLAC staff member handed me a letter sealed in a brown envelope. It was meticulously written, with a margin drawn in blue ballpoint with a ruler, dated, and addressed to me. The subject announced: The History of the Zone of Fizi. In numbered lists, it detailed the social organization of the region: 1) Collectivities (*kata*):

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[246] Recorded Interview, January 2014

Mutambala, Ngandja, Tanganyika, Lulenge. 2) Groupements (*vitongoji*): Basimukindje, Batombwe, Balala Sud, Basimukuna Sud, Babwari. It read: "I, Ebondo Theophile, come from collectivite (x), groupement (y), and village (z). If you search for me in this area, you will find information about me. Especially in my village." The letter ended with a request, and signed off: Ebondo Theophile, Defender of Human Rights (*mteteaji wa Haki za Binadamu*).[247]

A month earlier, Ebondo had finally opened up to me, sharing information about his human rights work. But before that, he told why he'd fled to Tanzania. He explained that his wife was originally from a different part of Congo than him – from Mboko. Her grandfather had refused to help the Maji Maji militia, so they killed him by tying him to a tree and shooting him. Her family fled to Nyarugusu, where her parents got a dowry to marry her to someone against her will. She eloped with Ebondo, and this caused a long-standing feud, because even though they were both Bembe, he was from a different village in Fizi. They tried asking her parents for forgiveness, but they refused, and she still gets harassed by them. Ebondo's grandfather was a church teacher and received many guests from all over. As a result, the Maji Maji thought he was collaborating with the Wanyamulenge. They lured him to their office and murdered him. He described obliquely how they had also attacked his mother. So, they fled. His mother had returned to the Congo as part of one of the voluntary repatriation plans, but was killed by the Maji Maji when they recognized her.[248]

Roland, a school teacher who had made his way through three refugee camps before arriving in Nyarugusu in 2009 explained that the conflict was regional and ethnically inflected.

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[247] Letter from Ebondo, September 23, 2014

[248] Field notes, August 4, 2014

“My story is very long. I fled problems… I don’t have parents, I’m all alone. I came to Tanzania in 2001. I was 15 years old. I came with others, after various things had happened. My whole family was killed. [Some people] came and helped me, and we came here to Tanzania as refugees. I came from Uvira. In the Congo, I came from a poor family. We didn’t have a lot. I am from South Kivu, from this area. I’m a Mrega. [There are] Warega, Washi, Wafulero, there are Wabembe, Wabuyu, Waabwari, Wanyamulenge, etc.

Me, you know, the problem is that, my family was affected a lot because of this war. The people who were fighting the war – the maji maji - a group who were fighting the army that came from Rwanda. Now, they didn’t have any help, they didn’t have anything, because those that were undertaking it were citizens. Now my family, especially my father, he refused because of his religious beliefs…. If you offer this contribution, it’s like you contributed to them. We’re Jehovah’s Witnesses. This is what caused problems for my family. Because they [the maji maji] were saying that more and more people were dying. Those people [their enemies] would chase you, in Katogota, Ibarika…. and in various places. So that we don’t keep dying it’s better that we organize ourselves. So they formed this group of maji maji. It was made up of citizens.

The conflict in the Congo… they way you all understand it, and the way it really is is different. The truth is that there are people who came years ago, Wanyamulenge, who came from Rwanda, from the war, in 1999. According to how our elders explained it to us, they came, they were given protection as refugees, but after years, they became like locals. They weren’t bothering people too much. They said that they came in 1959. The first group came in 1952. And they continued to arrive until the 1970s. Now, at the time of 1996, the war to overthrow Mobutu started. People themselves joined hands because they were tired of Mobutu. Now, this group, Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda, they started to control areas through the Wanyamulenge. They even brought cows, they gave them farms of citizens, and the cattle came. And locals suffered from being forced out and killed. They found that these people - groups that are largely within their tribe - were killing. The violence was about tribes controlling areas. It's about land. The conflict there is about ethnicity and controlling areas; about land. That is, Rwanda, Uganda Burundi, These three. They wanted to send Wanyamulenge, the tribe that belongs to them, that's related to them, to control these areas… that's what the citizens were saying earlier. So to combat this, citizens formed the maji maji. Like in Uvira, my home, we saw how the soldiers crossed over from Burundi and Rwanda, we saw it. That's the source of the violence. It came to the point that whoever refused to contribute [to this struggle] became an enemy. My family was affected because of this. Because every family was giving. And this was an agreement amongst the leaders of the villages. So I ran.

You see, the violence in the Congo started because Congolese Tutsis (*Wakongomani wa asili ya kiTutsi*) were being abused (*wananyanyaswa*). I think that's the way it's mostly described in the reports of the UN. But when the war started… we started to see that people – from the morning until the night! – were coming from Rwanda, from where all. Only young men! (*whispers*) They were entering. Then, we saw that the war was starting. Now, after this, and this is what caused most of the problems in the Congo, every time there was a conflict, those Congolese of Tutsi origin were helping those who were coming from where? From outside. Now why were other Congolese feeling hatred towards them? Every time we were invaded, when war happened, it was those others that were joining up with people from outside. It was our people who were losing our property and wealth, our people who were dying, our people who couldn't advance because we were in a state of war. So what did this bring? Conflict.

Truth be told, at one point I believed that perhaps it was foreigners or people from Western countries who are bringing the war. But these days I've begun to learn that war was caused internally. The war comes from the ongoing [unintelligible] of ethnic groups. When I reached the camp I did my own personal research about ethnicity. I communicated with a lot of Congolese of Tutsi origin, and others. I realized that they just hated me. They didn't want to talk to me. Here in the camp. Then I asked my friends of Tutsi origin: Why, every time there is a war, do you join up with those others? And they answered that they joined them in order to rule (*kutawala*). You hear? 'We joined them in order to rule.' I said, don't you all want us to defeat them? That means the war wouldn't end. So I understood. When the RCD war [Here he was referring to the political party and former rebel group Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie (Rally for Congolese Democracy) supported by the Government of Rwanda and active during the Second Congolese war], was going on, everything was owned by them. And some of the people were moved from their homes, and they were put into peoples' homes. But when the government began, they started to be returned back home. They want to rule over all the areas…and if they rule, they would seek to divide the country… and the country would be divided according to ethnicity. And United Nations thinks that it's them who has been oppressed more. Congolese of Tutsi origin. Those who came to the Congo – refugees from Uganda and Rwanda because the situation there was too bad. But they came and stayed. But after these events, I'm not going to deceive you, it will be difficult for Congolese to catch them and return them to Uganda or Burundi or Rwanda…So the way that United Nations and other countries understand the conflict is different from the way it actually is there.

[*Here he described his experience fleeing Uvira; I have omitted this testimony of the personal experience of extreme violence*]. Some of the maji maji were fighting with those who came from Rwanda. The maji maji were mainly fighting so that those others would leave, so that the citizens would have a chance to save themselves…. Because those others who came, they had a plan, they killed many, many people, so that the population would decrease, and their numbers could increase. They kept bringing [their own] people, and giving them farms, cattle, pastures were eaten.... now if you're a citizen, and [if you say anything,] they'll just kill you. If the maji maji saw that the cattle were ruining the fields of citizens… they would check if cattle were grazing. If there were cows there, the conflict would begin… because those maji maji would capture them, as the defenders of the people and their property. They're just citizens. They have no relation to the government, and they support themselves, they don't have external help… Now, the problem is that there were other maji maji groups that aligned themselves with Rwandans…because, at the time of negotiations so that they could pass again, it was like the maji maji were blocked. But the maji maji back home in general caused a lot of conflict…. the conflict there was caused by "ethnocentric ideas…" Ethnocentric ideas are what raise land issues (*ethnocentric ideas ndio naleta ardhi*) and cause land [problems.] Why do I say that? I say that because those people that are Wanyamulenge or of Tutsi origin, they would like to own that area, so that it's theirs….so they did everything so that the people already in that region would be driven from that land. The people who were from there said – this is our land and we were originally here. Now how will we live? You farm your food – people depend on farming in the Congo – and cows come and eat the food. (*laughs*) now how will you survive?

So the problems in the Congo those days, it's because of these three issues: the first, the struggle there, ethnocentric ideas in that area. The second reason comes from neighboring countries… Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda came up with the idea to capture these areas…. Burundi would take Uvira, Rwanda would take North Kivu, Uganda would take it's part. That's how they fight. It came to the point where Rwanda and Uganda were fighting in the Congo because of these problems. And they really ruined things. The people who were affected were the Congolese in those areas. [Because of] every group of a different origin that came from outside (*ugenini*), the Congolese people were affected, You won't hear about Burundi or Rwanda… you won't hear that they were attacked in Uganda or they went to attack Burundi or Rwanda. No. It's there [in the Congo] itself. The girls from [the Congo] are being raped, property from there is being ruined, people from there are becoming refugees… that means our neighboring countries don't like us…. Everything that happened happened in the Congo. The third reason, I'm not sure, but there are big companies from foreign countries outside the Congo, that support those countries so that they can get minerals. But I think… Congolese are very simple people! If we're protected... you can take the minerals! That's it! Without people dying. And there are people who don't have anything!"[249]

Camp life also facilitated the development of retrospective understandings of the conflict. Though a large part of the camp was composed of children who had either lived in the Congo at a very young age or had never been there at all, parents and elders frequently related stories of violence back home. Elders spoke extensively of a world ruled by community values and hierarchies in the Congo, explaining the role of chieftains and community arbitration to resolve conflicts and govern social life there. Speaking of the Bembe way of life, they explained that community discussions amongst elders and tribe leaders determined the outcome of conflicts. "Ruling is about culture and tradition…. I've been told – "oh, aren't you a *mwami,* advise your people!" But then UNHCR says, tribal leadership (*utemi*) isn't for here, it's for your home only." But then again they tell me to advise my people. Bembe…We've been left with only one thing – to advise our children… Here [in the camp], we don't have any authority. Authority belongs to zone leaders, and cluster leaders. The values here are changing. There are early pregnancies and rapes. In our culture, if you rape, you'll be killed. If you have two-three abortions, people know that you are a damaged person. Everyone sits and discusses things, the world teaches [that person] and they die. Now, the organizations say that this is violence. So we just stay silent. All we're left with is giving advice. We know that when we go back home, we'll build a chief's house (*lubunga)* with two doors, and we'll make things better." They explained that it was the chief (*mwami*) who had authority. "If you're a guest, you have to go there first, for protection. If we live with someone who isn't Bembe, we marry their kids, we go with them to the *lubunga*. We can't deal with matters of the kingdom. Only the chiefs can go inside…. The chief allocates land for building. He is the only one who can decide. He can ask everyone to bring food for the guest to be able to eat. After the guest has rested for a week, they'll give him a place to farm – one or two hectares. They don't let anyone starve."[250] The *mwami* had authority not only in matters of community arbitration (including matters of crime, wrongdoing, kinship, and other issues), but also in overseeing the distribution of land and resources.

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[249] Interview with Roland, June 23, 2014

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[250] Field notes, June 11, 2014

Elders felt that camp life had changed things for their children. “I realize that people have already got a different culture from that of the DRC. The youth just do whatever they want. Things that aren’t in accordance with our culture… people don’t respect us [leaders/*mwami*] here 100% because we can’t do much here. The morals have been changed.” Some elders related the trauma of the war to receptivity to new ideas. A former chief explained what the experience of war and exile had meant: “If you have people close to you, you won’t be able to give them your [moral] values, because there are different values where you have arrived. Moral values are mixing. Children don’t know which set of values to follow!” Another added: “Our moral values have been swept away… if we had even a quarter of our authority, we could build good morals again. But it would take time. We’ve ben here for 18 years – it’s like starting afresh.”[251]

Witchcraft had been an important tool in violent conflict; my respondents described magic that made them invisible from combatants who sought to harm them, impervious to bullets, or rendered them invincible or unkillable.[252] One respondent explained that the *mai-mai* militia (fighting against the Banyamulenge) were named so because they sprinkled magical water (*maji*) on themselves to give themselves special powers in conflict.[253] Some of the refugees in the camp had previously been a part of such militias; some willingly and others, especially children, who had been kidnapped and conscripted, unwillingly.

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[251] This paragraph draws on Field notes, June 11, 2014

[252] Field notes, February 13 and February 20, 2014; James Price and Paul Jureidini, Witchcraft, Sorcery, Magic, and Other Psychological Phenomena and Their Implications on Military and Paramilitary Operations in the Congo (Washington D.C. : Special Operations Research Office; Counterinsurgency Information Analysis Center, 1964).

[253] Field notes, February 13 and February 20, 2014

Lisa Malkii's classic study of Burundian Hutu refugees in Tanzania showed how refugees in settlements constructed a mythico-historical narrative of national belonging and returns, whilst urban refugees attempted to assimilate into Tanzanian society.[254] Though Nyarugusu was configured quite differently, specters of the Congo similarly haunted everyday life. Continuity between spaces was maintained in other ways, for example through the schooling system, which followed Congolese curricula and regulations.[255] These attempts, as well as others like holding parades for Congolese societies or celebrating Congolese Independence Day, were intended to discipline refugees in preparation for their eventual repatriation.

They were also meant to educate the large number of children in the camp about their identity, as well as to remind adults "where they came from." Despite the number of activities geared towards preparing refugees for repatriation, many do not see this as a possibility, because they do not believe that there will be peace and stability in the DRC. Among refugee leaders, return was spoken of as an abstract possibility rather than a real outcome. Regardless, visions of the Congo suffused life in Nyarugusu.

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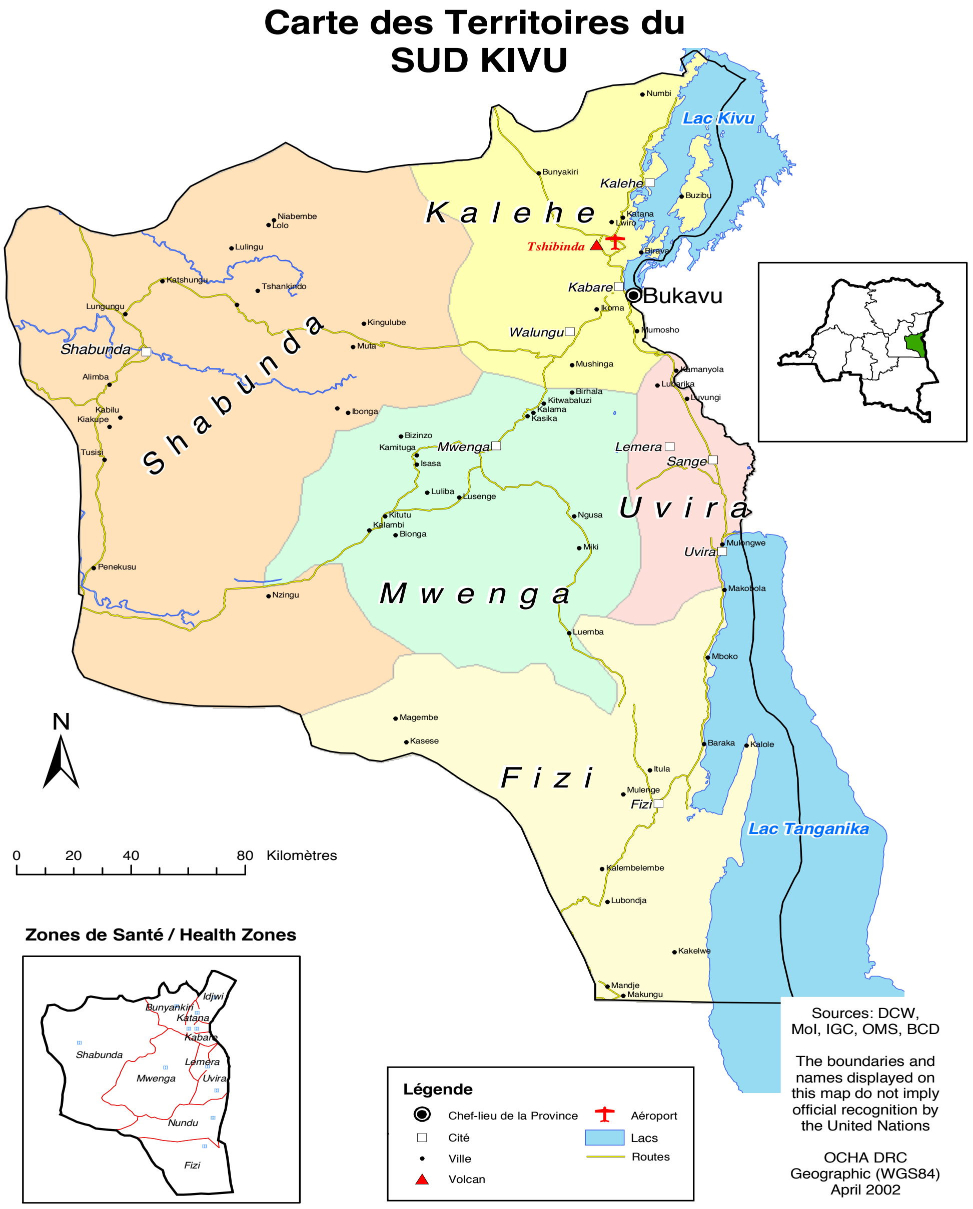
[254] Malkki, Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania.

[255] See Marion Fresia and Andreas Von Känel, "Beyond Space of Exception? Reflections on the Camp through the Prism of Refugee Schools," Journal of Refugee Studies (2015). The article discusses how education reflected the attempt to remake refugees as ideal citizens eventually able to reintegrate into their country of origin.


Carte des Territoires du
SUD KIVU
Lac Kivu
Numbi
Bunyakiri
Kalehe
Buzibu
K a l e h e
Katana
Lwiro
Tshibinda
Birava
Kabare
Bukavu
Ikoma
Walungu
Mumosho
Mushinga
Kamanyola
Luberika
Luvungi
Birhala
Kitwabaluzi
Kalama
Kasika
Niabembe
Lolo
Lulingu
Katshungu
Tshankindo
Lungungu
Kingulube
Muta
Shabunda
S h a b u n d a
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Kiakupe
Ibonga
Tusisi
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Mulenge
Fizi
Lac Tanganika
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Kilomètres
Kalembelembe
Lubondja
Kakelwe
Mandje
Makungu
Zones de Santé / Health Zones
Idjwi
Bunyankiri
Katana
Kabare
Shabunda
Lemera
Mwenga
Uvira
Nundu
Fizi
Légende
Chef-lieu de la Province
Cité
Ville
Volcan
Aéroport
Lacs
Routes

Sources: DCW,
MoI, IGC, OMS, BCD

The boundaries and
names displayed on
this map do not imply
official recognition by
the United Nations

OCHA DRC
Geographic (WGS84)
April 2002

Figure 5: Map of South Kivu. Source: UN OCHA

The possibility of return was temporally suspended and complicated by the apparent instability of the camp itself. For years, the Tanzanian government had been working towards becoming a refugee-free country. The last of the Burundian refugees had been repatriated from

Mtabila. The Director of Refugees in the Ministry of Home Affairs noted that this process had been difficult and prolonged over 4 years, but described it as "the most successful operation in the history of UNHCR."[256] He described how reluctant camp residents had been to leave and how the Tanzanian government actually considered using force, though in the end it was simply a case of "gunpoint diplomacy." In the course of closing the camp, to force people out, schools and other essential services had been shut down for up to three years; people lived not knowing when or whether they would be forced to return to Burundi. Many of Nyarugusu's current residents had already experienced life in other camps, including Mtabila, and a number of them spoke of the role of force, coercion, and denial of services in closing that camp. Given these experiences, there was a lot of uncertainty around whether Nyarugusu too, would be shut down. A census had been carried out in Mtabila prior to closure, and Nyarugusu residents worried that the current verification exercise foreshadowed the same thing.[257]

Camp residents invoked Congo as the country of "milk and honey" (*nchi ya maziwa na asali*), the site of immense natural beauty and prosperity, but equally as a place of lawlessness and war. Many refugees associated nighttime with danger and violence, and though the camp was isolated and far from the Congo-Tanzania border, it was considered quite porous, not least because people had the ability to transport themselves using the dark arts ("*kitu cha giza giza*"). Women claimed that combatants came from the Congo to rape them in the night. Others told me that relatives visited once darkness had fallen. They travelled by standing naked in a winnowing basket, or by disguising themselves as goats.[258] There were also camp residents who had "lost" their refugee status or were unregistered to begin with, and freely traveled between the camp and the DRC. Thus the danger from "back home" persisted day and night in the camp, circulating as tales of caution or gossip amongst refugees. Information was highly valued in the camp, but so too were such stories.

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[256] Interview with Acting Director of the Department of Refugee Affairs, Tanzanian Ministry of Home Affairs. January 10, 2014.

[257] Radio Kwizera broadcast, 2014. (Undated Archive)

Camp life had reworked social structures in many ways. The physical layout and location of the camp, along with Tanzanian government and aid agency imposed regulations and programs had restructured important institutions and relationships relating to authority, community, marriage, work, gender relations, justice, and even historical understanding. Exile had brought different communities in contact with one another; indeed, refugees often cited this as a source of difficulty and confrontation.[259] Whereas in the Congo villages might be isolated and relationships within communities were established, camp life meant proximity with unknown people from different tribes, villages, and regions. Not knowing the web of relationships within which these strangers were embedded meant that distrust and conflict could easily arise. Some even claimed that they were being persecuted or denied medical treatment on the basis of their ethnicity.[260] It was this context of relative insecurity, persistent violence, opacity, frustration, and scarcity that refugees had to navigate daily.

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[258] Of course, these stories are not unique to Nyarugusu or the DRC, but circulate in various forms in sub-Saharan Africa. Within the context of the camp, though, narratives about resettlement and refuge were bound up within tales of witchcraft and danger.

[259] Field notes, February 20, 2014

[260] Field notes, November 19, 2013

Daily life in Nyarugusu involved colossal struggles; the precarity of refugees and of the camp dictated the ways in which one had to navigate the most banal tasks, and bodily habits and ways of carrying oneself. Usually women did the heavy lifting, with babies strapped to their bodies, carrying clothes, pots and pans, and water buckets to the pumping stations. Obtaining biweekly food rations meant waiting in long lines rain or shine, then carrying heavy sacks quite a distance. Refugees also struggled with cooking these rations, often risking sexual assault or police violence to collect firewood, an increasingly difficult task due to deforestation. Getting a meeting with a protection officer or a GBV worker involved multiple visits to offices and long hours of waiting. Getting an official permit to exit the camp, for example to buy something in nearby Kasulu, required that one arrive at the Ministry of Home Affairs early in the morning, often multiple days in a row and present passport photographs, themselves nearly impossible to obtain. All of these activities required camp residents to navigate the barren terrain of Nyarugusu often. People lacked adequate footwear, with the most common shoe being a plastic slipper with two straps and no sole traction. In the rainy season, people learned to walk differently, taking a step and twisting the planted foot to avoid getting stuck in the mud or slipping, like a slow, careful dance. I point this out not to underscore the obvious fact that life in a refugee camp entails hardships, but to lay out the conditions under which people persevered to improve their lot.

Ethical behavior in Exile:

Given these conditions, how might we understand ethical life in the camp? Both the concepts of “forms of life” (Wittgenstein) as well as “live forms” (Biehl) suggest that life is constantly under construction.[261] These two formulations are also what allow us to move beyond assumptions about ethical behavior, since they draw our attention to what is actually happening in peoples' lives; to from the framework within which they see the world to the possibilities opened up by self-authorship. But how do we define ethics, where should we look for ethical behavior in this very specific situation, and what is it?[262] I follow Webb Keane's broad definition of ethics, which refers to how one should behave in relation to oneself and others.[263] I also follow his insight about tacit and explicit ethical stances – that awareness is not a precondition for ethics, but can be productive. In what follows I will sketch the conditions of encampment and the role played by human rights in generating certain ethical orientations. Given the ostensibly transitory nature of camp life, the uncertainty surrounding the possibility of resettlement, and the constant change in circumstances, this work is inevitably always incomplete. However, in Nyarugusu – as indeed in many other places - something very particular limns the site of the ethical: danger. This danger I refer to is manifold. It encompasses pain, suffering, and loss - of life, resettlement status, limbs, family members, property, prosperity, love, and potentiality. I suggest we pay more attention to risk and danger as an analytic for where ethical behavior might emerge, and to what kind of awareness they prescribe.

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[261] Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, trans. G.E.M Anscombe, 3nd ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967). João Biehl, "Ethnography in the Way of Theory," Cultural anthropology 28.4 (2013).

[262] These are some of the questions that have animated recent debates in the anthropology of ethics. See also: Veena Das Michael Lambek, Didier Fassin, and Webb Keane, Four Lectures on Ethics: Anthropological Perspectives (Chicago: HAU Books, 2015), Joel Robbins, "Value, Structure, and the Range of Possibilities: A Response to Zigon.," Ethnos 75.2 (2009), Jarrett Zigon, "Phenomenological Anthropology and Morality: A Reply to Robbins," Ethnos 74.2 (2009), Michael Lambek, "On the Immanence of the Ethical: A Response to Michael Lempert, 'No Ordinary Ethics.," Anthropological Theory 15.2 (2015), Michael Lempert, "No Ordinary Ethics," Anthropological Theory 13.4 (2013).

[263] Michael Lambek, Four Lectures on Ethics: Anthropological Perspectives. pp. 133

The conditions of precarity – material, economic, familial, and biological – in the camp necessitated an ongoing and daily recalibration through which ethical dispositions emerged. The fact that humanitarian policies were subject to change (for example, in the reduction or unavailability of rations, or assigning women as the head of household for ration cards) was a source of confusion and required that people familiarize themselves with new regimes constantly. The disappointments of everyday life were contained in the failure to adequately access aid services, the delay of casework, denied appeals and rescheduled interviews for protection and resettlement. Furthermore, though oriented towards the temporal closure and rebirth that would be a result of being approved for resettlement, refugees faced uncertainty at every stage, not least because the process itself introduced new variables and dangers into their lives. But as much as the camp shaped peoples' attitudes and comportment, as much as life was indeed constantly under construction, people acknowledged doing the work of ethical self-formation[264] while also recognizing others (and sometimes themselves) as having a fixed disposition. Camp residents also had to contend with two different orders: the present (and future) of life in the camp or in a third country, and the past in the Congo that bled every which way, inflecting the present, reconfiguring itself, and creating new potentialities. Life in the Congo was not the life they had now, but it would never go away.

Witchcraft and poisonings were common in the camp, and a source of fear and uncertainty. Danger, darkness, jealousy, and lack of education were seen as generative of ill-will and harmful acts towards others. All this was augmented by the saturation of everyday life by what I call "human rights work" – the prescriptive and dialogic deployment of human rights language. The following sections describe two everyday situations in which we can discern ethical self-recognition. The first focuses on ways of being "good" in the camp. The second focuses on a human rights training aimed at making women better defenders and bearers of human rights. I describe this as an everyday situation because of the ubiquity of human rights training in the camp and the ways in which it is omnipresent in and structures everyday life.

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[264] In the Aristotelian/Foucauldian sense.

Being Good: Fear and Danger in Nyarugusu

Scholarship on witchcraft has placed it at the intersection of global forces and local particularities and shown how it can be used to critique political configurations of power, wealth, and exploitation or even attain wealth in the face of inequality.[265] In East Africa, scholars have shown how modernization gave rise to anti-witch vigilantism, or how village communities have come to see witchcraft as the antithesis of development.[266] Others have argued that it is, in fact, a response to modern phenomenon.[267] Tanzanian scholar Simeon Mesaki has written about how witchcraft came to be seen as a relic of "tradition" and discusses the failure of the state to adequately deal with the problem of witchcraft and, contra anthropological writings that have sought to associate witchcraft with the modern, has written of commercialized anti-witchcraft services as an effort to realize modernization.[268]

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[265] Jean Comaroff and John L Comaroff, Modernity and Its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa (University of Chicago Press, 1993), Jean Comaroff and John L Comaroff, "Occult Economies and the Violence of Abstraction: Notes from the South African Postcolony," American ethnologist 26.2 (1999).

[266] R.G. Abrahams, ed., Witchcraft in Contemporary Tanzania (Cambridge: University of Cambridge African Studies Center, 1994), James Howard Smith, Bewitching Development: Witchcraft and the Reinvention of Development in Neoliberal Kenya (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

[267] Peter Geschiere, The Modernity of Witchcraft: Politics and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa (University of Virginia Press, 1997).

[268] Maia Green and Mesaki Simeon, "The Birth of the "Salon": Poverty, "Modernization," and Dealing with Witchcraft in Southern Tanzania," American Ethnologist 32.3 (2005), Simeon Mesaki, "Witchcraft and the Law in Tanzania," International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology 1.8 (2009).

Others have argued that the theory of witchcraft works as the (external) threat of vengeance for wrongs that have been committed, instead of an internal consciousness of guilt.[269] Many of these aspects are true of witchcraft in the camp.[270] Refugees I spoke with about witchcraft indicated that it stemmed from a lack of education and development – or because others did not want them to advance in life, whether morally or materially. Sometimes they referred to "science" as "Western witchcraft," drawing a parallel between separate kinds of knowledge as being on equal footing – just different ways of knowing and being in the world. Once, when I explained that I had been talking to some refugees about witchcraft, Kombe, who had a master's degree in psychology, remarked on the fact that I would naturally be interested in it. "Anthropologists like that sort of thing," he said with a smile.[271] Kombe was right in pointing out the way in which anthropologists have tended to focus on explaining witchcraft. My intent here is not so much to "explain" witchcraft but to show how it demarcates certain kinds of acceptable behavior in the camp, as well as a way of knowing the world. I follow Elias Bongmba in thinking about witchcraft in terms of ethics, though there are limits in espousing the Levinasian philosophy that underpins his argument.[272]

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[269] Eytan Bercovitch, "Mortal Insights: Victim and Witch in the Nalumin Imagination," The Religious Imagination in New Guinea, ed. Gilbert Herdt and Michele Stephen (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989). On witchcraft as an ordering principle, see: Edward E Evans-Pritchard, Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande, vol. 12 (Oxford London, 1937).

[270] For an overview of witchcraft in anthropology and history, see Ronald Hutton, "Anthropological and Historical Approaches to Witchcraft: Potential for a New Collaboration?," The Historical Journal 47.2 (2004). UNHCR considered witchcraft as a potential human rights issue. Jill Schnoebelen, Research Paper No. 169: Witchcraft Allegations, Refugee Protection and Human Rights: A Review of the Evidence (UNHCR, 2009).

[271] Field notes, June 23, 2014.

[272] Elias Kifon Bongmba, African Witchcraft and Otherness: A Philosophical and Theological Critique of Intersubjective Relations (SUNY Press, 2001). Bongmba focuses on witchcraft in Cameroon.

The following two chapters thus take up the question of witchcraft and what it can tell us about life in a post-conflict, humanitarian situation. Andrew Apter has written about how witchcraft amongst Congolese refugees in a camp in Zambia came about as a result of repatriation and the importance of matrilineal kinship.[273] In Nyarugusu, resettlement, rather than repatriation, engendered witchcraft and accusations of witchcraft. This chapter focuses on narratives of witchcraft – and its imbrication within a context of human rights work - to illuminate questions about ethics.

Some theorists distinguish between morality as submission to social rules and obligations and ethics as the practice of freedom.[274] My observations from Nyarugusu show otherwise: implicated in multiple orders of obligation, subject to expectations from a number of fronts, and in constant contact with all of these and one another, Nyarugusu residents had to figure out exactly how to behave in a shape-shifting terrain. And we can take a familiar concept often mistaken as self-evidently "ethical" or "moral" – "goodness" - to show that things are not always what they seem.

A certain kind of proper behavior was acceptable and encouraged in the camp. This required an ongoing process of assessment of one's environment and interlocutors to determine appropriate behavior, owing in part to issues of trust and the threat of violence. (I am not suggesting a total absence of social norms, expectations or any kind of collective understanding. I am simply saying that each situation demanded its own particular ethical response.) Getting along with everyone and being agreeable were desired qualities. But being good for society – or even being good to others – could have disastrous consequences. Acts of goodwill, whether aimed at other individuals or towards bettering society as a whole often led to trouble.[275] The following narratives from the camp will clarify what I mean. Though the fears encapsulated within peak at certain moments, they saturate daily lives, requiring a heightened awareness and self-discipline.

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[273] Andrew Apter, "Matrilineal Motives: Kinship, Witchcraft, and Repatriation among Congolese Refugees," Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 18.1 (2012).

[274] Veena Das, Michael Jackson, Arthur Kleinman, Bhrigupati Singh, ed., The Ground Between: Anthropologists Engage Philosophy (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014). pp. 7

Early on in my fieldwork I became acquainted with Kagabo.[276] His parents had fled Burundi for the Congo, where he lived until the age of 13. Orphaned in that conflict, he sought refuge for the second time in Tanzania. Now in his mid-thirties, he had married, fathered four children and become a born-again Christian. He had been appointed a *sungu sungu* officer in the camp and took his work very seriously. His very appointment was a sign that the community perceived him as “neutral” and thus harmless, especially given that he was Burundian and not Congolese. He usually worked night shifts and would often tell me stories of mysterious events after dark – people arriving and disappearing suddenly, humans visiting disguised as goats, strange noises. Kagabo was also worried about poisonings, given that he was part of the Burundian minority in the camp, and had instructed his children not to play outside unsupervised or accept food from anyone. He himself only ate food at home, often refusing food from others despite great hunger. In the course of offering him water, I discovered his religious beliefs dictated that he consume a liter of water each morning. I asked whether he was refusing out of politeness or if he felt he could not trust me. At this point he laughed, saying that I had no reason to harm him, since I was not from the camp. He mentioned that when the nearby Burundian camp of Mtabila had been shut down and they were moved here, he had been warned by camp residents and humanitarian workers about the dangers of Congolese witchcraft.

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[275] Field Notes, June 23, 2014

[276] I asked him what pseudonym he would prefer me to use. He chose Kagabo, which means “little man,” and explained that the connotations of humanness were meaningful to him, and that since he was short in stature but strong, it was a befitting name. On another occasion, he described it as “someone who is small but sometimes courageous.”

Kagabo also considered it extremely important to get along well with everyone and would go to great lengths to be perceived as a trustworthy person. He maintained good relations with everyone because he didn't want his kids to suffer in future.[277] He constantly emphasized this in his conversations with me, highlighting his diplomacy as well as his drive for self-improvement. He often boasted about his ability to read people well, and joked me with about analyzing me. Once, he told me how he had been unjustly accused of hiding weapons and imprisoned. He winced as he related the traumatic memory of having been unfairly punished and beaten. Even so, he had taken the punishment without complaint. The person who had accused him was a neighbor, and Kagabo was determined not to upset the balance since he had to continue living in the community, and swallowed his pride and anger.[278] He had taught himself some English by studying from a dictionary he shared with a friend, and asked me for a Spanish textbook, both in anticipation of resettlement in the US as well as out of a curiosity for learning. His big dream was to go to school and get an education, and he was always looking to increase his knowledge, insisting that our conversations were a learning opportunity. The conditions of the camp had structured his outlook on how to steer clear of conflict and danger, and he reevaluated his context and behavior frequently. At the same time, he attributed these changes to his character. When I asked why people would curse or poison someone, like many others, he explained that they might do it out of jealousy, ignorance, or a lack of education, but also claimed that it was in their nature to do so (*tabia yao*) or that this was just the way they were (*wako hivi tu*).

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[277] Field notes, February 19, 2014

[278] Field notes, February 23, 2014

A Congolese rights worker based in Dar – who had received a rare permit to work outside Nyarugusu - insisted that attacks were carried out because of jealousy. "I'm afraid of [poison]. If you have status in the community or you are trying to uplift the family, or you have a high education, if you go to a bad person, he can poison you. It's because there are so few opportunities – people are jealous (*uivu*). Jealous in a bad way. Because you can be jealous in a good way." He continued: "Darkness can lead someone to think of bad things. When it's completely dark… (*he trailed off*). When the rain is so heavy that you are not even sure if your house can resist, it can lead to a bad dream – to someone living in fear."[279] Here, the unpredictability of the environment and the weak structural conditions of the camp – houses constructed from sun-dried mud bricks and UNHCR plastic sheeting covered by thatched roofs – intersect with social dangers to create a climate of fear.

Almost everyone in the camp I spoke to was afraid of both poison and witchcraft, especially a kind of witchcraft specific to the Bembe community called "*Mlambo*."[280] *Mlambo* was an ever-present threat in the camp, and stories of *mlambo* were the "same story". A particularly dangerous kind of witchcraft, it struck its victims on the limbs, typically the lower legs or feet. Once struck by *mlambo*, one might be unable to walk, or, more commonly, would develop a wound that slowly grew in size and was usually black. *Mlambo*, like other types of bewitching, was identifiable as such because its wounds would not respond to allopathic medical treatment. It was linked to its own economy – whether selling spells or cures – that was said to extend beyond the borders of the camp and provide a lucrative source of income to its purveyors. It could strike anyone for a number of reasons: because people were jealous ("*ni chuki tu*"), or didn't want others to advance ("*hawataki maendeleo*"), had a bad heart ("*wana roho mbaya*"), or lacked education ("*hawana elimu*"). Even the Tanzanian UNHCR drivers were aware of the dangers, and constantly reminded me that I should not take such things lightly. One foreign resettlement officer had already been affected ("*amepigwa mlambo*"); unable to walk, he was forced to return home. In another instance, Kagabo's friend Charlie had hurt his leg in a motorcycle accident, and insisted that it was witchcraft. It was only a few weeks later that Kagabo told me that Charlie himself had hit someone while driving, and that his accident was retribution.[281]

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[279] Field notes, March 30, 2015.

[280] One witch/doctor that I spent time with explained that witchcraft was specific to individuals – they all had different capabilities – and that it would not work on those who were not Wabembe, or on foreigners. It was also forbidden to kill someone without a reason; witchcraft could only be used if you were seriously wronged. Interview with Mzee K, February 20, 2014.

There were many reasons one could be struck by *mlambo*, and they were not limited to bad behaviour. Wronging someone, destroying his or her property, or hurting another person could make you a target, but so too could ostensibly good behavior, like helping another person. The target was usually someone who was comparatively better off or who had access to more opportunities, or more significantly, someone who was "too good." It was generally understood that one did not show off any signs of prosperity; for example, large purchases made at the market, especially meat, would have to be concealed; as would other markers of relative wealth.[282] In fact, the rich were seen to have become rich and preserve their wealth through witchcraft.

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[281] Field notes, February 13, and March, 2014.

But it wasn't just a question of not flaunting one's prosperity and living a low-key life. Good behavior was perceived as being risky, too, as I learned in the case of a boy who had been the victim of *mlambo*. I first met Alex through his mother, who was a judge at the local tribunal. A tall, athletic teenager with dreams of becoming a football star, he had recently been forced to stop practicing due to an injury on his leg. It was an egg-shaped dark wound located a few inches above his left ankle. Every day, Alex would head to a healer to have his wound cleaned and dressed with a poultice of various herbs. He would also receive a few vials of medicine to take orally. Alex had been playing football with some of his friends. Noticing another boy playing without shoes, he lent his own pair to the player. At the end of the game, the other boy asked him whether he could keep the shoes. Alex refused, but offered to lend them at any time. In the calculus of possession and lack, Alex's relative prosperity (evinced by owning football shoes) and his reluctance to share (by giving up the shoes) was what put him in danger and led to *mlambo*. Whatever the cause, however, Alex's own understanding of the incident was he had been bewitched because he was helpful. If he only hadn't offered to help, he would not be in trouble. It was his good behavior that had landed him in this situation.[283] Ethics are thus a matter of relationships – not simply a question of choosing between two opposite possibilities, but a variety of possible positions presented within a web of relations, experienced differently by each.[284]

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[282] Field notes, February 18, 2014 "People are very jealous. When I went to buy fish the seller told me to hide it – "you can be bewitched." I have 8 children who eat meat. When I buy it, I have to buy 2 – 3 kilos. I was warned not to show it. This isn't Mtabila. You have to be careful."

[283] Field notes, February 23, 2014

Alex's case was an example of how individual generosity could be identified as the source of ill will. But working for the "good of society" was also seen as problematic. This was exemplified in the case of two rights-workers: Ebondo and Hamisi. Both were involved in GBV and rights work in the camp; Ebondo as a paralegal and one of the executive members at WLAC, and Hamisi as a GBV counselor at the IRC. Ebondo had also previously served as a GBV staff counselor for seven years. While both were aware that their work made them a target, Hamisi was more vocal in making the connection. Both stories illustrate what I mean about helpfulness (*kusaidia)* and working for the good of others (*kuboresha jamii)* in the realm of ethical behavior as well as the ways in which rights-work served to structure their outlook, self-perceptions, and self-making.

Ebondo

I had known Ebondo for about a year when I went to visit him in August of 2014. We often talked about WLAC-related issues and trainings, and I had accompanied him on a few official errands. Though we had enjoyed a cordial, even friendly relationship, he had never spoken to me about his own case or personal history. This afternoon, though, he pulled out a stack of reports. They detailed a weeklong trip he had taken to South Africa to participate in training on masculinity and GBV. He then told me a few details about his personal life, and finally got into how he had been followed and threatened in the camp. In 2006 he had started a men's group, which he then converted into a peace group, because he had wanted to involve men in the effort to combat GBV. He explained proudly that it had 520 people and was gender-balanced, with approximately half women and half men. Winking, he explained that he was finally sharing this information because he trusted me. The knowledge that he now trusted me with was nothing other than the account of how he came to believe in human rights.

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[284] See Jarrett Zigon and C. Jason Throop, "Moral Experience: Introduction," Ethos 42.1 (2014). pp. 10

Originally a skeptic, Ebondo was now fully committed to the idea of rights and "humanness." He explained that he had changed his mind about women's rights. "*Elimu*" or education was a key part of his story. Helping others figures prominently in the way he described why he does his work and what it means to him. He noted frequently that his aim was to improve society ("*kuboresha jamii*.")[285] But he clearly understood that his work posed risks to him. He expressed that the law in Tanzania was "strong," unlike in the DRC, which encouraged him to pursue this work and to hold it up as an example. But for the same reason, people threatened him when they returned to the DRC. In Nyarugusu, a seven-year-old girl had been raped, and Ebondo had managed the case. The perpetrators were jailed for 30 years, so their family blamed him and were constantly threatening him. He mentioned that he was attacked by witchcraft twice at night. Normally in high spirits no matter how bad the news, today Ebondo's eyes filled with tears.

Hamisi

Over the course of my research I visited Hamisi and his colleagues in the IRC GBV prevention and response center many times. The center was attached to the main hospital. The entrance was via a mud courtyard flanked by two open air "halls" where health workshops took place, and led into a small, stuffy room with classroom benches and an ancient, 10 inch TV that played educational films. There were two small annex rooms full of paper files, one of which connected to a "triage" room where survivors were interviewed and counseled. The walls were covered with handmade posters announcing the various categories of gender based violence and case statistics over the past years, and small, chicken-wired windows provided minimal light. One particularly sunny week, I ran into Hamisi, who exclaimed excitedly that he had something very important to tell me – a crazy story. He then lowered his voice, insisting that I needed to come see him at the center. When I stopped by, he related how, the previous day, he had been struck by lightning *inside* the GBV center ("*nimepigwa na radi"*), while sitting on a chair, telling me I could confirm the incident with a mutual friend of ours, who had also been there. For weeks, neither of them could stop talking about it with awe. I pressed for more details. Hamisi told me that he had been struck because he had refused to help some other refugees falsify a GBV center record. He had also refused to provide some other refugees with details of a case, and explained that he was consistently targeted because of the "good work" that he did.[286] He told me many similar stories, all of which involved attempted murder and were related to his work as a GBV incentive worker helping women, as well as to the fact that he had already been approved for resettlement. This meant that he was constantly on guard. Feelings of fear and caution arose most commonly around food:

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[285] Interview with Ebondo, September 15, 2014

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[286] The witchdoctor insisted otherwise: "It's important that you understand that what I am telling you it is true, not false. This is our culture and tradition. Witchcraft is to protect yourself. You can't just kill people. Like lightning, it can't hit you without a reason. Maybe you stole something. if you heard that a Bembe person was struck by lightning, it means that he did something. Maybe he stole something, slept with someone's wife, or killed someone. Otherwise the lightning would come back and kill the sender. It's about protecting yourself. That's it." Interview with Mzee Kenge, February 20, 2014.

"I was working late one day and I was very hungry. This guy I work with goes to the market at the end of the day. He comes back with a pineapple. A really nice big one, and that too when I'm feeling really hungry, and he gives it to me. (*Laughs*) I thought about eating it, but then I hesitated. I heard a small voice inside me, it made me stop. But on the other hand I really wanted to eat it right then. I decided to take it home to my wife, and we talked about it. Finally we thought of giving it to the neighbour's pig. Pigs can't just die like that, my neighbour said, because they have strong stomachs. So we gave it to the pigs. They died right then and there! All six of them! Imagine - I would have eaten that pineapple with my wife and children and we would all have died!"[287] Hamisi's voice oscillated between whispers and laughter as he related the story, before finally finishing it angrily.

Speaking of another time he had gotten sick from eating poisoned fish, he exclaimed: "They're jealous. It's only because of jealousy. We were 10 in my resettlement process group - we've already lost 4 of us. They died suddenly and without explanation!"[288] In Nyarugusu, generosity around food was often met with suspicion; many of my acquaintances insisted that their children not accept food from neighbours or friends, let alone strangers. The pineapple was suspect because it had been given to him at precisely the right moment, and out of unexpected generosity.

Hamisi explained that others didn't want good people like him to succeed – if they saw that you were a good person, they tried to harm you and rejoiced in your downfall. "They just have bad souls," (*Wana roho mbaya tu*) he continued, echoing a common refrain in the camp that attributed bad behavior to internal moral deficits. To illustrate his point, he told me another story, dropping his voice to a dramatic whisper, occasionally breaking into uncomfortable yet hearty laughter. A few weeks before the pineapple incident, a man had come to Hamisi's house with a prophecy:

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[287] Field notes, June 13, 2014

[288] Field notes, June 13, 2014

> "He said he had a vision of a small window of light. Outside, he could see people celebrating and waving flags. You see, if you do good things, people become jealous (*watu wanachukia*). They were celebrating because I had died. The man saw my dead body in a shroud. He warned me that people would cause me harm (*wataniletea vitu vibaya*). Then, two days later, a [GBV] survivor came to the office. They sent her. She came with presents, saying she wanted to thank me. I said, 'I don't accept presents – you can thank me with words only. I don't take bribes for my work.' She'd brought a chicken and some flour. She insisted. So finally I said, it's still early, let's slaughter the chicken now. When they (who had wanted me to slaughter the chicken at night) did, I saw charms deposited inside (*vitu vya amana - hirizi*). There was all kinds of filth inside – leather, thread, stones. She was sent to bewitch me. There was another man too. He said he came to ask me for advice about the resettlement process. But he didn't seem sincere so I brushed him off. He kept insisting. Then one day I saw him talking to the girl. Now how come they were talking like friends when they come from different villages on opposite sides of the camp? They wanted to cause me harm. (*kuniletea vitu vibaya*)."

Hamisi was especially proud of his honesty. He knew that several of the other staff members helped themselves to items meant for supporting GBV survivors. He was also aware of bribes taken to facilitate and advance protection cases (so that the refugees in question would have a better chance at accessing resettlement). Some of his colleagues had already been fired. Unlike in the case of *sungu sungu* or camp police, who were liked and trusted more for not accepting bribes, the continuous dangers posed to Hamisi had to do with the fact that he was sincere in his work, was not corrupt, and steadfastly pursued his work in human rights out of true belief rather than as a means to access aid or patronage. In response to these threats, he continued to work daily, exercising caution, but nevertheless persisting in his support for gender based violence and rights programs. Still, he was keen on getting to safety – "I just want to leave this place as soon as possible. Even to NMC – wherever – I must leave this place."[289] In the meantime, however, Hamisi showed up every day at the IRC center in neatly pressed slacks and an official t-shirt, convinced that he was doing the right thing because of the danger he faced. The constant feeling of being unsafe was the barometer against which he measured the value of his character.

Standing up: Learning human rights

Many of the camp residents I spoke with were engaged in constant self-reflection and self-care. This self-work was heterotemporal: inseparable from past experiences and oriented towards daily survival and future flourishing. Women gathered at human rights workshops, exhorting each other to become stronger and insist upon their rights. In doing so they reflected upon their behavior, place in society, and the means by which they could improve their situation by changing themselves. Some refugees, highly self-aware, spoke of their approach to survival or living safely in the camp by cultivating a certain type of personality and comportment. Many involved themselves in workshops and discussions on the necessity of rights work and improving society; this was tied to their understandings of themselves. Others sought out information and cultivated relationships that helped them understand and access aid.

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[289] Field notes, June 13, 2014, Nyarugusu camp. NMC was the transit center in Kigoma.

The story of human rights in the camp is not a single story. Human rights did not receive a unilateral reception in Nyarugusu. But even when we look at both sides – its defenders and detractors – it remains a potent force for structuring people's lives and dispositions. Let us take the example of a human rights training meeting. I attended one such meeting with a few WLAC members. No aid agency representatives were present. The WLAC incentive workers had organized it themselves as part of an outreach campaign to systematically hold workshops in each zone. The WLAC representative would inform the "*madesvillages*" about the meeting in advance, who in turn would spread the message amongst village occupants and encourage attendance. This particular training was held at 7 in the morning, which was just after sunrise. The timing was chosen so that people were not already busy getting water, which was turned on later, and so that it would not be too hot to sit outside in the sun. Still, it was early, and cold. A row of plastic chairs was set up against some of the huts for WLAC staff and important members of the village. Attendees stood or sat across from these chairs, but closer to another road of huts, which meant that there was a "road" between the trainers and attendees. As the training progressed more and more people passed between them, sometimes briefly stopping to listen and participate. It was thus almost impossible to live in the camp without being exposed to "human rights aid."

Participation in "human rights aid," like cultivating camp-appropriate comportment, signified work on the self. Foucault's notion of "ascetic practice" is helpful here – he describes it as "an exercise of the self on the self by which one attempts to develop and transform oneself, and to attain to a certain mode of being."[290] He explains the historical link between ethics and care of the self – the two are not synonymous, but in antiquity, ethics as the practice of freedom had revolved around the imperative to take care of oneself. This also meant that one had to possess self-knowledge. But Foucault's care of the self was not an individualistic endeavor per se. It involved being in a complex web of relationships and acting such that others were also cared for and meaningful relationships were maintained. Feminist critiques of Foucault's notion of the subject have suggested that we pay attention to marked subjectivities that "cannot be other than social and collective."[291]

Where, then, does the pedagogical camp figure in all of this? Foucault was concerned with "technologies of the self, which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality."[292] Techniques of the self might include, as in the case of the Stoics, writing letters, examining one's own conscience, or self-discipline (*askesis*). Foucault's account of these technologies was historically grounded in Greco-Roman philosophy and Christian spirituality of the late Roman empire, when self-knowledge had also meant self-care. But Foucault sees modern morality as requiring self-renunciation, where self-knowledge trumps self-care. In fact, he says that now "it is difficult to see concern with oneself as compatible with morality." I want to point out that, in contrast, morality in the camp very often centered around care of the self – self-preservation, bodily integrity, and dignity – and by no means excluded the care of others – whether related by kinship or societal ties.

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[290] Paul Rabinow, ed., Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth (Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984, Vol. 1) (New Press, 1997). pp. 282

[291] Nancy Hartsock, "Postmodernism and Political Change: Issues for Feminist Theory," Cultural Critique 14.Winter (1989). pp. 29.

[292] Huck Gutman and Patrick H. Hutton Luther H. Martin, ed., Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988). pp. 16-49

Indeed, James Faubion extends Foucault's analysis to show how the other also plays an important role in figuring the self's work on itself.[293] Rights workers aim to serve as role models. Faubion thinks of ethical becoming as a process in which people not only occupy certain normative subject positions but work towards occupying them *well*. It is this ethical autopoeisis that is exemplified in the case of the refugee case-workers, or the women who aim to become the subjects of rights – not just normatively entitled to rights, but actively, "good" subjects of rights who forcefully claim and fight for their rights. I am not pointing this out to foreclose the possibility of ethical complexity[294], wherein someone may occupy more than one ethical position (e.g. in the case of a refugee incentive worker it might be threefold: a mBembe, a refugee, and a rights-worker). Below, I describe a human rights training workshop for female refugee leaders that illustrates the work of becoming ethical *well*. Over the course of a three-day workshop, these women begin to think of themselves as rights bearing subjects with responsibilities to do "rights-work."

On August 6, 2014, approximately 35 women gathered in the IRC compound next to the Nyarugusu hospital. A few metres away from office buildings, they sat in a circular *makuti* meeting hall constructed from wood and roofed with plastic sheeting and thatch. They ranged widely in age and many of them had worn their best clothes for the occasion. A number of them were also participants in other GBV activism groups in the camp, like Kujitolea or the Peace Group. In the crowd are a few familiar faces; women I have seen take part in other workshops or aid agency consultations. They begin by talking about problems, like widow inheritance or underage marriages (*ndoa za mapema*). “Gender mainstreaming” and “gender balance” have been aid agency strategies for some time now, but the presence of women does not always ensure their active participation. A woman who is a Tanzanian IRC staff member leads the workshop, and a male staffer sits in the front row organizing. She stands in front of a large flipchart, messily decorated with slogans and important points about GBV. Some of the women are intensely engaged, taking notes with pens and notebooks that have just been distributed, others look exhausted and unwilling, and a few have nursing infants or small children with them. The format is both dialogic and discursive, with teaching followed by questions to the participants and debates amongst them. How can we improve things in the camp, the trainer wants to know. Someone suggests that the seminars should continue - that there should be seminars for leaders, and that male leaders should be educated that they should give women leaders equal opportunities (everyone applauds at this suggestion). Another woman complains there aren't enough women leaders in high positions. "What is a woman going to say in a group of men?" (“*ni ile mila ambao wanatujengea*”) . Another complains that women can't speak because they don't have power (“*wewe mwanamke huna neno la kusema.*”)

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[293] James Faubion, An Anthropology of Ethics (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[294] James Faubion, "The Themitical in the Ethical," "What is Ethics? And Who Cares?" Lecture Series, Kenan Institute for Ethics (2009). pp. 8

Towards the end of the training, the IRC staffer asks: How many can say they will bring change? The women slowly raise their hands, until most are up. Let’s stick together and be confident! (“*tuondoe noga. Natujiamini*”) Let’s work together, let us stand up! (“*tutoe noga,* *tujisimamie*") He exhorts them to avoid individualism and to participate in a group effort. ("*Usibaki pekee. Ushirikishe.")* Finally, he underscores the importance of reporting, giving the biblical example of Samson.[295]

In Chapter 2 I discussed how the GBV prevention and response system can fail women, make them feel inadequate, or place undue burdens on refugees. But equally, the regime of teaching human rights was perceived by women as a place to raise their awareness. They described suddenly becoming aware of new concepts and their own rights, and of questioning their circumstances. I am not suggesting that they were thus "empowered" in the liberal sense, or that they automatically believed in rights. But in the course of coming together in various fora, they began to create a shared sense of responsibility and awareness, however incomplete that may have been.

Ordinary Ethics

Critiquing the "ordinary ethics" approach as reproducing a transcendental moral philosophy, Jarrett Zigon writes that "moralities/ethics, and the politics they may demand, are not intrinsic to language and social activity, but emerge from the ontological conditions for being-in-the-world."[296] Though it may be tempting to interpret the usage of dominant moral vocabulary in terms of their ordinary or dominant use, in fact, people might use this vocabulary to point to an ethical imperative that exceeds what the first concept articulates.[297] He urges us to adopt "…a critical hermeneutics [that] provides a framework that does not simply equate moralities/ethics with everyday social life but rather traces their emergence from a world."[298] His oeuvre encompasses two arguments that are relevant here: 1) that we can locate ethics in moments of breakdown, and 2) biographical narratives are particularly illuminating of ethical dispositions.

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[295] Field notes, August 6, 2014.; Personal Communication with IRC workshop organizer, September 19, 2016.

[296] Zigon, "An Ethics of Dwelling and a Politics of World-Building: A Critical Response to Ordinary Ethics.", pp. 762

Following recent debates in what is alternatively termed "anthropology of ethics" or "moral anthropology,"[299] (many of which have focused on how exactly to locate what is "ethical" in nature) I suggest that we think of ethical dispositions and the making of ethical subjects in three ways – the first follows Zigon's intuition about world-making and biographical narratives. The second argues that a Wittgensteinian perspective on ordinary ethics can, in fact, allow us to overcome Kantian assumptions about morals. The third has to do with behaving safely; that is, ethical dispositions are forged in relation to the boundary between safe and unsafe. In comparison with ethical dispositions assembled in response to – and in accordance with – social norms, those of camp residents were made and remade either with a view to keeping safe, or, in some cases, in spite of - or even because of – the danger that acting a certain way would pose to oneself.

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[297] Zigon, "An Ethics of Dwelling and a Politics of World-Building: A Critical Response to Ordinary Ethics.", pp. 754

[298] Zigon, "An Ethics of Dwelling and a Politics of World-Building: A Critical Response to Ordinary Ethics."pp. 747

[299] Michael Lambek, Ordinary Ethics: Anthropology, Language, and Action (Fordham Univ Press, 2010), Faubion, An Anthropology of Ethics, Didier and Samuel Lézé Fassin, ed., Moral Anthropology: A Critical Reader (London, New York: Routledge, 2014), James Laidlaw, The Subject of Virtue: An Anthropology of Ethics and Freedom (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

Let us take a moment to separate out questions of ethics vs. morals. Part of the problem stems from the fact that the concept of morality itself is ambiguous, and is usually understood as a set of rules or values.[300] Instead of thinking of morality as a code or principles to be either followed or transgressed, we can think of it as "a form of embodied dispositions, cultural scripts, or moral choices intimately tied with emotions and feelings," that is, "morality as a realm not of rule following, but of lived experiences that feed back into one another in a continuing process of reevaluation and enactment."[301] Zigon distinguishes between morality (ways of being embedded in the world) and ethics (moments in which a person must reflexively work on the self to be morally appropriate). These ethical moments are brought about by moral breakdowns and are by nature creative, since they bring new moral selves and worlds into being.[302] He describes moments of breakdown as occurring when "some event or person intrudes into the everyday life of a person and forces them to consciously reflect upon the appropriate ethical response (be it words, silence, action or non-action)."[303]

Notwithstanding Zigon's insightful critique of theorists of ordinary ethics, reflections from this field are not substantially dissimilar, with the caveat that Zigon focuses on unconscious moral action, whereas many others do not. This holds true even if we return to the watering hole of ordinary ethicists, ordinary language philosophy. Hannah Pitkin writes: "From the perspective of our ordinary employment of language in the region of morality, moral discourse particularly centers on actions, and on action gone wrong. It has to do with the assessment and repair of human relationships when these have been strained or damaged by the unforeseen results of some action."[304] Pitkin and her interlocutors are interested in how moral discourse works in everyday life (as opposed to moral rules or principles). It is, after all, in ordinary use that our understandings of morality and action are learned and shaped. Pitkin is not wrong about breakdown, but there are assumptions behind her arguments: that we already know what moral discourse looks like. Nyarugusu requires us to think more deeply about both morality and ethics; because moments of breakdown were not sporadic and rare, but rather, the condition of breakdown was continuous.

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[300] See, for example: Chapter 3 in volume 2 of Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality, 3 vols. (New York: Vintage Books, 1988-1990).

[301] Jarrett Zigon, Morality: An Anthropological Perspective (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2008). pp. 8

[302] Zigon, Morality: An Anthropological Perspective. pp. 164-5

[303] Zigon, Morality: An Anthropological Perspective. pp. 165

For some methodological clarification, let us turn for a moment to Zigon's critique of ordinary ethicists and what he sees as their propensity to expand the domain of ethics into all that is social. Zigon's concern is that if we assume that studying the ethical is simply a matter of locating it, this means that we already know what ethics look like. He insists that ordinary ethics looks like "Aristotelian Kantism," whereby ethics is basically equated with Kantian morality. This implies some transcendental condition of humanness (whether reason or language) that provides the drive for moral behavior, and that they use the familiar, provincial moral vocabulary of terms like right, good, ought, respect, and dignity to describe both the reasons and outcomes of acting morally or ethically.[305] He argues that we need an analytic for recognizing what exactly morality or ethics look like in a specific situation, and that we might rethink moral concepts anthropologically by asking questions about the use of words, whether familiar or not, rather than assuming that their position in language is predetermined.

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[304] Hanna F. Pitkin, Wittgenstein and Justice: On the Significance of Ludwig Wittgenstein for Social and Political Thought (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973). pp. 149

[305] Zigon, "An Ethics of Dwelling and a Politics of World-Building: A Critical Response to Ordinary Ethics." pp. 751

The concept of rights, then, as a familiar term that seems self-evidently "ethical" provides us with food for thought. In this chapter I have focused on some of the discourses and practices of human rights circulating in the camp pertaining to rights education and rights-workers. I start from the assumption that they are not inherently "ethical" but that their existence and position can tell us something important about the ethical landscape of Nyarugusu.

Early debates on whether the rights of man were moral or legal precipitated disagreements on the source of rights. Positivists like Bentham insisted that there could be no rights springing from the essential nature of man – they had to be codified in law, thus becoming the rights of citizens. But, leaving aside the matter of tracing a genealogy of rights, contemporary human rights read largely as moral rights, even if they are in many cases also legal rights. Hence the call for the expansion into legislation of what are seen as fundamental moral rights (e.g. LGBT rights and collective minority rights). Philosophers have justified human rights in many ways, by appealing to equality, autonomy, human dignity, and the capacity for rational agency, among other things. They have argued in some cases that rights are necessary to protect human interests, or that they are based in an inherent desire and capacity for human freedom.[306] These justifications entail moral universalism, because human rights are considered to be universally valid. Relativism is at odds with human rights, and the expansion of rights is seen as sufficient to bring debates about local particularities to an end. Many of these philosophical justifications for rights have drawn on Kant.

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[306] Liberal feminists have often been concerned with freedom in fighting for women's rights. Linda A Bell, Rethinking Ethics in the Midst of Violence: A Feminist Approach to Freedom (Rowman & Littlefield, 1993). See also: Mahmood, Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject.

If the concepts and practice of human rights – its legal and political instruments and its discourse – are inherently tied to a Kantian view of morality,[307] what does this mean for its dissemination in the camp? Certainly aid workers subscribed to a universalist view of human rights as immutable and non-negotiable. And, following Zigon's arguments, if we are not to take human rights a priori as ethical, how should we understand them? In this case, it is not the notion of right that is inherently ethical, but what people do with it – the kinds of reappropriation, adaptation, and self-work that they do – that makes it fertile ground for an anthropology of ethics. We need to look at both how the discourse of rights is transformed as well as the impact of rights on everyday life. The transformation of the self through the awareness and practice of human rights and the usage of rights-language (understood here as the constellation of terms within the rights regime, ranging from rights to GBV) provide us with some clues as to its place in the ethical landscape. "Human rights work" (encompassing the ideological dissemination of human rights ideology through workshops, campaigns, and peer outreach) limned the contours of differential norms and expectations in the camp, and in doing so, generated specific kinds of anxieties and desirable behaviors.

Violence and the Everyday

This chapter tells the story of ethics, but equally of violence. While Zigon has located morality in biographical and other narratives, others have focused on the biographical as a repository of violence.[308] Being a refugee or asylum seeker in Nyarugusu demanded the continuous production and repetition of biographical narratives that highlighted past and present suffering and trauma. I would argue that though unbidden biographical narratives highlighted moral imperatives and ethical transformations, they were not the only site of expression of violence, which emerged continuously in other moments. The violence doesn't have to be unearthed: it lives in tales of narrowly missed opportunities, moonlights as a character in funny anecdotes, plays peek-a-boo in daily patterns of maintaining elaborately constructed social silences, erupts unexpectedly and disappears just as quickly, omnipresent. Veena Das argues that violence is not simply an interruption to which we bear witness or a catastrophic event, but that continuing on requires a descent into the ordinary; daily life is marked silently and continuously by this violence, and it is through the gendered labor of continuing a household that the fabric of life is mended.[309] But while that violence is swallowed as "poisonous knowledge"[310] and suppressed, in Nyarugusu violence continually bubbled to the surface, often turning to dark laughter. If the survivors of communal violence in India dealt with their violence through silence, Congolese refugees spoke their violence daily. Not only did specters of violence emerge continuously – whether unexpectedly or not - they also marked people's ethical orientations and decisions.

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[307] See Andreas Follesdal and Reidar Maliks, eds., Kantian Theory and Human Rights (New York: Routledge, 2014).

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[308] Monica Heintz, ed., The Anthropology of Moralities (New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2009). Zigon, Morality: An Anthropological Perspective. Veena Das, Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary (California: University of California Press, 2006), Jarrett Zigon, "Narratives," A Companion to Moral Anthropology, ed. Dider Fassin (Malden, MA: WIley-Blackwell, 2012).

[309] Das, Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary.

[310] Das, Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary.

The everyday is a site of routines and habits, but also of disappointments and doubts, and consequently, efforts to strive beyond these to bring about change.[311] Instead of sporadic moments of reflection, everyday life embraces ethical impulses, not least because of threats (to the ordinary) contained within it.[312] Note that I distinguish here between ordinary life (and speech) and everyday life.[313] To focus on the ethical in the everyday is not to suffuse ethics into all dimensions of life, but to look at the ongoing condition of "moral breakdown" – as an anxiety expressed by refugees who feared losing their *mila na desturi* and lamented the nature of life in exile – and the specific demands created by an ongoing project of human rights education. Everyday life in Nyarugusu was the site of violence – both lived and expressed – and also of crushing hardship. It is for these reasons that an ethnography of the everyday in Nyarugusu – always unfinished – rather than an "archaeological analytic of the subject" can reveal how people theorize their own conditions.[314] In other words, it can give us some insight into ethical autopoesis.

This chapter has described how the work of *mafundisho* and the material and biological precarity that inflected camp life have given rise to specific understandings of ethical behavior, and in doing so, has located the ethical not simply in terms of "goodness" or "rightness," but in relation to the horizons of danger and bodily integrity. In the next chapter, I describe how danger to one's life and (the lack of) bodily integrity became the ground on which understandings of refugeehood and humanness were articulated against the inadequacy of humanitarian aid.

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[311] Das, ed., The Ground Between: Anthropologists Engage Philosophy. pp. 286

[312] Das, ed., The Ground Between: Anthropologists Engage Philosophy. pp. 19; pp. 281-282

[313] This seems to be what critics of "ordinary ethics" find troubling: a narrow focus on speech, language, and voice. See Throop, "Moral Experience: Introduction." pp. 5-6. Though Zigon claims to focus on speech as act that calls people into a specific way of dwelling in the world, rather than in terms of meaning, as ordinary ethicists would, I think the two approaches are not irreconcilable. If we understand both the ways in which speech enjoins us to meaning, while recognizing that the subject(s) and object(s) of speech are constructed in particular ways, and if we understand "speech," to include gestures, breath, and utterances, we might begin to foreground the body as the medium through which such claims are made. I elaborate on this idea in Chapter 6.

[314] Biehl, "Ethnography in the Way of Theory." pp. 96-99. Biehl writes: "As ethnographers we are challenged to attend at once to the political, economic, and material transience of worlds and truths *and* to the journeys people take through milieus in transit while pursuing needs, desires, and curiosities, or simply trying to find room to breathe beneath intolerable constraints."

Chapter 5: Being a Refugee: Life and Bodies

> *"They are living like animals here."* -
> *UNHCR aid worker, Nyarugusu camp* [315]

The material, physical, and affective conditions of living in a remote refugee camp structured the ethical orientations of Nyarugusu residents in ways that recalled their precarity and imbrication in multiple life-worlds. How did they conceive of and describe the condition of refugeehood? In this chapter I explore some of the ways in which humanitarian confinement generated new ideas about humanness. By examining how refugees describe their own condition, I aim to re-center the discussion of humanitarianism and refugee life. Contemporary studies of humanitarianism have tended to take a birds-eye view, as it were. The notion of "biopolitics," particularly as popularized by Agamben, has featured predominantly in scholarship of humanitarianism and refugee studies.[316] Didier Fassin has helpfully distinguished between humanitarianism as biopolitics and a "politics of life"[317] – in other words, a mechanism of decision-making between lives worthy of saving and others that are not. Whereas biopolitics – and the broad range of meanings the term has been used to connote – can be a useful way of conceiving of humanitarian aid, particularly bureaucratic governance and knowledge produced on refugee populations, it can also flatten refugee perspectives and individual experiences of humanitarian, corporeal, and occult realities.[318] Similarly, while a "politics of life" helps us better understand geopolitical hierarchies and moral economies, a closer look at humanitarian assistance tells us exactly how the process of "saving worthy lives" operates.

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[315] Field notes, February 7, 2014.

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[316] See, for example: Comaroff, "Beyond Bare Life: Aids, (Bio)Politics, and the Neoliberal Order. .", Patricia Owens, "Reclaiming 'Bare Life'?: Against Agamben on Refugees," International Relations 23.4 (2009), Peter Nyers, Rethinking Refugees: Beyond States of Emergency (New York: Routledge, 2006).

[317] Fassin, "Humanitarianism as a Politics of Life. ." pp. 501: "What I call "politics of life" here are politics that give specific value and meaning to human life. They differ analytically from Foucauldian biopolitics, defined as "the regulation of population," in that they relate not to the technologies of power and the way populations are governed but to the evaluation of human beings and the meaning of their existence. Humanitarian intervention is a biopolitics insofar as it sets up and manages refugee camps, establishes protected corridors in order to gain access to war casualties, develops statistical tools to measure malnutrition, and makes use of communication media to bear witness to injustice in the world. But humanitarian intervention is also a politics of life, as I suggest to phrase it, in that it takes as its object the saving of individuals, which presupposes not only risking others but also making a selection of which existences it is possible or legitimate to save …"

[318] On biopolitics, see Monica J. Casper Thomas Lemke, and Lisa Jean Moore, Biopolitics: An Advanced Introduction (NYU Press, 2011). For biopolitical readings of humanitarianism and the camp, see Rozakou, "The Biopolitics of Hospitality in Greece: Humanitarianism and the Management of Refugees.", Bulent Diken, "From Refugee Camps to Gated Communities: Biopolitics and the End of the City," Citizenship Studies 8.1 (2004).

This chapter makes two related moves. First, I suggest that we look at humanitarian assistance and life in humanitarian containment from the perspective of refugees receiving aid, rather than observers of the humanitarian regime. I suggest that we do so in terms of the politics of the flesh and the body. In what follows I will attempt to work through the problematics of the body and the flesh in the context of the camp. Second, I point out how the registers of life and death suggested by biopolitics are inadequate in the face of undeath and zombie-ness, the transience between states of humanity and animality, and the physical presence of spirits and other metaphysical bodies.[319] Echoing the idea that "humanity is defined by its breach,"[320] refugees make claims to humanity/inhumanity based on bodily vulnerability and the loss or lack of corporeal integrity. Suffering, and vulnerability, the very things that they see as rendering them as less-than-human are at once their claim to humanity.

Refugeehood: Flesh and the Body

Black studies – black feminist thought in particular – provides a fertile way of entering into the problem space of humanitarian aid. Given the global hierarchies implicit within the provision of humanitarian aid, itself guided by supposedly universal norms and regulations, black feminist thought and conceptions of suffering offers rich theoretical grounds for thinking about problems of Africanness, discrimination, and pain as expressed by refugees in the camp. In many ways the pathologization of blackness as particular and alien to "normal" American life is paralleled by the pathologization of Congolese refugees by organizations whose activities are geared towards normalizing their ethical values and familial behavior. Perhaps more important is the desire to reconceptualize the notion of the human by challenging the category of man. For Sylvia Wynter, the struggles of race, class and global inequality are “differing facets of the central ethnoclass Man vs. Human struggle,” and the invisibilized and marginalized status of populations like refugees is a central part of this struggle.[321] In Wynter’s schema, the diasporic black African population of Nyarugusu, contained and controlled, seeking Arendt’s “right to have rights” requires us to push “human” back against “Man.” Wynter also pushes back against the parochialization of Black Studies vs. Euro-American theory that functions qua universal theory. Redefining the human in the context of emancipation and anti-colonialism calls for a theoretical framework that exceeds the dimensions of *bios*. In the camp, being human was in fact defined within the parameters of the bodily; refugees constantly drew attention to the corporeal vulnerability they experienced. Whereas personhood could be multiple and heterotemporal, being *human* and having humanity meant that one’s body was whole in a dignified manner. Fanon has pointed out that human beings are not merely biological mechanisms but produced of phylogeny/ontogeny and sociogeny.[322] Following this insight, the concept of the “flesh,” i.e. that which is prior to the unfree body as produced by social power, can help us to understand more about how refugeehood is structured and experienced.

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[319] On the ascription of animality in humanitarian spaces, see Nick Vaughan-Williams, ""We Are Not Animals!" Humanitarian Border Security and Zoopolitical Spaces in Europe," Political Geography 45 (2015).

[320] Feldman, ed., In the Name of Humanity: The Government of Threat and Care. . pp. 5.

The need to reconceptualize who or what can be human is also precisely why biopolitics can be a limiting discourse in the case of refugees.[323] Basing his argument on the work of

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[321] Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, after Man, Its Overrepresentation--an Argument." pp. 260-261.

[322] Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1968).

[323] See John Lechte and Saul Newman, "Agamben, Arendt and Human Rights: Bearing Witness to the Human," European Journal of Social Theory 15.4 (2012). Moving beyond “bare life” as the defining characteristic of the

Hortense Spillers and Sylvia Wynter, Alexander Weheliye has eloquently critiqued the notion of "bare life" and its racial blind spots.[324] Taking this critique as a starting point, I suggest that we can think of the refugee in terms of "flesh" and "body" instead of the emblematic figure of bare life or "biopolitics." This requires a) seeing the humanitarian apparatus from perspectives of refugees who relate it to bodily vulnerability (a perspective that is inevitably always incomplete) b) not simply looking at humanitarian regime from top down as observer of its bureaucratic and logistical functions. It also involves parsing the distinction between the "body" and the "flesh" more carefully.

Obviously, the contexts of slavery and humanitarian aid are vastly different. But what Hortense Spillers calls the "hieroglyphics of the flesh," which are passed down through generations, can also help us understand how refugees are "marked" by their humanitarian environment. This is particularly true given that the diasporic experiences of Congolese refugees in Tanzania are shaped both by memories of extreme violence at the moment of fleeing (sometimes multiple times), but also by older memories of the violence of colonial torture within

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human, Lechte and Newman have argued that we must pay attention to the human not as a concept but as part of "a community to come," in order to address the tension between human rights and sovereignty, as well as the transformation of such rights into biopolitical humanitarianism. However, they do not exit the framework of human rights, but insist that the human be defined as "'bearing witness to the human'—a bearing witness that brings to light the presuppositions and aporias characteristic of the current way of understanding politics and the human and thus opens the way to a different experience of human equality." (pp. 532) This conception of the human is made possible by accepting Agamben's argument about the figure of the Muselmann in Nazi concentration camps, who exemplifies being human in and through the destruction of his humanity. (pp. 525) Though I agree with the authors' insistence that we must look more closely at the figure of the human, their uncritical acceptance of categories like human rights, equality, and justice do not allow for decolonial thought that reconstructs the human prior to any conditions of oppression.

[324] Alexander Weheliye, Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014). Weheliye argues that juridical models of humanity allow suffering bodies into the category of humanity after the fact, and he is committed to other ways of making such claims.

their lifetime or that of their parents and grandparents. At a debate amongst teachers in anticipation of World Refugee Day, camp residents reflected:

> "Tomorrow we will have been refugees for 18 years. Our children don't even know when or why we got independence."
>
> "Why are we refugees? Refugeehood began with independence and continues until today. Why only refugeehood until now?"
>
> "Why am I a refugee? You'll find 40-year-old person named Vita [war]. Why?"[325]

One might describe this as "a poetics that engenders a shared history of human loss and the reinvention of the human together through that loss."[326] Similarly, the experience of the body in pain – one unmarked by a Cartesian duality - can tell us about how humanitarian policies have shaped lived experience. Spillers, ruminating on "body" and "flesh," notes that the distinction between the two

> "impose[s] that distinction as the central one between captive and liberated subject-positions. In that sense, before the "body" there is the "flesh," that zero degree of social conceptualization that does not escape concealment under the brush of discourse, or the reflexes of iconography. Even though the European hegemonies stole bodies- some of them female-out of West African communities in concert with the African "middleman," we regard this human and social irreparability as high crimes against the flesh, as the person of African females and African males registered the wounding. If we think of the "flesh" as a primary narrative, then we mean its seared, divided, ripped-apartness, riveted to the ship's hole, fallen, or "escaped" overboard."[327]

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[325] Field notes, June 19, 2014.

[326] Karavanta Mina, "Human Together: Into the Interior of Auto/Ontopoeisis," symploke 23.1-2 (2015). pp. 157.

[327] Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book." pp. 67. Spillers continues, speaking of the violence of slavery: "The anatomical specifications of rupture, of altered human tissue, take on the objective description of laboratory prose-eyes beaten out, arms, backs, skulls branded, a left jaw, a right ankle, punctured; teeth missing, as the calculated work of iron, whips, chains, knives, the canine patrol, the bullet. These undecipherable markings on the captive body render a kind of hieroglyphics of the flesh whose severe disjunctures come to be hidden to the cultural seeing by skin color. We might well ask if this phenomenon of marking and branding actually "transfers" from one generation to another, finding its various symbolic substitutions in an

Flesh is that which cannot and must not be commoditized[328] – in the aftermath of slavery – and yet in the camp, it is – both in the transformation of refugee flesh and in the exchange of persons as compensation for those dead or injured and thus no longer whole.[329] The refugee body, on the other hand, is subject to humanitarian governance and confinement. This humanitarian governance is informed by the ongoing production of racialized knowledge about Congolese refugees as *naturally* unceasing victims *and* perpetrators of violence; it is significant that refugees continually recalled the lengthy history of violence against black Congolese bodies, both under regimes of colonial brutality as well as under the racializing gaze of liberal humanitarianism that apprehended them as suffering Africans.[330]

In the previous chapter I briefly described how the environment in the camp shaped bodily comportment; the experience of humanitarian aid was an embodied one. The combination of bright red mud, dust and rain with barely thatched houses and the architecture and layout of the camp forced a certain pattern of bodily behavior and attentiveness. Rainy season mud required a modified version of walking, and dusty weather brought the hazard of chigo flies (*funza*) nesting in toes, among other problems. The compacted dirt roads hardened in the sun, but

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efficacy of meanings that repeat the initiating moments? As Elaine Scarry describes the mechanisms of torture [Scarry 27-59], these lacerations, woundings, fissures, tears, scars, openings, ruptures, lesions, rendings, punctures of the flesh create the distance between what I would designate a cultural vestibularity and the culture, whose state apparatus, including judges, attorneys, "owners," "soul drivers," "overseers," and "men of God," apparently colludes with a protocol of "search and destroy." This body whose flesh carries the female and the male to the frontiers of survival bears in person the marks of a cultural text whose inside has been turned outside. The flesh is the concentration of "ethnicity" that contemporary critical discourses neither acknowledge nor discourse away."

[328] I am grateful to Elliot Ross for bringing up this point.

[329] See Chapter 2 for a discussion of the practice of *fidia,* or "child human compensation," wherein a female child is given as payment for debts, whether incurred through the death of a person under one's care, or a monetary loan.

[330] See Chapters 1 and 3. See Anupama Rao and Steven Pierce, ed., Discipline and the Other Body: Correction, Corporeality, Colonialism (Durham, N.C. : Duke University Press, 2006). on the paradox of how colonial violations and excessive disciplining of the body gave rise to modern forms of human rights discourse.

were pockmarked with potholes and humps from the rain. In some places, ditches as deep as seven feet flanked the roads, so you would have to occasionally take an actual leap. The further zones of the camp often flooded, which meant that people had no choice but to wade through pools of water to get elsewhere. Snakebites were also a hazard, especially given that in the absence of proper food storage facilities, nearly every house in the camp was infested with mice.

The very act of seeking help from UNHCR and other agencies entailed psychological as well as physical distress. In Chapter 1, I discussed how aid workers dismissed material concerns and requests for adequate quantities of food, soap, medical equipment, and other everyday necessities by switching the conversation to how refugees were committing human rights abuses against women driven by "harmful traditional practices." As a result of the humanitarian focus on teaching refugees about human rights, there were ongoing campaigns that expected camp residents to wake up early, wait for human rights workshops, attend parades, and sit through meetings with aid workers no matter how harsh the weather. In all seasons, camp residents would wait in front of the UNHCR protection offices, hoping to be seen. Refugees were active in the process of seeking resettlement, and this constituted work – the work of waiting and of remembering.[331] But it must be noted that this work is also physically demanding. The UNHCR field offices in Nyarugusu were fenced off. If one were able to get inside, there were a few concrete ledges and steps to sit on. The bathrooms in this compound were not accessible to those seeking an audience, but were padlocked and meant for aid workers. Not wanting to miss their chance, refugees would refrain from expressing bodily necessities. For the rest of the camp residents outside, there was scant shade. A few sat on rocks, some squatted, and others simply stood in the punishing sun. A few months after my arrival, when the USAID donor visit was imminent, painted signs were erected within the compound and a large, thatched structure was built for those waiting. Shade may have arrived, but comfort had not. Some of those in line had protection or resettlement cases, while others sought to be reunited with their families. All spent hours, if not days, waiting for the opportunity to lodge a request for assistance. Those that did have appointments had to visit a bulletin board in front of the main hospital; these appointments were also subject to change at the last minute if an aid worker did not come to the camp on a particular day. The uncertainty of these endeavors wore heavily on both bodies and minds.

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[331] Christophe Sevigny, "Starting from Refugees Themselves: Sketch for an Institutional Ethnography of Refugee Resettlement," Canadian Association for Refugee and Forced Migration Studies (York University, Toronto: 2012), vol.

This bodily stress of navigating distances in the camp and waiting was described as an exercise in patience and endurance, but also of pain. Kombe, a part-Banyamulenge refugee from Kivu was there often. His wife had already been resettled in the U.K., but since they had not registered their marriage officially and were not registered on the same ration card, he had yet to obtain resettlement. Kombe had concealed the fact of his Banyamulenge heritage and felt under threat in a camp that was mostly populated by Babembe. Kombe talked quite a lot about the history of colonialism in the camp, at times linking it to contemporary struggles. He explained how hard it was to get an audience with the protection officers and how much time he spent waiting. Then, shrugging his shoulders, he sadly echoed what I had already heard many refugees say: "*Tunavumilia tu*" (We [must] endure it/ suffer patiently). Another constant refrain was "*Tunaumia huku*" (We're in pain here [in the camp]).[332]

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[332] Field notes, June 23, 2014.

Camp residents found humanitarian assistance inadequate, confusing, and at times demeaning. Physical suffering was just one aspect of life in the camp and the condition of refugeehood. I do not want to equate bodiliness with the subjective experience of pain, and by extension, the body as simply the object of humanitarian power.[333] But bodily vulnerability and suffering (linked to witchcraft or otherwise) in particular signaled the distinctiveness of *ukimbizi (*refugeehood*).* Refugees understood their status and the condition of refugeehood in complex ways, most importantly as the loss of wholeness, which also meant the loss of dignity and humanity.[334] This was not only tied to their legal status, but also to what camp life had made of their bodies. At a debate prior to World Refugee day, a number of teachers had gathered at WLAC to discuss refugee rights. In a breaking voice, one of them spoke about what being a refugee meant to him: "Whoever loses their rights, loses their humanity, their dignity. As refugees, we have lost our dignity. (*Yule ambaye anapoteza haki yake, anapoteza utu wake, heshima yake. Kwa mkimbizi, tumepoteza heshima.)* I don't even have basic rights." Another, responding to a prompt for messages to refugee leaders and national leaders, insisted: "We'd advise all of society that they should be human (*wawe na kiwe binadamu*). Humanity is a very important thing."[335] They saw the condition of refugeehood as stripping them of rights, consequently humanity, and thus of power.

In Chapter 3, I suggested that "turning the conversation away from "rights" and towards ways of being in the world can help us understand more both about Nyarugusu as well as about other ways of thinking about personhood, ethical dispositions, and justice."[336] Yes, refugees were aware of the "right to have rights" and noted the connection between having rights and being within the fold of humanity. But they also defined humanity in other ways: full humanity entailed bodily integrity. During the debate mentioned above, the facilitator also asked: "What does World Refugee Day remind you of?" "It saddens me," one teacher answered. "I don't know where I left from and how I got here. It reminds me of all this – how I came here and was treated for my mental health and started life again. Since I came here, I have never regained the body weight I had in the Congo. We'll just have big questions. It's a day of contemplation – how can we go back, etc."[337] He held up a photograph of himself taken at an earlier date, and gestured towards himself, pulling his clothes out to show how loosely they now hung on him. This sort of concern with adequate bodily weight was not at all uncommon, and given food scarcity in the camp, not surprising. What was notable, however, was the connection of discourses about humanity and bodily well-being.[338] In many instances, speaking about life in the camp, residents would mimic the UNHCR logo, which features two hands protectively encompassing a figure. Referring to the aid they received, they put their hands above their heads, saying "We have nothing. Our hands have been cut off. (*Tumekatwa mkono*)" The phrase "*tumekatwa mkono*" was a jab at the UNHCR logo's disembodied hands; it reflected the constraints under which camp residents were placed, particularly the inability to work, but also the demotion into a condition of less-than-wholeness.

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[333] Steven Van Wolputte, "Hang on to Your Self: Of Bodies, Embodiment, and Selves," Annual Review of Anthropology 33.1 (2004). pp. 255-256.

[334] Field notes, June 19, 2014.

[335] Field notes, June 19, 2014.

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[336] See Chapter 3.

[337] Field notes, June 19, 2014.

[338] Robert Meister has argued that the circumscription of human rights abuses to bodily injury has precluded any sort of meaningful justice in post-Apartheid South Africa. See Meister, After Evil: A Politics of Human Rights.

Other "same stories" that I heard concerned food. At the beginning of my research in the camp I was often mistaken for an evaluation officer. Once, walking through one of two food distribution points on ration day, people gestured to their food asking me if I could believe how little they were given. I heard about food almost daily. If I sat down for an open-ended conversation, the subject of food rations would come up nearly immediately: the rations were not enough, they were late, difficult to cook, monotonous, and dissimilar to food they were used to eating.[339] I saw these stories as the natural outcome of totally inadequate food assistance. But over time I came to understand that they also revealed much more about the ways in which refugees saw themselves. Camp residents presented pictures to show the disparity between previous versions of themselves and their new appearance in the camp. These pictures comprised part of their "dossier," supplementing other health records and evidence of interaction with aid agencies. This happened both in peoples' homes as well as in more public forums like workshops or debates. Pointing to the picture, they would announce their original weight, then how many kilos they'd lost in the camp. The loss of weight and the onset of poor health was emblematic of the condition of refugeehood.

Understandings of bodily breakdown were naturally gendered. Womanhood was explicitly tied to reproductive functions and organs and gender-normative presentation, which in the Congolese context meant bodily adornment and wearing dresses or skirts. Men in the camp –

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[339] To give you a rough idea of food aid, when I visited the food distribution center in February of 2014, camp residents told me that they received: No rice (they recalled that the last shipment of rice was received thanks to Japan in 2005 or 2006), a sack of maize flour, beans (people use firewood to cook and the beans take up to three days to cook properly), a fistful of salt per person per month, and two cups of vegetable oil per person per month. Mothers also receive fortified porridge. This particular month, the shipment of food from outside Tanzania was delayed, so there were only beans for half the month. I was told the food only lasts 3 weeks, even though it's supposed to last a month. They receive no vegetables besides these staples. People farm within their tiny plots, but technically are not allowed to. There is a small, very limited local market close to the entrance of the camp two days a week, where villagers from surrounding areas sell fruits, vegetables, and some basic necessities. This is not officially sanctioned, and people often cannot afford the goods.

like most men elsewhere - both expected this and spoke of it disparagingly as characteristic of women, noting that their propensity to spend money on clothes or make-up meant that they were feeble-minded. Once, interviewing a young woman, I was interrupted by her neighbor, an older woman. I was wearing trousers, but otherwise presented as stereotypically femme. She asked me whether I was a man or a woman. I responded that I was a woman, to which she exclaimed in disbelief: "Then show me your breasts!" (*Toa maziwa!)*. Bodily markers of fertility and femininity were extremely important, and injury to what defined womanhood or the lack of reproductive capabilities was seen as a serious hindrance to a full social and familial life.

Refugees did not simply *have* a body, but *were* bodies.[340] They faced corporeal vulnerability caused by malnutrition, extensive weight loss, illnesses, skin problems, parasites, and bodily harm from beatings, rape, and witchcraft. Women in the camp expressed their condition in terms of corporeal vulnerability too. This is not to say that their experiences of camp life were simply of suffering, but that camp life emphasized corporeality and physical being. Many survivors of sexual violence suffered from fistulas or other reproductive injuries. They lamented their inability to give birth, interpreting it as a lack of wholeness and purpose.[341]At times, the origins of their pain were located in the Congo – some referred to the treatment they finally received upon arrival in the camp, others noted how their wounds and injuries had been exacerbated by camp life.[342] Given that in Bembe life having children was of utmost importance, a woman who could not bear children could be subject to violence or ostracism.[343] Women also explained that their inability to take care of their skin was troubling ("we don't even receive lotion - "*hatupewi hata mafuta ya mwili*"). Ringworm infections, painfully dry skin, callouses, cracked feet, hardened hands, lice, chigoe flea, mango fly, and mosquito bites engraved the surface of the body with a catalog of humanitarian shortcomings. The insecurity of their new space also meant that the threat of bodily violation was ever-present – for example, when they went out in the fields to collect firewood.

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[340] B.S. Turner, The Body and Society: Explorations in Social Theory (London: Sage, 1996). pp. 43: "The body is at once the most solid, the most elusive, illusory, concrete, metaphorical, ever present and ever distant thing – a site, an instrument, an environment, a singularity and a multiplicity." See also Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Margaret M. Lock, "The Mindful Body: A Prolegomenon to Future Work in Medical Anthropology," Medical Anthropology Quarterly 1.1 (1987). The notion of the body I am working with here acknowledges many different bodies – multiple, spiritual, and corporeal.

[341] Interview with Rosita, February 3, 2014.

Camp residents not only recalled past moments of bodily wholeness and good health, but remembered *with* their bodies. Their material selves bore traces of both the past in the DRC and the harsh present of the camp. Whether the camp was a site of healing and treatment of injury associated with violence in the Congo and consequent flight to Tanzania, or the location of renewed violence, the body served as mediator of experience. This was evident not only in the case of those who felt their weight loss acutely, but also those who bore new and old scars; remnants of pain seared into their flesh. In some of my interviews women would undress, lifting up blouses and skirts to show the inscriptions of violence – stab wounds from kitchen knives and machetes, burn marks, scratches and bruises, surgical wounds, skin problems, and ulcers.[344] "*Nimepunguza*," they would say, too. "I've lost weight." For Spillers, flesh is prior to the captive body. The captive body always retains the memory of the flesh, in fact, "the body's return to the flesh is a central site for the production of that counter memory."[345] And as Margaret Lock puts it, "…bodily distress has both individual import and political possibility."[346] Miriam Ticktin has written about how the suffering body becomes a biological resource in which illness and violation is actually desirable and in which racialized and gendered narratives allow only certain kinds of suffering to be recognized as legitimate.[347] In the camp too, having a body suffering from disease and gender-based violence might garner a refugee assistance. But recalling whole bodies also functioned as a form of claim making. In focusing on their wounds, weight, and bodily vulnerability – in accepting the contingency of life and physical security – camp residents remember other, wholer versions of their bodies and selves. This was not only a form of remembrance, but also a claim against the inadequacy of humanitarian assistance.

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[342] Interview with Rosita, February 3, 2014

[343] Interview with Fortunata, September 20, 2014; Interview with Rosie, February 3, 2014

[344] Interview with Rosie, Feb 3, 2014; Interview with Fatuma, November 4, 2014.

Life, Death and Undeath in the camp

If bodies were a site of remembrance and experience, they were not simply material. Bodies could be metaphysical, present, absent, alive, dead, both, or somewhere in between. In other words, the taken-for-grantedness of life was troubled in more ways than one. During my time in Nyarugusu I became acquainted with an entirely other register: that of the undead, of the multiply present, and of those woken from death in order to be used *as labor*. Stories of refugees who were not alive, but took the place of those who are alive in the fields were common. In these narratives, they were mentally unable to think for themselves, enslaved, physically present, yet nothing but ghosts, working without consciousness, unremunerated, and alienated from their labor. It would be easy to stop here and read these stories as simple stories of extraction. But I believe that they have more to do with the ways in which refugees perceived their value as human beings and how the condition of refugeehood had altered this.

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[345] Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick, Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader (Taylor & Francis, 1999). pp. 321.

[346] Margaret M Lock, "Cultivating the Body: Anthropology and Epistemologies of Bodily Practice and Knowledge," Annual Review of Anthropology 22 (1993). pp. 142.

[347] Ticktin, Casualties of Care: Immigration and the Politics of Humanitarianism in France.

There is no shortage of zombies and vampires in African history and popular culture. Stories of these not-quite-humans are not uncommon in or limited to sub-Saharan Africa.[348] Luise White writes about stories of vampires employed by colonial agents to suck the blood of Africans, ultimately reading them as a commentary on the nature of work and interactions with technology. White urges us to ask what these things that may not have happened meant to the people for whom they were real. White is concerned with the task of historiography and reinserting fantasy into history to question methodologies; the tales are authentic because it is the subjects themselves who produce their idioms. Her vampires are "not simply generalized metaphors of extraction and oppression but… like other orally transmitted information, told at specific times to specific people for specific reasons."[349] The tales she cites are different than those of the undead "zombies" I encountered in Nyarugusu. But there are important parallels.

Stories of zombies in Nyarugusu shared a number of narrative features, but what distinguished them from similar regional tales was that the narrators always related them to the condition of refugeehood. They were told to me by male refugees and involved a person who had died and then come back to life, but without full consciousness or awareness, and usually as labor. The stories were usually told as received tales and were united by the absolute certainty of death and shock of subsequent recognition. They often involved the loss of mental faculties and sometimes of good health. Camp life is taxing, but work is not allowed. But "occult economies"[350] were thriving; I continuously heard stories in which people are raised from the dead – abducted – as laborers; one of witch doctors I spoke with admitted to this practice. These people aren't conscious of their whereabouts, or that they are enslaved. They are an army of compliant laborers, saving money for their witch masters, sometimes back home in the Congo, and sometimes near the camp. People might be raised from the grave at night, and used to work in the fields or in construction, before returning to their subterranean homes. In other cases, they exist simultaneously – both alive and dead - in more than one place. I had vaguely heard of these stories, and asked my friend Ebondo about them. He had recently recalled to me how he'd been struck by lighting in a closed room in the middle of the day, and relished the opportunity to tell me about what he'd seen in the camp:

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[348] See, for example: Luise White, Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), Jean Comaroff and John L Comaroff, "Alien-Nation: Zombies, Immigrants, and Millennial Capitalism," The South Atlantic Quarterly 101.4 (2002).

[349] Luise White, "Cars out of Place: Vampires, Technology, and Labor in East and Central Africa," Representations 43 (1993). pp. 29.

"You can find a man - he's died, a funeral was held [in the camp], his family knows he's dead. But in reality, he's alive and whole somewhere else."

"What?" I asked, perplexed.

"Yes. It's witchcraft."

"But why?"

"They're used as workers. Like slaves. They've lost their minds – they don't know where they are or what they are doing. They can't think."[351]

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[350] Comaroff and Comaroff, "Occult Economies and the Violence of Abstraction: Notes from the South African Postcolony."

[351] Fieldnotes, May 17, 2014.

The insecurity of camp life thus did not end with the death of one's material body. New dangers lurked in the afterlife; but even then one could not recover wholeness. In another instance, "A man died of snakebite in Nyarugusu. Two weeks later he was seen alive in the DRC, going to work the fields, cutting wood." In this example, death caused by natural dangers in the camp (and presumably, the lack of antivenom in the camp hospital) returned a refugee home. The condition of work is ambiguous; perhaps it was forced labor, but it might also be read as a reflection on the inability of refugees to work in Nyarugusu.[352] Similarly, another story told of a refugee incentive worker dying and coming back to life as a laborer: "A teacher was going to Kigoma. He worked for CEMDO (the environmental organization in the camp). On the way from Kasulu he saw a refugee in the same *daladala* (minibus). When asked, he said he was going to Kigoma. He'd died and been buried in Nyarugusu already. He was going to Kigoma to work for someone who had a dagaa fishing business – to work the nets."[353] Given the kinds of threats encountered by refugees who had secured coveted positions with humanitarian organizations, this death may have been viciously motivated by jealousy, but also points to the economic stress experienced in the camp.

Yet another example pointed to the despair engendered in humanitarian confinement. "Someone hung themselves in the camp. They were buried. Two days later some refugees saw him on a motorcycle and asked him where he was going. "I'm going to the Congo." "Have you already registered? (*Umeshapita sensa*?)" Yes, I've already registered and I'm going to the Congo. He was alive! They shook his hand and talked to him." In this anecdote, escape by suicide, rather than formal resettlement or repatriation, was the only reasonable means to return home.

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[352] "Income generating activities" were prohibited by the Government of Tanzania, and there was no real space for farming.

[353] Examples above from Field notes, June 10, 2014.

The condition of refugeehood was thus laden with risk, not only from nature but also from ill-meaning people. Another man found himself conscripted to labour as a zombie slave while in the camp. He was able to escape through death, and crucially, through reappearance in the Congo. "When he went to do some farming, he was bitten by a snake. Someone went to take his corpse and he was buried. They dug a grave and he was buried the very day he died. But after a few months had passed, the man returned (*Yule mtu alirudi*), I don't know whether through witchcraft or what! (*sijui, ni mazingira ya kiuchawi?!)* He appeared in the Congo (*alienda kuonekana kwetu Congo*). He carried the baggage (*mizigo*) of people who had made him work (*watu wanaomfanyisha kazi*). When you die, they do this to you. A person takes minds (*hizi akili*), and changes them, and the minds that are altered become in like another world (*deuxieme monde*). When they found this man with his baggage, [it was because] there was a man who recognized him and greeted him. He [the man who recognized him] called out for others to help. Then they grabbed him and took him and gave him various medications, and he's alive until now, living in a place called Baraka in Mwambango.

"Did he recover?"

"Yes, he recovered and is healthy (*mtu mzima*). He was here, and it was here in the camp that he died and they buried him."

"How come he didn't he come back [to life in the camp]?" I asked.

"Now why would he come back [to life] here, when there is our homeland? Here we are refugees, and there is our homeland. Now, after being like an invalid, they took him to a prayer hall (*vyumba vya maombi*) and they had to pray, and he recovered, and it looked like there was no reason to come back here, so he's at home (in his homeland) there (*yupo kule nyumbani*)."[354]

All these stories involve death and witnessed burial. The body is most certainly both dead and interred, and yet what is striking is that coming-alive happens firstly with regards to the extraction of labor, and secondly, in the Congo. In the final example, the man who is rescued from his predicament as an unconscious laborer is rescued in the Congo. He recovers his full health and remains in the Congo, his true home. The condition of refugeehood was perceived as making camp residents more vulnerable to abduction or un-death. In other examples, zombie refugees were taken to work in fisheries in Kigoma and Mwanza, and in Dar es Salaam in places like big stores and factories. Their bodies (and the labor that could be extracted from them) had value, not their lives; the abduction was possible precisely because they were refugees whose lives had no value and who no one cared about.[355]

Witchcraft and the Body

Another discourse that centered on bodily integrity, protection, and value was that of witchcraft. In the previous chapter I discussed the emergence of new ethical orientations with regards to fears surrounding witchcraft and imperatives to protect the wholeness of one's self. But witchcraft also gave rise to a different kind of bodily distinction – that of the human and the animal. The following narratives about witchcraft add to our understanding of the bodily experience of refugee life and vulnerability in the camp. They also point to an embodied form of knowledge – to the body as an instrument for *knowing* and not just being.

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[354] Recorded interview, January 2014.

[355] Field notes, May 17, 2014.

My interlocutors in the camp, along with UNHCR drivers and Tanzanian staff members, were at pains to warn me about witchcraft and often spoke of the dangers it presented. Many of the drivers had worked in multiple camps and settlements, and traded stories about the things they'd seen. One driver told me about *uchawi* he had seen in Kibondo, where the former Burundian refugee camps were located. In the example he provided, a child's arm was used to make medication. It was taken for evidence and the people in question were jailed. Later on, in the evidence bag, it had turned into a goat's leg.[356] Other declarations of the dangers of witchcraft were bolstered by grainy videos sent over Whatsapp that purported to show various acts of witchcraft. These videos were standard fare in Tanzania, and witchcraft a common theme in Tanzanian television shows, but the drivers always insisted that it was particularly dangerous in the context of refugee settlements and camps.

The main narratives of witchcraft in the camp were temporally divided, and had in common ideas of profit and protection.[357] The first was historical - memories of colonial violence were not at all distant. Exploitation was spoken of in idioms of the witchcraft and science-as-witchcraft, e.g. "The wazungu came and bought our magic. They took it home and used it for technology."[358] In the second telling located in the Congo, witchcraft was the source of the abilities of rebels and armies but was also used by civilians for protection. These stories explained survival and refugeehood.

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[356] Field notes, Feb 17, 2014.

[357] Chapter 4 discusses theories of witchcraft, accumulation, and occult economies.

[358] Field notes, Feb 20, 2014.

Witchcraft was also used to extract labour or maximize profit. I was told about two refugees from Mtabila who had gone to a local farmer's plantation to work as farmhands. The story reflects the potential for exploitation amongst refugees who leave the camp to seek out work.

> "They were among twelve men eating food from a single communal plate of *ugali,* a hearty, starchy food made from either cornmeal or cassava. They kept eating and eating - the food seemed to be enough for everyone, but they weren't actually full yet. One of them had taken medicine to protect himself against witchcraft, so he saw something like an invisible hand. He warned his friend not to eat, saying the man was using witchcraft to feed his workers so he didn't have to pay for food. They then confronted the man, who confessed. The next day, the food wasn't enough for everyone. And the *ugali* wasn't filling. The farmer agreed to pay them double their wage if they agreed not to tell anyone. They left early. From then on none of the other refugees went to that farm to find work."[359]

Finally, witchcraft could be used by camp residents to disguise themselves or become invisible. This could be done to get around camp regulations. Such was the case of one woman, who had no money for tickets, but was able to leave the camp and take a 6-hour bus journey without any problems because she could appear invisible.[360] Others traveled to the Congo and back undetected. More significantly, it allowed for the transformation of the human body into an animal body. Some transformed themselves into goats or other animals to hide, or changed others into cattle to perform labour or as a punishment. Thus beliefs and narratives of witchcraft simultaneously contained the human and the non-human, the dead and the living, and the potentiality of bodily injury, healing and protection.

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[359] Field notes, May 17, 2014.

[360] Field notes, May 17, 2014.

In the camp, a person suspected of being a witch (*mchawi*) could suffer serious consequences, even death. A number of people were moved to temporary secure housing to protect them once they had been dubbed witches. But on the other hand, some sought to protect themselves from curses by using witchcraft itself, since there was a difference between a witch (*mchawi*) and a witchdoctor (*mganga*). There were also many types of witches (*wachawi*) and witchdoctors/healers (*waganga*). Among healers, there were mediums, some who only used leaves and trees to heal, and some who could know all your problems without being told. Some of the *waganga* could do all of these things. One could be both a *mganga* and a *mchawi*, though apparently having both abilities was rare. There were two simultaneously existing and somewhat contradictory claims about witchcraft in the camp. First, everyone I spoke to maintained that witches were dangerous and that cursing others was the result of jealousy or because of an evil character (*roho mbaya*). Second, witches themselves – and indeed many non-witches who claimed that witches were evil – stressed that they only used witchcraft for protection. Ideas and beliefs about witchcraft and protection existed alongside religious convictions – for example, someone would visit a witch and obtain a protective serum, while also claiming that they were a devout Christian and that God would protect them being cursed (*kurogwa*).

I sought out a witchdoctor after learning how pervasively the practice of witchcraft – and the fears it aroused – affected camp life, and was introduced to one by my Bembe teacher, a young man who told me that the witchdoctor had cured him of snakebite. He was already dead when his father had brought him to the *Mzee*, who brought him back to life. He insisted that you just *knew* when something was *uchawi*. He was no longer afraid of witchcraft, though, having protected himself with a series of miniscule razor cuts on the wrist and applying medicine to them. One could also do this under the chin. It was common to find either a witch doctor/traditional healer or a witch, but rare to find someone who had both the powers of witchcraft as well as those of healing. Mzee Kenge was both.

Mzee Kenge lived in a far corner of the camp, a half hour walk from the main verification center. His hut was neatly organized, with a walled off yard in the back, a designated covered entrance, and two large rooms. The room we usually sat in contained an assortment of tools more commonly associated with witchcraft – bones, mirrors, a rice basket, and various small objects and bottles of tinctures. Our first visit was cordial, and Mzee was excited to talk to me, and quite forthcoming. He spoke with his whole body, laughing and gesturing, but given the nature of his work and the danger of being discovered as a witch, he was secretive, shooing off curious children who had gathered around and constantly checking the small window that dimly illuminated the room in which we sat. He understood that my questions came from a place of a skepticism, and seemed eager to show me more. This turned into a pattern of gently extending and then withdrawing invitations, as though both of us knew there was an invisible line that could not or should not be crossed.

Mzee Kenge suggested that he could curse me with *mlambo* ("piga mlambo"), so that I would know that it was real, and then heal me. But it could bother me many years later, and then what? I wouldn't be able to find a cure in India. He had a perpetual smile, which sometimes turned into a smile of "can you believe it?" He lowered his voice to tell me how secret it was, and that it was only used to protect himself and his family. Besides, he said, magic has a short shelf-life, and doesn't work forever.

The second time we met, Mzee was not wearing his hat but a white triangle in his hair towards the front of his head. He explained that it was to protect him, insisting again on how important protection is – how he only engaged in witchcraft for self-preservation and protection. He noted that he was more willing to talk to me because I wasn't African, and therefore had no personal investment in witchcraft. He also gestured under the table to indicate that the ancestors (*wazee (Swahili)/ bakoko (Bembe)*) were there, listening to everything we said. They wanted to know exactly what I wanted to know. I mirrored him in secrecy, trying to be sensitive to how he might feel. At our next visit, clearly aware of my skepticism, he told me that he had spoken with his ancestors about me, and that he knew I really wanted to see witchcraft. He offered to turn my leg into a snake temporarily, or perhaps conjure up a leopard. I declined both offers.[361]

Back in New York, I was reminded of this moment while reading John L. Jackson's article on ethnographic sincerity. "Ethnographic work might also actively solicit a kind of compassionate and empathetic guffaw at the many ways in which people hold fast to a sense of robust selfhood, fending off the potentially dehumanizing slide into an anguished and pathological embrace of one-dimensional victimhood."[362] Jackson urges us to push past our concerns with "authenticity," instead looking at "sincerity," paying attention to "how anthropologists and their informants embody an equally affective subjecthood during the ethnographic encounter."[363] Amongst aid workers, concerns about witchcraft were often talked about dismissively ("I don't know what they are imagining").[364] Fears were seen as unreasonable and irrational. But however absurd or fantastical tales of shape-shifting and supernatural powers might have seemed, they were real ideas with real manifestations in the camp. A skeptic myself, I'd often ask how exactly people knew about witchcraft or where their stories came from. The answer was always that knowing was innate, and a given. (*Unajua tu*!/You just know!) I found my mind wandering to potentially "rational" explanations for *mlambo* (Necrotizing fasciitis? Festering wounds?) Nevertheless, I was committed to taking these stories seriously.

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[361] Field notes, February 20-22, 2014.

[362] John L. Jackson, "On Ethnographic Sincerity," Current Anthropology 51.S2 (2010). pp. 279.

[363] Jackson, "On Ethnographic Sincerity." pp. 281.

Speaking of what has been termed the "ontological turn" in anthropology, David Graeber writes: "… we'll never have any chance of finding out [whether we are right or wrong] if we commit ourselves to treating every statement our informants make that seems to fly in the face of accepted ideas of physical possibility as if it were the gate to some alternative reality we will never comprehend. Engaging in such thought experiments does not really open us to unsettling possibilities. Or, anyway, not the kind of unsettling possibilities that are likely to get anyone fired from their jobs. To the contrary, it ultimately protects us from those possibilities, in just the way Holbraad suggested OT protects Western science and common sense."[365] How might we think of stories of witchcraft, zombies, and transformation in the camp in this context?

My encounters with Mzee Kenge and others who spoke about witchcraft gave me two indications about how parables of witchcraft could also be read as commentaries on corporeality and personhood. First, it reiterated that the necessity of corporeal protection and nourishment, while important everywhere, was heightened and charged in the camp; being a *mtu mzima* (literally translated as able-bodied or whole person, but used in the sense of complete personhood) meant that the flesh was adequately protected from harm, well-fed, and filled out. Secondly, personhood was spatiotemporal as well as corporeal. The *physical* presence of ancestors – dead and from another time – was repeatedly marked, as was the idea that this kind of spatiotemporal and physical presence could be multiple.

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[364] Interview with UNHCR Community Services Officer, July 30, 2014.

[365] David Graeber, "Radical Alterity Is Just Another Way of Saying" Reality": A Reply to Eduardo Viveiros De Castro," HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory 5.2 (2015). pp. 35. Jafari Sinclaire Allen and Ryan Cecil Jobson, "The Decolonizing Generation: (Race and) Theory in Anthropology since the Eighties," Current Anthropology 57.2 (2016). have noted that Graeber has not acknowledged his intellectual debt to black anthropologists who had already made this point. See Faye V. Harrison, ed., Decolonizing Anthropology: Moving Further toward an Anthropology for Liberation, 2nd ed. (Arlington, VA: American Anthropological Association, 1997). pp. 1-15.

I also spent a lot of time talking to Sly, a middle-aged Burundian who was a *sungu sungu* officer. He had held a position of leadership in another refugee camp. He had also spent time in the Burundian refugee settlements. He stressed that he had experienced and seen a lot. Usually, our conversations took place in Swahili, but he would switch to English when he wanted to share information secretly. On many occasions he gave me details of gross humanitarian failure – stories of aid workers taking advantage of or purposefully harming refugees, of politicians in cahoots with militia, of institutional and political failures on the part of aid agencies that were so egregious they belied belief - then insist that I shouldn't write about them, because it would be too dangerous. Like many camp residents, he was obsessed with the news, asking me whenever we met about recent events in far-flung locations. Sly was also very conscious of the social norms demanded in the camp. Like other Burundians, he was acutely aware of how he must carry himself in the camp to avoid trouble and discussed this with me openly. One of his main concerns was witchcraft – or more specifically – the fact that the Bembe were known and feared for these abilities:

> "They take a man – a live man – and bury something else as if he's dead – then take him to another place, still alive. Then they come at night and take him alive and sell

> him for gold and diamonds in Congo, for the purpose of hard work. It's a kind of witchcraft because you make the person disappear. You make it seem like he is dead, but you bury something which is not a dead body. The Congolese do not like to do night patrol, [because they might] meet with cows on the road or a person who is carrying a house on his head. [*note: this refers to acts of witchcraft in which humans have transformed themselves/been transformed into cows to avoid detection, and to the inordinate strength that can be granted by witchcraft as well as the fact that labor can be compelled using it.*] The Bembe do this a lot. They don't like to see others develop. Me myself as a *sungu sungu* I am investigating these cases to see why these things are happening. People are telling me everything. I know from victims and those who treat them... They do these things as a business. They send you to someone and he charges you the amount he wants. The curser and the curer work together. They've even taken to South Africa – they're even bewitching foreigners. It's *mlambo.* Even though it kills. We're scared of it and of poisoning. There are different types of *mlambo* – for 2 months, 6 months, 2 years. You know [name of officer] from the MHA [Ministry of Home Affairs]? He got *mlambo* in the leg."[366]

Then, pointing to the person next to me, he whispered in English that he was one of the most dangerous people in the camp. "Everyone in the camp is scared of him. His mother is a witch. She can hold a table and turn it into a man. Another man who is feared is a zone leader. He can't be overthrown because they are scared of him."

He continued: "Another woman was given as compensation but when she awoke she was next to a goat. Yet another had turned into a snake. You see, it is a kind of business. It's in the bible – Jesus himself said it was. Deuteronomy. But we should never fear them because we should believe in God," he said confidently. "But are you scared?" I asked. "Ah, the body is scared!" Reminding me of Jesus, he said – "The spirit is willing, but the body is afraid." He insisted that undeveloped people practiced witchcraft because they were jealous when others advanced: "Even the Waha [locals of Kigoma] – if they have money, they go somewhere else to build, like Mwanza or Dar. They know that if they show development they'll get cursed. Even when people buy food like beef, they hide it, because they can be bewitched if other people know. People are very jealous. When I went to buy fish the seller told me to hide it, and warned me that I could be bewitched." Then he told me about the stress of being in Nyarugusu, writing down his weight on a bible pamphlet in front of him, underlining his original weight and double underlining his lowered weight.

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[366] This and the following paragraph: Field notes and Interview with Sly, February 18, 2014.

The body was the instrument of feeling and the repository of his anxiety; witchcraft was known and felt through the body in terms of fear, and worked against bodily integrity. While religious convictions could properly protect Sly's spirit from fear, witchcraft would be able to harm his body physically both by its existence as threat and its potential application as harm. This kind of embodied knowledge was also described as both a given and culturally specific. I usually asked my interlocutors how they knew certain things – for example, that someone far away had been cursed, or that witchcraft was used to kill those who had been given as *fidia*. The answer was always some variation of "I just know." Kundjo explained that he knew *uchawi* existed because he had seen its effects, and because it existed even in the bible. However, you couldn't see it; knowing about it was intuitive.[367] Mzee Kenge described this as a cultural as well as an intuitive, embodied skill: It's our secret. We have this ability. It's an ability within our culture." (*"Tunajua kama siri yetu. Huu uwezo – sisi tuko nao. Ni uwezo katika mila zetu.")* He continued: "The instrument of knowing ("*Chombo ya kujua")* is like a radar. You can simply see it, like on a TV. Or you start thinking about the person. Perhaps you call, and you're told that they were sick, but you don't think that's true. So you consult experts – [with] indigenous expertise *("ujuzi wa kiasili")*. In this telling the body of the diviner is a finely tuned instrument. Mzee Kenge referred to this as a *"microscope ya kiasili,"* (an indigenous microscope), that functioned like an x-ray machine and was actually a way to look inside someone's body without a machine.[368] Thus bodies in the camp were not simply ways of being, remembering, and feeling, but also of *knowing*.

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[367] Fieldnotes, February 13, 2014.

The instability of the 'boundaries' between humanity and animality was also significant. Along with the transformation of human beings into animals and body parts into animal parts, a rich zoography existed in the camp. Humans could turn into [*kugeuka*] animals – most commonly goats, cows, or hyenas – or compel others to take on animal forms.[369] Rats, snakes, insects, cattle, and dead animals figured physically and metaphorically in camp life. I spent a lot of time with Pascale, a medical student from Goma, who was now a volunteer at the camp hospital. One day, when we were talking about medical treatment in the camp, he admitted that he did not like the sight of blood. I asked him why he chose to be a medical assistant then. "This blood and the blood of slaughtering a person [*damu ya kuchinja mtu*] (here he mimed slitting a throat with his hand) are totally different!"[370] On another occasion, he told me that he did not like to eat meat because (again, miming a knife slitting his throat) he had seen his father slaughtered like an animal.[371] Women described acts of violence and sexual violence in the camp as inhuman and bestial (*vitendo vya unyama*). Animals were harbingers of danger or lightning rods for witchcraft. Allen Feldman writes of the rich animal topography he encountered ethnographically: "At these sites animality was a shared nexus for both the agents and recipients of violence; practices, images and memories of violence were rendered tangible, material, and intractable thorugh the figure of the animal… Political animality functioned in many of these episodes as a habitus of inhumanization, by which I mean not the maltreatment of humanity but rather the entrenchment of specific anthropocentric norms through ideological projections of humanity's negotiations, alters, and antagonists – all those who lack humanity yet densely signify the human in their lack."[372] The danger posed by "entrapment" into animal flesh, the concealment of humans as animals, a life marked by being-as-animal rather than being-as-human, and the association of animal-being with violence all pointed to a specific understanding of desired humanity as dignified and out-of-danger.

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[368] Fieldnotes, February 17, 2014.

[369] Personal Correspondence with Kagabo, April 5, 2017.
[370] Field notes, March 5, 2014.

[371] Field notes, March 20, 2014.

Being Human

Encampment and the ongoing work of "*mafundisho*" (education) also generated a whole new vocabulary amongst aid workers and refugees alike. One term that came up consistently – both explicitly and otherwise – was "the human." Refugees have come to define being human in a number of ways, but their stories also trouble the category. They reflect upon the condition of encampment to express demands on humanitarian aid based upon their humanity. In a number of situations – when NFI's (non-food items) were delayed or unavailable, when food was delayed or inadequate, when no assistance was forthcoming – I heard camp residents insist that they should be helped because they were human. Surveying the damage to homes caused by a storm, Kagabo noted that the residents would receive no help to rebuild. Pointing to school buildings destroyed by a storm a few months prior, he shook his head in disbelief, explaining that they had not yet been rebuilt. "You see? How can they, as human beings, not do anything? They should help us because they are human beings and we are human beings. Aren't we human?" *(hatuko*

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[372] Feldman, ed., In the Name of Humanity: The Government of Threat and Care. . pp. 117.

binadamu?)[373] Kagabo thought that aid workers should understand their shared humanity as the basis for helping camp residents. Aid workers too, thought of human beings and humanity, but in reference to the suffering other. They often referred to what they could *not* do to refugees, for example, prohibiting them from cooking in the transit camp, even though they were not supposed to. "After all, they are human beings."[374] This was a refrain I heard from many aid workers. Refugees were to be helped because they were human beings too; they could not be mistreated because they were, after all, human, and they were human because they were suffering.[375] As human, they must be included in the category of man; they must have rights.

Earlier, I discussed having rights and bodily wholeness as two conditions for inclusion in the category of humanity. The figure of the body was the site of experience, remembrance, and knowledge. The physical sensation of loss, fleshly harm, and corporeal vulnerability structured notions of what it meant to be fully human and wrote refugeehood as a condition of less-than-humanity. Even so, Kagabo's "Aren't we human beings?" insists on a claim to humanity despite that lack. Similarly, as seen through the prism of zombie-ness, refugeehood signified a lack of value and the potential for abduction and bodily exploitation. Recovery from this condition entailed exiting the condition of exile in the camp. Finally, tales of witchcraft revealed understandings of personhood as exceeding physicality and reiterated the understanding of full humanness as bodily safety. Thus *refugeeness*, *personhood* and *being human* were defined with reference to the transience between life and death, corporeality, animality, humanity and inhumanity. *Being human* called forth narratives and claims about humanitarian aid and elicited new frameworks of flourishing. Whereas the feminist critique of violence against the body and the right to bodily integrity was framed as a human right, and the appeal to its protection looked to the language of legality, rule of law, and legal instruments, the claim to corporeal wholeness and wellness made by refugees did not draw on the language of rights, but referred to dignity based in humanity (in which humanity itself was not universal but comprised of differential vulnerability). This is slightly different than the claims to dignity articulated by African critics of human rights discourse, because it did not refer back to the language of rights. Black feminist theorists, in critiquing the discourse of rights, and in showing how even the acceptance of and appropriation of rights have been insufficient in achieving full humanity have opened up the path to move away from the rule of law as justice.[376] Hannah Arendt had already pointed out human rights were meaningless without citizenship,[377] but black feminism has drawn our attention to the fact that citizenship is meaningless without full humanity.[378] Refugees – dually marginalized as outside the order of citizenship and outside the pale of full humanity (but not suffering humanity) – require us to think through this problem more urgently than ever.

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[373] Field notes, March 19, 2014.

[374] Field notes, October 4, 2014.

[375] In the 1990s, Rony Brauman of Doctors Without Borders (MSF) defined a human being as "one who is not made to suffer." Peter Redfield, Life in Crisis: The Ethical Journey of Doctors without Borders (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013). pp. 41.

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[376] Hartman, Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America, Ashon T. Crawley, Blackpentecostal Breath (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017), McKittrick, ed., Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis, Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, after Man, Its Overrepresentation--an Argument.", Sharpe, In the Wake: On Blackness and Being, Claudia Rankine, Citizen: An American Lyric (Minneapolis: Graywolf, 2014).

[377] Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism.

[378] In the context of humanitarian care for refugees in France, Miriam Ticktin writes: "one can either be a citizen or a human but not both." Ticktin, Casualties of Care: Immigration and the Politics of Humanitarianism in France. pp. 219. Refugees in Nyarugusu point out that they are treated as neither.

In the next chapter, I discuss other fleshly experiences of refugeehood, including moments of laughter, to explore the condition of vulnerability that forms the basis of new claims in Nyarugusu, and how such claims point towards a political otherwise.

Chapter 6: Laughter, Bodily Vulnerability, and the Horizons of an Otherwise

The Nyarugusu "Departure Center" was a temporary shelter constructed with plastic sheeting hung on wooden poles and covered with tin roofs. Located next to the UNHCR field offices, it housed some of the refugees with protection needs and new arrivals to the camp. As with other housing in the camp, there was no flooring. Camp residents insisted that it was worse to be in "Departure" than the rest of the camp, because people could not plant food, and they did not have solid walls. One afternoon, as I sat in the *sungu sungu* office facing "Departure" with a couple of khaki-clad officers, a woman marched over from across the road, baby slung over her back, with a dirtied, stemless umbrella in hand.[379]

"I've come to file a report," she said, agitated.

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[379] The following paragraphs draw on Field notes, March 11, 2014.

"What?"

"This!"

"What do you mean, this?!"

"This!" She threw the umbrella onto the floor, and it bloomed with force to reveal a tattered plastic bag. "I woke up to this in the morning. It's witchcraft." Her voice rose.

"Open it up, let's see."

Someone gingerly pushed the bag open. Inside was a smaller see-through plastic bag, and a plastic soda bottle filled with an unknown substance.

"Is it a bomb?" someone asked. It did look suspiciously like a poorly constructed Molotov cocktail. Another person gingerly opened it and smelled the contents. No, not kerosene. Juice maybe? They chuckled. No. The general consensus was that no one knew what it was. The main officer leaned over to me, and conspiratorially whispered in English: "This is not witchcraft. Witchcraft is secret and invisible to the naked eye [*ni kitu cha giza tu, haionekani kwa macho*]. She is making it up to support her protection case. She is a Murundi in departures. She wants to show that she is being discriminated against."

"How do you know?" I asked.

"I just know."

Suddenly, someone looked up from the packed office. "Hainh? Is that a cat? Look, she's throwing a cat. Are you kidding me?" A bemused expression flitted across his face.

I looked over, and indeed, across the dirt road, there was a lady with an actual ten-foot pole, hurling a dead cat over the fence of the departure center. She missed, and the cat landed inside.

"Tell her she can't do that! She has to go bury it!"

The woman jimmied the pole under the cat again, and awkwardly scooped it up, its limp body draping on either side of the wood. We watched, transfixed, as she adjusted her *kitenge*, leaned back, and heaved it up. This attempt too, failed, and the metal fence reverberated as the dead feline thwacked against it and fell gracelessly to the ground.

A *sungu sungu* officer scurried off to tell her off. In the meantime, the cat was successfully vaulted over the fence. Everyone in the office started laughing, at first gently chuckling, then letting go, belly laughing louder and louder. The woman with the mysterious bag stood by impatiently, but by now was also invested in the cat event. Propriety was soon restored, and lots of disapproving, smirking head shaking went on.

Later on, listening to the evensong of birds in Kasulu, I told my partner the story, laughing hysterically, barely sipping air. It wasn't funny at all – a dead cat being conscripted to the pole-vault – but there was something morbidly hilarious about it, and I couldn't stop. Each time I laughed, I was aware that there was something not right about it, even as I recalled how the others had laughed uncontrollably in the moment.[380] In my field notes, I remarked that the sight of the dead cat flying over the fence was "chilling but uproariously funny." The very next sentence states bluntly – "Something is happening to me." The act of laughing at something that was not meant to be funny showed me that I had changed in some way. Perhaps I had simply become accustomed to the dark humor of the camp, but at a more fundamental level, I seemed to be coming up against the limits of empathy as a mode of relating to people who lived there.

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[380] Field notes, April 27, 2014, Nyarugusu Camp.

The confluence of two dark events becoming subsumed by laughter was remarkable, but not uncommon. I was often impressed by the great sense of humor and good cheer of camp residents (and they took a great deal of pride in it). This good humor was interrupted at unlikely moments, sometimes in an explosive manner and at other times very quietly, by the violence of laughter – laughter that responded to, recalled, or refused violence.

There are three main points I wish to make in this chapter. The first has to do with the eruption of laughter in moments that are profoundly, as it were, not-funny. This laughter has to do with the body and with the unknown. The second concerns the use of laughter to negotiate a social relationship. Here, I build on anthropological understandings of laughter as constitutive of social relationships to explain how laughter, smiling, and exhalations functioned as a means of calling the listener in by limning difference and thus vulnerability.[381] Laughter is not only preoccupied with the body, along with its materiality, transformations, and vulnerability, but is also *of* the body, i.e., it is an embodied gesture that points towards a political otherwise in the excess of meaning and invitations that it generates. Finally, I suggest that laughter as breath(ed), the breath, and these acts of openness move us away from abstractions – like human rights – and towards an ethics of vulnerability grounded in the body. Paying attention to both affect and emotion, I look at laughter multiply: as expressive of a "moral mood," as an affective "remnant," and as a form of active, invitational vulnerability.[382]

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[381] See John Carty and Yasmine Musharbash, "You've Got to Be Joking: Asserting the Analytical Value of Humour and Laughter in Contemporary Anthropology," Anthropological Forum 18.3 (2008), Emmanuel De Vienne, "“Make Yourself Uncomfortable:" Joking Relationships as Predictable Uncertainty among the Trumai of Central Brazil," HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory 2.2 (2012), Sareeta Amrute, "Press One for Potus, Two for the German Chancellor: Humor, Race, and Rematerialization in the Indian Tech Diaspora," HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory 7.1 (2017). On humor and politics, see, for example, "Special Section on Jokes of Repression," East European Politics and Societies 25.4 (2011). On joking relationships, see: Marcel Mauss, "Joking Relations. Translated and Introduced by Jane I. Guyer," HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory 3.2 (2013), Alfred R Radcliffe-Brown, "On Joking Relationships," Africa 13.3 (1940).

Henri Bergson opens his treatise on laughter by noting: "the comic does not exist outside the pale of what is strictly HUMAN."[383] Laughter, he insists, is strictly social in its expression and function, and cannot be accompanied by feeling. When uneasy, life [society] replies with the gesture of laughter.[384] Bergson is convinced that laughter is more than simply aesthetic in nature, in fact, it aims for "general improvement."[385] There is something profound in Bergson's observation that laughter is the correction of all that is rigid in human behavior, "something mechanical encrusted upon the living."[386] He goes on to note that "ANY INCIDENT IS COMIC THAT CALLS OUR ATTENTION TO THE PHYSICAL IN A PERSON WHEN IT IS THE MORAL SIDE THAT IS CONCERNED."[387] Moreover, "WE LAUGH EVERY TIME A PERSON GIVES US THE IMPRESSION OF BEING A THING."[388] We can, therefore, only laugh at what is related to that which is human, within the context of social relationships; the observation that laughter points us to the disconnect between the moral and the physical is also relevant to certain cases of laughter in Nyarugusu.

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[382] Jason Throop describes moral moods as "temporally complex existential modalities that transform through time and yet often entail a durativity that extends beyond the confines of particular morally salient events and interactions." C. Jason Throop, "Moral Moods," Ethos 42.1 (2014). Yael Navaro urges us to consider non-Western frames of affect and conceives of "the remnant" as one such frame, in which affect is relational and recreates past social forms. Yael Navaro, "Diversifying Affect," Cultural Anthropology 32.2 (2014).

[383] Henri Bergson, Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic, trans. Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell (Dodo Press, 2007 [1900]), Bergson, Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic. pp. 2. For a more comprehensive history of the philosophy of laughter, see John Morreal, Comic Relief : A Comprehensive Philosophy of Humor (Chichester, U.K.; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009). and Ralph Piddington, The Psychology of Laughter: A Study in Social Adaptation (New York: Gamut Press, 1963).

[384] Bergson, Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic. pp. 9.
[385] Bergson, Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic. pp. 9.

[386] Bergson, Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic. pp. 22.

[387] Bergson, Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic. pp. 22, emphasis in original.

[388] Bergson, Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic. pp. 25, emphasis in original.

I find it instructive to turn to early modern theorists of laughter, who were much more concerned with the body and the pneumatology, sensuousness, and senses of laughter, and humors (in the earlier, medieval usage of the word). In 1579, French physician Laurent Joubert published a three-volume book entitled *Traité du Ris,* dealing with the causes of laughter, its definition, and the problems of the comic. Joubert distinguished between what is laughable in action versus in speech; within the question of what is laughable in word is the matter of whether laughter results from what is told, or as a result of the words themselves. Importantly, laughter cannot be separated from its physiological scaffolding.[389] If, for Aristotle, laughter was a defect that was neither painful nor destructive, for Joubert, ugliness and the absence of compassion were necessary to laughter. Moreover, laughter involved antonymy and oxymorons. Breaking with earlier theorists like Fracastoro and Maggi, Joubert locates laughter not within or in tension with the mind, but specifically in the body. Of course, we have to remember the difference between *laughter* as an act and *the comic* as genre.

What is particularly significant is that *sympathy* is not included in Joubert's conception of laughter, which also requires a sort of emotional ambivalence wherein chance plays a big part.[390] Bergson, too, spoke of the "momentary anaesthesia of the heart"[391] – in other words, the emotional desensitization that happens at the moment of laughter that is critical to it. Later, Freud would also disavow pity's role in laughter. The dead cat posed a sudden interruption to the temporal and social flow of the gathering inside the *sungu sungu* hut, but also hinted at a discontinuity in propriety. We laughers did not feel sympathy for the woman who had possibly cared for the now-dead cat and was affected by its death. Here, we were confronted with the excess of the situation: the drab, tented and unfloored structures surrounded by a wire fence within a red-soiled compound where nothing could be grown; the fact that this woman lived in some condition of limbo – either that of waiting for asylum status, or temporarily there as a measure of protection, or waiting for resettlement, the loss of life that was palpable in the environs of the camp, both in the memories of family members and friends lost to violence, as well as the death that inevitably lived in the camp. The fact that a thin wire fence marked the boundary between an outside that might be dangerous and an inside that was safe(r); that the woman throwing the cat evidently found this flimsy border significant. The absurdity of having to dispose of a dead cat in a situation *like that*. This laughter was in excess, not in the sense that Freud meant, but in bringing into its orbit all that which structured what engendered it in the first place.

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[389] Gregory de Rocher, Rabelais' Laughers and Joubert's Traité Du Ris (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1979). pp. 12-13.

[390] Bergson, Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic, de Rocher, Rabelais' Laughers and Joubert's Traité Du Ris. pp 22-23.

[391] Bergson, Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic. pp. 5.

Joubert, and earlier, French physician and writer Rabelais point to the fact that humor is not entirely painless; it is ambiguous.[392] This ambiguity also comes from the opposed emotions of sorrow and joy.[393] These cannot be present together as the source of laughter, but must alternate, and emerge in the hearer; "laughter is not able to exist unless there are mixed feelings about it."[394] Rabelais had also been preoccupied with the body: his early modern "grotesque realism" was tethered to a positive notion of the bodily which was neither private nor individualized.[395] In fact, the "material bodily principle is contained not in the biological individual, not in the bourgeois ego, but in the people... who are continually growing and renewed. This is why all that is bodily becomes grandiose, exaggerated, immeasurable."[396] The very function of this grotesque realism was to destroy abstraction in ritual and concept, to "bring down to earth, *turn their subject into flesh*."[397] In the same way in which the (regenerative) degradation represented by humor rejected the construct of a wholly private and isolated subject, the dark humor in Nyarugusu that referenced bodily transformation, grotesque animality, death, eroticism, and bestiality also constituted a grounding of the abstract category of refugeehood into its lived experience, at the same time inviting its participants into a mutual relationship.[398] Though there are important differences between the carnivalesque use of grotesque humor and the laughter and mockery that it engendered, in the camp, women's laughter – painful and disbelieving - while talking about men who behaved like animals, raping women and forcing their own sons to have intercourse with them approximated the unfinished body that comprised the duality of life/birth and death which was "blended with the world, with animals, with objects."[399] I want to focus on the aspects of materiality anchored in the fleshly, as opposed to the practice of derision and mockery. Donna Goldstein has also written about laughter in a Rio shantytown in the context of suffering and rape; laughter is a response that encapsulates the frustration that residents feel in the face of desperation.[400] The laughter of Nyarugusu residents similarly evoked and gestured towards the absurdities and difficulties of everyday life in the camp, but I read it as an embodied response that called forth a new affective aesthetic of openness.

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[392] de Rocher, Rabelais' Laughers and Joubert's Traité Du Ris. pp. 37.

[393] de Rocher, Rabelais' Laughers and Joubert's Traité Du Ris. pp. 113.

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[394] de Rocher, Rabelais' Laughers and Joubert's Traité Du Ris. pp. 140.

[395] Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1968). pp. 18

[396] Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World. pp. 19.

[397] Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World. pp. 20, emphasis added.

[398] There is also the inescapable matter of power. Achille Mbembe points out that interpretations of dominant power based on binaries are inadequate; he refines Bakhtin's insight into the grotesque by looking not just at lives but at spectacles and ceremonial displays of state power. Mbembe's work unsettles easy dichotomies and asks us to consider the possibility that the postcolonial relationship is one of "illicit cohabitation." Laughter as revelation of vulnerability (among other things) was not simply a way of making claims with regards to the humanitarian exertion of power, it represented a way of "making space" into an otherwise. Achille Mbembe, "Provisional Notes on the Postcolony," Africa 62.01 (1992).

The dead cat and what remained excessive to the laughter it brought forth can also be thought of in terms of the (un)known. Georges Bataille is right that the joy of laughter can never be separated from the tragic. According to Bataille, "laughter is, let us say, the effect of un-knowing, though laughter has not, theoretically, as its object the state of un-knowing; one does not, by laughing, accept the idea that one knows nothing. Something unexpected occurs, which is in contradiction to the knowledge we do have."[401] This understanding of laughter is a philosophical, theological one – Bataille ultimately returns us to the question of religion, in which laughter eschews positive philosophy and dogma. I'll stop short of Bataille's conclusion regarding thought and being, but the surplus to which he points us is instructive. Laughter is inevitably related to the tragic; it is a salve; it provides emancipatory possibilities, and it points to a certain (but not total) un-knowing. But setting aside the question of philosophical knowledge – what seems to me in the case of the camp to be a cipher for disbelief – I think that laughter points to an *embodied* form of (un)knowing. Laughter, grounded in the body, reworks ones very being: "Encounters with horror, violent disgust, that miraculously transform into experiences of laughter… [constitute] inner experiences that overwhelm any sense of the distinction between interiority or exteriority. At the limit of knowledge, un-knowing is activated, a process in which subjectivity is torn apart, unworked at the core of physical and mental being."[402]

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[399] Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World. pp. 27.

[400] Donna M. Goldstein, Laughter out of Place: Race, Class, Violence, and Sexuality in a Rio Shantytown (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

[401] Georges Bataille and Annette Michelson, "Un-Knowing: Laughter and Tears," October 36.Georges Bataille: Writings on Laughter, Sacrifice, Nietzsche, Un-Knowing (1986). pp. 90.

But what form does reworking subjectivity through laughter take? For Bataille, laughter's function is to communicate, but it does constitute a rupture – a sudden interruption to what he calls a "personal system" in isolation. Both Kant and Schopenhauer too, had remarked upon laughter's disruptive potential – the former saw it as the discontuinity of expectation and appearance, whereas the latter saw it as the disconnect between sensuous and abstract knowledge. The memory of the experience and witnessing of violence explodes in the form of laughter – laughter that disrupts, refocuses, repairs, but most importantly, that bubbles up through the body. In these moments of vulnerability, laughter constitutes an invitation. If we take Joubert's rejection of sympathy and compassion seriously, in the contemporary, Arendtian sense, pity is precluded within the domain of laughter; thus the relationship engendered by laughter is characterized by something other than paternalism, or, in Hobbes' terms, superiority.

Laughter in the camp also collapsed into violence within scenes of intimate exchange. I'd gotten to know Muheshimiwa when I was observing legal aid cases at the Women's Legal Aid Commission (WLAC). He subsequently found himself incarcerated in Kasulu, and I'd managed to help by calling him a lawyer. Muheshimiwa had a litany of troubles, not least of which was having a teenage daughter that someone else wanted to take as compensation. But he'd recently had a baby girl, and I went over to congratulate him. As we sat in his home admiring his daughter, smiling and laughing, he suddenly asked me: "Do you know why we Congolese like to have so many children? We like being around a lot of people. People should be close." His smile did not fade, but grew wan, as he continued: "But then, with the war… They filled a room with people and lit a fire. Everyone died. They did this in her village (*he pointed to his wife*). They were standing like this (*he demonstrated hands held up, with fists clenched*). Like animals. They burned people… they burned them alive." Suddenly silenced, we sat there, holding each others' gaze sadly. For Muheshimiwa, the joy of having a new child was inseparable from the loss he had experienced, and this was not the only occasion on which laughter had suddenly and sharply exposed trauma. On my way out later, he pointed to a photo on the wall that I'd complimented earlier. "That was when we were in Lughufu. It was taken when I was in good health – before I had problems with my stomach."[403]

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[402] Fred and Scott Wilson Botting, ed., The Bataille Reader (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997). pp. 2.

Muheshimiwa's daughter's flesh was what was prior to the violence that transformed members of his community into bodies engulfed by flames. His own flesh, now weakened into a refugee body with stomach problems. Nyarugusu was reputed to be the worst of all the camps in Western Tanzania's Kigoma district, it had been neglected over the years and had not improved much after the other camps had closed. Lughufu, a camp that had already been shut, was closer to Kigoma town, and even if one lived in the camp one could obtain fish, and opportunities for farming were better. The laughter that related to his present bodily state also contained within it the image of deterioration. It invited me to imagine the harm done both in the context of community decimation and humanitarian inadequacy.

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[403] Fieldnotes, April 29, 2014, Nyarugusu Camp.

In an earlier chapter I pointed to the discursive problem surrounding Congolese violence. Sexual violence in the Congo was spoken of as a given – something inalienable and essential to the very nature of the ongoing conflict, and of the Congo, and thus to refugeehood. In the aid agency view, it explained subsequent sexual violence and social issues in the camp.[404] I do think that the persistence of violence across generations is important, just not in the way that aid agencies envision it. In fact, while people in the camp spoke sporadically of the two recent wars, they often skipped straight to the colonial period and its brutality.[405]

Let us turn for a moment to Nancy Rose Hunt's re-reading of colonial violence in the Congo.[406] Hunt notes that the contemporary international humanitarian campaign surrounding sexual violence in the Congo is marked by a lack of historicization. She points to the long tradition of visual evidence provided through atrocity photographs that depict mutilation, arguing that it demands a re-reading "through the senses." This kind of re-reading of colonial violence would "take us to fright, shame, and the unsayable, and the way these sometimes produced silence or, perhaps oddly, a brief eruption of laughter. Yet the duration of duress in this same region into the Belgian Congo years (1908–60) is also significant to issues about (overlapping) modalities of violence—structural, corporeal, symbolic, psychic, sexual—and their reproduction and somatization over time. The bodily and reproductive effects of spectacular, transgressive, sexualized violence are of particular interest."[407]

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[404] This has, no doubt, to do with the kinds of funding given for various programs. See, for example, the recent debunking of Liberian rape statistics: Dara Kay Cohen and Amelia Hoover Green, "Were 75 Percent of Liberian Women and Girls Raped? No. So Why Is the U.N. Repeating That Misleading 'Statistic'?," The Washington Post October 26 2016.
[405] Field notes, March 26, 2014.

[406] Nancy Rose Hunt, "An Acoustic Register, Tenacious Images, and Congolese Scenes of Rape and Repetition," Cultural Anthropology 23.2 (2008).

Hunt listens for "acoustic traces" as a way to reread the violence of the Free State and its echoes in the present. Her archive reveals laughter, and she too, turns to Bataille to explain the "anguish" of laughter and the relationship of laughter to dominance. She notes that the macabre, gratuitous violence described in the historical record is not dissimilar to contemporary violence in the Congo – as depicted in the UNFPA film she references, though of course this should not suggest some kind of historical continuity or causality. Nor were the accounts I heard in the camp: rape with objects resulting in internal trauma, gangrape, dismembering, cutting babies out of wombs, and forcing men to have sex with their own mothers. But whereas contemporary humanitarian interventions in the Congo are highly bureaucratized and medicalized, the intervention in the camp focuses on culpability and respect for rights.[408]

Hunt's powerful article suggests that links to the past should be about locating repetitions and echoes and about producing history in a "mode of repetition" such that we can learn how to read the archive in a specific way, and carefully appropriate historical debris in order to write history. This method has ethnographic purchase as well. The retelling of contemporary violence in the Congo can never be ahistorical. But at the same time, as Hunt notes, "the point is to listen to distress in its immediacy and duration."[409] The urgency of paying attention to the echoes of violence in an ethnographic mode was not lost on me.

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[407] Hunt, "An Acoustic Register, Tenacious Images, and Congolese Scenes of Rape and Repetition." pp. 226.

[408] This is not to say that there were not also rights-based interventions in the Congo; many of the refugee incentive workers that I'd spoken with had also been involved in similar rights organizations in the Congo. Thus the circulation of humanitarian discourse around sexual violence didn't simply travel with organizations, but spread with the movement of refugee bodies.

I suggest that the repetitions expressed in laughter and gesture in Nyarugusu are crucial to understanding their purpose. The frequency and tone of laughter and its arrival surrounded by violence ricocheted across time and space. Muheshimiwa's gesture of holding up his hands echoed multiply: in the severed limbs of King Leopold's Free State, the hands tied in the burning church during civil conflict, and the metaphorical hands cut off by the inability to work in the camp that represented the care and violence of the UNHCR logo.

Then there is the question of the aftermath of this violence; or rather, its continuing reverberations. The women (and men) I spoke to in the camp gradually attempted to knit their lives back together; marrying, remarrying, having children, negotiating new relationships. In this reading, violence does not represent a mere break that cleaves life, but is subsumed into the everyday, woven into the ordinariness of everyday life so that life may go on despite the experience of a limit condition.[410] The meaning of life was dual: it encompassed the ordinariness of daily activities, but also the corporeality of a life-form. But skepticism, doubt, and unknowability shadow the work of time and repair. In the camp, as I noted in an earlier chapter, words did not (only) get swallowed as poison. Sometimes, violence extinguished speech *and* voice, as in the case of Pascale's mother, who saw her husband's throat slit in front of her, and did not speak a single word for a year. Veena Das' distinction between "voice" and "speech" helps us to understand how language becomes inhospitable or inadequate; it is through the finding of a voice that one might reinhabit a place of destruction.[411] Giving voice does not preclude silence, and is distinct from speaking.

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[409] Hunt, "An Acoustic Register, Tenacious Images, and Congolese Scenes of Rape and Repetition." pp. 242.

[410] Veena Das offers us a conception of the subject as marked by its relationship with others and with a collective. Crucially, the experience of of re-becoming a subject is articulated within a collectivity; it is about finding a voice amongst other voices. But this very plurality of voices may in fact pose danger. Das, Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary. pp. 9.

Paying attention to laughter folded into "voice" reorients us towards the corporeality of language; like Wittgenstein, Das points us to the ordinariness of (bodily) life. Language is the "bodying forth of words"[412], but words, too, need life (given by voice) to have force.[413] Indeed, our suffering (and skepticism) is grounded in the "concreteness of human beings, their *being flesh and blood creatures*."[414] This corporeality is also intimately connected with the other. Statements about pain, appearing as indicative statement are in fact claims, requests, and demands upon others, which are beginnings of relationships.[415] Declarations of suffering like "You see, Aditi, we live a hard life here" (*unaona, Aditi, tunaishi maisha magumu*), "we are just suffering patiently" (*tunavumilia tu!*), "tunaumia huku," (*we're in pain here*) and complaints about the lack of food and the breakdown of physical health were invitations into an affective mode of relationality that privileged the corporeal.

Das' observations on the relationship between the body and language help us to work through the kinds of claims staked in and through laughter. Laughter as embodied voice is necessarily social; there is a "mimesis... established between body and language, but it is through the work of the collectivity that this happens rather than at the level of the individual symptom."[416] Das points out that there are always "transactions between body and language," and that the pain of the other "seeks a home" both in language and in the body.[417] It is through the relationship between language and the body that pain is "voiced" and demonstrated, and it is through this continual gesture that one comes to "reinhabit" the world. But I suggest that this "bodying forth of words" suggested by laughter and exclamations is not so much an attempt to "reinhabit" the world as it is to make a claim on *what once was* and *what should be*; or rather, a claim to *what one is*: a human being.

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[411] Das, Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary.

[412] Das, Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary. pp. 40.

[413] Das, Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary. pp. 6.

[414] Das, Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary. pp. 41, emphasis added.

[415] Das, Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary. pp. 48.

The very condition of refuge precluded the meaningful rehabilitation of one's own world; Nyarugusu residents consistently brought my attention to this fact by illustrating the differences between life in the Congo and life in the camp. In attempting to begin relationships – with each other, myself, and aid workers - through claims, demands, exclamations, and other utterances that give shape to pain, Nyarugusu residents double down on *what they are* in the face of their experience of inhumanity; despite having witnessed and experienced "acts of savagery and inhumanity" (*vitendo vya unyama*), charred and scarred bodies, and the steady erosion of fleshly wholeness and services adequate to sustain a dignified life.[418] Laughter was that which recalled the flesh; it rejected the carceral humanitarianianism that sought to produce refugees as bodies, instead summoning the human.

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[416] Das, Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary. pp. 50.

[417] Das, Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary. pp. 57.

[418] Das also reminds us that it is precisely because such acts of extreme violence are recognized as being perpetrated by humans that they are monstrous.

As in laughter, so in pain. In the case of the women in Das' book who had experienced violence, containing this experience as poisonous knowledge carried within one's body and constituting it through its hiddenness was itself a bodily experience. Remembrance is bodily, and "the movement from surface to depth also transforms passivity into agency."[419] Bodily remembrance in Nyarugusu was as much about the patient suffering, sometimes even carried as a first name, as it was about the eruption of what had been held back. The pragmatic retelling of horrific experiences produced in the face of camp management (as in the case of Gabi) by no means precluded their silent absorption, emerging sharply from the belly or the chest, in the staccato of an epiglottis moving to and fro and a vibrating zygomatic major muscle. Laughter may be undoubtedly social, but "there are only so many ways to laugh."[420]

What, then, do we do with laughter in the course of retelling stories of rape? Das later writes that sexual violence as thanatopolitics enacted in the wake of partition "questioned the very idea that one had a human form of life;" this violence was the reduction of life to bare life.[421] Elsewhere in this dissertation I have argued that the homogenizing effects of the discourse of bare life do not allow for an adequate description of life in the camp. If Das has rescued it from the critiques of differential vulnerability on the basis of sexed and raced concerns, it nevertheless does not allow for an understanding of what is prior to the body; i.e. the flesh.[422]

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[419] Das, Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary. pp. 54-55.

[420] Robert R. Provine, "Laughter," American Scientist 84.1 (1996). pp. 40.

[421] Das, cited in Penelope Deutscher, ""On the Whole We Don't:" Michel Foucault, Veena Das, and Sexual Violence," Critical Horizons 17.2 (2016). pp. 195.

Thus violence emerged as an embodied/enfleshed memory in the form of laughter. I do not mean that violence itself constituted a rupture in the fabric of what was otherwise ‘normal.’ Humanitarian confinement demanded testimonial speech - the performance of suffering and vulnerability-as-risk through the vocalization of experiences of violence. Camp space itself structured the utterances of violence: in common life, they were commonplace, sometimes casual, always known. Within the spaces of aid, they were demanded, extracted, and often reluctantly provided. In everyday life, violence was spoken about plainly but obliquely, in general and in the abstract, with gestures or insinuation. In the context of mutilation, torture, and rape in the Congo, the words “*Tumekatwa mkono,”* (our hands have been cut off) accompanied by hands held up at chest level, crossed at the wrists, directed at the treatment of camp residents in Nyarugusu by UNHCR and the Tanzanian government, have additional reverberations. The bodily remembrance of violence and the corporeality evidenced by laughter was sexed; remembrance split between a whole, masculine body based on vascularity and weight and intact reproductive organs and sexuality grounded in the feminine body.

The macabre laughter that echoes in Hunt’s retelling of colonial violence was that of the perpetrator – the laughter of sadistic pleasure. In the camp, laughter functioned as a conjunction, and gave way to disturbing moments. It also accompanied brief digressions about violence and punctuated longer testimonials. Tinged with joy, resignation, despair, anger, and dis/belief, it simultaneously illuminated damage, repair, and continuity. In particular, by writing anew the relationship between my respondents and myself, it opened me up to the possibility of conversion, all the while gesturing towards a different set of political concerns.

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[422] See Weheliye, Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human., and Ewa Płonowska Ziarek, "Bare Life on Strike: Notes on the Biopolitics of Race and Gender," South Atlantic Quarterly 107.1 (2008).

Laughter and Ethnography

The affective entanglements produced in the course of encounters in the camp, particularly in situations where difference was reinscribed rather than overcome, also led me to think about laughter in a different way, specifically in terms of vulnerability and openness. My fieldwork has involved both the small, predictable sort of failures – the kind where vehicles break down, bureaucracy holds up research, interviewees don't show up, meetings get cancelled, poor health halts work; but also ones that strike me as more spectacular – where the field itself is hostile, where communication breaks down, where suspicion hides under smiles, silences, or carefully provided narratives.

I never expected that ethnography would be easy, much less that it would not require inordinate amounts of patience. In fact, I had envisioned a world full of uncertainty, of constant breakdown, of stonewalls, and of logistical hiccups requiring much ingenuity. I knew that the veil of rigour and objectivity was just that, and had determined that "muddling through" was as close as I would get to a decent method. The "methodology" section of my prospectus hinted as much, so much so that a committee member pointedly asked me exactly what it was that I was planning to do. It drew mostly from "Poor Theory, Notes on a Manifesto" – which I thought grand and well considered. Not in itself an ethnographic method or tool, it nevertheless lent itself well to imagining the complex work of ethnographic engagement: poor theory "reflexively re-encounters the history of theory through paying attention to the murky, unsystematic practices and discourses of everyday life. Poor theory is conditioned by reflexive imbrication with probable pasts and arguments with/about possible futures, and thus comes to see the present, too, as heterotemporal." My ethnography would not proceed under the rubric of organized rigour, but "through appropriations and improvisations, through descriptions that do not leave what it describes unchanged." Most importantly – "Poor theory suggests not a resignation to epistemological futility but an openness to that which outpaces understanding. Objects of analysis present, in their contingency, in their being unsystematic, a degree of intransigence that frustrates mastery. The intractability of the object throws into relief the possibility of error in our methods."[423]

When I returned to those words after nearly a year of living and working in Tanzania, they seemed lofty, idealistic, even annoying. But of course everyday life is unsystematic, but of course we can't understand everything. But what if intractability equals not overcoming nor leads to openness, but breakdown? What if research is compounded not simply by confusion and failure, but fear and suspicion? And what of the corporeal? What if it is not our "method" but our very beings and bodies that produce intransigence – or our affective responses? In the face of profound and continual failures both small and large, I found many of these questions weighing on my mind.[424] As it turned out, laughter was the key to some of them.

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[423] University of California Irvine Critical Theory Institute, "Poor Theory: Notes Towards a Manifesto," Nov. 9, 2012.

[424] Field notes, September 23, 2014.

John L. Jackson writes about ethnographic time – the "haptography" of an ethnographic experience – the combination of chance, knowledge, and un-knowledge that make up ethnographic renderings. He advocates for a thin description – an unfinished-ness that is carefully considered, rather than the (false) image of a larger understanding. In this dissertation I have focused on many incomplete moments, drawing on patterns to illuminate aspects of life in the camp.[425] For many months, I was unable to decipher the 'meaning' of the incident at Departure, if it indeed had one. I thought about the woman and the cat almost daily, unable to shake the feeling that they demanded greater attention. Why laugh then? I asked. And why did I laugh with everyone else?

Revisiting my fieldnotes, I realized how many times I had written about intimate moments with my colocutors and the emotions that marked them. With aid workers in particular, this came in the form of tension, suspicion, and professionalized, carefully worded opinions, with occasional moments of reckless revelation, and less often, laughter. With camp residents, curiosity, suspicion, indignation, sighs, shrugs, laughter, and other evocative gestures.

One afternoon, as Kagabo and I sat outside the verification center, I asked him about a moment earlier in the day. "When we were at the doctor's house…" I began. We both started laughing; the doctor told incredibly long and detailed stories, down to hours and minutes of the day. "You were laughing about cards," I finished. Kagabo laughed throatily, delighted that I had asked. "That's why we were laughing!" He continued: "Tanzanians are clever. (*laughs*) You know, Tanzanians are clever! That's why UNHCR agreed that we'd be given refugee cards (*kadi*

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[425] John L. Jackson, Thin Description: Ethnography and the African Hebrew Israelites of Jerusalem (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013)., pp. 91-94.

ya mkimbizi). But these cards, if you think about it a lot, and you think about the implications, the identification card is for a family, not for an individual. So, you can't leave [the camp] with them! Because, they've given a warning too, that if you lose it, you won't get another! So if you want to travel, you can't travel with it. That's the first thing. The second thing is that it's for a family, not for an individual person. So you leave it at home. It's better that you lose the card of one person than of seven or eight people. You might lose it, or encounter problems but those seven people will continue to get their rights (*kupata haki yao*). So, I see that it's tricky. (*starts laughing again*). I laughed a lot because what I discovered is that Tanzanians are very clever! It's like they already saw that refugees are stupid (*mjinga sana*), so much so that you can deceive them with small things." The cards were also much larger than wallet-size, and thus not easy to carry around.[426] In this, and in many other moments, laughter pointed to the absurdity of humanitarian aid. It accompanied tales of long wait times, inadequate food, and buildings and shelters that had gone unrepaired, but also bureaucratic inefficiencies, and ill-considered interventions that had (sometimes unintended) consequences.

It was also in and through laughter and its corresponding "sly glimmerings," hints and evocations that Nyarugusu residents made gestures away from the abstraction of rights and towards an ethics of openness and vulnerability produced in and through bodily exhalation.[427] Breath, in the form of laughter as well as varied exhalations also served as a signal towards openness. Ebondo, a refugee WLAC staff member, would sometimes repeat the name of the camp as we walked around. It was always when the conversation had fallen silent. He'd be smiling, and exhale the word "Nyarugusu." Sometimes he clicked his tongue and quickly cocked his head, then seemed to snap back. When I asked him what he meant, he'd just chuckle, shrug and say "*basi*," or variously say things like "Nyarugusu is a camp of peace and security," "we thank God we're here," "we're just here (*tuko hapa tu*)" and then sigh loudly. Claudia Rankine writes of breath and sighs: "To live through the days… Sometimes you sigh… The sigh is the pathway to breath; it allows breathing. That's just self-preservation… The sighing is the worrying exhale of an ache. You wouldn't call it an illness; still it is not the iteration of a free being. What else to liken yourself to but an animal, the ruminant kind?"[428]

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[426] Interview with Kagabo, February 24, 2014

[427] Botting, ed., The Bataille Reader., pp. 60. Of course, as Bataille points out, laughter may be irrelevant if one is unaware.

The cadence of speech in Nyarugusu (which was also regionally common) illuminated how breath structured communicative relations as well. In recounting stories, people employed rhetorical devices that were divided by tone and breath. An example: A women tells the story of leaving her ancestral village. She describes the reason that they had to leave. Then says "We had to… ? (*incomplete word, voice rising into a question, with a breath sharply drawn in, then pausing*) …We had to do what? (*voice declining*) We had to flee." ("*Ikabidhi tu?… tufanye nini? Tukimbie"*). The quick inhalation, a pause, then the slower exhale of a question. Or, sometimes, a sharply uttered, high pitched "AH!" of disbelief, surprise, or delight that exposed the fractures contained within the matter at hand. These flows of breath and its stoppage invited the listener in; to listen more carefully, to answer a question, to imagine what the situation might have demanded.

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[428] Rankine, Citizen: An American Lyric pp. 59-60.

Breath expelled as laughter also formed the basis of knowing. It should come as no surprise in our contemporary moment that Nyarugusu residents were very aware of themselves and their position as the "ethnographied," and that I found myself navigating the "ethnographic dance" of what is offered up and held back from researchers.[429] Highly attuned to regular meetings and visits by locally based aid workers, and international experts, monitors, and academic researchers, they often brought my attention to others who were in the camp for similar purposes. Aime and Kagabo, Burundians who had been in the camp since Mtabila had closed, told me about a recent arrival:

Aime: "Oh, there's another PhD researcher here, some English guy. He never smiles. He doesn't talk to anyone either. I wonder what kind of research he's doing. How can you do research without talking to someone?"
I asked: "Does he speak Swahili?"
Kagabo: "Yeah, I think so. But he never speaks to anyone. He's always wandering around. Maybe he's just "observing," and straightaway doing "analysis." (*Nafikiri anaongea Kiswahili, lakini haongei na watu. Anazunguka zunguka. Labda anaobserve, na akafanya analysis.*) And he never laughs!"

Aime and Kagabo both observed that simply seeing things with your own eyes was not enough; adequate information could only be gained through engagement. Later, when Kagabo and I talked about the researcher again, he declared that he might not be used to seeing a situation like the refugee camp, which would explain his lack of laughter. I suggested that it might be difficult to see past the suffering to acknowledge the *life* of the camp, given the contrast of his own situation. Yes, Kagabo agreed, we are living real lives here.[430] The male researcher's lack of laughter also represented his failure to properly engage with others in the camp, but also his inability to see a form of *life*.

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[429] Jackson, Thin Description: Ethnography and the African Hebrew Israelites of Jerusalem. pp. 93.

In Chapter 5 I described what camp residents perceived as socially acceptable behavior. Getting along well with others helped make life in the camp easier, and a smiling, laughing disposition was naturally key to this. I first met Pascale outside the UNHCR protection office, where he had been coming regularly to file a protection case. Finding it difficult to transfer into a Tanzanian university due to the difference between educational systems in the DRC, he asked for my help in applying to medical school in Tanzania. He looked forward to a different life, one in which he'd be reunited with his two younger brothers and continue with his education, or possibly resettled, insisting that he couldn't stay in the camp much longer. He was strongly opposed to getting married, because he wanted his circumstances to be better. In the meantime, however, he volunteered at the medical center and hospital, and lived with extended family. I accompanied him to the Red Cross family search office, and visited his home several times, and as time passed, I noticed gradual improvements that were different from many of the other refugee houses I'd been in – a paved cement floor, furniture, decorations.

Having sought refugee from an urban area, Pascale was no doubt slightly better off than others from villages in Sud Kivu, and perhaps accustomed to a different standard of life, though I also observed him borrowing money from another new arrival. But as time passed, his decisions were informed less by indignation at the conditions of Nyarugusu and more by resignation to his new life in the camp. A few months later, his brothers had made their way to the camp after escaping abduction in the Congo. By the time a year had passed, Pascale had found a potential wife and pledged a dowry to her family. Life in the camp was undoubtedly harsh (*maisha magumu*) – but it was still *a life*. Laughter was a coping mechanism, but also a mediator of relationships. In these two capacities it revealed the temporal scales through which people experienced refugeehood. Kagabo and I would often spend time with Pascale, and one day as we sat idly chatting under a barren tree on plastic chairs, the conversation turned to laughter. Laughter was critical to this life, because "If you don't laugh you'll go crazy. It refreshes you. (*inarefresh*)." It was also necessary to maintain relationships. Despite having been in the camp for only a few months, Pascale was rather well known. He put it down to his disposition: "Everyone knows me because I laugh a lot." Referring to a mutual acquaintance that was rather grumpy, he added, "That's just the way he is [*ni jinsi alivyo*]. He doesn't know a lot of people because he doesn't smile."[431]

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[430] Field notes, February 13, 2014.

Along with laughs of delight, I encountered many laughs of anger, resignation, discomfort, absurdity and menace throughout my fieldwork. As I got to know people in Nyarugusu better, I found myself answering lots of questions about my own life, background, and beliefs. Within personal conversations (rather than the stories I heard), laughter began to mark out the contours of my relationship with certain Nyarugusu residents, delineating both danger and the limits of the refugee community to me, the outsider. Enthusiastic palm slapping and low fives always accompanied the laughter of joy. I knew a joke had hit its mark when my hands hurt.

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[431] Field notes, February 20, 2014.

People I spoke with also laughed when I asked about something uncomfortable, or when they didn't want to answer. In these cases, a low chuckle might be accompanied by an "anh-ah." Perhaps the laugh would simply end the conversation, or I would know from the smile and headshake that followed. In other situations laughter stood in for the continuation of words, as when my colocutors and I joked about my skepticism. They knew I didn't believe in God, and laughed about it. And they took great delight in retelling stories about witchcraft, laughing about my insistence on knowing more even as I remained aloof from belief and fear, as well as at the tales themselves. This laughter limned our different understandings of the world, and their acknowledgement of that fact. It expressed the warmth in our relationships, as well as the distance and the unknowing that marked them. Lauren Berlant and Sianne Ngai have argued that comedy doesn't only dispel anxiety, but also produces it. Indeed, "one worry comedy engages is formal or technical in a way that leads to the social: the problem of figuring out distinctions between things, including people, whose relation is mutually disruptive of definition."[432]

Speaking of the saturation of the ordinary by the comedic in a world in which "the funny is always tripping over the not funny, sometimes appearing identical to it," Berlant and Ngai write: "…the affective labor of the comedic as a socially lubricating mood commandeers comedy to enable the very contradictions and stresses to which it also points."[433] Crucially, comedy helps us to identify what we share with others and what we do not, and reminds us of the very intersubjectivity that propels us to joke about things.[434] Berlant and Ngai beautifully capture the messiness of the comedic: the grim darkness that clings to pleasure, and the discomfort and violence present within the funny. They draw our attention to the suturing of the painful and comic in expressions of disbelief, but insist that the proximity and pleasure derived from the comedic is worth holding on to. This dual understanding of the comedic – as something that expresses and shows the boundaries of our relation to others, and contains within it a multitude of affective possibilities, offering excitement even as it disturbs – informs my reading of laughter in the camp.

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[432] Lauren Berlant, and Sianne Ngai, "Comedy Has Issues," Critical Inquiry 43 Winter (2017). pp. 233.

[433] Berlant, "Comedy Has Issues." pp. 234-236.

When I told Sly, a *sungu sungu* with whom I had had many conversations about witchcraft, that someone had offered to teach me about witchcraft, he responded with a warning that I would be cursed ("*Asije akakuroga*!") I responded, jokingly, that I couldn't be ("*mimi siwezi kurogwa*") – to which we both laughed, and he nodded in agreement.[435] Nyarugusu residents often explained that they didn't fear me because I had no reason to curse them; after all, I was neither Congolese, nor a refugee (and sometimes, because I was not African). Witch doctors that I met with explained that unless it was purchased, witchcraft would not work on those who were not Bembe.

The many long conversations about witchcraft with the witchdoctor Mzee Kenge were also punctuated by much laughter. At one of our first meetings, he explained that there would be a two-day meeting of witches in the camp. I asked him how he knew. He exhaled into a long, slow chuckle. “It’s a secret.”

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[434] Berlant, "Comedy Has Issues." pp. 235.

[435] Field notes and Interview with Sly, February 18, 2014.

Dusting off his hands in resignation as he explained how his resettlement case had gotten no traction in the last decade, he said, “Now, with witchcraft, if I find a way to go, I’ve called to the Congo. He’ll come, he’ll come from above and take me away. It’s here. (*Gesturing below the table beneath us*) It’s here. We’re talking, it’s right here, underneath.” He laughed heartily. “Who?” I asked. He laughed again. “Right here, underneath, there’s something.” His voice rose as the laugh turned into a fit of giggling. “Wait, who?” I press. “Who?” (*Still laughing*) “The ancestors!” I nodded in understanding. “We’re with them right now. As we’re talking, they’re right here.” I confirmed, “Ah, they’re listening.” “Yes,” he said, smiling. “They’re listening.” “Alright!” I responded, smiling back. He burst into laughter again. “Please greet them,” I said, enjoying his mirth. He laughed again. “If you speak, they will listen on their own. (*His voice dropped to a whisper*) They must be here. They’re listening.” “Okay,” I responded with a smile. “I’m open.” He started slowly again “So, this is the hidden person. If you would like to know the secrets of witchcraft, here they are.”[436]

Later on, Mzee was laying out some implements on the table. As I examined them, he explained “ This is a medicine that I use. If you come into my house, and you’re a witch, it will affect you.” I looked up, and half seriously, replied: “But I’m not a witch.” He laughed loudly, and clapped. “It can’t hurt you.” “Why are you laughing?” I checked in. “I’m laughing because you say you’re not a witch.” He paused, but didn’t stop smiling. “If you were a witch, it would have already hit you." I realized what I had been too slow to understand "Ohhhh, so you would have already known." He nodded.

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[436] Interview with Mzee Kenge, February 20, 2014.

Kagabo, who I saw on an almost daily basis, had told me many stories about human beings disguising themselves as animals through witchcraft. Walking through the camp one day, we passed by a goat. I joked that it might possibly be a person. Turning to me very seriously, Kagabo said that it couldn't. It had a rope around its neck. Human beings would never allow themselves to be tied up like that, because they were free. An hour later, he began telling me the story of a man who enjoyed having a lot of sex. He'd been lusting after a particular woman, and he liked to fuck a lot, so he pursued her (and her sisters) aggressively. One night, he finally slept with the beautiful woman, but when he woke up the following morning, she had transformed into a goat. "Imagine!" Kagabo added. We both collapsed laughing, unable to walk for the next few minutes.[437]

My relationships with Kagabo and Sly were more established and lent themselves to a certain camaraderie, in which the differences between my beliefs and theirs were a laughing matter. The laughter between Sly, Kagabo, and myself held our beliefs up to the light, and let us be open to them. This laughter also contained the possibility of conversion – another form of life could be. In other situations colored by humor (broadly speaking), however, the funniness of my skepticism was accompanied by a darker potential. Though I visited the WLAC office regularly and was acquainted with many of the refugee paralegals there, our relationship was more formal and based on conversations about WLAC matters rather than the kind of personal interactions I had had with Kagabo and his friends and family. One day while visiting, I met a new paralegal who had come in to sign the attendance ledger. A few of the other staff members were sitting around on long benches, chatting, and the atmosphere was jokey. She looked familiar, and I asked her if we'd already met. She said she hadn't met me, and I responded lightly that I might have seen her without her seeing me. She retorted: "ah – it's not possible that you weren't seen!" I answered, jokingly, at once referring to the many tales of witchcraft being something secret and hiding itself ("*kitu cha giza*") and mocking my own skepticism – "Maybe I hid myself." Everyone laughed heartily. The chairman jocularly wagged his finger at me - "Well, if you do something bad, we'll lock you up!" I smiled and said I was a safe person (*mtu wa salama*) so he wouldn't. Everyone laughed again. What remained unsaid were the suspicions surrounding my presence in the camp. Rumors had swirled around the visit of another anthropologist who was hired by the International Rescue Committee to conduct a study of *fidia*, or child compensation. Refugees had complained – "*wanatuchunguza*" – or – "they are investigating us!"

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[437] Field notes, Feb. 19, 2014. I point out such instances of laughter to express the coming-together-ness of disparate orientations of the world; I am not suggesting an essential similarity, but rather an invitation to let knowledge happen to each other. On the dangers of assuming belonging to the same worlds, see: Achille Mbembe, Critique of Black Reason (Duke University Press, 2017).

Laughter and Vulnerability: New Possibilities

The common thread of vulnerability ties both of these circumstances that elicit laughter together. Laughter's relationship to unease, danger, and distress underscored moments of potential precarity; when violence threatened to interrupt ordinary moments too forcefully, when the small fissures between my colocuters and I were at risk of turning into chasms, vulnerability lurked behind this embodied sound. By vulnerability, I do not mean weakness or susceptibility to harm.[438] Nor do I equate it simply with risk or precarity. Parkhill et. al.'s study of communities living under nuclear risk shows how humor can both hide and reveal affective states engendered by risk, and argues that it helps to live with such risk by "suppressing vulnerabilities, enabling the negotiation of what constitutes a threat, and engendering a sense of empowerment."[439] In my interactions, however, laughter did not exactly "suppress" vulnerabilities, but acknowledged them.

In previous chapters I have described how Nyarugusu residents described bodily vulnerability and argued that it forms the basis for claims to dignity, being human, and better humanitarian care. In this chapter I seek to further underscore how vulnerability makes its appearance in social scenes – within the context of relationships as well as everyday life in the condition of suffering patiently. Whereas vulnerability has been tied to risk, my interactions in the camp – though indeed, colored by anxiety (about the potential closing of the camp, the danger of witchcraft and poison, and the temporality of resettlement or repatriation) – point to a different generative possibility. In other words, it points us to claims not made within secular liberal political orders, even if such claims adopt terms from them, and to the possibility of the incompatibility of the grammar of humanitarian rationality, i.e. human rights, versus human wrongs.

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[438] For a philosophical overview of the concept of vulnerability, see Erinn C. Gilson, The Ethics of Vulnerability: A Feminist Analysis of Social Life and Practice (New York: Routledge, 2014).

[439] Karen A Parkhill, Karen L Henwood, Nick F Pidgeon and Peter Simmons, "Laughing It Off? Humour, Affect and Emotion Work in Communities Living with Nuclear Risk," The British Journal of Sociology 62.2 (2011).

Writing on vulnerability, Estelle Ferrarese remarks that it presupposes a moral evaluation and obligations, thus enjoining us to action/care. However, she cautions against an understanding of vulnerability that does not take into account the conditions of its production: "*How does the idea of a fundamental human vulnerability enable us to account for socially produced or configured forms of vulnerability*?"[440] At the same time, she pushes back against notions that vulnerability precludes power, and that it might obstruct both freedom and equality. These concerns are only notable within a world-view that conceives of liberal equality as desirable without attending to the dangers that it might pose.

Nevertheless, in intuiting that vulnerability can in fact form the basis of political action (broadly understood), Ferrarese has rightly critiqued those who, like Hannah Arendt, argue that the vulnerable body – and plurality - is incompatible with the political. She insists that the concept of vulnerability "[reinvents] categories of freedom, equality, and being-in-common based on the body," it is not apolitical but "works to undo the world."[441] The laughter in the camp called my attention to vulnerability, but also to how this vulnerability was fundamentally embodied – and how, ultimately, it was defined in terms of humanity.

But how are we human, and how are we bodies? Judith Butler has argued that bodies are not entities but relational; we cannot think about bodies without thinking about the infrastructures and relationships they are embedded within.[442] It strikes me that it is only from the perspective of late capitalism (and late liberalism) that it seems to be necessary to articulate this enmeshment of bodies within other webs and forms of life, in order that we may "we might call into question the body as discrete, singular, and self-sufficient…. to understand embodiment as both performative and relational."[443] Butler writes that we ought to see the human body is dependent on infrastructure (defined as entanglement within both human and technical worlds of support and nourishment). Through this theorization we also emerge with an understanding of human-as-vulnerable, both to breakdowns in infrastructure as well as to one another, and that "this very vulnerability indicates a broader condition of dependency and interdependency which changes the dominant ontological understanding of the embodied subject."[444]

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[440] Estelle Ferrarese, "Vulnerability: A Concept with Which to Undo the World as It Is?," Critical Horizons 17.2 (2016). pp. 153.

[441] Ferrarese, "Vulnerability: A Concept with Which to Undo the World as It Is?." pp. 158.

However, this idea of human as vulnerable – even if differentially so – does not acknowledge how Man, the Western bourgeois conception of the human, is "overrepresented" as the human itself.[445] It is this overrepresentation of man that forms the "human" of human rights, and refugees in the camp push back against the abstractions expressed within the humanitarian commitment to teaching them about their rights by insisting on their specific humanity.[446] This humanity is expressly described as one that is shaped in and through humanitarian intervention and bodily precarity. In expressing vulnerability, Nyarugusu residents disrupt human rights as a discourse, insisting on the spatial and bodily materialities that must be attended to. This "constant negotiation of particularities – extending outwards from colonial brutalities – produces an ethics of being "yet to come."""[447]

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[442] See Elizabeth Grosz, Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism (St. Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1994)., for a critique of the masculinist focus and mind-body divide in theorizing the body as well as the elaboration of a sexed corporeality.

[443] Judith Butler, Rethinking Vulnerability and Resistance, 2014, Available: http://www.institutofranklin.net/sites/default/files/files/Rethinking%20Vulnerability%20and%20Resistance%20Judith%20Butler.pdf.11-12.

[444] Butler, Rethinking Vulnerability and Resistance.2014, pp. 11-12.

[445] Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, after Man, Its Overrepresentation--an Argument." pp. 260.

[446] Bryan Turner has argued that we might connect human rights to human frailty and the vulnerability of the body, and in doing so, ameliorate vulnerability of the body through the institutionalized protection of rights. I argue the

Thus the continuous evocation of bodily decay and infrastructural damage in Nyarugusu was not by any measure apolitical. But I am cautious of making a straightforward equivalence between statements of vulnerability and notions of resistance, which is what Butler does. But can we talk about vulnerability without relating it to resistance? Or is resistance the only compatible grammar to understand claims based upon (corporeal) vulnerability? As Ferrarese and others argue, linking vulnerability with moral evaluations and obligations of care denies its political nature.[448] Might it be more productive to think about laughter as producing a space for openness?

When Das speaks of language as "bodied forth," of allowing oneself to be "marked" by the knowledge of the other, she gestures towards agency not as transgression, resistance, or escape, but rather, as a "descent into the ordinary".[449] This picture of agency becomes more elaborate when we think of it as bodied; in conjunction with Wittgenstein's observation that it is thinkable to locate one's pain in another's body. The relationality of pain underscores the idea

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opposite: that a focus on human vulnerability, by focusing our attention to the human, can help us look beyond the framework of rights. See Bryan S. Turner, "Outline of a Theory of Human Rights," Sociology 27.3 (1993).

[447] McKittrick, ed., Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis. pp. 6.

[448] Ferrarese, "Vulnerability: A Concept with Which to Undo the World as It Is?."

[449] Das, Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary., pp. 7.

that agency can be located in knowledge not gained actively, not sought out, but rather, in passivity or passion. This becomes explicit if we return to Cavell: "My knowledge of you marks me; it is something that I experience, yet I am not present to it... my knowledge of others.... is something that finds me...," that is, "I must let it happen to me."[450] It might be easy to think of "we're suffering here" or "we're in pain" as complaints expressing invitations to sympathy or empathy. But laughter undoes any notion that those modes of relationality might be adequate. Laughter as voice was an invitation to consider differently lived-and-believed worlds, of which precarious vulnerability was a constitutive part. Rather than thinking about it as "resistance," which would itself necessitate the use of a binary distinction between resistance/oppression, we might read it as the expelling of breath that insists on openness.[451]

Indeed, in calling for a an ethics of vulnerability that defines it in terms of openness, philosopher Erinn C. Gilson brings us back to Merleau-Ponty's account of flesh and orientation to the world, in which passivity figures not as inaction but as possibility – precisely the opposite of what is expressed through the idea of resistance as action. Our flesh is part of the world; we are mutually imbricated within it.[452] Being open means allowing others to communicate through one's body. Laughing in the camp, with, rather than at each other, meant expressing an ethic of vulnerability that called forth a new responsibility. This responsibility was one that spoke back to the humanitarian world and its failings, to the social world remade through violence, and to each other as in the form of openness grounded in and through the flesh rather than abstractions like human rights.

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[450] Cited in Das, Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary. pp. 41.

[451] See Crawley, Blackpentecostal Breath., for a reading of otherwise possibilities created through BlackPentecostal practices of breath, aesthetic performances, and speaking in tongues.

[452] Gilson, The Ethics of Vulnerability: A Feminist Analysis of Social Life and Practice. pp. 130-131.

CONCLUSION

In early January of 2017 I receive a video from Kagabo. The preview shows only the familiar red soil of Nyarugusu, punctuated by two incongruously bright green shrubs, and indistinguishable figures on a pathway. I click on it, and a chorus of voices bursts through my speakers as the camera pans across a line of approximately 60 men and women clad in dark blue – *sungu sungu* officers. In the corner, a shadow of a hand wrapped around a cellphone appears briefly, before the video reveals a small white pickup truck. *Sungu sungu* officers stand on the flat bed and lower a coffin. The voices get louder, more mellifluous, and people briefly interrupt their clapping to help as the coffin, wrapped in bright purple cloth, is passed down.

“We’ll leave the world
Ai yo, this world, we’ll leave this world

The world is flowers, flowers"[453]

The words "*dunia maua maua*" repeat, rise and fall with enthusiastic double clapping. They sing that life in this world is like the life of tender blossoms: short. They look lovely in the morning, but in the afternoon, they wither, and die under the hot sun. They are burying their colleague, and our friend, Sly. Each carrier at the front gestures for more hands as the coffin floats forward, past a man in a khaki vest with "TWESA" emblazoned on the back. The camera pans back to the truck quickly, where a man in a white shirt holds a digital camera up to his face, then jumps down to continue recording the procession. Behind him, people clamber out of another packed vehicle to join the pallbearers. Another hundred or so people are gathered around, and the voices get softer as two lines snake away from the camera towards the gravesite, and the video abruptly ends.

Sly died of a chronic condition that he could not get adequate medication and care for in the camp. Kagabo had attended many other funerals in the camp, of community members who died of illness or had been brutally murdered. For each, he borrowed a device to record videos. They were then edited and shared on social media and via cellphones. He had been resettled before this funeral, and had received the video from a friend still in the camp. Death and absence rendered exile even sharper, and vice versa. In another context, Christina Sharpe writes of recognizing Black death as constitutive of democracy and justice. Though Sharpe is talking of the state sanctioned and extralegal murders of Blacks in America, her understanding of antiblackness as "the ground on which we stand" and of the lived Black experience as

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[453] *Dunia tutaiacha*
Ai yo dunia tutaiacha dunia
Dunia maua, maua
Dunia maua, maua (repeats)
Personal communication with Kagabo, January 9, 2017, and June 11, 2017.

"deathliness, in the wake of slavery," also speaks to the afterlives of slavery, colonial, imperial, humanitarian and postcolonial violence in Nyarugusu.[454] It draws our attention to humanitarianism and encampment as a historically instituted determination of differential humanity and as a globally reproduced technology of order. Sharpe reads Black being in the wake as an "insistence on existing."[455] It is this "insistence on existing" and on being heard that I have tried to pay attention to in the context of humanitarian aid as focused on the (racialized) manifestations of the "human" contained within "human rights."

I began this thesis by describing humanitarian priorities in the camp and arguing that humanitarianism has shifted from a concern with the bodily and the material to the moral and the ethical. This shift is a result, in part, of global discourses on the rights of women. Humanitarian aid attempts to teach refugees human rights. These human rights are the rights of women and children, rather than human rights at large, or even refugee rights, which are in fact severely constrained and violated through encampment. In the first chapter, I describe the various ways in which this human rights pedagogy is discussed and deployed in the camp. In the second chapter, I argue that humanitarian aid continues to work on camp residents' moral orientations by forcing community participation in such a way that it engenders demands for good behavior but also good knowledge. In other words, the refugee who is under humanitarian care must not only be a good humanitarian subject by participating in their own care, but also by following the proscribed rules of the humanitarian regime and its procedures and by having a specific attitude and the knowledge to go along with that. By looking at the case of a female GBV survivor encountering the GBV protection apparatus, I trace the fissures in this impossible demand; by showing her reticence to be a “good survivor,” I reaffirm that the conscription of refugees into a particular kind of modern (humanitarian) consciousness can never be complete.

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[454] Sharpe, In the Wake: On Blackness and Being. pp. 7-8. Sharpe talks of the "undisciplining" that must occur in order to imagine and think otherwise, and to "articulate a method of encountering a past that is not past." ("I am interested in how we imagine ways of knowing that past, in excess of the fictions of the archive.") pp. 11

[455] Sharpe, In the Wake: On Blackness and Being. Pp. 11

The third chapter underscores the ideological and political concerns that drive the humanitarian operation in Nyarugusu and describes how contact between aid workers and refugees is shaped by demands to produce humanitarian knowledge. This knowledge comes about in the context of monitoring and evaluation meetings, within which refugees have a chance to articulate their own demands. They insist on the right to be heard, and to be listened to.

Chapter four contextualizes the lives and imaginaries of refugees who have fled violence in the South Kivu region of Eastern DRC. It argues that the context of encampment and the constant circulation of human rights discourse give rise to specific ethical orientations in the camp. It argues that human rights is a fertile area of study for an anthropology of ethics, and locates the ethical in relation to danger and bodily integrity.

Chapter five explores how refugees understand the conditions of refugeehood. It shows the limits of theories of biopolitics in understanding refugee and humanitarian situations, turning instead to black feminist theory to emphasize the body and racialized understandings of humanness that underpin the enterprises of humanitarianism and human rights. It should be clear by now that the story of human rights in the camp is not a single story with a simple narrative. Whereas the previous chapters have described refugee incentive workers who are enthusiastic about rights, refugees who adopt the language rights to get services, refugees who manipulate the language of rights and GBV to express entirely different demands, and refugees who refuse rights and/or critique their European provinciality, this chapter focuses on taking the "human" out of "human rights." Refugees make claims to humanity that do not depend on the language of law or rights, but with a view to wholeness and dignity. Unlike Hountoundji, who also premises rights on dignity, they do not look to the human rights regime at all, but to social relations of care and the expectations that naturally arise from them.

The final chapter describes intimate moments between myself and my colocutors. Using laughter as a way to understand certain modes of affect, it explores unexpected moments of humor and the sociality of laughter and breath to uncover other intersubjective ethical demands. I argue that laughter can represent or create an invitational relation between laughers, and that breath expelled as laughter can function as an antidote to the abstraction of human rights. This is because laughter as an embodied gesture in the camp bids one to see vulnerability, and represents a demand for an ethics of care premised on such vulnerability.

This dissertation has sought to describe the conditions under which those living under humanitarian confinement in Nyarugusu made claims for a different present and future. Rather than simply focusing on the difficulties they faced, however, I hope I have succeeded in moving towards what Joel Robbins calls an "anthropology of the good:" i.e. an anthropology of values, or of the ways in which people might conceive of living well.[456] I aimed to do so in two ways: by looking at what the supposedly universal values of "human rights" encompass, and by looking at what refugees considered to be a dignified, good life.

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[456] Joel Robbins, "Beyond the Suffering Subject: Toward an Anthropology of the Good," Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 19.3 (2013).

Anthropology has had its own complicated relationship with rights. Initially opposed to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, anthropologists have been criticized for cultural relativism that leads to ignoring women's human rights. In the 1980s and 1990s, anthropologists began articulating a greater commitment to international human rights. However, even in taking a critical stance to human rights, many anthropologists remained committed to simply reframing rights.[457] Intellectuals in Africa have been debating the universality of human rights for decades. Some scholars argued that the concept that human rights were indeed universal – that some version of rights had always existed in Africa – or could be made so, and others criticized rights for their particularly European inflection, arguing either that rights needed to be expanded or the context of rights historicized for them to have any effect. But even attempts to achieve a "genuine universality" did not stray far from the discourse of rights, accountability, rule of law, and democratization. Undoubtedly, many of these conversations took place within a very particular context of decolonization, globalization, and uneven development. But human rights have never managed to dissociate themselves from the concept of man. Notwithstanding the calls to expand human rights – to include new rights, or new perspectives – these critics of human rights have not argued that we give up the concept of rights in favor of another one altogether. This dissertation acknowledges the failings of human rights and the existence of proposals to modify the concept. However, it has described what the practice of human rights (as articulated by a supposedly global but actually local, and Western-dominated multilateral organization, the United Nations) looks like in Nyarugusu. I have argued that rather than considering women's rights as human rights, in the camp, only women's rights are human rights. I have suggested that the reconfiguration of ethical orientations in the camp in the context of and in confrontation with human rights does something more powerful than simply suggest modifications to the human rights regime as currently practiced. In some ways refugees who sought the "right to be heard" or "the right to be listened to" gestured towards this "expansion" or modification of rights. In other extremely important ways, however, refugees exited the framework of rights entirely.

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[457] See Mark Goodale, Surrendering to Utopia: An Anthropology of Human Rights (Stanford University Press, 2009), Ellen Messer, "Anthropology and Human Rights," Annual Review of Anthropology 22.1 (1993), Mark Goodale, "Introduction to "Anthropology and Human Rights in a New Key"," American Anthropologist 108.1 (2006), Ann-Belinda S Preis, "Human Rights as Cultural Practice: An Anthropological Critique," Human Rights Quarterly 18.2 (1996).

Indeed, one might argue that a politics of responsibility based on care and vulnerability is not significantly different from a truly universal human rights that encompasses particularities and differential experiences of power and inequality. But the key point about such a politics is that unlike human rights, it no longer appeals to the law as a framework for justice. Human rights is about accountability. It is about punishing those who commit human rights abuses. It is about inherent individual (and to some extent, group) rights enshrined in legal instruments and upheld through the application of justice in courts of law. An ethics of care, on the other hand, is based on a commitment to relationships and repair. It eschews the concept of accountability as punishment, and focuses on accountability as a set of social relations of care for one another, both at the individual as well as the societal level. This form of care is premised on openness and vulnerability, and takes repair rather than punishment as the starting point for human flourishing. It is gentler, negotiable, and sensitive to context and complexity.

The continued presence of “Man” as the subject of rights that constitutes certain lives as less important than others, or, paradoxically, by making their very vulnerability a site for the imposition of a provincial (Western) ideology requires us to think in terms of what Faye Harrison called a “decolonizing Anthropology” that works against “dehumanization.”[458] In very literal terms, by turning our attention to “the human” in Nyarugusu, I have sought to write it as *homo narrans*, in order to foreground new meanings of the human that escape both “Man” and “human rights,” and, but also to point towards the generative possibilities that they offer. In other words, I have tried to show that a world beyond human rights is possible, but only if we pay attention to what it means to be (differently) human.

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[458] Harrison, ed., Decolonizing Anthropology: Moving Further toward an Anthropology for Liberation. pp. 10. Jafari Allen and Ryan Jobson place black life at the center of such an anthropology: “While extant accounts of modern Anthropology approach the New World Negro as a peripheral figure that bears little consequence to the field at large, what might we glean from a genealogy that places her at the center of its theoretical concerns rather than at the distant margins?... anthropological discourse has been structured upon silences that conveniently obscure the conditions of intellectual production from which a taxonomy of enlightenment Man qua Human was birthed and sustained…” Jobson, "The Decolonizing Generation: (Race and) Theory in Anthropology since the Eighties." pp. 131. In a response, Francis Nyamnjoh critiques the authors for their blind-spot with regards to non-Western anthropologists.

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