"From Gender to Equality": The Ethics of Equality Promotion in
Canadian Development Policy

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Abstract

Is it every ethically acceptable to conduct development projects in countries or under conditions which enforce discriminatory policies against women? The following study examines the role of Canadian development policy in the promotion of human rights and specifically gender equality in Canadian development projects. Evaluations of Canadian development policy are undertaken for the purpose of identifying past successes and failures. Recommendations for future policy design are identified.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of Research

The research which shapes the foundation of this thesis was motivated by my desire as a student of both Philosophy and International Development Studies (IDS) to find a way of marrying the two fields. So much of what philosophy majors do involves operating in the abstract, while IDS is concerned very much with what is happening in reality. While there are numerous theories on ways to promote and achieve development around the world, there remains only a small but growing interest in the ethics behind development policy and practice. With many development theorists and practitioners focused largely on economic (and to a lesser extent social) development objectives, the guiding principles of development sometimes go undefined or ignored.

This thesis was inspired by an assignment I was asked to do as a Philosophy undergrad in a cross listed IDS course which involved writing on the issue of participating in development projects with countries with overt discriminatory policies regarding women. Apparently it is quite common for development officers to be put in situations where they know that the projects they are participating in will not only impose restrictions on their development agency (by disallowing women in certain positions) but will likely not benefit a large portion of the population, that is, women, because of their lowly status in society. While it is clear that these countries still benefit from development assistance, it creates quite the ethical dilemma for development workers entering a situation which they know to be systematically discriminatory (and in some

ways counterproductive). This dilemma is best showcased at the level of policy, as this is where abstract theory generally meets development objectives and provides a suitable space for an ethical discussion. For this exercise, the development policy of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) provides an interesting example of ethical considerations within a blanket development policy.

As many a post-modernist thinker (and others) have noted, there is not much point in trying to reform institutions when people are literally starving to death. The priorities of CIDA are not necessarily the priorities of men or women in the global South, considering their lives are in imminent danger whether it is through the threat of starvation, dehydration, or violence. Deciding where CIDA fits in terms of its commitment to ethics and discrimination in development practice will be a huge factor to address in moving forward with its development policies, especially in light of many Canadian civil society actors and women's groups pressuring the organization to take more of a stand on ethical and sustainable gender promotion in development. In this thesis I will argue for the continuing promotion of gender equality in development. I hold that this is required for both ethical and developmental reasons and offer my own account of what direction CIDA might take with its gender policy in moving forward with its development goals.

1.2 Research Design

It is not an uncommon occurrence for development officers to find themselves in ethical dilemmas regarding discrimination within development projects. Unfortunately the scope of this exercise is not wide enough to devise recommendations for how to

proceed in every case of discrimination in development. The research of this thesis will instead focus on one specific policy document, CIDA's 1999 Policy on Gender Equality. This document was chosen not only because of its significance within the subject of ethical development policy, but also because it holds personal relevance to this Canadian researcher. It should be noted that there are a number of types of discrimination found within development practice (such as discrimination based on race, class, sexual orientation, *et cetera*), and that the focus on gender discrimination has been selected primarily for personal relevance to this researcher.

The research is designed to examine and discover how gender equality is treated and featured in current development policy, specifically at the national level. There is a growing interest in the field of development ethics, due in part to the recent shifts away from economic based measures of development to a more human based measure of development (for example the Human Development Index), and issues surrounding gender equality and development policy and practice continuously arise. In addition to the practical obligations surrounding the promotion of gender objectives within development projects (a fact which has been well documented over the years), the ethical obligations of furthering a long-term approach to human rights and equality (including gender equality) is gaining momentum. It has been 10 years since CIDA implemented its landmark policy on gender equality in development projects, and a thorough analysis and discussion of the conception, implementation, and evaluation of the project is timely.

Furthermore, an analysis of the success and failures of the project will provide beneficial information for future recommendations and policy development and/or modification.

Preliminary investigations have revealed that despite the ambitions of the 1999 policy document, the expectations and goals laid forth in said document have been implemented with mixed results and in some cases implementation was not entirely possible. In the past few years both CIDA and non-governmental civil society groups have produced detailed evaluations and recommendations for the improvement of the 1999 Policy on Gender Equality; however it is not entirely clear what is being done to successfully insert these recommendations into the Canadian Government's current policy and practice. The aims of the research component of this thesis are to uncover the contemporary role of the policy within CIDA, as well as look to the theoretical and practical components which lead to the formulation of the policy in the first place, and what CIDA's position has been historically on the issue of women and development. This leads to the questions of why and how CIDA came up with this policy (what were the social, practical, and organizational landscapes at the time), how the policy fared in its implementation and why, and what directions CIDA might take with the policy in the future in order to ensure its continuing applicability and relevance within Canadian development discourse.

1.3 Methodology

The methodological approach used in this thesis project is largely qualitative in nature. This is because it is extremely difficult to fully quantify the benefit of incorporating gender equality into overall development practice. While comprehensive,

the evaluation process employed by CIDA is largely qualitative in its recommendations. (A few project results were quantifiable; for example it is possible to measure the health benefits to increasing women's access to clean drinking water by compiling figures on illnesses related to drinking dirty water, as well as other medical statistics). One might hold that in development it is more desirable to focus primarily on measurable successes and less on abstract theoretical recommendations, but in order for the policy to move forward and address both qualitative and quantitative shortcomings, it is necessary to examine the theoretical underpinnings of current practice so that we know how they might be improved upon.

Amartya Sen, Martha Nussbaum and others have argued repeatedly that developing a proper theoretical basis for determining what data to collect and how to understand and interpret those data is essential. This is most striking in the case of Sen's work in "Poverty and Famines" where he famously demonstrated that the Bengal famine in the 1940's was caused by an urban economic boom that raised food prices, and not by any shortage of food production. Millions of rural workers to starved to death when their wages did not keep up with the rising cost of rice which was instead going to feed livestock. Not only was this a valuable insight in terms of the varying conditions which can lead to famines, but it also showcased the political factors of famine, namely that because colonial India was not a democracy there were no vote-seeking politicians willing to undertake relief efforts, and thus Sen also concluded that even modest food shortfalls created deadly famines in authoritarian societies (Sen, 1981). This type of study

highlights the importance of understanding the data collected in development work, and the role that theory plays in illuminating and directing development efforts so that they are not misinformed and therefore will have the potential for greater success.

Document analysis is the chief research method employed in this thesis. In order to evaluate and make recommendations it is necessary not only to have a detailed understanding of the policy itself, but also of Canadian development policy in general and the institutional background from which the 1999 Policy on Gender Equality developed. The data collection strategy employed in this research will involve compiling and working with a large array of secondary data including texts, government documents, newspaper articles, and Non-Governmental Organization (or NGO) publications. Relying on secondary data sources allows the most prudent combination of primary and secondary data sources (as much of the information necessary for meeting the research objectives either already exists or could not be collected more efficiently or competently). For this reason secondary data is a good fit for this thesis which is concerned in large part with pre-existing events.

Meeting our research objectives involves the use of a combination of inductive and deductive reasoning within a qualitative framework of content analysis. By looking at a number of related variables, we will study both internal and external policy evaluations in order to identify emerging trends (i.e success and failures of the policy). Once trends have emerged, other supporting documents (including texts, newspaper articles, and government documents) will be utilised in order to facilitate further evidence

to support the emerging theme and identify the areas in need of the most significant improvement. The reasoning for this second policy comparison is that it is always useful to have both internal and external perspectives on such things, and as the old adage goes "two heads are better than one."

Furthermore, by analysing the policy against external evaluations we can take our conclusions further by offering recommendations for policy redesign. Through the compilation and thorough analysis of all relevant secondary data, several noteworthy conclusions emerged surrounding which policy objectives were not being met. Additionally, by taking into consideration historical conditions it became apparent which theoretical direction is best suited to improving the relevance and practical effectiveness of CIDA's Gender Equality Policy.

1.4 Thesis Structure

This first chapter has outlined the purpose of this research and the methods used to gather data in order to meet research objectives. The remainder of the thesis is structured as follows.

Chapter two begins with a brief introduction the field of development ethics, its main proponents, and the issue of relatively little literature on the subject of ethics in development practice. This chapter forms the theoretical crux of the thesis and from there several concepts key to supporting the promotion of gender equality in development are introduced, beginning with the concept of universal human rights and universal values. In

order to understand the importance of promoting gender equality in development policy it is imperative that one recognizes the importance of universal rights and the role they play in the status of women.

From there we go on to discuss the development approach which is most complimentary to gender equality, the Human Development and Capabilities Approach (or HDCA) as pioneered by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum. Finally, the traditional methods of promoting gender equality in development are discussed, particularly feminist development discourse and the Women in Development (WID), Woman and Development (WAD), and Gender and Development (GAD) approaches. These are then contrasted with competing notions of social justice and equality.

Chapter three applies the theoretical components of the thesis directly to the arena of Canadian development policy. Opening with a brief discussion on the nature and definition of policy, the chapter then moves on to discuss the history of Canadian foreign policy and subsequently Canadian development policy, and gender equality in Canadian development strategy is discussed. Finally CIDA's 1999 Policy on Gender Equality is introduced and the theory behind the policy, the details of the policy, and the outcomes of the policy are discussed in detail.

Chapter four moves on to comparative analysis of the evaluation and recommendations offered by CIDA's internal evaluation committee as well as a selected evaluation and recommendation document authored by various member of Canadian NGO's and women's groups. Upon completion of the evaluation analysis, theoretical

components from Chapter two are introduced, specifically the Human Development and Capabilities Approach and discussion ensues on how this theoretical component might be incorporated along with the aforementioned recommendations in order to improve upon CIDA's policy in terms of both policy premise and language.

The conclusions reached in Chapter five of this thesis demonstrate how thoughtful ethical considerations can translate to real life situations found throughout development. While the practical reasons for gender equality have long been proven in development this thesis shows that ethical contemplation is also necessary if we are to move forward with current practices towards a policy framework more centered in social justice and equality. My research suggests that Canadian development policy has already been evolving based on ethical and practical underpinning (even considered "cutting edge" among its international contemporaries), that there is space in development policy discourse for ethical theory, and that ethical consideration can help shape and (hopefully) improve on current policy frameworks.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Is it ever ethically acceptable to conduct development projects in countries or under conditions which enforce discriminatory policies against women? For example, in some regions of the world, leaders have indicated that they will not accept development projects that have women development officers in any but the lowest level positions. In

such nations—and others—having women in any type of leadership position within a development project is simply not permitted. Furthermore, discrimination against women runs far deeper in many countries other than just demanding exclusionary provisions related to development projects, and the reality is that women living in these nations often suffer from far greater inequalities in their daily lives than just those related to employment or development. These deep rooted inequalities are affecting women and communities in every facet imaginable including health, safety, income, personal relationships and in many southern countries, inequalities are even contributing to low levels of overall economic development and quality of life.

Although the primary focus of this thesis will be on gender inequalities, it is worth noting that racial and class inequalities are just as harmful and unacceptable and contribute to poor development progress in some of the same ways that gender inequality does. The reason that is often cited for these glaring inequalities is that in certain cultures/religions/traditions a woman's "place," or a person's caste, or ethnicity are very clearly assigned from birth, and what we may perceive as discrimination is in fact seen as proper behaviour with inequalities between men and women simply being accepted as culture. The Universalist regarding human rights finds this reasoning to be unsatisfying both in terms of development objectives and moral reasoning, and I will lay out an argument in defence of the Universalist position on these issues in the forthcoming sections of this literature review.

The correlation between gender inequality and poverty has long been established (Nussbaum, "Women" 3), and the need to strongly incorporate a gendered perspective into development is nothing new as feminist development theories and theorists have been around for decades. For example, studies have shown that gender inequalities in education are bad for economic growth. Development itself is of course relative, but this thesis will operate within the framework of human development while placing an emphasis on capabilities, equality, and social justice using women as a focal disenfranchised group. In the following chapters, I hope to address the basis we have for the assumption that human rights and especially gender equality is something we have a practical and moral obligation to promote, and then to use this justification for our strong commitment to equality as a guide to assist in developing policies and principles for international development agencies (specifically CIDA) to ensure that their work meets this requirement. And as mentioned above, although the correlation between poverty and gender in inequality has historically been used to support a notion of gender based development, I hope to show that the ethical and just reasons for adapting such an approach are just as important as reaching development objectives; in other words, the theoretical component of my thesis asks, "What is the moral basis for our strong commitment to gender equality in development policy?" And the applied component shows how (once we grasp the nature of and justification for our commitment to equality) we can design development projects which embody this commitment in the most effective way possible.

2.2 Development Ethics

Despite seeming like a relatively new branch of development, developmental

ethics was conceived around the same time as many development theories, with the

actual term "development ethics" first appearing in the writings and work of French

Economist Louis-Joseph Lebret in the 1950's. However, the label and core agenda of

development ethics did not garner any wide spread attention until almost 20 years later

with the work of Denis Goulet whose version of development ethics aims to treat the

ethical and value-based questions posed by development theory, planning, and practice.

Goulet saw development ethics as a new discipline or sub discipline of the current

development discourse, and he wrote extensively about ethics' possible lines of

influence, through prophetic force and more routinely through incorporation in methods,

movements, and education. His own ideas did not become adequately embodied in

methods and methodologies, but some have become so thanks to other authors, such as

Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum. In the 1980s their work at the United Nations World

Institute for Development Economics and Research and the formation of International

Development Ethics Association (IDEA), and by American social philosopher David

Crocker led to a growing ethical influence in forums for development policy and practice,

specifically in debates on aid, trade, and development cooperation (ethical trading, child

labour, *et cetera.*). This ethical movement was not limited to NGO's and concerned

citizens groups, and saw participation by some national governments (notably South

Africa and Northern governments in Europe and North America) who were seeking a human-rights based approach in development cooperation (Gasper, "Ethics" 18).

Goulet characterizes development ethics as an examination of ethical and value questions posed by development theory, planning, and practice. Crocker characterizes development ethics as involving the normative or ethical assessment of the ends and means of third world and global development. Both accounts consider development ethics to be a field of study. Des Gasper writes "The idea of development as societal improvement is relative; in the broad sense of progress or desirable change. Development ethics attempts clarification, assessment and widening of values which are given power" (Gasper, "Ethics" 20). Ethics in the more general sense of the term can be interpreted and applied in different ways; a person or group's 'ethic' or 'ethics' is their set of substantive beliefs about what is good or bad and right or wrong in relations between people, or societies. The term 'moral' is often used interchangeably with the term ethics— *that is* a person's morals are sometimes considered their ethics and vice versa— but for the purposes of this exercise we will try to refrain from the use of the word moral for the sake of consistency. 'Ethics' can also refer to the theories or principles that guide people (*that is* see above), and finally it is also a field of study which considers and generates substantive sets of ethical beliefs about associated theories in descriptive, prescriptive, and methodological ways. According to Gasper each of the accounts of ethics could be used for development ethics; a set or sets of beliefs/ideas about ethics in

issues of development; a theorised set of such beliefs/ the study of sets of such beliefs and the issues they concern (Gasper, "Ethics" 19).

The role of ethics in development and in particular what moral considerations should be present in development projects and in development discourse in general is not clearly defined and there will be those who object to "value laden" assumptions and how to approach different sets of ethical belief about what does and does not constitute development. The notion of so-called "ethical practice" itself is sometimes criticized as being a notoriously "Western" concoction and how this is handled in development discourse and project implementation is a very delicate area. Issues such as social justice, equality, and freedom of religion, would have to be considered and discussed in order to determine the value or even relevance of implementing ethical considerations into any development including a gendered approach to development. Determining what is meant by equality, and the hierarchy of "freedoms" in development will be necessary for a discussion on the case of gender equality in development practice. Furthermore, the notion of "development as freedom" (Sen, Nussbaum) and the correlation between equality and development will be central concepts in establishing the relevance of gender equality in meeting development objectives.

When making recommendations aimed at policy development, as this thesis does, there is the issue of translating the ethics surrounding development into actual policy and practice. Peter Berger and Denis Goulet have identified four issues that should be considered when making policy choices. The first is that societal improvement is value

relative, which makes it difficult to make accurate claims on what would have the most desired effect. The second is that development strategies involve human cost and suffering, which sometimes inadvertently leads to cruel choices and the problem of "non-development" with the danger of creating "great bads" when improving the situation was what was intended. The third issue is that like development, non-development can also have terrible costs. (However, as Berger points out, although development strategy may require people to be faced with cruel choices which require "intense and systematic discussion," this is not sufficient reasoning for abandoning development altogether. He adds that the increased life expectancy in the South is a clear example of how development can work). Fourth, policy developers must identify and compare development alternatives which require value critical examination, something on which it is sometimes difficult to obtain a consensus. For example, when comparing stages of growth theory to human development theory, depending on the developer's personal values there could be a vast difference in the way approaches are assigned worth (Gasper, "Ethics" 14).

The role of ethics in contemporary development practice is still something which is unfolding across the globe. In the next section we will look into what current ethicists are saying about development, and what ethical considerations are being taken into account when formulating development initiatives. The field of development ethics is still a comparatively new field of applied ethics, and at present some its main proponents and organizations might appear to be of the fairly "mainstream" (read: political) variety.

Nevertheless, development ethicists (and development thinkers alike) seem committed to the idea of ethical development and are generally in agreement that the ethical element of development theory and practice is just as relevant and important to development objectives as the more traditional aspects of scientific analysis and policy.

In order for development theories and frameworks to truly address development issues, there needs to be normative principles present to assess whether the proposed development is good or bad. For example, while the traditional scientific measure of economic growth is commonly used to as an indicator of development, it does nothing to account for any bad effects this type of so-called development may have had on communities, the environment, *et cetera*. (Crocker). Thanks largely to works by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, the Capabilities Approach has gained acceptance as a potential measure of development (Crocker), which we will see in more detail during the coming sections. (The capabilities approach is used here loosely as a framework for development and is only capitalized when referencing Nussbaum's work specifically as she has clearly defined a Capabilities Approach, whereas although Sen's original inception used a capabilities framework he has since focused on "freedoms.") We will also see how Martha Nussbaum's interpretation of the Capabilities Approach fits in with a Universalist interpretation of human rights.

It is worth pointing out that the purpose or intention of injecting a normative framework into development policy is not simply for the satisfaction of theorists whose sole desire it is to differentiate right from wrong for the sake of being right. As it happens

the theoretical words of 'right' and 'wrong' could just as easily be replaced with the more

the words 'good' or 'bad' (which make better sense in a development context).

Deontological moral systems as advocated most famously by John Rawls and Immanuel

Kant are characterized primarily by a focus upon adherence to independent moral rules or

duties. Thus, in order to make the correct moral choices, we simply have to understand

what our moral duties are and what correct rules exist which regulate those duties.

Consequently, it is 'good' to follow your duties and 'bad' to shirk them. Teleological

moral systems like those most famously advocated by Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart

Mill are characterized primarily by a focus on the consequences which any action might

produce. Therefore it follows that in order to make correct moral choices we have to have

some understanding of what will result from our choices. It is 'good' when we make

choices which result in the correct consequences and 'bad' when we make choices which

result in the incorrect consequences.

As for the relevance of this for development dialogue, one might say that in order

to satisfy the moral criterion for what could be considered 'good' or 'bad' one must pay

special attention to duties and consequences. Hence, the goal of development ethics is not

simply to create more theoretical dialogue but to establish a more comprehensive version

of what it means to have success in development. The goal is to expand on traditional

definitions focused solely on economic factors. In terms of what this all means for

development policy, if it can be shown that achieving basic human capabilities leads to a

more just and therefore complete realization of development, the issue of gender equality

certainly figures prominently in that women's lack of access to capabilities remains a huge problem in realizing a country's full potential.

2.3 Human Rights and the Idea of Universal Values

2.3.1 Human Rights: The Right to Development?

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights contains civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights, with the first two types of rights generally enjoying more relevance and action. This is due in great part to the Western NGO human rights movement which has focused almost exclusively on civil and political rights. The difference between the effectiveness of civil and political rights versus economic, social, and cultural rights is that civil and political rights are generally more permissible as they entail immediate, negative obligations with little resource implications whereas the latter are embodied primarily in policy prescriptions dependent on the availability of resources. International human rights law came into being at a time when states dominated international relations and the international human-rights system was also state oriented; the entire system relied on connecting every individual to a responsible state that had the capacity to deliver protection. Regardless of desirability, human rights are inherently tricky to deliver and enforce and current human rights law shares many of the general weaknesses of international law in that enforcement and compliance are not its greatest strength (De Feyter 31).

The right to development was first articulated in the early 1970s when a new category of human rights called "solidarity rights" were introduced in order to "infuse the human dimension into areas where it had been missing" (De Feyter 111). Individuals, states, and national groups all hold rights to development, with the idea being that if all actors on the international social scene participated both as right holders and duty bearers then the right to development could be realized. The right to development saw further attention in the late 1980s when the United Nations General Assembly adopted a non-binding United Nations (UN) declaration on the Right to Development. This new declaration only partially incorporated the preceeding declaraction, as only rights to individuals and people's rights were recognised, whereas the role of development fell primarily on the state with little international involvement beyond the level of policy (De Feyter 43). Several developed nations, including the United States, opposed the declaration but the right to development continues to appear in United Nations literature as recently as the Millennium General Assembly Declaration of September 2000. At the global level, there is no accord on human rights except that equal consideration is given to both sets; and attempts at establishing a hierarchy are highly contentious.

In a practical sense, human rights are also an extremely controversial issue at the global policy level. Leading human rights figure Makau Mutua argues that the campaign to universalize human rights furthers an historical continuum in an unbroken chain of Western authority over the last century; "It forms a long queue of the colonial administrator, the Bible-wielding Christian missionary, the merchant of free enterprise,

the exporter of political democracy and now the human rights zealot" (Mutua 20). Mutua,

like Upendra Baxi, adopts what he calls "the outsider-insider perspective" on the human

rights movement. Both recognize the validity of human rights and the human rights

discourse but reject an "outsider" or what is commonly seen as a purely Western

interpretation of human rights (De Feyter 44). As one would expect, states which are the

most influential in other areas of international relations are also the most influential in the

human rights rhetoric, and the most glaring example of this is the focus of human rights

on the rights of individuals (over those of, say, groups). "If non-Western societies had

been dominant in formulating the international discourse on human rights, individuals

would have been approached much more as social beings. Arguably, international human

rights would not have just regulated the relationship between the state and the individual,

but would have also dealt with how both the state and the individual relate to the

intermediate level of the group (families, communities, age groups) that determine the

social position of the individual" (De Feyter 45).

2.3.2   Central Notions of Human Rights

In order to understand the role that human rights policies should play in furthering

the goal of enhancing capabilities we need to understand the conceptual connections

between human rights and capabilities. As previously mentioned, one of the objectives of

development ethics is to formulate and insert some type of normative dialogue regarding

what constitutes 'good' and 'bad' development, moving towards a more holistic (*that is*

not primarily economic) conception of development. The recognition of the importance

of human rights is certainly compatible with an ethical view of development, but to what extent this is so will be discussed in the coming paragraphs. According to Thomas Pogge, a conception of human rights can be factored into two main components; a concept of understanding of what one may call a "human right"; and the substance or content of the conception, that is, the goods or objects it identifies for protection by a set of human rights (Pogge 45). "We cannot convincingly justify a particular list of human rights without first gaining a clear sense of what human rights are. Yet we can justify a particular understanding of human rights without presupposing more than a rough idea of what goods are widely recognized as worthy of inclusion"(Pogge 45).

Pogge also asserts that there are several central notions to understand regarding the nature of human rights. Human rights express ultimate moral concerns (persons have a moral duty to respect human rights above and beyond what any national or international legal document might say). Human rights express weighty moral concerns which normally override other normative considerations (for example, your right to personal safety overrides my right to walk around with a sword pointing directly at you). Moral concerns are normally focused on human beings, as they alone have human rights and all human beings have equal status (because of their being human). Human rights express moral concerns that are unrestricted; they should be respected by all human agents irrespective of their particular epoch, culture, religion, moral tradition, or philosophy. These moral concerns are broadly sharable and capable of being understood and

appreciated by persons of different epochs or cultures, religions, moral traditions, *et cetera*. (Pogge 46).

In order for humans to live dignified and just lives, they must be capable of acquiring the human rights and protections associated with this level of functioning; something which should be applicable the world over. "The notion of un-restrictedness and broad sharability are related in that we tend to feel more confident about conceiving a moral concern as unrestricted when this concern is not parochial to some particular epoch, culture, religion, moral tradition, or philosophy" (Pogge 46). Nussbaum aims to achieve her notions of human functioning based on a theory of "political liberalism". She uses "central capabilities" as a foundation for basic political principles that should underwrite constitutional guarantees ("Women" 5). In other words, it becomes the responsibility of political agents to ensure that the capabilities are defined and enforced which would require "good governance" and the "rule of law" (which could be considered overly idealistic when applied to many current third world situations). However, Nussbaum argues that the list of capabilities could be endorsed for political purposes and many of the fundamental rights included on the capabilities list are not incompatible with respecting individual's freedoms and choices, and are thus defensible as desirable in any society.

Additionally, Nussbaum does not necessarily promote the real and actual function of each of the capabilities she puts forth and realizes that all human beings are not automatically capable of functioning on all levels and at all times. She is most concerned

with the opportunity for functioning and the freedom to choose. "In order to describe how a threshold level of capability might be secured, much more needs to be said about the appropriate role of the public sphere ... and also about how far the public sphere is entitled to control the activities of private actors in the pursuit of the capabilities on the list" (Nussbaum, "Women" 75). So while Nussbaum is not entirely clear about whose responsibility it is to implement and enforce the items on her list nor in what capacity they would do this, she admits that there is a certain legal element that would have to be imposed (but she has not yet fully explicated the logistics or details of this aspect of her approach). The actual list that Nussbaum has introduced for her Capabilities Approach to development consists of ten capabilities she labels "the central human functional capabilities". She describes this as "freestanding moral code", which resulted from years of cross cultural discussion.

There are three primary critiques associated with human rights and the language used to defend them. Primarily there is the legitimacy critique. "Human beings in nature are, in this view, no more born with human rights than they are born fully clothed; rights would have to be acquired through legislation, just as clothes are required through tailoring" (Sen, "Development" 228) Proponents of this argument, like Jeremy Bentham assert that 'natural rights' are rubbish and insist that rights must instead be seen in post-institutional terms as instruments, rather than as prior ethical entitlements which is at a very fundamental level in contradiction of the basic idea of universal human rights. Karl Marx also contended that rights could not come before the institution of the state. The

second and perhaps most common critique is the cultural critique. This argument holds that the assumption that human rights (usually characterized as a "Western concoction") are necessarily at odds with traditional Asian values and therefore inapplicable universally. The third critique is the coherence critique which is essentially based on linguistics/semantics and asserts that rights are entitlements that require correlated duties and that there has to be agency associated with a duty to provide 'A' with 'B' and so forth (Sen, "Development" 228). Ergo, there is ensuing confusion over who is providing who with what.

While it is critical for a comprehensive vision of human rights to emerge if global aspirations of equality and social justice are to be fulfilled, the concept of group rights presents a challenge for the notion of human rights presented in this thesis. If women as a group are placed in an unequal relation to men (or divided based on class, age, ethnicity, *et cetera*), then the constraints of that grouping would not fulfill equality obligations to the extent that this researcher would like to believe possible. However it is not certain that that is how group rights might translate and it is not the purpose of this thesis to discuss group vs. individual rights. It is worth noting that Upendra Baxi's vision of human rights might suggest that this grouping would not necessarily affect women negatively; "the mission of contemporary human rights is to give voice to human suffering, to make it visible and ameliorate it." (Baxi 6). If the West/Rest divide can agree that the alleviation of human suffering is the foremost characteristic of human

rights discourse then certainly the plight of women would factor heavily in any suffering based analysis.

2.3.3 Universal Values, Culture, and the Rights of Women

Certainly one of the central issues to the successful argument of this thesis is whether or not an adequate defence of universal values can be mounted. The name "universal values" itself is in fact value laden. The use of the word 'value' alone implies that what is being prescribed is worthy and appropriate of attention and of being adapted. And despite the fact that there are few items mentioned in the above list that anyone could really find fault with on the surface, the fact remains that this whole notion comes from the first world and is being looked at as a potential solution in the third world. In reality, advocating a set of universal guidelines aimed at achieving equality would be extremely difficult, as it is rare that there are not competing political, financial, and historical interpretations of what constitutes a just and flourishing world. There is obviously a profound lack of understanding between what religious and cultural practices actually represent around the world, with parties in both the first and third world having misconceptions about the meanings and history behind traditional behaviours. Anthropologists like Lila Abu-Lughod have written on the concept of cultural relativism, and while they agree that its tendency to "explain away" questionable practices as culture is unsatisfying, those in the West must understand that the final product of human rights and freedoms will probably look different from its current inception, and fundamental ideas of justice will vary between women of different backgrounds and locations. Abu-

Lughod instead advocates a holistic understanding of cultural difference with a strong emphasis on historical events to aid in understanding.

The strongest support for a Universalist perspective comes from those with full faith in the universal declaration of human rights (this researcher included). However thinkers in the vein of Wendall Berry have argued that Universalists fail to see how any conception of human rights could be seen as controversial and a colonial tool for domination (Rahnema 281). Gandhi was against the right to education and importation of schools into India as he feared they would damage existing well rooted pre-colonial and indigenous approach to education. More recently, in most Latin American, Asian, and African villages, collective or communal rights have priority over individual rights and traditional hierarchies (for example, elders) have primacy over any equality (Rahnema 281). Critics of universalism assert that "individualism is essential to the very conception of universal human rights when in reality, real communal rights of peoples to their commons often come with morals and traditions which imply dissolving or contradicting individual rights to avoid their inherent individualism" (Rahnema 283). In other words, these thinkers hold that individualism is a Western construct when compared to the communal construction of many Eastern societies. Opposition to human rights is seen by some as on par with opposition to any other abuses of power both modern and pre-modern.

There are a multitude of reasons why women are denied certain capabilities or rights in different parts of the world. Martha Chen explores examples from parts of India

and Bangladesh in 1970s and 1980s of active opposition to rural women obtaining paid work although they wanted/needed it in order to support their immediate families, *that is* their children. Some of the most common explanations Chen encountered were: women do not need paid employment or need it less than men do because they are unsuited or less suitable for the work concerned; women gaining employment would contravene local culture (written tradition/law/men/local/elite/local leadership/older generations); objections to calculations in terms of women's individual personal benefit, that is, women willingly sacrifice the pleasure of paid work for the good of others. All of these claims were eventually refuted or discredited upon further investigation by Chen into the communities from which the explanations were given, but the point is that there is a multitude of reasons beyond simply religion which people give for perpetuating inequality, and many of them are not as defensible even from a cultural relativist's standpoint as they do not involve even the same level of consistency as many religious congregations. "Alleged prohibition by religion is a variant. A form of communitarian ethics is often cited in support: the morality is whatever the community accepts: there is no other basis for evaluation" (Gasper, "Ethics" 204).

Take for example the rather contentious cases of countries such as Afghanistan or Iran; what these countries "stand for" today in terms of politics, rights, religion, and culture is not an accurate representation of long standing tradition, but rather the result of great shifts in history. If one were to look at Iran's history dating back as little as thirty or forty years ago, the dictatorship that regulates the culture and "role" of women today is a

far cry from what was once a relatively free society in terms of women's access to education, employment and freedom outside of the home. Similarly, Afghanistan under the Taliban was distinctly different from that of 20 years ago when Afghanistan had a very cultured society with many highly educated women and men compared to more recently when women have had very little freedom of movement (Henshall Momson 223). The point being here is that despite what some may consider to be culturally relative experiences, the people in the aforementioned countries have clearly also shown a propensity towards other societal norms in the not so distant past.

Cultural relativists and others who criticize the idea of universal values argue that as a whole we should respect, take seriously, and further development by working within and building upon community values. They also hold that, ethically speaking, there is no independent notion of right and wrong and we should therefore always defer to the values that are constructed within communities, each of which is its own "moral universe" (Gasper, "Ethics" 19). These types of arguments are commonly analyzed within the field of communitarian ethics by philosophers such as Charles Taylor and Alasdair MacIntyre. Their research shows the history of values as changing concepts which represent their social conditioning. This evolutionary rational is in contrast with and further highlights previous arguments made on the basis that any given community could actually have a complete, consensual, and consistent moral language (Gasper, "Ethics" 19). Taylor conceives of communitarian ethics as "society as an association of individuals, each of whom has conception of a good and worthwhile life and, correspondingly, a life plan.

The function of society ought to be to facilitate these life plans, as much as possible and following some principle of equality" (Taylor 186). The issue here with regards to a Universalist interpretation of human rights and justice is that not everyone in a society will share a similar conception of "the good life". Taylor observes that "... Many writers seem to agree on the proposition that the principle of equality or non discrimination would be breached if society itself espoused one or another conception of the good life ... Any view endorsed by society as a whole would be that of some citizens and not others." (Taylor 186).

Another issue surrounding the notion of culture as an impasse to equality is the way in which Eastern and Western values are pitted against each other in contemporary political and sociological discourse. "Because of the experience of contemporary political battles, especially in the Middle East, Islamic civilization is often portrayed as being fundamentally intolerant and hostile to individual freedom. But the presence of diversity and variety *within* a tradition applies very much to Islam as well" (Sen, "Development" 239). A more relatable example could be that of fundamentalist Christians in the United States, who in their extremism are comparable with their Islamic counterparts. Simply because a certain group of Christian extremists feel that homosexuals should lack human rights based on their being born as such, does not mean that every Christian feels that way or that it is a defensible position based on religion. It is in fact insulting to Islam to view its rather diverse history only in terms of contemporary conflicts and politics.

Asian values are not essentially at odds with Western values and there are numerous examples dating back thousands of years (for example the Carvaka and Lokayata Atheist schools in India in the 6th century B.C.), and others from Chinese and Arabic history which support an historical notion of tolerance and variety with so-called Asian values and within the Asian traditions. The presence of dissidents in every culture makes it problematic to take an unambiguous view of the true nature of any local culture (Sen, "Development" 239). "It does not follow that what is said from within one tradition cannot be heard or overheard by those in another. Traditions which differ in the most radical way over certain subject matters may in respect of others share beliefs, images, and texts. Considerations urged from within one tradition may be ignored by those conduction enquiry or debate within another only at the cost, by their own standards, or excluding relevant good reasons for believing or disbelieving this or that or for acting in one way rather than another" (MacIntyre, "Whose Justice?" 350).

It is crucial to reiterate that the notion of development ethics and human development that the capabilities approach and its prescriptions perpetuate aren't aimed solely at solving the problem of development; rather they are also a set of guidelines which could be enforced anywhere in the world to the probable advantage of any given society. Additionally, for Nussbaum, her values aren't really *her* values; rather they are the result of years of work working with philosophers, development thinkers, people in the field, and ordinary women in need to development assistance (specifically those in India). She does not see any of the values she has listed in her Capabilities Approach as

"competing" with general values like dignity of the person, integrity of the body, basic political rights and liberties, *et cetera*. Far from being a cultural imperialist her respect for difference is profound and perpetrates the idea that respect for differences itself could be considered a universal truth (Nussbaum, "Women" 32).

Also worth mentioning is that although scholars like Nussbaum and Sen sometimes write in a development context (and the purpose of the thesis is to spotlight gender and development), nowhere does Nussbaum (or Sen) ever claim that any of the universal values are in place worldwide. In fact, Nussbaum frequently brings up cases where the U.S. could learn from the Indian constitution (for example in areas related to rape law) ("Sex" 3). Equality is by no means a done deal in the United States or the North, and the so-called developed countries each have both gender and equality issues. Nussbaum does not envision a world where each country models itself on the United States constitution but rather where each country integrates the Capabilities Approach into their own law and identity insofar as it will help to make the world a more just, peaceful, and equal place. People may subscribe to the fundamental morals present in the list without necessarily subscribing to any particular view of the world, religion, culture, *et cetera*, and it is in this way that Nussbaum's list and Sen's "freedoms" have tried to remained neutral, and leave it up to individual societies to decide to the threshold level of each of the central capabilities; "Part of the idea of the list is its *multiple realizability*: its members can be more concretely specified in accordance with local beliefs and circumstances ... it is thus designed to leave room for reasonable pluralism in

specification ... as citizens work toward a consensus for political purposes" ("Women"
77).

2.4 Equality and Human Development: The Capability/ Capabilities Approach

The Human Development Approach (or HDA) was pioneered by Muhab ul Haq,
Paul Streeten, and Richard Jolly although some consider Sen to be the approach's "main
progenitor" in many aspects. Sen describes the relationship between HDA and the
capability approach as the Mahayana (Big Vehicle) and the Hinayana (Little Vehicle)
respectively. In this sense the capability approach (CA) can be viewed as an offshoot or
"baby" of HDA and as an evaluative approach within a larger approach and policy
explanation. The focus of this combined approach provides a balanced framework for
which to approach development policy, focusing on different factors of explanation,
operationalization and measurement, value priorities and choice of policy means (Gasper,
"Development" 17). In September 2004, Sen launched the Human Development and
Capability Association (HDCA), an organization which promotes research from many
disciplines on key problems including poverty, justice, well-being, and economics.
Frances Stewart is the current president of the HDCA and Martha Nussbaum is a past
president. The HDCA promotes high quality research in the interconnected areas of
human development and capability. Its scholars are mainly concerned with research in
areas across a broad range of topics where the human development and capability
approaches have made and can make significant contributions, including the quality of
life, poverty, justice, gender, development, and environment. The HDCA aims to be

multi-disciplinary and also promotes work in the fields of economics, philosophy, political theory, sociology, and development studies.

Within the HDCA and the human development approach in general, priority is given to human issues, the distinctive situations of various groups (for example, women), and data analysis based on socio-economic significance and policy design which when guided by the capability approach gives attention to inputs other than food for determining actual functioning and capabilities (Gasper 17). This approach has been criticized on several grounds; first, the apparent vagueness of Sen's work might lead to a "conceptual fuzziness" that could allow the terms of the approach to become twisted during application. Secondly, academics working outside the realm of front line policy makers run the risk of over-refining the approach which makes it appear obscure to potential users. And lastly policy makers could end up choosing a more practical route in operationalization, effectively debasing the core rationale of the approach. However, it is thought that HDA on its own runs less a risk than the two combined as it is very clear in its top priority which is not economic growth but human development (McNeill 20).

When it comes to advocating for an equality and human rights based approach to development, the capabilities approach can be used to evaluate and direct development and development policy. First articulated by Sen in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the "capability approach" can be understood as the full set of attainable alternative lives that face a person; in other words, instead of the traditional valuing of commodities as indicators of development, it is instead a person's "functioning" which is valued (Gasper,

"Ethics" 133). Capabilities are seen by Sen as demarcating the space within which

quality of life assessments were made, for example when working on Human

Development Reports. Sen's articulation of a capabilities approach can be distinguished

from Martha Nussbaum's later expansion on Sen's work, which is known as "the

Capabilities Approach", and will be examined in more detail later in this section. The

main difference between Nussbaum and Sen's capability approaches is that Nussbaum

has expanded a notion of functioning to include a set and detailed list of human

"capabilities" necessary for one to achieve fully human functioning. (Gasper "Ethics"

166).

In more recent years, Sen has refined his original conception of a capability to the

perspective of development as freedom (also his famous book by the same name). Sen

views the expansion of freedom as not only the primary end but principle means of

development and the removal of various "unfreedoms" as itself constitutive of

development (Sen, "Development" 20). What is of greatest interest for the purposes of

this thesis is the remarkable two-way relationship present within a capabilities conception

of development; the relationship between capabilities and public policy which allows

each to influence the other. Sen articulates five instrumental "freedoms"; political

freedoms (the opportunity people have to determine who should govern and on what

principles with the possibility to scrutinize and criticize authorities); economic facilities

(opportunities individuals enjoy for utilizing economic resources for the purpose of

consumption, production, or exchange); social opportunities (arrangements that society

makes for education, healthcare, *et cetera* which in turn influence an individuals

substantive freedom to live better); transparency guarantees (applicable to freedoms at all

levels and refers to the freedom to deal with one another under guarantees of disclosure

and lucidity); protective security (needed to provide a social safety net for preventing the

population from being reduced to "misery", and includes things like unemployment

benefits, famine relief, *et cetera*). The freedoms are designed to be interconnected and

complimentary and the inter-linkages should be considered important when developing

policy (Sen, "Development" 25).

Some have accused Sen's work in "Development as Freedom" as being vague and

somewhat ambiguous. One area of debate is whether or not Sen's freedoms are meant to

be used as a framework for development debate or as a defensible approach to

development in and of itself (Fleurbaey 75). The openness of the "freedoms" prescriptive

element has been called advantageous by some because it allows for diversity in

formulation and application which is exactly the same reason why some dislike it. As is

anything open to interpretation, it risks misuse at the expense of the entire approach's

credibility.

Despite the fact that Sen's capability approach has evolved into a group of

developmental freedoms, many would still distinguish between Sen and Nussbaum's

approaches as primarily defined by their varying usages and association with a list

(Gasper, "Ethics" 183). While Sen's work appears more abstract (which can be seen as

either a blessing or a curse) Nussbaum has always maintained a commitment to

specifying capabilities and adhering to a set list. Nussbaum insists that there is no

hierarchy in the organization nor should there be any hierarchy in the execution of the list

and all functions are meant to work together in equal levels of importance. The very first

capability appearing on the list is *life*; while this may seem straight forward but is

obviously a huge problem in the developing world. The right to life is the ability to live

one's life without the threat or happenstance of premature death or that one's life become

so reduced that it is not in fact worth living. The second capability is *bodily health*; the

ability to have good, properly nourished physical health including adequate shelter and

access to reproductive health. It is interesting to note here that although up until this point

the capabilities approach has had seemingly little to do with the plight of women

specifically, in the actual stated capabilities which Nussbaum hopes would become

constitutional, women are singled out and protected in areas where they are lacking the

most. Third on the list is *bodily integrity*; that is, the ability to move freely from place to

place, and to have one's body secure from violation in terms of physical or sexual assault,

domestic violence, *et cetera*. (Nussbaum, "Women" 78).

Some items on the list are more abstract than others such as the fourth capability

of *senses, imagination*, and *thought* (concepts which are harder to define). While the

ability to think and reason and receive a basic education seems defensible enough, the

right to imagination and the production of self expressive works might be more difficult

to write into a constitution because of its subjective value. The fifth capability is

emotions (or the right to be able to form attachments to things, to love and be loved, and

generally experience basic human emotions such as longing and gratitude without

overwhelming fear and anxiety of human abuse or neglect). Nussbaum defends this rather

soft capability by asserting that the types of human association that result from proper

emotional experiences are shown to be crucial in development. The sixth capability is

practical reason. While it may be humorous to assert that not everyone is born with the

capability to practically reason if given the opportunity, in this context Nussbaum means

it to protect an individual from the liberty of conscience. The seventh capability,

affiliation, is laid out in two parts. One part is meant to protect freedom of assembly and

political speech. The other part protects against possible discrimination resulting from an

affiliation with a particular race, class, gender, or sexual orientation (Nussbaum,

"Women" 79).

Proponents of the Capabilities Approach in general assert that not only is the

approach committed to capabilities but that capabilities are the priority, hence the name

(Gasper, "Ethics" 185). In order for capabilities to fulfill their commitment to equality it

must be a priority, "If equality is to be demanded in any space—and most theories of

justice advocate equality in some space—it is to be demanded in the space of

capabilities" (Alkire 122). This is relevant to a conception of equality in development

policy. One of the biggest holes in a capabilities framework as it appears currently is its

attention to democracy and its different forums. As a public policy approach to

development *that is* group decision making for groups, it appears that neither Sen or

Nussbaum have very clearly articulated how these processes of public reasoning are

going to take place exactly and that current research is lacking in the area of what kind of democratic institutions would need to be in place for the capability approach in practice to be carried or succeed (Robeyns 113).

The "list vs. no list" debate is also a major source of contention among development theorists. Sen works within a framework which involves an "incomplete" list of basic capabilities (or as he refers to them "freedoms"), which can be expanded upon on a case-by-case basis within different communities. Nussbaum holds more fiercely to the idea of a specific list and somewhere in the middle David Braybrooke advocates the necessity of the list while at the same time acknowledging that it could never be complete; "Moreover, cogent philosophical reasons argue against holding that any such list could ever be completed. For how could it be completed without setting a limit to the categories that are to be used and the distinctions drawn in describing human beings, their environment, and the relationships between them and their environment?" (Braybrooke 37). This is not to say that Braybrooke advocates for capabilities (he advocates for needs), nonetheless his views on the list/no list debate are highly relevant for this exercise As Gasper diplomatically points out, much disagreement can be removed by better distinguishing between types of lists; "Lists come in many types: as proposed definitive statements or as indicative suggestions; as exact prescriptions or as requiring local interpretation; as purportedly complete or explicitly partial statements."(Gasper, "Ethics" 345). Sen's instrumental freedoms fall more in the former described categories and Nussbaum's in the latter.

Yet both have been criticized for not being more like the other, Sen for being too vague and Nussbaum for being too precise. Again, it is Gasper who points out that the purpose of lists like Nussbaum's (and for example the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) is precisely to set limits and clearly define expectations. There is also the issue of authors or the same author thinking they or the various incarnations of their arguments are in agreement when in fact there are varying degrees of tension within their frameworks (Gasper "Ethics" 357) "The Millennium Development Goals and similar basic-capabilities-list formulations are also drastically oversimplified operationalizations, but potentially defensible ... to approach development and equality with strong reference to capability, they focus appropriately on representative standard individuals, and priority aspects of access or functioning in terms of universal basic values, not idiosyncratic personal features or wishes ... They form a workable point of attention, usable to put pressure on real governments and hold them accountable" (Gasper, "Ethics" 357).

The practicality of philosophical theorizing in the field of international development where action is sometimes immediately required, has often come under fire from critics who argue theorizing in general lacks empirical data or plans for action, and that sitting around talking about development is not going to put water in people's glasses or food on their tables. Nussbaum herself is critical of the value of some theory (namely post modernist thought which she correctly deems "unresponsive") but insists on the practical political value that abstraction can bring to a problem. And although Nussbaum herself has not yet outlined how exactly to go about implementing the Capabilities

Approach in state constitutions, what she has done is come up with a concrete guide for

shaping and directing a move towards equality and prosperity should people choose to

embrace it. The Capabilities Approach is by no means an instantaneous solution to a

centuries old problem, but rather a holistic and well intentioned attempt to promote

justice and equality in the developing world and beyond.

2.5 Equality Promotion in Development Practice: A Gendered Perspective

2.5.1 Women and Development: A Brief History

Because this thesis takes a stance on human rights and equality through ethical

considerations with a specific interest in women's equality and human rights, a brief

discussion on the history of women's issues in the realm of development is warranted.

As it is well known, there is an entire approach to development based on the belief that

women are central to overall development objectives and that their oppression is the

central issue for development policy. Worldwide activism and research by feminists,

economists, and development practitioners has provided ample evidence of the important

role of women in the productive sectors of economies. Many governments and

development agencies have incorporated women's and gender perspectives in to their

policies, design measures, procedures, and strategies for project implementation, albeit

with mixed success (Valke 4). While this thesis takes on women as a group and views

their equality as tantamount to reaching desired developmental objectives, it is the larger

commitment to equality and human rights for all that we advocate as a true end for development.

The central point of the original women-centred approach in development practice was that both women and men must contribute in order to lift themselves and their countries out of poverty. "Because women comprise more than half of the human resources and are central to economic as well as the social well-being of societies, development goals cannot be fully reached without their participation ... women and development is thus a holistic concept wherein the goal of one cannot be achieved without the success of the other" (Snyder & Tadesse 6). Part of achieving the goals of development was understanding the cause of women's subordination to men, and the complexity of the situation lead development thinkers to contemplate why there was so little appreciation for social, cultural, economic, or political attributes of non-Western, third world societies (Parpart *et al*).

The struggles and inequalities faced by women throughout the developing world have long been on the radar in terms of development project design and implementation, however as this brief history of women, gender, and development will show, there are marked differences in the approaches that were enacted towards this issue. Up until the 1970s the approach towards the women/development issue was direct improvement policies directed towards women only insofar as they were complimentary to women's roles as wives and mothers. Known as the "welfare approach" it was assumed that once women gained more control over their own fertility, the benefits of macroeconomic

growth strategies (aimed at their husbands) could in effect "trickle down" to them (Henshall Momson 220).

The Women in Development (or WID) approach to development is the result of the theoretical merging of liberal feminism and modernization theory. The growing women's movement in Western Europe and North America played an instrumental role in establishing women's ministries in many countries and institutionalizing WID policies in governments, donor agencies, and NGO's. It was decided that women were not well enough represented in development and that modernization projects involving technology transfer and training were ignoring women and not having the desired economic effects. To combat this problem and bring the third world up to its full industrial capacity it was decided that women needed to be brought in to the development process and that this was to be achieved by focusing on the development of income-generating projects for women. This involved designing projects specifically aimed at getting women out into the workforce so that they may contribute equally to the economy through better training and educational opportunities. The overall goals of WID were to produce more efficient, effective development opportunities for women in order to maximize their earning capacity and household contributions (Parpart, *et al*).

Unfortunately WID objectives were not fully realized, as women in the South did not really have time to focus on "income generating projects", most of which were based on the assumption that all women were the same when in fact they came from very different backgrounds. Eventually, WID advocates shifted from proclaiming the ill

effects of traditional development efforts on women, to exposing the ill effects of women being left out of development. Enter the Gender and Development (or GAD) approach, which was felt to address the women and development issue in places where the WID simply could not (namely its assumption that modernization was the only measure of development and failure to include men and their relationship to women in the development process). Also referred to as "gender aware planning", GAD materialized from the experiences and analysis of Western socialist feminists who had begun studying development issues; "the GAD perspective calls for a synthesis of the issues of materialist political economy and radical-feminist issues of patriarchy and ideology. Drawing on the socialist-feminist perspective, the GAD approach argues that women's status in society is deeply affected by their material conditions of life and by their position in the national, regional, and global economies" (Parpart *et al* 10). Unlike, the WID approach, the GAD approach paid special attention to the vast difference amongst women around the globe and saw women as the agents for their own change.

The goal of this new, more complete approach to the issues of gender and development aimed to reverse unequal power relations and create equitable and sustainable development with both women and men as decision-makers (Hashell Momson 220). This new "people centred" development was attractive because not only did it bring gender (and in that case men) into the picture, it also had a more long range vision for what development should and could aim to be. The 1975 UN Women's World Conference facilitated yet another incarnation of the women/development approach, this

time drawing on the short-comings and positives from previous dialogue and approaches. The Woman and Development Approach (WAD) was a complete rejection of the "Western" white women feminist approaches of the past, and instead saw the overcoming the effects of colonialism and alleviating extreme poverty as more important than male/female equality. This new group of southern voices eventually formed the southern based Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era or DAWN network which aimed to make the views from women in developing country more visible in women and development discourse (Hashell Momson 5).

In terms of gender and development, some progress has been achieved in translating commitments to women and gender into policy but there remains a gap between stated objectives and practice (Valke 4). Building more equal relations to enable women's full participation in development objectives involves additional change or transformation in the structures that discriminate against women (Sweetnam & Porter 9). However, simply addressing women's issues in particular development situations will not lead to the kind of change possible with an overarching global recognition of equal human rights. Mainstreaming gender for the purpose of development objectives is a worthwhile and important step in changing attitudes. However, a global conception of equality and social justice, once widely accepted, will strengthen the original argument for gender equality in development by taking it from a simply a gender issue to a full-blown central ethical concern.

2.5.2 Beyond WID WAD and GAD: Social Justice and Equality

In briefly discussing the feminist discourse in development history it is my intention to show that there are practical reasons related directly to development for the focus on women during both project design and project implementation. While earlier approaches focused mainly on the economic advantages of educating and training women for the work force, for this exercise I align closest with the GAD "people-centred" approach which focuses more explicitly on equality and equitable male/female relations. (This approach is also the closest theoretically to the Capabilities Approach.) That is not to say that the two are the same. It is just to observe that they share common ground with their principles of equality and also the former's diminished allegiance to traditional economics-based feminist approaches to development.

The issue of gender equality and development is not so much an issue about subordination and patriarchy as it is an issue of justice. Unequal sexual and political circumstances have given women unequal human capabilities. In this essence they are being treated not as agents of their own destinies, but as a means to other people's ends which denies them a life of "truly human functioning" (Nussbaum, "Women" 4). Because of the strong documented correlation between gender inequality and poverty, the abolition of inequality is a serious issue for human development; "International political and economic thought should be feminist, attentive (among other things) to the special problems women face because of sex in more or less every nation in the world, problems without an understanding of which general issues of poverty and development cannot be well confronted" (Nussbaum, "Women" 4). Women have gone from so-called "welfare

recipients" to considered agents of their own futures, and there now exists an intersection between providing for women and giving them the capabilities so do so for themselves (Sen "Development" 190). "To see individuals as entities that experience and have well-being is an important recognition, but to stop there would amount to a very restricted view of the personhood of women" (Sen, "Development" 190).

The limited role of women in their communities and economies seriously affects the lives of all people; men, children, and women. A woman's well-being is directly affected by her capability and ability to function as an agent of her own, and empirical research shows that this is strongly influenced by her ability to earn an independent income, find employment outside of the home, obtain ownership rights, become literate, *et cetera*. "The unequal distribution of income and resources, and in particular, gender inequality, is a central concern in the quest to improve well-being. This is because economic inequality can contribute to or perpetuate various forms of unfreedoms – such as discrimination, social intolerance, and lack of political power – that inhibit the acquisition of individual capabilities" (Van Staveren *et al* 292). There is additional specific evidence that women's education and literacy tends to reduce mortality rates in children, especially female children and is also important for the reduction of fertility rates (conversely high birth rates adversely affect the freedom of women) (Sen, "Development" 26).

It is not my intention in this thesis to discuss the merits and demerits of a practical feminist approach to development. As stated in the preceding paragraphs, the approach

that I favour for the purposes of my research is the "development as freedom" approach associated with the Capabilities Approach. As Irene Van Staveren points out, one of the main characteristics of capabilities or "freedoms" are that they are not only complimentary but also mutually supporting in that they have the ability to affect one another. "Freedoms are intertwined and any feminist agenda for gender-equitable macro policies would benefit from a move for simultaneous change in other arenas as well ..." (293). This is vital in our spotlight on gender equality and reinforces the idea that equality in and of itself is desirable and that gender equality is a vital component in the realization of a more equitable world. If we are to maintain a conception of development that includes universal human rights as part of a social justice framework, then gender equality is important to that realization.

It is also worth mentioning that when discrimination is absent and equality is more fully realized, it is advantageous to a society in some less tangible ways than mentioned above. For example, if I decided that the only acceptable role for homosexuals in my society would be that they are seen and not heard, I am putting myself at a distinct disadvantage to those who openly accept homosexuals and thus are exposed to the talents and increased size and support of their communities. To use an example for fitting with our theme of development, while it is sufficient to say that having one literate parent will enhance a child's life, it would then logically follow that having two literate parents would have an even greater positive impact. While it is true that there is something to be said for having "too much of a good thing" in terms of meeting basic development goals

(such as education, literacy, and food security), an increase in resources could hardly be considered damaging.

Semantics aside, when it comes to the positive impacts associated with gender equality there is a researchable relationship between gender equality and macroeconomic variables regardless of finite measurability. The fact that these benefits are not as readily measurable as some poverty directed analysis can be does not undermine the value that a large, inclusive, and educated community would have for development. "Research underscores that macro-level policies can hinder or help gender equity, and that gender inequities, in turn, can promote or hamper the attainment of macro-economic objectives. There is thus a two-way casualty between macroeconomic variables and gender equity". (Van Staveren 294).

2.6 Summary

Despite the current rather precarious nature of the field of ethics and development, it is clear that development is on the radar of many prominent philosophical theorists. The shift towards a more comprehensive meaning for development has meant that experts are trying to come up with new and tangible ways to explore the definition of real development and as a result are continuing to generate new and exciting frameworks for development. The issue of gender equality and the role of women has long been part of development discourse but a fresh focus on human rights and a notion of social justice and equality like the one articulated by Nussbaum, Sen, Gasper and others has emerged,

and as we will see in the next chapter, put into practice by CIDA. Canada at one point in time was a leader in the promotion of gender equality, yet in recent years a once ambitious piece of policy appears to have stagnated somewhat under less than stellar reviews. The literature outlined in this chapter hopes to make a case for the continued promotion of gender equality in development policy design and practice. This suggests that more abstract, long term directives still have value in development practice and finding meaningful ways to incorporate these ideals into practice is the next challenge.

3 FOREIGN POLICY: DEVELOPMENT & GENDER

3.1 Introduction

As we have seen in the previous chapter, there is a great deal of theory regarding where and how women should be incorporated into development. While it is clear that their unequal status contributes to cyclical and long term poverty in their respective countries, it is not entirely clear how current development policies are addressing this extremely volatile political issue. In order to understand how something like gender inequality can be effectively managed through policy implementation we now turn our focus to the arena of foreign policy, and specifically Canadian development policy. We begin this chapter with a brief overview on public policy and the role it plays within governments. We then move on to an historical overview of Canadian foreign policy and

Canadian development policy before launching a detailed discussion on CIDA's 1999

Policy on Gender Equality.

3.2 Understanding Public Policy

Public policy is commonly understood to be whatever governments choose to do

or not to do (Dye 2). Government policies can regulate conflicts within a society, help to

organize society to carry on conflict with other societies, or distribute a great variety of

representative rewards and material services to various members of society. Governments

extract money from societies in the form of taxes and may also use policy to regulate

behaviour, organize bureaucracies, and distribute benefits. For example, a government

may choose to encourage the development of small business by adopting a policy which

offers tax breaks or other financial incentives to business owners.

The study of public policy is traditionally left to political scientists and it is

important that public policy is studied to ensure that a particular nation is adopting the

right policies in order to achieve its goals. This is not so much an exercise in values as it

is determining whether or not public taxes are being spent constructively. Political

scientists are thought, at least in some cases, to have a moral obligation to advance

specific public policies and not to be silent in the face of great social and political crises;

"Policy studies can be undertaken not only for scientific and professional purposes but

also to inform political discussion, advance the level of political awareness, and improve

the quality of public policy" (Dye 4). By studying what governments do, why they do it,

and what difference (if any) it makes in overall outcomes, policy analysts may discover

the key trends and effects which are shaping the public system ranging from defence and education to foreign policy, civil rights, and healthcare (Dye 4).

By being able to pinpoint the causes and detriments of public policy and the effects of political institutions, processes, and behaviours in public policy, groups and individuals can better predict and consequently organize in order to get their voices heard (for example, the power of lobbying in the civil rights movement). Perhaps most importantly, studying public policy can uncover whether or not it is having any real consequences in people's lives. For example, are welfare programs actually a disincentive to work, are international developmental objectives being met, and so forth. At this point it is crucial to distinguish the difference between policy analysis (mentioned above) and policy advocacy. Policy analysis is mainly concerned with explaining and answering questions regarding public policy, while policy advocacy aims to prescribe what policies governments ought to pursue (learning about "why this" is not the same as saying "this ought") (Dye 5). The two are entirely complimentary in that in order to advocate for change it is important to understand what caused previous policy to fail (and thus avoid repeating mistakes). Conversely it could be assumed that the whole purpose of explaining something would be to improve upon it and despite a rather ambiguous morality policy analysis would not benefit the public without policy advocacy.

The main objective of a critical examination at the policy level is understanding the relationship between institutions like federal governments and public policy; a policy cannot become a public policy until it is adopted, implemented, and enforced by some

government institution. (In the case of this thesis, CIDA is the relevant government agency.) Government institutions lend legitimacy, universality, and coercion to a public policy (whereas the sanctions than can be imposed by other groups and organizations in society are more limited), and government has the ability command loyalty and enact policies governing a society (Dye 5). This is most true within national boundaries and the arena of foreign policy is much trickier to navigate, but the point is that channelling ideas and proposals through government is the best way to legitimize them both locally and abroad. The old saying goes that "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em" and despite the difficulty in influencing government policy, that which does make it into law is immediately given relevancy and influence.

3.3 Canadian Foreign Policy: A History of Development Strategy

3.3.1 From Development Aid to CIDA: A Brief History

If one is to make sense of CIDA it is necessary to first explore the organizational culture that has brought Canadian development policy to where it stands today. Much like Canada's peacekeeping activities, "Development Assistance" or DA, was elevated through the post World War II years as a distinctly "Canadian" vocation (Cooper 210). DA was built on the notion that Canada could distinguish itself among nations by focusing on this unique area of specialized interest and expertise and Canada saw an opening in a relatively new arena where it could potentially excel on the international stage. Canada had taken great pride in appearing as a committed and constructive figure

in the international community, and the national interest in DA further strengthened the country's sense of international citizenship (Cooper 210).

In terms of DA policy, Canada initially gained a reputation of being a country with an ambitious set of international responsibilities and dedicated aspiration to carving out a specific place for itself in international policy (Cooper 210). Because of this, signs of any DA retreat were met with equal parts of discomfort and controversy – a lesser stance on DA was essentially considered "un-Canadian". There has long been and continues to be quite a heated debate on whether or not Canada has lived up to or fulfilled its "helper-state" expectations especially throughout the 1970s and 1980s; " ... the debate over development assistance has continually burst out to embrace larger critical and normative concerns. This process has had the effect of scattering the debate ... the extended controversy over development assistance now lacks a clearly defined core issue; but it is axiomatic that the issues and questions under review within the rubric of development assistance have become extremely diffuse" (Cooper 210).

The so-called "Trudeau years" were an exciting time in DA programming characterized by an acceleration in the administration of Canadian development assistance. In 1968, what was then known as the Department of External Affairs (DEA) office was transformed into what is now known as CIDA and Maurice Strong (a so-called "activist" and "outsider") was CIDA's inaugural leader. Strong embarked on a distinctive path of institution building which incorporated a sense of obligation, volunteerism, and a collective commitment to the benefits associated with promoting technical assistance,

education and training through DA. In 1970 a critical language change officially signified

Canada's leading approach to DA; "development aid" (as it was then known) became

"development assistance", and "underdeveloped" became "developing" (in reference to

Southern nation states). Canada's declaratory DA policy quickly leapt ahead with Strong

and Prime Minister Trudeau favouring ostentatious, adventuresome, and diversified

approaches to DA even amid the economic shocks prevalent in the 1970s. It is worth

noting however, that at the time that the declaratory policy of Canadian DA was

considered pioneering, in actuality Canada's operational policy was lagging considerably

behind and words were speaking louder than actions (Cooper 212).

This new focus on innovation in foreign aid policy stood in stark contrast to the

loose and informal aid policies associated with the 1960s. The new CIDA approaches

incorporated a working model for the application of a system of rational management,

cost benefit analysis, priority setting, and a complete planning and evaluation exercise

(Cooper 220). Prior to the 1970's the so-called "old guard" in charge of DA assumed that

their perspectives were representative of Canadian citizens as a whole, but the new CIDA

philosophy introduced a strategy for integrating state and societal concerns into DA

policy making. The free spirited activism of the 1960's had also paved the way for

NGO's to move to the forefront of DA policy, in large part due to civil society efforts.

Following the civil society integration in development assistance policy, CIDA moved to

increase the involvement of Canadian firms in the South through a commercial

attachment policy. Canadian businesses were encouraged to invest, participate in joint ventures, and transfer technology to partners in the South.

The Mulroney government and the 1980s brought less than stellar changes to CIDA and its aid objectives. A large national deficit and declining financial and institutional capabilities at home contributed to what has been referred to as Canada's "aid fatigue'. This new government was in full support both declaratorily and organizationally of 'structural adjustment' programs taking place in the South, as was CIDA's director at the time, Marcel Masse and Canada even assumed a leadership role for the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in Guyana with Masse remarking; "CIDA has taken the leap of faith and plunged into the uncharted seas of structural adjustment ... Structural adjustment figures among the priorities for Canadian Development" (Cooper 227). During this time policy space was also allotted to so-called "global governance issues" or "good governance" and Canada appeared to be following development trends as opposed to setting them.

The government under Prime Minister Jean Chretien in the 1990s aimed to distance themselves from the Mulroney government and its conservative development assistance policies. "In terms of foreign policy, the Liberals tried to blend development policy and programs more comprehensively into its overall foreign policy agenda ... development assistance was referred to ... as a "vital instrument of Canadian foreign policy". From this point of reference, the intrinsic merits of development assistance became subordinated to its contribution towards the larger goals of an "integrated" foreign policy

based on three core objectives: namely, the manner in which "it promotes prosperity and employment, protects global security and projects Canadian values and culture". (Cooper 236) The main gesture towards this differentiation was contained in the 1995 foreign policy statement "Canada in the World", and this new direction centred upon a 'human needs' approach to development. In fact, 25% of Canada's overseas development assistance (ODA) was earmarked for programs serving basic education, family planning, reproductive healthcare, nutrition, water, sanitation, and shelter. This new approach was seen as an extension of the earlier focus on social and environmental sustainability as well as the women in development approach (Cooper 236). During this time the government allowed extensive dialogue and consultation with NGO's during the review process and the result was a clear swing towards activities aimed at promoting people and human centred development.

Chretien's Liberals also brought another new focus to CIDA and its DA policy, specifically the rather integral shift from short-term project building and a top-down strategy of building long-term relationships and encouraging decentralization following the emerging "civil society" policy agenda. In 1991 CIDA officially adopted the principle of "sustainable development", including a commitment to "sustainable human development". Gone were the government financial programs of the 1980s and in their place were new human centred approaches to development policy (Cooper 228). This was in part due to the increasingly intersectional relationship between CIDA and the NGO community. A rather cynical take on this new partnership was the view that CIDA

was looking to decentralize responsibility when it came to development policy, and this lead to more operational authority being awarded to societal actors. The role of CIDA and the state shifted from being an actual "doer" of development to more of a development "facilitator" as assistance was frequently channelled through NGOs; "By one set of calculations, done by the Canadian Council for International Co-operation: "Funding to NGO's increased steadily throughout the 1980s and 1990s, reaching a peak in 1992/93, when Canadian NGOs received a total of $310 million for their international programs from CIDA" (Cooper 228). This shift was meant to deal with the perceived problem of a top heavy management structure, a high concentration of development personnel within national headquarters, and the lack of accountability often associated with a complex management style. As we will see in upcoming sections, this farming out development would significantly impact the implementation of CIDA's policy on Gender Equality.

3.3.2 Tensions

As mentioned above, Canada's robust involvement in the field of DA strategy probably had something to do with the heightened international profile that such an involvement would bring. The Canadian development mantra and subsequent declaratory language frequently spoke of "increasing stability and peace through development assistance", yet how Canada intended to translate this international position to advance its own sovereign interests remained rather vague (Cooper 236). During this period Canada regularly distributed its assistance quite globally, which raised the question of whether or

not the development policy was spreading aid too thin. For example, in 1986 Canada development assistance was distributed among 119 states, regional development banks, international organizations and Canadian and foreign NGOs. It might be suggested that such a global reach is more motivated by returns in prestige brought by such discrete contributions, rather than any clear developmental objectives (Cooper 237).

This noticeable absence of an explicit foreign policy motivation increased the amount of scrutiny levelled both internally and externally on Canadian foreign assistance strategy. For example, at one point during the height of federal and Quebecois tensions in the 1980s, Canadian DA targeted the francophone nations in West Africa for development projects, a region that until then had not seen nearly as much activity as its south African counterparts and this lead some to cast DA as an "erratic political football" to be thrown wherever it was needed according to any ongoing constitutional struggle (Cooper 239). It was felt that Canada was using DA as an image building exercise in order to be seen as francophone friendly at a time where there was considerable turmoil between the francophone community and the rest of Canada.

In addition to a relatively vague foreign policy objective, the debate revolving around Canadian development assistance is at times contentious and certainly on-going. One of the most pressing concerns was and continues to be the relationship between the official government organization of CIDA and the NGO community. As we will see in chapter 4 the civil society response to CIDA's gender equality policy was swift, scathing, and comprehensive despite civil society involvement in the policy's design. There is a deep

seeded wariness about the embrace of government channels by the NGO population

which partly stems from a circumspect approach surrounding embracing the government

and the actual mechanisms of consultation between the two bodies have lead to

speculation about the true nature of any alleged "partnership" (Cooper 240). Perhaps an

even bigger controversy and certainly the most relevant for this thesis is the concept of

any conditionality being associated with development assistance. At the very least NGOs

and private citizens want transparency from the government, especially in regards to the

question of a linkage between human rights and development (issues of that nature are

considered "too sensitive" to be left to government alone).

With a history of ambiguous albeit ambitious development strategy, the examination

of the CIDA organization, its motivations, and Canada's foreign policy track record have

proved quite an enlightening exercise for understanding the coming sections on gender

equality and human rights as they fit into Canada's development strategy today.

> Development assistance has proven to be an issue area where Canada has been
>
> able to display many of its skills in international politics. By its ability to go
>
> through stages of self-criticism and renewal, Canada has been able to show its
>
> tremendous capacity for reflection and innovation. Canada has constantly caught
>
> new waves of ideas about international development, which it has tried to factor
>
> in to its own policies and programs. Some of the notions can be critiques as
>
> faddism or clever wordplay, but this intellectual agility has allowed Canada to
>
> keep up a sense of public purpose about international development even as the

focal point changed from aid, to development assistance, to the multifaceted

agenda of global governance and beyond ... Reputationally, the development issue

has proven to be both a plus and a minus for Canada (Cooper 240).

3.4 Gender Equality in Canadian Development Strategy

As demonstrated above, CIDA has a history of cutting edge policy, terminology, and

widespread development influences especially in the arena of human rights. Even before

CIDA's groundbreaking policy on Gender Equality (which will finally be unveiled in the

next section) Canada has been on the forefront in terms of its gender specific

development policy. For example, internationally Canada is a leader in terms of bringing

forward concerns of violence against women and in recognizing gender violence in the

context of war as a crime against humanity (Sjolander *et al* 126). Conversely, while

Canada's declaratory language regarding women's rights (for example, the "Declaration

on Violence against Women") has been strong, their participation in anything considered

international law has come at a slower pace and often only after more progressive

delegations have advanced whatever the particular agenda was to the point where Canada

either had to participate or face criticism on the international stage (Sjolander *et al* 126).

In terms of gender equality and human rights as they relate to Canada foreign policy

strategy, there are some major criticisms of the Canadian Government both at home and

internationally. According to human rights expert and Special Advisor on Human Rights

to the National Association of Women and the Law, Shelagh Day, Canada has had

considerable problems implementing the rights that they have agreed to both at home and

abroad. And while it is true that the focus of this exercise is on evaluating Canada's commitment to women and equality in developing countries, it is relevant to note that their performance on home soil has been questionable in the past. Despite adopting a constitutional guarantee of equality and human rights statutes in every jurisdiction that is meant to protect women in areas of employment, services, housing, *et cetera*, women have often faced a lack of government will to actually fulfill those rights (Sjolander *et al* 127). This is especially true in terms of economic equality, as Day notes "inequality is currently being maintained, if not deepened, by a government's policy of downsizing, cutting social programs, privatizing services, and deregulating markets. This neo-liberal economic agenda, which seems to be endorsed by governments globally, is understood by more and more women to have a regressive, not an emancipatory impact. It is being imposed without regard to the commitments that have been made to women's human rights and women's advancement" (Sjolander *et al* 127).

One of the reasons Canada has had only relative success with human rights at home is the manner in which human rights agendas developed in the first place. On the one hand there are civil and political rights, thought of as "hard rights" which can be enforced by courts and tribunals, and on the other economic, social and cultural rights or "soft rights" which are essentially not really rights so much as "government aspirations" as they are not enforceable by the courts (Sjolander *et al* 132). Of course this divided rights paradigm is detrimental to any women's equality project as it does guarantee them full equality in all of the human rights dimensions. At this point it is necessary to say that full

equality is about as likely a mother being able to evenly divide a piece of cake between her two children; it will never be exactly equal, however it can be very, very close.

For human rights activists like Day, the notion that Canada is seen as a human rights leader in terms of the country's work at an international level sits rather uneasily. As mentioned previously, Canada does care a great deal about how it is perceived on the international stage on human rights issues and is a leader in that arena, but unfortunately falls short in its obligation to Canadian women. " It is particularly difficult to support the claim to leadership in light of the fact that there has been little change to the women's economic situation of women in Canada since the Royal Commission reported thirty years ago ... Women in Canada remain the poorest of the poor in Canada. Over the past two decades the percentage of women living in poverty has been climbing steadily" (Sjolander *et al* 133). This is especially unsettling for Day as she believes that Canada is indeed one of the countries in the world where equality for women is entirely possible as it has the wealth and infrastructure to support real progress. "Canada is an enthusiastic signatory to international commitments and that is an achievement, but it is not living up to those commitments at home" (Sjolander *et al* 133).

All of this may lead us to conclude, quite bluntly, that although Canada talks a good talk when it comes to gender equality and foreign policy it is unable to walk the walk in its own backyard. The connection between the status of women and the status of women affected by Canadian development projects is hardly something that could be properly examined in the space of this thesis but the apparent parallels between strong language

and little action both at home and abroad is certainly worth noting especially when discussions for future directions take place. As we have seen there is a huge practical difference between declaratory language and actual implementation and the next section will spotlight this quite effectively by dissecting a Canadian foreign policy documents CIDA's 1999 Policy on Gender Equality. While the policy is notable for its leadership in terms of language and commitment to practice, in terms of overall outcomes it fell short of expectations according to both the government itself and civil society gender and human rights groups.

3.5 CIDA's 1999 Policy on Gender Equality

3.5.1 Policy Overview

The final issue, and the true problematic of the thesis, is how the findings unearthed throughout this exercise can be engaged in order to improve on current Canadian development practice in the area of gender equality. Just over 10 years ago, CIDA developed a pioneering policy on Gender Equality (or GE) and as far as a gendered approach to development goes, CIDA asserts that not only is gender an essential component for meaningful development, but that it is an absolute must if long term sustainable development is ever to be achieved ("CIDA" 2). The policy itself is almost 30 pages in length and offers a detailed outline for building a gendered component and measure into every stage of a development project, regardless of the nature or intended results of the project. While quite comprehensive, after a decade of use the results of the policy implementation are unfortunately questionable. CIDA released their own

evaluation of the policy in 2008, and there has been a vocal civil society response including an outside evaluation on the success of the project, both of which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

The three main objectives of CIDA's Gender Equality Policy were to advance women's equal participation with men as decision makers in shaping the sustainable development of their societies; to support women and girls in the full realization of their full human rights; and to reduce gender inequalities in access to and control over the resources and benefits of development ("CIDA" 2). CIDA aimed to link this new policy with its other overarching development policies like poverty reduction, basic human needs, infrastructure services, human rights, democratization and good governance, private sector development, the environment, and women in development. To do this it developed a comprehensive table showcasing how gender equality links to each objective along with examples of results to look for that would contribute to the achievement of gender equality.

For example, the priorities of the poverty reduction policy "to promote policies that create an enabling environment for poverty reduction; support poverty-focused programs that improve income-generation opportunities, skills training and basic services; launch targeted interventions that directly empower vulnerable groups like women, children, minorities, the landless, the unemployed, and the displaced" ("CIDA" 11) are then linked to gender equality in that "compared to men women generally have less access to and control over productive assets, employment and training opportunities, basic services,

information, and decision making mechanisms in the state, judiciary, private sector organizations, the community, and within the household. These gender inequalities contribute to and perpetuate poverty from one generation to the next" ("CIDA" 11). The objective then becomes to design projects for poverty reduction that will have positive impacts on certain areas where gender inequalities (listed above) exist. Project outcomes of increased access to productive assets, basic services, skills training, participation in decision making (at state and other levels) were all listed as contributing to the achievement of gender equality and are thus desirable.

Another strategy for CIDA's policy involved using gender analysis as a tool for understanding the local context of any development project concerned with equality. In order to most efficiently promote gender equality and gender analysis, it is required that all CIDA policies, programs, and projects demonstrate an understanding of local contexts. The concept of a "local context" is characterized as "the recognition that development interventions operate within existing social, cultural, economic, environmental, institutional, and political structures in any community, country, or region" ("CIDA" 16) and stresses that few of these groups are homogenous and various formal and informal power structures exist which reflect social, economic and political relationships among people. Gender analysis relates to the specific relationship between women and men and should identify the varied roles played by men, women, and children of both sexes within the household, workplace, economy, *et cetera* ("CIDA" 16). Gender analysis is imperative for structuring projects so that various contextual

constraints are recognized and accounted for in order to ensure maximum success for that particular project relative to gender equality and other objectives, and that it remains useful throughout the entire life of the project cycle. In addition to using gender analysis in order to meet the practical needs of a particular project (for example, water, shelter, food, *et cetera*) to ensure sustainable benefits projects must also take into account the strategic issues related to gender (like gaining legal rights, closing wage gaps, etc) in order to endure a comprehensive and sustainable development initiative within a particular region ("CIDA" 17).

Additionally, according to the GE policy, CIDA is also committed to supporting the achievement of gender equality through policy dialogue (where CIDA can share equality views amongst its many partners); programming frameworks (CIDA's international cooperation with various corporate partners); and program assistance (economic and sectoral reform in partner countries). Furthermore, gender analysis and equality objectives should be realized through institutional strengthening and capacity development initiatives, bilateral projects and programs, multilateral programs, and projects and programs of Canadian civil society partners. Perhaps the most notable is CIDA's specific attention to the growing number of humanitarian and emergency assistance and peace building activities in which Canada is currently involved. By building a knowledge base of gender specific needs in emergency situations (including institutional capacity on gender equality within the criteria for selecting organizations to deliver humanitarian assistance, including gender equality within programming

frameworks of multilateral organizations, and including discussion of gender equality results in policy dialogue with various partners involved in humanitarian and emergency assistance), CIDA incorporates a strong gender equality component within its humanitarian agenda ("CIDA" 24). Lastly, the policy includes a detailed performance assessment tool for measuring accountability related to gender equality goals within development strategy. This assessment includes corporate level guidelines, planning process guidelines, a process to be used during project implementation, and how to measure project performance ("CIDA" 26).

3.5.2   Policy Shaping Theory

The ethical theory behind a given policy's objectives is perhaps of greatest significance to the Universalist philosopher when it comes to innovative policy reform. In the case of CIDA's policy the question of foremost importance is determining on which theoretical foundations the goals of the new policy were based. There were a great number of practical reasons for adopting a more equality friendly perspective on development projects (many of which were outlined in the previous section), but the more complicated questions remain; did CIDA have any ethical concerns dictating their strong stance on equality, and from what (if any) organizational context did this pioneering document spring? To help understand both questions let us look briefly at the historical and conceptual underpinnings of the policy on gender equality.

According to CIDA the policy was born out of a previous commitment to what it refers to as "sustainable development" as well as a strong historical commitment to

women in development. In 1995 CIDA released a policy statement entitled "Canada in the World" in which they outlined this commitment and "indentified the full participation of women as equal partners in the sustainable development of their societies" ("CIDA" 1). This was one of six programming priorities in the statement, and demonstrated Canada's continuing commitment to Women in Development (which began in 1984 with WID), and progressed to their 1995 policy on WID and Gender Equity (which has been widely referenced as a model for policy dialogue and development amongst both CIDA and its partners). Consequently, not only is gender equality a "women in development" issue it has also featured prominently in Canada's overarching foreign policy discourse. Of note at this time was the international attention being paid to advances in the area of gender equality specifically at the 1995 UN conference on women in Beijing, which produced a renewed commitment via the "Beijing Platform for Action", which was made possible by wide spread donor commitments and guidelines drafted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation Development. CIDA's policy committee in turn recommended that the WID and gender equity policy be updated ("CIDA" 2).

What is exciting to the Universalist about the Beijing Platform and the role it played in CIDA's policy development is its verbatim dedication to the notions of justice and human rights. Canada has endorsed a number of high profile human rights treaties in the past, and CIDA cites this allegiance as the primary rationale behind the adoption of Beijing objectives and discourse. "The advancement of women and the achievement of equality between women and men are matters of human rights and conditions for social

justice and should not be seen in isolation as a women's issue. They are the only way to build a sustainable, just, and developed society. Empowerment of women and gender equality are prerequisites for achieving political, social, economic, cultural, and environmental security among peoples" ("Beijing" 41). However, CIDA largely steers clear of language like "social justice" when laying out its motivations for the gender equality project, preferring to approach the issue from a sustainable development perspective focusing on long term development goals like poverty reduction.

The most notable change from CIDA's previous gender and equality policies to the 1999 incarnation was the use of the terms "equality" vs. "equity". In previous policy documents gender equity is understood as the process of being "fair" to women and men and, in order to ensure fairness, various measures had to be taken to compensate for the usual social and historic disadvantages women face. Gender equality on the other hand indicates that women and men ought to benefit from having the same status. CIDA's previous policies on gender equity were only used in the anticipation that they would eventually lead to gender equality, thus gender equity can be reduced to only a means to a result (gender equality). Policies mediating "fairness" and "equity" simply become antiquated when the goal of a policy focuses on the full realization of gender equality in order to fulfil other long term development objectives ("CIDA" 3).

Additionally, like the rationale behind the Beijing Accord, CIDA contends that DA needs to put a "greater focus on the realization of the human rights of women and girls: This policy puts greater emphasis on the eradication of discrimination against women and

girls as part of CIDA's concern for social justice and development effectiveness"

("CIDA" 3). This proclamation exists among several other points of interest regarding the

differences between the 1995 and 1999 policies and it is worth pointing out that this is the

only time in the entire document that the social justice rationale is evoked in support of

the GE policy. While the majority of the rationale behind the new policy vision is related

to the achievement of long term development goals like poverty reduction, this concern

for social justice suggests some underlying ethical principles. While it is one thing to

want equality as a means for achieving end goals of development, to suggest that there is

a correlation between social justice and development indicates that CIDA recognizes the

desirability of achieving equality not just for economic development purposes but also for

social development reasons and it would appear that CIDA identifies not only that

equality is good for business but it is also inherently more just in terms of social

development objectives.

3.5.3 Policy Outcomes

In 2008 CIDA commissioned an independent consulting team to evaluate its

successes, failures, and overall performance in implementing the GE policy. Specifically

CIDA was looking at commitment (levels of effort and investment), enabling outcomes

and effectiveness (relating to capacity building, management and delivery, institutional

results), development outcomes (gender equality achievements in partner countries), and

the continuing relevance of the policy ("Evaluation" 1). In terms of commitment and

financial investment, the consulting team found that 792.8 million (or 4.68%) of 16.5

billion dollars available for Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) went to GE specific and GE integrated programs and because of the cross-cutting nature of GE policy all CIDA investments are expected to advance GE. Therefore, any GE approximation would actually be an underestimate because it only focus' on GE specific and integrated monetary values. Despite this, based on the uncertain nature of long term donors and partnerships, there remains a continual threat to GE policy's stability and sustainability.

In terms of non-monetary commitments to GE policy, CIDA's policy commits GE as a means and an ends to overall development results and the biggest internal supporter of said policy is the executive Vice President of CIDA, John McBride. However, the consulting team found that GE lacks consistent support at the highest levels of the organization (according to employees) "This lack of consistent support is seen to have weakened corporate resolve in the pursuit of GE" ("Evaluation" 13). The independent consulting team also found that there is no explicit contemporary agency-wide GE strategy with designated responsibilities, identified targets, or precise accountability framework and that the policy is not highly visible in day to day operations as GE initiatives are handled on a case by case basis and with "gender funds".

The commitment target of mainstreaming gender has generally failed as a goal of gender infused development according to a general consensus among donor agencies and CIDA. The consulting team found that "... focused actions and funding can be more effective in grounding institutional commitment to GE in analysis, design, planning, delivery, reporting, and accountability systems. As a result specific gender equality

programming and mainstreaming have come to be seen as complimentary strategies"

("Evaluation" 14). As for the human rights component of CIDA's policy commitment,

the independent evaluation team found that CIDA contributes significantly to other

agencies which advocate a human rights approach as well as agencies with a focus on

empowerment as a means to broader economic and social development The team

observed that "CIDA's GE commitment can be seen to pursue GE as both a necessary

goal in its own right and as a means to sustainable development and poverty reduction

targets" (Evaluation" 14).

Regarding the "enabling outcomes" portion of the evaluation, the team looked at

results like institutional capacity building and management and delivery, and found both

positive and negative outcomes. There was considerable success noted in that GE

championship was indeed embedded at the highest organizational level. There also

existed a strong group of GE specialists both internally and externally which lead to

progressive and well founded policy based on social development, human rights, and

economic empowerment. CIDA was also seen to have produced various useful tools of

assessment including evaluation frameworks and tip sheets for project design.

The most notable negative results discovered by the consulting team were a lack of

consistent leadership at the highest organizational levels, a lack of consistent expertise

across agency branches, and an outsourcing of knowledge which was troubling and

contributed to policy inconsistencies. The independent evaluation team also noted that

there was a risk of "ghettoization" of the gender function within the broader context of

priorities and sector specific work within the agency. This is troubling as it suggests that rather than empowering the gender function the policy has sometimes undermined the gender function in terms of development ("Evaluation" 15). The "ghettoization" of gender is an important concern for the future direction of gender and development policy and one of which will be elaborated on in upcoming sections. The consulting team also showed concern with the gender unit becoming embedded in the policy unit, the lack of consistent middle management champion and inconsistent communications, monitoring, and the level of staffing allocated to GE policy implementation and sustainability.

The independent evaluators thought that the impact of CIDA's GE policy on its partners was generally extremely positive and has led to partners consistently advocating for GE in development work and this means that happily, CIDA has played a facilitating role in GE work. Still, many CIDA partners are still applying a "practical needs and strategic interest approach" instead of "access to rights, decision making and development resources approach". GE is not in actuality being applied at all stages across the board and often tapers off after project design and as a project progresses. This is especially prevalent with multi-lateral partners. There is also a significant concern regarding "invisible results" with many in the field claiming that current evaluation and monitoring systems are not able to document all progress and in fact there is more progress happening than is indicated by reports ("Evaluation" 16).

The evaluation of actual development outcomes associated with GE policy implementation was very positive. Among the four key elements of the GE policy

objective the most success was found in improving women's access to resources and benefits. For example, women experienced improved livelihoods and increased control of productive assets, strengthening of institutional capacity, and increasing access to appropriate services for their well-being. Another successful objective of GE policy was advancing women's equal participation as decision-makers and this was done primarily by building organizational capacity (women's groups) and focusing on improving the management of natural resources, agricultural production, social services, *et cetera*. There is relatively less documented evidence of success in instigating the adoption of policies supporting gender equality. The weaknesses with documented GE results are related to their sustainability and their ability to affect structural change in furthering GE.

Beyond the intrinsic value of the aforementioned advances it was also well documented that these improvements also had an instrumental value as they "spilled over" into other objectives of GE. For example, a women's group providing resources for small business ventures might lead to a woman's increased economic or professional power which in turn allowed her more clout in the family bargaining arena. The independent evaluation team found that unfortunately in the area of human rights for women and girls there showed the lowest level of success. Upon close examination this area had received the least careful attention to documenting results and the reviewers suggest that results may have underrepresented the levels of success because of the nature of the evaluation system. This was because these results were never as clearly defined as in other objectives and, thus, were not as likely to be documented. The reviewers

suggested paying attention to a variety of results (such as access to credit or land) in order to have greater documentation of success in future evaluations.

The team also identified a number of cases in the field where GE policy had a direct effect on core development objectives such as poverty reduction, access to clean drinking water, health services, education, *et cetera*. The reviewers documented what they call "modest gains" in human rights with the "occasional" success story (something they thought reflected the low overall commitment to this objective by CIDA). Nevertheless, the success stories are worth noting as they demonstrate the power that development policy has in affecting institutional change of overseas development partners. For example, since 2002 the rates of acid throwing rates at women have steadily declined in Bangladesh while prosecutions for the crime have increased and several rehabilitation centres for victims have cropped up. This was all achieved through sustained multifaceted support to a Bangladeshi NGO dedicated to the rehabilitation and reintegration of victims as well as the support of international donors and incorporating strong male participation ("Evaluation" acdi-cida.gc.ca).

A decade on, the relevance of CIDA's GE policy remains a contentious issue. The evaluation itself represents the fact that nearing the ten year mark from the policy's inception GE policy is still very much alive within CIDA and demonstrates that its aims remain both a national source of interest and a global challenge. As with anything in the global environment, the evaluation team found that GE policy could benefit from rejuvenation in order to better suit the changing development climate, priorities, and

interests but that it certainly remains relevant in light of current global conditions. There continues to be opportunities of growth and influence for CIDA's GE policy and Canada benefits from credibility in the area of GE and is therefore able to influence new aid modalities in terms of GE. New aid modalities offer potentially greater leverage for CIDA and its partners to integrate and influence GE policy to a wider audience with a larger scope of projects.

Of course along with opportunities come challenges and the test of new aid modalities will sometimes presuppose a GE commitment (which is not always the case), and gender concerns risk being assumed or reduced. The frontline individuals preparing new aid modalities are often low on GE materials and a commitment to GE at all levels and stages of planning is necessary to ensure the incorporation of GE into the future final product. The same goes for the performance measurement aspect of any new aid modality, as there is often not a GE component and diligence is required to ensure that GE results will be measurable.

4   DISCUSSION & ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The evaluation committee responsible for the 2008 performance review of

CIDA's GE policy produced a report containing nine specific recommendations in

response to the success' and failures of the policy implementation. Implementing these

recommendations is seen as imperative for the continuing and furthering the success of

the GE policy. The recommendations relate directly to four areas: evaluation criteria

commitment, enabling environment, developmental results, and relevance. The following

chapter will discuss in detail the specifics of these recommendations as well as compare

against similar recommendations made by a civil society group comprised of NGO

workers, women's rights advocates and other concerned citizen groups. From there the

Human Development and Capabilities Approach (HDCA) will be reintroduced as a

further resource in determining how to revise the policy in order to achieve maximum

fulfilment of development objectives and move the theory further towards an agenda

based on ethical principles.

4.2 CIDA: Response & Recommendations

4.2.1 Recommendations

In terms of CIDA's commitment to GE policy, the committee identified three key

recommendations for future success. The first was for CIDA to develop a Corporate

Gender Equality Action Plan in order to fully recognize that the GE policy is still relevant

to attaining gender equality, because a stronger corporate strategy for implementation is required to sustain commitment. The second was to secure budgeting for gender equality support and integration, specifically in the area of women's groups and civil society contributions. The third was to aim for additional investment to be put towards GE research and knowledge creation and to improve resources for knowledge retention and distribution.

In order to further promote an enabling environment for GE policy, the committee also came up with three recommendations. The first was to invest in more GE training for all staff (including middle and senior management) in order to promote consistency in GE objectives and projects. The second was to strengthen the ability of the Equality Between Women and Men Division to engage program and field personnel as well external partners in a two-way exchange of experience and reflection. It was thought that this would encourage a more systematic approach to gender sensitive project planning and implementation. The third recommendation was to develop a sort of "GE help desk" in order to assist members of any CIDA team with inquiries they may have relating to GE policy and programs. For the development outcomes component of the evaluation the committee recommended that CIDA strengthen accountability to GE policy for core-funded organizations, and strengthen GE assessment tools and reporting tools for monitoring gender equality results. Finally, in terms of relevance the committee recommended to "develop a strategic approach to addressing opportunities and

challenges presented by the New Aid Modalities, [in relation to] gender equality and cooperation with other bilateral and multilateral donor organizations" ("Evaluation" 32).

4.2.2 CIDA's Response

In the official management response to the evaluation report, CIDA essentially agreed with all of the recommendations put forth in the report bar the creation of a help desk as the organization felt that such resources were already in place. CIDA management outlined very specific responses to each recommendation with most changes being on put on track for a completion date of September 2009 (except in cases which by nature would require ongoing changes). Management asserted that plans to increase consistency as well as internal training and commitment were already in motion and pledged to install a Corporate Gender Equality Action Plan in response to the recommendation regarding the lack of consistent tools for developing and implementing GE programs and projects.

What was most interesting about management's response was that (in perhaps a display of devotion towards the principle of GE), they referred to Gender Equality as a CIDA "brand" stating "Gender Equality is a 'CIDA brand'. All members of CIDA's Management Board have a role to play in ensuring that CIDA's work contributes to advancing equality between women and men. They are accountable for the implementation of the Management Response, including the Action Plan, in their respective branches. The Vice President, Sectors, and Global Partnerships Branch, will,

in addition, be accountable for monitoring the implementation of the Management

Response and reporting the to the Management Board" ("Evaluation" 34).

4.3 Civil Society: Response & Recommendations

In September of 2009, a number of groups representing various civil society

interests and operating under the blanket name "Informal [Civil Society Organization]

CSO Working Group on Women's Rights" (including members from Oxfam Canada,

World University Service (WUSC), Peacebuild, and the Centre for International Studies

and Cooperation (CECI)) authored their own response to CIDA's 1999 Policy on GE and

on CIDA's recently released evaluation of the project. Along with CIDA, the CSOs

stated that they had a vested commitment to gender equality based on the principles that

gender is the most specific forecaster of poverty and gender inequality is both the primary

obstacle for the eradication of poverty and a critical obstacle to overcoming in achieving

equality for all. (It is worth noting that CIDA acts as a donor agency for many CSOs and

the language used in the document is complimentary to language found in CIDA's GE

Policy and evaluation).

The CSO response found that CIDA's 1999 Policy on Gender Equality is "both

sound and progressive as a framework to CIDA's long term commitment to gender

equality" ("Strengthening" 3). While the CSO's highlight areas of success within the

policy, for the purpose of this exercise we are more interested in the areas which they

found lacking, and the CSO recommendations (which they refer to as "an additional but

related series of recommendations, based on ... analysis of the solid data provided by the

evaluation") ("Strengthening" 3). Aside from recommending the immediate

implementation of all nine key recommendations found in the report (and discussed in the

previous section), the CSO's specifically identified the disproportional weaknesses in the

GE policy objective regarding the advancement of women's rights. The CSO's

recommended "CIDA's Gender Equality Action Plan must address ways to ensure

explicit CIDA support for the human rights of women and girls, in line with the already

established key objective for the Policy on Gender Equality ..." ("Strengthening" 11).

Noting that CIDA is a signature to many human rights treaties, the CSO

evaluation also asserts that CIDA should adopt a human rights approach to their

development planning in order to remain consistent with international human rights

standards. The CSO evaluation claimed that in order to improve

>both programming attention and results for the policy
>
>objective of increasing the capacity of poor and vulnerable
>
>women to claim their human rights. In understanding the
>
>relevant international human rights standards for the
>
>programming related to gender equality and women's
>
>rights, CIDA should reference the provisions of the
>
>Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of
>
>Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), relevant
>
>General Comments by UN Treaty bodies and the work of

the UN Special Rapporteurs as well as international

customary law ("Strengthening" 11).

This is an interesting addition given the "trickle-down" effect that CIDA relies on with

some of its other GE objectives in the sense that it appears at times that they intend to

achieve rights by increasing access to more tangible assets, when in fact the sustainability

of the access might well depend on incorporating an overarching human rights

perspective in order to achieve long term results.

The CSOs, in their comments, claimed that another weakness within the GE

evaluation was CIDA's difficulty with ensuring that its GE policy was translating across

organizational boundaries. The CSOs feared that with many multilateral and

interdepartmental dealings sometimes CIDA's gender equality promotion and policy

simply fell through the cracks. In fact, for an organization that works so frequently with

multi-lateral organizations (not to mention invests so much money at that level) it seemed

to the CSOs surprising that CIDA was not prepared to deal with the fact that their fellow

aid agencies and various aid outposts were not likely to be as committed to the idea of

gender equality promotion as CIDA was ("Strengthening" 12). Consequently, the CSOs

claimed that CIDA's GE policy came up short. They wrote: " ... CIDA may be making an

explicit attempt to move toward aid effectiveness; however, this may potentially beat the

cost of gender inequality mitigation effectiveness. The study demonstrated that using

mulit-donor platforms and budgetary support has weakened CIDA's own institutional

abilities to address gender equality as they lost the incentive to protect the investment"

("Strengthening" 12).

4.3 Revisiting Capabilities: From Gender to Equality

The CIDA 1999 Policy on Gender Equality and its ensuing reviews (both internal

and external) have demonstrated that gender equality remains a pressing and dynamic

issue as we enter the second decade of the 21st century. CIDA's commitment to GE and

its "branding" GE as a special interest for Canadian development assistance certainly

demonstrates the ongoing relevance of discussion on the topic of GE within development

strategy. According to CIDA's "Management Response" steps are being taken and

measures are in place to continue the application and evolution of CIDA's GE policy for

future development practices. While this is quite encouraging for any proponent of GE

programming, it does not mean that the policy could not benefit from more radical

changes.

In keeping with the points raised in previous chapters such as the notion of universal

human rights and the underlying ethics surrounding development policy and assistance, a

slight shift in direction and semantics could prove effective in reconciling some of the

issues presenting in GE policy dialogue. In some cases it only takes a "slight shift" and

the potential for great change under comparatively small policy changes is well illustrated

by Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein in their concept of *liberal paternalism*. While it

sounds like an oxymoron, liberal paternalism promotes the freedom of

individuals/citizens to choose (liberalism), while at the same time providing the

architecture of their choices (paternalism). In a policy setting this would entail less in the area of government coercion or constraint and more in the way of choices via incentives and "nudges" (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008). Instead of setting up sweeping goals and objectives (for example, increase female literacy by 20% in the poorest countries over the next 10 years), orchestrate instead smaller incentives via "choice architecture" in order to make the task appear less daunting (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008).

Since 2008, Canadian DA has been bound by what is known as the Canadian Overseas Development Assistance Accountability Act. This Act includes directives on the implementation of programming related to gender equality and human rights ("Strengthening" 2). The Act declares that "Official Development Assistance may be provided *only if* the competent minister is of the opinion that it contributes to poverty reduction; takes into account the perspectives of the poor; *and is consistent with international human rights standards*. The Act, along with CIDA's Policy on Gender Equality, *implies an explicit human rights approach* to the implementation of both direct and indirect programming relating to gender equality" ("Strengthening" 2 emphasis added). This identifies human rights as being in the same league as poverty reduction when it comes to allocating development assistance.

If the continued evolution of the human rights approach as a DA policy is indeed the direction that western development agencies (governmental and otherwise) are heading, then the time has come to more fully incorporate this element into development policy discourse and into explicit policy language. As we have seen in previous chapters, human

rights raise several contentious issues especially when it comes to explicating them in detail. The achievement of adapting human rights for policies purposes would be no small feat; but in terms of gender equality it seems that the human rights of women and girls have already been recognized (by CIDA at least) as an essential component for effective long term development. In fact, as mentioned previously, CIDA has been on the cutting edge of gender and development policy since the early days of development strategy.

In addition to CIDA's pioneering commitment to women in its development approaches, CIDA also has a history of an evolution of policy language and strategy from the 1980s until now. The history of CIDA's strategy with development programming and policy is perhaps more obvious than language patterns (and has already been discussed at length in previous sections), but it is safe to assume that CIDA's commitment to women in development has increased steadily from simply trying to bring them into development programs to working towards gaining equality with their male counterparts to (most recently) achieving equality with their male counterparts. The less obvious fact is that the language employed by CIDA when rolling out these policies has evolved in a rather interesting way. 1984, CIDA's first policy of this nature was titled "Women in Development" (or WID). In 1995 CIDA's policy went further and was thus partially renamed to "WID and Gender Equity" to include gender, and then the most recent "1999 Policy on Gender Equality" which completely leaves behind "women" language.

This change in language is interesting for two reasons. First, with each incarnation of the policy CIDA's stance clearly moves from less of a focus on the incorporation of women in to development per say, and more towards a stance on equality (based on the language and title of each document). Second, in recognition of this fact the language employed on the title of each policy moves away from the use of the word "women" to the use of the word "gender", whilst introducing equity and equality respectively. This is a significant evolution in terms of policy focus and language and suggests (whether unconsciously or not), that CIDA is moving away from so-called traditional "women and development" approaches to an arguably more innovative and timely stance centered on equality.

The innovation in focusing on equality instead of a particular group, in this case, women, is beneficial in a number of ways. Whenever a particular minority group (whether based on gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or some other characteristic) is singled out as of "special interest" by a government body, that particular group has an increased possibility of facing a backlash at some point as they can be seen by members of the public as having been shown favouritism. "The term 'backlash' [is] to refer to the directing of hostility towards some agent which is believed to be responsible for social change which threatens one's status. This is a preservationist reaction which often takes the form of a social movement attempting to block some change proposed by another movement or to obtain the reversal of some change which has already been implemented" (Ponting & Gibbons 223). Therefore, not only do women in the developing

world face negative attitude towards changes in their status, women and particularly feminists in Canada have often come under fire for the social changes executed under their direction.

Of course special interest groups (including feminists) play a vital role in bringing the issues of group members to the forefront of society and without them the demand and avenues for change would be significantly diminished. That being said, once certain issues (like the status of women in the developing world) have reached the forefront of government conscience it might be considered less socially provocative to adopt a more neutral rhetoric (such as equality based actions) on the policy level. The evolution of CIDA's gender policy language could be seen as an indicator that this is the direction that gender policy is naturally heading in, or it could simply be a coincidence representative only of the policy itself. Either way, the evolution of the policy is inevitable and it is clear from both CIDA's internal evaluation and the recommendations of civil society groups that there is still a lot of work to do in order to achieve the policy objectives.

This brings us back to the Capabilities Approach and its potential impact on development discourse and policy. The direction of CIDA's gender policy for development projects is clearly moving away both linguistically and theoretically from a women's perspective to an equality perspective. What this researcher suggests is that in order to evolve efficiently CIDA needs to take the next step in their policy development not only by changing the language of the policy from a gendered language to that of equality, but also by addressing some of the most glaring failures of the 1999 Policy.

What stood out from both internal and external reviews was the failure of CIDA to reach the human rights objectives of its development work, not only relative to the successes of other objectives but overall. A comparatively abstract and constitutional objective will be much more difficult to achieve in reality than more concrete development goals, but that is not to say that there is not room for improvement in the current policy document.

This is where the Capabilities Approach to development enters. While it is far too ambitious to expect a complete policy overhaul (aside from being it undesirable as there are certainly many good elements already in place), CIDA might benefit from incorporating some capability theory into the future design of the policy. Instead of focusing on the gender aspect of equality CIDA should focus on the equality of capabilities among all persons, and instead of calling it a policy on gender equality call for a policy on equality (or human equality). This avoids the potential backlash of what could be perceived as favouritism and moves towards a more encompassing notion of equality which goes beyond equality between men and women to between all humans regardless of race, class, or sexual orientation. Of course the realization of human equality is still years if not decades away, but policy pioneers like CIDA could be the perfect representatives of this type of initiative when it comes to development and global thinking. While the status of women is still a concerning issue for development projects, it must be recognized that gender inequality is only part of the larger picture of perpetual inequality.

As capabilities proponents acknowledge, the concept of an entirely equal and just world is certainly not feasible (and no amount of policy adjustments will render utopia), but the space for improvement always remains. What version of capabilities to incorporate would obviously require a considerable amount more space and time than this research exercise would allow, but a few key concepts from both Nussbaum and Sen's versions stand out, albeit for opposite reasons. Sen's conception of the five freedoms (political, economic, social, transparency, and security) is somewhat vague and thus appealing for its adaptability to various different policy lines, for example freedoms at home or freedoms abroad. On the other hand, Nussbaum's more detailed list offers more concrete examples of words and objectives that should actually appear in a capabilities framework. A compromise would be to incorporate both concrete and abstract elements in a sort of "working" list of capabilities that could be used to guide policy revision and formation. "The success of policies should be assessed according to whether they promote people's freedom ... policies should respect people's agency and be specifically based on their ability to participate (giving particular voice to marginalized groups)" (Deneulin & Shahani 295). Take CIDA's policy for example: if CIDA were to go ahead and move towards an equality perspective for its overseas development policy, then policy objectives would have to contribute in some way to the promotion or achievement of elements found on the "list" (whatever it was determined to include).

One potential area of contention again comes around to language. While Sen writes of *freedoms*, Nussbaum uses the term *capabilities*. Because language is an important

policy communicator as well as a potential downfall, it is important to fully consider

which one of the terms is more politically neutral and representative of CIDA's overall

message and goals. The word "freedom" might be considered too wishy-washy and broad

or even unachievable as it represents such a utopian state of being. In many countries

where basic freedoms are extremely lacking among the general population it is hard to

imagine freedom as a starting point (maybe as an end point, but overly ambitious as a

starting point). In contrast, "capabilities" though more slightly technical seem more

concrete and achievable. For example, to set as a policy objective that everyone have

political freedom comes across as nearly impossible given many current political

situations, yet on the other hand aiming to give everyone the capability of voting seems

like a more concrete and achievable task. Every capability will not necessarily be relevant

for every project, but developing a list based on Sen's five freedoms (which seem to get

at most areas relevant to development) and then matching up with different Equality

policy objectives could incorporate the theory in to practice quite nicely.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS OR FUTURE RESEARCH

The analysis provided in the preceding chapter supports the assertion that ethical considerations should not only play a role in the formation of development policy for practical and theoretical reasons, but also that ethical considerations can help to move policy in a forward direction. In terms of gender equality, policy is a critical area for the implementation of gender equality initiatives and that it is in fact necessary for the achievement of long term development goals. The analysis also shows that although CIDA is considered a cutting-edge entity in terms of its development policies (specifically those relating to gender), it still has room to grow in order to meet all of the objectives set forth in its current Policy on Gender Equality. This chapter outlines the three main conclusions that can be drawn from this policy discussion and analysis, and offers suggestions regarding what CIDA can do in order to move forward with their Gender Equality Policy. The chapter concludes by identifying what areas of Canadian development policy will be most urgent in the coming years, and offers ways in which a blanket policy on equality may be incorporated into these current and emerging development objectives, specifically in fragile states.

5.1 Conclusions

1) Ethical considerations should not only play a role in the formation of development policy objectives, but they can also help to move policy forward.

While it is unlikely that this exercise in the practical and theoretical rationalization of development policies has converted a large new following of devout Universalists, it is clear that development is not separate from ethics and every piece of policy (whether it comes from a national body or elsewhere) speaks for the moral compass of the organizational body. In CIDA's case, its increased recognition of human rights objectives seemed to steer its policy from a perspective or equity and opportunity to a stronger stance on gender equality. Although its commitment to the ethical considerations surrounding the status and equality for women in development opportunities seemed to stem largely from the practical development results associated with increased equality between the sexes (at least that is how is it appeared in the language of the actual policy document), there were ethical and theoretical considerations present as well. There was an obvious human rights consideration articulated and CIDA's history of participation in human rights programs suggests that their commitment to equal rights goes deeper than practical surface matters.

Practical reasoning can only take one so far and once the link became clear between the development benefits of equality among the genders it followed that any development policy should consider equality objectives when developing projects and programs. The link between equality and development may be foundational but it is not prescriptive in nature, and ways in which to satisfy the link must be sought out as an external exercise. It seems that CIDA's moral reasoning behind their policy lies heavily with human rights objectives and legislation, and while this is promising it is not final. In

moving forward CIDA would do well to look at what theoretical development approaches compliment best its vision for equality and social justice. The Human Development and Capabilities Approach has been demonstrated to be human centred development theory which also offers practical inspiration for policy directives. CIDA should use this approach in formulating future policies and in evaluation both existing policies and its current practices.

2) CIDA's groundbreaking 1999 Policy on Gender Equality had tremendous practical successes, but overtly failed to meet most of its human rights objectives regarding the status of women and girls.

Despite a promising and robust commitment on paper, relative to the other objectives of CIDA's policy their success in achieving their human rights targets was minimal. It was suggested by CIDA's evaluation committee that this may have had more to do with inadequate measurement tools and the sometimes intangible nature of human rights achievements. That said there still appeared to be confusion surrounding the human rights objectives within the organization which translated into its poor execution in development projects.

While the internal review suggested that addressing the measurement framework would greatly increase results in this area, the external CSO group suggested that more of an overhaul was necessary. Their suggestion that adopting a human rights stance more in line with international human rights legislation like the language used in the Beijing accord (which Canada has signed), is a plausible move forward for the policy. CIDA's

current direction with the policy seems more in line with improvement than complete

overhaul but the fact that it remains relevant in 2009 is quite encouraging from a political

standpoint.

3) CIDA's women, gender and development policy strategy is evolving away from women centric language and strategy, creating a space for new ideas.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the language of CIDA's gender policy is

changing, from "women's inclusion in development" to the most recent incarnation of

gender equality as a complete policy objective. To this end it seems that the policy should

naturally move forward, as suggested in the previous chapter, to a policy of "equality" or

"human equality". This is in keeping with the basic purpose of gender policy (which is to

promote equality) but instead of singling out women it proposes a notion of equality for

all. This is a complimentary strategy to that of universal human rights and could be

served by the incorporation of a variation the Human Development and Capabilities

Approach.

Moving forward, a policy on equality could still hold special provisions for

groups in need of more "equalizing" than others (*that is* women and some minorities) but

would cease to be to focal point of policy rhetoric. This would reduce the likelihood of a

backlash against the group which had been singled out for special attention and pave the

way for minorities to be brought into the fold. By reforming the policy both in terms of

language and platform, CIDA may yet again find itself among the leaders on global

equality matters and further back up all of their current human rights commitments, an important step on a global stage.

5.2 Areas for Future Research

It is clear from the above discussion that CIDA's gender equality policy would benefit from revisions. However, while poverty reduction is and always will remain a foundation for development policy, the third world landscape of 2010 provides a number of new challenges. With the fragile situations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Haiti as well as the continued violence in regions of Africa, the Middle East, and South America, adapting development policy to work within these states will be important. In regions of great catastrophe there is often opportunity for great change. Consequently now is a particularly interesting time for development thinkers, officers, and supporters. Any new gender or equality policy will have to take into account fragile states (especially given CIDA's growing development assistance commitments to these areas).

Through preliminary research it has come to view that in light of the various conflicts currently being waged around the world, that CIDA's gender policy does not offer much in the way of concrete prescriptive directions for how to approach gender equality in conflict and post-conflict settings (Baranyi & Powell 2). Given that Canada is currently on a major mission to Afghanistan (peaceful or otherwise) in terms of aid, gender commitments have taken a back seat to rebuilding efforts. A further task would be to identify how an equality policy could be applied and whether or not applying it in these areas would be feasible, something which would require thought and planning outside the

realm of this thesis. That is not to say that such matters do not require urgent attention, but it allows for a space in which to ponder what the role of equality could or should be in such extraneous circumstances. In the past, disaster and post-conflict regions have provided opportunities for peace building that wouldn't normally have arisen and this raises the question of whether and how, in states where the rule of law has ceased to exist and there is in effect no social order or capacity for institutions, on would go about ensuring that gender equality was adequately address in the rebuilding efforts? On a much larger scale then a typical development project, gender equality could be integrated into the design of rebuilding and peace building efforts.

With such a focus on post-conflict projects within Canadian aid and military branches, a common directive on engendering peace building could be established as part of any future CIDA policy. The disappearing role of gender in post-conflict states has been of interest to development thinkers long before the CIDA evaluation of its policy emerged, and it is clearly an area in which gender equality can be improved upon. Regardless of whether or not this is the most relevant arena for the promotion of gender equality, it is clear that CIDA's current policy on gender equality is lacking in some areas and failing in others, and the goal of this thesis is ultimately to determine where the most change or revision is needed in order to further objectives.

5.3 Final Thoughts

The future of Canadian development policy rests firmly on the shoulders of Canadians, regardless of political or organizational affiliation. If CIDA is to continue on

a path of innovation and change then it is essential that their policies manifest ethical considerations and thoughtful design. The issue of equality, specifically in regards to the status of women remains a contentious topic and one which is at risk of downplay from a culturally relativist standpoint. The notion of any government imposing its own moral considerations on the international community is daunting to many, and can be seen as further encouraging an East/West North/South divide. This is all in spite of overwhelming evidence relating increased equality with the achievement of development objectives.

There are few forms of discrimination left in the world which still appear to be considered politically acceptable (at least to some), sexism being one and homophobia being another. While racial or religious discrimination seem to be inherently indefensible, discrimination based on sex or sexuality seems to prevail. One might ask if the minority group represented in this thesis was changed from "women" to "black" would the cultural relativists employ their same arguments and continue with the claim that discrimination can be deemed cultural? If discrimination against ethnic or religious minorities presented as systemic and cultural would it be considered just as culturally permissible as discrimination against women, or would the idea of equality suddenly appear to be more significant?

The Human Development and Capabilities Approach employs an intrinsic foundation of equality of opportunity, and as CIDA has demonstrated meaningful and sustainable development cannot occur without a specific focus on the issue of human

rights. If certain humans are denied rights of access based on varying degrees of cultural discrimination this is akin to fighting a losing battle, which effectively gives certain groups more right to develop than others. It is up to international governments and aid organizations to ensure that they are not perpetuating a further imbalance of access to human rights and capabilities if they are to succeed in meeting global development objectives. The ethics point to equality for all.

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