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Engendering Understandings of Faith-Based Organisations:

Intersections between religion and gender in development and humanitarian interventions

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Introduction

This chapter engages with debates about the gendered nature and implications of faith-based non-governmental organisations (FBOs) working in the fields of development and humanitarianism. It starts by tracing the role of faith-inspired interventions designed to “improve” the lives of Others around the world. It then introduces feminist critiques of Christian missionary societies’ support for Western colonial projects ostensibly designed to “protect” women and children from what were labelled “traditional” and “barbaric” religious and cultural structures. This preliminary discussion provides the foundations for the remainder of the chapter, which examines the faith-gender-development nexus via a series of ruptures and continuities in discourse and practice. Hence, although Christian discourses, doctrines and actors were pervasive in colonial-cum-development programmes, after World War Two the newly institutionalised developed industry prioritised secularism as the strongest means to secure socio-economic development and good governance, including gender equality. In turn, academic and policy interest in faith-based development increased dramatically throughout the 2000s, and it is now broadly recognised that faith continues to motivate and inspire responses to poverty, crisis and human rights violations across the global South and global North alike.

With increasing funds and resources being allocated by states and international agencies to faith-based development actors, however, many feminist analysts have warned against the premature idealization of faith-based development actors. Inter alia, they note that FBOs may exclude women from decision-making processes and refuse to engage with individuals and social groups who do not comply with norms regarding gender and sexuality. Whilst such concerns are valid on many levels, the chapter notes that there is an overall lack of comparative analyses examining the intersections between gender, faith and development, and more evidence is therefore urgently required to evaluate the gendered motivations, nature and implications of initiatives developed by FBOs. Equally, however, the chapter argues that more evidence is also necessary in order to assess the *assumptions* which continue to be held by many secular and faith-based actors that faith-based development initiatives will necessarily be more conservative than secular programmes with regards to gender relations and gender equality. Indeed, despite the apparent shifts in the official space granted to religion and secularism in development discourse, policy and practice, continuities with European colonial assumptions regarding religious barriers to women’s rights remain. In contrast, the chapter argues that neither FBOs nor secular organisations are a priori “conservative” or “liberal” with regards to gender roles and relations, and that critical analysis is therefore necessary in order to overcome the diverse hierarchies and structures of oppression which underpin the development industry as a whole, whether these hierarchies exist within faith-based *or* secular organisations’ operations and programmes for Others.

Definitions and Typologies

A “faith-based organisation” can be defined as “any organisation that derives inspiration from and guidance for its activities from the teachings and principles of faith or from a particular interpretation or school of thought within a faith”¹. Just as “secular” organisations are highly diverse, so too are FBOs involved in development and humanitarian activities, ranging from small-scale local-level religious congregations, to national inter-denominational coalitions and networks, to international

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faith-based humanitarian agencies with multi-billion dollar budgets; in turn, organisations may combine the provision of assistance and protection with proselytization and/or faith-centred delivery strategies, or reject these processes and strategies in respect of the international humanitarian principles which prohibit this. In line with this heterogeneity, FBOs have different histories, underlying motivations, fund-raising mechanisms, and modes of operation.

Clarkeⁱⁱ identifies five ‘functions’ guiding FBOs’ activities around the world, leading to the following typology: faith-based representative organizations; faith-based charitable or development organizations; faith-based socio-political organizations; faith-based missionary organizations; and faith-based radical, illegal or terrorist organizations. Clarke’s typology is helpful because it recognizes the diverse aims and modes of operation of organizations broadly motivated by “faith”, highlighting the potential role of FBOs in tackling poverty and social exclusion via charitable or development initiatives. Nonetheless, such classificatory systems need to be critically examined, including for the following reasons.

Firstly, the label ‘faith-based organisation’ may not be used by members of a given organization or network, since faith principles are often conceptualised as a foundational part of ‘a community’s heritage, culture and broader way of life,’ rather than as a ‘religious’ framework *per se* (interview with Yossi Ives, Tag Developmentⁱⁱⁱ). Indeed, UNFPA notes that the term ‘community organisation’ is often used rather than ‘faith-based organisation’ (interview with Henia Dakkak, UNFPA^{iv}). This is because ‘faith’ may not be explicitly identified by community members themselves as the core motivating or organisational principle, and ‘faith’ may be indistinguishable from the community’s broader social, cultural and political life.

Secondly, an organisation’s aims and objectives, whether it is denominated ‘faith-based’, ‘community-led’, or indeed ‘secular,’ may be difficult to identify and delimit. As such, organisations and networks can simultaneously fall under the category of *faith-based charitable organisations* which aim to implement development and humanitarian programmes, and as *faith-based missionary organisations* which combine the provision of development support with spreading “key faith messages beyond the faithful, by actively promoting the faith and seeking converts to it”.^v Furthermore, as I have argued elsewhere with reference to American Evangelical humanitarian organisations active in the Sahrawi and Palestinian protracted refugee situations in the Middle East and North Africa,^{vi} FBO charitable missionary organizations may simultaneously be identified as ‘faith-based socio-political organizations, which organize and mobilize social groups on the basis of faith identities but in pursuit of broader political objectives’.^{vii} As such, FBOs often have overlapping motivations, including ‘charitable’, ‘missionary’ and ‘socio-political’ objectives that might be difficult separate in theory or practice. Furthermore, classifying FBOs can also be challenging due to the “difficulty in sometimes determining the nature of an FBO’s gender agenda, because often a single organization takes different standpoints on various gender issues” (Tadros, 2010: 1). Equally, however, critical analyses of contemporary secular NGOs and agencies often highlight their overlapping motivations and aims: charitable objectives may exist alongside the promotion of socio-political and ideological priorities in the name of what Kandiyoti refers to as “the trinity of democratisation, good governance and women’s rights.”^{viii}

Faith-based organisations, gender and development: a brief introduction

Faith principles have long inspired individual and communal responses to the socio-economic and spiritual needs and rights of members of their own and other communities. Indeed, extensive studies document the ways in which diverse faiths have motivated responses to human needs throughout history and around the world. For instance, Islam provides an obligation for Muslims to provide financial or material assistance to care for widows and orphans, and to offer protection and sanctuary to both Muslims and non-Muslims who are fleeing conflict and persecution. In turn, followers of

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Buddhism known as *bodhisattva* have purposefully delayed or relinquished their personal quest for enlightenment in order to alleviate the suffering of others, and philanthropy has also historically played a central role in Confucianism and other religions. As the connections between faith, gender and development are many, two bodies of literature exploring these intersections are particularly relevant for the purposes of this chapter.

Protection narratives and civilising missions: the religion-gender-and ‘colonialism-as-development’ nexus

Numerous studies have examined the gendered dynamics surrounding Christian missionary societies’ interventions in support of Western colonial and imperial projects and their “civilising mission”.^{ix} Such faith-based interventions included missionaries’ roles in implementing paternalistic and Orientalist colonial policies which ultimately aimed to “save brown women from brown men”^x. Officially in the name of promoting women’s rights, these initiatives included missionary groups’ support for anti-*sati* (“widow immolation”) campaigns in India, strategies to “liberate” Muslim women across the Middle East and North Africa by “unveiling” them, “morality” campaigns to promote Victorian models of marriage, sexuality and reproduction in the colonies, and to “save” illegitimate or “miscegenated” children through forced adoptions and/or internment programmes.

These programmes and campaigns formed part of the foundational discourses of what we currently refer to as “development”, and they were infused with religious discourses and imagery, they were often supported and implemented by actors explicitly motivated by faith, and were intrinsically gendered in nature. For example, specific notions of femininity and womanhood were promoted through these programmes, and campaigns were developed to protect women from social and religious systems and practices which were labelled as ‘barbaric’ in nature. Simultaneously, colonial systems developed strategies to redress the perceived characteristics of colonised men, ranging from feminised and infantile males requiring paternal guidance, to ‘deviant’ or inherently violent men needing to be civilised and controlled.

As a whole, these feminist studies reveal that colonial “development” discourses and policies have historically been based upon a “discursive strategy that constructs gender subordination as integral only to certain [non-Western] cultures,” solidifying a separation and hierarchy between ‘us’ (liberal, equal) and ‘them’ (illiberal, barbaric and oppressive of women), for highly political purposes.^{xi} By opposing race and religion with gender in such debates, the ‘positional superiority’ of Western culture has historically been reinforced over Other cultures.^{xii} Western actors have thus established violence against Other women as a central concern, proposing the need to ‘save’ these women from ‘their’ ‘religion’ and ‘culture,’ and perceiving the West as being responsible for liberating and empowering women across a range of geographies through development programmes and foreign policy frameworks alike.

The *official* position of religious belief, practice and imagery within contemporary mainstream development discourse, policy and practice has shifted significantly since the colonial period. Nonetheless, the broader discursive frames which have historically constituted certain societies, social groups and individuals as being in need of external interventions to “develop”, save and protect them, have continued to date.

From secular development paradigms to the “rediscovery” of faith in/and development

A second, increasingly extensive body of literature regarding the role of faith-based and faith-inspired actors in development activities has emerged since the 2000s. However, the intersections

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with *gender* have tended to be less prominent than in the above-mentioned analyses of the colonial era.

Christian discourses, doctrines and actors were pervasive in colonial-cum-development programmes, and yet from the birth of the professionalized aid industry in the post-WW2 era to the early-2000s, conceptualizations of development prioritized secular approaches as the strongest means to secure democratic political structures, good governance, and women’s rights.^{xiii} Indeed, with reference to the latter, religion “is often perceived to be conservative, steeped in tradition, and invariably resisting change. For example, while modern secular values are invariably presented as espousing gender equality, religion is assumed to confine women to traditional roles” (Ferris, 2011: 623). The official promotion of secularism prior to the 2000s was thus effectively justified through a continuation of colonial assumptions that “traditional” religious and cultural frameworks were barriers to socio-cultural “change” (read: “modernisation”) in general, but also to women’s empowerment and women’s rights more specifically.

However, broader debates within social theory throughout the 1990s and 2000s questioned long-standing assumptions that modernisation and modernity would be characterised by the entrenchment of rationality and secularisation. Furthermore, academics increasingly argue that we live in a “post-secular” age in which religious belief and practice are becoming increasingly, if differently, important for individuals and communities around the world. In the field of international development, there has been a notable increase since the 2000s in academic and policy attention to the role of religion and spirituality on the one hand, and faith-based organisations on the other. This interest can be perceived in the policy and practice of mainstream development organisations such as the World Bank, UNDP, UNFPA and UNAIDS, and by states such as the UK and the US. These organisations and states have officially continued to promote what I refer to as ‘secularism at home’ through the separation of religion from the public sphere, while increasingly acknowledging the potential benefits of funding development initiatives and programmes implemented by FBOs domestically and in the global south, and supporting initiatives designed to strengthen Southern civil societies, including faith-based communities and networks.

Such attention is understandable on many fronts, including for pragmatic reasons: for instance, in 2006 the World Health Organisation reported that one in every five responses to HIV/AIDS is related to faith. Furthermore, numerous studies have noted that the renewed academic and policy interest in faith and development is partly related to the belief that faith-based initiatives have the potential to promote a holistic model of human development including through notions of spiritual development and spiritual capital. It has also been argued that faith-based development may be more relevant to beneficiaries for whom religious identity, belief and practice are pivotal elements on individual and collective levels. Aid delivered by organisations, and individuals, inspired by faith may be trusted more than assistance offered by secular institutions, and faith leaders may themselves be well positioned to provide information and assistance to potential beneficiaries. For instance, the Islamic Foundation of Bangladesh offers training to Imams which includes topics on reproductive health, gender empowerment and HIV/AIDS, with 40,000 Imams having been trained to promote HIV prevention amongst their local communities.^{xiv} Indeed, it has been argued that local faith leaders and local faith communities are often well-positioned to engage with issues that are considered too sensitive, taboo or stigmatised to openly share with external actors (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Ager, 2013). For instance, Parsitau’s study of female internally-displaced Kikuyu victims of sexual and gender-based violence in Kenya highlights that faith communities were the only actors able to provide trauma counselling in that context (2011). Equally, Roy demonstrates the special access that Muslim female medics working with the Islamic FBO al-Wafa (an FBO affiliated with Hamas) had

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to address the sexual problems experienced by severely disabled Palestinian men in the Gaza Strip (2011: 158).

However, this increased attention to the roles of FBOs, especially those inspired by Islam, has often been associated with a securitization framework which questions the motivations and aims of such actors, and denominates their activities as political and ideological rather than motivated by humanitarian principles. In effect, the renewed interest in supporting faith-based development actors has often been “tied” to a range of non-economic conditionalities; these conditionalities include an official commitment to secular principles institutionalised within the post-colonial development and humanitarian industry, such as a commitment to non-proselytisation, the universal, neutral and impartial delivery of aid, and an explicit commitment to principles of gender equality and female empowerment.

Indeed, gender-based conditionalities associated with international funding for faith-based and secular development actors alike are widespread: in essence, grants will only be awarded if gender has been mainstreamed throughout development programmes. And yet very few comparative or theoretical studies explore the *gendered* impacts of faith-based development actors. Even fewer critically evaluate the connections between faith-based organisations, gender and humanitarian situations. The latter is a key area requiring further analysis by academics, policy-makers and practitioners alike.

Engendering our understandings of faith-based organisations in development and humanitarian contexts

The sex workers reportedly appreciate the non-judgmental approach adopted by the nuns [of the Antonio Center in the Philippines], who do not aim to persuade them to leave the sex industry, but rather aim to protect them during their time as sex workers, and to support them to find alternative livelihoods if and when they choose to leave sex work.^{xv}

It has been argued by Tadros that the majority of the recent literature on religion and development frames FBOs “as positive agents for the advancement of gender equality... highlighting the positive role faith and faith-based initiatives can play in eliciting social change” (Tadros, 2010: 1). She subsequently draws on a wide range of case-studies, primarily of Christian and Muslim FBOs, to warn against the premature idealization of faith-based development actors. For instance, she maintains that “A critical dimension of women’s agency and power has to do with the conditions and terms of [women’s] participation in FBOs”.^{xvi} This concern resonates with Islamic Relief Worldwide’s reflection that ‘women’s participation in planning stages is considered low in comparison to implementation stages’ in its operations in Sudan (Survey Response, Islamic Relief Worldwide^{xvii}). Islamic Relief Worldwide continued by noting that certain Muslim religious leaders in Pakistan and Afghanistan have hindered women’s involvement in recovery and reconstruction following natural disasters and conflict situations; in such instances, faith leaders have argued that it is culturally inappropriate for women to work in this area. Equally, a Christian organization admitted that church hierarchies in certain contexts across Sub-Saharan Africa foster the exclusion of women and other social (and sexual) minorities in decision-making.^{xviii}

Importantly, however, when critiquing women’s unequal participation in FBO decision-making processes, Tadros notes that although “women are often the majority of paid workers in third sector organizations” around the world, “in most cases they do not occupy leading positions” in *either* secular *or* faith-based organisations (Tadros, 2010:14). This qualification is significant because “*little evidence* is available about the gender-related implications of current development policies and

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practical initiatives that actively engage with religion” (Tomalin, 2013: 193; emphasis added). Nonetheless, Tomalin asserts that “there is a danger that the uncritical adoption of dominant (usually male) perspectives and voices within religious traditions may result in the marginalization of alternative voices and positions, for example feminist or gender-equal interpretations within religious traditions” (Tomalin, 2011: 6). She continues by warning that “in prioritizing religion, other identities and alternative approaches may be ignored” (ibid). Such a warning is in line with the argument that hegemonic religious attitudes to sexuality and marriage may endorse “gender inequality in relationships,” with such attitudes reinforcing “practices that increase women’s vulnerability to domestic and sexual violence, and their inability to access appropriate health and legal support” including sexual and reproductive health services.^{xix}

While these and other concerns are valid, it is clear that more evidence is needed to assess whether *assumptions* held by secular actors about local faith communities and national and international FBOs can, or cannot, be maintained, and to what extent. These include *beliefs* that FBOs are *automatically* more ‘conservative’ and ‘patriarchal’ than their secular counterparts; that LFCs and faith leaders will *necessarily* hinder the participation of women and girls as decision-makers, as aid and service providers and as beneficiaries alike; and that FBOs will *undoubtedly* refuse to engage with individuals and social groups who do not comply with norms regarding gender and sexuality. In addition to the example from the Philippines cited above, this last presumption has also recently been challenged by a survey of attitudes toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) asylum-seekers^{xx} which concluded that FBOs’s views on providing services to LGBTI people are *no better or worse* than the attitudes held by secular institutions (Survey Response, UNHCR-Geneva^{xxi}). Examples of FBOs engaging with gender non-conforming individuals and social groups in development and humanitarian contexts abound, including the Ojus Medical Institute in Mumbai which provides services to people living with HIV, including “men who have sex with men, injecting drug users and transgender people”.^{xxii}

With such examples are increasingly being recognized, can it be asserted, as Tadros does (op cit), that FBOs have been prematurely idealized by the development industry? I would argue that neither the academic literature nor mainstream policy discourse and practice have taken it for granted that FBO involvement is necessarily positive regarding gender roles and relations. While this may now increasingly be the case in *official* declarations by international (secular) *development* actors and agencies, Clarke’s research with DfID officials clearly reveals ‘significant concerns about the erosion of DFID’s traditional secularism...They fear donor entanglement in sectarian or divisive agendas’.^{xxiii} Furthermore, official engagement with FBOs is a very new recent phenomenon within *humanitarian* contexts. Research with many of the largest secular and faith-based organisations (including UNHCR, Oxfam and UNFPA, and Islamic Relief, Christian Aid, CAFOD, Tag International and Anglican Alliance), confirms that development and humanitarian operations in the field often continue to be characterized by tension and mistrust (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Ager, 2013). Importantly, this tension exists between secular and faith-based organisations on the one hand, but also between different FBOs, including in particular those which variously denounce or enact proselytization in assistance and service delivery contexts, on the other (ibid).

Indeed, while Tomalin posits that “One of the perceived problems facing secular development organizations is wariness about being openly critical of religious organizations for their attitudes towards gender, or indeed probing very far at all into their values and policies on gender equality” (2011: 6), recent research with mainstream secular and faith-based humanitarian organisations reveals high degrees of self-reflection and self-critical approaches by both secular and religious organisations (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Ager, 2013). This includes the recognition of the challenges

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and opportunities arising in their own and other faith-based organization’s approaches to gendered divisions of labour within FBO structures, and the gendered nature of FBO’s aims, objectives and outcomes vis-à-vis gender relations and gender equality.

FBOs can therefore be critical not only of secular organisations’ work but also of their own and other faith-based organisations’ approaches to gender. In many ways, this transcends Marshall and Taylor’s positive interpretation of Tearfund’s critical position towards evangelical churches’ conservative approach to sexual activity and behavior in the context of HIV/AIDS programming (2011). Marshall (herself employed by Tearfund) and Taylor argue that Tearfund was able to be critical towards its evangelical partners due to their identity as ‘insiders’. Equally, Tomalin suggests that such critical projects “have the potential to be replicated in contexts where secular organizations find it difficult to gather information about the gender attitudes in particular religions, or to critique them when they are found to be problematic” (2011:7). Beyond these conclusions, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Ager’s study offers an example of multidirectional critiques and the possibility for open debate and mutual learning within and across secular and faith-based organisations working in humanitarian contexts (2013).

Recognizing this possibility highlights the importance of academics, policy-makers, practitioners, as well as beneficiaries themselves, to be critical of both faith-based *and* secular responses to development and humanitarian settings, especially when the protection of women and female empowerment continues to be invoked as a key motivating factor for interventions in contexts of peace and conflict, thereby perpetuating the Western colonial legacy discursive and policy frameworks above.

Concluding Remarks

Given the long history of faith-based interventions in the name of charity and development, a range of continuities and shifts can be identified in the ways faith-based actors have designed and implemented development and humanitarian responses around the world. Despite conceptual and programmatic shifts within social theory and the development industry throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, faith principles have continued to motivate individual and collective responses to others in need, whether these others are co-religionists, members of other faiths, or of none. Equally, faith-based discourses are still regularly invoked to justify diverse forms of intervention to address poverty and social deprivation, women’s oppression, and conflict-induced displacement. Continuity with the diverse activities undertaken by missionaries during the colonial era to “save” Other women is perhaps particularly notable with reference to the geographical areas and the thematic issues which FBOs often become active in, and, of course, through the continuation of missionaries’ presence and activities in peace, conflict and post-conflict situations around the world. The latter has been most visible over the past decades across the Middle East and North Africa, where international commitment to support the protection of women and promote women’s rights has mobilised gendered religious symbols such as the burqa. Indeed, with the image of forcibly veiled Afghan women having been invoked by Western politicians as not only justifying but even demanding military intervention, exploring the role of faith-based responses to development and humanitarian situations is particularly pertinent in cases where intersecting discourses regarding gender and faith have been amongst the factors *causing* conflict-induced displacement. With the relatively late emergence of interest in the FBO-gender-humanitarianism nexus, future research into this area will be particularly important for academia, policy and practice over the coming years.

Distinctions and Distinctiveness?

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It may indeed be the case that “religion is [often] used to legitimize patriarchal hierarchies” in FBOs (Tadros, 2010: 14), and yet patriarchal hierarchies and Orientalist priorities are also prevalent throughout ‘secular’ organizations and the overarching development industry. As such, analyses of the gendered nature and impacts of FBO programmes must be paralleled by ongoing investigations into secular organisations, and of the development and humanitarian industries more broadly. This is especially urgent since both secular and faith-based organisations arguably embody problematic continuities with the faith- and gender-based dynamics underpinning the colonial era’s “civilizing mission”.

Indeed, it could be argued that FBO interventions draw particular attention to key dilemmas about what is defined as “development” or “empowerment”, and what position gender and religious identity and practice can or should play when attempting to achieve these “goals”.

Despite the increased interest in FBOs’ potential to promote human development since the 2000s, in this chapter I have argued that faith-based actors are often perceived as being likely to maintain or reinforce the gendered status quo by reproducing patriarchal structures. In this denomination, FBOs’ relationship with patriarchy is implicitly (and often explicitly) contrasted with a firmly held *assumption* that secular organisations have overcome these oppressive frameworks, practices and dynamics and are therefore ideally positioned to promote the empowerment of women. This is visible, for instance, when Greary points to the key question explored in a number of articles in her 2006 Special Issue of *Gender and Development*: “how faiths and institutions which have a history of repression of, and discrimination against women, and which continue to be dominated by patriarchy in many areas of belief and practice, can act as catalysts for and supporters of positive social change for women” (Greary, 2006:346). Through framing the key question in this manner, the reader is led to believe that *secular* organisations, unlike FBOs, *are* well positioned to “act as catalysts for and supporters of positive social change for women” since they do *not* have a “history of repression” or “discrimination”, and are *not* “dominated by patriarchy” (ibid). Such an assumption is highly problematic on numerous levels, and is clearly contradicted by numerous examples of patriarchal dynamics pervading secular organisations and agencies: indeed, it is precisely *because* of the prevalence of gender bias across the development industry that proponents of gender and development have developed sophisticated critiques of the androcentric foundations and implications of mainstream development theory, policy and practice. It is also highly problematic given that secular development programmes designed to “empower” women often have paradoxical impacts, ultimately reproducing systems of oppression (i.e. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2014).

If secular organisations often fail to promote gender equality and female empowerment through their programmes, it is equally the case that certain FBOs have officially promoted the empowerment of women and the transformation of female subjectivities. For instance, Parsitau argues that female-led Pentecostal and charismatic churches in Kenya aim to transform women’s expectations of their potential, in addition to advancing the spiritual and material empowerment of both single and married women (2012). However, this in turn raises the question of whether spiritual empowerment is to be considered to be a form of “development”, and if so (or if not), by whom.

Another pertinent example derives from UNFPA’s awareness that the very definition of what may be considered to be a ‘basic need’ in a humanitarian situation is both highly gendered and intimately related to the faith-identity and belief system of affected communities. This conclusion is supported by UNFPA’s account of its response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004: local conceptualisations of ‘basic needs’ transcended secular organisations’ perceptions, since many Muslim women affected by Tsunami held that headscarves were essential to maintain their dignity and were a prerequisite to

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be able to access other services in public fora (in Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Ager, 2013). That some individuals, communities and organisations might prioritise the provision of veils, or indeed the reconstruction of a mosque or temple as a “basic need” to be prioritised over the delivery of food or medicine, may be perceived by external analysts as promoting the continuation of the *status quo*, rather than maximising the opportunity to promote “women’s rights” at a time when traditional social, political and religious structures have been disrupted by the processes preceding and characterising humanitarian crises – the latter is a prevalent view in conflict and displacement studies, and is even codified as an international obligation for UN agencies such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees^{xxiv}). Indeed, although many individuals and communities would prioritise “saving a way of life” over “saving a life”,^{xxv} much of the development industry considers that certain “ways of life” are effectively at the root of discrimination and abuse, and that these ways of life are precisely why international interventions are necessary and not only morally justifiable, but effectively morally obligatory.

Key questions emerging in this regard include whose perspectives are to be prioritised in development and humanitarian interventions, and whether beneficiaries’ beliefs (including those pertaining to religion and gender) and priorities (including on spiritual and material, personal and collective levels) are accepted by international actors, or are rejected on the assumption that beneficiaries are so deeply embedded in “their” patriarchal, oppressive structures that “they” are suffering from false consciousness which only “we” can overcome. It is this overarching hierarchy which underpins the development industry that needs to be critically analysed and overcome, whether the hierarchy exists within faith-based *or* secular organisations’ operations and programmes for Others.

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ⁱ Clarke, G. and Jennings, M. (2008) “Introduction”, in G. Clarke and M. Jennings (Eds) *Development, Civil Society and Faith-based Organizations: Bridging the Sacred and the Secular*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1-16, p. 6.

ⁱⁱ Clarke, G. (2006) ‘Faith Matters: Faith-Based Organizations, Civil Society and International Development,’ *Journal of International Development*, 18:835-848, p. 840.

ⁱⁱⁱ Cited in Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Ager, 2013.

^{iv} Ibid.

^v Clarke, *Faith Matters*, p. 835

^{vi} See Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, E. (2012) *Conflicting Missions? The politics of Evangelical humanitarianism in the Sahrawi and Palestinian protracted refugee situations*, Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity Working Paper, April 2012.

^{vii} Clarke, G. (2006) Faith Matters, p. 840.

^{viii} Kandiyoti, D. (2004) ‘Political Fiction Meets Gender Myth: Post-conflict Reconstruction, ‘Democratisation’ and Women’s Rights’, *IDS Bulletin*, 35(4):134.

^{ix} In other instances, including during the Spanish “discovery”/occupation of the Americas, missionaries drew upon Christian doctrines to herald abolitionist movements and to argue in favour of the common humanity of colonised persons, often advocating for political and legislative change within colonies and the metropolis alike.

^x Spivak, G. C. 1993. “Can the subaltern speak?” In P. Williams and L. Chrisman (Eds) *Colonial discourse and post-colonial theory*, New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 66-111. p.93.

^{xi} Volpp, L. 2001. ‘Feminism versus Multiculturalism,’ *Columbia Law Review*. 101 (5): 1181-1218, p. 1181.

^{xii} Following Nader, L. 1989. ‘Orientalism, Occidentalism and the Control of Women,’ *Cultural dynamics* 2 (3): 323-355.

^{xiii} Related debates at the time also argued that “multiculturalism was bad for women” in Western liberal democracies since allowing “minority” women’s religious and cultural frameworks to exist in “our” liberal democracies would perpetuate “their” abuse by “their” men. Academics and policy-makers subsequently argued that it was “our” responsibility to ‘protect’ “other” women from practices defined by Western observers as ‘abusive,’ ‘illiberal’ and ‘violent’ (including ‘forced marriage’, ‘child marriage’ or ‘female genital surgeries’) (Okin, S. M. 1998. *Feminism and Multiculturalism: Some Tensions*. *Ethics* 108: 661–84; Cohen, J., M. Nussbaum, and M. Howard, eds. 1999. *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women? Susan Moller Okin with Respondents*. Princeton: Princeton University Press; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, E. (2013) ‘Transnational Abductions and Transnational Jurisdictions? The politics of “protecting” female Muslim refugees in Spain,’ *Gender, Place and Culture*, iFirst article 2013).

^{xiv} Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs (2010). *Faith-Inspired Organizations and Global Development Policy: A background review “mapping” social and economic development work in South and Central Asia*. Washington DC: Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs.

^{xv} Kaybryn, J. and Nidadavolu, V. (2012) *A mapping of faith-based responses to violence against women and girls in the Asia-Pacific region*. Asia-Pacific Women, Faith and Development Alliance and the United Nations Population Fund, p. 56.

^{xvi} Tadros, M. (2010) ‘Faith in service: what has gender got to do with it?’ *Open Democracy*, 16 November 2010. Available at <http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/mariz-tadros/faith-in-service-what-has-gender-got-to-do-with-it>.

^{xvii} Cited in Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Ager, 2013.

^{xviii} Ibid.

^{xix} Smith, A and Kaybryn, J. (2012) *HIV and Maternal Health: Faith groups’ activities, contributions and impact*, Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities, drawing on Gaul, et al., 2011.

^{xx} The survey was conducted by the Organization for Refugee Asylum and Migration.

^{xxi} Cited in Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Ager, 2013.

^{xxii} Herwadkar, 2012 cited in Smith, A and Kaybryn, J. (2012) *HIV and Maternal Health: Faith groups’ activities, contributions and impact*, Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities, p. 51.

^{xxiii} Jennings, M. and Clarke, G. (2008) “Conclusion: Faith and Development – of Ethno-separatism, Multiculturalism and Religious Partitioning?”, in G. Clarke and M. Jennings (Eds) *Development, Civil Society and Faith-based Organizations: Bridging the Sacred and the Secular*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke. Pp. 260 – 274, p. 262.

^{xxiv} Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, E. (2014a) *The Ideal Refugees: Gender, Islam and the Sahrawi Politics of Survival*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, E. (2014b) “Gender and Forced Migration,” in E. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, G.

Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, E. (2015) “Engendering Understandings of Faith-Based Organisations: Intersections between religion and gender in development and humanitarian interventions,” in A. Coles, L. Gray, and J. Momsen (eds.) *Routledge Handbook of Gender and Development*, London: Routledge. Pp. 560-570.

Loescher, K. Long and N. Sigona (Eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Forced Migration and Refugee Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

^{xxv} Allen, T., and D. Turton. 1996. “Introduction: In search of cool ground.” In T. Allen (Ed) *In search of cool ground: War, flight and homecoming in Northeast Africa*. Geneva: UNRISD in association with James Currey, London, 1–22.