

**Pathways of Women's Empowerment: Global Struggle, Local Experience
A Case Study of CARE-International's Women's Empowerment Project
in Zanzibar**

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Zuzanna Kucharski

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Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Faculty of Social Science
University of Ottawa
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

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List of Abbreviations and Swahili Terms

Ayat- Verse of the Quran

ASP – The Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP)

CARE International – International development organization

Hadith- a collection of traditions containing sayings of the prophet Muhammad

Iqra’a- Proclaim or Read

Inshallah- God Willing

JOCDO - Jozani Credit Development Organization

PESACA- Pemba Saving and Credit Association

MDGs- Millenium Development Goals

Muzuri- Nice/ Good

NGO – Non-governmental organization

Quran- Islamic Sacred book, believed to be the word of God

Riba- interest

SAPs- Structural Adjustment Programs

Sharia- Moral code and religious law derived from the Quran and Hadith

Sheha – Leader of a *shehia*

Shehia – Local government unit consisting of one big or a few small villages

TAMWA- Tanzanian Women’s Media Association

UN- United Nations

VSLA – Village Savings and Loans Association

WEZA- Women’s Empowerment Zanzibar Project

Abstract

In the field of International Development, increased attention has been given to the concept of women's empowerment as it has been recognized as a potential driver for change. Classified as a global struggle, commitments to this concept have been at the core of many development interventions, whether they be a small NGOs working in a single community or large-scale international aid agencies with presence all around the world. Despite its international recognition, women's empowerment has been largely left unquestioned within development practices and especially with regards to the impact it may have on local beneficiary communities. This thesis will address how universal ideas such as this one become meaningful in the local setting through a case study of CARE-International's Women's Empowerment in Zanzibar project that was implemented from the years 2008-2011. In applying Sally Merry's (2006) concept of vernacularization, as a theoretical framework, it will be shown that international aid organizations do not simply adapt women's empowerment to the local arena. Instead, various local actors are involved in a dynamic process of translating, negotiating, and making the concept more meaningful to the beneficiaries and, thus, cause a new hybrid understanding of women's empowerment to emerge. This new concept draws more extensively on local institutions, knowledge and practices that have been interweaved with Islamic practices which play an important role in the lives of Zanzibaris. This thesis will illustrate how NGO culture converges with and diverges from the local communities and expose the realities that exist within the greater development discourse.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Mwanamke ni chachu ya maendeleo- A woman is an important part of development

- Swahili Proverb on the Kanga¹

¹ “Kanga are colourful, message-bearing cloths worn by women in many parts of East Africa. The messages which are in Swahili, the lingua franca, touch on important spheres of life: social and ethical norms, sex, religion and politics. Kanga are used as a medium: they are means of communication and aim at integration and individuation in the cultural context.” (Linnebuhr 1992:81)

In the field of International Development, increased attention has been given to the concept of women's empowerment as it has been recognized as a potential driver for change. Classified as a global struggle, commitments to this concept have been at the core of many development interventions, whether they be a small NGOs working in a single community or large-scale international aid agencies with presence all around the world. Women's empowerment has even been identified as the third Millennium Development Goal by the United Nations in the Millennium Declaration, which distils the key goals and targets agreed upon in the international arena.

Despite its international recognition, the concept has been largely left unquestioned within development practices and especially with regards to the impact it may have on beneficiary communities. This thesis will address how global ideas such as women's empowerment become meaningful in the local setting. Sally Merry (2006) discusses this issue in reference to the concept of vernacularization, in which the role of intermediaries, such as local NGO partners, becomes crucial actors in adapting global ideas and making them relevant to local contexts. These intermediaries can be seen as brokers who translate information between the various levels of society, which allows for an analysis to be conducted that examines what the flow of global ideas means in the local arena.

The role of these intermediaries will be explored through the process of vernacularization which will be based on empirical research from the

Women's Empowerment in Zanzibar development intervention, that was initiated by CARE-International. This thesis seeks to answer the following questions: How is the transnational idea of women's empowerment implemented and understood by CARE-International and how does it speak to or accord with the lived realities of the people at the local implementation setting of Zanzibar? How does the idea cross the gap between a global understanding of women's empowerment and local socio-cultural understandings of gender and family? By answering these questions, it will be shown that the international organization do not simply adapt women's empowerment to the local arena, but that various local actors are involved in a dynamic process of translating, negotiating, and making the concept more meaningful to the beneficiaries and , thus, cause a new hybrid concept to emerge. This concept relates to the global framework advocated by the international development communities; yet, it is also applicable to the given context.

In delving deeper into the perspective of the beneficiaries, this thesis will demonstrate how NGO culture converges with and diverges from the local communities and how this relates to the greater development discourse. External forces and the development discourse have as much influence on NGO behaviour as local experience (Ebrahim 2003). To understand how and why an NGO works, it is necessary to look at the local situation as well as the external conception of the development "problem". Through this close analysis of the discourse on women's empowerment at

the various stages of the development project, this thesis will highlight how different discourses and perspectives on development are negotiated and how they become situated in the social field.

This thesis will be based on the data that was collected through a multi-sited ethnography that was conducted in Ottawa, Canada and the Island of Unguja, Zanzibar. The thesis will be comprised of six chapters: Theoretical Framework, Methodology, Background Information, Findings, and Conclusion.

Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce and describe the foundations that will frame and explain how the concept of women's empowerment is circulated and becomes relevant in a local setting. It will begin with an overview of the anthropological approach to development and establish a relationship between the two fields. It will continue with a review of the concept of women's empowerment and show where this thesis is situated within the existing literature. The chapter will conclude with an overview of Merry's (2006) concept of vernacularization, which will be the tool of analysis used to understand how women's empowerment can become meaningful in local contexts.

Methodology

This chapter will outline the research methods that were undertaken to address the thesis questions. It will begin with a description of a multi-sited ethnography and why this approach was chosen. This will be followed by a discussion of the data collection and analysis methods. It will conclude with the ethical considerations and the limitations of the research.

Background Information

This chapter will provide a brief introduction to Tanzania and, more specifically, Zanzibar, which was where CARE-International implemented the Women's Empowerment Project. There will be an overview of the historical, political, and social processes to situate the relevance of the thesis. In addition, an overview of Islam and development in the region will be explored as they play significant roles throughout the thesis.

Findings

The final chapter will present the findings from the fieldwork done in Canada and Tanzania from the case study of the Women's Empowerment Project in Zanzibar. The research questions will be answered in a description of what women's empowerment meant to the informants through a cross-site analysis that will show how this global concept is adapted in the local arena. It will conclude with an overview of the themes that emerged from the data analysis as well as a discussion on what these findings mean within the greater discourse of development.

Chapter 2 : Theoretical Framework

Asiyekujua hakuthamini- He/She who does not know you, does not value you

-Swahili Proverb on the Kanga

The purpose of this chapter is to set the foundation for investigating how the concept of women's empowerment is circulated and becomes relevant in a local setting in the context of an international NGO. The discussion begins with an overview of the approach to development in terms of discourse and proceeds with establishing the relationship of anthropology and development. It continues with a review of contending conceptions of women's empowerment in development and situates this thesis within the existing literature. This chapter concludes by bringing forth the instrument of analysis to see how women's empowerment can become meaningful in local contexts by adopting Merry's (2006) idea of vernacularization.

Development Discourse

Since the emergence of the term “development” after the Second World War, the concept has become both an urgent global challenge and a vibrant theoretical field. “Development” is a contested term; for some it is seen as an ideal, an imagined future towards which institutions and individuals strive, while others may see it as a destructive myth, an insidious, failed chapter in Western modernity (Escobar 2005). Development brings with it a set of shifting terminologies and has been prone to rapidly changing fashions.

The concept has gone through a massive redirection since first emerging after the Second World War. It was specifically composed of institutions and policies focusing on alleviating poverty and improving living conditions in previously colonized countries. After the basic needs approach of the 1970s, which only emphasized economic growth and the distribution of the benefits, theorists and politicians were in search of different approaches to solve the social and economic problems of the “Third World” (Escobar 1995). New paradigms of sustainable development emerged in the 1990s alongside more recent attention to building civil society, good governance, and participatory development, which proposed modifications and improvements to the programs that were in place; but the idea of development itself, and the need for it, was never questioned (Eldelman & Haugerud 2005). Development is seen as a certainty in the social imagination, and it seems impossible to conceptualize social reality

in another way. There is no doubt that, at its best, development has been a focal point for all those who have hoped for a world order of stable prosperity and progress. Whether development is seen as a discourse, project blueprint, or a historical process, the concept has become increasingly contentious and it has attracted attention from many scholars (Edelman & Haugerud 2005).

Establishing the Relationship between Anthropology and Development

Relations between anthropologists and the world of development ideas and practices date from the early days of the discipline during the colonial period and have continued, in various forms, up to the present day. Anthropologists have, for many generations, worked within NGOs, demonstrating how much the discipline has to offer in terms of improving the work of the development practitioners. Other anthropologists have tried to position themselves outside the sphere of development and engaged in critiques of the very notion of development, arguing that the concept is morally, politically, and philosophically corrupt (Gardner & Lewis 2005). This can be seen in the literature where there is a distinction between “development anthropologists” who work broadly within the agendas of development institutions, doing research or advocating for particular policies, and “anthropologists of development” who work on the subject of development itself, often taking a critical stance which questions its ideas, values, and purposes (Fisher 1997).

Many contributors to the critical stance of development have outright rejected the desirability of “development”, which they see as a destructive and self-serving discourse propagated by bureaucrats and aid professionals that has the poor trapped in a cycle of passivity and misery (Edelman & Haugraud 2005). One of the most notable development critics in the “anthropology of development” category has been Arturo Escobar. In *Encountering Development*, Escobar reconsiders this concept of development by looking at it through a more critical lens in which he uses deconstruction, prejudicial detachment, and the contextualization of development as a hegemonic, all-encompassing cultural space. Escobar’s main argument entails that there is no linear or universal model of economic or social development that can be objectively applied to the diverse local cultures of the societies that are, according to him, misleadingly grouped under the “Third World” (Escobar 1995). In essence, Escobar seeks to move beyond the concept of development by approaching it through a discursive analysis of the components and relationships of what he calls,

the three axes that define development; the forms of knowledge that refer to it and through which it comes into being. Objects, concepts, theories and the like; the system of power that regulates its practice; and the forms of subjectivity fostered by this discourse (Escobar 1995:10).

Escobar compared his concept of development as a historically-produced discourse to Edward Said’s work on Orientalism, which is a “systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage and

even produce -the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively during the post Enlightenment period” (Said 1978:42-43). This definition is also relevant in the study of development as a representational practice. By substituting “the Orient” for “Third World”, the definition illustrates the productive power of the development discourse (Escobar 1995).

Escobar’s *Encountering Development* (1995) conceptualises development through the examination of the way in which linguistic structure and meaning shape how it is understood and then coordinated into interventions, calling it the “development apparatus”. This approach marked a shift in studying development, from a realist approach to interpretivist or post-structuralist approaches. This did not deny the need for change in some of the countries deemed “Third World” or “developing”, but calls for this change to be conceived in different terms. Escobar calls for the use of ethnographic methods in development by advancing the deconstructive initiatives brought by the current initiatives, but without declaring they are universally applicable. He calls for stronger emphasis on local culture and knowledge and the promotion of localized, pluralistic, grassroots movements to replace the top-down approaches that are in place (Escobar 1995).

Another contributor to the development discourse stance in the anthropology of development has been James Ferguson with his book *Anti-politics Machine* (1990). Through a detailed case study of the Thaba-

Tseka Development Project in Lesotho from 1975 to 1984, he argues that the ideas and institutional structures that support Western development projects are fundamentally flawed because of the way the West continues to represent the former colonial world (Ferguson 1990). He points out how development efforts often attempt to de-politicize change by focusing on instrumental assistance but not on the objective conditions that led to the development failure. In this sense, project efforts offer band-aids that address symptoms but leave the causes untreated or, at worst, promote projects that systematically redirect economic resources and profit to the original donors (Ferguson 1990).

These critics have demonstrated that, in an effort to eradicate poverty and promote positive social change, development projects often end up re-inscribing the forms of inequality of development. With this conclusion and critical stance, it should be asked whether there is any hope for future development. More recent work has tried to transcend the distinct boundary between development anthropology and the anthropology of development.

Crewe and Harrison, in *Whose Development? Ethnography of Aid* (1998), have moved towards alternative positions of the development discourse stance. In using two kinds of interventions, the promotion of aquaculture in Zambia and the improved stoves in Sri Lanka, they argue against the deterministic and polarizing view of Escobar and other “deconstructors of development” (Crewe & Harrison 1998:14-19). The

authors argue for a more nuanced account of power and development practice at different levels through an analysis of the relationship between individual agency and structural constraint. Their study moves past the dichotomy between the development practitioners and the beneficiaries in arguing for more nuanced accounts of the relationships that appear in the development field (Crewe & Harrison 1998).

Similarly, Gardner and Lewis (2005) draw on both practical development experience and thorough understanding of the post-development critique. They are “crafting an alternative practice” that addresses dilemmas of poverty, environmental destruction, and globalization. Such work signals new productive engagements between anthropology and development and a new set of challenges to the entire discipline. According to Venkatesan and Yarrow in *Differentiating Development: Beyond an Anthropology of Critique* (2011), this critical stance has led to an increasingly acute impasse from where there is no escape because, in a complete rejection of development, these critiques have closed themselves off to any consideration of how or whether it is possible to retain hope in the vision of a better future. They try to move beyond the impasse and selectively build on the critical insights of post-development critiques whilst breaking with its predominantly discursive focus by taking more ethnographic approaches. According to Venkatesan and Yarrow, development can be seen as a positive force and they argue that there should be a redirection to the concrete practices through which

development is achieved and the specific social realities framed by ideas of development (Venkatesan & Yarrow 2011).

For Venkatesan and Yarrow, development can be seen as a mode of engagement like anthropology that attempts to understand, represent, and work within this complex world. And whilst, according to them, earlier anthropological accounts imagined development in relatively monolithic terms, their own approach seeks to reveal how these are refracted in terms of different “counter tendencies”, and shed light on the diverse social and cultural contexts in which ideas of “development” circulate without having a conventional understanding of “the local” (Venkatesan & Yarrow 2011).

Venkatesan and Yarrow's approach to development as more of a means for engagement where the anthropologists themselves can participate, and they point out that this past opposition from anthropologists is difficult to sustain because development workers frequently borrow anthropological understandings to frame and understand the worlds they inhabit and, at the same time, anthropologists are increasingly employed by development organizations to apply the insights of anthropology (Venkatesan & Yarrow 2011).

This is an important point to make to anthropologists researching development because it helps them to be critically reflexive in their own research instead of holding the belief that they have superior empirical knowledge. Anthropologists may have imagined themselves outside the scope of the development sector and presumably untainted by it; this is an

example of “anthropology’s increasing sense of itself as a discipline has moved beyond its colonial past, has taken shape by reference of development’s apparent inability to make the parallel move.” (Yenkantesan & Yarrow 2011:4). In changing this perspective, anthropologists situating themselves as active participants within development really pave the way for a more positive relationship between anthropology and development, where there can be an application of anthropological perspectives to multidisciplinary development projects and they actively use their knowledge to inform, if not transform, development practices. Anthropologists can serve as a great link to moderate the relationships between development institutions and the groups they seek to help (Yenkantesan & Yarrow 2011).

In sum, the positions of “anthropology of development” and “development anthropology” do not have to be separate and, while it is important to deconstruct development if politically meaningful contributions are to be made, there must be a continuation of making vital connections between knowledge and action. It is necessary to show that whenever anthropologists are working on development issues, on an applied or theoretical level, they are still working within what Ferguson (1990:8) defines as the “interpretive grid” of the development discourse. This concept goes beyond the applied-theoretical distinction and seeks to reveal more of the ethnographic detail of the organizational apparatus of development, as well as a deeper analysis of the ways in which the

concept of development has come to play a central role in the lives many (Ferguson 1990).

As a researcher in the field of development, I have engaged in both the practices by engaging with NGO workers and offering my support to their projects and, at the same time, trying to bring forth new ways of thinking about development while keeping in mind the relationship between knowledge, discourse, and the reproduction of power within development (Fisher 1997). I had to acknowledge that the interface between developers and those to be developed is not a case of binary oppositions consisting of the modern or scientific versus the traditional indigenous thought. The paradigms within which developers work are contextually contingent, culturally specific, and contested by those of the social groups that they target (Gardner & Lewis 2005).

Empowerment: another buzzword in the development lexicon?

In the ever-changing field of international development, buzzwords play an important role in framing the current agendas that are of interest to the international communities. These buzzwords, which can be globally circulating ideas for change or methods of practice, can be adopted for several reasons. It can be thought that framing the issue in this way may resonate more with potential supporters and more effectively help in the pursuit of the goals. Or It can be a password for potential funding, or a way of bringing together a diverse set of practitioners and beneficiaries and make it easier to build networks and partnerships with other international

organizations (Cornwall & Eade 2010). The taken-for-granted quality of these buzzwords is that it leaves unquestioned much of what is actually done in its name.

“Empowerment” has become one of the most widely used buzzwords in the development lexicon. Starting from the beginning of the 1990s empowerment was applied to a variety of social-change processes, but it made its mark in reference to women and gender equality, replacing earlier terminology of “women’s development” and “people’s participation” (Batliwala 2010). The 1995 *Fourth World Conference on Women*, in Beijing, was when “women’s empowerment” was introduced on the world stage with the development community pushing for more progressive approaches to gender issues. As the term spread, state actors, aid agencies, development professionals, feminist activists, and advocates were adopting it, but there was no clear consensus on what it meant to its various advocates (Batliwala 2010).

There is a range of approaches for discussing how woman’s empowerment might be implemented or evaluated in development. Furthermore, many projects and programs, which espouse the empowerment of women, showed little if any evidence of attempts to define what this means even in their own context, let alone to assess whether and to what extent they have succeeded. One of the notions that was brought forth was looking at empowerment as a “process of change” whether for greater freedom, choice, or action (Batliwala 1994; Kabeer

2001; Rowlands 1997).

Batliwala (1994) was one of the earlier scholars who participated in the debate on empowerment and gender as development approaches. She was concerned that, like other concepts such as poverty alleviation, empowerment too would lose its transformative ability. She called for collective effort and political action on local and national power structures that oppressed women and men. For her, empowerment is “the process of challenging existing power relations, and gaining greater control over the courses of power” (Batliwala 1994:130). For her change has to come from both the grassroots level and national level.

Similarly, according to Kabeer (2001), women’s empowerment is a process that seeks to challenge patriarchal institutions and beliefs that reinforce women’s inequality. For her, it aims at achieving collective rights in social, economic, political, and cultural domains. Thus, similar to Batliwala, Kabeer(2001) looks at empowerment as being a collective endeavour across various domains. Also in this line of thinking would be Marquand (1997) and Stiles (2000) who focus on the role of national and global politics and posit that, for any change to emerge, women and men cannot only be understood at the local level.

Others, like Moser (1993), have conceptualized empowerment as the consciousness of individuals and the power to express and act on one’s desires. One must look at the abilities individuals have over choices in life and their control over resources (Moser 1993).

In addition to these conceptualizations, one thing to note is that the term “empowerment” does not translate easily or equally into other languages thereby making it problematic when used in development that is to be applicable in various transnational contexts. For example, in French, ‘to empower’ can be translated into two different verbs: *autoriser*, which suggests ‘power over’, or *rendre capable*, meaning ‘power to’ (Luttrell & Quiroz 2007) .

Little discussion about the concept of power has ventured into the field of development; as noted by Rowlands (1997:18), “it is in its avoidance of discussing power that the fundamental weakness of the literature on women and development lays.” She argues that “empowerment is more than participation in decision-making; it must also include the processes that lead people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to make decisions” (1997: 14). Traditional development and feminist models have seen power as repression and it has been assumed that the oppression of women can be explained by patriarchal social structures, which secure the power of men over women. This has been called into question and said to be an oversimplified conception of power relations and, in the case of women, they are simply the passive, powerless victims of male power (Hartsock 1990).

Foucault's work on power has been used by some feminists such as Phelan (1990) to develop a more complex analysis of the relations between gender and power that avoids the assumption that the oppression of

women is caused by men's possession of power. On the basis of Foucault's understanding of power ; being exercised rather than possessed and circulating throughout the social body rather than emanating from top down, some feminists have challenged gender relations which emphasize domination and victimization and enabled feminists to explore the ways in which women's experiences, self-understandings, comportment, and capacities are constructed in and by the power relations they are seeking to transform (Phelan 1990). These entanglements of power complicate stories of domination and resistance, making complex any development interventions intended to empower women, who are thought to be marginalized by current conditions, by changing the power dynamic within societies.

Furthermore, in addition to the contested ways of defining empowerment, problems arise in trying to measure empowerment. The need to measure has never been more urgent than at the present time because many aid agencies call for projects to be results driven. In referring to empowerment as a process and as outlined previously by various theorists, results can be elusive and indicators of social change may be hard to detect. Taylor (2000) cautioned that an attempt to measure someone else's empowerment can cause disempowerment and argues that it should not become something that is done to the ones with less power by the ones with more power. Similarly, Mayoux (2009) noted that in trying to select indicators of measurement for empowerment, there

are underlying theoretical and political perspectives of what impacts are important in which differing views end up not considered. What can be taken from these arguments is that the measurement of empowerment is value driven and cannot be reconciled by monitoring empowerment from the perspective of an outsider as is often done in the field of development. In addition, selecting indicators and the means to measure can bring forth very normative characteristics depending on one's perspective of empowerment.

In the 1990s, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), which has now merged with the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, attempted to bring forth a measuring tool of women's empowerment in hopes of it becoming universally applicable. Their scope of indicators were political, economic, and social, and looked at examples such as percentages of government seats held by women in local councils or the mobility of women within and outside their residential localities compared to men (CIDA 1997). More recently, Alsop and Hensohn (2005) have attempted to create a measurement tool for empowerment that too was hoped to be implemented universally. For them, empowerment outcomes were determined by opportunity, structure, and assets that were influenced by women's agency (Alsop & Hensohn 2005). The indicators they looked at were the existence of opportunity, its use, and the outcome for an idea of degrees of empowerment. An example would be whether opportunities to attend school exist, whether girls or

women attempt to go to school, and whether they actually attend school. Even if there is a desire to make a choice, an opportunity for a person or a group may not exist (Alspo & Hensohn 2005). Although providing a deeper scope than the CIDA attempt, these indicators are once again assuming that there is a sequential path for empowerment and a generic all-encompassing perspective of what it means to be empowered. Such attempts at measurement are usually done when a project has already been designed to empower women in a given locality, so how do agencies determine the need for empowerment in the first place? To what extent are these indicators relevant to the communities where empowerment is implemented?

It is evident that the concept of women's empowerment has become a "popular, largely unquestioned good" within development practice and is frequently used to add glamour to interventions that seek to achieve a variety of economic and social outcomes, which, although extremely desirable in themselves, do not necessarily challenge existing patterns of power (Parpart, Rai & Staudt 2003:1). This thesis hopes to move past questioning if women's empowerment interventions change the power dynamic in societies and look at the concept through a more fluid position. In establishing that global concepts are differentially received and interpreted, this research will explain what happens to the concept of women's empowerment if it is circulated globally and how it becomes meaningful in local settings. Sally Merry (2006) discusses this issue by

referring to the role of intermediaries, the actors in the middle like NGO staff or social movement activists, who translate the discourse and practices from international arenas to specific local settings. She analyses this process, in her work on human rights adapted to local contexts, using the concept of “vernacularization”. This offers a useful instrument for analysis in this research on women’s empowerment

Vernacularization: Unpacking the Process

“As ideas from transnational sources travel to small communities, they are typically vernacularized or adapted to local institutions and meaning” (Merry 2006: 39). The concept of vernacularization was originally used in reference to the 19th century when explaining the process of separating the medieval transnational use of Latin into national languages. Anderson gave mention to this in his book, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1991), where he explained the declining importance of the script languages by the nations of Europe and was leading to a grounds for and justification of nationalist sentiments among the citizens of those states.

Vernacularization, in the context of international development for this research, can be seen as the process in which the meaning of the concept for the local situation is extracted from the universal idea. It can be asked, how can the transnational idea be extracted and be made meaningful and fitting to the local social and cultural settings?

Merry (2006) explains that a key dimension in the process of

vernacularization is “the people in the middle”. These intermediaries are NGO staff, local activists, etc. that translate discourse and practices from international arenas to local conditions, as well as act as brokers between culturally distinct worlds. They negotiate between local, regional, national, and global systems of meaning and can hold various positions. As translators, they revise global rights agendas for local contexts and reframe local grievances into funding proposals for international donors. They are usually influenced by those who are funding them: “their ethnic, gender or other social commitments; and institutional frameworks that create opportunities for wealth and power” (Merry 2006:10). However, in the process of adaptation, the ideas must be framed in indigenous cultural categories and assessments are made in examining the extent that existing modes of thinking can be challenged and to what extent radical ideas must be concealed. This theoretical concept was applied through case studies of campaigns against violence against women in the China, India, Peru and the United States in which it was argued that vernacularization of human rights ideas challenged the ideas of gender violence as a normative social practice (Levitt & Merry 2009).

Similar to Merry’s “people in the middle”, the role of intermediaries in development have also been theorized by Mosse and Lewis (2006) with their concept of development brokers who navigate at the interface of various knowledge systems. They are forced to bracket and manipulate their identities within the disjunctures of the agendas of development

actors, and deal with the various tensions in process of negotiation and translation. While Merry does not make a clear differentiation between brokerage and translation in her theory, Mosse and Lewis (2006:13-14) distinguished these concepts by indicating that:

The concept of translation refers to mutual enrollment and the interlocking of interests that produces project realities. Moreover, where in internationalist approach emphasized the brokering of an almost endless multiplicity of actor perspectives, strategies, and arenas, the metaphor of 'translation' examines the production and protection of unified fields of development.

Although theoretically sound, these boundaries may be difficult to examine in practice. In this research, "brokerage" will be used in reference to the action done by actors and discourses through negotiations and mediation, while "translation" will be the result of brokerage where fields are constructed and various concepts are adapted with the incorporation of the diverse interests of the various actors who are a part of the NGO project. The process of vernacularization will, therefore, be examined through methods of brokerage and translation actions.

The process of vernacularization can, according to Merry (2006), take place in a continuum that specifies how extensively local cultural forms and practices are incorporated into the imported concepts. At one end of the continuum, "replication" refers to the process where the imported idea is implanted into a cultural context with very little attempt at contextualization or modification according to local needs. The overall organisation, mission, and ideology of the intervention are set by the global

concept while the local context provides its distinctive context. On the other end of the continuum, Merry (2006) brings forth “hybridization”, which is a much deeper engagement with the local context and it occurs “when institutions and symbolic structures created elsewhere merge with those in a new locality, sometimes uneasily” (Merry 2006:46-48). With hybridization, new hybrid concepts are created and imported concepts may be rejected or overthrown yet the name of the concept itself is retained while the content of the concept is drastically altered.

In addition to using the process of vernacularization in reference to human rights as used by Merry (2006), other transnational idea can be analyzed through this process. Cheng (2011) used the concept to examine how international norms about human trafficking and women’s rights became vernacularized into anti-prostitution policies in South Korea. She argued that the process created challenges with the state, and propelled actions and reforms, but also had unexpected results of supporting state nation-building. Michelutti (2008) has argued that through vernacularization, conventional theories of democracy have become embedded in cultural and social practices. This became relevant and powerful with her case study of a lower caste minority from the Yadvas in Northern India.

The field of international development is greatly legitimized through global ideas that are codified into international contracts or mandates (Levitt & Merry 2009). One of the best known examples is the UN

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which forms a blueprint for development practice agreed to by the 189 UN member states and more than 23 international organizations (United Nations 2009). Women's empowerment, in addition to being a buzzword within development as explored earlier in the chapter, is also one of the ideas that is instituted by the United Nations in the form of Millennium Development Goal number 3: "To promote gender equality and empowering women" (United Nations 2009:1). It is for this reason that the so-called "universal" concept of women's empowerment will be explored as it is carried out by CARE-International to the local arena through the Women's Empowerment Project in Zanzibar (WEZA). As the process involves many actors and the concept is highly contested in the field of international development, it may be interesting to observe how the negotiation process is carried out, and then an analysis can be brought forth regarding what the flow of global ideas, such as women's empowerment, means to the local arena.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Mungu ndie muamuzi wa kila jambo- God is the Judge for everything.

-Swahili Proverb on the Kanga

This chapter will outline the methodological methods employed for this project. The first section explains the rationale using a multi-sited ethnographic approach for the case study chosen to answer the research question. The next section discusses the data collection methods which were divided into the different sites in which data was collected for the chosen case study. Following the data collection, the data analysis methods are presented. Lastly, ethical considerations, research bias and limitations are presented.

Multi-sited Ethnography

To fully understand how development knowledge is translated in the local context I chose to do a case study of a project on Women's Empowerment in Zanzibar done by the International NGO CARE to track this translation in motion throughout the multiple sites that data was collected from. In anthropology, changing notions of place, culture and nation have lead researchers to refocus their object and place of study. Marcus (1995) has identified a new mode of ethnographic research designed to move away from the traditional methods of long-term data collection from single sites and of "local" situations to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, ideas, objects and identities. Multi-sited fieldwork consists of "mapping strategies" or pathways where connections are formed that traverse localities and follow the people, the object, the metaphor, the idea, the biography or the conflict (Marcus 1995). This method was well suited for this research as mandates in the field of International Development are framed to be global issues that are of a concern to all of humanity such as women's rights and in the case study of the mandate of women's empowerment in the locality of Zanzibar, it is important to see the pathways of this project implementation in the name of this cause.

Multi-sited ethnography can allow for an understanding of a variety of perspectives involved this specific idea and process of implementing women's empowerment which started from online policy research and interviews from the headquarters of CARE- International to observations

and semi-structured interviews at the regional offices in Dar Es Salam and Zanzibar in Tanzania, local NGO partners of the Tanzanian Women's Media Association and finally to the local villages in southern Unguja Island of Zanzibar. The total number of participants recruited for the in-depth semi-structured interviews was 11(6 CARE and TAMWA staff, 5 community members) from the various sites who dealt with WEZA. In order to safeguard their identities their genders and their positions in the organizations will not be provided since the NGO staff numbers from both CARE and TAMWA were small and this would compromise their anonymity.

Multiple data sets from multiple sites have allowed for a comparison of similarities and differences for analysis on the project created by an International Organization with global mandates of women's empowerment and how it has been translated to local terms to be implemented and impact a specific population in small villages in Zanzibar.

First Phase

In the first phase the site was CARE-International in Ottawa which is one of the 14 member organizations in the global confederation of Care International. The main goal from this site was to collect policy and procedure data pertaining to CARE's global mandate of women's empowerment then reports from the specific project of WEZA (Women's Empowerment in Zanzibar). In addition to online research of CARE-International, semi-structured interviews were performed with Managers

and Project Evaluators. This phase was integral to the project in order to get the full grasp of why women's empowerment and gender was a relevant issue for CARE-International and how it was defined and how projects were designed to be implemented. In addition, for the WEZA project it was an important to understand how the local communities and specifically women in Zanzibar were perceived by CARE-International and how the issue of women's empowerment was framed in order to analyse and compare with the following data collection sites.

Second Phase

Once the first phase of the research was complete I travelled to Tanzania for over a month to track how women's empowerment in the context of the WEZA project was perceived at various sites that took part in the project. Although the WEZA project was implemented from 2008 until 2012 it was a good case study to choose in order to track the sustainability of this concept and its impact once the project was finished. This concept of women's empowerment was tracked to answer the research question to see how global mandates in International development are vernacularized into local terms on the ground.

This phase of the research began in Dar Es Salaam for where semi-structured interviews and observations were conducted at the CARE Tanzania Regional Office with NGO staff and Directors that had worked on the WEZA project.

The remainder of the time was spent in Zanzibar where the project WEZA took place. Time was spent between the NGO CARE Zanzibar office, TAMWA office and 2 local villages (Jambiani and Makunduchi) in southern Unguja which were two villages from the many that the project took place in southern Unguja and Pemba Island. Formal semi-structured interviews with NGO staff, and the men and women of the community were conducted.

Questions that were asked to both sets of NGO staff from CARE and TAMWA covered basic information pertaining to education, family structures, religious backgrounds then specific questions dealing with education their work at the NGO, their perspectives on the community and especially the women they work with, the project, their perspective on the achievements and shortcomings of WEZA and finally their future goals for their communities. This will lead me to the main questions pertaining to gender, empowerment, and what this means to them as a development goal in their field.

Questions that were asked to the community members covered topics of education, family structure, religious background then details about their relationship with the WEZA project, the duration of the participation and their personal perspectives on the project. Furthermore, a large section of the questions covered perspective on gender, empowerment, gender equality and the perspectives on gender roles in family life and the greater community.

Participant Observation/ reflexivity

In addition to semi-structured interviews with NGO workers of CARE, TAMWA and community members where the project WEZA implemented, participant observation was a key data collection method during my stay in Zanzibar. Through a local NGO I had arranged to live with a Zanzibari family who became my support system in Zanzibar and key informants in helping me understand the everyday nuances and dynamics that are part of the daily lives of the people of Zanzibar. My Zanzibari mother, as I called her became very close to me and a key informant with regards to understanding the role of women in Zanzibar. As a mother of 5 with 4 girls ranging from ages 20-10 and a young boy the age of 6, she was always very involved in her children's upbringing while at the same time was a very influential member of her community in mobilizing women to be more active in the public sphere. Being a director of her own local NGO and having worked with the various key informants that I conducted interviews with I was given the opportunity to learn from her and was able to formulate firsthand accounts of their lives and gain novel insights. I focused on participating in daily life as much as possible in order to understand the way of life and especially the notions of women's empowerment and women's rights. This entailed staying in the household; eating, sleeping, and working with family members and neighbors. Hours were spent playing with the children, listening and participating in various discussions, helping family members with household chores, going on visits, and eating

local cuisine. I went on several visits to my hosts' family members and friends in town and in other areas.

As pointed out by Marrianci (2008) in the book *Anthropology of Islam*, trust is a central part of fieldwork and in particular today in the case of research within some Muslim communities. Although I am a practicing Muslim and was able to relate to the participants because of our common religious beliefs and practices that we engaged in together such as praying, Quran reading, visits from the local Sheikh, visits to the mosque and discussions revolving Islamic teachings so perhaps they were able to open up to me with certain issues. At the same time I had to be careful as although we had a common religion as discussed earlier in the introductory chapter ,97 percent of Zanzibar is Muslim, the experiences faced by a Muslim in Zanzibar may be different than my experiences as a Muslim in Canada .What brought me as an anthropologist closer to my participants was the understanding that it was the empathy that I experienced through emotions and feelings for my participants that got me closer to them. Participant observation did not just mean taking part in activities and sharing actions in order to observe, note, report and analyse. Participant observation meant taking part in emotional processes involved in the formation of feelings and it was for this reason that in studying a women's empowerment project in an Islamic community, my knowledge of the Islam, its texts, and being acquainted with a certain rhetoric that existed in the community helped me facilitate the possibility of observing, through

participation, how informants transform, manipulate and make these elements their own (Marrianci 2008).

My participant observation experiences were recorded in a detailed journal that I updated every day throughout the trip about my personal experiences throughout my fieldwork, this journal was a complementary component to the semi-structured interviews in order to use triangulation in order to cross-check data from multiple sources to search for regularities in the research data (Babbie 2013). This method gave a more detailed and balanced picture of the situation.

Participant Recruitment

In the first phase when dealing with CARE-International, participants were recruited through a recruitment script that was sent out by e-mail to the offices. The e-mail addresses were found on various CARE International sites that dealt with the WEZA project which included evaluation reports and CARE's main website that had a contact page. There was usually a long waiting period to hear back from potential participants so, at times various e-mails were sent to the same person or secretaries were contacted to forward the messages to the potential participants. If an agreement of participation was made, a date was set for the interview either in-person or via Skype.

During the second phase in Tanzania, e-mails were sent or phone calls were made with a recruitment script and if initial contact was not

made through this way, the NGO offices were visited and the recruitment script was presented to the potential participants in person. Snowball sampling was used with the first participants so I was able to get directed to the right NGO staff that worked on WEZA since the project was finished the year prior to my fieldwork and some of the present staff had not been employed with the NGO during that time.

Although the WEZA project took place in four districts of northern Pemba and Southern Unguja in Zanzibar, the community participant recruitment took place only at two villages on Unguja Island because all the NGO offices were located there so it made it easy to stay on one Island throughout the fieldwork in Zanzibar. The community participants were recruited by snowball sampling from the NGO staff due to time constraints as I was told that going into the villages for the first time in hopes of finding and recruiting women who took part in WEZA would have been a daunting task. This was due to initial mistrust that dated back to incidences of previous foreign NGO scams that communities have dealt with and my lack of Swahili . Since the CARE and TAMWA had established trust with the communities snowball sampling seemed to be the best fit for the situation.

The recruitment criteria for the NGO staff was that they must be over the age of 18 and employed with the NGO during the time of the WEZA project from 2008-2012. As for the criteria for the community participants it was extended to males or female from the village where the WEZA project was implemented and over the age of 18.

Data Analysis

All semi-structured interviews and field notes and were transcribed and organized chronologically according to data collection site (CARE-International, CARE Tanzania in Dar Es Salaam, Care Zanzibar , TAMWA, Villages (Makunduchi and Jambiani). Documents retrieved from phase one regarding CARE-International were also organized and attached to the interviews and from the CARE-International site.

Open coding was the first step towards gradually making sense of the data. In the process of Open Coding, the concepts emerge from the raw data and later grouped into conceptual categories. The technique of open coding is to read the transcriptions closely and code the data line-by-line and generating concepts which are abstract representations of ideas, events, objects, actions or interactions. The goal was to generate as many codes as possible, without thinking too much about how they would be put together in the final stages (Babbie 2013). Open coding was done on screen using word document using the hashtag symbol(#). During this process there it was thought that there was a lot of resemblance to the hashtag used in social media .The hashtag is usually a word of phrase prefixed with the symbol (#)with a keyword or phrase assigned to the text. In this case each sentence was assigned one or more hashtags relating to the sentence for the text. Once the code was written alongside the sentence, it was also copied onto a separate document to track and later be further grouped into

conceptual categories and in the end into emerging themes. Some of the codes were more descriptive in nature, others were more analytical. Both styles of open codes helped identify recurrent patterns, thematic dimensions and analytical categories.

Once the major themes were established with the open-coding analysis, cross- site comparisons were done to discover correlations and patterns that may have been specific to the site. This was done to truly map the translation of the NGO project from the headquarters to the local communities and the concept of women's empowerment through the various sites.

Ethical Reflections and Possible Limitations

Self-reflection on ethical challenges and possible limitations was an important part of this research project. When addressing different aspects relevant from my fieldwork here, I will show how I have tried to minimize possible limitations.

Since multi-sited ethnography has multiple locations, in-depth knowledge of one location may not be a possibility. The quality of the data may be compromised and at the same time managing multiple sites may be a challenge and limit the feasibility of the research (Marcus 1995). Gaining access to NGO staff especially in the first phase that dealt with CARE-International required numerous e-mails, phone calls for a few months before any contacts with potential participants were made. Skepticism of

the motivation behind the research that deals with a sort of evaluation of an International Organization's project, may have been the reason for this struggle so gaining trust and reassuring participants that the research would benefit the participants was frequently discussed with them.

Snowball sampling was the main method of recruitment used to gain access to many participants if they were not originally recruited by e-mail or phone call. This may have had limitations as the sample may have been influenced by the first participants. This especially may have been a limitation in the cases that first participants that were NGO staff helped recruit some of the community member participants which may have had ethical limitations due to the donor-beneficiary relationship, in which participants may not have been open about their feelings towards the NGO.

This limitation was addressed in the introduction with the participants when I emphasised that I was a student and not employed by any organization or government and at the same time spoke to them about the potential benefit to their community that this research may bring.

Since using multi-sited ethnography allows for a research topic to be explored through multiple spaces, but because spaces are not only geographic, but can be social, virtual the direction of the research can be compromised. There can be an abundance of data if it is not focused from the beginning stages of the research. This could have been a limitation because the direction was not always a clear path to follow. (Marcus 1995).

In this case since the project was finished and the number of staff was limited it was not a question of endless possibilities but a question of staying focused on the concept that was being followed throughout the sites which was women's empowerment. This was the main reason why a case study was chosen to track the concept of women's empowerment within the context of the NGO WEZA Project.

When using multi-sited ethnography to compare different group's perspectives of the same concept of women's empowerment, there were at times challenges in obtaining comparable data. Attempting to obtain comparable data may be problematic and some difficulties arose related to cultural appropriateness of questions asked(Marcus 1995). To help limit this possibility, semi-structured interviews were used to not leave the questions constrained and controlled and difficult for the participants to interpret. The participants had the freedom to give their own definitions of key concepts used in the interview and guide the direction of the interview through the open ended questions that semi-structured interviews guidelines provide.

Although Swahili was the common language spoken in Tanzania for the second phase of the research project, English was used in the workplace which made my limitations with the Swahili language easier to deal with. A translator was used with two community member participants which was a disadvantage since my questions and the participants answers

may have been altered in the process of translating. I tried to make up for this by more non-verbal engagements throughout the interview.

Chapter 4: Background Information

Naishi niwezavyo siishi mtakvyo- I live as I can afford not as you wish

-Swahili Proverb on the Kanga

In the following chapter, I will give a brief introduction to Tanzania and Zanzibar as well as the historical, political, and social processes that are relevant in this context. There will also be an overview of Islam and development as both play important roles in the thesis.

Tanzania and Zanzibar

Zanzibar is an archipelago in the Indian Ocean off the East African Coast. The two main islands are Unguja and Pemba, in addition to some 14 smaller islets. The biggest island, Unguja, is located 40 kilometres off the coast of Tanzania's mainland. Zanzibar is a semi-autonomous region in Tanzania. The Revolutionary Government in Zanzibar governs all matters not regarding the union. Zanzibar has its own presidency, ministries, and parliament, as well as representation in the Tanzanian parliament (Myers 2002). There are three levels of government structures below the central level of administration in Zanzibar: the regional administration, which consist of 5 regions; the district administration, consisting of 10 districts; and the 236 *shehia* local government units, which preside over single, large villages or over several smaller ones (Torhonen 1998). *Shehias* are led by a *sheha* who is appointed by the Regional Commissioner upon advice from the District Commissioner. As will be evident in this research project, *shehias* are important entities in the Women's Empowerment in Zanzibar



Source:

http://www.ewpnet.com/trip_maps/zanzibzr.htm

(Retrieved on 15.02.14)

Tanzania is the second most populous country in East Africa, with approximately 40.4 million people in 2007. The total population of Zanzibar Island (Unguja) is about 620,956 while Pemba has 360,797 people. Islam is practiced by 97% of the population as a result of its colonization as an Omani sultanate; the remaining 3% of the population is a mix of Hindus and Christians (World Bank 2009). Kiswahili and English are Tanzania's two official languages, but Arabic is also commonly spoken in Zanzibar (Tanzanian Government 2013).

Historical Overview of Zanzibar

Zanzibar has been inhabited for 20,000 years, but the history truly started as early as the 1st century AD. The island became a base for traders voyaging between Arabia, India, and Africa as it offered a convenient point from which to trade with East African coastal towns. Garrisons were established on the island and the first mosque was built in the southern hemisphere (Fair 2001).

During the Age of Exploration, the Portuguese Empire was the first European power to gain control of Zanzibar, which lasted for nearly 200 years. In 1698, it fell under the control of the Sultanate of the Oman, during which time an economy of trade and cash crops was developed by the ruling Arab elite (Larsen 2008). The major exports of the island were spices that were grown on the plantations, ivory from the mainland, and slaves – Zanzibar was host to one of the world's last open slave markets. In 1890, Zanzibar became a British protectorate. In the early 1960s, as the

nationalist tide swept through the colonies, the British began to withdraw and, on December 10th, 1963, Zanzibar became an independent nation (Larsen 2008). A month later, the bloody Zanzibar Revolution overturned the largely Arab government, banished the sultan and his family, and brought the majority Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP) to power (Lubawa 1985). After the revolution, resistance groups were persecuted and even assassinated under the reign of ASP; the socialist-oriented regime upheld a one-party system (Tanzania National Website). On April 12th, 1964, President Sheikh Abeid Amani Karume signed a Declaration of Union with Tanganyika, thus forming the United Republic of Tanzania.

Development in Tanzania and Zanzibar

Shortly after unification and the adoption of the Arusha Declaration, the newly-created Tanzanian government launched the village development scheme *Ujamaa* across all of Tanzania, including Zanzibar. The purpose of *Ujamaa* was to increase productivity through the creation of communal villages. Within seven years of the launch, over 9 million people had been resettled into 6,000 villages; this accounted for 60% of the population (Ingle 1972). Instead of the expected results of increasing production and generating “development”, these policies left the rural populations worse off than before. Clove production in Zanzibar was particularly impacted by the socialist policies of *Ujamaa* and has never recovered from its effects. In the early 1970s, Zanzibar was the world’s leading producer of cloves; however, under *Ujamaa*, the large farms were divided into smaller units and it

became illegal to sell cloves to any buyer other than the government. Consequently, farmers received a lower price than the world market value causing systematic under-investment (Lubawa 1985). Today, Zanzibar ranks a distant third in the world market, with Indonesia supplying 75% of the world's cloves compared to Zanzibar's 7% (*Country Report* 2008).

The failures of *Ujamaa* went beyond state marketing boards or diminished incentives in agriculture. Private entrepreneurship was discouraged and there was a prohibition on the formation of private initiatives, such as NGOs and credit cooperatives, while at the same time all commercial banks became nationalized and responded solely to the needs of the state (Mutesasira 1999). In the 1980s to 1990s, the country fell into economic crisis, which led to the Tanzanian government adopting the IMF-directed Economic Recovery Program (ERP) that included economic stabilization and Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) (Muganda 2004).

During this time, there was a shift from a centrally-planned economy to a market-oriented economy. Some of the reforms included the devaluation of the currency, reduction of tariffs, changes in the domestic tax system, and increased investment in infrastructure. These reforms had even greater detrimental effects on Tanzanian agriculture, as well as on growth, equity, and the goals of poverty alleviation (Wobst 2001).

One significant change caused by SAPs was that the role of civil society in development and service drastically increased. The number of registered NGOs in Tanzania shot up from 17 in 1979 to 813 by the year

1994 (Wobst 2001). Further growth in the sector was due to subsequent transformations in donor funding strategies in the late 1990s. Donors began to channel aid funds through international- and locally-based NGOs, which were considered to be more efficient, less corrupt, and operated closer to the poor than to government bureaucracies (REPOA 2007). NGOs began to fill in the gaps that the government was forced to back down from due to budgetary restrictions. As people realized the willingness of donors to give direct support to NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs), the number of organisations exploded. In 2000, an NGO Policy was formulated to establish a legislative framework to allow NGOs to operate effectively. The actors representing the policy steering committee included representatives of academia, government, and local and international NGOs that were community-based organizations and religious institutions. They sought to address confusion in NGO registration and the conflicting definitions of an NGO and laws pertaining to the formation of an NGO.

The policy estimated that 2,000 local and international NGOs were operational in Tanzania, but other studies have found that many organisations only practiced on a part-time basis, existed in name and proposal only, or worked in a very limited capacity (REPOA 2007). With NGOs on the rise, it is important to critically investigate their role in society and as a driver for development. This research will further investigate the role of NGOs, with a specific focus on international NGOs, to contribute to

the knowledge of the role they play in the communities in which they implement projects.

NGOs in Zanzibar

Non-Governmental Organizations in Zanzibar have been on the rise since the 1980s when SAPs began to take place. By the end of 2007, there were more than 510 registered NGOs. There are also more than 50 village development organizations, development committees, or other types of primary development committees and unregistered community organisations. (Novak 2012).

According to the government in Zanzibar, NGOs are necessary tools for strengthening economic and social development and are contributors of income and poverty reduction. Since 2009, the Zanzibar government has been involved in creating policies and institutions for NGOs to address the needs of coordination, efficient networks, promotion of their abilities and actors, and the exchange of information among the organizations, the government, and other institutions (Ministry of State 2009).

As part of the Zanzibar Development Vision 2020 and the Strategy of Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction, the government has tried to build a better environment for the NGOs to operate in to further support the government in reaching the goals of their vision by the year 2020 (Ministry of State 2009). The government initiated the Zanzibar Poverty Reduction Plan (ZPRP) in January 2002. This plan was the first step in an attempt to

reach the plan of the Zanzibar Development Vision 2020, of eradicating absolute poverty in the society. The following excerpt is from the introduction text to ZPRP (2007:2):

The ZPRP was an operational plan with strategies to mobilise and utilise domestic financial resources, both public and private, and a framework for attracting external resources to support prioritised expenditure plans. It focused on reducing income poverty, improving human capabilities, survival and social well-being and containing extreme vulnerability; to achieve these, the Plan focused on a selected number of priority sectors, namely, education, health, agriculture, tourism, infrastructure (particularly rural roads) and water, as well as cross-cutting issues like good governance, trade and combating HIV and AIDS.

Empowerment, especially concerning gender and women's empowerment, has become a goal as well as a means for executing Zanzibar's strategy to reduce poverty. By addressing community-based projects, education, and capacity-building as three of the main goals, the government has formally embarked on the decentralisation train (ZSGRP 2007). With the government's openness to international NGO support in their current development initiatives, the role of international NGO projects in the region is a relevant issue to understand the greater scope of the regional development strategies as well as how they coincide with the local communities.

Regional Ethnography – Pluralistic Society

Zanzibar has been greatly influenced by its strategic maritime location between the sailing routes across the Indian Ocean (Middleton 1992). As mentioned previously, although it was founded as a trading depot

by the Portuguese in the 1500s, it was not until Sultan Majid of Oman transferred his capital to Zanzibar City in 1941 that Zanzibar grew into a major Indian Ocean ivory- and slave-trading centre that drew merchants from Southwest Asia, South Asia, the United States, Britain, and Germany. The residents put much emphasis on their “Zanzibariness” in opposition to the Tanzanian mainland while simultaneously differentiating each other within Zanzibar because they originate from different places outside Zanzibar (Larsen 2008).

This common history of mobility stretches along the coast of East Africa, from Somalia to Mozambique along the “the Swahili Coast”; these people are often referred to as Swahili, although coastal people themselves often refuse to use this term. A main topic in the anthropology of the Swahili region has been the issue of whether the people living there constitute a coherent, bounded society and whether the shared Swahili language, religion, and distinguishable culture can constitute an integrated social group (Middleton 1992; Caplan & Toplan 2004). Some have argued that this concept is a mere illusion based on ideological and relatively recent historical trends while others have considered the Swahili coastal culture a dynamic synthesis of African, Arabic, and Asian ideas and practices within an African historical and cultural context – making it distinctively Swahili (Larsen 2008). With this in mind, it is important when mentioning the Swahili coast to respect the diversity present within the island without oversimplifying and differentiating the complexity of

Zanzibar society and to acknowledge the large role it plays in the society today.

Previous anthropological studies on the Swahili coast have covered topics about Islamic mysticism; emic divides between *dini*, practices understood as Islamic, and *mila*, practices viewed as customary or indigenous; but most anthropological literature about Zanzibar has specifically focused on the coastal settlements of Zanzibar (Topan 2009; Larsen 2008, 1998; Middleton 1992; Caplan & Topan 2004). My focus on international development projects in Zanzibar can, therefore, be a small yet relevant contribution to the empirical knowledge of Zanzibar.

Islam in Zanzibar

Dating back to the 10th century, Islam has had a powerful influence in Zanzibar with 97% of the population being Muslim. In pre-colonial and colonial times, Islamic practices in Zanzibar were a fusion of influences from African traditions and various Islamic practices stemming from the Arab world. Debates on Islamic matters flourished and interacted with debates in the greater Swahili Coastal area (Larsen 2008).

After independence, the role of religion in the public sphere was restricted due to the socialist secularism but also because Islam was discursively linked to the “Arab” population that was depicted as alien, imperialist, and capitalist. During this time, many Islamic scholars were forced to leave the country and the remaining religious leaders were predominantly Sufi *sheikhs*, adherents to Islamic mysticism of various

forms and not belonging to a single sect or group (Larsen 2008). This period is known as The Years of Darkness according to many contemporary Zanzibaris, where Zanzibar was once identified as an outward looking hybrid of Islamic scholarship that had been restricted and was forced to turn its back on the world.

With the demise of *Ujamaa* in the 1980s, Tanzania's economy was gradually liberalised and democratic reforms were introduced that resulted in religion once again being allowed in the public sphere. There was a boom in Islamic activities in all areas of life; Islamic NGOs, bookshops, schools, universities, prayer groups, and *dawah* groups have flourished since this time (Turner 2009).

Currently, the majority of Zanzibaris follow the Shafi'i school of Sunni Islam, but the islands are characterized by high Islamic diversity with Ibadhi and Sufi influences and, since the transitional period of Tanzania's political structures, revival movements of many sorts are also playing a part in the composition of the Muslim community (Beckman 2010). The term "Islamic revivalism" will be used throughout the thesis, defined by Siman Turner (2009:9) as:

covering a number of tendencies towards strengthening Islamic thought, practice and belief in Zanzibar – something that is part of a global tendency. This tendency is not necessarily linked to any particular organisations, neither does it express any particular sect. In fact there is an expressed wish among revivalists to move beyond sect and simply be 'Muslims'.

In the context of Zanzibar revivalism, it does not refer to a single movement of a single ideology and the goals, means, and socio-demographic composition vary throughout the process of this revivalism. There is a general tendency for Islam to become more individualized, with the emphasis on the individual's own relation to God rather than various rules and rituals. In addition, Islamic knowledge is less controlled by religious authorities because individuals now have access to Islamic literature and scholars in a variety of ways, including the Internet, satellite television, and through travelling abroad (Turner 2009).

This overview of the diverse approaches to Islam in Zanzibar is important when attempting to engage religion and religious identity and avoid the trap of essentializing Islam and Muslim societies. In the field of anthropology, there have been numerous efforts by scholars (Asad 2009; Marranci 2008; Geertz 1968; Gellner 1981) to find a paradigm through which Muslims can be studied as human beings rather than living symbols of religion. Geertz(1968) analysed religious change in Morocco by developing an approach to Islam that uses both history and anthropology. His analysis is rooted in his conception of anthropology as a discipline whose focus is culture, a system of meanings through which human beings exchange goods and symbols. Asad (2009) approaches Islam through seeking to understand the historical and current conditions that have enabled the production and maintenance of specific discursive traditions, or their transformations, and the efforts of practitioners to achieve coherence.

Although distancing himself from the search for a definite answer to what Islam is, Marranci (2008) argues for a paradigm that makes both senses and emotions the analytical key to Islam and the lives of Muslims.

This attempt to articulate a specifically Islamic perspective or Islamic communication about Muslim communities have projected an essentialized conception of a religion “that crosses societal, cultural, political, and regional formations and histories” (Semati 2011:123). This goes in hand with the tendencies by other scholars to vilify Islam and to attribute it to a whole gamut of issues that are not supported by empirical evidence or careful scrutiny of the analysis that produced such attribution. What structures such a discourse is a logic that insists on cultural and religious distinctions in order to bestow on Islam the status of an ontological category (Semati 2011). What this logic inevitably creates is an us versus them structure in which the “ Other” is always on the side of the backward, which is not fully seen as developed in the field of International Development. This thesis will try to go beyond this essentialized perspective of Islam through bringing forth the perspectives of the beneficiaries and local actors and sharing their own perspectives of what Islam means to them.

Chapter 5: Findings

Neema ya wazee furaha ya watoto- Economic success of parents is a joy to their children.

-Swahili Proverb on the Kanga

This chapter sets out to present the qualitative findings obtained from the fieldwork done in Canada and Tanzania in the case study of CARE-International's Women's Empowerment Project in Zanzibar (WEZA). This will be done by answering the questions posed in Chapter 1: How is the transnational idea of women's empowerment implemented and understood by CARE-International, and how does it speak to or accord with the lived realities of the people at the local implementation setting of Zanzibar? How does it move across the gap between a global understanding of women's empowerment and local socio-cultural understandings of gender and family? These questions will be answered by describing what empowerment meant to the research participants through a cross-site analysis in order to show the movement of the concept. Furthermore, themes emerged from the data analysis, will be presented and examined.

Cross-Site Findings about Understandings of Women's Empowerment

In order to answer the first question posed in the research – How is the transnational idea of women's empowerment implemented and understood by CARE-International, and how does it speak to or accord with the lived realities of the people at the local implementation setting of Zanzibar? – the process was tracked through the various sites of the WEZA project. First, the implementation process will be described on a macro-level to highlight the main actors and their relationships at the various levels of interplay of the concept in motion. Additionally, understandings of empowerment will be presented at each site to show how this concept is translated throughout the various stages of the project's implementation.

Implementation Process of WEZA

The Women's Empowerment in Zanzibar (WEZA) was a four-year project beginning in January 2008 and concluding in December 2011. CARE-International is a global confederation of twelve member countries, each having an autonomous non-governmental organization that implements programs, advocacy, fundraising, and communications activities in its own country as well as countries seen as in need of "developing". CARE works in 84 countries in which projects are implemented from country offices but are managed by one of CARE's members. In the case of WEZA, member country CARE-Austria worked with CARE-Tanzania and the local branch CARE-Zanzibar, in partnership with a local organization called Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA), to

implement the project. As written in an official CARE-International 2011 Report about the process, “This member ensures appropriate and inclusive strategic planning and program development, sound financial management and control, and effective personnel hiring and management” (CARE-International Annual Report 2011:9). Various informants explained the process, including one staff member from TAMWA who noted,

WEZA was implemented with CARE-Tanzania and TAMWA as a partner and Jozani Credit and Development Organization (JOCDO), Pemba Saving and Credit Association (PESACA) were local organizations that helped.

In addition, the project worked with several Civil Society Organizations and the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar. Another informant from CARE-Zanzibar, the regional branch of CARE-Tanzania, mentioned,

Also we had many umbrella NGOs involved that are locally based which trained these groups of women so although the project finished in 2011 it keeps on going. We had a lot of guidance from the other branches of CARE like CARE- Norway , CARE-Austria and even CARE-Canada is involved but not in this project but in northern Tanzania. The donors did not design the project, we got the money from the European Union and with the help of CARE-Norway and Austria these programs are designed and the key indicating problems are identified by CARE.

Understandings of Women’s Empowerment at Various Sites

CARE-International

At the top institutional levels of CARE-International, women’s empowerment has been conceptualized and introduced by member

countries that design programs that are implemented with the framework as a base in the local levels. As explained in one document published by CARE-International (2013:1),

There are as many pathways of women's empowerment as there are women. However, if CARE is to be truly accountable for its contributions to women's empowerment, we must be explicit about our own definition of the concept, and ideas about how it can be measured. The Women's Empowerment SII Framework is CARE's effort to make our ideas about women's empowerment clear, so that others may understand, challenge, and engage them.

Furthermore, the document defines “women’s empowerment” as,

At CARE, we view women’s empowerment through the lens of poor women’s struggles to achieve their full and equal human rights. Therefore, CARE defines women’s empowerment as the sum total of changes needed for a woman to realize her full human rights – the interplay of changes in:

- Agency: her own aspirations and capabilities,
- Structure: the environment that surrounds and conditions her choices,
- Relations: the power relations through which she negotiates her path (CARE-International 2013:1).

CARE-International put together a SII global women’s empowerment framework on concrete outcomes for which it can be held accountable. It organizes the diversity of women’s realities into a shared framework, and links women’s own definitions and priorities for empowerment with 23 key dimensions for social change (CARE-International 2013:1). See figure below:

Agency	Structures	Relations
1. Self-Image; self-esteem	11. Marriage and kinship rules, norms and processes	19. Consciousness of self and others as interdependent
2. Legal and rights awareness	12. Laws and practices of citizenship	20. Negotiation, accommodation habits
3. Information and skills	13. Information and access to services	21. Alliance and coalition habits
4. Education	14. Access to justice, enforceability of rights	22. Pursuit, acceptance of accountability
5. Employment/control of own labor	15. Market accessibility	23. New social forms: altered relationships and behaviors
6. Mobility in public space	16. Political representation	
7. Decision influence in household	17. State budgeting practices	
8. Group membership and activism	18. Civil society representation	
9. Material assets owned		
10. Body health and bodily integrity		

In a separate document from the 2012 CARE-International Annual Report (p. 8) the concept was considered as,

Women's Empowerment means bundling the changes needed for a woman to realize her human rights. The changes need to happen on three stages: a woman's own capabilities and aspirations, the environment that influences her choice and the interactions she engages in each day. In short: Empowerment means changing the relationships and social structures that shape the lives of women and girls.

In the case of WEZA, a CARE-International consultant came to Zanzibar at the start of the project to perform a baseline study in order to formulate a set of impact and effect indicators to help put the framework in place for the program's application. In applying the CARE-International SII

Empowerment framework, the team used both participatory focus groups and a survey to find the impact and effect indicators chosen: economic empowerment, political empowerment, empowerment in the household and cultural barriers, support of CSO and government institutions, income generating activities, empowerment for social action, savings and loans, and social empowerment. These were then divided into the themes of Economic Empowerment and Social Empowerment (De Boodt 2008). At the end of the WEZA project a CARE-International consultant came to do an end term evaluation in which CARE-Tanzania, CARE-Zanzibar, and TAMWA staff were involved. The same survey was repeated and participatory focus groups were used to make a “before-after evaluation” to measure change. As one CARE-International informant explained,

The baseline questions were still there and I wanted to do the survey again; they looked for the baseline survey to see if the questions made sense. They were able to compare the baseline questions with the final evaluation and this was exceptional.

Furthermore, in order to understand and measure empowerment the informant noted that,

Perceptions are not the same as effect... Role plays were used to gain information about the term women’s empowerment and its aims, programs and the tools used, as well as leading questions. The third question asked (during the role play) was if the situation had gotten worse or better and what made that change happen? The role play the beneficiaries performed was about domestic violence, they showed how they were beaten, and it was amazing. They showed us how they dealt with it (domestic violence) and this method worked very well.

The overall objective of the project, according to CARE-International's baseline study, was,

To contribute to poverty reduction and improved social justice in Zanzibar (as per Millennium Development Goals 1, and 3); and the specific objective was:

Income increased and social, cultural, and political barriers to women's empowerment progressively overcome for 6,000 rural poor women. To achieve its objectives, WEZA is operating towards the following expected results (ERs):

- ER1: At least 300 women's groups, mobilized and successfully implementing Village Savings and Loans scheme²
- ER2: 5,000 women undertaking action for social change towards women's empowerment
- ER3: 2,500 women profiting from 4 new or improved market-driven products
- ER4: Grassroots women's empowerment efforts effectively supported by 60 local and national institutions (De Boodt 2008).

In examining how women's empowerment is conceptualized at the CARE-International level, what can be deduced from the findings is that the concept was seen as a human rights issue and fell under the rights-based approach framework frequently used by the International Development community. This framework is where an NGO combines the ideas of

² The village savings and loan associations were originally modelled on CARE-International's project in Niger and has been replicated in several other countries, particularly in Africa. Other international NGOs, including Save the Children, Plan International, World Vision, and OXFAM, have also used this model. The Village Savings and Loan Scheme is a time-bound accumulating savings and credit association in which 15 to 30 people save regularly and borrow from the group fund. Loans usually have terms of between one and three months and are to be repaid with interest. On a date chosen by the members, usually after about a year, all the financial assets are divided among the members in proportion to one's savings. This process produces payouts for members and then the groups normally re-form and start a new cycle of saving and lending. The groups rely solely on their own savings and have no access to external funds. CARE-International introduced this model in Zanzibar in 2001 in the Jozani Savings and Credit Associations program. The role of CARE was to train these groups on how to better operate. CARE trained 61 groups during that time, after which the groups came under the supervision of an apex organization called Jozani Credit Development organization (Anyango et al. 2007).

development and human rights into the development projects. There are four main principles to follow in this approach: human rights-based approach to the design of the program, education about rights-based approach, rights to participation, and accountability. The approach design of the program begins with the analysis of the unfulfilled human rights, then it commits programs and funds to fulfilling these missing human rights (Cornwall & Nyamu-Musembi 2004). CARE-International staff concluded that women in Zanzibar were not benefiting or did not have knowledge of their human rights, so the WEZA project was designed to accomplish this. CARE-International used their Women's Empowerment SII Framework which is used internationally and named their primary objective, to work towards the Millenium Development Goals 1 and 3, which illustrates how the project adhered to the internationally recognized rights-based approach for its overall framework. It is important to note that CARE-International consultants from Austria and other member countries were not frequently present in Zanzibar during the project's implementation aside from the baseline study, and project monitoring and evaluation stages. CARE-Tanzania and their local branch CARE-Zanzibar, in partnership with TAMWA, were on the ground implementing the project. Therefore, it is important to look at the rest of the sites to understand how women's empowerment was understood.

CARE-Tanzania

In the WEZA Project, CARE-Tanzania was the country office that was to implement the project in partnership with TAMWA. CARE-Tanzania is located in Dar Es Salaam, which is commonly known as mainland Tanzania, but most of the work was done from the sub-office of CARE-Zanzibar. As explained by a CARE-International informant,

In Zanzibar there were a few people from Care-Tanzania in the project. In the headquarters in Dar es Salaam they need to write reports and it is about the organization business. It was at the CARE-Zanzibar office where the work with the beneficiaries was going on, and where they dealt with the day to day problems. The people in Dar Salaam didn't know the critical issues of the WEZA project. They were very busy people. They came to Zanzibar for the debriefing.

When asked about their role in empowering women in Zanzibar and how empowerment is understood, a CARE-Tanzania informant at office in Dar Es Salaam noted,

In Zanzibar the cultural and religious norms really make it hard for women to become empowered and many women are disempowered especially in the island of Pemba. In the Island of Pemba 60-70 percent of women are illiterate. They get married at 12, 13, 14 and also have very early pregnancies. There is also gender based violence where rape is involved and since it is a culture of secrecy not a lot of these incidences are reported. The beginnings were hard for this project because not a lot of women wanted to join and many of the men did not let their wives join the loans and savings program.

The religion of Islam was given mention when the informant explained,

Pemba is more disempowered because it is more religious and they are closer to Arabic roots, their descendent culture where as the main island is more African culture

The informant further explained what women's empowerment meant to CARE-Tanzania in the WEZA project by explaining the objectives and ways the project was implemented:

The major objective of the project was to increase income of women and overcome social, cultural and political barriers to their empowerment. This makes the empowerment efforts to appear in two intertwined components of social and economic. CARE-Tanzania dealt with the loan project of Village Savings and Loans groups while the Tanzania Women's Media Association dealt with the social side of the project.

What can be deduced from these findings is that the country office of CARE-Tanzania was slightly removed from the project implementation and had more responsibilities in the administrative aspect of the project, especially in managing the organization and maintaining relationships with the member country while providing donors with reports about the organization. Women's empowerment, to them, was a response to end some of the practices that were seen as disempowering due to cultural and religious norms. Islam was seen as impeding empowerment; as the informant mentioned above, the women of Pemba were more disempowered because it is more religious. The staff from CARE-Tanzania overall perspective on women's empowerment was closely in line with the CARE-International SII Framework used in the baseline survey that generated the key indicators to empowerment. The focus on the economic empowerment side of the project meant dealing with the Village Savings and Loans program, which CARE-International introduced to Zanzibar in 2001 and already had over 100 active associations.

CARE-Zanzibar

CARE-Zanzibar is a sub-office of CARE-Tanzania and is located in Zanzibar City on Unguja Island, which is near some of the villages where the WEZA project was implemented. CARE-Zanzibar was on-site for the project's implementation and played a major role in working with the local villages throughout the project. In speaking about women's empowerment in the WEZA project, one informant from CARE-Zanzibar explained,

Women's Empowerment in Zanzibar deals with women's empowerment and by empowerment we mean that we want to help women socially and economically. You know, right now female villagers can't see themselves as leaders, businesswomen and active members of the community and are not able to express themselves to their full potential so WEZA helped them in these regards.

Further elaborating what was meant by social empowerment, the informant explained,

Socially, we offered adult classes to help women learn as many are not able to read or write. We also had activities that would help women change their attitudes of being shy and help them identify their own problems as to say capacity building. As many of the women are shy and are not able to express themselves to their full potential. It also helped them to play a stronger role in their households and be more aware of their defined roles and be aware of their rights and roles and responsibilities as women. Through these activities they were able to gain capacity to address problems and understand their roles in societies and in their villages and households.

Regarding economic empowerment, the informant elaborated,

To empower women economically, we had the Village Savings and Loans program, which taught women how to save and give loans and at the same time trained women on how to run a business. In their villages, groups of 15 women would form and get together. Weekly they would meet and give each other loans

from 500 to 1000 shillings³. It was like a business, the more the woman saves, the more the loan she was able to give, like shares in a way. The project was highly successful especially the economic empowerment component of the VS&L, which keeps on going and the weekly meetings of the village groups are still functioning.

One interesting finding that came up in the discussion with informants from CARE-Zanzibar was their reference to Islam as a means to empower women. As mentioned by one informant,

Many times people who are not knowledgeable about Islam perceive it to be impeding women's empowerment and the cause of disempowerment but this is not the case and people just do not have knowledge of what Islam is. Islam is a way of life and actually gives women a lot of empowerment.

CARE-Zanzibar seemed to have a nuanced approach to understanding women's empowerment. While the concept was viewed through the lens of CARE-International's indicators, specific understandings of what they meant were taken from dealings with the communities they were working with. The definition was explained through the two major indicators of social and economic empowerment – the specific indicators that were predetermined in the baseline study that CARE-International introduced have not been used. Specifically, when looking at the social component, the informants used examples from the ground level of what needed to be changed in terms of education, role in the household, and self-expression. As a way of life for the people of Zanzibar, Islam was mentioned as a path to women's empowerment when one is properly informed. Furthermore, although CARE-Zanzibar was in charge of the

³ 1 Canadian dollar is equal to 1469 Tnz Shillings Source: www.currency.me.uk retrieved on March 3, 2014

economic empowerment component of the project, which dealt with the Village Savings and Loan Associations that were introduced to certain communities in 2001, informants from the office still had extensive knowledge about the communities they worked in and their social needs.

TAMWA

The Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA) is a local NGO with a mission of advocating for women's and children's rights by conducting awareness-raising activities for cultural, policy, and legal transformation through the use of media. For the WEZA project, TAMWA was in partnership with CARE-Tanzania on the implementation end of the project. In explaining their position on what women's empowerment means, one informant illustrated,

TAMWA dealt with social and political issues and CARE-Zanzibar dealt with the economic issues. The project originally had 300 target women's groups to mobilize and we ended up mobilizing 7000 women through the saving and loans programs done by CARE as our entry points. For gender, human rights, and gender-based violence, we had many organizations help with activities to show the women their rights and mobilize them.

The informants of TAMWA gave detailed descriptions about what some of the issues rural women of Zanzibar faced that they saw as disempowering. They spoke about women not being allowed work or leave the home without her husband's permission, women not getting her rights in accordance with Sharia Law in divorce and inheritance issues, women

being shy and not engaging in public affairs or running in public offices, early marriage, and gender-based violence. Some examples informants gave were:

There is a patriarchal system here where there is a notion that men must be the dominant and certain concepts of Islam are misinterpreted and contribute to undermining women in the communities so we had religious leaders teach women about Islam with Islamic teachers.

In line with this perspective, another informant mentioned,

It is a patriarchal system and women were not able to participate or express themselves and were told that men can only do leadership positions because the Quranic verses were used such as that the man is leader and that men is her heaven. Through WEZA we had to change attitudes to change women so they participate in public affairs and run in public offices.

You see, men would treat women like properties and want them inside the home and think that women who go outside will be involved in extramarital relations but after the men saw the success of the project and the benefits, they wanted to join themselves and would even get jealous and say that WEZA only loves women and it was hard for us to keep all the men from joining and that is why we had such an influx.

The informants further elaborated about the various local organizations and state authorities they collaborated with, in order to explain the methods that were used to address and change the issues at hand. Below is the final figure of all the state and local organizations that contributed to the WEZA Project.

**Institutions and organizations
that supported the VS&L groups
Government institutions**

CSOs/NGOs

Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Affairs	ZAFELA (Zanzibar Female Lawyers Association)
Ministry of Information, Tourism, Culture and Sports	ZLSC (Zanzibar Legal Service Centre)
Ministry of Social Welfare, Youth, Women and Children Development	ZANA
Ministry of Health	ZAMEW (Zanzibar Media Women Forum)
Ministry of Education and Vocational Training - Adult Classes and Gender Unit	COWPZ (Catalyst for Women Progress in Zanzibar)
Ministry of Trade Industries and Markets	TGNP (Tanzania Gender network)
Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources – PADEP, TASAF. Extension Department	ZAWCO
Ministry for Local Government	FAWE
Ministry of Internal Affairs – police in particular – DPP and police female network	ACTION AID
Ministry of State, first Vice President Office – Department of Drug abuse	ACRA
	PIRO (Pemba Island Relief Organization)
	PRADO
	UWAMWIMA (Vegetable Growers Association Western District)
	ZCCIA
	JUWAMI
	JUWAKAP

(De Boodt 2008)

TAMWA informants also spoke of how they were able to mobilize many women and help them gain confidence. Women were trained to know their religious and legal rights, engage in political activities, speak out against gender-based violence and reported it to the police, and were getting further education. As one informant indicated,

Women were very shy to talk to people and express themselves so we had the African women educational centre educate women encourage families to have their girls acquire an education. The Zanzibar Female Lawyers Association provided them with legal services and counselling to access their rights and train them. Another organization COWPZ (Catalyst for Women Progress in Zanzibar) , the catalyst of rural women, helped women to participate in their communities at the local level and mobilize them the *sheha* leaders on the community level.

For the informants at TAMWA, women's empowerment is certainly an ongoing process in which the WEZA project was a mere stepping stone in tackling what they believe needs to be accomplished. Informants spoke about the need for more advocacy in women's problems as all cases knowledge is limited and, although the project helped the rural women gain income, it did not give them the skills to go further and join major projects involved in Zanzibar City and Mainland Tanzania. An example given by one of the informants was,

We had one woman who got a larger role in a big project but she was behind because of her lack of English and she didn't follow as quickly as the others. We need the women to join larger projects and see what others are doing like selling things outside the country.

Furthermore, informants from TAMWA gave mention to the importance of mobilization on the greater community level because, to them, the issue of empowering women was only one of the many challenges that exist in rural communities.

When speaking about the role of men in the communities, informants explained that men were very involved in the process although the project was geared toward women. They explained that the beginning was hard for the men, and many did not trust WEZA and asked their wives not to join. But when they saw the benefits from the women that did join, specifically in earning their own money, the men allowed their wives to join and even wanted to join themselves. As one informant commented,

The main barrier to this project was men as they would tell their wives that if they would leave the house they would be like

prostitutes and that the urban women (Zanzibar city) who were coming into the villages with bad intentions. You see men would treat women like properties and want them inside and think that women who go outside will be involved in extramarital relations but after the men saw the success of the project and the benefits they wanted to join themselves.

What is clear from the findings is that TAMWA used the WEZA project as a platform to address the issues of the communities. TAMWA was on the front line of the project's implementation and had a lot of freedom as to which activities and workshops they would bring to the villages. Although there was some reference to women's empowerment as a human rights mandate, mostly it was discussed from the community level in reference to the specific needs of the rural women of Zanzibar. In mentioning practices that derived from Islam being misconceived, women not getting their religious rights fulfilled in marriage, and women not being active in the public sphere, TAMWA collaborated with various local religious authorities and local NGOs focusing on education, law, and politics to start a mobilization process, which would be only the beginning of what needed to be done according to them.

Local Community Members

WEZA was implemented in 60 *Shehia*: 30 in Pemba and 30 in Unguja. *Shehia* are the lowest unit of jurisdiction in Zanzibar, equivalent to a village. In each of the *Shehia*, a coordinator was trained by TAMWA and was closely involved in all the social empowerment activities. They were to compile data and follow up on women's and children's issues and report back to WEZA

as well as to the Ministry of Youth, Employment, Women and Child Development. The final count of members for the Village Savings and Loans groups was 7841, 785 of which were men. However, an estimated 120,000 community members participated in various social activities through the 4 years of implementation. When asked about what women's empowerment meant, the informants spoke of the issues that affected them prior to the project's implementation: gender-based violence, early marriage, lack of education, shyness, and Islam being misused and misinterpreted. As one informant mentioned,

Before WEZA, there was male dominance and this was practiced to the top. WEZA physically educated women and gave women's rights through WEZA and were not shy anymore. There is male dominance and early marriages after WEZA but everything minimized and still continues to help the community even though the project finished and it is sustaining.

Similar to what TAMWA informants spoke about, to the community members, the issue was more deeply rooted in structural and societal issues and could not be addressed by solely focusing on the symptoms that have manifested as a result of what the women had faced. As summed up by one informant,

Islamic leaders keep telling our society about women and what women must do but do not talk about men and their responsibilities. When a woman is working, the man must take care of her as well. Both need to be coexisting together and helping each other as it is said Islam.

They also mentioned the role of men in the WEZA project:

As for the men, some were happy with WEZA, cooperated and saw the benefits, and some were afraid and only a very few; most saw benefits. They saw the benefits and the few were

jealous because women were out of the house and were afraid that if they are out of the home they would be inferior and the women would become superior so they would fear about WEZA.

According to the informants there was a change in their communities after the WEZA project and many benefited from the WEZA project. They were very happy about the social and economic benefits that materialized. Although the project finished 2 years earlier, many of the activities and the lessons the informants learnt from the project continued to resonate with them. One informant was building her own house and said that she was inspired by the WEZA project, the Village Savings and Loan groups were ongoing and women themselves were approaching local Islamic leaders and asking them to focus their sermons on issues more relevant to them.

WEZA physically educated women and through WEZA and were not shy anymore. The position of women is now *mzuri* and everyone is in good position. Everyone comes to coordinate and if they see anything like rape domestic violence or violence against women they cooperate with courts and the cases are moving and rape cases reduced and they go on want to fight it in the courts. There is a special place in police stations that have gender based violence case and they coordinate with *shehas*. All our lives we never saw such a good project.

For community members, the WEZA project was one approach towards the process of structural changes that they envisioned for their own communities. Informants spoke of the need for more education and mobilization on a greater scale. Their hope was also that Islam would be rightfully practiced to give everyone in the community their proper rights in accordance the book of Allah, the Quran and the Hadith (the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed). As summed up nicely by one informant,

So there is a lot of changes that must take place but it will take a long time but *inshallah* [God willing] it will change. We will be fighting it.

Themes

There were two major themes that emerged from the data collected: local NGOs as intermediates, and Islamic revivalism as a means to translate women's empowerment to the local communities. This section will discuss these themes, which will demonstrate how vernacularization was in effect throughout the implementation process of the WEZA project. It will answer the second question posed at the beginning of this thesis: how does the concept of women's empowerment move across the gap between a global understanding of women's empowerment and local socio-cultural understandings of gender and family?

Partnership Brokers: Local NGOs

Throughout the WEZA project implementation, it was revealed in the findings that the concept of women's empowerment was not simply brought to the local communities by the NGO CARE-International, but rather various actors in the local arena were involved in a dynamic process. The local NGOs, CARE-Zanzibar and TAMWA, can be seen as brokers who acted as the main intermediates between the global and local levels and were positioned within a complex field of actors. They were negotiating the concept of women's empowerment with the various stakeholders within the WEZA project. This process happened at various levels from CARE-International, who originally brought forth the project and viewed it as a human rights mandate that should be applicable to every context, to state officials, CARE-Tanzania, various local NGOs in Zanzibar, the *shehas* who

are the local authorities of the *shehia* districts, and the beneficiaries of the communities. Through the various stages of negotiations, CARE-Zanzibar and WEZA adapted the CARE-International women's empowerment mandate in the local context. During the process, they were subject to different compulsions, such as the expectations from the global arena of CARE-International to take the rights-based approach and follow the SII Framework that adheres to the Millennium Development Goals, to write reports to the donors, as well as the necessities that arose from the field like cultural specifics that had to be taken into consideration.

Although both CARE-Zanzibar and TAMWA served the role of brokers to complete the vernacularization process, what made these two organizations different from each other was to whom they were more accountable. First, as previously mentioned, CARE-Zanzibar is a branch of CARE-Tanzania, which is a country office of CARE-International whereby the 12 member countries can bring forth their various development projects and implement them through CARE-Tanzania. Since CARE-Tanzania was distantly located on Mainland Dar Es Salaam, CARE-Zanzibar was to act on their behalf in the places where WEZA was implemented. Their role throughout the project focused on the economic component that dealt with bringing in new or improved market-driven products and the Village Savings and Loan scheme that CARE-International had introduced in previous years. For this reason, CARE-Zanzibar had less autonomy in decision-making throughout the implementation process as they had to be

mindful of the CARE-International framework and keep them, along with the donors, up-to-date on the WEZA activities. TAMWA, on the other hand, is an independent local NGO that has been functioning in Tanzania since 1987 to help women and children by conducting awareness-raising activities for cultural, political, and legal changes through the use of media. In focusing on the social component of the WEZA project that included grassroots women's empowerment efforts supported by 60 local and national institutions and undertaking action for social change towards women's empowerment, TAMWA had a strong connection and presence on the ground with the rural beneficiary communities and was working closely with the various local institutions that joined in on the project.

One example that showed the strong connection TAMWA had to the communities was when one staff informant from TAMWA explained the hardships that arose when they first arrived to recruit beneficiaries. Many community members, especially the men were apprehensive of their wives joining the programs and taking part in training sessions given by the local organizations. Most informants from CARE-International and CARE-Tanzania said that the cause of this was men trying to keep women in the home due to Islamic cultural barriers. Although agreeing that this may have been one explanation, the TAMWA informant went beyond this explanation and revealed that there was an incident where NGOs set up financial programs in the rural communities only to steal the money the community members had made. The informant explained,

Some [community members] feared this [joining WEZA] because other NGOs were dishonest and ran away with money. In 2006 there was a program set up of village loans and in the end the project stole people's money and left the communities. So they had a reason to mistrust.

One CARE-International informant explained the functionality of these organizations which further illustrates their roles as brokers,

Zanzibar is different than mainland by history and culturally. What is important is the political issues. Mainland should not put their nose in their business from politicians and government people, the communities are in a way isolated and women are even more isolated. In Zanzibar, there were a few people of CARE in the project. As the head office is in Dar Salaam, communication was not very frequent and a bit superficial. In the headquarters in Dar Salaam, they need to write a report and it is about organization business. On the ground is where the work is going on, CARE-Zanzibar and TAMWA dealt with the day to day problems. The people in Dar Salaam didn't know the critical issues of the Zanzibar program. They were very busy people so they came to Zanzibar for the debriefing. The Tanzanian Women's Media Association had a huge impact and achieved so much.

Another informant from CARE-Tanzania's head-office also gave mention to this when asked about some of the stories from the field regarding the beneficiaries:

TAMWA would be a great contact to tell you about stories and about the culture of Zanzibar as I am from Mainland and only dealt with the project at the end of the 4 years while the other members have more information.

Both these informants helped illustrate how TAMWA and CARE-Zanzibar can be regarded as brokers negotiating with the various stakeholders in the WEZA project. Additionally, the divisions and tensions between islanders and mainlanders were mentioned, which was a topic that surfaced many times throughout the fieldwork.

Community member informants also spoke about intermediaries in the WEZA project and other development initiatives. Two informants spoke about how, throughout the duration of the project, they only had dealings with local Zanzibari staff either from WEZA or CARE-Zanzibar. Another informant spoke about foreign NGOs and how many international NGO projects in the community started incorporating more local community members for project implementation:

In my village, there were 3 foreign NGOs that did things with the community and recently they try to get community representatives involved in the projects as before they would fail because the NGOs would come in and not understand the culture context or the culture of the village and the needs of the community.

Another informant mentioned,

Foreign NGOs many times do not understand the issues and they are more of a business working to make money and not really make changes. When they hear of social issues, they are not willing to help or blame Islam without understanding the context.

These were only a few among the many examples that displayed the negative sentiments community members had towards international NGOs, which perhaps helps explain why local NGOs and community members are contracted to help in the implementation stages of development projects.

As highlighted, in the WEZA project, TAMWA and CARE-Zanzibar played the roles of brokers and were seeking to conceptualize women's empowerment in terms that would resonate with local populations and, at the same time, satisfy global expectations but they both executed this in different ways. By analyzing their organizational structure and their roles

throughout the implementation process, it was found that CARE-Zanzibar was more accountable and bound to CARE-International and the donor organizations in making sure the project was in line with the international framework of the rights-based approach to women's empowerment and the Millennium Development Goals while TAMWA was more connected to what was happening on the ground and making sure the project was relevant and resonated with the rural communities. Nevertheless, both TAMWA and CARE-Zanzibar worked hard to cooperate with each other, and consultations and negotiations occurred between them and all the various stakeholders throughout the duration of the project.

As brokers that help in the process of translating between global and local systems of meaning, TAMWA and CARE-Zanzibar experienced power in setting the terms of exchange and how to channel them but, at the same time faced vulnerability in the limitations in persuading people with grievances to accept their interpretations and to induce elites to provide financial, social, and political support to the aspects of the project that they deemed relevant (Merry 2006). The strategies that both organizations used fell along a continuum in the vernacularization process, which, as described by Merry (2006), can range from a replication of the global form to a hybrid merging of distinct local and global institutions and ideologies. The variations are not bounded, but are a matter of degree. There are also constraints on either end of the continuum; TAMWA and CARE-Zanzibar had to walk a fine line between too much replication, in which case the new

ideas would have lost their appeal to local communities, and too much hybridity, in which case the reforms would have lost their support of the global community including funding and publicity. But since vernacularization was a continual process during the time of implementation, there was constant negotiation and reformation in response to events and opportunities that redefined both the power and limits of translation (Merry 2006).

Islamic Revivalism

Throughout the WEZA project, the main intermediaries, TAMWA and CARE-Zanzibar, were working on vernacularizing imported concepts of women's empowerment. Although both played different roles and were in charge of specific portions of the interventions, with TAMWA working on the social aspect and CARE-Zanzibar working on the economic aspect, the way in which women's empowerment was adapted to local conditions was quite similar. The major challenges in implementing gender policies in Zanzibar was the fact that while CARE-International's official development discourse and politics linked with global concepts of women's empowerment, it was disconnected from the local Muslim society. TAMWA and CARE-Zanzibar faced this challenge by negotiating development from below and localizing the global discourse, carving new special spaces to bridge the established divide between universal rights-based orientation and Islamic visions of gender.

During the fieldwork, informants from CARE-International and CARE-Tanzania spoke of Islam as a major barrier that impeded women's empowerment but, in other cases, the religious aspect appeared to be ignored as official CARE-International documentation concerning the WEZA project had no mention of religion or Islam. Both of these issues can be deemed problematic because the Islamic discourse was predominant throughout Zanzibar and the community's link to their faith played an important role in many aspects of their lives. In a discussion with one of the informants from CARE-International, they said,

First thing that it is a Muslim country, the communities are in a way isolated and women are even more isolated. Women have coloured attire and in some other place they wear black and have less exposure to the outside world. The Muslim religion is very strong, more than other places like in Sierra Leone which is also a Muslim country but people were doing things in their own way.

Similarly another informant from CARE-Tanzania said,

In Zanzibar, the cultural and religious norms really make it hard for women to become empowered and many women are disempowered, especially in the island of Pemba. Pemba is more disempowered because it is more religious and they are closer to Arabic roots their descendent culture whereas the main island is more African culture.

Informants from CARE-International and CARE-Tanzania, who were not residents of Zanzibar and did not spend as much time in the field during the WEZA project, attributed Islam to disempowering women and perceived there to be an inherently dangerous relationship between the practice of this religion and the status women. Issues of Islamic attire, closer roots to Arabic culture, a woman's position in her home, and her ability to leave the

home to work were viewed as Islamic practices that were the main barriers to empowerment.

The NGO staff from TAMWA and CARE-Zanzibar had very different opinions on matters of Islam and the status on women. One informant from CARE-Zanzibar illustrated,

Many times people who are not knowledgeable about Islam perceive it to be impeding women's empowerment and the cause of disempowerment, but this is not the case and people just do not have knowledge of what Islam is. Islam is a way of life and actually gives women a lot of empowerment. Islam does not tell women not to work or leave the home or not to learn and be able to read in write. In the Quran, the first *ayat* that ever came from Allah was *Ikrah* which means read in Arabic. It is important in Islam as the Prophet did not know how to read but still Allah commanded him to read. Similarly the Prophet's wife Khadija, she was a businesswoman who was very respected and successful. People have the wrong concept of Islam. Here in Zanzibar it is traditions and customs that impede women to be empowered and not the religion of Islam. Women in Islam must present themselves as women, like with the scarf, you are women, a self-respecting woman wears it to be considered as a woman and not a man. There are differences between men and women.

According to the informants from CARE-Zanzibar and TAMWA, some practices that existed in the communities did not embody full Islamic principles and were believed to be taken out of context. In having an understanding of what a great role Islam plays in the lives of many Zanzibaris, they facilitated workshops and various training sessions using Islamic ethics and worked alongside Islamic community leaders. One staff member from TAMWA touched on this issue and noted,

Perceptions of Islam were sometimes misinterpreted in how they believed. We asked religious leaders who are gender sensitive and sent them communities and tried to use Hadith,

Quran, and histories of women during the Islamic era to let the women know that some of the practices are not the same as in Islam. At first women did not look and did not want to participant but we have stories in Islam of women such as Khadija who are businesswomen and so we helped the women engage in small business and, at the end, with their groups they were able to have social funds and things changed for them. Men were even supported by their wives and both contributed to the relationship. Men would provide basics and women would support clothes and education for the girls with the money she was able to save.

Similarly, another informant from TAMWA confirmed,

Quranic verses were used such as that the man is leader and that man is her heaven so through WEZA we had to change attitudes about women so they can participate in public affairs and run in public offices. We had found Islamic leaders who wanted to change things for women and we had one who is doing his PhD and it worked out because he was part of a religious leader network and he would come into the communities and speak to them about Islam and how many of the concepts may have been misused and would tell them about the people in the Prophet's time. We also had the gatekeepers of the *shehias* who were positive leaders and working in the front line. So with these gatekeepers and the religious leaders they would tell them the correct version of the misinterpretations and give examples of the Prophet's time, such as in the Islamic era there were women presidents and during this time no Quranic verse from God came down to tell them that this is not correct so it shows that this was okay by our creator. They would give stories of Khadija who was a great successful businesswoman and a wife of the Prophet, as well as Aisha who was an educated woman and wrote many hadith about the Prophet's life.

As the informants illustrated, in the beginning it was not easy to get community members to participate in the WEZA project and many times it was assumed that, in order to practice Islam correctly, the women must stay in the home, get married young, and raise the children while the husband works and provides for the family. In working through this

obstacle, instead of alluding to the human rights framework or the women's empowerment understanding brought by the Millennium Development Goals that were followed by CARE-International, they incorporated Islamic teachings into their workshops and brought Islamic leaders into the communities. They used stories and verses from the Quran and Hadith to encourage women to enjoy social, economic, and political development in the community. Framing the role of women within the context of Islamic faith made it more acceptable for beneficiaries to participate in the WEZA project and started a dialogue in the communities about other perspectives on various gender issues that are accepted in Islam and, in turn, helped mobilize the community to engage in politics and work-related activities. What was important was that options were given to the women. For example, instead of only looking at the importance of the family unit and raising children into strong members of society who are connected to their Islamic roots, women also had to option to work outside the home by using the story of Khadija – a businesswoman and the Prophet's wife – and other economic teachings of Islam. In addition to the examples quoted by some of the informants, other references included:

And among his signs is this: that He created mates for you from yourself that you may find rest and peace of mind in them, He ordained between you love and mercy. Certainly, herein indeed are signs for people who reflect (Haleem 2004:30, 21).

For seeking education, they explained that both women and men had the same rights and obligations in using a quote from the Hadith, "Seeking knowledge is mandatory for every believer" (Yamani & Allen 1996:92).

In addition to incorporating an Islamic framework into the project, in working as brokers, CARE-Zanzibar and TAMWA were able to foresee certain aspects of the CARE-International framework that would not respond well with the community members in the early implementation stages of the project. One example was the Village Savings and Loans scheme, which was introduced by CARE-International. The original Village Savings and Loans model allowed savers to earn interest of 5% on their deposits. The intermediaries knew that according to Sharia Law interest is prohibited from being collected, so groups attached a service fee instead. As illustrated by an informant from CARE-Zanzibar,

One challenge we came across was *riba* and the Village and Savings program as in Islam interest, *riba*, is forbidden and it is not allowed as it is a sin. What we did instead was to have a service charge and not *riba*. So the woman who was giving a loan beforehand charged a service charge for the job she was doing which made it okay to give the loan.

Just as the informants from CARE-Zanzibar and TAMWA spoke a lot about using the Islamic framework throughout WEZA and knew what an important role Islam plays in the lives of Zanzibaris, the community informants, both men and women, also discussed these issues. One female community member informant noted,

You see Islam the first verse that came was *ikrah*, which is 'read'. This is for everyone, we must read to gain proper knowledge and know our rights. Women must read and study Sharia [Islamic law] and common law and know that Islam does not prohibit these things and know what to do in situations. In Islam, women and men are equal and we will not be judged for being a man or woman but for our hearts. Islam came to empower women. during the pre-Islamic areas women used to be buried alive, treated like slaves and sold like cattle, and not

treated like human beings. Islam told us that we are equal and that men are not superior to women but unfortunately people misuse it or do not understand it. With Islam, yes women are different than men in two things. When they go outside they must wear the *hijab* and that is the physical covering as well as *hijab* as a behaviour. And men must take care of this for their women. You see my husband is okay with me working and I cover well and there is no problem in Islam with this, I am not committing any sins. I hope to raise my children in this way.

A male informant from the community illustrated the roles of men and women in Islam, noting,

Islamic is not about equality between men and women, to us although the same under the eyes of God, we do play different roles in this life to have a functioning society. It is sad when in the West, women use men as their standard to what equality is. You see in Islam men have to do everything, cook, clean, and women must be good to their husbands and respect them but many times people misinterpret Islam and do not understand their roles.

Another male informant from the community mentioned,

Many people practice Islam but use old customs that are not Islamic and are cultural which are not good in Islam. For me, there is only Allah and that is it, you do not need anything else.

Additionally, these Islamic principles and the notion of Islamic revivalism were embodied in the actions of the participants. Two female informants spoke about challenging certain religious clerics in the communities and spoke to them about issues that were important to them. This goes to show that the dialogue that was started about status of women in Zanzibar through an Islamic framework went past mere discussions and materialized into actions. As one female informant remarked,

We go to the *imams* and ask them why many of their sermons are just about how women should be and we tell them to speak more about the men and tell them that women in Islam are empowered like Khadija, Fatima who were strong women in Islam but men only address what women must do.

Instead of referencing Islam as a barrier to women's empowerment, Islam is used as a way to mobilize communities and bring together religious leaders and the beneficiaries for a discussion that brought to light the nature of Islam and its role in society. Local forms of Islam were challenged by a number of new, revivalist kinds of Islam, influenced to some degree by a global Islamic revival but shaped by the particular, local histories and politics which is in line with Simon Turner's(2009) theory of this phenomenon mentioned in Chapter 2. Participants throughout the fieldwork would reference globally followed English speaking scholars and reference their YouTube lectures or TV series in explaining their perspectives on aspects such as gender and why the status of women in Zanzibar was not in line with what they considered as strong Islamic values. The Islamic revival that took place during the WEZA project and was present throughout Zanzibar was far from radical or violent. In fact, Islamic revivalism challenged the religious authority of traditional sheikhs who used to have a monopoly on interpreting Islam and brought forth alternative perspectives on women in Islam that stemmed from the fundamental teachings from the Quran and the Hadith, centred on the Sharia.

Islamic revivalism taught that, within Islam, many varying perspectives and practices can be accepted depending on circumstances as it is an all-encompassing faith. Thus, when working alongside the beneficiaries, the local organizations spoke of women's empowerment and women's rights under Sharia Law rather than as a Millennium Development Goal or a human rights law. There was support for an increased influence of Islamic values and it was seen, according to staff from TAMWA and CARE-Zanzibar, as a solution that resonated with the rural communities. As the global concept of women's empowerment was brought to the communities through the WEZA project, it became vernacularized by local intermediaries who interweaved it with practices and discourses of Islamic revivalism and to produce a hybrid discourse that drew more extensively on local institutions, knowledge, and practices but thought about empowerment in new ways that were able to bring change to the rural communities (Merry 2006).

Chapter 6: Conclusion

***Situmai uzuri wangu, natumai bahati yangu- I value not your wallet
but your morality.***

-Swahili Kanga Proverb

What Was Accomplished

For decades, anthropological studies have focused on the problems with development and argued that the initiatives were “paradoxically used to consolidate inequality and perpetuate poverty” (Venkatesan & Yarrow 2012:1). This thesis has moved past this critical stance and focused on development as a mode of engagement that attempts to understand, represent, and work within the international system. In working within the “interpretive grid” of the development discourse, ethnographic details were sought about the organizational apparatus of development (Ferguson 1990). In addition, a deeper analysis was sought out of the ways in which concepts of development have come to play in the lives of those affected.

In the world of development, buzzwords have played an important role in framing interventions. “Women’s empowerment” has taken a prominent place within the development lexicon and has been listed as one of the Millennium Development Goals by the United Nations, which helped make its mark as a universal struggle for all. This thesis has taken a critical look at how this global concept has been framed and used to justify development interventions. This was done through a case study of CARE-International’s Women’s Empowerment in Zanzibar project, by analysing how the concept is able to reach the local arena, how it is perceived and negotiated, and questioning if it becomes meaningful on the ground. Here,

Sally Merry's (2006) concept of vernacularization, as well as analyses of brokerage and translation, offers tools to look at this process.

In using a multi-sited ethnography, the concept of women's empowerment was tracked throughout the various sites of the WEZA project. It was shown that women's empowerment is not simply brought to the beneficiaries by international organizations like CARE-International, but by various actors in the local arena who were involved in a dynamic process of translating, negotiating, and making the concept more meaningful to the beneficiaries. Local NGO partners TAMWA and CARE-Zanzibar can be seen as brokers and were working in between the local and global levels in order to adopt such concepts in the local context. They have positioned themselves within a complex field of actors and were subject to different compulsions, like the expectations from the global arena to keep close to the international framework that was set out for them, as well as dealing with the cultural specificities that have to be taken into consideration (Merry 2006). It has been shown that the CARE-Zanzibar and TAMWA utilised their platform to be efficacious in advocating for the local struggles at the community levels but however at the same time with their links to the International NGO CARE-International, it is not to say that they have not desired the "global" influence. They emphasised their "global" and "local" image and status, as perceived by others, under particular circumstances, and for particular ends, in a bid to counteract more powerful players.

The means through which the local intermediaries helped translate women's empowerment was by incorporating principles of Islam that were part of the Islamic revivalism movement that was going on in Zanzibar. Through this, the intermediaries helped the concept move between the gap of a global understanding and the local socio-cultural understanding of gender and family. Given the strong influence Islam has on the region, through workshops, training sessions, and working alongside community leaders, women's empowerment transformed into a dialogue of the role of women in Islam in accordance to Sharia Law. Community members took on an all-encompassing approach to Islam where alternative practices, such as women working outside the home or engaging in politics, were seen as also acceptable for women to take part in. At the same time, the local intermediaries had to please CARE-International and their donors by incorporating CARE-International's Women's Empowerment SII Framework and the Millennium Development Goals recognized universally and, therefore, wrote many progress reports and had CARE-International representatives present for monitoring and evaluating the project to ensure this was the case.

This thesis has challenged the global/local dichotomy that is dominant in international development and illustrated that it is an inadequate means for mapping the work of International NGOs and tracking women's empowerment given the complex intertwined relationship between the two so called "spheres". It was shown that through various

actors especially the local NGOS on the ground during the WEZA project, negotiation processes, and translations, women's empowerment became vernacularized and, thus, a new concept was developed, which still relates to the global framework while being applicable to the given context (Merry 2006). In this paradox of making global concepts into the vernacular, in order to be accepted they had to be tailored to the local context and resonate with the local cultural framework. However, to be part of the international development community, the human rights approach had to be incorporated, which uses ideas of "individualism, autonomy, choice and equality" (Merry 2006:3).

The conclusion that can be drawn from this thesis is that applying universal ideas such as women's empowerment, to various development interventions produces a set of ideas and practices that are remote from their original intentions and ideas set by the international community. Furthermore, by researching the way such interventions are adapted to the local setting, it becomes clear that local partners have spearheaded efforts to bring forth the perspectives of the beneficiaries in stronger ways. However, questions remain; will local NGOs ever be allowed a level playing field in the international development community and have the ability to set future development agendas?

Future Research

As the case study highlighted, international development agencies and NGOs have been channelling aid to and through local institutions and organizations rather than entering the field and implementing the projects themselves. Through these local organizations and intermediaries working alongside the beneficiaries, projects may have more success in resonating with the local communities as concepts deemed universal become vernacularized; however, there is some cause for concern, which paves a way for future research in this area of study: in channelling money through international NGOs, it is likely that reduced amounts of aid go directly to local NGOs who have the capacity to create and implement projects without oversight.

Although local organizations are contracted in to implement projects, there are still some tensions that arise due to the adaptability to local contexts. This is due to projects being designed by international actors who may not have a strong local presence. Furthermore, intermediaries face a lot of pressure in adhering to the standards and frameworks set for them while making sure the projects are relevant on the ground. This leaves one wondering, are local NGOs and other organizations deemed incapable to receive aid assistance directly by the international donors? Future research can review current literature on development “partnerships” between “Northern” and “Southern” NGOs and investigate what their roles are in

their relationships and how it comes to play in the greater scheme of international development.

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