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Violence as an Under-Recognized Barrier to Women's Realization of Their Right to Adequate Food and Nutrition: Case Studies From Georgia and South Africa

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A RIGHTS-BASED ANALYSIS OF GENDER, NUTRITION, AND STRUCTURAL EXCLUSION: CASE STUDIES FROM GEORGIA AND SOUTH AFRICA

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KEY WORDS

human right to adequate food, women's rights, nutrition, Georgia, South Africa

ABSTRACT

This paper addresses under-acknowledged barriers of structural violence and discrimination that interfere with women's capacity to realize their human rights generally, and their right to adequate food and nutrition in particular. Case studies from Georgia and South Africa illustrate the need for a human rights based approach to food and nutrition security that prioritizes non-discrimination, public participation and self-determination. These principles are frustrated by different types of structural violence that, if not seriously addressed, pose multiple barriers to women's economic, public and social engagement.

This paper addresses the question of why the status of women's and girls' food and nutrition security is not improving at a time when so many call for their inclusion in policy agendas (cf. De Schutter, 2012; United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2003; United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2010; United Nations Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, 2011). We argue that a central reason is the under-acknowledged barrier of structural violence and discrimination that interferes with women's capacity to realize their human rights generally, and their right to adequate food and nutrition in particular. Recognizing the role of violence as a barrier to achieving food and nutrition security requires a broad human rights based approach that asks from a grass roots standpoint, *why cannot women command* their entitlement to food. This differs from a more narrow, top-down, and patronizing food security perspective that asks, *why are women not getting access* to adequate and sufficient food. A broad human rights based approach to food and nutrition builds on the progressive realization of human rights for all community members, including women. The approach also builds from a local orientation towards food and nutrition systems that augments self-determination and autonomy instead of the violence of food dependency.

Among the world's most food insecure groups including rural persons, especially small farmers, and the urban poor, women and girls face violations of their right to adequate food and nutrition at a 60:40 ratio relative to men and boys (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2007) and comprise 70 % of the global poor overall overall (De Schutter, 2011; De Schutter, 2012; Quisumbing & Smith, 2007; World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [FAO], & International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2009). Lack of attention to gender-based violence and discrimination in the context of food and nutrition security violates not only women's human rights, but also interferes with the well-being of entire families, communities, and States. According to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and the *2009 Global Hunger Index* (von Grebmer et al., 2009), gender discrimination has been directly associated with

heightened conditions of social instability, political conflict, and hunger. Yet despite social inequities, countless studies identify women as the key to household food and nutrition security despite the social discrimination they face (FAO, 2011; International Food Policy Research Institute [IFPRI], 2005; Kent, 2002). According to IFPRI (2005) and reiterated by FAO (2011), this key role of women refers to a range of complex factors. Studies have shown that if women have a higher social and economic status within the household and community and therefore increased decision-making power, this will positively affect the wellbeing of all household members, but especially children's nutrition and health. If women have better access to resources such as land and agricultural inputs, this results in significant gains in agricultural productivity. Enabling women access to agricultural technology and extension services has a greater impact on poverty reduction than targeting men.

This paper provides first an overview of international approaches to food and nutrition security, the right to adequate food and nutrition, and to women's rights, in which we expose the lack of articulation between the right to adequate food and women's human rights. The article then introduces a range of gendered food-related violences[1], followed by a discussion of violence as an under-recognized barrier to women's right to adequate food, particularly with regard to women's participation in food and nutrition policy and planning. A section on research methodology precedes the presentation of two case studies based on empirical research from Georgia and South Africa. These case studies illustrate how structural violence and discrimination interfere with efforts to improve women's lives. The discussion finds that significant change to women's food and nutrition status cannot be achieved in isolation, but must incorporate women's full human rights over their life course with particular attention to women's bodily integrity and their right to self-determination and non-discrimination.

INTERNATIONAL APPROACHES TO FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY, THE HUMAN RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD AND NUTRITION, AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Food security is defined by the FAO as "a situation that exists if all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to adequate, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (2001, p. 49). Food insecurity refers not just to hunger, but the risk of being hungry (Kracht 1999), the ways in which food is obtained (social access; Webb & von Braun, 1993), and the use and intra-household distribution of food (Maxwell & Smith, 1992; Rogers & Schlossmann, 1990). Recognizing the lack of attention to biological aspects of food in addition to economic factors (Gross, Schoeneberger, Pfeifer, & Preuss, 2000), the UN Committee on World Food Security more recently adopted the concept of "food and nutrition security", with the definition,

> Food and nutrition security exists when all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to food, which is safe and consumed in sufficient quantity and quality to meet their dietary needs and food preferences, and is supported by an environment of adequate sanitation, health services and care, allowing for a healthy and active life. (2012, p. 2)

At the international level, food and nutrition security was derived as a policy function directly from two sources: the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 25, paragraph 1; "the right to standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family [*sic*], including food …"; and from the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)[2], Article 11; "the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family [*sic*], including adequate food …" (Bellows & Hamm, 2003). Food and nutrition security however loses the fundamental human rights principal of participation and decision making in the development of public policy on the right to adequate food. From the broad 1966 ICESCR and its many follow-up instruments, States Parties[3] and their local communities have become accountable to individuals and groups to progressively and specifically realize, through obligations to respect, protect and fulfill, the human right to appropriate access to a sufficiency and adequacy of food

(Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1999; Eide, 2005; Suarez Franco & Ratjen, 2007). Also central to the idea of the human right to adequate food and nutrition is indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights. This means that the right to adequate food and nutrition is linked closely with all other human rights, including the right to the highest attainable health, women's rights, political and civil rights, and other economic, social and cultural rights like education, employment, inheritance, and housing. From this vantage point, we can understand and develop policy measures (including recourse and remedy tools) recognizing that a woman cannot realize her right to adequate food and nutrition if, for example, her right to work and fair pay is denied, or if psychological or physical violence, whether enacted, threatened or implied, deters her from public life.

A central challenge to women realizing the right to adequate food and nutrition is the lack of harmonization within the relevant international human rights instruments. Clearly, the 1948 UDHR and the 1966 ICESCR contain highly patriarchal and discriminatory language with regard to men dominating and managing the relationship between the State and individuals in "men's families" vis-à-vis an adequate standard of living, including food. We note that although this language has not changed, the intervening 1999 General Comment 12 on the Right to Adequate Food by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the FAO's 2005 *Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security* have attempted to atone for early UDHR and ICESCR language with strong statements on non-discrimination by gender. The FAO publication, *Women and the Right to Food: International Law and State Practice* (Rae, 2008) itemizes where women's right to food is mentioned. Nevertheless, this work has not leveraged coordination of UN human rights bodies with the food, nutrition and gender competences to enact and engage progressive policy.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW 1979; entry into force 1981) was the first successful attempt to build an

international treaty dedicated to a specific group after 1966. CEDAW attempted to highlight and take normative steps to address systematic discrimination that prevented women's access to rights outlined in the 1966 ICESCR and its companion treaty, the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, focusing particularly on paid work, political life, education, and health care. However, CEDAW's Article 14 on Rural Women notwithstanding, CEDAW neglected women's rights to adequate food beyond attention to "adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation" (Article 12). CEDAW also does not address violence against women, which was only finally articulated in the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAW) (UN General Assembly, 1993). DEVAW however does not link violence against women with women's right to adequate food and nutrition.

International human rights lawyer, Ana-Maria Suarez Franco has repeatedly lectured on the need to harmonize legal sources that touch upon disparate aspects of what must be included in a holistic approach to women's right to adequate food. The benefit of an approach of this nature would be to establish structures that build policy development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation into the formal human rights institutions. This process would contribute to the evolution of a systematic interpretation of now diverse legal sources. Practical examples of an evolution of women's right to adequate food and nutrition could come, for example, in the form of a comprehensive General Comment by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, or, General Recommendation by the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women[4].

FOOD VIOLENCES AND GENDER

Bellows (2003) proposes the term "food violences" to characterize periodic or chronic physical, psychological, and political harm associated with food availability and food-related work. Food and food-based work (for example, food production, shopping, meal preparation,

food service industry work, etc.) represent locations that can instigate gender based-violence. As indicated in the examples that follow from the literature, food-related violences that affect women are diverse, encompassing when and how they eat, expectations for women's food work and the right to abuse or reward women for it, the impact of violence on the nutrition and health status, the normalization of such violences, and the ability to exploit women's engagements in food work and the related violences to leverage global marketing incursion of unhealthy foods into local food systems.

Women and girls often eat last, least, and most poorly in private household spaces (Kikafunda & Lukwago, 2005; Musaiger, 1993; Rosalina, Wibowo, Kielmann, & Usfar, 2007; Sasson, 2012), having also least access to the right and resources to eat in public spaces (e.g. in Ethiopia, Scherbaum, 1997). Ethnographic observations reveal retaliatory abuse for cooking transgressions like burning food, preparing too much or too little, or at the wrong time (Ambrosetti, Amara, & Condon, 2013; Beardsworth & Keil, 1997; Burgoyne & Clark1984; DeVault, 1991; Dobash, 1979; Schuler, Yount, & Lenzil, 2012; Whitehead, 1994). Physical violence in response to this "misbehavior" is condoned and even normalized (per Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), as often by women as by men and sometimes even more so by women (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2010). Household power over food, marshalled by husbands but also by other men and male and female in-laws (Dalal, Rahman, & Jansson, 2009; Raj, Livramento, Santana, Gupta, & Silverman, 2006; Raj et al., 2011) as well as by employers of migrant home care workers (Ayalon 2009; Eziefula & Brown, 2010) is shown to be exercised to punish women. Characteristically this abuse takes the form of withholding food or restricting funds to pay for food (Usta, Makarem, & Habib, 2013), pushing many women into high risk sexual behavior prone to violence in order to secure money or food (Weiser et al., 2007). Violence in general and intimate partner violence in particular affects not only the health and nutritional status of women, but also that of their children (Ackerson & Subramanian, 2008; Hasselmann & Reichenheim, 2006; Rico, Fenn,

Abramsky, & Watts, 2011; Salazar, Högberg, Valladares, & Persson, 2012; Shroff, Griffiths, Adair, Suchindran, & Bentley, 2009; Sobkoviak, Yount, & Halim, 2012; Yee, 2013; Yount, DiGirolamo, & Ramakrishnan, 2011; Ziaei, Naved, & Ekström, 2012)[5]. Indeed one study shows that tangible supports such as food, as well as housing and financial assistance, are precisely what women surviving physical or sexual violence identify as most needed (Postmus, Severson, Berry, & Yoo, 2009). Economic exertion that is generally targeted at women by the globalizing agro-food industry urges increased, poor quality household food purchases that are leading to reduced reliance on local food systems and cultural preferences, as well as, a correlated growth in non-communicable disease (Moodie et al., 2013).

VIOLENCE AS AN UNDER-RECOGNIZED BARRIER TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN FOOD AND NUTRITION PLANNING AND POLICY

Violence is an under-theorized aspect of hunger, malnutrition, and the exclusion of groups like women, children and the indigenous from food and nutrition security (Bellows, 2003; Ulvin, 1998). The threat of diverse forms of violence impedes women from engaging their own right to adequate food and from acting on behalf of their families and communities to the full extent of their capabilities. This helps to explain why so little progress has been made in improving gender mainstreaming with respect to food and nutrition security. Gender-based violence is rarely acknowledged nor anticipated by policy makers when attempting to address women's particular vulnerability to food and nutrition insecurity and to mainstream them into right to adequate food work.

Violence targets individual and group survival, wellbeing, freedom and identity and is realized through "avoidable insults inflicted on basic human needs and more generally life, and lowering the real satisfaction level of needs below what is potentially feasible" (Galtung, 1990, p. 292). Multiple forms characterize violence: passive threat or active force, cultural violence based on traditional practice (Galtung, 1990), and structural violence featuring

systematic violation aligned with social injustice that "is built into [social] structure and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances" (Galtung, 1969, p. 171). Kinds of structural violence include: poverty, or the deprivation of material necessities; repression and the lack of human rights; and alienation, i.e., the deprivation on non-material necessities (Ulvin, 1998). Structural violence generally acts as a frame for direct and cultural violence and serves to maintain uneven, discriminatory social relations that build upon prejudice directed against diverse groups: ethnic, racial, or political minorities, rural peoples, the elderly or infirm, women, children, sexual minorities, etc. Men, of course, can also experience structural violence in relation to a discriminatory status based on their location in any of these categories.

Women and men are often complicit in reifying cultural norms that systematize the violations that in turn preclude women's public participation. In the private home, familial compacts will resolve that women obey, respect and predominate in the private household sphere, and that men protect and govern both private and public spheres. In the public sphere, monitoring gender-based violence has historically been narrowed and medicalized, with stress on physical and intimate partner violence instead of an analysis of restrictions on access to public and political life and the loss of public voice and participation. Further work is needed to link violence, including gender-based violence to economic systems that often construct the conditions of chronic poverty, the loss of self-determination, and the entrenchment of dependency. Without such analysis, we lose capacity to measure participation and self-determination with regard to the right to food and nutrition security.

METHODOLOGY

The two case studies presented here arise from separate ongoing research projects that form part of a larger academic-civil society collaboration entitled *Gender, Nutrition and the Human Right to Adequate Food: Towards an Inclusive Framework*[6]. The theoretical concepts

discussed in this paper draw from this collaborative project that is based on findings of separate research projects located in diverse geographic locations including those presented here that were presented in in the context of different workshops and other broad discussion events from 2008 – 2013.

The case study of Georgia is part of a larger doctoral research project in the post-democratic transition countries Georgia and Armenia. It introduces the activities of the Taso Foundation, a development organization, and its partners towards the promotion of women's involvement in the public domain to overcoming social exclusion and gender inequality in the post-Soviet era of rapid socio-economic and political transition and military conflicts. Data presented here are based on structured interviews with the staff of the Taso Foundation that were conducted in 2011 and 2012, observations of meetings held by three women's groups and the Taso Foundation staff between June and July 2012, non-structured interviews with the organization's clients after these group meetings took place, and visits to four project sites with the women group members. In addition, the organization's reports and publications were utilized for data analysis. The Taso Foundation was selected for this case study from the larger research project on civil society organizations that work on food security in Georgia, in which 122 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were surveyed and interviews with 32 NGOs working on food security took place. The Taso Foundation was chosen based on three criteria: 1) its work with rural and marginalized women, 2) its involvement in food security, and 3) application of the rights based approaches that create an enabling environment for women's participation in public life.

The South African case study is based on successive research that has been carried out since 1997, two years after the first democratic election took place post-apartheid. This enables an analysis and presentation of how social exclusion and gender inequality, as an ongoing legacy of apartheid policies in concert with enduring patriarchal and paternalistic structures, result in gender-based violence and severe discrimination that prevent women in

present-day South Africa from participating in development strategies towards enhanced livelihoods and nutrition. Data presented here are based on empirical research among rural populations (Lemke, Vorster, & Jansen van Rensburg, 2003) and farm workers (Lemke, Heumann, & Bellows, 2009), as well as continuing study since 2010, framed as participatory action research in close collaboration with several NGOs that facilitate agricultural programs targeted at women (Lemke, Yousefi, Eisermann, & Bellows, 2012). All three studies employed a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, including quantitative household surveys on socio-demographic and economic indicators, qualitative open-ended interviews, interviews with key informants and experts, non-participant and participant observation, as well as focus groups.

CASE STUDIES

The following two case studies address gendered rural conditions in Georgia and South Africa, two countries that have experienced rapid political, economic, and social transformation. Both countries have further experienced severe conflict on their territory: in Georgia, mostly post-1991, and again most recently in 2008; in South Africa, over decades during colonization and apartheid, formally ending in the early 1990s. In South Africa, although the country is richer, income disparity is higher than in Georgia, whereas indices for poverty and gender inequality are similar in both countries (see Table 1). With regard to food security, South Africa is considered moderately food insecure, based on the Global Hunger Index (von Grebmer et al., 2013). However, according to the latest *South African National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (SANHANES-1)* published by the Human Sciences Research Council in 2013, in fact only 45.6% of the South African population were food secure, while 28.3% were at risk of hunger and 26% experienced hunger (Shisana et al., 2013, p.10). In Georgia, also a moderately food insecure country, 36% of the population have an average consumption below the minimum subsistence level, which is calculated based on the

cumulative share of 70% of the minimal food basket and 30% of non-food items defined by the Government of Georgia (Gassmann, Berulava, & Tokmazishvili, 2013, p. 10).

Table 1 about here.

Georgia

Immediately after the collapse of the USSR in 1990, Georgia faced economic stagnation, increasing poverty and social inequality, political instability, ethnic conflicts with severe humanitarian outcomes, corruption, and depletion of agricultural sector. At the same time, international donor agencies opened their country offices in Georgia, among them the Open Society Georgia Foundation (OSGF, founded 1994), a country affiliate of the Open Society Institute. In 2007, the Taso Foundation transformed from OSGF's Women's Program as an independent national women's fund. Currently, Taso Foundation operates with 6 – 7 predominately female staff members and a fluctuating program staff and volunteer base. The organization works primarily with rural women, including ethnic minorities. From 2008, its clientele has expanded to internally displaced and conflict affected women. The Foundation's vision of social development guarantees women's involvement into the public domain, stressing that increasing participation and it organization's wording "social activism of women" should be merged with poverty reduction (Tabukashvili 2011, p. 4).

1. Structural Violence In Non-conflict Setting: Empowerment Of Rural Women

Recognizing regional disparities between women's involvement in the public sphere in the capital Tblisi and other cities in Georgia versus in rural areas, the OSGF Women's Program began in 2004 to focus efforts in the countryside. When the first grant competition for women's social activism was announced in rural areas, most of the applicants applied with proposals to improve their families' and communities' social and economic conditions,

notably by creating income generation possibilities in small-scale farming. These project ideas were different from those that the staff of Taso Foundation was accustomed to receive from civil society groups in the capital, where stress lay on civil rights and domestic violence and trafficking. As was reported during interviews in 2011 and 2012 with the organization's head in rural areas, widespread poverty and unemployment and the willingness to overcome it were the main motivations for women applying for the grants. Consequently, most of the requests were about finding ways to improve the social and economic lives of women and their families, such as improvement of water supply and starting small businesses. Since 2004, more than 200 grants have been issued to rural women, most of them related to farming. Besides providing trainings on business planning, Taso Foundation encourages women's participation in community mobilization activities, such as gender sensitive community budgeting, ensuring access to drinking water, providing help to community members in need. The members of women groups receiving grants decide among and for themselves how to manage the farm, for example, how much harvest to sell or to keep for feeding their families, and how to manage the generated income. The main basis for any decision is a mutual benefit of all group members.

Interviewed Taso Foundation leadership believes that the prevalence and form of domestic violence is probably higher in rural areas as compared to the urban areas associated with higher poverty and unemployment and lack of social protection systems. However, according to Taso Foundation experience, there is less physical violence in rural communities with strong patriarchal traditions and norms, as long as gender expectations are not challenged. Incidence of physical violence appears when a woman or a girl tries to challenge or oppose her subscribed roles and expectations. For example, as was reported by the staff members of Taso Foundation, in a comparably paternalistic Azeri ethnic minority of Georgia physical violence is less common as compared to the Georgian rural communities, because women rarely dispute the burden of their work or inability to manage money.

In order to promote women's activism, Taso Foundation grants are given exclusively to women groups. It also encourages grantees to collaborate with each other, bestowing the multiple advantages of these grants, building women's networks, reducing rural isolation, and sharing experiences and strategies for overcoming challenges both to grantees' projects for economic development generally, and their authority as women more specifically. However, believing in benefits of collaboration conflict with ingrained resistance to organized cooperation during the first stages of a group formation, probably due to the experiences of forced farm collectivization when Georgia was part of the Soviet Union, and where private property was prohibited and individualism discouraged. According to Taso Foundation twenty years after the breakup of the Soviet Union, the very discourse of cooperation continues to provoke anxiety and skepticism.

2. Emergency Response To Conflict: Provision Of Local Food Through Gendered Distribution Networks

In August 2008 a short, but devastating military conflict broke out between Georgia and Russia. Around 130,000 Georgians, including most of the population of the town Gori and nearby villages, were *internally displaced* (FAO, United Nations Children's Programme [UNICEF], & World Food Program [WFP], 2009). Taso Foundation along *with* other civil society organizations made changes in the scheduled work-plan in order to provide assistance to people in conflict affected areas. It worked with the internally displaced persons (IDP) coordination center, and provided food, hygiene products and other necessities. The Foundation contacted rural women partners and grantees of the Empowerment of Rural Women program from the conflict-*unaffected* region of Kakheti and negotiated the purchase of local produce at relatively inexpensive prices for the IDP center. Taso Foundation emphasizes that,

> "many women villagers took out their clothes and products stored for winter for their own families and loaded our trucks free of charge, some of them even suggesting we take some refugee families to them – they were eager to feed these families through the whole winter, to host and support them in every way …" (Tabukashvili, 2010, p. 21)

In the situation of the post-conflict despair, women nevertheless had a sense of the ownership and the confidence in their ability to mobilize and help other women.

The case of Taso Foundation buying the produce from local sources is contrasted with the procurement of eight hundred tons of wheat flour from Turkey and its distribution to IDPs in Georgia in early 2009 by WFP (Bruckner, 2011). While the mass purchase of basic food stuffs was needed and complied with WFP procurement standards in relation to the nutritional content, the product did not fit in well with Georgian food traditions or practice. The Turkish flour did not have a gluten index appropriate for traditional Georgian breads and as Bruckner (2011) explains the resulting bread turned rock hard and was inedible.

3. Post-emergency Phase: Human Rights, Internally Displaced Women's Self-help Groups

After the first phase of post-emergency, the Foundation, together with UN Women continued working with IDPs and Taso Foundation's network of women's initiatives and encouraged the creation of women's self-help groups to address basic needs and rights of IDPs. Drawing on the Taso Foundation's previous experience with rural women, the approach of self-help groups is to address specific needs of IDPs while concurrently working towards structural social change through education about and construction of democratic society with respect to human rights, equality, social justice, and peace. In this way, the empowerment of women is centralized in the re-establishment of social stability. Taso Foundation continues to support economic empowerment of rural IDPs by providing grants for income generating activities, including establishment of farms.

Currently, more than forty self-help groups remain active in social mobilization in rural Georgia and are engaging in public policy making in the post-emergency period. The majority of members and the leadership remain female, although the groups also accept men in cases where individual expertise is necessary. The IDP groups receive legal consultations on their rights from lawyers, and participate in trainings on CEDAW and the rights of refugees.

After the initial meetings with IDPs, it became evident for Taso Foundation that although IDP women first identified economic and food security as priority funding needs, prevention of domestic violence in conflict affected rural areas needed to be a priority. In 2009, Taso Foundation established the Karaleti Women's Center where trainings on women's rights were offered to rural women from nearby communities. During one of these early seminars, a woman disclosed her case of domestic violence. After a period of rehabilitation, she returned home and thereafter, committed suicide. Following this tragedy, the Center intensified its work on rural domestic violence integrating other civil society organizations and the local police office, and in 2009 alone, responded to 20 domestic abuse cases.

Two additional outcomes resulted from self-help groups' experience. First, members joined other civil society organizations in elaborating policy recommendations for Georgia's National Action Plan on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. As the leadership of Taso Foundation states, this civil society collaboration equipped self-help group members with practical engagement with human rights issues and benefitted from their contribution to the policy-making. Second, self-help group activities have focused on incorporating biological farming methods for safe and healthy food. In consultation with them, Taso Foundation has come to define biological farming as one of its priority funding areas for agricultural projects. At the time of the interviews, Taso Foundation together with a self-help group of IDPs was in the process of establishing a model farm.

South Africa

1. Structural Violence And Exclusion: The Legacy Of Apartheid

In South Africa, long before the formalization of apartheid in 1948, discriminatory laws and practices against all non-white groups served to establish and maintain uneven economic and social relations, with women being especially disadvantaged and marginalized. For example, black South Africans could not own land, formalized by the Natives Land Act of 1913, forcing them into wage labor and further preventing farm workers from migrating to urban areas and seeking off-farm employment (Van Onselen, 1996). This largely destroyed subsistence farming and resulted in farm workers and their families being trapped on farms, lacking the skills to be involved in the wider economy (Atkinson, 2007). Today farm workers on commercial farms continue to face poverty as well as income and residential insecurity and belong to the most vulnerable population strata. Women face even more severe discrimination and structural and cultural violence in these conditions, with perpetuating social structures such as paternalism reinforcing their inferior position within the household and community (Reddy & Moletsane, 2009). On farms generally, employment and housing contracts are linked to men, while women are mostly employed on a temporary basis, with their wages being lower than those of men. This leads to women having limited decision-making power with regard to intra-household resource allocation, as well as with regard to other decisions that affect their and their families lives', such as decisions about education, income generation, and geographical location. This economic and social inequality further results in dependency on male partners and livelihood insecurity for female farm workers should the men leave the farm, stop working, or abandon their female partner (Lemke et al., 2009). With regard to the contribution of women to the agricultural sector in South Africa, according to Altman, Hart, & Jacobs (2009, p. 357) nowadays they represent 61% of people involved in farming. Women are engaged to a greater extent than men in producing food for household

consumption. However, women's access to resources such as land, agricultural inputs, credit, extension and other services, is severely limited, due to social norms, as is observed elsewhere (FAO, 2011). Even when gender rights are formalized by laws, they typically conflict with traditional authority and customary law, resulting in gender-based disparities in property rights (IFPRI, 2005).

2. Gender-based Violence And Resulting Changes In Household Structures

In South Africa, different forms of violence against women, including direct violence such as sexual or physical violence, have a political dimension, as is outlined by Schäfer (2008) in her in-depth analysis of women's rights organizations and gender-based violence. During apartheid the struggle against the oppressive regime was at the forefront, with rights of women not being recognized. Oppression against women by men both within and outside of the anti-apartheid movement was not addressed, accounting in part for the impunity of violence against women existing to today. While the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) is one of the most progressive in the world, guaranteeing the right to food and emphasizing socio-economic and cultural rights as well as sexual and gender equality, this stands in stark contrast to the social, economic and political realities of the majority of its citizens (Robins, 2008). Due to ongoing patriarchal structures and the high incidence of domestic violence against women, they often leave their male partner and stay single, resulting in high levels of female-headed households (Jones, 1999; Van der Vliet, 1991). This can be regarded as a coping strategy of women, but also as a strategy for empowerment by resisting male domination, framed by Jones (1999) as singlehood for security, referring both to greater economic security of women as well as lower risk of physical violence and sexual abuse from their male partner, including lower risk to contract HIV. This striving for greater security and greater independence from men was confirmed in research among rural South African populations (Lemke et al., 2003). The aforementioned study, as well as research

among farm worker households (Lemke et al., 2009) further revealed that women-led households, although having less access to earned income compared to male-headed households, are able to take better care of the general well-being of household members than comparable households with male headship. Women-led households also achieve a better nutrition situation and nutrition security, measurable among other indicators by higher household food diversity and thus better nutritional adequacy, and lower incidence of food shortage. This is due to women having better access to social grants from the State, remittances from relatives and other social networks, and various types of informal incomes. These studies highlight on the one hand that women-led households might be better off than often assumed with regard to food and nutrition security, and that women's access to resources and power relations within households are crucial factors for food security and livelihoods. On the other hand, these women-led households are still often not able to break out of the vicious cycle of structural exclusion and poverty. The findings from these two studies emphasize the urgent need to include detailed investigations of household and gender variables in demographic and health surveys.

3. Programs Aimed At Women's Empowerment And Possible Cost Of Participation

Ongoing research investigates the prospects for sustainable livelihoods and food and nutrition security in the context of land and agrarian reform, in cooperation with civil society organizations that offer programs specifically targeted at smallholder farmers and women (Lemke et al., 2012). One sub-study of this recent project explored women's empowerment through farming cooperatives, facilitated by the South African NGO Women on Farms Project. Participatory action research and in-depth interviews revealed that women in these cooperatives, despite facing several problems with regard to production and access to markets, were able to improve various livelihood assets through: better networking with the NGO and amongst each other (social assets); capacity building and training (human assets);

and gaining access to land (natural assets). This further resulted in women's increased level of self-confidence and empowerment. Another sub-study carried out in cooperation with Grootbos Foundation, a non-profit organization, explored an agricultural and life skills training project for women. Participatory action research and in-depth interviews revealed that, similar to the above example, women experienced improvements with regard to certain livelihood assets. The reported and observed positive changes that were experienced in both programs benefited not only the women, but their entire households, resulting in better access to food and increased food diversity. On the other hand, both projects experienced a number of challenges, among others, different expectations on the side of project leaders and project participants; lack of communication; dependency of participants on the organization and on social assistance; and the lack of future prospects and employment in the agricultural or related sectors.

The intention of drawing women out to participate powerfully in the construction of their own lives, can, however, put them in danger. In the Women on Farms Project, the difficulties associated with women leaving their homes to participate in group meetings were explicit. Living in very or relatively isolated rural settings, these women worry that when they leave no one will care for or feed their children. Worse, they fear for the children's potential exposure to abuse in their absence. Additionally, the material goods of their household remain unprotected.

4. Addressing Gender-based Violence – Where Are The Men?

We do not underestimate the oppression of men under colonization and especially how they were discriminated against under apartheid leading to powerlessness and humiliation. In combination with the disruption of social structures and the lack of role models, as well as other factors, this reinforces gender-based violence (Schäfer, 2009). While the above described programs address und include exclusively female participants, the NGO Sonke

Gender Justice Network[7] aims at addressing specifically men. The organization that was founded in 2006 by two former male anti-apartheid activists, speaks out against all forms of violence against women, promotes the need for positive male role models, and strives for establishing partnerships between men and women that are based on mutual respect and equality, in order to reinstate healthy social structures.

DISCUSSION

Human rights are defined in part by their indivisibility and interdependence. This means that the pursuit of women's right to adequate food and nutrition may not disregard violations of women's rights while "delivering" a modicum of food security. For example, programs of food relief under conditions of long term refugee internment or chronic poverty must develop policy together with women most involved in feeding families and communities. Further, and most critically, there must be recognition of the structural violence and discrimination that women face in participating in such public engagements as well as comprehensive planning to address the multiple barriers that women experience. The structural violence of poverty, discrimination, and war reproduces itself at all levels and in all sectors of society, especially in the context of gender inequality. The household, wherein cultural traditions and expectations regarding male dominance and rule already may hold sway, often resists women's greater profile in public space as threatening male dominance. Women's right to adequate food is progressively realized when the path to food and nutrition security is co-designed, co-implemented, co-monitored, and co-evaluated by women, and where there are recourse and remedy options (Burity, Cruz, & Franceschini., 2011) to address and overcome the barriers to women's human rights and bodily integrity.

Social isolation reduces formal and informal communication networks and the reach of public law and oversight. Social isolation magnifies conditions of discrimination against women and gender-based violence, just as it can also leverage conditions of racial or ethnic

inequalities. Isolation can occur anywhere. Yet the opportunity for it is magnified in rural regions and traditional cultures that are physically and socially remote, in particular when they are conjoined, that is, when traditional cultures, including patriarchal household governance and racial inequality, are located in remote areas. We emphasize that we do not maintain that rurality and traditional culture inspire violence. We argue rather that poverty, especially in the post-conflict setting and lack of reliable social and economic support systems amplify social isolation which, as in the reported case in Georgia, means that patriarchal resistance to women changing social norms have a risk of escalating. Without communication networks, violence and discrimination become normalized. It is through reducing social isolation, for example through networking, that normalized injustice receives a name, can be discussed, and alternatives to accepting violence can be imagined and carried out. Groups and networks can, through mutual recognition and support of personal dignity and self-worth, identify and reinforce self-determination and the capability to claim the status of a rights holder; they can challenge the normalization of injustice and violence. Why are the many programs consciously addressing women's and girls' lack of food and nutrition security not successful? We should ask the people concerned how to answer this question, and what the appropriate measures are in their view. When addressing specifically women and girls this could mean to integrate their ideas on how to bring them to a policy making table to address the barriers that frustrate them. When addressing specifically men and boys, this could mean to ask them what their role is with regard to these barriers, where they experience violence in their own lives, and how and why the reproduction of violence appears to make sense; and of course, how the cycle can change (Decker, Miller, & Illangasekare, 2013).

In the case study of Georgia, the Taso Foundation reported that lower-income rural women grantees applied less often for projects addressing their civil and political rights, including protection from domestic violence, and more often for economic development

projects than did their more materially secure and interconnected peers in urban areas. This does not suggest that rural women face less domestic violence, but rather, rural domestic violence might be tolerated by women as a lesser danger than poverty and social isolation. For example as Taso Foundation described, a young Azeri daughter's cultural destiny requires her to agree with her father on when to quit school and marry; or, a married woman's obligation is to unconditionally accept her burden of work at home and in the field. But when a woman tries to contest the established system of socially acceptable behavior, for example by opposing her father's will to marry someone she does not like, or questioning a husband's decision to buy a car instead of a washing machine, she will face a high risk of physical violence (as relayed during interviews with the staff of Taso Foundation). Structural violence defines and patrols the boundaries for women's activities, where the guardians of tradition are not only men, although husbands' are the ones who are culturally expected to mete out physical violence. The Taso Foundation has consciously tried to unite women's human rights and the right to adequate food, foregrounding the importance of projects designed both to improve economic and food security and to centralize the promotion of women's autonomous role in the public sphere. In the Georgian case study, we witness the incredible contribution of publically networked and socially empowered women organizing to source local food relief for displaced populations during and after the conflict-related crisis. Contributing to family and community human security generally, and food security as a principal aspect thereof, *in a publically recognizable way,* establishes a foundation to secure women's rights as well as ongoing regional autonomy over food and nutrition needs.

The case study of South Africa reflects upon interconnected aspects of structural, cultural, and physical violence exacerbated by the country's history of colonialism, *apartheid,* and ongoing paternalism and economic and social inequality. Diverse strategies are engaged in by lower-income rural women to protect themselves and their families both from direct violence and from the lack of adequate food and nutrition. Some women live independently of

men in order to maintain control over their personal freedoms and the economic security of their households. Other women live together with men who have the primary employment attachment to large plantation-type farms. In this rural situation, isolated from almost all basic services and support systems, women must accept the whims of husbands, boyfriends, and farm owners to secure basic needs for themselves and their children. In general, most economic development and food security programs do not investigate the structural conditions of violence that form and limit women's ability to improve food and nutrition well-being, thus rendering interventions unsustainable.

The right to adequate food encompasses much more than "enough food" through increased food production or emergency program delivery. Human dignity and self-determination at the core of realizing the right to adequate food does not reduce an individual or a population to a state of dependency. Human rights calls for rights holders to have a participatory voice in the framing of public policy which includes conditions of recourse and remedy should a State fall short of meeting its right to adequate food obligations. Given that human rights are understood to be realized over time, that is, "progressively", and that no State has endless resources, it is normal for States to fall short of full realization. Progress forward will be enhanced by democratic participatory engagement.

Well-governed and participatory food and nutrition systems and economies that protect livelihood security are a goal toward which the two case studies have very different experiences and expectations. In its Empowerment of Rural Women program, Taso Foundation's small grants support women's development in the agricultural sector. Women's projects always link increased food production for markets with household and community nutritional well-being and democratic self-governance; the emphasis is never on production for sales alone. Enhancing entrepreneurial savvy and potential as well as expanding regional information and professional networks co-exist with knowledge of and attention to the nutritional health and well-being of households and communities. This level of complexity

paid off during and after the conflict emergencies and post-crisis period. At that time, Taso Foundation grantees provided traditional and high quality food at reasonable prices as contrasted to the imported low-gluten flour that could not reproduce traditional baked staples (Bruckner, 2011). Being able to mobilize local food sources and to translate this experience into contributions to the Georgian National Action Plan relative to Security Council Resolution 1325 demonstrates that women must be included in peacemaking practices and policy; they should not be subdued by patronizing rhetoric and related public policy and customary tradition. Additionally, the Taso Foundation's experience demonstrates that local and regional engagement in supporting emergency populations helps prevent a spiraling into dependency on foreign food imports, and promotes sustainable farming approaches.

Different from the Georgian example, there is little modern experience in South Africa with functioning local food and nutrition systems and economies: farm workers, mostly men, have been engaged in agriculture for income, with women on farms being increasingly employed as seasonal workers and engaging in informal work. Colonial and *apartheid* violence included the dispossession not only of land, but also of entire livelihoods, infrastructure and social networks (Kepe, Hall, & Cousins, 2008; Van Onselen, 1996). Enslavement first of the indigenous Khoisan inhabitants into the colonial economy and later of the black population onto farm and ranching enterprises as well as mining and industrial concerns, denied them dignity and self-determination, and separated them from the traditional reproduction of their nutritional livelihoods through sustainable food production and gathering. Further, violence and discrimination against black women became entrenched, perhaps especially in rural areas where women's autonomy on large white-owned farms has remained subordinate. Women's role in overseeing family nutritional well-being relies on social and extended family networks, but additionally also on seasonal, informal and migrant work. Household food production plays a smaller but still significant role depending on the specific region and circumstances. Today, post-*apartheid* land reform seeks to redress well

over 100 years of loss of access to land and social inequality through a government program of land re-distribution and tenure reform (South Africa Department of Land Affairs, 1997). However, among the many challenges land reform faces is the legacy of exploitation that associates agriculture with food exports instead of community and regional nutritional traditions, rights, and security. It is highly questionable whether land reform, regardless if successful or not, addresses gender discrimination in land acquisition strategies.

SUMMARY

Violence is an under-recognized barrier to the realization of women's right to adequate food and nutrition. Food related violences, such as those related to food work and access, maintain discriminatory practices that violate women's basic human rights. They are constituent of structural violence that delimits their social and public engagement, interfering with policy attempts to include women into public decision making affecting their own lives in general, and with regard to the right to food in particular. Case studies from Georgia and South Africa illustrate the need for a human rights based approach to food and nutrition security that prioritizes non-discrimination, public participation and self-determination; principles that are frustrated by structural violence, especially for women.

Addressing women and women's rights in the context of the right to adequate food must take into consideration their full set of human rights, not just the right to food. Mainstreaming women into strategies to improve food and nutrition security must recognize and plan for structural, cultural and physical violences that impede women's access to human rights as well as their capacity to engage publically for themselves and others. Education and social networking are critical resources to expose and confront violence, providing more capacity for women to realize their potential for themselves and their communities.

The right to adequate food embraces self-determination that strives to build local food systems that are not dependent upon outside economic and political power. More research is

needed on the role of gender and income inequalities, food insecurity, and the degree to which local food and nutrition systems and economies are integrated into social systems of human rights holders, duty bearers, and food governance systems.

NOTES

1. We use the plural of violence, as in ‘food violences’, with reference to the paper by Bellows (2003), “Exposing Violences: Using Women's Human Rights Theory to Reconceptualize Food Rights.”

2. As of July 2013, 160 countries have ratified the 1966 ICESCR meaning that they formally ascribe as States Parties to the legally binding treaty. Countries not ratifying the treaty include Belize, Comoros, Cuba, Palau, Sao Tome and Principe, South Africa, and United States of America.

3. States Parties to international treaties are countries that have signed and ratified the international law within their representative branches of government and are thereby bound to conform with the provisions of that international law.

4. For a discussion of a presentation by Ana Maria Suarez Franco, please see the report from the Gender, Nutrition and the Right to Adequate Food Workshop held on 20 May 2011 in Hohenheim University, Stuttgart, Germany. Retrieved from https://kge.uni-hohenheim.de/fileadmin/einrichtungen/kge/Daten/GNRtAF_Workshop_Report-World_Nutrition_Conf_Rio_28Apr2012.pdf (Accessed February 3, 2014).

5. An analysis of Bangladesh’s cross-sectional demographic and health surveys by Ziaei et al. (2012) reveals that women’s exposure to violence in the private sphere is associated with increased risk of having a stunted pre-school aged child. Similar results on the negative consequences of intimate partner violence on children’s nutritional status were found in different geographic contexts (e.g. Ackerson and Subramanian (2008) in India; Hasselmann and Reichenheim (2006) in Brazil; Rico et al. (2011) in Egypt, Honduras, Kenya, Malawi and Rwanda; Sobkoviak et al. (2012) in Liberia; Salazar et al. (2012) in Nicaragua). Yount et al. (2011) review the gaps in research and propose a conceptual interdisciplinary framework that

models how intimate partner violence against mothers influences a child's growth and nutrition prenatally and through the toddler years.

6. For an overview of the academic-civil society collaboration entitled Gender, Nutrition and the Human Right to Adequate Food, see the website, http://www.fian.org/fileadmin/media/publications/2013_Gender__Nutrition__and_the_Human_Right_to_Adequate_Food_book_synopsis.pdf (Accessed January 30, 2014)

7. Sonke Gender Justice Network, http://www.genderjustice.org.za/.

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Table 1. Conditions of Economic Stability, Food and Nutrition Security, and Gender Equality in Georgia and South Africa.

Condition	Name of the country (year)	
	Georgia	South Africa
GDP in USD (2013)[1]	$15.83 billion	$384.3 billion
GINI Index[2]	42.1 (2010)	63.1(2009)
Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line (% of population)[3]	24.7% (2009)	23% (2006)
IFPRI Global Hunger Index (2013)[4]	9.3	5.4
Gender Inequality Index (2013)[5]	0.438	0.462

[1, 2, 3] Word Bank Online Data 2013; [4]von Grebmer et al. 2013; [5]UNDP 2013

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