

Alison Long

Substantial Research Paper
Ethics, Peace & Global Affairs,
International Peace & Conflict Resolution Division
School of International Service, American University

Submitted: Spring, 2007

ABSTRACT

This paper uses a case study of Afghanistan to explore the use of human rights and gender awareness frameworks in a development context, generally, and the policies and activities aimed at addressing the needs of women and/or gender-differentiated interests, in particular. Focusing on two multi-lateral, UN development organizations and two local, grassroots development organizations working in Afghanistan, this study asks the following questions: (1) When, if ever, are human rights framings and gender awareness used to inform the discourse and policies of these development agencies? (2) What are the challenges of implementing human rights and gender awareness frameworks in development work? In order to answer these questions, this research primarily draws upon interviews with employees and consultants of those agencies and organizations in Afghanistan, as well as to my field notes and an analysis of UN policy reports and material culture of AUN and Oruj. This paper proposes that human rights and gender awareness frameworks are present in these organizations' discourses, but that the application of such frameworks has been highly problematic. By examining how UN and local development workers understand and justify the incorporation of human rights and gender awareness into their work, as well as the problems that accompany their presence, this paper aims to engender a greater understanding of the forces shaping development and rights work in Afghanistan and the ethical significance of their presence.

I. INTRODUCTION OF RESEARCH

For the last several years, Afghanistan and Afghan women have been the center of the international development community's attentions and efforts. While "human rights" and "gender awareness" have become buzzwords in the development world during this period, policies claiming the inclusion of those frameworks have not yet brought about effective, sustainable development in Afghanistan, nor improved Afghans' quality of life, nor enhanced the status of Afghan women (Abirafeh 2005). On the contrary, they often have generated resentment and backlash amongst Afghans. This begs several questions: upon what ideologies, norms, and assumptions are development policies based? By using the concepts of human rights and gender awareness (whether solely at a discourse/elite level or also "in the field" with beneficiaries), what is it that international development bodies wish to achieve in Afghanistan? Have such conceptual frameworks been problematic for development workers and if so, how? How do local realities, such as Islamic beliefs and heightened personal insecurity, affect the application of these concepts? Investigating and understanding the underlying conceptual frameworks of development work since the fall of the Taliban (2001)¹, and consequently explicating the accompanying challenges of those concepts in development work, is an important endeavor if this deadlock is to be addressed and overcome.

¹ I will be focusing most heavily on the time period since the fall of the Taliban (2001), since that's when the vast majority of all development organizations intensified and expanded their efforts.

This study examines how the conceptual frameworks of human rights and gender awareness inform development policies and are understood by workers in both international, multilateral organizations (IMOs) and smaller, grassroots organizations (especially those whose programs target Afghan women and/or gender-differentiated interests and capabilities). Specifically, this research will focus on two main questions: (1) When, if ever, are human rights framings and gender awareness used to inform the discourse, policies, and programs of multilateral and grassroots development agencies working in Afghanistan? (2) What are the challenges of implementing human rights and gender awareness frameworks in development work?² This paper proposes that human rights and gender awareness frameworks are present in these organizations' development discourses, and while the application of such frameworks has been highly problematic, the presence of these two frameworks has lent ethical weight to organizations' development efforts.

Methodology

In order to most effectively identify and analyze the conceptual frameworks and priorities embedded in various development policies and internalized by development workers in Afghanistan, this research took the form an exploratory, multi-organizational case study. The two main research questions were applied to the work of four development agencies in Afghanistan during the period 2001-2006. In a development context like Afghanistan, it is rare to find organizations that possess both sufficient financial/human resources *and* unlimited and unmediated access to and communication with local "beneficiary" populations; most development organizations working in Afghanistan have one or the other, but generally, not both. The United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) and United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM), were singled out as representative IMOs because, despite the limited access their policy-makers have to beneficiaries, these organizations possess tremendous resources, as well as prestige within the international development community, making them major players in the development world in Afghanistan. The Afghan Women's Network (AWN) and Oruj Learning Center (OLC) were chosen as examples of grassroots development organizations because, while they struggle for adequate financial and human resources, they do enjoy high levels of access³ to the communities with which they are working. Moreover, all four of these organizations possess the potential to reveal the conceptual frameworks and perceptions that underpin their policies and programs, as each organization's documentation and substantial staff and organizational presence in Afghanistan allow for stronger linkage of frameworks to actions. (These organizations will be described in greater detail in Section III).

Data Collection

This research relied upon three methods of data collection: structured personal and email interviews with individual development workers of the four organizations; an in-depth,

² It should be noted, here, that this proposal for research constitutes only the first piece of a larger research agenda—one in which the actual implementation of each development organization's respective policies and strategies will be evaluated (i.e. for gaps between discourse and practice) and their perceived effectiveness compared.

³ The staff of each organization are native speakers (both Dari and Pashto), have insight/knowledge into the culture, and in many cases, have familial ties to the communities with which they work; according to employees at both organizations, such "insider" status often increases communities' confidence in AWN/OLC's projects.

discursive analysis of UN reports, UNDP and UNIFEM development policies, and the material culture of two local, women-oriented development organizations (AWN/OLC); and field notes (observation) taken over the course of the thirteen weeks spent in Kabul, Afghanistan (2006).

Interviews were conducted continuously throughout the duration of the research (approximately June 2006-January 2007). In-person interviews with employees from UNDP, UNIFEM and AWN and OLC staff, as well as email interviews with employees of each of the four organizations, were arranged. The first one or two individuals at each organization suggested other development workers within their organization who would likely act as solid informants. For the UNDP, UNIFEM, and AWN, 2.5 hour long interviews were performed with three employees from each of the organizations; for Oruj, the Executive Director, the organization's only English speaker, was interviewed on three separate occasions. The interviews were formulated in order to allow respondents to reflect on their organization's policies, activities, and the underlying justifications for the work they do. Since it was deemed essential that these respondents share their reflections about their organization's work and goals, without being made to feel as if they were betraying their organization (if they choose to speak critically of the organization's ideology and justificatory frameworks), respondents are identified only by their professional positions (see Appendix A for the Consent Form; Appendix B for the Interview Questionnaire).

This research also relied upon discourse/content analysis of primary organizational documents, in particular those of the UN, as a supplementary method of data collection. Such document analysis (i.e. an analysis of material culture of each development organization) acted helped to corroborate or contravene the data obtained through interviewing and observation (Yin 2003, 95). As the intention of this study was to discern and describe how these organizations and their employees justified and understood their own work (i.e. conceptual frameworks and norms they employed to explain their work), the language, text, and discourse employed by these organizations and their respective employees are relevant subjects of analysis (Weinberg 2002, 266).

Finally, field notes were relied on as a third source of data. Over the course of three months of field work, the spaces and conditions in which the four organizations carry out their work and, more importantly, the relationships, lines of communication, and hierarchies within the Kabul development community, were observed. This further contextualized employees' statements and discourse in policy reports.

II. THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS, & GENDER

Given the focus of this research, there are several key theories, concepts and conceptual relationships, and debates that both influence and constrain the policies advocated by various development organizations and agencies. In order to orient and contextualize the two main research questions, the literature on the following areas will be presented: dominant, guiding theories of development (i.e. economic growth and, more recently, human-centered, social development); gender awareness and human rights theories as they relate to development, as well as the theoretical nexus of human rights, gender, and development; and finally, a discussion on the theoretical compatibility of human rights, gender awareness, and Islam.

Development Theories

Before the 1980s and 1990s, human rights and gender, respectively, were almost completely absent from discussions about development. In fact, the underlying assumptions and goals of traditional, dominant development theories, as will be shown below, marginalized human-centered considerations—such as human rights and gender awareness. Although studies on the interrelatedness of human rights, gender awareness, and development are growing in number, the legacy of traditional development theory means that even the primary advocates of human rights and gender awareness in development must often resort to “the economic argument” to justify the application of these apparently “supplementary” frameworks. It will therefore be useful to first briefly review the historically dominant development tradition; this will contextualize resistance to or marginalization of human rights and gender awareness frameworks in development and elucidate how criticisms of traditional economic development theory made development discourse more fertile ground for the addition/incorporation of human rights and gender considerations.

As perhaps the primary theory within conventional development literature, the ‘take off’ theory of development⁴ remains rather prevalent in the practical world of development policy. According to this theory, an “investment of capital will enable underdeveloped countries to ‘take-off,’” their wealth to increase, and their economies to expand, and thus, the country to ‘develop’; in practice, this theory has translated into policies and programs aimed at increasing a country’s wealth (Tomasevski 1989, 1). Although this theory has been disconfirmed several times over, such failings seem to not have profoundly affected its popularity (ibid) amongst the most powerful development players. In fact, the “economic growth as development” model continues to underpin the neoliberal, “belt-tightening” development policies relied upon by major players and donors such as the World Bank and IMF (Passe-Smith 2003).

Coinciding with the second wave of feminism (1970s-1980s), feminists and Third World activists and scholars began criticizing this theory of development for focusing almost exclusively on increasing wealth as a means to and ends of development, for not putting people at the center, and for prioritizing the roles, needs and interests of men (while marginalizing or making invisible those of women and children). These critics charged traditional development policies with disempowering developing countries, such as Afghanistan, while enriching the West; and of benefiting men and the public sphere, while hurting or ignoring women/children and the private sphere. In other words, dominant development policies began to be regularly accused of increasing global inequality (Afshar & Barrientos 1999; Jaggar 2002). This analytical lens encouraged a shift toward more *inclusive*, participatory, human-centered, and socially-conscious approaches of development (Weaver *et al.* 1996)—like those of Human Rights-Based (HRBA) and gender aware approaches to development.

A significant step toward putting people and hitherto marginalized populations at the center of development (i.e. making the end goal of development “improving the quality of life of humans,” *not* economic growth) has been the formulation of social development theory (SDT); in particular, SDT provides more fertile theoretical ground than “economic growth as development” for the conceptual frameworks of human rights and gender awareness. This theoretical lens portrays social services (e.g. education and healthcare),

⁴ First put forth and articulated by Walter Rostow, in *Stages of Economic Growth* (1960).

which improve quality of life, as both central strategies to and end goals of development. An SDT lens inquires, “what are the linkages between [social services] and “certain broad societal changes required in the general process of development?”” (Adams & Adams 1968, 247). Social development efforts are almost universally perceived as, “enhancing social mobility; community development, and national integration, and population control” (ibid)—that is, striving to improve humans’ quality of life.

Notably, the goals of gender equality and universal human rights and the priorities advocated under SDT strongly complement one another. For example, SDT reinforces the belief that social services and capacity building have acted as “proven weapons against poverty, opening up access to knowledge and skills and helping to break down barriers that exclude poor and marginalized people from political and economic life” (Hall & Midgley 2004, 153); such a concern for marginalized groups clearly resonates with the goals of gender awareness and gender equality. Also, the international development community, under the umbrella of SDT, has shown a preference for supporting and funding universalist and “neutral” (non-biased) social development programs; such a preference demonstrates a commitment—at least in theory—to egalitarianism and non-discrimination (Chabbot 2003, 50); notably, such a goal aligns with those of a human rights framework. Since the focus and end goal of SDT is to improve the quality of life for all human beings, its proponents might be less likely to marginalize or ignore human rights and gender awareness frameworks than those who advocate economic growth as development.⁵

Gender Awareness and Gender Mainstreaming⁶ in Development

Within the general push for more inclusive development theories, the mid- to late-1990s, witnessed a growing feminist contingent who increasingly advocated the value, feasibility, and desirability of incorporating an awareness of gender into assistance strategies and development policies. These critical, feminist voices⁷ argued that by recognizing and assessing the different roles, needs and interests, opportunities, resources available to, attitudes towards and expectations of men and women—particularly in underdeveloped or developing societies—broader, more human-centered and sustainable development could be achieved. “Gender awareness,” in this context, is non-prescriptive but recognizes that ‘gender’ almost universally influences or constrains not only a person’s quality of life (Mertus 2001), but also a person’s access to the benefits of development efforts (Palmer et al 1998). Moving beyond simply being *aware* of the role gender plays in the lives of beneficiaries, “gender mainstreaming” would oblige development bodies to carry out continual assessments of the role gender plays in allocations of resources, power, and decision-making both within the local community targeted for development (i.e. beneficiaries), as well as within the development organization itself (Neimanis 2001) in order to achieve *gender equality*.

Looking more closely at how ‘gender’ manifests in ‘development policies,’ Hyndman and Alwis (2003) have noted the common phenomenon of “‘adding on’ women beneficiaries or women’s perspectives to [development organizations’] larger frameworks of development, which remain unchanged and unproblematized” (213). In other words, development organizations advocate the consideration of gender when analyzing their beneficiaries, but

⁵ The author recognizes both the possibility and probability of scholars and policymakers advocating SDT, while being unable to implement it fully—primarily because the structures, processes, and norms within “development as economic growth” are both ubiquitous and ideologically powerful.

⁶ For detailed definitions of each these terms and how they differ, see Appendix C.

⁷ Especially in the First World (U.S. and Europe).

then fail to apply such a lens to their own management practices and organizational structures; such a strategy is thought to occur amongst large, bureaucratic development bodies that tend to resist top-down change (Mertus 2001, 100). Additionally, scholars have noted that gender policies within development efforts which strive for gender equality, traditionally have focused primarily or exclusively on women—not on the relationships between women and men (Abirafeh 2005). In doing so, development organizations policies rarely encourage interventions and “interact[ions] with male beneficiaries... and therefore [are] afforded few opportunities to make men rethink and change unequal gender hierarchies” (Hyndman & de Alwis 2003, 216) that contribute to inequality and underdevelopment. Such one-sided “gender policies” are not transformative, scholars argue, because they isolate women, portraying them primarily as victims and ‘the most vulnerable’ (Carpenter 2003). Generally, how profoundly gender awareness has been incorporated into development policies and efforts can be assessed by analyzing the extent to which the organization does the following: treat ‘gender’ as relational by working with *both* men and women beneficiaries, while acknowledging their different roles and status; and advocate the use of a gender lens on the organization itself, its hierarchy, structure, hiring/firing processes, assignments, etc.

***Human Rights and a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) to Development*⁸**

Although increasingly accepted in the international community, human rights continue to be incredibly controversial and frequently manipulated (as a concept), especially within the field of development. Parallel to the emergence of gender awareness, a discussion of the possible role of a human rights framework in development arose in the early 1990s (Scheinin & Suksi 2005, 4). Scheinin and Suksi (2005) attribute the introduction of these two new framings to an acknowledgement of the less-than-expected effectiveness of the dominant “economic growth as development.”

Because perceptions of the validity and definition of human rights in the international community vary from those held in “traditional,” communitarian societies, like Afghanistan, a brief examination of the theoretical relationship between human rights and development, via the conceptual jumping-off point of the concept of human rights itself, is useful. Some Western scholars⁹ trace the modern articulation and principles of human rights to the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNHDR 1948). Based on humans’ inherent dignity, human rights, as articulated within the UNHDR, are universal and inalienable (apply to every individual and cannot be taken away); interdependent and interrelated (the fulfillment of many, if not all, rights is dependent upon the fulfillment of other rights); and non-discriminatory and inclusive (UNECOSOC 1997, 2). Despite the aforementioned indivisibility and interrelatedness of human rights, the latter have often been divided into sub-categories: negative (prohibitions against) and positive (obligations to) rights; or into first generation (civil, political), second generation (economic, social, cultural), and third generation (community, solidarity) rights (Donnelly 2003). Which category(ies) of rights are prioritized varies from one organization, agency, or government to the next. Nevertheless, within the international community—and in particular, in most of the West—human rights are generally viewed as a moral standard that, when respected, improve the lives of people (Gready & Ensor 2005).

⁸ For detailed definitions of these terms, see Appendix C.

⁹ Osborne Eide makes this argument in “The historical significance of the Universal Declaration.” *International Social Science Journal* 50.158 (Dec 1998): 475-497.

What is the theoretical connection, then, between human rights and development policies and goals? Those in favor of incorporating the two have explained the two are “close enough in motivation and concern to be compatible and congruous, and different enough in strategy and design to supplement each other fruitfully” (UNOHCHR 2006). More specifically, the general, theoretical aim of both human rights framework and development is to improve the lives of human beings, especially in underdeveloped countries, like Afghanistan. Skeptics, on the other hand, maintain that there has always been and continues to be “a strict separation” between economic development and the promotion of the welfare of populations in underdeveloped or developing countries (Tomasevski 1989, 7). Such skeptics point out that *de facto* development policies can be “inequitable and exploitative, usually both” (ibid, 143) and as such, are antithetical to a human rights framework.

Increasingly, however, scholars view a human rights framing as beneficial and/or corrective to development policies. For Gready & Ensor (2005), human rights framings provide a discourse that “allow[s] development agencies to counter some of the recent criticisms of unaccountability, and lack of internal democracy and transparency, and might be a crucial tool in reversing the trend toward increasing skepticism towards development organization” (2). Similarly, the UNDP argues that human rights concepts and discourse, being both normative and operative, not only provide

a vision of what development should strive to achieve (to secure the freedom, well-being and dignity of all people everywhere), but it also provides for a set of programming tools and essential references (human rights standards and principles) that ensure pertinent analysis, focus on important human development goals, ownership by the concerned people and sustainability of development efforts (UNDP 2001, 2).

In contrast to Tomasevski (1989), who argues that human rights can only be ‘reactive’ and ‘corrective’ to development policies that emphasize economic growth (19), the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights portrays a human rights framework as more proactive and far-reaching. Recently, the UNOHCHR stated that, “the concern of human development is the realization by all of basic freedoms, such as having the choice to meet bodily requirements or to escape preventable disease. It also includes enabling opportunities, such as those given by schooling, equality guarantees, and a functioning justice system. The human rights framework shares these concerns” (UNOHCHR 2006, 7). Similarly, Scheinin and Suksi (2005) contend that to advocate a human rights-based framing of development is to acknowledge that “the denial of human rights is both the cause and the outcome of poverty, marginalization,” and underdevelopment; moreover, it assumes that, “to ensure sustainability of development interventions, not only must peoples... be involved in the decisions that affect their lives and be given access to the means to realize their rights, they must also become aware of their... rights in order to be able to hold the duty-bearers accountable” (5). Specifically, the interdependence of all human rights means that, as they are embodied in international law, such law can be “used to address development-related claims” and have the potential to address a multitude of human injustices (7).

The Nexus of Human Rights, Gender, and Development

It is important to note that some scholars argue that a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to development has the potential to enhance women-oriented development. That is to say: since it is increasingly clear that women comprise a disproportionately large percentage of the poorest sectors of society, and have the least access to the benefits of development efforts,¹⁰ development policies should be modified to take the gendered nature of poverty into consideration. “For women, rights and development are very closely intertwined... removal of legal discrimination and institutional discrimination is a clear rights issue. The role of development then is to support the process of legal reform and to support education and awareness campaigns... on women’s rights and men’s responsibilities...” in order to support the improvement in the position and conditions of women (Moon 1996, 31-32). The discussion about the nexus between human rights, gender, and development policies, however, is still nascent. Currently, the UNOHCHR and other UN bodies dominate the literature on this topic, explicitly advocating the linkage between these three areas (UNDP 2001; UN E/CN.6/1996/40; UNESCO “Rights Based Approach”; UNOCHR HR/Pub/06/8). Their reports present human rights and gender mainstreaming as complementary and mutually reinforcing conceptual frameworks within development. Both strive to ensure greater equality: gender mainstreaming aims at equality between men and women, while human rights, which include women’s rights, prohibits discrimination based on sex (UNOHCHR 2006, 22). Both conceptual frameworks (human rights and gender mainstreaming) are normative and, in a development context, require an examination of the impact of development activities on the welfare of different individuals/groups (i.e. men and women)—especially individuals/groups who have been the most disempowered and marginalized (i.e. in most societies, including Afghanistan).

Human Rights & Gender Awareness: Feasible in an Islamic Context?

In researching Afghanistan, it is impossible to ignore the centrality of the Islamic faith, especially as they shape the practical parameters of development. This section therefore aims at contravening that the perception that Islam is necessarily irreconcilable with the conceptual frameworks of gender awareness and human rights (specifically women’s rights). How can the concepts of gender awareness and human rights can be situated within the Islamic faith in such a way that does not contradict its fundamental message and principles? Numerous scholars—Western, Muslim, and feminist—have explored gender (Shal Leo 2005; Ahmed 1992; Scott 1985; Wadud 1992; Aaftaab 2005) and human rights (Al-Rahim 2005), specifically women’s human rights, (Afkhami 2005; Al-faruqi 2000) in the context of Islam; however, only a brief overview of arguments supporting the compatibility of Islam with these conceptual frameworks will be presented here (for opposing arguments/positions, see footnote¹¹).

¹⁰ According to the UN, “women are still the poorest of the world’s poor, representing 70% of the 1.3 billion people who live in absolute poverty. When nearly 900 million women have incomes of less than \$1 a day, the association between gender inequality and poverty remains a harrowing reality” (UNIFEM website).

¹¹ Under the most conservative, orthodox understanding of the Qu’ran, the concept of universal human rights—as individuals’ rights—is incompatible with Islam for two reasons. First, because Muslims are enjoined to “obey God, the Messenger, and those with authority among you” (cf. 4:83), so that order and harmony within the entire *umma* (community) may be achieved (Stowasser 2000, 27). Second, because according to the Qu’ran, not all individuals are equal, as those who demonstrate more *taqwa* (piety) have

With regard to the compatibility of Islam (Quanic) and human rights, generally—and women’s human rights, specifically—reformists and feminists (Ahmed 1992; Wadud 1992; Afkhami 1995; Mayer 1991) argue that this orthodox understanding of the Qu’ran is, in fact, a product of Muhammad’s revelation being filtered through a patriarchal, authoritarian, and ultimately oppressive, socio-cultural context. That is, that Islam is not inherently contradictory to universal human rights and women’s human rights—but traditional, ahistorical understandings of the Qu’ran certainly are. Ahmed (1992) argues that the Qu’ran’s main ethical and spiritual message is one of egalitarianism and respect—clearly, not at odds with the ideology of universal human rights and dignity. Afkhami (1995), like Ahmed, stresses the importance of considering historical context in assessing the appropriateness of Muslims asserting their human rights. She points out that “Muslim women’s awareness of their... rights is part of a historical process in which all individuals, men and women, have increasingly appropriated their ‘selves’...” (4); and as “history moves from law (the condition of obeying the framework already given) to right (the condition of acting to establish appropriate frameworks),” (ibid) Muslim women can and should claim their rights in order to achieve an identity that is “historically adequate, psychologically rewarding, and morally acceptable” (ibid). Mayer (1995) insists that Islamic authorities that deny women’s human rights, e.g. as enshrined in CEDAW, rely on “the contingent, man-made nature of rules depriving women of equal rights” and the “myth that there exists a monolithic and retrograde Islam that precludes according equal rights” to people, including women (128). This debate (over the compatibility of human rights and Islam) is becoming increasingly polarized, but nevertheless allows for an ideological platform (contested though it may be) for advocating for Muslim’s human rights, including Muslim women’s human rights.

In considering the role of gender in Islam, scholars seem to fall into two general categories, similar to those delineated above.¹² Both Muslim fundamentalists and, increasingly, Muslim feminists agree that locating the “true” message of Islam is the only legitimate terrain upon which the issue of gender and women’s positions can be debated (Kandiyoti 1988). However, differing translations of Qu’ranic *sura* (Qu’ranic chapters), as

higher “darajah” (higher degree/level) (Wadud 1992, 66-67); equality, then, is “a function of morality and goodness” (Stowassar 2000, 34) as opposed to being automatically guaranteed by virtue of one’s humanity. According to this interpretation of the Qu’ran, Muslim women face an additional obstacle to claiming their “universal human rights” as the Qu’ran states husbands have *quwama* (being in charge) over their wives (4:34); this, in turn, is viewed as justifying men’s dominance over women (i.e. women’s oppression by men).

Although only two standpoints in this debate are noted here, the author is not suggesting that there are only two possible positions in this debate on the compatibility of human rights and Islamic faith. There are dozens of subtle variations of interpretations of the Qu’ran and the Hadith, as well as the weight given to and the rulings of prominent Islamic scholars in the centuries after Muhammad’s death versus ongoing, hermeneutical interpretations of the Qu’ranic text. However, due to constraints of time and space, the paper only highlights the two currently popular extremes in order to delineate the rough parameters of the debate..

¹² See Footnote #13. More orthodox interpretations of Islam advocate “traditional” gender roles—eternal and crucial to the proper functioning of a Muslim *umma*. Such a stance does not acknowledge historical or external circumstances as contributing to the formulation of *Hadith*, the *sahaba* (consensus of Muhammad’s companions) and *ijtihad*. Moreover, in examining the Qu’ran, these scholars advocate interpretations of *sura* that support “traditional,” patriarchal gender roles: women owe obedience to their husbands (Wadud 1992); women must hide themselves (ibid); etc.

well as differing weights given to certain *sura*, *Hadith* (oral traditions of the words and deeds of Muhammad), and the *ijtihad* (reasoning) of Islamic scholars and caliphs in the centuries following Muhammad's death, have led to different conclusions about the nature of Islam's "true" message and how gender figures into that message. Scholars like Wadud, Shal Leo, Stowassar, and Ahmed argue that the modern concept of gender—defined not only as differing roles for men and women, but differing values placed on those roles—does not exist in the true and ethical Islam: pious Muslim subjects, whether woman or man, earn equal value in the eyes of Allah. Accordingly, any analysis of female and male roles and responsibilities, as they exist in modern Muslim communities, such as Afghanistan, must acknowledge that the differing values placed on each men's and women's roles and responsibilities are in fact social and historical constructs—hardly immutable or inherent to the Islamic faith. Under this view, applying a gender lens to (i.e. achieving gender awareness in) is essential to exposing un-Islamic practices and beliefs, such as discrimination against women.

III. HISTORICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

Having covered the relevant theoretical ground necessary, a brief overview of past development efforts and an introduction to the organizations under analysis will be presented, followed by a discussion of this research's findings regarding current development, rights, and gender efforts in Afghanistan.

A Brief History of Reform and 'Development' in Afghanistan

In order to explain both the context of and the reactions to the current development policies and efforts targeting Afghans, and Afghan women in particular, it is necessary to present a very brief overview of past attempts at reform and development. Presently, Afghanistan suffers one of the worst human development situations in the world¹³ including: pervasive and profound gender inequality, an urban-biased and "weak state, a history of development from the top, [that is] characterized by a low level of industrialization," and an extremely high level of poverty (Riphenber 2003, 188). The vast majority of the country's institutional structures and processes "deny or limit [women's] access to economic resources and political participation... imposed sexual divisions of labour" (Sen & Grown 1987, 26); unfortunately, such constraints on Afghan women and girls have become entrenched as they are intricately bound up in local culture and patriarchal, authoritarian interpretations of Islam.

Nevertheless, there have been various waves of reform in Afghanistan, each meant to advance the status of women, throughout the last century.¹⁴ Each of these waves of

¹³ Human development (HD) is "an alternative development paradigm that emphasizes people as both the agents of change and the objects of development," as opposed to the goal of economic growth; of 178 countries recently ranked by UNDP for HD, Afghanistan falls at 173 (UNDP and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. "Afghanistan: National Human Development Report 2004, Security with a Human Face: Challenges and Responsibilities." p. v. Available at: http://www.aed.usace.army.mil/faqs/afghanistan_2004.pdf

¹⁴ The two most obvious examples being Shah Amanullah (1919-1929) condemning of the veiling/seclusion of women, promoted education for girls and other pro-secular reforms; and the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan's (1978-1992) issuing Decree No. 7, to ensure the equal rights of women and men... to 'end the sale of girls for good...' (Moghadan 1989, 47). Both of these regimes were perceived by Afghans to be heavily influenced by foreigners.

reform, whether from the Afghan government or, more frequently, from external/foreign groups—was “opposed by traditionalists and fathers keen to maintain control over their daughters” (Moghadam 1999, 178) and resulted in a backlash comprised of a “re-masculinization” of political activity (Giradet 1998, 180) and the public sphere. Similar to the response to the earlier and widely unpopular rule of the Soviet-backed People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (1978-1992), the Taliban’s response to the perceived chaos of *Mujahideen* rule (1992-1996) entailed imposing a rigid social code on all Afghans and “invoking religion and Afghan culture... made pronouncements about appropriate behaviour for women, imposing restrictions on their freedom of movement and access to employment and education in areas they controlled...” (Amnesty International 1999). The fall of the Taliban regime (2001), following a US and NATO offensive, was seen by the international community to “offer new opportunities for Afghan women and girls to gain their rightful position in society and come equal partners” in development (Riphenber 2003, 187). However, even after the official fall of the Taliban and the instituting of a Republican and relatively progressive government in 2004, increasing insurgent attacks and a deteriorating security situation¹⁵ continue to cause great anxiety amongst both Afghan women and men alike.

Afghanistan’s long tradition of antagonism between “insiders” (Afghans) and “outsiders” (throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, the British and the Soviets; and more recently, the Americans) continues to color, at least to some extent, which organizations’ development policies and approaches are seen as acceptable and consequently, effective and sustainable, and which are not. Within this dynamic, “gender” and “human rights” have become flashpoints. The debate over whether or not these conceptual frameworks are ‘Western’ in origin—and therefore foreign impositions on Muslim, Afghan culture—or if they are universal and universally understandable (through various cultural texts) is on-going (Mayer 1991; Afkhami 1995; Abirafeh 2005; Afarey 2004; Donnelly 2003, 72-76). How development bodies—whether international or local/Muslim—choose to acknowledge, articulate, and address such differential positions on ‘human rights’ and ‘gender’ is likely to be illustrative of their own organizational understanding, rationale, and use of these concepts.

The Organizations: UNDP, UNIFEM, and AWN and Oruj

Since surveying the policies of the entire development community in Afghanistan would be too large an endeavor and its results too heterogeneous to assemble, analyze, and present in this paper, I will focus my analysis on the policies and discourse of intergovernmental or multilateral development bodies (UNDP & UNIFEM) and local, non-governmental organization (AWN and its member organization, Oruj). This paper does not examine national/government development agencies (e.g. those within the Afghan government, USAID, etc.) or private development organizations (e.g. Aga Khan Foundation); although such groups do play major roles in the development of Afghanistan, practical obstacles prevented their inclusion in this study.¹⁶

UNDP & UNIFEM

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) first started working in Afghanistan in the 1950s, and continued its work throughout the reign of the Taliban in the

¹⁵ The Taliban are regaining ground, in the south and the east especially, and insurgents attack schools, public buildings and target public figures of the current administration. Ref to back this up?

¹⁶ E.g. their employees were inaccessible; organizational documents were not made public; etc.

late 1990s, to the present (2007). During the time of the Taliban, when most development efforts ceased as most foreign organizations were forced out of the country, the UNDP “delivered US\$200 million of assistance to Afghanistan, using its own resources as well as those mobilized through bilateral partners and its extensive outreach throughout the country” (UNDP “Overview”). Since there are only two countries with lower poverty indices than Afghanistan and 70% of Afghans live below the poverty line, UNDP has targeted Afghanistan as a “global priority” in reaching the UN Millennium Development Goals (ibid). The key criterion for UNDP’s work in Afghanistan is collaboration with the host government in an attempt to “consolidate peace, enhance security and promote respect for the rule of law” in a sustainable manner (ibid). UNDP’s in-country policy goals are organized into three “pillars”: 1.) state-building and government support; 2.) democratization and civil society empowerment; and 3.) promotion of sustainable livelihoods (ibid). In describing its own aims and work in Afghanistan, the UNDP highlights “respect for justice and human rights” and “promoting gender equality... and [gender] mainstreaming” (ibid).

For UNIFEM (United Nations Fund for Women), which works closely with UNDP and other UN bodies, focuses its development efforts on Afghan women. Beginning its collaboration with Afghan women, other UN bodies, and Afghan authorities in 2002, UNIFEM has funded “innovative and experimental” activities that aim to benefit Afghan women and advance their priorities and involve Afghan women in all stages of development (UNIFEM, “UNIFEM Afghanistan”). The overall goal, as articulated by the UNIFEM website, is to facilitate Afghan women’s realization of “their human rights as enshrined in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)” (ibid). Since UNIFEM is not an implementing body, its strategies include supporting networking, collaboration, partnerships, and knowledge-building amongst Afghan women’s organizations and UN agencies. As a funding body, UNIFEM prioritizes programs that promoted institutional capacity building, gender mainstreaming in the Afghan government, grassroots organizing, women’s economic security, and gender equality in media (“UNIFEM Programs”). UNIFEM justifies its presence and efforts in Afghanistan by citing the social, economic, and political exclusion Afghan women have faced over the last several decades and the consequent need to combat such marginalization. Ultimately, then, the underlying rationalization for UNIFEM’s presence aligns with a “women in development” approach; that is, by involving Afghan women in development, the latter will be “more equitable” and thus “more sustainable” (ibid).

AWN (Afghan Women’s Network) and Oruj

Founded in 1995, AWN describes itself as “a non-partisan network of women and over 90 women’s non-governmental organizations (NGOs), working to empower Afghan women and ensure their equal participation in Afghan society” (AWN “Who we are”). Its mission is “to enhance the effectiveness of its members by fostering partnership and collaboration between members, undertaking advocacy and lobbying, and building their individual capacities;” and, additionally, “[to] recognize the value and role of children as the future of Afghanistan and, as such, [to] regard the empowerment and protection of children as fundamental to their work” (ibid). While the overall stated goal of AWN is “the equal participation of *all* Afghans in Afghan society,” it is clear that this NGO is women-oriented. The three pillars of AWN’s development work are articulated as: capacity building of women themselves and the organizations of which they are members; advocacy of women’s human rights; and coordinating and facilitating communication and collaboration of women and

women's groups in Afghanistan. AWN admits that capacity building, as the broadest and most widely supported¹⁷ goal, is prioritized. Nevertheless, advocating for Afghan women's rights and enhancing collaboration and solidarity amongst Afghan women are, at first glance, key to AWN's policies.

Oruj Learning Center (OLC), a member organization of AWN, focuses solely on development through education at the grassroots level. OLC is an Afghan-founded (2002), Afghan-run NGO that implements its own projects. It seeks to "ensure that the interests and voices of Afghan girls...are represented and heard by those in power" (OLCb 2006, 4) and to enable women to be "decision makers in the development of Afghanistan" (Basiri, email interview, 20 Nov. 2006). Its overarching mission is to increase economic opportunities for Afghan females, with the specific goal of securing and enhancing educational opportunities for Afghan females. OLC perceives its role as that of a catalyst, "one which can make the case for girls' education in traditional societies and consequently, meet the growing demand for girls' education" (OLCa 2006, 14). According to its director, Afghanistan will never achieve full development if NGOs and agencies focus only on urban centers; consequently, Oruj hopes its own holistic approach—working exclusively in rural or isolated areas and with only four communities—will "encourage other NGOs to expand their activities to remote areas" (Basiri, *email interview*, 20 Nov. 2006). Finally, OLC strives to "secure and enhance educational opportunities of Afghan females" (OLCa 2006, 3) by using traditional Afghan authority structures (*shuras*) and the staff's own relationships with the communities.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based upon personal interviews performed from June-August 2006, as well as an analysis of development documents (2001-2004), and participant observation, this study uncovered two broad, related trends within these development bodies' policy rhetoric and the discourse of their employees in Afghanistan. Firstly, women's rights as human rights and gender awareness frameworks do consistently appear in both textual discourse of these organizations and in the discourse of those working on the ground for these organizations. Development workers attest to both the ubiquity and utility of human rights and gender awareness; consequently, it can be assumed, at least at a discursive level, Afghans and Afghan women in particular, are being exposed to these frameworks and told of the latter's potential to advance their quality of life. Second, the research found that the application of human rights and gender awareness to development programs in Afghanistan is faced with at least five serious challenges and questions: the perception that human rights and gender are "Western" impositions; the conflation of "women" and "gender"; differing assumptions about women's vulnerability; a partitioning of time between emergency post-conflict and development phases; and finally, the use of economic arguments to justify development activities that strive to promote human rights.

Presence of Human Rights and Gender in Development Discourse

Even after the fall of the Taliban in 2001, there was a perception within the international community, and the UN specifically, that Afghan women had "less" than

¹⁷ In reference to the international development and donor communities.

Afghan men with regard to human rights. Therefore, the promotion of women's human rights and gender awareness in Afghanistan received a great deal of attention. The UN General Assembly (GA), the UNDP, and UNIFEM, and other UN aid bodies, were the leading advocates of universal human rights and gender equality. Unfortunately, the UN introduced these concepts relying on legalistic phrasing or highly formal verbiage, making them inaccessible to the average person. For example, Article 4.1 in CEDAW—the implementation of which UNIFEM prioritizes and dedicates a great deal of its funding to organizations and programmes with that goal—requires,

Adoption by States Parties of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating *de facto* equality between men and women shall not be considered discrimination as defined in the present Convention, but shall in no way entail as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate standards; these measures shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved (CEDAW, ratified by Afghanistan 5 March 2003).

Not surprisingly, given this style of presentation, the discourse of gender awareness, gender equality, and women's rights have not been easily or comprehensively adopted by Afghans.

A former consultant of UNIFEM explained, “If someone handed *me* CEDAW or any other document like it and told me ‘implement this in your life,’ I would not know where to start. Although I think the concepts, like the value of all human life, exist everywhere... it's the wording [in these documents] that gets people...” (UNIFEM Employee #1. *Interview*. 6 July 2006). For anyone not versed in Western legal frameworks or the concept of gender, it would be difficult to comprehend the intended/organizational connotations of human rights and gender perspectives, and how they might be realized within the local realities of Afghanistan. Moreover, such discourse—rooted in the assumption that the Afghan government take certain actions and ensure certain tenets are upheld—is in discord with the current government's limited capacity.

With regard to UN's use of “gender awareness,” a UNIFEM worker noted pessimistically, “I think the rhetoric [of gender] is there... and people plug it into the official documents because they feel that they have to and there is political pressure to do so, but I don't think the development people here have really internalized it” (Interview. 6 July 2006). She also disclosed that “a small, elite, largely white, Western circle of ‘gender advisors’ has gained a large deal of influence in the development community” because “they have the ear of donors, the Minister of Women's Affairs, etc.”; unfortunately, while they rely upon gender awareness rhetoric, “they have not and do not engage sufficiently with local women” to inform, justify, and explain that rhetoric (*ibid*). A UNDP programme director also touted the importance of gender awareness in the organization's work, especially at the conceptual and planning levels, “Certain differentials, like economic differences, are widely acknowledged (though they don't always know what to do about it). But the gender difference is not so automatically acknowledged—only when it is *so* obvious, like when the girls/women are denied equal access to health services/jobs/education. UNDP uses gender awareness to fix that and, ultimately, to help women's well-being” (UNDP Employee #2. *Interview*. 13 July 2006).

To at least a certain extent, Afghan women and the local population, generally, are being exposed to this human rights and gender rhetoric. Employees at AWN, a local development organization that interact constantly with UNDP and UNIFEM,¹⁸ characterized its work as both development *and* human rights advocacy. “Although it’s hard to see the changes [brought about by human rights advocacy], outside of Kabul” and “I am not optimistic about the progress that has been made toward achieving [women’s] human rights throughout the country... I would say that the people here in Kabul are certainly talking about it” (AWN employee #1. *Interview*. 30 July 2006). AWN employee #2 proudly identified all the methods the Network uses to promote women’s human rights: advocacy, lobbying, creating awareness for women and children’s rights through conferences, meetings, workshops, and trainings, as well as coordinating and facilitating communication between local, national, and international development bodies working for women’s rights (AWN Employee #2. *Email Interview*. 1 January 2007). She attributed AWN’s knowledge of and commitment to the conceptual framework of human rights to its founding members’ attendance at the Beijing Conference (in 1995).

With regard to a human rights framework, AWN stressed the importance and utility of being able to turn uniform, internationally accepted understandings, e.g. of human rights, in achieving their organization’s development goal—to improve the status and opportunities of Afghan women. “Afghanistan signed 6 human rights treaties, so we have these really important documents... to see and compare if Afghanistan is following those standards. It helps us be able to point out when Afghan authorities using the name of Islam, incorrectly, to protect violations of human rights” (AWN Employee # 1. *Interview*. 30 July 2006). Similarly, a program manager at AWN explained that using a human rights framework allowed the Network to address “honor killing, child marriage, forced marriage, self-immolation, women’s lack of education, lack of access to healthcare, and other issues. Human rights framework is the best way to approach and tackle these challenges. Women’s rights are part of human rights, of course. And using human rights give us the chance to guarantee a witness to our struggle” (AWN Employee #3. *Email Interview*. 19 December 2006).

The female director of Oruj also repeatedly acknowledged the prevalence of “human rights” amongst the development community in Kabul (*Interview*. 28 June 2006). Oruj’s Executive Director (ED) noted that, “In urban communities, like Kabul, where women are educated... they know they have the right to work, even if they are denied key positions. In uneducated communities, such as those where Oruj implements projects, women do not even know about their basic rights. While human rights is such a generic concept in the West, here, women’s human rights especially must be promoted. Educating girls makes it more likely that they will know and have the confidence to claim their rights” (Oruj Executive Director. *Email Interview*. 20 November 2006).

Both AWN and Oruj employees seemed at ease using the discourse of gender awareness and claimed their organization’s adherence to such a conceptual understanding. One of the two AWN programme managers interviewed categorized the “trainings in gender analysis and gender and development,” which it provides for its member organizations, as being “one of the important activities of AWN” (AWN Employee #3. *Email interview*. 19 December 2006). OLC’s Executive Director (ED) explained that within Oruj’s work, gender awareness is used at the various phases of a project. However, she

¹⁸ As a participant in UNDP/UNIFEM-sponsored conferences and workshops and as an applicant for UN funding.

explained, the concept of “gender” is understood and applied from “the Islamic point of view... [that is], always seeing the roles of groups of people within the context of them being Muslim” (Oruj Executive Director. *Interview*. 28 June 2006). She also stated that the term “gender” is not used explicitly during interactions/communications with members of the communities in which its projects were located; in fact, as the ED pointed out, there is no Dari or Pashtu word for “gender” (ibid).

The Challenges of Applying Human Rights and Gender Awareness in Development

Perception of Human Rights as a Western Construct

In speaking to individuals who have worked or currently work for these four development organizations, especially those employed by the UN, it became abundantly clear that they were very aware of how the discourse and strategies surrounding these two conceptual frameworks were problematic. According to a current UNDP gender advisor,

UNDHR and human rights and gender are *very* western concepts. Afghanistan is a communitarian society, not an individualistic society... those things—especially human rights—are nonexistent in the east. Human rights do not exist here in Afghanistan, in any form *we* would recognize. In the US, if you’re sick, you’ll call 911—not the neighbor. Here, if you’re sick, you have 10 friends who will help you... you don’t expect strangers or the government to help you. You see, human rights are very individualistic, and the West’s sense of freedom is very different from that of the east. Human rights are not given a lot of importance in this part of the world (UNDP Employee #1. *Interview*. 17 June 2006).

Inquiring how such a conceptual framework is perceived by the UNDP’s Afghan beneficiaries, and Afghan society in general, she replied,

Here, within Afghan society, women’s rights are even more non-existent than human rights (which are generally men’s rights). Women’s rights, in fact, do not exist. Human rights organizations and their importance has not been recognized in this society. And if human rights *did* exist then they’d be men’s rights (ibid).

Interestingly, when asked the same set of questions, a program director at UNIFEM, interviewed the following day, responded rather ardently:

Human rights concept as a western concept? I challenge that. What is happening is that the conceptualization of human rights is always based on the Western sources, but if you look to the east, there are so many thinkers and philosophers and poets who have been writing about people’s rights and freedoms, and injustice. One difference is that when we talk about human rights, we use Western resources to explain it and we never use *other* sources. The Western articulation of human rights is not that old—1945, when an internationally accepted framework was established... but it was *not* discovered then (UNDP Employee #2. *Interview*. 13 July 2006).

Other development workers, however—both Afghan and international—indicated an awareness that local groups and individuals who interact with UN agencies only superficially “accept” the HRBA and gender-sensitive components of the aid programs presented to them. According to UNDP informant #3 (a logistics expert), however, in most cases, local groups and individuals simply agree to the terms, receive the aid or services, while failing to operationalize or internalize any measures that might be capable of bringing about truly sustainable change or improvements for women (*Interview*. 10 July 2003). This is because many Afghans—both men and women—who are exposed to the work of international development bodies, like UNDP, perceived human rights and gender awareness frameworks to be in conflict with local interests/beliefs.

Although my interviews and discussions were limited to internationals and Afghans living in Kabul and its surrounding provinces, many of the respondents (both UNDP and UNIFEM) articulated their disillusionment with the UN’s human rights-based approaches and gender aware policies—which are sometimes seen as foreign impositions or, more often, as having not brought about any tangible benefits to the average Afghan; such benefits include opportunities for respectable and well-paid employment, education beyond primary school, safe and free movement in the public sphere, etc. (Oruj Executive Director. *Interview*. 28 June 2006). A UNDP employee, who had been working in Afghanistan for more than two years, chose to articulate the situation thusly,

Even if an Afghan (or many Afghans) were aware of his/her/their rights, it’s almost impossible to apply them here—because there’s no support framework (e.g. law, order, justice system, etc.) to reinforce their worth. It’s a double-edged sword to believe in human rights in Afghanistan. When you know about and believe in your human rights, then you can’t accept the local norm (where human rights are violated left and right)... but you don’t have a supporting framework that will ensure respect for your human rights either (i.e. judicial system, police)—you are then between a devil and a deep sea (UNDP Employee #1. *Interview*. 17 June 2003).

An analysis of the discourse of the UN reports also demonstrated the shallowness of the organization’s “commitment” to promoting and/or implementing Afghan women’s rights, such as the right to education, *in the face of local resistance*. Examples of this phenomenon are indeed evident within the UN’s policy reports. After many girls schools had been burned down, one UN report to the Economic and Social Council suggested that aid, in the form of education programs, be disseminated “to whoever can receive it, on the basis that it is better to educate only the boys rather than neither the boys nor the girls,” (UN Doc E/CN.4/2000/68/Add.4, para 81). However, while girls’ enrollment in schools (especially beyond primary school) grew gradually after the fall of the Taliban (and quickly in Kabul), it once again is declining, especially in the provinces. In 2002, a Follow-up report to the Beijing Declaration admitted that the UN’s activities in Afghanistan had led to “no significant progress in improving girls’ access to equality...” (para 27).

Equating “Women” with “Gender”

The most substantial misunderstanding within the discourse of the UN (UNDP and UNIFEM) is the tendency to conflate “women” with “gender.” Referring to the UNDP in particular, a consultant for UNIFEM stated, “No one uses gender in the full sense of the term. It is always conflated with women—to the detriment of men who

probably are having an identity crisis and need to feel that they are a focus of attention... If you want to work with women (and that is OK, believe me!), then just say so. Don't call it gender and then do women" (UNIFEM Employee #1. *Interview*. 6 July 2006). She added that this is done, "to the detriment of men who probably are having an identity crisis and need to feel that they are a focus of attention. women will be a lot better off if men are given some attention as well" (ibid; see also Abirafeh 2005). A gender advisor at UNDP agreed, "We use the word 'gender' in our projects all the time. But here, 'gender' is essentially talking about 'women.' UNDP tries to counteract that by having both women-specific programs and gender-mainstreaming, where we talk about women and men and their relationships... but that [gender mainstreaming] isn't the part that's getting through—in the context of Afghanistan, that is" (UNDP Employee #1. *Interview*. 17 June 2006).

While two of AWN's employees articulated their discouragement at the progress made (or lack thereof) and the backlash against "gender," all the *local* development workers interviewed stressed the importance of negotiating and applying such a concept in a manner that is accordant with local realities and understandings. For example, Oruj approaches the application of gender awareness and women's rights in a different way after its staff and beneficiaries witnessed its applications by "big, foreign development [bodies], like the UN":

In places where gender is taught from the Western point of view it has brought enormous dilemmas. There is ban on women to work and get education. This is because, in some provinces like Bamyan and Parwan, after a series of "gender awareness" workshops, some Afghan women started asking for divorces. At the end, some women got divorces but encountered new problems afterward. These women do not have jobs mainly due to illiteracy and thus, they are burden on their parents. They now carry a social stigma which endangers their position in the society. This leads to depression and perhaps to mental disorder. Moreover, the divorced women are not able to keep their children since they cannot feed them in their parents' homes (*Email interview*. 20 November 2006)

AWN's employees all articulated an understanding that "women's issues" had *de facto* become conflated with "gender issues" in the development context of Afghanistan. Nevertheless, AWN Program Director argued, "AWN wants to work with both men and women—though we work through our members—so half our trainers are male, to interact with men in the communities, and half are female, to interact with the women and girls of these communities" (AWN Employee #2. *Email Interview*. 1 January 2007). At the end of the interview, she added, "Until you win over the Afghan men—even if it's a development project to help women or to make sure they know their human rights—you don't have any chance in liberating women" (ibid).

Assumptions About Afghan Women's Vulnerability

Another pattern that emerged from this research was the tendency of the UN to equate Afghan "women" with heightened "vulnerability," which legitimizes the application of gender awareness and justifies development specifically targeting Afghan women. In analyzing the textual discourse of UN reports and the statements made by UN development workers, this correlation was consistently used to justify the application of gender awareness and the "special" attention given to Afghan women; such a correlation

was made resisted by the local organizations of AWN and Oruj; this will be discussed below.

Some scholars have found that when international aid organizations move into a conflict or a post-conflict zone, especially in underdeveloped countries, such as Afghanistan, the group “women and children” becomes tightly associated with concepts of “especially vulnerable,” “innocent civilians,” and primary “victims” or “targets;” conversely, “men,” as a group, become strongly connected to the category of “combatant” and strongly disassociated with “civilian,” “vulnerable,” or “victim” (Carpenter 2005, 302). Additionally, advocacy networks and donors, who define their work in terms of aiding the most “vulnerable” populations, reinforce this set of gender norms when they fund humanitarian aid organizations’ that prioritize “women and children.” If such gendered beliefs begin to act as a “cognitive map” for the development community, the UN, and the combatants themselves, the ability of development agencies to protect adult males and recognize women’s agency will be progressively undermined. Aaftaab (2005) reaffirms the danger in “the theoretical processes that support the representation of Afghan women as victims,” as this, in turn, “legitimizes their violent salvation” by the U.S. military and “rescue” by foreign aid bodies (45).

This use of gendered associations is particularly apparent in UN policy reports (2000-2004) to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. No mention is made of women being “vulnerable” in the first several reports (pre-2000); however, by 2001, the UN reports repeatedly portray women as being more prone to violence, neglect, deprivation of opportunity and resources, discrimination (UN Doc E/CN.6/2001/2/Add.1, paras 8, 17, 19, 38, 62, 77). It was both implied and expressly stated that, “women and children benefiting from [UN humanitarian] programmes were amongst the poorest and most vulnerable people in Afghanistan” (para 35); therefore, women’s needs and roles deserved a “special focus” (para 49) within humanitarian activities (para 32). Moreover, while the 2002 report recommended that, “Afghan women should be seen as primary stakeholders and agents of change who have identified their own needs and priorities in all sectors of society...” (para 62), only two paragraphs later the report states “special measures need to be taken to protect women and girls from forced and under-age marriages and... violence” (para 65); the implications of this is, of course, somewhat paradoxical and demonstrate the difficulty – and perhaps, as some imply, the inefficacy – of viewing women as competent agents. Nevertheless, later that year (2002), another UN report articulated at least one drawback of the aforementioned gendered identities. With the goals of relief, reconstruction, and development, UN aid activities “seemed to [demonstrate] a tendency to perceive women primarily as victims of past abuses and discrimination and as members of a vulnerable group rather than as active and full partners in all spheres...” (UN Doc E/CN.6/2002/5 para 51). That is, this gender discourse risks hindering Afghan women’s capacity to empower themselves through UN services and resources.

When asked if Afghan women were, in fact, seen as being “in greater need of development aid,” one UNDP employee admitted that that this did occur, but she also admitted how “risky” such an approach was.

You have to start somewhere. In Afghanistan, you have to start with women, and then work slow and steady. You can’t defy *all* the norms at once, but again, you have to start somewhere and the condition and treatment of women here is the issue of greatest concern. You have to implement empowerment programs that assume women are *not*

subservient, that they are capable; but there's also the assumption that they [Afghan women] just need a little extra support. This is risky—to provide 'special' support to women need—but you have to take the risk anyway (UNDP employee #3. *Interview*. 10 July 2006).

When policy-makers and development workers assume that Afghan women are more vulnerable, especially in a highly insecure environment like Afghanistan, this can “render [Afghan women] absolutely useless” in the development process; instead, organizations “just need to assist them, to allow them to help themselves. Otherwise, none of the [development] work the UN is doing here will stick” (*ibid*).

The material culture of both Oruj and AWN is peppered with the discourse of women's empowerment and the dearth of “women as vulnerable” rhetoric is noticeable. OLC, for example, articulates its role as that of a catalyst only, “one which can make the case for girls' education in traditional societies” (OLCa 2006, 14), “ensure that the interests and voices of Afghan girls...are represented and heard by those in power” (OLCb 2006, 4), and ultimately, to enable women to become “decision makers in the development of Afghanistan” (Oruj Executive Director. *Email interview*. 20 Nov. 2006). In interviews with the Director and within its strategic plan, Oruj repeatedly highlights two features of its work. First, despite the “girl-oriented” nature of the development project, Oruj views the input of all community members (male and female) as integral to every aspect of development project (e.g. needs assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation phases). Second, it is “the commitment and support of both female students and their families” (including fathers and brothers) that determines “the success of Oruj's projects,” especially in the face of deteriorating security (*ibid*).

Looking closely at both the structure and material culture of AWN, the importance of local ownership of and women's agency in development projects becomes clear. “We're [only] as successful as our member organizations,” an AWN employee told me; “those women [who make up our member organizations] are the ones carrying out the [development] work” (AWN Employee #2. *Email Interview*. 1 January 2007). In this context, Oruj's and AWN's use of gender perspective is justified by its ability to open up more positive, empowering opportunities for Afghan women to participate in and inform the development of their country, while avoiding the marginalization (or negation) of women's agency.

The Partitioning of Time

Many of the informants recognized that that aid efforts in Afghanistan distinctly transitioned from an emergency-humanitarian phase to a development phase and articulated this as problematic for the effective implementation of human rights and gender awareness. During and just after the fall of the Taliban (2001), the aid community appears to have been working within “an emergency phase” in which direct services (food, shelter, water, etc.) were prioritized and all other objectives were subordinated. Informants, referring to this “tyranny of emergency” as a ready-made excuse (UNDP Employee #3. *Interview*. 10 July 2006), indicated that this perception allowed women's human rights and gender equality goals to be deprioritized. Unlike the crisis of violent conflict, according to Veridame, gender inequality and “discrimination against women [on their own are] not perceived by the international community as affecting vital interests and values,” so “widespread and systematic violations of women's rights as those occurring in

Afghanistan” rarely engender forceful reactions (2001) during this phase. Hyndman and de Alwis similarly argue that such conceptual frameworks come to be seen as “a luxury, not integral to people’s survival” (2003, 213). One Afghan women’s human rights activist interviewed agreed that the frameworks were viewed as “negotiable,” during and immediately after the fall of the Taliban (AWN Employee #1. *Interview*. 30 July 2006). Development workers described how this phase is followed by a less urgent, development phase, which began late 2001 or early 2002 and was characterized by discourses/policies which more frequently embodied multiple conceptual frameworks, in particular, human rights and gender awareness.

This conceptual partitioning is significant with regard to human rights and gender frameworks. The underpinning conceptual frameworks (or lack thereof) and logic that aid bodies rely upon initially in Afghanistan, during the emergency phase of the late-1990s through 2001, did not simply disappear when the policies and activities shifted in 2001/2. According to women’s rights activists and gender specialists working there, when aid organizations ignore the importance of gender and human rights framings in disseminating aid *at the beginning* of their activities in Afghanistan, their future work has no precedent for perceiving gender and women’s human rights as fundamental components of helping a country develop.

As Hyndman (2004) points out, “initial strategies of providing assistance often become *de facto* permanent ones” (Hyndman 2004, 196). One UNDP employee similarly articulated the problem,

When you first move into a post conflict country, the focus is on immediate assistance (shelter, food, water)—those programs are given priority (recovery) and other frameworks are deprioritized. Only in the development phase—that’s when gender usually becomes important to planners and donors (UNDP Informant #1. *Interview*. 17 June 2006).

Unfortunately what this often entails, at the ground level, is that gender and rights frameworks become immediately marginalized when security deteriorates.

Employees of both AWN and Oruj also acknowledged the shift from an “emergency” to “development” phase, although they did not challenge it. AWN employee #2, in discussing the work of its member NGOs’ activities, indifferently noted the shift: “Women’s rights and development NGOs at first only asked for resources and services to help people survive. Now, our NGOs interact with one another, but there’s also more competition because it’s not enough just to provide basic services. Now, it’s less about emergency, now they [the NGOs] have to focus on capacity building of their own organizations” to get funds from donors (*Email Interview*. 1 January 2007). Oruj’s ED also described this changeover, remarking that just after the fall of the Taliban, all aid organizations in Afghanistan “focused on providing emergency humanitarian aid,” and only “recently, [they] focus on long-term development strategies, mainly in education, health, and some infrastructure sectors” (*Email interview*. 20 November 2006).

Moreover, employees from both organizations emphasized their respective organization’s desire to plan for the long-term, but inability to do so due to the stipulations of donors and massive funding bodies’ for projects. Many local rights and development bodies—like AWN and Oruj—are given funding to execute projects in periods of one year

or less.¹⁹ This undermines prospects for sustainability of any improvement in quality of life in general; however, it is a particular hindrance to aid programmes that publicize their use of seemingly radical/foreign concepts of gender awareness and devotion to women's human rights.

Using Economic Arguments to Justify the Application of a Human Rights Framework

In order to circumvent local resistance to human rights, development workers from the UN and local development organizations employed a similar discursive strategy: all informants articulated the efficacy of justifying human rights in development programs/policies with economic arguments. Such a side-stepping strategy is not necessarily a direct challenge to the human rights framework. However, it does raise a valid question—To what extent do such justifications undermine the legitimacy and credibility of a human rights framework?—which scholars who champion the use of human rights in development must, at the very least, consider.

Two UNIFEM employees and one UNDP, in separate interviews, all explained that economic arguments were most effective in justifying the application of a human rights framework in development work. For example, the UNIFEM programme director stated,

Here, in Afghanistan, we tried—together with the government—to use a HRBA and the Beijing Platform and CEDAW to address basic [human] rights. But not much came about. You need to do an economic argument—*not a rights-based argument*—because that [the former] is the convincing one, to both donors and Afghans alike. To say, it is a woman's right to have access to health, that is less appealing than “the economic cost of high birth rate is X, Y, and Z to the country...” Everyone is trying to be so logical and professional, no one wants you to talk from the heart; just the cold, hard, economic facts. Even with the fight for women's right to be protected from violence, the UN must talk about statistics. Saying violence against women violates their rights, to whom does that appeal? But when you say, violence against women is causing this much health expenses, and this much legal expenses and decreases global productivity this much, well, then it is logical and it appeals to donors and the Afghan people in general. Maybe talking about rights is too radical or brings connotations with communism or too many obligations (UNIFEM Employee #2. *Email Interview*. 22 July 2006).

UNIFEM Employee #3 argued, “If UNFIEM wants to promote economic rights of women, it has to can talk about the restrictions imposed on women from within Afghan society—how restricted movement limits the income of families. That

¹⁹ There are instances of NGOs receiving funds from donors for aid projects that last three to five years, but those are rare. According to the CEO of a logistics organization, which works closely with the UN in Afghanistan, “There's no such thing as ‘long term’ aid here, only ‘short term’... The problem is getting worse: security has deteriorated over the last 12 months, and so donors and aid agencies will not invest their energies in anything long-term. No one can guarantee the safety of their ‘investment’—so they work in 2 – 3 months stints... tops.”

kind of talk (within Afghanistan) is okay” (*Interview*. 6 August 2006). Likewise, a UNDP logistics expert echoed that “human rights, for Afghans, is a last priority... last on the list. International development workers have to deal with that. If that means aiming at human rights, but using other justifications, then that’s what they have to do. UNDP has to recognize that reality” (UNDP Employee #3. *Interview*. 10 July 2006).

Similarly, an AWN employee (#1) admitted that when advertising human rights programmes to their membership and Afghan communities, they sometimes “promise that through our trainings, membership, and education we can provide, you can get jobs easier” (*Interview*. 30 July 2006). Its executive director seemed to accept the fact that she had to justify Oruj’s work in one “language” (of human rights) when negotiating with donors and funding bodies (usually foreign or international) and another “language” with “beneficiary” communities (*Interview*. 28 June 2006). The Executive Director admitted that when interacting with community members of areas which Oruj schools are located, she does not “push the language of human rights” because “it just doesn’t mean anything to them” (Oruj Executive Director. *Interview*. 28 June 2006). Instead of discussing the “right to education,” Oruj turns to the Qu’ran to justify development through education (*Interview*. 28 June 2006). Echoing the AWN employee who argued that respecting individuals’—including women’s—rights was not inherently contradictory to Islam (AWN Employees # 3. *Email Interview*. 19 January 2006), Oruj’s Executive Director strategically explains and advocates the organization’s work through the discourse of the Qu’ran. Oruj believes that, in advocating for *girls’* education (i.e. girls’ right to education), it is possible and necessary to appeal to families’ and men’s belief in the importance of the Qu’ranic text and the “message of Islam” (*Email interview*. 20 November 2006); that message is egalitarian and “respects the right of women and men, both, to learn” (*ibid*). In this way, the resistance to girls’ *right* to education can be, at least partially, evaded.

V. USING AN ETHICAL LENS: HOW DO HUMAN RIGHTS & GENDER AWARENESS CONTRIBUTE TO ETHICAL DEVELOPMENT?

A *discussion* of ethics²⁰ will better enable development policy-makers and development workers in the field to become more confident in their professional (and perhaps personal) decision-making, especially when navigating a complex and challenging contexts, such as Afghanistan. Therefore, this section examines the ability of ‘human rights’ and ‘gender awareness’ frameworks to bring about “ethical” development, especially when such considerations may conflict with other claims (e.g. efficiency; economic realities and demands; national and international legal considerations; and issues of cultural autonomy or resistance to neocolonialist forces). In other words, what ethical weight²¹ do human rights and gender awareness frameworks add to development endeavors taking place in Afghanistan? Before discussing the moral significance of the two frameworks within

²⁰ “Ethics” and “morality” will be used interchangeably, in which ‘ethics’ is defined as “a framework designating the correct or right relations between people” (Gasper 2004, 19),

²¹ “Ethical weight,” located within a social context, can be viewed as, ‘the pressure to arrive, consciously, at certain right judgments and, consequently, to take certain right actions.’

development, however, a brief overview of the questions surrounding the ‘ethics of development,’ generally, is in order.

In order to move toward ‘ethical development,’ it is important first to identify what is meant by ‘development,’ what goals are the term encompasses, and whether or not such efforts grow from a ‘moral urgency’ (Gasper 2004; Crocker 2007). Within the last two decades, as outlined in Section II, there has been a shift away from viewing development as attempts to achieve greater economic growth and toward a more inclusive and reflective interpretation of development—one which ideally does “not equate societal improvement to economic growth and... [does] not ignore costs and the distributions of [those] costs” (Crocker 2007, 22). Amartya Sen, a liberal economist and philosopher whose work focusing on ending inequality and poverty, emphasizes that ‘development’ acts as a means and an end to expand people’s freedoms and “valuable capabilities and functionings” (1999, 15). Sen’s ‘friendly’ view of development²² tends principally to focus on enriching human life and increasing human well-being.

Such an evaluative definition of ‘development’ is often based on one or more of the following assumptions, as summarized by Des Gasper (2004): 1.) that extreme poverty and underdevelopment *can* be remedied through some means; 2.) that underdevelopment *should* be remedied because it is undeserved; 3.) that there is an *obligation* to remedy the situations of those impoverished groups/societies by bringing about ‘public goods’; and 4.) that development involves *choices*, explicit or implicit, about the priority given to reducing suffering versus other objectives, such as the growth of aggregate wealth or of national power (7-9). Granting these assumptions, this paper suggests that development efforts can and should be evaluated within a moral lens; that is, development policy makers can and should be expected to ascertain and adhere to guiding principles or frameworks that will best enable them to enrich human life and increase human welfare. Thus, working toward ‘a higher quality of life’ (ibid 25) in Afghanistan, which finds itself on the lowest rungs of the human development index, can be viewed as part of a moral undertaking.

However, even as the consensus on a *human-centered* definition²³ of development grows, there are subsequent practical questions: Who is morally obligated to help underdeveloped societies? Who determines the trajectory of the development? To what extent should development efforts be based on universal principles, e.g. cosmopolitan utilitarianism (Singer 2002), or adapted to particular circumstances (Gehring 2007, 4; Crocker 2007, 60; Goulet 1995; Edwards 1994)?²⁴ How should development efforts be ethically evaluated—upon what moral criteria can or should such efforts be measured? For example, should efficiency/effectiveness, increased equity of resources and opportunities, increased human security, the fulfillment of basic needs, or the realization of human capabilities be the measuring rod of ethical development?

While such issues continue to be deliberated, it is important not to lose sight that there is growing agreement on how *not* to go about ethical development: “traditional

²² At the other extreme, ‘development’ can be seen as a “‘fierce’ process.. which demands calculated neglect of various concerns that are seen as ‘soft-headed,’ [such as] social safety nets that protect the very poor... social services...and political and civil rights” (Steiner & Alston *eds.* 2000, 1316).

²³ Again, “human-centered” simply implies that people’s welfare, capacities, agency, and freedoms are given primary consideration during both the designing (“means”) and evaluation (“ends”) of development efforts.

²⁴ Some scholars have chosen to avoid this standoff by advocating the *universal* principle of letting *particular* societies determine their own development priorities (Sen 1999; Nussbaum 2002).

[economic-oriented] development created as many problems as it had solved” and strict “financial relief and food aid [has] only *partly* addressed the problems of poverty... and underdevelopment” (Crocker 2007, 61). An ethical perspective that is cognizant of the limitations of “traditional development” would thus encourage two value-based principles as the baseline for development: 1) development should inculcate a “do no harm” approach (Anderson 1999) and, 2) development should strive toward achieving human well-being and reducing human suffering (Crocker 2007, 59). The practical application of these principles would seek to decrease violence and servitude, thus allowing individuals to exercise agency. Such guiding principles and their practical implications continue to evolve on a global scale (Edwards 1994; Goulet 1995).

From this starting point, this paper now asks, ‘How do the incorporation of human rights and/or gender awareness frameworks contribute to ethical development endeavors?’ Each conceptual framework can now be evaluated, in the context of ethical development, in turn. It is apparent that human rights are increasingly “a sort of *lingua franca* of ethics talk, [generally,] so that much of the discussion about ethics in international relations takes place making use of the vocabulary of rights;” and consequently, human rights have come to “provide a doctrinal lever for those who would... shape development” (Vincent 1992, 267). Midgley (1999) argues that human rights are ethically valuable because human rights language refuses to focus on

those who are under obligation,’ as they may choose not to fulfill those obligations, but instead reorients the development discussion to “directly [focus on] the people who need relief. [Human rights discourse] aims to lay a burden publicly on anyone who stands in the way of relieving them... The quasi-legal language invokes the broad responsibility of the law [and] makes it much harder to say ‘this is none of my business’ (167).

Human rights is an “implacable” (ibid) ethical force due, at least in part, to its discursive prevalence throughout the world; such ubiquity, though not necessarily indicative of a unified or homogenous ethical tradition, “indicates the utility of the discourse of rights for the protection of a plurality of interests...” (Vincent 1992, 267) and is “associated closely with human dignity” (ibid 254).

As discussed in Section II (p. 10-13), incorporating a human rights framework reinforces the *human*-centeredness of development strategies and goals. Specifically, the human rights-based approach to development embraces the method of “participation and [local] ownership” at every phase (Steiner & Alston *eds* 2000, 1312) and the goal of “ensuring [respect for] economic, social, and political rights of all” (Robinson 1999). Though often charged with being purely rhetorical or overly idealistic, human rights “exercise their pull” on development efforts “by indicating a direction” (Midgley 1999, 170). Since an ethical approach is “always about *both* the world we inhabit and the world we want to construct” (Hutchings 2001, 130), the inclusion of human rights language and understandings—despite on-going debate and practical questions—can be seen as pulling development efforts and solutions toward a more people-centered trajectory.

The ethical significance of incorporating a gender perspective into development policies and practice perhaps is as readily apparent as that of a human rights framework. Advocates of a gender lens, whether in the field of ethics (Gilligan 1993; Held 1998; Baier

1998; Tronto 1998; Jaggar 1998) or development (Abirafeh 2005; Neimanis/UNDP 2001; Hyndman & de Alwis 2003), aim at exposing the differing—and generally hierarchal—roles, needs, and interests of men and women. If ethical development values human well-being and strives to expand all people’s capabilities, freedoms, without ignoring the distribution of the costs of development efforts, a gender lens dovetails well with those priorities. It uncovers and denaturalizes the gendered nature of systems of knowledge-generation and problem-identification, underlying assumptions and value systems, policies, institutions, and practices which historically and globally discriminate against ‘the feminine.’ Gender-aware development, then, has greater capacity to be inclusive—both in its formulation and in the distribution of its benefits—than non-gender aware development efforts, as the former demands the recognition of women’s humanity alongside that of men (Baier 1998, 331; Ashworth 1999); this, of course, dovetails with the demands put forth by a human rights framework in which all individuals, irrespective of gender or sex, have equal worth and rights.

Beyond acknowledging and capitalizing on women’s agency and potential contributions to the processes of planning, implementing, and evaluating development programs (March *et al.* 1999), some scholars argue that the inclusion of feminist perspectives²⁵ could radically transform the moral framework underpinning development (see Gilligan 1980). Jaggar (1998) contends that since everyone’s individual moral insight is limited, “the socially disempowered, [such as] women, must be heard with a special respect” as their participation and voice “broadens and deepens” moral understanding and therefore, it should be afforded “moral epistemic privilege”—though not necessarily “superior moral understanding” (363-4). Jaggar’s argument (reminiscent of Hegel’s theory on the mutually constitutive consciousness of ‘master’ and ‘slave’²⁶) is based on the assumption that those who are

socially located on the edges or the underside of dominant culture, [such as] women, have first-hand experience of the far-reaching and subtle as well as immediate and blatant consequences of evils such as [discrimination] and exploitation—and often have developed practical strategies for survival and resistance (ibid).

The ‘consciousness’ distinctly available to females, as well as the strategies to offset subjugating forces, could be effectively employed in development programs to identify and overcome socially constructed inequalities; specifically, they could be used to chip away at the supports of gender discrimination (Hutchings 2001, 130) by challenging the morality of autonomy-dependency, public-private, reason-emotion, justice-care divisions (Tronto 1998 Baier 1998) which currently and invisibly constrain the parameters of development.

As argued here, the inclusion of human rights and gender awareness frameworks demands the focus of development policies and programs be centered on ‘quality of human life’ and on the circumstances and voices of previously marginalized

²⁵ Again, although there might not be a distinct or innate ‘feminine’ set of values or voice, there are most likely feminine “focal points,” whether due to socialization, biological nature, or a combination of the two (Held 1998, 335).

²⁶ Within Hegel’s master-slave dialectic, the "master" is a "consciousness" that defines itself in relation to the slave's consciousness—a process of mutual dependence. "The consciousness for-the-Master is not an independent but a dependent, consciousness... Thus he is not certain of existence-for-self as the truth; rather, his truth is the inessential consciousness and the inessential action of the latter [the slave]" (Hegel 1977, 61).

individuals/groups. How might this apply to the specific development context of Afghanistan? In the cultural, religious, socio-economic and historical context of Afghanistan, the relevance of a human rights-based and gender-sensitized approach to development is particularly salient. This is primarily because international and local development agencies often actively support women-targeted development policies and programs in order to address the perceived vulnerability of and widespread discrimination against Afghan women.

Although the majority of Afghanistan's customary structures and processes assume, embody, or promote gender discrimination due to culturally prescribed patriarchal, authoritarian interpretations of Islam (Sen & Grown 1987), the choice of *policy-makers* to include the lens of human rights or gender into development policies would not overcome the injustice of this horizontal inequality²⁷; these frameworks must be made accessible to and used by *Afghans themselves*. Human rights and gender awareness do provide more inclusive language for development policy-makers and workers—offering discourse to describe the needs, roles, and expectations of Afghan women as distinct from Afghan men (irrespective of whether this difference is a social construction or innate) and to argue that Afghan women, as humans, innately possess basic rights; however, Afghan women (and men) must *exploit* the gender perspective and human rights frameworks, as tools, in order to ensure their voices are heard, their agency recognized, and their moral knowledge (Gilligan 1980; Held 1998; Tronto 1998) valued and incorporated into the discussion of how Afghanistan can best realize ethical development. For example, turning to a HRBA to development that is also gender-aware would allow Afghan women to identify violations of women's rights, especially as they occur in the 'private sphere' (Ashworth 1999), that would otherwise go unnoticed. If development organizations, such as UNDP, UNIFEM, AWWN, and Oruj, acknowledge this critical role that Afghan women (and men) can and should play, then the incorporation of human rights and gender awareness frameworks will broaden and deepen the ethical foundation of their development efforts.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study was to reveal how development workers and elites perceive, understand, and articulate the conceptual framings and norms that guide their work in order to explain how organizations translate their conceptual frameworks into actionable policies. Clearly, both human rights and gender awareness frameworks, while present in and ethically significant to development policies of multilateral and grassroots organization working in Afghanistan, have been applied in rather problematic ways—particularly by/within the international development organizations studied here. However, past difficulties do not necessarily negate these frameworks' potential utility in developing Afghanistan—especially since the research on theoretical and practical methods to overcome and/or minimize the obstacles and challenges encountered thus far is still nascent. Therefore, in order to enrich and further the discussion of the role and appropriateness of human rights and gender awareness in a development context, this paper would like to suggest several avenues and areas for future research.

²⁷ Horizontal inequalities, as defined by Stewart (2002), are “severe inequalities between culturally defined groups” (2) as opposed to inequalities between individuals or households. The socially constructed category of gender would allow for the cultural discrimination against Afghan females to be viewed as a horizontal inequality.

In order to minimize the chance that gender-aware and HRBA conceptual frameworks may be marginalized, it will be important to investigate the feasibility of transforming the conceptual “timetable” that structures development work in conflict or post-conflict areas. Development workers in Afghanistan were highly aware of this conceptual partitioning of time—between a crisis phase that necessitates “emergency” assistance and a less urgent, development phase—which allows human rights and gender frameworks to be ignored and marginalized while the foundation for all future development work is being laid. However, as one informant from UNDP stated, “You have to implement all the conceptual frameworks at the same time: gender, human rights, and law and order/justice... you can’t wait to think about rights and gender because—guess what?—if you don’t in that initial ‘recovery’ phase, you never will” (UNDP Employee #1. Interview. 17 June 2006). Consequently, future scholars might examine the initial mechanisms and priorities employed when aid programs and projects are “packaged.” Is there substantial evidence, either in discourse and practice, that the initial goals and priorities of such aid embrace human rights and gender awareness? If not, what specific theoretical and practical obstacles prevent their incorporation?

Additionally, there is a general absence of confidence in gender equality and/or universal human rights in Afghanistan, both within the beneficiary population and, occasionally, amongst development workers themselves. Such a deficiency prompts the following questions: To what extent do development bodies working in Afghanistan objectively assess the context in which they are working? How willing are development organizations—especially foreign or international—to adapt institutional discourse and practices to facilitate *local* understandings? According to development and rights workers (both international and local) in Afghanistan, advocating blanket, inflexible, and top-down applications of human rights or gender awareness strategies simply does not work. Many of the informants suggested that development organizations work from the existing, local capitals of experience and knowledge to effectively negotiate with oppression and patriarchy (Skalli-Hanna 2004). In fact, this study found some evidence that rights and gender programmes *can* be tailored to local understandings; for example, “Given the fundamentally Islamic foundation of Afghan society, development organizations should bring Islamic tenets more directly into its discourse/dialogue on women’s human rights” (Oruj Executive Director. *Email Interview*. 20 November 2006); moreover, as shown in earlier in the paper, the Islamic faith, with its message of spiritual egalitarianism and justice, is not inherently contradictory to human rights goals and gender awareness, and even gender equality. To what extent such adaptations decrease the chances that the conceptual frameworks will be marginalized by aid organizations when insecurity increases would be an important area for future study.

Development organizations have not yet successfully countered the tendency within discourse and practice to conflate “gender” and “women,” often promoting women-targeted projects under the title of “gender aware.” Women-oriented activities are clearly necessary in the context of Afghanistan (because Afghan women, in general, are starting with “less”), but development programs have yet to target holistically *wives and husbands, fathers and daughters, or brothers and sisters*—even though those are the existing relationships which shape the lives, opportunities, and constraints of both genders. In Afghanistan, the most serious human rights and gendered problems—such as violence and discrimination against women—are acted out both by men and women. Therefore, future research might explore the theoretical barriers and practical obstacles that deter

development workers and donors from involving and targeting both genders and stressing the *relationship between* the two genders in development efforts.

Finally, this research revealed that development workers within the international development community recognize that Afghan women are often viewed as more vulnerable and, consequently, more deserving of aid than Afghan men. Although the language of women's empowerment has not fully materialized in the development discourse of the UNDP and UNIFEM, it is fundamental to the discourse of Oruj and AWN. The respondents from these two grassroots organizations employed a discourse in which the organization was seen less as "director" and more as a "facilitator" for the advancement of women. Given these findings, future research might explore in what ways and to what extent does the discourse of "Afghan women as vulnerable" further these women's reliance on the organizations and discourage women's agency²⁸? More generally, what are the drawbacks—as well as the feasibility—of large, international development organizations embracing a discourse that is not only reliant upon the capitals of knowledge and experience of the "beneficiaries," but also one in which the ultimate organizational aim is "working itself out of a job"?

Ultimately, this study found that the while both international, multilateral development organizations and local development organizations *do* use human rights and gender awareness frameworks in their discourses and policies in Afghanistan, such frameworks have been operationalized in such a way that has diminished the transformative, sustainable, and ethical benefits of such frameworks. This study provided data and, ultimately, raised theoretical and practical questions that will hopefully not only enrich the discussion about ethical development efforts intending to advances the status and opportunities of women and yield sustainable results in Afghanistan, but also better enable those who plan and executive development efforts in Afghanistan to decide where and how the concepts and perceptions of human rights and gender awareness direct and limit their work.²⁹ Ideally, the Afghans targeted by the development work of UNIFEM & UNDP and Oruj and AWN (i.e. the beneficiaries) would also benefit from this research, as it might enhance their understanding of the rationales, assumptions, and ethics guiding the development work occurring in their country; however, practical constraints make such a course of action highly unfeasible at this time.³⁰

²⁸ See Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977*. Colin Gordon, Ed. New York: Pantheon Books, 1980.

²⁹ This paper will first be submitted in fulfillment of a Masters' degree and, subsequently, I hope to submit this paper to the organizations studied here, via the respondents who participated in the research.

³⁰ Such a course of action would encounter several practical obstacles: first, this research would have to be translated into both Dari and Pashto, since the vast majority of those living in Afghanistan do not speak English; second, since more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of all Afghans are illiterate, the findings would also have to be presented orally, in both Dari and Pashto; and finally, poor infrastructure and transportation systems, as well as the practice of sexual apartheid, would require an extremely large number of presentations of this work, in order to reach a significant amount of the Afghan population.

VII. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Consent Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERVIEW

Conceptual Framings of Development Work in Afghanistan

You have been asked to participate in a research study conducted by Alison Long from the School of International Service at American University. The purpose of the study to investigate the conceptual framings used in development work in Afghanistan. The results of this study will be included in Alison Long's Masters thesis. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because of your participation in policy-making and development activities in Afghanistan. You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate.

- This interview is voluntary. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop the interview at any time. We expect that the interview will take about 10 minutes.
- Unless you give us permission to use your name, title, and / or quote you in any publications that may result from this research, the information you tell us will be confidential.
- I would like to record this interview on audio cassette so that we can use it for reference while proceeding with this study. We will not record this interview without your permission. If you do grant permission for this conversation to be recorded on cassette, you have the right to revoke recording permission and/or end the interview at any time.

This project will be completed by May 2007. All interview recordings will be stored in a secure workspace until 1 year after that date. The tapes will then be destroyed.

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form. _____ (*initial here*).

(Please check all that apply)

I give permission for this interview to be recorded on audio-cassette.

I give permission for the following information to be included in publications resulting from this study:

my name my title direct quotes from this interview

Name of Subject (please print): _____

Signature of Subject _____ Date _____

Signature of Investigator _____ Date _____

Please contact *Alison Long*, alirose@gmail.com or 202 965 9423 with any questions or concerns.

If you feel you have been treated unfairly, or you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Professor C. Call, Chairman of the Committee on the Use of Humans as Experimental Subjects, School of International Service, American University, 4400 Massachusetts Ave, Washington, DC 20017, phone 1-202-885-1000.

APPENDIX B: Interview Questionnaire

Sample Interview questions for development policy-makers and workers:

- 1.) For which development organization/agency do you work?
 - For how long have you worked for the organization?
 - Can you describe your job responsibilities or Terms of Reference (TOR)?
 - Can you briefly describe the general goals and rationale behind the development work being done by your organization.

- 2.) “Human rights” (or “human rights based approach”) and “gender awareness” are terms that are used very frequently in the development world in Afghanistan. Does the mandate or the officials of your organization use those terms?
 - In what context do they use them?
 - What does each of those terms *mean* to you? (Define them, as you understand them)

- 3.) How do the concepts and arguments of either “human rights,” “gender,” or both, appear in or modify your work in development?
 - Please give examples.
 - If not, why not?
 - When/how have you used these concepts to justify or explain the work you and your organization does?

- 4.) If HR frameworks are used by you or your organization, where does that framework originate, in your opinion? If gender awareness is used, where does that framework originate, in your opinion?

- 5.) To what extent do you consider the understandings and responses of Afghans (i.e. your organization’s beneficiaries) to the concepts of human rights and gender when forming organizational policies or programs?
 - Do your beneficiaries use ‘human rights’ and ‘gender’ (or similar concepts under different terms) in their own discourse when interacting with your organization?
 - If so, can you give examples of this?
 - If not, why do you think Afghans have not embraced these concepts in their discourse?

- 6.) What is the greatest obstacle to the integration of ‘human rights’ into the development work occurring in Afghanistan? What is the greatest obstacle to the integration of ‘gender awareness’ into the development work being done in Afghanistan?

- 7.) How, if at all, would you change your organization’s use/reliance on these concepts in development policies, specifically with regard to development policy for Afghanistan?

APPENDIX C: Key Terms

Gender awareness:

A state of knowledge of the differences in roles and relations of women and men, how this results in differences in power relations, statuses, privileges and needs. This is not a normative concept; that is, it is not prescriptive of some end goal or change (e.g. gender equality).

Gender Mainstreaming:

“Mainstreaming a gender perspective is a process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s, as well as men’s, concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring & evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality” (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1997). Such a framework is both normative and prescriptive.

Human Rights:

Inalienable, indivisible, interdependent, and universal, these rights are constituted by the basic standards without which any person could not live in dignity. Therefore, to violate someone’s human rights entails treating her/him as though she/he were not a human being. While there is no universally accepted list of which rights constitute ‘human rights,’ the most widely accepted list of rights can be found in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) [Available at: <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>]. Such rights listed therein include: life, liberty & security (Article 3), freedom from slavery (Art. 4), freedom of movement (Art. 13), freedom from discrimination (e.g. Art. 15, 16, 18, 25), right to employment (Art. 23), education (Art. 26), and culture (Art. 27). Such an understanding of human rights, however, is admittedly individualistic and has been contested by many in “Third World” societies who view the rights of communities and groups as overriding and/or being more beneficial to human life than individuals’ rights. Moreover, ‘lists’ of human rights, while understandable at a policy level, have been used to rank, prioritize, or selectively acknowledge certain human rights—although doing so clearly contradicts the United Nations’ understanding/definition of human rights.

Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) to Development:

“A rights-based approach to development is a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. Essentially, a rights-based approach integrates the norms, standards and principles of the international human rights system into the plans, policies and processes of development... The principles include equality and equity, accountability, empowerment and participation... an express linkage to rights, accountability, empowerment, participation, non-discrimination and attention to vulnerable groups” (UNOHCHR, “Rights-Based Approach,” <http://www.unhchr.ch/development/approaches-04.html>) Others have described HRBA as requiring the development world to “rethink our problems [traditionally] looked at through a production and growth-focused framework... While an [economic] growth-based model promises advancement and quality of life for many, it also leaves out many more. A rights-based approach begins with the objective of ensuring *equity* and a decent standard of life for *all* persons. With this as a starting point, we can then examine growth-led development and hope for better equity, lower poverty rates, and improved standards of living” (Jorge D. Taillant, “A Rights Based Approach to Development,” an oral presentation to the World Social Forum, 2 March 2002).

REFERENCES

- Aaftaab, Naheed Gina. "(Re)Defining Public Spaces through Developmental Education for Afghan Women." In Ghazhi-Walid Falah and Caroline Nagel, eds. *Geographies of Muslim Women, Gender, Religion, and Space*. New York: The Guilford Press, 2005.
- Abirafeh, Lina. "Lessons From Gender-Focused International Aid in Post Conflict Afghanistan... Learned?" *Gender in International Cooperation*, 7. Bonn, Germany: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) Division for International Cooperation, Department for Development Policy, January 2005.
- Adams, Don and Janet Adams. "Education and Social Development." *Review of Educational Research* 38.3 (June 1968):243-263.
- Afary, Janet. "The Human Rights of Middle Eastern & Muslim Women: A Project for the 21st Century." *Human Rights Quarterly* 26.1 (Feb 2004): 106-125
- Afghan Women's Network (AWN). Website, "Who we are." Available at: <http://www.afghanwomensnetwork.org/index.php?q=node/32>
- Afkhami, Mahnaz, ed. *Faith and Freedom, Women's Human Rights in the Muslim World*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995.
- Afshar, Haleh and Stephanie Barrientos, eds. *Women, Globalisation and Fragmentation in the Developing World*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999.
- Ahmed, Leila. *Women and Gender in Islam, Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*. London: Yale University Press, 1992.
- Al-faruqi, Maysam J. "Women's Self-Identity in the Qu'ran and Islamic Law" in Gisela Webb, ed. *Windows of Faith, Muslim Women Scholar-Activists in North America*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000.
- Al-Rahim, Muddathir 'Abd, ed. *Human Rights and the World's Major Religions, The Islamic Tradition*. Westport: Praeger, 2005.
- Amnesty International. "Women in Afghanistan: Pawns of Men's Power Struggles." ASA 11/011/1999, 1 November 1999. Available at: <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/engASA110111999>
- Anderson, Mary, Wolfgang Heinrich, Stephen Jackson, and Marshall Wallace. *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – Or War*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1999.
- Ashworth, Georgina. "The Silencing of Women." In Tim Dunne & Nicholas Wheeler, eds. *Human Rights in Global Politics*. Cambridge, UJ: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- AWN Employee #1. *Interview*. 30 July 2006.
- AWN Employee #2. *Email Interview*. 1 January 2007.
- AWN Employee #3. *Email Interview*. 19 December 2006.
- Baier, Annette C. "What do women want in a moral theory?" In James P. Sterba, ed. *Ethics: The Big Questions*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1998, pp. 325-331.
- Carpenter, Charli R. 2005. 'Women, Children and Other Vulnerable Groups': Gender, Strategic Frames and the Protection of Civilians As a Transnational Issue. *International Studies Quarterly* 49.2 (June): 295-334.
- CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women). Entered into force on 3 September 1981 and ratified by Afghanistan on 5 March 2003. Available at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm>
- Chabbott, Colette. *Constructing Education for Development, International Organizations and Education for All*. New York: Routledge-Falmer, 2003.

- Crocker, David. "Development Ethics and Globalization." In Verna Gehring, ed. *The Ethical Dimensions of Global Development*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007.
- Denzin, Norman & Yvonna Lincoln. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2000.
- Donnelly, Jack. *Universal Human Rights, In Theory and Practice, Second Edition*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003.
- Dupree, Nancy Hatch. "Afghanistan: women, society, and development." *Journal of Developing Societies* 8.1 (1992): 30-42.
- Edwards, Michael. *Future Positive: International Cooperation in the 21st Century*. London: Earthscan. 1994.
- Eide, Asbjørn Eide. "The historical significance of the Universal Declaration." *International Social Science Journal* 50.158 (Dec 1998): 475-497
- Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977*. Colin Gordon, ed. New York: Pantheon Books, 1980.
- Gasper, Des. *The Ethics of Development, From Economism to Human Development*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004.
- Gehring, Verna, ed. *The Ethical Dimensions of Global Development*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007.
- Gilligan, Carol A. In *a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993 (reissue).
- Giradet, Edward and Jonathon Walter, Eds. *Essential Field Guides: Afghanistan*. Geneva: International Centre for Humanitarian Reporting, 1998.
- Goulet, Denis. *Development Ethics*. London: Zed, 1995.
- Gready, Paul & Jonathan Ensor, eds. *Reinventing Development? Translating a rights-based approaches from theory to practice*. London: Zed Books, 2005.
- Hall, Anthony and James Midgley. *Social Policy for Development*. London: Sage Publications, 2004.
- Hegel, Georg W.F. *Phenomenology of Spirit, Translated by A.V. Miller*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977 (Hegel's original publishing of the work occurred in 1807).
- Held, Virginia. "Feminist Transformations of Moral Theory." In James P. Sterba, ed. *Ethics: The Big Questions*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1998, pp. 331-346.
- Hutchings, Kimberly. "Toward a feminist international ethics." In Ken Booth, Tim Dunne, Michael Cox, eds. *How Might We Live? Global Ethics in the New Century*. Cambridge, UK : Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Hyndman, Jennifer and Malathi de Alwis. "Beyond Gender : Toward a Feminist Analysis of Humanitarianism and Development in Sri Lanka." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 31.3/4 (Fall 2003): 212-222.
- Hyndman, Jennifer. "Refugee Camps as Conflict Zones: The Politics of Gender." In Wenona Giles and Jennifer Hyndman, eds. *Sites of Violence, Gender and Conflict Zones*. California: University of California Press, 2004.
- Jaggard, Alison M. "Toward a Feminist Conception of Moral Reasoning." In James P. Sterba, ed. *Ethics: The Big Questions*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1998, pp. 356-374.
- . "A Feminist Critique of the Alleged Southern Debt." *Hypatia* 17.4 (2002): 119-142. Available at: <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/hypatia/v017/17.4jaggard.html>
- Kandiyoti, Deniz. "Bargaining with Patriarchy." *Gender and Society*, Vol. 2, No. 3, Special Issue to Honor Jessie Bernard (Sep., 1988), pp. 274-290.

- Mann, Carol. "Models and Realities of Afghan Womanhood: A Retrospective and Prospect." Paper prepared for the Gender Equality and Development Section, Social and Human Sciences Sector, UNESCO, July, as part of the programmatic work on "the role of culture and social institutions." 2005. Available at: http://portal.unesco.org/shs/es/file_download.php/16e82f6fb73cbac314c8b691c08140baCarol+Mann.pdf
- March, Candida, Ines Smyth, and Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay. *A Guide to Gender-Analysis Frameworks*. London: Oxfam Publishers, 1999.
- Marshall, Catherine & Gretchen B. Rossman. *Designing Qualitative Research*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1989.
- Mayer, Ann Elizabeth. *Islam and Human Rights, Tradition and Politics*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991.
- . "Islamic Law and Human Rights: Conundrums and Equivocations." In Carrie Gustafson and Peter Juviler, eds. *Religion and Human Rights, Competing Claims?* New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1999.
- . "Rhetorical Strategies and Official Policies on Women's Rights: The Merits and Drawback of the New World Hypocrisy." In Mahnaz Afkhami, ed. *Faith and Freedom, Women's Human Rights in the Muslim World*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995.
- Midgley, Mary. "Towards an ethic of global responsibility." In Tim Dunne & Nicholas Wheeler, eds. *Human Rights in Global Politics*. Cambridge, UJ: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Mertus, Julie. "Grounds for Cautious Optimism." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 3.1 (April 2001): 99-103.
- Moghadam, Valentine. "Revolution, the State, and Islam: Gender Politics in Iran and Afghanistan." *Text* 22 (Spring 1989): 40-61.
- . "Revolution, Religion, and Gender Politics: Iran and Afghanistan Compared." *Journal of Women's History* 10.4 (Winter 1999): 178-194.
- Moon, Gillian, ed. *Making Her Rights a Reality, Women's Human Rights and Development*. Australia: Community Aid Abroad, 1996.
- Neimanis, Astrida. *Gender Mainstreaming In Practice: A Handbook*. United Nations Development Programme's Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS. Summer 2001. Available at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/gmfstudy.htm>
- Nussbaum, Martha. "Capabilities and Social Justice." *International Studies Review* 4.2 (Summer 2002): 123-136.
- OLCa. 2006. *Securing and Enhancing Education for Afghan Females*. Oruj Learning Center. Available at www.advocacy.net.org.
- OLCb. 2006. *Three Year Strategic Plan & Budget (2006-2009)*. OLC. Available at www.advocacy.net.org.
- Oruj Executive Director. *Interview*. 28 June 2006.
- Oruj Executive Director. *Email Interview*. 20 November 2006.
- Palmer, Celia A. and Anthony B. Zwi. "Women, Health and Humanitarian Aid in Conflict." *Disasters* 22.3 (1998): 236-249
- Riphenber, Carol J. "Gender relations and development in a weak state: the rebuilding of Afghanistan." *Central Asian Survey* 22.2/3 (June 2003): 187-207.
- Rossmann, Gretchen B. & Sharon Rallis. *Learning in the Field, An Introduction to Qualitative Research, Second Edition*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2003.
- Rowland, Jo. "A word of the times, but what does it mean?" in Halch Afshar, ed., *Women and Empowerment, Illustrations from the Third World*. London: MacMillan Press, 1998.

- Rubin & Rubin. *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995.
- Scheinin, Martin and Markku Suksi, eds. *Human Rights in Development Yearbook 2002: Empowerment, Participation, Accountability and Non-Discrimination: Operationalizing a Human Rights-Based Approach to Development*. Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2005.
- Scott, Joan. "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis." Presented at the American Historical Association in New York City, December 27, 1985. Gender and the Politics of History.
- Saigon, Mitchell and John T. Passe-Smith, eds. *Development and Underdevelopment: The Political Economy of Global Inequality, Third Edition*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Renner Publishers, 2003.
- Sen, Amartya. *Development as Freedom*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Sen & Grown. "Gender and Class in Development Experience." In *Development Crises and Alternative Visions*. Monthly Review Press, 1987.
- Shal Leo, E. "Female Sexuality and Gender in Modern Feminist Interpretation." *Christian Muslim Relations* 15.2 (2005): 129-140.
- Singer, Peter. *One World: The Ethics of Globalization*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002.
- Skalli-Hanna, Loubna. "Loving Muslim women with a vengeance: The West, Women and Fundamentalism," in Joe Kincheloe and Shirley Steinberg, eds, *The Miseducation of the West*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004.
- Steiner, Henry J. & Phillip Alston, et al. *International Human Rights in Context: Law, Politics, and Morals, Second Edition*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- Stewart, Francis. "Horizontal Inequalities: A Neglected Dimension of Development." Working Paper No. 81, Queen Elizabeth House Working Paper Series. February 2002. Available at: <http://www3.qeh.ox.ac.uk/RePEc/qeh/qehwps/qehwps81.pdf>
- Sweetland, Scott R. "Human Capital Theory: Foundations of a Field of Inquiry." *Review of Educational Research* 66.3 (Fall 1996): 341-359.
- Tomasevski, Katarina. *Development Aid and Human Rights*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989.
- Tronto, Joan C. "What can Feminists learn about morality from caring?" In James P. Sterba, ed. *Ethics: The Big Questions*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1998, pp. 346-356.
- UNDP Employee #1 (Gender Advisor). *Interview*. 17 June 2006.
- UNDP Employee #2 (Programme Director). *Interview*. 13 July 2006.
- UNDP Employee #3 (Logistics Expert). *Interview*. 10 July 2006.
- UNDP and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. "Afghanistan: National Human Development Report 2004, Security with a Human Face: Challenges and Responsibilities." Available at: http://www.aed.usace.army.mil/faqs/afghanistan_2004.pdf
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). "A Human Rights-based Approach to Development Programming in the UNDP – Adding the Missing Link." 2001. Available at: http://www.undp.org/governance/docs/HR_Pub_Missinglink.pdf
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). Website, "Overview." Available at: http://www.undp.org.af/about_us/overview_undp_afg/default.htm
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) & the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. 2004. *Afghanistan: National Human Development Report 2004, Security with a Human Face: Challenges and Responsibilities*. Available at: http://www.and.gov.af/src/src/MDGs_Reps/MDGR%202005.pdf

- UNECOSOC (United Nations Economic and Social Council). Commission on Human Rights. *Integrating the Human Rights of Women Throughout the United Nations System: Report of the Secretary-General*. 20 December 1996. (E/CN.6/1996/40).
- "Report of the Economic and Social Council for 1997: Gender Mainstreaming." (A/52/3, 18 September 1997). Available at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/GMS.PDF>
- Commission on Human Rights, 56th Session. *Integration of the Human Rights of Women and the Gender Perspective, Violence Against Women: Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences*, Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy. (E/CN.4/2000/68/Add. 4). 13 March 2000.
- Commission on Human Rights, Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, 53rd Session. *Other Issues: Report of the Secretary General on the situation of women and girls in the territories occupied by Afghan armed groups, submitted in accordance with Sub-Commission resolution 2000/11*. 2 August 2001. (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2001/28).
- Commission on the Status of Women, 45th Session. *Follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: Report of the Secretary-General, Addendum, The Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan*. 25 February 2001. (E/CN.6/2001/2/Add.1)
- Commission on the Status of Women, 46th Session. *Discrimination against women and girls in Afghanistan: Report of the Secretary-General*. 28 January 2002. (E/CN.6/2005/5).
- Commission on the Status of Women, 47th session. *The situation of women and girls in Afghanistan: Report of the Secretary General*. 23 January 2003. (E/CN.6/2003/4).
- UNESCO. "The Human Rights Based Approach to Development Cooperation: Towards a Common Understanding Among UN Agencies." Available at: http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/appeal/human_rights/UN_Common_understanding_RBA.pdf
- UNGA (United Nations General Assembly). General Assembly, 70th Session. *Situation of human rights in Afghanistan*. 12 December 1997. G.A. Res. 52/145, UN GAOR. Available at <http://www.un.org/ga/documents/gares52/res52145.htm>
- *Report of the Inter-Agency Gender Mission to Afghanistan*. Mission headed By the Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, Angela King. 12-24 November. Available at http://www.un.org/womenwatch/afghanistan/documents/1997_IGMreport.pdf
- UNIFEM Employee #1 (consultant). *Interview*. 6 July 2006.
- UNIFEM Employee #2. *Email Interview*. 22 July 2006.
- UNIFEM Employee #3. *Interview*. 6 August 2006.
- UNIFEM (United Nations Fund for Women). "UNIFEM Afghanistan: Fact Sheet." http://www1.bpcd.net/cgi-bin/nphproxy.cgi/000000A/http/afghanistan.unifem.org/PDF_Documents/UNIFEMAfghanistan_FactSheet_081205.pdf
- UNOHCHR (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights). "Frequently Asked Questions on A Human Rights Based Approach to Development Cooperation." United Nations, New York and Geneva. 2006. HR/Pub/06/8.

- Vincent, R.J. "The Idea of Rights in International Ethics." In Terry Nardin & David R. Mapel, eds. *Traditions of International Ethics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Weaver, James H., Michael T. Rock, and Kenneth Kusterer. *Achieving Broad-Based Sustainable Development: Governance, Environment, and Growth with Equity*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, Inc., 1996.
- Weinberg, Darin, ed. *Qualitative Research Methods*. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 2002.
- Yin, Robert K. *Case Study Research, Design and Methods, 3rd Edition*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2003.
- Zolnosky, Grace. "Building healthy communities: human capital investment." *Nation's Cities Weekly* 29.4 (Jan 2006): 5-7.