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ACRONYMS and ABBREVIATIONS

Afghanistan National Development Strategy – **ANDS**
 Afghanistan Pilot Participatory Poverty Assessment – **APPPA**
 Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Union – **AREU**
 Asian Development Bank – **ADB**
 Commission on Human Rights – **CHR**
 Convention against Torture 1984 – **CAT**
 Convention on Civil and Political Rights 1966 – **CCPR**
 Convention on Economic Social and Cultural Rights 1966 – **CESCR**
 Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 1979 – **CEDAW**
 Country Gender Assessment – **CGA**
 Cost of Basic Needs – **CBN**
 Development Assistance Committee – **DAC**
 Gender-related Development Index – **GDI**
 Gender Empowerment Measure – **GEM**
 Gender and Development – **GAD**
 Heavily Indebted Poor Countries – **HIPC**
 Human Development Index – **HDI**
 Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy – **I-ANDS**
 International Financial Institution – **IFI**
 Millennium Development Goals – **MDGs**
 Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development – **MRRD**
 Ministry of Women’s Affairs – **MOWA**
 National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan – **NAPWA**
 National Public Radio – **NPR**
 National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2005 – **NRVA 2005**
 Non-governmental Organizations – **NGOs**
 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development – **OECD**
 Papua New Guinea – **PNG**
 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper – **PRSP**
 Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan – **RAWA**
 Save our Species – **SOS**
 Sourcebook for Poverty Reduction Strategies – **PRSP Sourcebook or Sourcebook**
 Structural Adjustment Project – **SAP**
 Sustainable Livelihood Framework – **SLF**
 UK Department for International Development – **DFID**
 United Nations Development Fund for Women – **UNIFEM**

United Nations Development Program – **UNDP**
United Nations Economic and Social Council – **UNECSOC**
United States Agency for International Aid – **USAID**
Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 – **UDHR**
Women in Development – **WID**

Abstract – English

Decades of conflict in Afghanistan have resulted in extreme instability, poverty and gender inequality. The human toll resulting from foreign invasion, the subsequent civil war (1992-1996) and the current conditions is great. Afghanistan suffers from corruption, weak governance, and violent factionalism. Although the reason for international involvement in Afghanistan may stem from political or economic interests, a stable democracy in Afghanistan is important, if for any reason, to improve living conditions, especially of women and children, who often disproportionately bear the brunt of war by having limited access to services which provide basic human needs as well as experiencing violence in and out of the home, all the while having no protection and recourse from the government. In the meantime, international financial institutions (IFIs), most prominently the World Bank, issue loans in exchange for PRSPs that, despite extensive international involvement in preparation (as is the case in ANDS), are said to be country owned and provide a path to gender equality. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to analyze ANDS to determine, whether it provides a meaningful path to improving the situation of women in Afghanistan. This research explores the western feminist approach to gender equality that is most likely the basis for World Bank's approach to gender equality. The Bank focuses, to a large extent, on economic empowerment of women in developing countries and ANDS envisions women's increased involvement in the private sector. Political representation and legal protection for women are also presumed to provide a path to gender equality in ANDS. The research goes on to point out the short-comings of the western feminist model like unequal pay, insufficient employment, ineffective legal protection, violence against women and limited access to political power and how this relates to Afghanistan and ANDS. Furthermore, the research uses post-development theory to address issues of ANDS' feasibility and effectiveness, mainly focusing on how the global scope of the document, weak governing structures in the country, gaps between statements and actions in development, western exploitation of developing countries' resources, and women's experiences with development shape the process and impact the outcomes of strategies like ANDS, especially in areas of gender equality. Additionally, the research focuses on two participatory surveys (NRVA 2005 and APPPA) conducted in Afghanistan for the purpose of guiding the policies in ANDS. The analysis focuses on determining whether the surveys were participatory and representative in terms of gender. This includes determining whether gender specific issues were addressed, equal and meaningful participation took place and gender disaggregated data was presented. The research findings indicate that numerous problems at different levels exist with ANDS that may limit its effectiveness at achieving gender equality in the country. The findings also imply a general inability of IFIs to play a role in solving complex social issues in poor

countries such as gender inequality that often stem from a multitude of causes and are outside of the institutions' expertise.

Abstract – German

Jahrzehntelange politische und militärische Konflikte schlugen sich in Afghanistan in Form von extremer wirtschaftlicher Destabilisierung, Armut und geschlechtsspezifischen Ungleichgewichten nieder. Der Tribut der Menschen, resultierend aus feindlicher Invasion, dem anschließenden Bürgerkrieg von 1992 bis 1996, sowie der jetzigen Situation, ist enorm. Afghanistan leidet unter Korruption, einer schwachen politischen Führung und Querelen zwischen den Stammesgruppen. Obgleich der Grund für die internationale Einmischung in Afghanistan politische und ökonomische Interessen sein mögen, wäre eine stabile Demokratie in Afghanistan sehr wichtig, nicht zuletzt um die Lebenssituation der Bevölkerung, insbesondere von Frauen und Kindern zu verbessern, die überproportional unter der Last des Krieges leiden, weil ihr Zugang zu Hilfeleistungen zur Sicherung der wesentlichsten menschlichen Bedürfnisse erschwert ist, sie gleichzeitig inner- und außerhalb der eigenen vier Wände ohne Schutz und Hilfe durch die Regierung mit Gewalt konfrontiert werden. Gleichzeitig vergeben Internationale Finanzinstitutionen (IFIs), vor allem die Weltbank, Kredite im Gegenzug zu nationalen Armutsbekämpfungsstrategien („PRSP“). Letztere sind trotz internationaler Beteiligung an der Vorbereitung (wie im Fall von ANDS) regionaler Natur und unter anderem dazu gedacht, Gleichheit unter den Geschlechtern herbeizuführen. Das Ziel dieser Arbeit ist es daher, die „Afghanistan National Development Strategies“ (ANDS) zu analysieren, um festzustellen, ob diese Strategien einen sinnvollen Schritt zur Verbesserung der Situation der Frauen in Afghanistan darstellen. Die Arbeit untersucht den westlich-feministischen Ansatz zur Gleichheit der Geschlechter, der höchstwahrscheinlich als Basis für den Zugang der Weltbank zu Gleichberechtigungsfragen dient. Die Weltbank fokussiert in hohem Maße die wirtschaftliche Stärkung der Frauen in Entwicklungsländern und auch die ANDS sehen eine nachhaltigere Involvierung der Frauen im privatwirtschaftlichen Sektor vor. Auch die politische Repräsentation und der gesetzliche Schutz von Frauen sollen zur Gleichberechtigung zwischen den Geschlechtern führen. Die Arbeit versucht dann, auf die Mängel nach dem westlich-feministischen Ansatz, wie Einkommensgefälle, Unterbeschäftigung, ineffektiven gesetzlichen Schutz, Gewalt gegen Frauen und eingeschränkten Zugang zu politischer Macht für Frauen offenzulegen und wie diese Mängel im Zusammenhang mit Afghanistan und den ANDS stehen. Dabei wird „Postdevelopment Theory“ angewendet, um die Durchführbarkeit und die Effizienz jener Aspekte der ANDS zu

überprüfen; das Hauptaugenmerk wird darauf gelegt, wie sich insgesamt der Zugriff des Dokuments, die schwachen Regierungsstrukturen im Land, die Unterschiede zwischen Ankündigungen und Taten, die westliche Ausbeutung der Ressourcen von Entwicklungsländern und die Erfahrungen von Frauen mit Entwicklung den Prozess gestalten und auf Strategien wie ANDS einwirken, speziell auf dem Gebiet der Geschlechtergleichberechtigung. Darüber hinaus werden zwei in Afghanistan durchgeführte Studien (NRVA 2005 und APPPA) in die Arbeit miteinbezogen, welche die ANDS-Strategien abstecken sollten. Die Analyse konzentriert sich darauf herauszufinden, ob diese Studien tatsächlich auf Partizipation und Repräsentativität im Hinblick auf das Geschlecht abstellten. Dazu gehört, ob geschlechtsspezifische Themen aufgegriffen wurden, ob die Teilnahme an den Studien gleichberechtigt und in sinnvoller Weise erfolgte und ob die Daten nach Geschlechtern getrennt evaluiert wurden. In der Arbeit wird festgestellt, dass in den ANDS noch eine Vielzahl an Problemen auf unterschiedlichen Ebenen existiert, sodass deren Effizienz in Hinblick auf eine Gleichstellung der Geschlechter begrenzt ist. Ein weiterer Schluss aus den Nachforschungen ist, dass in der Regel IFIs ungeeignet sind, zur Lösung komplexer gesellschaftlicher Probleme armer Länder, wie z. B. die Ungleichheit zwischen den Geschlechtern, beizutragen, die oft auf eine Vielzahl von Ursachen zurückgehen und außerhalb des Einflussbereiches der IFIs liegen.

1. Introduction

Afghanistan is a country with numerous ethnic groups and languages. The population is estimated at more than 32 million with a positive growth rate. Urban population is only 23% to 77% that live in the rural areas.¹ Based on the Human Development Index² (HDI), the country is considered to be one of the poorest with 174th ranking out of 178 countries. Afghanistan has an HDI of 0.345 and only Burkina Faso, Mali, Sierra Leone and Niger measure below. Afghanistan's HDI seems even more severe when compared with that of its neighbors: China (0.768), Iran (0.746), Uzbekistan (0.696) or Pakistan (0.539). Primary, secondary and tertiary school enrollment is at nearly 60%, although well fewer girls than boys attend school. Literacy rates in Afghanistan are also the lowest in the world, where only 12.6% of women are literate and 32.4% of men. Female and child mortality rates remain high and violence against women is "widespread."³ The estimated maternal mortality rate is 1.6% and infant mortality rate 13.5%.⁴ The birthrate is estimated at 38.37 births per 1,000 population and the death rate is estimated at 17.83 deaths per 1,000 population in 2009.⁵ The condition of the country is also reflected in the life expectancy of its population, where both men and women are estimated to live until the age of 44. Currently, nearly half of the population is between the age 0-14 and face an uncertain future. The country suffers from violent conflicts and as a result of U.S cold war strategy and the subsequent Soviet war, the country experienced ethnic conflict, severe poverty and decrease in the status of women,

¹ Rasuly-Palczek, Gabrielle. (March 2010). Rebuilding Afghanistan: Local Politics versus State Policies Lecture. University of Vienna, Austria.

² See Center for Policy and Human Development at Kabul University. (2007). Afghanistan Human Development Report: Bridging Modernity and Tradition, Rule of Law and the Search for Justice. Islamabad, Pakistan: Army Press. Pg. 17 : The Human Development Index is based on an integration of three basic measures, including life expectancy at birth, educational attainment measured by literacy and educational enrollment, and GDP per capita.

³ Ibid. Pg. 18-19, 24.

⁴ See Ibid. Pg. 4-5 : The maternal mortality rate is based on 1,600 deaths per 100,000 live births and the infant mortality rate of 135 deaths per 1,000 births. The infant mortality rate has improved from 165 deaths per 1,000 births, according to a 2004 measure.

⁵ Index Mundi. Afghanistan Demographics. [Access: 20 October 2010] <http://www.indexmundi.com/afghanistan/>

especially in the rural areas.⁶ According to a UNIFEM study, violence against women in Afghanistan appears to be “endemic.” This includes physical, sexual and psychological violence. All women in Afghanistan are affected regardless of age, marital, education or employment status. The UNIFEM study was done to overcome the lack of information on domestic violence in the country and included 1,300 cases of reported acts of violence. According to UNIFEM’s discussions with experts, it is believed that “the violence is widely under-reported.”⁷

The situation of women in the world, the role of women in development and the role of development in women’s lives is a frequent topic in development discourse. The international community’s effort at gender equality in Afghanistan has garnered much spotlight following U.S. involvement in the country. The notion of gender equality changes with time and varies with place, person and culture and is therefore ambiguous; while, at the same time, some in the development cooperation promote it as a concrete concept of universal understanding. The World Bank defines gender equality and gender gap as the following:

“Gender equality: An approach addressing the issues facing both men and women in sharing the benefits of development equally, which ensures against a disproportional burden of negative impacts; Gender gap: The gap between men and women in such terms as how they benefit from education, employment, and services.”⁸

The issue of gender in development has gained more prominence in recent decades. “Gender and sexuality matter to international development, [while the] international financial institutions (IFIs) are key players in the global restructuring of gender norms and intimacies.”⁹ In her book, Bedford discusses the World Bank’s linking of post Washington Consensus policies to gender issues in developing countries. The economic policies are still neoliberal, yet more attentive to the issue of gender relationships, like promotion of loving couplehood in time of economic crises or work on family

⁶ Rasuly-Palczek, Gabrielle. (March 2010). Rebuilding Afghanistan: Local Politics versus State Policies Lecture.

⁷ United Nations News Centre. (14 August 2006). Domestic Violence in Afghanistan is ‘Endemic’, Perpetrators Go Unpunished – UN Study. [Access: 9 June 2010] <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=19512&Cr=afghan&Cr1>

⁸ Bamberger, Michael et al. Chapter 10: Gender. In: A Sourcebook for Poverty Reduction Strategies. (2002). Jeni Klugman |ed|. Washington, DC: World Bank. Pg. 367.

⁹ Bedford, Kate. (2009). Developing Partnerships: Gender, Sexuality, and the Reformed World Bank. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press. Pg. xii.

strengthening as a way to address gender and economics in one setting. The Bank's new policy connecting gender and economy is also reflected in the Bank's policy advice to empower women through work, promote poor men's involvement as responsible fathers and spouses, and increase poor families' cohesiveness as a link to economic recovery.¹⁰ It was the time of post Washington Consensus (post Structural Adjustment Projects (SAPs)) that the World Bank "moved to [this] new gender approach..."¹¹ Therefore, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), as the successor development strategies, focus on mainstreaming gender. The Bank's post Washington Consensus perspective on development attempts to be more balanced and inclusive of social relationships, albeit mainly those of heterosexual nature. This is also a response to the Bank's SAP failures such as disregard for women's unpaid work and male exclusion from the household realm throughout policy making. The SAPs failed to see economic value in women's reproductive work.¹² The PRSPs may involve country reconstruction or nation building, yet also focus to a large extent on establishing gender equality, believing that the equality between men and women serves as a catalyst for poverty reduction.¹³ The PRSP for Afghanistan, titled the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), addresses gender equality as a cross-cutting issue throughout all sectors within the country. The goal of this research paper is to answer, whether ANDS provides an effective model of gender equality that is capable of reducing poverty in Afghanistan.

¹⁰ Ibid. Pg. xiii, xxxiii.

¹¹ Ibid. Pg. 1.

¹² Ibid. 2 and see Ibid. Pg. xvi : Reproductive work by women refers to social reproduction, which includes biological reproduction, reproduction of labor and practices related to caring for family and community and the satisfaction of human needs.

¹³ See Bamberger, Michael et al. Chapter 10: Gender. Pg. 339-340 : Rigid gender roles related to employment, asset allocation and legal ownership, as well as lack of access to education are seen as barriers to poverty reduction and economic growth.

2. Theories and methods

To answer the main question of whether ANDS' approach to gender equality is an effective approach to achieve gender equality and poverty reduction in Afghanistan, the research will most of all require a thorough analysis of ANDS as a policy paper in order to determine how gender equality and poverty reduction are constructed in the policy paper. Additionally, as the development of ANDS was supported by research, consultations, surveys and assessments, such as household surveys, it is important to analyze those documents as well in order to determine the origins of the gender equality and poverty reduction constructs in ANDS. One of the minor goals of the research is to see how the international development community and its agencies like the World Bank envision positive change in a developing country and what plans they develop to achieve the change.

2.1 Theories

The ideas presented in post-development theory provided the initial inspiration for the research.¹⁴ Post-development theory is used as a basis for determining whether the gender equality construct in ANDS represents an effective policy basis to achieve gender equality and poverty reduction. As is presented in the following chapter (Chapter 3), the main aspects of post-development theory applicable to the analysis of ANDS are the following: Negative influence of western culture and environmental damage; Diminishing role of nation state; Global transfer of resources from poor to rich countries; Global versus local approaches to development; Distrust in development language; and Effect of development intervention on women.

The first aspect of western cultural influence and environmental damage is applicable to the case study of Afghanistan, because the country is a home to great diversity in terms of numerous ethnic groups and languages. In addition, it is a largely rural society. The fear of environmental degradation is also appropriate, especially that development and the stimulation of economic activity in poor countries often leads to exploitation of natural resources and urbanization, both of which (mining and urban development) are sectors in ANDS with existing policy frameworks.

¹⁴ See Post-Development Reader. (1997). Majid Rahnema and Victoria Bawtree [eds]. London: Zed Books.

The role of the nation state is also relevant to Afghanistan as the country's governance is considered extremely weak and needs to be strengthened in order to provide the necessary frameworks for social and economic development. On the other hand, post-development scholars envision the weakening of the state's role as protector of its people, resulting from neoliberal policies.

In relation to global transfer of resources, the involvement of foreign countries in Afghanistan's security and reconstruction presents the opportunity for foreign governments and corporations to access Afghanistan's wealth of natural resources. As is noted in section 3.3 of this research, often social economic policies in a national strategy are set up with a short-term focus on profits, in order to first and foremost ensure repayment of loans.

Post-development's praise of local versus global culture is also applicable to Afghanistan as ANDS in itself can be considered a very global strategy that, despite enacting a local approach by focusing on developing individual provincial profiles and strategies (5.1.1)¹⁵, has received much of its framework from the international community. The focus on provincial profiles is generally on establishing local plans for security, infrastructure, education and employment and deals more with local resource needs rather than cultural preferences.¹⁶ As a result, ANDS still embodies a very universal approach and a global strategy, especially with Afghanistan government's expressed acceptance of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)¹⁷, the Afghanistan Compact¹⁸ as well as the overall involvement of the international community in Afghanistan's reconstruction.

The criticism by post-development theory of the development language is probably most applicable in the use of the word *participation* to express the involvement of stakeholders, like local populations, in decision making and/or policy formulation. Most notably, the meaningful involvement of women in development cooperation is important to the main research focus of this text as the research aims to determine whether ANDS is an effective policy

¹⁵ Refers to section 5.1.1 of this research. Similar cross references to various sections of this research are made throughout this text.

¹⁶ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 22-24.

¹⁷ See Appendix Pg. 157.

¹⁸ See Appendix Pg. 161.

for gender equality, partially basing the measure of effectiveness on the perceived level of involvement by Afghan women in ANDS.

Finally, post-development scholars' perception of the effects of development on women in the developing countries is also relevant to the research as it is important to critique the gender equality construct in ANDS and determine whether the construct has been improved, based on the knowledge available on the failures of gendered development approaches in the 1970s (3.6), as well as to see whether ANDS overcomes some of the concerns of post-development such as economic or sexual exploitation or lack of legal protection for women in a development setting, especially a setting promoting employment, microfinance, and income generating activities (see Chapter 3).

Western feminist theory, more specifically liberal western feminism, is used as a framework from which ideas of what constitutes gender equality in industrialized countries are derived. This is most important in order to establish that ANDS' gender equality construct has its roots in western feminism, in order to provide the critique of the positive and negative aspects of western feminism in a way that relates to Afghanistan and the gender equality policies in ANDS. ANDS reflects the general approach to gender equality as perceived by the western feminist model. This includes political representation, legal rights and employment opportunities. Chapter 4 will discuss the most relevant aspects of western feminism as well as its beginnings and two separate emergences, the first in 1850s and the second in the late 1960s. This chapter also discusses the western feminist involvement and influence in development cooperation and how its effects can be harmful, but also much needed, in some cases.

2.2 Methods

This research first and foremost involves a case study of ANDS. The case study involves analyzing the different sections¹⁹ of ANDS in order to derive the gender equality construct, mainly – how does

¹⁹ The sections include Chapter 1 *The ANDS: An Overview* (including a general overview of all sectors in Afghanistan); Chapter 2 *The Participatory Process and Provincial Development Plans*; Chapter 3 *The Poverty Profile*; Chapter 4 *Macroeconomic Framework*; Chapter 5 *Security*; Chapter 6 *Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights*; Chapter 7 *Economic and Social Development*; Chapter 8 *Cross-cutting Issues*; Chapter 10 *Implementation Framework*; Chapter 11 *Monitoring Framework*; and Appendices.

ANDS envision gender equality? Most focus will be given to sectors²⁰ discussed in ANDS and the policies within those sectors. Based on the policy framework within each sector presented in ANDS, it will be determined first which sectors focus mostly on equal involvement of men and women as well as equal distribution of resources to men and women. From this, it will be determined whether the western feminist roadmap to equality through political representation, employment opportunities, and legal rights dominates the framework of ANDS.

Other methods of this research include an analysis of data collection surveys on which ANDS policies are partially based. The two surveys analyzed are the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2005 (NRVA 2005) and the Afghanistan Pilot Participatory Poverty Assessment (APPPA). The NRVA 2005 is a quantitative survey considered to be representative of the Afghan population (5.1.2), whereas the APPPA is a qualitative non-representative survey (5.1.3). The analysis mostly focuses on determining the general level of participation by women in the data collection as well as the existence of data disaggregation by gender.

Text analysis is another method used in the research, mainly in analyzing the content of ANDS. For example, text analysis is used to determine how often the NRVA 2005 and APPPA are quoted throughout ANDS. For example, if one survey is deemed more gender focused – to what extent does ANDS rely upon its data for policy decisions? Additionally, when issues like solutions to domestic or gender based violence are deemed necessary for achievement of gender equality – to what extent are they present or at least mentioned in ANDS?

Finally, the research uses the World Bank's own *Sourcebook for Poverty Reduction Strategies* (PRSP Sourcebook) to see whether the World Bank's own prescriptions for a successful preparation of a PRSP are utilized in ANDS. The Sourcebook's recommendations in the area of gender, participation, and poverty measurement and analysis are given the most focus. The legitimacy of the PRSP Sourcebook's recommendations in areas of gender and participation are especially supported by additional sources stressing the importance of stakeholder participation and data disaggregation.

²⁰ See Appendix Pg. 166-174 for a list of sectors and sector summaries.

2.3 Structure of research

In order to determine whether the model of gender equality in ANDS is effective, the research will first address the meaning of the concept of gender equality by focusing on the perceptions of gender equality from the view of western feminism as well as other feminist perspectives and post-development theory. An analysis of western feminist perspective is necessary based on the initial hypothesis that the World Bank's PRSP relies heavily on western feminist discourse as basis for gender equality achieving policy making. Other feminist theories including post-colonial or third world feminism and Islamic feminism will be used as a critique of western feminism to argue against western feminism's dominance in World Bank's development discourse. Other feminist sources like anthropological writings of Lila Abu Lughod and other multidisciplinary sources describing gender roles in different parts of the world will support the argument against western feminism as the only recipe for gender equality. Although, it will also be noted that post-modernist, post-development, and/or multiculturalism perspectives present some problems as well. Because the underlying goal of ANDS and the gender equality it aims to create is poverty reduction, the research work will rely on post-development theory to provide a critique of the ANDS as an effective strategy for poverty reduction in Afghanistan. The question of ANDS' potential for achieving gender equality and subsequently reducing poverty will therefore be supported with a combination of feminist and post-development theories.

The chapter on post-development theory research will describe concepts and ideas from post-development theory that are relevant to the research question. These include the cultural and environmental influence of development; the role of the nation state in regulating the economy, organizing civil society and protecting its citizens; the dynamic between aid giving and aid receiving countries related to transfer of resources; globalization and its effect on development in local communities; development discourse; and women's role in development. A critique of post-development will be derived from multi-disciplinary sources or presented directly from post-development critics.

The subsequent section will focus on gender equality and how it is perceived in western feminism. This part will discuss the two methods of mainstreaming gender into development policies: Women in Development (WID) and Gender and Development

(GAD). The western feminist notions will be further contrasted with the reality of gender equality in industrialized countries as well as the gradual replacement of western feminism with more local approaches to women's empowerment and gender equality, such as post-colonial or Islamic feminism, and examples of gender roles in other parts of the world.

To answer the research question of ANDS' effectiveness as a model for gender equality, the research will focus on deriving the gender equality construct from ANDS, in order to determine, whether it can effectively achieve gender equality and lead further to poverty reduction. To do this, the research will include a section on PRSP preparation, discussing the guidance presented by the World Bank, in form of PRSP Sourcebook, for PRSP policy formulation that is considered to successfully support the achievement of gender equality. The recommendations presented in the Sourcebook have been supported in general in development discourse, especially by organizations like Oxfam that support careful collection of gender disaggregated data. The next section will provide a summary of ANDS, focusing on each sector's policy framework for gender equality and poverty reduction measures to determine how ANDS envisions equality between men and women in Afghanistan. The sectors are grouped into security, governance, and social and economic sectors, with corresponding sub-sectors including law and human rights, agriculture and rural development, urban development, culture, health and social protection among others. The conclusion will return to post-development theory, western and non-western feminism to critique the gender equality construct and determine whether it represents true and meaningful equality and whether it could successfully lead to poverty reduction in Afghanistan.

3. Relevant aspects of post-development theory

World Bank's role in development is controversial and often criticized as harmful and exploitive. The Bank's PRSPs are promoted as Third World reconstruction projects, despite critics' beliefs that the benefits fall into the hands of the industrialized countries. The benefits are said to result from forcing the PRSP countries to open their markets to free trade, export resources and implement a standardized framework of social organization. As will be shown in the PRSP Summary section of this text (Chapter 5), the PRSP for Afghanistan aims to construct and reconstruct specific sectors of society to facilitate the rise of a prosperous nation state. Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world and a mostly rural society that has suffered from decades of foreign interference and war. In order to critique the PRSP for Afghanistan, the application of the post-development theory is appropriate, because of the country's largely rural environment and lack of regional and global connectivity, creating the perception that Afghanistan must modernize in order to prosper economically.²¹ As a result, Afghanistan faces extensive reconstruction efforts meant to *modernize* and connect the country to the regional and global market. Many post-development scholars see globalization as a negative force and the involvement of international institutions as harmful interference, all the while arguing that modernization as experienced throughout the decades of development is a process that destroys traditional cultures and in many cases, results in degradation of life quality rather than in the prosperity it promises.

Although many post-development texts were written in the 1980s and some before, the issues they raise are relevant to development today. Post-development often criticizes the effects of the decades old neoliberal economic paradigm, which continues to

²¹ See Watson, Ivan. (27 September 2010). After Nearly a Century, a Modern Afghan Railroad is under Construction. [Access: 10 October 2010] <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/asiapcf/09/27/afghanistan.first.railroad/index.html?hpt=Mid> : Watson describes recent railway construction efforts in Afghanistan that are the first since King Ammanulah Khan's railway plan of the 1920's. Because Afghanistan suffered from war and isolation, it never developed a railway system, which further decreased its regional connectivity. The Afghanistan Country Director of Asian Development Bank, Craig Steffensen, sees such modernization projects as key to Afghanistan's economic growth, in order to ease and increase trade, as well as enable the transport of extracted mineral resources.

influence recent development policies. Some of Illich's four decade old readings address issues much like the ones people face today. In *Tools for Conviviality*, Illich described a crisis of human dependence on technology, reduction of people to mere consumers, addiction to industrial productivity and reliance on the professional experts to dictate the way of life. Illich predicted an eventual crisis originating from an economic disaster that would expose the gap between the institutions' principles and actions, and result in humans losing faith in the establishment as it is.²²

Many post-development scholars see the intervention by industrialized countries in the policies of poor states as culturally invasive and environmentally destructive. The theory also views the traditional concept of nation state as no longer relevant. Other beliefs include that the hierarchy of development serves to exploit the poor to benefit the rich. The idea of global unity is not only incomprehensible, but also impossible. The language of development is used to control by creating a positive impression, through language, of the development process. The discourse on women's rights in developing countries has been seized by the international financial institutions to put a face of female emancipation, progress and change on policies that promote the economic and political aims of industrialized countries.

Post-development's promotion to end the practice of development, its stance on science as a reductionist form of knowledge, fear of westernization, homogenization of culture, and destruction of environment, and criticism of the focus placed on economic activities as source of well-being, make post-development a radical theory.²³ Nederveen Pieterse's critiques post-development for arguing that poverty is relative, that it results from interference in subsistence lifestyles by growth strategies, or that it is voluntary or spiritual, because it omits providing an actual solution to poverty. Furthermore, post-development equates development to westernization as well as continuation of colonization. By doing this, it denies the Third World agency,²⁴ when it presents it as the victim of development and does not consider the Third World's

²² Illich, Ivan. (1973). *Tools for Conviviality*. [Access: 30 September 2010] <http://www.opencollector.org/history/homebrew/tools.html>

²³ Nederveen Pieterse, Jan. (2000). *After Post Development*. In: *Third World Quarterly*. Vol. 22. No. 4. Pg. 175.

²⁴ *Ibid.* Pg. 177-178.

participation in it. Additionally, reducing development to westernization, all the while criticizing reductionism, points out hypocrisy on the part of post-development. Ziai also has criticism for some of the main aspects of post-development theory. For one, post-development creates a romantic and uncritical portrayal of local communities and traditions, even though vernacular societies do practice some humiliating and violent acts against women and children. Secondly, the theory rejects modernity and development, despite it having the power to improve lives with medical and technological advances. Thirdly, post-development rejoices in cultural diversity and traditions, while rejecting universalism, opening a way for legitimization of oppression through traditional practices. Post-development opposes a dominant authority dictating lifestyles, all the while appearing authoritative by promoting a lifestyle of conviviality. Finally, the theory offers general criticisms only and by only providing criticism, post-development offers no solutions to the problems.²⁵

3.1 Cultural influence and environmental damage

Development involves a transfer of ideas, technologies and influences from one part of the world to another, from the rich to the poor and from one culture to another. There are diverse positive and negative opinions about development's influence and some believe that it causes harm to local communities, their traditions and knowledge. Some who fear development see it as a force of cultural homogenization as diverse societies' customs, beliefs, values, and traditions become replaced by a dominant system that is perceived to be most efficient, progressive and desired.

Benjamin concedes to the fact that an institution like the World Bank exerts a strong cultural influence in developing countries; however, he defends the Bank against some criticism from cultural theorist, who often rely on the work of social scientists, like the postcolonial scholars Sachs or Escobar for their critique, that often presents a too simple and distorted view of such a highly complex organization, especially when primary documents from the

²⁵ Ziai, Aram. (2004). The Ambivalence of Post-Development: Between Reactionary Populism and Radical Democracy. In: *Third World Quarterly*. Vol. 25. No. 6. Pg. 1049-1053.

World Bank's archive are not used to reach these conclusions.²⁶ "The World Bank [...] comes to stand conveniently as the infamous target of public outrage that arguably ought to be directed at the broader systemic processes of global capitalist exploitation that the Bank participates in but does not uniquely orchestrate."²⁷ He further speaks against reducing the Bank to the driver of globalization and notes its complex role in post World War development, from transformation of Europe to that of emerging decolonized states. Additionally, the criticism of the World Bank is often one dimensional, because it is the social sciences that are often left with the task of providing critique of the institution. This leads to a "significant narrowing of the range of Bank projects and policies that can be discussed in literary and cultural scholarship, as well as a reluctance to engage in specific, substantive critique of either the broader implications of Bank policy."²⁸

Other criticisms from post-development scholars indicate that the development processes deplete natural resources and destroy the earth. Galeano states that capitalist production costs the world 15 million hectares of forest a year, of which 6 million become a desert, while the land and water sources are contaminated from industrial practices causing human exposure to harmful chemicals. A large part of world's resources are consumed by a small amount of rich countries, where the richest six percent of world's population consume one-third of energy and natural resources.²⁹ In addition to the poor suffering from excesses of the rich, their environments and livelihoods are destroyed by projects of infrastructure expansion and the hunt for natural resources.

International organizations, however, have become more involved in caring for the environment. At the end of October, 2010, the World Bank announced its commitment to the environment with a new program called *Save Our Species* (SOS), which focuses on valuing and preserving diverse ecosystems. By valuing nature in numbers, countries will know the extent to which they can exploit their natural resources and how much work they must put into preserving them. The value of countries' ecosystems will be

²⁶ Benjamin, Bret. (2007). *Invested Interests: Capital, Culture, and the World Bank*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press. Pg. xxi.

²⁷ *Ibid.* Pg. xx.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Galeano, Eduardo. (1991). *To Be Like Them*. In: *Post-Development Reader*. (1997). Majid Rahnema and Victoria Bawtree | eds |. London: Zed Books. Pg. 214-215.

incorporated into national accounts.³⁰ The World Bank has committed funds to SOS and expects countries and the private sector, especially, to contribute to the fund. “SOS will provide grants for conservation action on the ground, focusing on specific threatened species and their habitats and will bring what has been greatly missing so far: coordination between many different key players. It also gives businesses a unique opportunity to become directly involved in saving the planet’s natural environment and helps companies meet their sustainable development goals.”³¹

3.2 Diminishing role of the nation state

The weak government and weak economic and social structures in Afghanistan make ANDS a blue print for nation building as well as a map for reconstruction. Afghanistan is a country of numerous ethnic groups and languages, where unifying factors are difficult to come by. According to Rasuly-Palaczek, even though the country is largely Islamic, for the purpose of nation building, the religion is not a unifying factor as there are Sunni and Shi’a splits. Although most ethnic groups follow either only the Sunni or Shi’a practices, others, like the Hazara are divided. In addition to difficulties with finding unifying factors among the various ethnic groups, there is also a clear disconnect between the urban and rural areas of Afghanistan. The Afghan state has tried slowly to gain access to local population by establishing tribal leaders, who are representatives to the Afghan state. Yet, many rural populations remain distrustful of the central government and organize themselves into small governing units, including courts and dispute tribunals.³² While promoting nation building, the reconstruction plans are based on the World Bank neoliberal policies, which according to post-development scholars, actually results in the state abandoning its inherent role as protector of society:

“The state in modern times has been a source of both law and legitimacy, of authority and monopoly over coercive power (or so it was presumed, and in

³⁰ Whiteman, Hilary. (28 October 2010). World Bank to Turn Nature into Numbers. [Access: 29 October 2010] <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/BUSINESS/10/28/world.bank.green.accounts/index.html>

³¹ World Bank. (28 October 2010). SOS – A New Call on Businesses to Respond to Extinction Crisis. [Access: 29 October 2010] <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:22746878~pagePK:64257043~piPK:437376~theSitePK:4607,00.html>

³²Rasuly-Palaczek, Gabrielle. (March 2010). Rebuilding Afghanistan: Local Politics versus State Policies Lecture.

that presumption lay its power), a source also of security for the people, of systems of justice, equity and accountability, and through them all, of conditions of freedom and creativity, the arts and the pursuit of excellence.”³³

Because the organization of the state serves to provide security and to balance competing interests in society, including interests of corporations versus those of citizens, this role is dissolved by neoliberal influence. The “state as an institution is under severe strain.”³⁴ Most recently, states have begun to face a backlash from civil society and grass roots groups³⁵, responding in part to states’ failure to uphold their functions, resulting in state corruption, state sponsored violence, state inefficiency or ineffectiveness, and for failing to protect the poor among other events taking place in the decades of development. The neoliberal nation state is more at risk for failing to uphold state function, because it outsources its functions to the private sector.

“Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices...It must also set up those military, defense, police, and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if needed, the proper functioning of markets...[I]f markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary.”³⁶

As a result, “deregulation, privatization, and withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provision have been too common.”³⁷ Despite negative influence, the neoliberal thought has travelled through universities, think tanks, institutions and organizations and has become a way of life, a common sense of understanding how the people must live and operate to experience a good life. It planted the idea that maximizing market activities and the reach and frequency of market transactions resulted in increased social welfare. The idea was further accepted by the masses in countries like the U.S. or U.K,

³³ Kothari, Rajni. *The Agony of the Modern State*. In: *Post-Development Reader*. (1997). Majid Rahnema and Victoria Bawtree |eds|. London: Zed Books. Pg. 143.

³⁴ *Ibid.* Pg. 146.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Harvey, David. (2006). *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. New York: Oxford University Press. Pg. 2.

³⁷ *Ibid.* Pg. 3.

when packaged with concepts like individuality and freedom to choose.³⁸

Although post-development often criticizes the World Bank for its neoliberal policies as well as for the influence it exerts on the governments of developing countries, resulting in adoption of neoliberal policies and harm to civil society (3.3), accounts and reflections of ex World Bank country directors counter this position by stating that the Bank attempts to work in partnership with the country and is aware that this is the most successful approach. In the last two decades, the World Bank has focused on an ownership-based model of partnership with the loaner country, reflecting the belief that policies tend to be successfully implemented with the government's participation and commitment. In some cases, it is the lack of commitment from the receiving government that is the cause of a country's problem and not the World Bank's influence as "not all governments are equally committed to the transparency, evenhandedness, and strategic vision required for development."³⁹ The World Bank ex country directors concede that "the Bank has been most effective when it can work with a government committed to the objectives of growth and poverty reduction..."⁴⁰ The critics also point to the bank's push for privatization and market liberalization as the cause of suffering of the populations in developing countries, however, the Bank's experience in post-communist eastern Europe made its staff aware that there are risks involved with privatization that occurs too quickly, with too great of scale and is unwelcome or controversial. However, there is an agreement in the Bank that "ownership transfer of state enterprises to the private sector is, in general, the right policy."⁴¹

Kavalsky gives an example of 1976 Afghanistan government refusing the Bank's influence on developing health and education for the country's citizens in favor of infrastructure development: "[In Afghanistan] we are focusing our efforts on improving health and education. This is the area of basic needs in Afghanistan...The secretary tells me that his government is 'sick and tired' of being

³⁸ Ibid. Pg. 3-6.

³⁹ Gill, Indermit S. and Todd Pugatch. (2005). Policies, Politics, and Principles: Three Hundred Years of World Bank Experience. In: At the Frontlines of Development – Reflections from the World Bank. (2005). Indermit S. Gill and Todd Pugatch. |eds|. Washington, DC: World Bank Publications. Pg. 8.

⁴⁰ Ibid. Pg. 9.

⁴¹ Ibid. Pg. 5.

lectured about basic needs [and what it] really wants is our support for the cement factory and for infrastructure.”⁴² This example shows that the staff of World Bank working on projects within developing countries is not the sole dictators of policy, but attempt to work with the government to find solutions. Additionally, World Bank’s focus is not solely on growth of the private sector.

3.3 Global transfer of resources

Beginning with the 1982 loan crisis, the World Bank implemented SAPs⁴³ to protect against economic decline of its borrowers, to ensure repayment.⁴⁴ According to Susan George, the World Bank loans provide a platform for the developing world to support the rich countries by taking on and repaying debt with high interest. George states that from the beginning of the debt crisis (1982) until 1990, the debtor countries paid USD 6.5 billion in interest payments alone. The interest payments during this time period amounted to USD 1000 for each citizen of North America and Europe. Despite paying such high amounts, the poor countries remained indebted,⁴⁵ even with the very existence of SAPs meant to bring the countries’ economies on prosperous paths. In the eight year time period, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reported a USD 927 billion flow to the developing world and much of it was in the

⁴² Kavalsky, Basil. *Gathering Experience*. In: *At the Frontlines of Development – Reflections from the World Bank*. (2005). Indermit S. Gill and Todd Pugatch. [eds]. Washington, DC: World Bank Publications. Pg. 24.

⁴³ See Mohan, Giles. (2009). *Structural Adjustment*. In: *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*. R Kitchin and N Thrift [eds]. Oxford, UK: Elsevier. Pg. 5 PDF : *Structural Adjustment Projects focus on stabilization and liberalization, where tariffs are removed to stimulate efficiency in local production; export of agricultural goods is promoted; currency is devaluated to make exports cheaper; regulations and restrictions are reduced to promote business activity; subsidies are removed to avoid price distortions; social services are reduced to cut government spending; government offices are reduced and workers laid-off to ensure lean operation; efforts to combat government corruption are implemented; privatization is introduced to increase efficiency and competitiveness. These implementations are meant to open the economy and reduce role of government, resulting in an environment enabling of foreign investment, all leading to the release of funds needed to repay the loan obligations.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* Pg. 6-7 PDF.

⁴⁵ George, Susan. (1992). *How the Poor Develop the Rich*. In: *Post-Development Reader*. (1997). Majid Rahnema and Victoria Bawtree [eds]. London: Zed Books. Pg. 207-213.

form of loans.⁴⁶ Further into the 1990's, as many developing countries continued to struggle with economic adjustments and loan repayments, the World Bank created a new program, the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC)⁴⁷ initiative, which was a renewed effort to ensure payments on existing loans.

Countries' attitudes about the loans and the conditions imposed upon them vary. According to Inder Sud, a former World Bank country director for Middle East, the response to and acceptance of loans and the conditional SAPs by countries like Egypt, Jordan and Yemen have differed. In 1995, Egypt expressed an objection to the Bank's pressures to undertake economic reforms and complained about the Bank's unwelcome lending advances, despite knowledge of Egypt's abundant access to bilateral grants.⁴⁸ Hirschmann does not think that the poor countries have the power to make objections: "poor governments, seriously in debt, desperately short of resources and increasingly unable to pay [for] basic services, submit to whatever they are told."⁴⁹ In the end, the SAPs have been much criticized for allowing the rich countries to gain access to poor countries' resources, while restructuring the countries' economic policies that resulted in continued or greater poverty and decrease in life quality. As example, countries in Africa like Niger, Zambia, Madagascar, Togo, Cote d'Ivoire, Malawi, Mali showed negative average per capita growth rates, while Mauritania, Senegal, Kenya, Ghana and Uganda experienced growth rates from 0.1-2.3% in the time of SAP implementation through 1999.⁵⁰ Along with negative growth and 18 adjustment loans, Zambia experienced large budget deficits on current accounts, high inflation and a negative real interest

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ See Mohan, Giles. (2009). Structural Adjustment. Pg. 7 PDF : Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) was a 1990s initiative to assist countries in loan repayment in exchange for committed to neo-liberal reforms.

⁴⁸ Sud, Inder. Reflections on Development. In: At the Frontlines of Development – Reflections from the World Bank. (2005). Indermit S. Gill and Todd Pugatch |eds|. Washington, DC: World Bank Publications. Pg. 250.

⁴⁹ Hirschmann, David. From "Home Economics" to "Microfinance": Gender Rhetoric and Bureaucratic Resistance. In: Women and Gender Equality in Development. (2006). Jane S. Jaquette and Gale Summerfield. |eds|. Durham and London: Duke University Press. Pg. 73.

⁵⁰ Easterly, William. (August 2002). What did Structural Adjustment Adjust? The Association of Policies and Growth with Repeated IMF and World Bank Adjustment Loans. In: Center for Global Development Institute for International Economics – Working Paper Series No. 11. Pg. 26.

rate.⁵¹ From the former Soviet Union transitioning economies, that received SAP loans in the 1990s, Poland, Albania and Georgia have positive growth rates, while Ukraine, experienced a negative 8.4% growth, despite receiving 10 adjustment loans.⁵²

The main positive aspect of SAP for Mohan is that it provided financial flows for loan repayments, however, some of the social impacts were harmful. Mohan sees some of the negative impacts of SAPs like limiting a country's long-term prosperity by focusing on current advantages like production of country specific products, limiting a country's product portfolios. The imports, often final stage products, proved harmful to local production as they replaced locally produced and often more expensive goods. This further led to deindustrialization and service oriented economy, however, as the local community businesses lacked the professional knowledge, this gave access to presence of foreign service-based companies.⁵³ The economic adjustments also had direct effect on women. For example, the financial liberalization allowed for easier transfer of capital, but it mainly benefited larger corporations with already existing financial credibility. This promoted concentration of ownership among the rich and small to medium sized businesses remained on the margins. Many of which were women owned enterprises. Labor market liberalization and reforms also affect women, in that most of the jobs created are taken by women and are often low to semi-skilled and flexible with low pay, little rights and security.⁵⁴

3.4 Global versus local

Local approach to development means acting within a close proximity to home and thinking of small scale projects that cover a limited scope. Gustavo Esteva and Madhu Suri Prakash believe the idea of *global thinking* was created by the global economy. It is the idea that economic globalization will deliver goods and services and remove people from poverty while providing them with "ballot boxes, health care, schools, paved roads, telephones, superhighways,

⁵¹ Ibid. Pg. 9.

⁵² Ibid. Pg. 26.

⁵³ Mohan, Giles. (2009). Structural Adjustment. Pg. 9-10 PDF.

⁵⁴ Ibid. Pg. 10 PDF.

flush toilets...among others.”⁵⁵ *Global thinking* not only forces communities to abandon their local beliefs, but also to adopt the globally accepted idea that global is better than local despite knowing that no one and no one group or institution is capable of global knowledge. Esteva and Prakash further state that any knowledge, even with scientific support, can be challenged and reasserted. Furthermore, they see science as a “reductionist” discipline. They believe that no one person, regardless of his access to technology or data banks is capable of knowing everything about the world and beyond and “since none of us can ever really know more than a miniscule part of the earth, *global thinking* is at its best only an illusion, and at its worst the grounds for the kinds of destructive and dangerous actions perpetrated by global ‘think tanks’ like the World Bank, or their more benign counterparts...”⁵⁶ Any region, country, province, ethnic, tribal or religious group are complex entities with distinct cultural, traditional and historical roots that guide their ways of life. To compress all such complexities into a homogenous strategy is violent. “The reductionist and universalizing tendencies of such ‘science’ are violent and destructive in a world which is inherently interrelated and diverse.”⁵⁷

The universal idea that the global economic system is a catalyst for positive social change is propagated by the same institutions that benefit from the idea. “[The] principal sources [of the idea] are the great economic and financial institutions – the World Bank, International Monetary Fund [...] which, in order to diffuse their ideas throughout the world, finance various research centers, universities and foundations...”⁵⁸ The information is further disseminated to private investment firms, professors and journalists,⁵⁹ who eventually feed the information to the masses.

⁵⁵ Esteva, Gustavo and Madhu Suri Prakash. (1998). *Grassroots Post-Modernism: Remaking the Soil of Cultures*. Pg. 9.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* Pg. 9-10, 22.

⁵⁷ Shiva, Vandana. (1989). *Western Science and its Destruction of Local Knowledge*. In: *Post-Development Reader*. (1997). Majid Rahnema and Victoria Bawtree |eds|. London: Zed Books. Pg. 161.

⁵⁸ Ramonet, Ignacio. (1995). *The One and Only Way of Thinking*. In: *Post-Development Reader*. (1997). Majid Rahnema and Victoria Bawtree |eds|. London: Zed Books. Pg. 179.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

3.4.1 Local thinking in practice

According to Esteva and Prakash, men and women should think small to keep within the human scale and must accept that human knowledge has real limits. They believe that thinking small, or locally allows humans to understand their actions and consequently take responsibility for them, like in the case of local farming. Esteva and Prakash compare local food production to the commercialized version that feeds the global market. Local production generally results in healthier food and farmers as well as better treated animals.⁶⁰ It is seen as more responsible without the use of heavy pesticide, and overcrowding and animal abuse, which are well documented consequences of mass food production. Additionally, locally owned initiatives allow the community to respond quickly and appropriately to changing needs.

Another positive aspect of acting locally and establishing local economies is the communities' independence from the global prices. In *Ethics of the Local*, Gibson-Graham describes projects, where communities transformed themselves from subjects of global economy into "subjects with economic capacities, who enact and create a diverse economy through daily practices both habitual and...intentional."⁶¹ Such transformation required a mental switch, where non-capitalist activities and subjects were also perceived to be practical and productive. The projects took place in areas of Australia and United States that were heavily reliant on globalization and as a result suffered from downsizing, deindustrialization and privatization. As for most subjects of the global economy, it took time for the community to open up to alternative and diverse economic ideas like "collective enterprises, household and voluntary labor, transactions involving barter, sharing and gift giving."⁶² In attempt to diversify the regional economy, the people learned to deprogram their way of looking at goods, services, employment and livelihood taught to only be possible through capitalistic endeavors.

⁶⁰ Esteva, Gustavo and Madhu Suri Prakash. (1998). *Grassroots Post-Modernism: Remaking the Soil of Cultures*. Pg. 23-26.

⁶¹ See Gibson-Graham, J.K. (2003). *An Ethics of the Local*. In: *Rethinking Marxism*. Vol. 15. No. 1. Pg. 55 : The term 'subjects of global economy' is paraphrased from the following sentence: "The research projects I will describe are focused on transforming ourselves as local economic subjects, who are acted upon and subsumed by the global economy, into subjects with economic capacities..."

⁶² *Ibid.* Pg. 55-61.

Although independence of global economy may seem liberating, the idea of local economies, disconnected from a national or global economy seems unrealistic. It brings to question the feasibility of sustaining an independent local economy in the long-term as the sole provider of livelihood and calls attention to certain forms of social protection, provided by the state that is linked directly to official employment or economic activity, unlike bartering, volunteering or gift giving. Benefits like retirement income, medical insurance, unemployment pay, and childcare allowance are often, depending on a country, available to a person based on his/her connection to the state as a taxpayer employed in a formal economy. The postmodernist idea of local economies is difficult to apply in reality due to the level of globalization as well as bureaucratic government structures and formal national economies. Because social protection and livelihoods depend largely on a person's connection to the global or national economy or government, remaining outside may leave him/her in a position of marginalization.

The idea that community economies may not be able to exist outside of capitalism or without it can be seen in a case study of smallholder oil palm sector in Papua New Guinea (PNG), where a team of researchers set out to determine the factors of productivity loss and provide solutions to improve productivity in the oil palm industry. The case study points out that a diverse local economy exists in PNG. PNG's link to global economy comes from its trade in oil palm which is a large export product of PNG and functions on the basis of smallholder schemes - these are small farm lands oriented around a corporate center, where farmers of oil palm drop off their harvest, receive equipment and can receive any technical assistance they need. The corporate centers belong to large international corporations from Britain and Belgium, although they are partially owned by the government of PNG. The local economic activities include gardening, exchange of goods and time spent on social activities like networking, which is also related to the economic activities.⁶³ It can be said that the palm oil trade is the capitalist economy, where the corporations appropriate surplus and sell the product on the global market, and the remaining activities constitute community economy. It can be seen, however, that the community

⁶³ Koczberski, Gina. (2001). Improving Productivity of the Smallholder Oil Palm Sector in Papua New Guinea: A Socio-economic Study of the Hoskins and Popondetta Schemes. The Australian National University.

economy could not be as successful without the capitalist economy working alongside of it. For one, because the rise of the oil palm industry in PNG was responsible for population movement from cities to the country side in the first place and therefore, it allowed for other economic activities to develop. On the other side however, it can also be seen that the existence of a diverse community economy could provide the population with security in case the capitalist economy fails, because it has found other ways to supplement its income.

3.4.2 Global human rights

Under the auspices of *global thinking* comes the international human rights regime. The human rights regime is often a condition for aid from world financial agencies.⁶⁴ Despite the fact that many of the international conventions like the Convention against Torture (CAT), Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Convention on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR), Convention on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) and the original instrument, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) were created before most developing countries could express, with recognition, their concerns about conforming to a single regime that may undermine domestic laws, but more importantly culture and tradition, especially in the post war time, when it was most urgent to establish a universal morality. The UDHR turned out to be less than universal as many countries expressed concern with the drafting and negotiation process. The Soviet Union was concerned about the individualized nature of human rights and some Arab states resisted the tone of western culture in the declaration. Countries argued over wording, order of articles, and favoritism for political over economic rights. Yet eventually, the declaration, under heavy influence of the United States and leadership of many western educated representatives, was passed. The only uniting factor for many countries was to ensure an indefinite delay of any enforcement mechanism system for individual complaints.⁶⁵ This exercise in codification of a universal morality and

⁶⁴ Sheth, D.L. Alternatives from an Indian Grassroots Perspective. In: Post-Development Reader. (1997). Majid Rahnema and Victoria Bawtree [eds]. London: Zed Books. Pg. 329.

⁶⁵ Normand, Roger and Sarah Zaidi. (2008). Human Rights at the UN: The Political History of Universal Justice. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press. Pg. 143-195.

the opposition it created was a clear example of the cultural diversity in the world and issues of cultural sovereignty, amidst hegemonic pressures to conform to *global thinking*. The U.S. was able to exert heavier influence, not only because of the defeated Europe at the time, but also because Eleanor Roosevelt was the chairwoman of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) and served not as an “independent champion of human rights”, but as a “representative of the U.S. government.”⁶⁶ Because Roosevelt argued against implementation of an individual complaint system, which is now seen as “far and away the most damaging decision for the long-term viability of the human rights system...”⁶⁷ it shows more that the U.S. took a lead in the CHR, not to proclaim the universality of human rights, but instead to proclaim its political, economic and ideological dominance in the world. The current regard of the human rights regime as conditionality for development aid may therefore be seen more as an imposition of a western culture and symbol of western dominance.

Esteva and Suri Prakash also criticize the international human rights regime as obliging uniformity upon diversity and for lacking consideration of local practices. Additionally, in case universal human rights were universally accepted, the fact that no enforcement of global human rights exists begs to question its real purpose beyond the symbolic. Realization of universal human rights would require a massive centralized and compulsory enforcement mechanism, which does not exist. There is no international court of human rights and “ordinary people lack the centralized power required for ‘global action.’”⁶⁸ This may further show that the human rights regime is no more than symbol of dominant ideology.

The compliance with international human rights conventions is left to United Nations Treaty-Monitoring Bodies, like the Human Rights Committee for CCPR, or the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights for CESCR, Committee against Torture for CAT, and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women for CEDAW. The states are mandated to turn in initial and then periodic reports of progress regarding transmission of treaty provisions into domestic law, plus additional informational data. The

⁶⁶ Ibid. Pg. 149.

⁶⁷ Ibid. Pg. 150.

⁶⁸ Esteva, Gustavo and Madhu Suri Prakash. (1998). Grassroots Post-Modernism: Remaking the Soil of Cultures. Pg. 21.

committees that review the reports can provide recommendation and guidance regarding actions to be taken by the state (although this form of exchange may actually be more constructive and effective). In some cases, even when individual complaints are allowed, the committee can offer a non-binding decision.⁶⁹ The lack of a universal enforcement mechanism for non-compliance proves partly that the postmodernist view of the universal human rights regime as imposing is not well supported. In case of CEDAW, an optional protocol exists that provides for procedures for individual complaints; however, these can only be considered in case the optional protocol has been signed and ratified by the member state, but most importantly, the individual must have “exhausted all domestically available possibilities of seeking effective remedy [before filing] a complaint with the competent treaty-monitoring body.”⁷⁰ This means that the individual must first and foremost take the matter up with a local judicial body, something postmodernist theory could not criticize.

Finally, post-development views the notion of rights and law as a western construct. Many indigenous traditional cultures lack the perception of rights based on one’s existence as a human and especially find it difficult to identify with the concept of a universal definition that is controlled by an institution, along with monitoring and potential enforcement of such rights. Human rights like the right to education, health or employment are translated in development into rights to modern medicine, sewage, or roads,⁷¹ forcing local communities to adapt to a new style of living.

There is an opposing point of view, in the sense that criticizing universal human rights as culturally invasive may give fuel to cultural and religious fundamentalists, who see their interpretation of norms as encroached upon and in need of defense. Moghissi argues that while more culturally sensitive methods of scholarship on women and the Middle East have been a positive step in recognizing diversity in culture and beliefs, cultural sensitivity runs the inherent risk of overlooking the restrictive role that patriarchal Islamic institutions play in women’s lives.⁷² To relate the postmodernist

⁶⁹ Nowak, Manfred. (2005). Handbook for Parliamentarians. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Pg. 27-32.

⁷⁰ Ibid. Pg. 29.

⁷¹ Esteva, Gustavo and Madhu Suri Prakash. (1998). Grassroots Post-Modernism: Remaking the Soil of Cultures. Pg. 110-119.

⁷² Moghissi, Haideh. (1999). Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism: The Limits of Postmodern Analysis. London and New York: Zed Books. Pg. 42.

cultural sensitivity or cultural understanding, the argument in favor of the *hijab* as a tool of empowerment for women is often presented. Moghissi disagrees and states that the process of coercion, whether through physical force or social/political pressure that is often present in the practice of *hijab* is circumvented in the ‘tool of empowerment’ argument. “In Iran, [...] *hijab* still represents one of the country’s torments, twenty years after the 1979 Revolution. Legislation and government rulings make veiling mandatory...In Algeria, the ‘choice’ for women is between wearing a veil or not staying alive.”⁷³ Other arguments like the role of *hijab* in fighting consumerism, erasing class divisions, or shielding women from men’s sexual advances are also seen as bad excuses, since Islamic societies are not egalitarian and the veil cannot and does not protect women from rape.⁷⁴ “Ironically, many arguments used by fundamentalists against the hegemony of the West for pushing forth ‘authentic’, indigenous traditions are shared by the postmodernist perspective.”⁷⁵

3.5 Development language

The language and words used in development differ in meaning and action. In recent years, development responded to criticism and shifted its rhetoric to convey the understanding that local communities must own the process of development. “The new words – partnership, empowerment, ownership, participation, accountability and transparency [were coined to] imply changes in power and relationships, but have not been matched in practice.”⁷⁶ The word ownership often implies autonomy, yet the development agencies exert influence on policies directly and indirectly. Primary stakeholder is the poor and marginalized person in society, whom the project should benefit the most, yet he or she often has no voice in shaping policies. There is a clear gap between the meaning of words and practice. One reason for the gap between saying and doing is that “dominant discourse can co-opt or misuse language.”⁷⁷ Language can be used to gain trust to gain access. Participation is another

⁷³ Ibid. Pg. 42-43.

⁷⁴ Ibid. Pg. 45.

⁷⁵ Ibid. Pg. 73.

⁷⁶ Chambers, Robert and Jethro Pettit. Shifting Power to Make a Difference. In: Inclusive Aid: Changing Powers and Relationships in International Development. (2004). Groves, Leslie & Rachel Hinton |eds|. London, UK: Earthscan Publications Ltd. Pg. 137.

⁷⁷ Ibid. Pg. 142-144.

concept overused in development and participation in the sense of taking part not only in discussion, planning, but also decision making should be questioned for its feasibility. Involving poor people in key decision-making processes is “one of the most daunting challenges,” for a variety of reasons including time being a “scarce resource” for the poor;⁷⁸ therefore, it should be expected that critics may question the sincerity with which words like *participation* are being used. In his criticism of development language, Esteva defines the word development as “[describing] a process through which the potentialities of an object or organism are released, until it reaches its natural, complete, full-fledged form.”⁷⁹ Speaking of organisms reaching natural or full-fledged forms implies that Esteva is using a biological definition. “Gradual change in size, shape, and function during an organism’s life that translate its genetic potentials into functioning mature systems”⁸⁰ is a definition directly from an encyclopedia. Esteva acknowledges the metaphoric use of biological development to argue that organisms that do not reach their full potential are deemed as abnormal in science and become the study subjects for creation of new theories: “The study of these ‘monsters’ became critical for the formulation of first biological theories.”⁸¹ Applying his biological metaphor to international development, Esteva implies that the developed countries perceive the poor countries as abnormal and in turn use them for social experimentation. Esteva continues his critique by saying that not only has development not lived up to this meaning, creating gaps in practice, but the pure meaning of the word created a perception of division and imbalance of power in the world; the powerful are the developed and those without power are underdeveloped. In order to gain power, one must develop and go from worse to better, inferior to superior or simple to complex.⁸² By producing discourse about the developing countries, the industrialized countries can better dominate

⁷⁸ Owusu, Charles. An International NGO’s Staff Reflections on Power, Procedures and Relationships. In: *Inclusive Aid: Changing Powers and Relationships in International Development*. (2004). Groves, Leslie & Rachel Hinton |eds|. London, UK: Earthscan Publications Ltd. Pg. 137,142-144.

⁷⁹ Esteva, Gustavo. Development. In: *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power*. (1992). Wolfgang Sachs |ed|. London: Zed Books. Pg. 8.

⁸⁰ Encyclopedia Britannica. Biological Development. [Access: 29 October 2010] <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/65976/biological-development>

⁸¹ Esteva, Gustavo. Development. Pg. 8.

⁸² Ibid. Pg. 6-10.

and control them.⁸³ Development language is used for multiplicity of reasons, to influence public opinion in favor of development, to define a society in terms that will justify intervention, to relay a relationship of power and define the poor people's standing in the relationship, or to hide a bad deed behind a good word. According to Simmons, "[n]o amount of talk about consultation, partnerships and empowerment can alter the fact that the principal effect of Third World development, as is generally practiced, is to impose economic and political system beneficial to relatively small elite."⁸⁴ Yet for all the criticism post-development brings against development discourse, scholars like Escobar use their own speech in a "sloppy" and "indulgent" way, all the while "[playing] games of rhetoric."⁸⁵

Participation is another word that post-development sees as lacking practical application. This is a strong argument, since it is difficult to measure the influence of participation on the effectiveness of projects and no formula exists for determining the proper amount of participants, type of participants and the proper amount of time needed for participation to be successful. However, PRSP underwriters have shown genuine interest in establishing meaningful participation, even if with minimal results. In case of the Bolivia PRSP, Rosalind Eyben, the head of UK Department for International Development (DFID) described her experience working on preparing the country's PRSP from 2000 to 2001, especially in the area of gaining participation. The PRSP for Bolivia is a proof that participation is still a difficult aspect of PRSP to accomplish; however, not one without positive consequences. Eyben states that because societies are so layered with so many individual interests, it is very difficult to not only coordinate, but also to move through boundaries set up by one group for another. Working on the Bolivia PRSP, Eyben noted how different groups within society contributed or were prohibited from contributing to the PRSP. She described the government of Bolivia, made up of self-centered elites, facing reelection at the time of PRSP consultations, as completely unconcerned with the process and opposed to participation of local communities. The marginalized were kept from consultations due to

⁸³ Escobar, Arturo. (1985). *Discourse and Power in Development: Michel Foucault and the Relevance of his Work to the Third World*. In: *Alternatives*. Vol. 10. No. 3. Pg. 377.

⁸⁴ Simmons, Pam. (1992). 'Women in Development': A Threat to Liberation. In: *Post-Development Reader*. (1997). Majid Rahnema and Victoria Bawtree [eds]. London: Zed Books. Pg. 244.

⁸⁵ Nederveen, Pieterse. (2002). *After Post-Development*. Pg. 183.

their perceived lack of knowledge about state issues. To fight against this, the PRSP preparation team reached out to churches as well as community organizing groups and NGOs in order to get input from people from diverse backgrounds. In the end, the author believes that the input from stakeholders was not truly participatory. Yet, the process was not without progress; the most positive aspect of participation was that the marginalized became more informed about their rights to improve schools and to hold local and state governments responsible for their actions.⁸⁶ “The PRSP process in Bolivia did contribute to a shift in the balance of power towards poor people”⁸⁷ and “strengthened the mutual recognition between state and civil society of the right of the latter to hold the state accountable, including the need for the state to pursue anti-corruption measures in a much more energetic fashion.”⁸⁸

3.6 Women in development

Gender roles in society change over time and can be influenced by culture, religion or tradition or by the political situation in the country. The discourse surrounding women’s roles as well as improving or taking away women’s rights are sometimes used as bait for political gain or as a disguise for ulterior political motives. The involvement of women in development is also a subject that has received a lot of interest. What is often missing is the voice of the women whose lives could change as a result of intervention, whose perspective is often overlooked in favor of expert opinion. This puts women in developing countries in a passive role. This passive involvement has allowed development institutions with purely economic intentions to turn gender equality into a concept of female empowerment and to gain access to developing countries’ human resources. The female economic empowerment discourse began in the 1970s, from the belief shared by the World Bank that “women’s productivity was being ‘wasted’ because it mostly flowed through informal channels, unaccounted for and unexploited by the world market.”⁸⁹

⁸⁶ See Eyben, Rosalind. Who Owns the Poverty Reduction Strategy? A Case Study of Power, Instruments and Relationships in Bolivia. In: *Inclusive Aid: Changing Power and Relationships in International Development*. (2004). Groves, Leslie and Rachel Hinton | eds|. London, UK: Earthscan Publications Ltd.

⁸⁷ Ibid. Pg. 56.

⁸⁸ Ibid. Pg. 71.

⁸⁹ Simmons, Pam. (1992). ‘Women in Development’: A Threat to Liberation. Pg. 245.

The idea that initially seemed as pro-women was actually based on the assumption that productive labor is the only one that has economic value. By disregarding women's reproductive roles and promoting productivity, women's work was doubled, making women overworked and less equal. The effort to bring women into development was a "genuine effort"⁹⁰ on the part of western feminists to expose "discrimination and inequality"⁹¹ in development, yet once the idea reached the development apparatus, productivity became the focus. Simmons believes that such focus on women as producers is based on the following false assumptions in development: Economic growth leads to development and improved well-being; Women desire to be and have time to be part of the national economy; The goals of women's movements are compatible with economic growth; Women in the industrialized world are closer to gender equality than women in the developing countries. The idea that women did not benefit from post World War Two development was based on false thinking. Women's lack of benefit from development stemmed not from lacking access to economic activities, instead from development institutions' disregard for women's domestic labor. While development projects took men away from homes or villages, women stayed behind taking care of children and growing food, albeit in form of subsistence farming and away from the global economy. Their work, however, was not perceived as contributing to the development process. The projects to involve women in income generating activities further hurt women by failing to address the exploitation that takes place. Women are put at the bottom of labor division and pay scale. The exploitation includes sexual harassment and rape. Additionally, it is disadvantageous for women to produce goods for markets they have no control over.⁹² Removing women from their reproductive labor in order to utilize their capacities is seen as a legitimate undertaking. The outcome is women's removal from their diverse surroundings and placement in a uniform, centralized and controlled environment.⁹³ Finally, treating female productive labor separately from reproductive labor, disregards how much the former affects the latter and how doing

⁹⁰ Ibid. Pg. 246.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid. Pg. 246-248.

⁹³ Shiva, Vandana. (1989). *Western Science and its Destruction of Local Knowledge*. Pg. 161.

both simultaneously without special assistance and coordination makes the gender inequality even greater.

4. Gender in development

Gender equality has become an important topic in development cooperation. International organization like the United Nations focus on mainstreaming gender inside the organization as well as within its agencies. Gender equality is also of great focus in the United Nations MDGs,⁹⁴ where targets are set for member states to improve gender equality in areas of education and health. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) centers its work around women's empowerment and gender equality: "The empowerment of women and achieving gender equality permeates everything we do – our policies, programs and investments."⁹⁵ The United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNECSOC) defines gender mainstreaming as "a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated."⁹⁶ The international financial institutions, predominately the World Bank have likewise adapted strategies to help address gender equality in their policies and programs⁹⁷ and development NGOs like Care International or Caritas International focus on gender equality with reports titled *No Peace without Women*⁹⁸ and *Women and Migration*.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ See Appendix Pg. 157.

⁹⁵ United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Women's Empowerment. [Access: 27 October 2010] <http://www.undp.org/women/mainstream/>

⁹⁶ United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNECSOC). (18 September 1997). A/52/3. Women 2000: Gender Mainstreaming. Pg. 2.

⁹⁷ Bedford, Kate. (2009). Developing Partnerships: Gender, Sexuality, and the Reformed World Bank.

⁹⁸ See Care International. (22 October 2010). No Peace without Women. [Access: 27 October 2010] <http://www.care.org/newsroom/articles/2010/10/UNSCR-1325-Special-Report-From-Resolution-To-Reality-20101022.asp> : The NGO has issued a report on the 10 year mark of United Nations Social Council Resolution 1325 that called for more women to be involved in peace-building. The report offers insights into the changes that took place and provides recommendations for the future.

⁹⁹ See Caritas International. Women and Migration. [Access: 27 October 2010] http://www.caritas.org/activities/women_migration/index.html : *Women in Migration* represents a sector of Caritas' work dealing with numerous aspects of migration including migrant workers, migrant rights, refugees and migration caused by conflict and war.

Focus on gender equality in development results from the belief of development organizations that gender equality does not exist in developing countries and that the industrialized countries must help women realize their human rights. On what grounds does the industrialized world hold the knowledge and mandate of gender equality? Are women in developing countries unequal to men and are women in the industrialized world equal to men? Where women in Africa and Middle East are seen as forced to wear restrictive clothing, forced into marriages, denied education and employment, raped, mutilated, stoned to death and abused, women in the industrialized countries experience their own forms of oppression, be it eating disorders, aesthetic procedures, fear of aging, social pressures related to age, money, success, or motherhood, job insecurity, unequal pay, rape, violence, human trafficking and death penalty. In some cases, the experience of inequalities, like women's access to education in developing countries has little to do with traditional restrictions, but more with lack of infrastructure or quality of education or insecurity due to ongoing wars, in which case, both men and women suffer. This in no way reduces the importance and need of fighting for women's rights, it only points out that the aid giving countries should not assume their version of gender equality to be better and expect for it to be accepted as the dominant model of progress. Any form of gender inequality in one country or region exists in other parts, albeit it manifests itself differently. This by no means indicates a resignation from a fight against inequality; instead, it calls for recognition that women's experiences of inequality or oppression are universally linked; however, they can also not become defined based on a dominant paradigm, proclaimed (by self or others) as universally applicable. By universally linked, it is meant, that women experience certain forms of oppression as a result of their gender. As Catharine MacKinnon states, "Women are violated in many ways that men are not..."¹⁰⁰ Likewise, a CNN report on domestic violence in Afghanistan says that, "one of the biggest dangers [in Afghanistan] is to be a woman."¹⁰¹ Yet, even though women's experiences can be universal, it is also important to understand that they differ regionally,

¹⁰⁰ MacKinnon, Catharine. (1993). Crimes of War, Crimes of Peace. In: On Human Rights – Oxford Amnesty Lectures 1993. Pg. 142.

¹⁰¹ CNN. (24 September 2009). Afghan Women Hiding for their Lives. [Access: 27 October 2010] <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/asiapcf/09/23/afghanistan.women.abuse/index.html>

culturally or individually; therefore, imposing a dominant paradigm as a solution against gender inequality can also be harmful, especially, when the dominant paradigm has yet to prove to be successful. As the different forms of feminism exist and perceive gender inequality and the necessary solutions differently, it is therefore essential to include as many possible perspectives in the field of development, when addressing strategies, policies, programs and reforms to achieve gender equality.

Gender inequality is present throughout the world. According to Simmons, women earn 10% of world's income and own one percent of the wealth, while doing nearly 70% of the world's work. Women in industrialized countries are not always better off than any other in the world, partially because the legislation, although not intended to solve inequality in entirety, helped less than expected. In the U.S. and U.K. legally mandated rights to social security, health and abortion remain under threat and all forms of violence against women are on the rise. Simmons addresses the pressures women face, when they work in and outside of the home, but are later blamed for social issues like youth delinquency, resulting from breakdown of the traditional family,¹⁰² which may explain why women in developing countries reject the western philosophies of female liberation. In many western societies, women's roles as workers, political participants, mothers and wives leave women overspent and faced with mounting pressures to maintain a balance.

Despite this, the industrialized countries continue to believe they must help to improve the standard of living for the women in the developing world. This general view can be reflected in statistical reports like that from the Washington Population Crisis Committee, titled *Poor, Powerless and Pregnant*. Inside the report it is stated that "there exists no single place on earth where women enjoy equal status with men or where conditions for women could be classified as excellent;"¹⁰³ however, the conditions of poor women in Europe are considered to be of "reasonable living standard," when compared with those of women in developing countries:¹⁰⁴

"The standards of living vary enormously throughout Europe, and in some countries and many rural areas the lack of facilities, services and modern technology, drastically increases women's physical work, the number of

¹⁰² Simmons, Pam. (1992). "Women in Development: A Threat to Liberation." Pg. 251.

¹⁰³ Kaplan, Gisela. (1992). *Contemporary Western European Feminism*. London: UCL Press Limited. Pg. 23.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

childbirths, health risks and sheer number of working hours in a day. In comparison with the rest of the world, however, especially with developing nations, European women, even in the poorest sections, tend to enjoy reasonable living standards.”¹⁰⁵

Additionally, the report confirms education as a gain for women. This gain influences chances of access to paid employment as well as the potential to increase earning power. Likewise, control over age at marriage, control over child bearing and “exercise of legal and political rights,”¹⁰⁶ are said to be positively correlated to education. The right to and equal access to education is one of the core goals of western feminism.

4.1 Western feminism

The western feminist movement dates back to the late 19th century and is often described as coming in two waves. The beginnings of the first wave date back to the 1850s in North America and Europe. The first wave is said to have ended in the time of World War One, when women were granted the right to vote.¹⁰⁷ The second wave is said to have begun in the year 1968 which is considered to be a year, when the “feminist consciousness” took over many women in North America and Europe.¹⁰⁸ Western feminism is diverse and has branched out into numerous areas since the beginning of the movement. The non-exhaustive list of feminisms includes “liberal, equity, equal or natural rights, Marxist, socialist, radical, revolutionary, reform, cultural, existential, psychoanalytic, postmodern, Third World, black, Jewish, Asian, Chicana, agrarian, status-oriented, and survival-oriented.”¹⁰⁹ Yet the most theoretical distinctions today focus on liberal (equity or equal rights) feminism and cultural feminism, where the former emphasizes equality between genders, while the latter, the differences.¹¹⁰ Liberal feminism focuses on women’s political, economic and legal equality and cultural feminists often critique the liberal feminists for equating equality to sameness, all the while, ignoring to challenge the male values. For cultural feminists, it is the acknowledgment and appreciation of differences that leads to

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ LeGates, Marlene. (2001). *In Their Time: A History of Feminism in Western Society*. New York: Routledge. Pg. 197.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. Pg. 327.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 5.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. Pg. 5-6.

women's improved status.¹¹¹ Kaplan more specifically refers to the second wave feminism, when discussing origins of feminist divisions, which include liberal, socialist and radical. She sees liberal feminists as "organized, hierarchical, negotiative and coalition-building," seeking change through formal networks and progressive legislature. Socialist feminists avoid hierarchism and see women's oppression in class division and exploitation resulting from capitalism. Radical feminists are primarily concerned with sex and patriarchy over class and see a solution to gender inequality in complete separation from and independence of men.¹¹² Furthermore, feminism can be divided into "individualist" and "relational," stressing, respectively, individual rights or cooperation among genders and complementing male and female roles.¹¹³ In addition to fractions within western feminism, the feminism is often criticized for its middle class roots and lack of focus on class and race as factors in oppression. "Chicana, black, and Asian-American feminists have in fact explicitly repudiated a feminism that does not go beyond gender issues,"¹¹⁴ especially that some women identify with their race before they identify with their gender. Others find common ground in gender alone on the basis of women's "essential characteristics," including women's emphasis on relationships and mutual responsibility, cooperation and connection.¹¹⁵

4.1.1 First wave of western feminism

The first wave fought against the "male monopoly on education, professional careers, and culture; married women's economic and legal dependence; sexual and moral double-standards; women's lack of control over their bodies; the drudgery of housework; low wages; and [...] women's exclusion from politics,"¹¹⁶ although the main goals composed of improving married women's legal status and ensuing economic autonomy for single women with greatest focus on property rights, education and professions. In the end of the first wave, women's suffrage became of great importance and is seen as

¹¹¹ Ibid. Pg. 6.

¹¹² Kaplan, Gisela. (1992). *Contemporary Western European Feminism*. Pg. 20.

¹¹³ Allen, Ann Taylor. (2005). *Feminism and Motherhood in Western Europe: 1890-1970*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. Pg. 4.

¹¹⁴ LeGates, Marlene. (2001). In *Their Time: A History of Feminism in Western Society*. Pg. 4.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. Pg. 2.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. Pg. 197.

having sidetracked the preceding issues.¹¹⁷ Overall, the first women's movement, despite being critical of male privileges, had still a very positive view of family and motherhood, and saw the achievement of equality as resulting in recognition of gender differences and their complementary nature.¹¹⁸ The first wave was considered to be the first women's movement of an international scale¹¹⁹ and better organized than any loosely structured or arranged women's movements before, yet the movement was largely led by women of the middle-class¹²⁰ and therefore did not focus on class or race.

4.1.2 Second wave of western feminism

The second wave was a much more vocal and extensive movement, partly due to availability of media coverage in this time. In Atlanta, for example, the feminist consciousness translated itself into protests against beauty pageants and a call for female liberation from aesthetic enhancements.¹²¹ Yet the main themes for achieving equality for European feminists focused on inequality in employment, technology, domestic work, politics and civil liberty. Not only was women's access to employment important, but also ending the placement of men and women in traditional employment roles. "As long as women and men continue to be clustered in certain industries and occupations, the ideal of one job market for all, irrespective of gender, has not become a reality."¹²² Technology provides power and independence and therefore, it is seen as necessary for women to use technology and work in technology fields like engineering. With technological advancements, women's domestic work is lighter, further allowing them to leave the household to generate income, raising their standard of living. Participation in the government is an important aspect of democracy and gender equality. "[N]umerically equal representation of women and men at government level alone is a sign of parity and of democracy at work."¹²³ Yet, despite equal representation, the level of influence should also be important.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. Pg. 202, 237.

¹¹⁸ Allen, Ann Taylor. (2005). *Feminism and Motherhood in Western Europe: 1890-1970*. Pg. 3.

¹¹⁹ Kaplan, Gisela. (1992). *Contemporary Western European Feminism*. Pg. 7.

¹²⁰ LeGates, Marlene. (2001). In *Their Time: A History of Feminism in Western Society* Pg. 197-199.

¹²¹ Ibid. Pg. 327.

¹²² Kaplan, Gisela. (1992). *Contemporary Western European Feminism*. Pg. 27.

¹²³ Ibid. Pg. 43.

There is a belief in politics that women must gain power of policy making in order to help other women. Other, more radical view is that women should govern, because they can do so better than men.¹²⁴ The issues concerning western feminists related to civil liberties often deal with the right to abortion and freedom from domestic violence, or any violence.¹²⁵

4.2 Influence of western feminism in development

Western feminist beliefs in the “moral responsibility to share [their] values with [...] those whom they considered their inferiors”¹²⁶ has been documented in colonial histories and has been directed at lower class women, immigrants or indigenous population. This ‘moral responsibility’ was much stronger during the first-wave movement, although, it can be argued that the use of WID in the 1970s parallel to the second-wave feminism proves that the *moral responsibility* remained, even if its intensity was diminished. To an extent, it continues to make its way into gender policies in developing countries, despite the uniqueness of gender roles among cultures. Women’s empowerment in western cultures is achieved through employment, education, political participation and health, whereas in some non-western cultures, women’s empowerment may come as a result of age or the number of children she has¹²⁷. The most important realization, one promoted by Abu-Lughod’s *Writing Women’s Worlds* is that there are differences in women throughout the world and there are different feminisms. Despite this, many development projects, especially large scale reconstruction or nation building by the World Bank focus on transferring western ideas of gender equality to the developing country. In general, the World Bank has been viewed as not only an institution that creates development policies and provides advice and consultations to developing countries, but also transfers culture. World Bank “is surely one of the most influential global institutions of post-World War II era”¹²⁸ and “ought to be understood as a cultural as well as an

¹²⁴ Ibid. Pg. 44.

¹²⁵ Ibid. Pg. 47-53.

¹²⁶ LeGates, Marlene. (2001). In *Their Time: A History of Feminism in Western Society*. Pg. 199.

¹²⁷ Abu-Lughod, Lila. (1993). *Writing Women’s Worlds: Bedouin Stories*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pg. 133-135.

¹²⁸ Benjamin, Bret. (2007). *Invested Interests: Capital, Culture and the World Bank*. Pg. xi.

economic institution.”¹²⁹ As mentioned in the introduction of this text, the World Bank has a conscious agenda of influencing gender relations in developing countries, while promoting its economic policies. Benjamin further suggests that the World Bank has influenced and shaped the idea of culture, all the while “[trafficking] in culture”¹³⁰ by “[engaging] in rhetorical acts of public persuasion that rely on cultural formations and that appeal to cultural values.”¹³¹

4.3 Gender mainstreaming in development: GAD/WID

The mainstreaming of gender is the number one priority in many development projects. GAD and WID are methods of gender mainstreaming in policy. Although the GAD model is preferred over the WID model, the use of the methods “[has] had an impact on development discourse and on the way aid is administered, but [it has] been less successful in making a material difference for the vast majority of women in developing countries.”¹³² The change in methods of mainstreaming gender into projects reflected feminist philosophies of the time, the WID resulted from the second-wave of western feminism of the 1970s and GAD reflected the rise of post-colonial feminists in the 1980s.¹³³ The WID came with the *awakening* that women’s labor composed half of any developing nation’s resources and could not be wasted. Women’s input had to be utilized in development. The idea led the United States government to pass legislation¹³⁴ requiring the Agency for International Aid (USAID) to establish the Women in Development Office in 1973. The legislation encouraged a greater attention to be paid to women’s issues; however, it provided no specific guidance on how to carry out the mandate. This left the USAID staff divided, some opposing the WID ideology as “culturally inappropriate,”¹³⁵ believing that promoting women’s roles as more prominent may create discord in developing

¹²⁹ Ibid. Pg. xii.

¹³⁰ Ibid. Pg. xiii.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Jaquette, Jane S. and Kathleen Staudt. (2006). Women, Gender, and Development. In: Women and Gender Equity in Development Theory and Practice (2006). Jane S. Jaquette and Gale Summerfield [eds]. Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press. Pg. 17.

¹³³ Ibid. Pg. 18.

¹³⁴ 1973 Percy Amendment Act to the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act.

¹³⁵ Jaquette, Jane S. and Kathleen Staudt. (2006). Women, Gender, and Development. Pg. 23-24.

societies. This attitude was challenged by Boserup's research that disputed the claims of African traditions as prohibitive of women's productive labor and instead, lay blame on colonialism and its introduction of cash crops and farming technologies for minimizing women's productive roles. The research helped for WID to no longer be perceived as culturally insensitive method, since it was seen as helping in returning pre-colonial social order.¹³⁶ After a decade of utility, WID was criticized for unknowingly placing additional burdens on women by assuming that women's reproductive activities left them with abundance of time to take on paid work.

The GAD model emerged in the 1980s with promise of effectiveness and sensitivity to women's diversity. The point for GAD was to tackle the uneven distribution of power between the genders. GAD's major criticism of WID was its placement of women in productive labor restricted to traditionally female roles. The new goal now was to train women in typically male skills, giving women the right to property, and providing services like child care or transportation to ease women's reproductive burdens as they enter the productive sphere. In addition, GAD promoted mainstreaming of gender issues into all development projects, instead of assigning gender related work to a specific agency. Finally, GAD promoted women's participation in the development process and saw its role as empowering.¹³⁷ Although WID was considered harmful, because it segregated women from men, while promoting women's economic activities, whereas GAD involved men in the process by analyzing differences between the genders, both methods of addressing inequality are a creation of the industrialized feminists and place women's role within the realm of global economy. The WID was a term invented in the early 1970s by a "Washington-based network of female development professionals."¹³⁸ It was the same group that lobbied the U.S. Congress, resulting in the 1973 Percy Act Amendment to the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act requiring U.S. development donors to integrate women's activities in developing countries into those countries' national economies¹³⁹ that in the

¹³⁶ Razavi, Shahrashoub and Carol Miller. (1 February 1995). From WID to GAD: Conceptual Shifts in the Women and Development Discourse. Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development. Pg. 3-5.

¹³⁷ Jaquette, Jane S. and Kathleen Staudt. (2006). Women, Gender, and Development. Pg. 24..

¹³⁸ Ibid. Pg. 28-29, 31.

¹³⁹ Ibid. Pg. 31.

1980s, with the introduction of SAPs, became more opened to global trade (3.3). The WID's focus on promoting women's productive labor in developing countries corresponded to the second-wave liberal feminist movement in the U.S. focusing on equal rights in employment (4.1.2). The GAD likewise, was a western created method based on studies of gender roles conducted by researchers at the Harvard Institute of International Development, focusing on differentiating household roles and household members' access to resources, noting an importance of establishing equality through equity; thus again (like in WID) focusing on economic rather than social aspects of gender.¹⁴⁰

4.4 Non-western feminism

Western feminism focuses to a large extent on women's independence of men. It also promotes women in overcoming their perceived roles by taking part in social spheres claimed by men. This is reflected in the "transformation view" held by western feminists, where it is believed that women are seen as inferior to men and their status can only be raised¹⁴¹, when women do what men do. Non-western forms of feminism share some goals of western feminism, but are clearly disconnected in terms of others. Shahidian states that "many non-western advocates of women's rights have had an ambivalent relationship with western feminists, [where the] commonality of problems and similarity of aspirations bind those activists with their ideologies [and] imperatives of socio-cultural traditions differ from those of the birthplace of western feminism [and] challenge the applicability of many aspects of feminist theories."¹⁴² An example of rift between western and non-western feminism is the issue of motherhood. In her book, *Feminism and Motherhood in Western Europe: 1890-1970*, Allen attempts to answer the question, whether "[it is] possible to be both a mother and an autonomous individual?"¹⁴³ She calls this a maternal dilemma and states that only in the last century, have women actually had the

¹⁴⁰ Razavi, Shahrashoub and Carol Miller. (1 February 1995). From WID to GAD: Conceptual Shifts in the Women and Development Discourse. Pg. 12-15.

¹⁴¹ Kaplan, Gisela. (1992). Contemporary Western European Feminism. Pg. 30.

¹⁴² Shahidian, Hammed. (12 February 1998). 'Islamic Feminism' Encounters 'Western Feminism': Towards an Indigenous Alternative. Springfield, Illinois: University of Illinois at Springfield. Pg. 1.

¹⁴³ Allen, Ann Taylor. (2005). *Feminism and Motherhood in Western Europe: 1890-1970*. Pg. 1.

possibility to freely make a choice about motherhood and usually it is a choice against other forms of self-realization. Furthermore, she sees family nurturing, reproduction and child-rearing as a burden restricting women's participation in economic, social and cultural spheres.¹⁴⁴ The opposite view is presented in Abu-Lughod's writing, where the women of the Egyptian Bedouin communities take pride in motherhood and see their social status rise as a result of it.¹⁴⁵

Since post-colonial studies weigh heavily on development scholarship, the idea that feminism or gender equality exist in non-western culture is more commonly accepted. This implies that the concept of female empowerment and gender equality is multiple and that no dominant blue print for gender equality exists. "The erstwhile representation of Western (or Anglo-American) feminism as *normative* has been displaced by the recognition of a multiplicity of feminisms."¹⁴⁶ Recent developments in the areas of cultural sensitivity have called for feminism to acknowledge differences in various cultures. Sinha addresses diversity in feminism and its effects on challenging perceptions. To what extent should western countries respect the cultures of non-western countries, even when a certain act may seem (to some or majority of western feminists) to constitute discrimination, suffering or torture of a woman?¹⁴⁷

Non-western feminist perspectives often suffer or have suffered from lack of legitimacy in the west. In addition to the initial struggle for recognition as legitimate women's movement, the non-western feminism continued to struggle for its autonomy in the colonial and post-colonial time. According to Sinha, Indian feminists' legitimacy depended on approval and support from both, the nationalist movements and western feminists. This was present in the case of Indian feminist movements in colonial times, where the British women, while helping the Indian zenanas, still saw them as racially inferior, and delegitimized national feminist movements for their link to the national party, while the nationalists decried their lack of patriotism for connecting with the western feminists. While Indian feminists often turned to British feminists or international feminist

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Abu-Lughod, Lila. (1993). *Writing Women's Worlds: Bedouin Stories*. Pg. 133-135.

¹⁴⁶ Sinha, Mrinalini. (2000). *How History Matters: Complicating the Categories of "Western" and "Non-Western" Feminisms*. In: *Is Academic Feminism Dead? Theory in Practice*. [ed.]. The Social Justice Group. New York University Press. Pg. 168.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

movements to support their struggle in India, they also had to fight to receive recognition and respect from those same groups.¹⁴⁸

Presently, there is a need to acknowledge the differences and respect for those differences in feminist perspectives. In her book, *Writing Women's Worlds: Bedouin Stories*, Lila Abu-Lughod does just that. Her anthropological writing describes the daily lives, stories and actions of women in relation to other women, family members and their husbands. She shows that although female roles may seem restricted by western standards, they are considered as normal and acceptable in their own cultures, pointing to importance of contextual understanding. A woman's role as a mother, home maker, or one of three wives may seem boring or degrading, when taken out of its context. The fact that women are excluded from certain social activities does not mean that they are singled out for their anatomy, because boys also have social and cultural restrictions by which to abide.¹⁴⁹ By viewing gender as learned behavior, instead of sex, it is evident that gender roles for men and women are shaped by both genders. As women in the west may define their identities through careers or education, the *other* women may belong to families from whom they gain strength and identity:

“In the stories in this book, individual women are clearly agentive, but not just in their assertions of rights or refusals of arranged marriages, but in their fierce attachments to shared moral principles and their religious sensibilities. The extended families that modernists and Western analysts denigrate as imposing “traditional” tribal limits on individual freedom are, for the women who lament their relatives’ deaths, celebrate their brothers’ marriages, defend their families’ honor, desperately try to have children or limit family size, and argue with their uncles, daughters, and mothers, the grounds of everyday life. For the Awlad ‘Ali Bedouin women in the ethnography, family is the nexus of individual identity and personal development and the object of great love and loyalty, along with inevitable conflict.”¹⁵⁰

Parallels and conflicts between Abu-Lughod's descriptions of gender roles and (western) feminism as a force for women's rights can easily be drawn. The protests of Egyptian Bedouin women against arranged marriages or struggles to continue education or to move to the city¹⁵¹ match LeGates assumptions that feminists existed long before

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. Pg. 168-179.

¹⁴⁹ Abu-Lughod, Lila. (1993). *Writing Women's Worlds: Bedouin Stories*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pg. 215-218.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. Pg. xvi.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. Pg. 237-242.

feminism, meaning that the women in Abu-Ludghod's book do not need an organized form of protest to possess a feminist consciousness. "If we define feminism as an organized movement for women's rights and interests, we first find it in the nineteenth century [...] Europe and North America;"¹⁵² however, this does not mean that women without organized feminism (like the Egyptian Bedouins) do not possess a feminist awareness.

Because western and non-western feminisms share similarities and differences, as do gender roles throughout the world, the development institutions must be considerate of diversity, when framing policies aimed at gender equality. For example, family harmony can be undermined, when women are strongly favored over men for jobs as a result of affirmative action. This is not to say that economic involvement or educational opportunities should not be presented to women in developing countries, it only means that the way gender roles are constructed (and will be affected by policy) should be given great consideration.¹⁵³ Applying one set of feminist beliefs to a large group can be harmful and the term itself "has [already] been problematized for imposing a false unity on a highly disparate set of people, ideas, and events."¹⁵⁴

4.4.1 Post-colonial or third-world feminism

Trinh provides a contrast of western and non-western cultures, when she describes events taking place at a community meeting:

"On the day and at the time agreed, each member eats, washes her/himself, and arrives only when s/he is ready...the discussion does not have to begin at a precise time...A mother continues to bathe her child amidst the group; two men go on playing a game they have started; a woman finishes braiding another woman's hair. Never does one open the discussion by coming right to the heart of the matter...There is no catching, no pushing, no directing, no breaking through, no need for a linear progression which gives the comforting illusion that one knows where one goes. Time and space are not [kept, saved, wasted, or lost]."¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² LeGates, Marlene. (2001). In *Their Time: A History of Feminism in Western Society* Pg. 7-9.

¹⁵³ Afghanistan: A Country Study. (2001). Gender Roles. Peter R. Blood |ed|. Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress. [Access: 20 December 2010] <http://countrystudies.us/afghanistan/58.htm>

¹⁵⁴ Allen, Ann Taylor. (2005). *Feminism and Motherhood in Western Europe: 1890-1970*. Pg. 5.

¹⁵⁵ Trinh, T. Minh-ha. (1989). *Woman, Native, Other*. Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana: Indiana University Press. Pg. 1-2.

Trinh's books seems critical of western feminism as disregarding Third World women, the same way, men disregarded women, when asked to join in the discourse on sexism. She quotes Ellen Pence who wrote:

“Gradually, I began to realize the tremendous gap between my rhetoric about solidarity with Third World women and my gut feelings...Our idea of including women of color was to send out notices...We never came to the table as equals. Women of color joined us on our terms...”¹⁵⁶

Naghibi, a postcolonial scholar questions the dominance of western feminist discourse and its portrayal of Muslim women. Growing up in the time following the Iranian revolution, she noticed the shift in description placed on Muslim women from “exotic Persian [to] fundamentalist Islamist [to] oppressed Muslim woman,”¹⁵⁷ partly due to shortage of Middle East in postcolonial scholarship and excess of it in the media,¹⁵⁸ which often contributed to the bias. She points out that the language of global sisterhood was started in the 19th century within the larger framework of modernization through which elite Persian feminists expressed solidarity with western feminists. “The problem with the discourse of sisterhood remains, however, the inherent inequality between ‘sisters’. Often using the veil as a marker of Persian women’s backwardness, western and (unveiled) elite Iranian women represented themselves as enlightened and advanced, while the veiled Persian woman was made to embody subservient womanhood.”¹⁵⁹ The stereotypes of Muslim women accepted by some western liberal feminists are also accepted by some Muslim/Islamic feminists.¹⁶⁰ Because of stereotypes and the need to recognize minority opinions, multiculturalism in gender equality is of great importance, although it may also pose reverse problems. The argument for multiculturalism is sometimes weakened, when minority women’s claims of discrimination are dismissed based on acceptance of cultural differences and traditions. Accommodating multiculturalism can “reinforce gender inequality within the minority groups being accommodated...The idea here is that by granting accommodations to a minority cultural group, states permit some

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. Pg. 85-86.

¹⁵⁷ Naghibi, Nima. (2007). *Rethinking Global Sisterhood: Western Feminism and Iran*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press. Pg. ix.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. Pg. xii.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. Pg. xvii.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. Pg. 140.

members – usually the group’s more powerful members – to oppress more vulnerable members of the group.”¹⁶¹

4.4.2 Islamic or Muslim feminism

As mentioned by Shahidian (4.4), Islamic feminism has differences with western feminism along with some strong connections; however, from Moghissi’s writings, one perceives similarity in some aspects like the stance against veiling (3.4.2) or the belief in the possibility of universal feminism, where “women have definable interests and concerns that can form the basis for solidarity, common action and common struggle among women.”¹⁶² She praises the struggles of early western feminists in the areas of education, employment, suffrage, legal rights and rights in marriage, and restricted gender roles for improving women’s lives in western societies and points out that such progress was possible because of modernity and capitalism; however, she states that some aspects of western feminism, especially control over body or sexual reproduction, may seem irrelevant to women in developing countries whose child may be dying as a result of poverty.¹⁶³

The work of the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) clearly shows that its feminism has commonalities with western feminism, yet deals with issues specific to the Afghan women such as government corruption, presence of foreign troops and the Taliban.¹⁶⁴ Women in Afghanistan deal with short but extremely difficult lives, lack of education and being illiterate, and violence including sexual violence experienced as children and as women. In addition, the women raise their children in a war zone, and cook and clean with scarce access to running water,¹⁶⁵ to name the diversity of problems. Because Afghan women’s oppressions are unique to their situation, it is not likely that western

¹⁶¹ Song, Sarah. (November 2005). Majority Norms, Multiculturalism, and Gender Equality. In: *American Political Science Review*. Vol. 99. No. 4. Pg. 474.

¹⁶² Moghissi, Haideh. (1999). *Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism: The Limits of Postmodern Analysis*. Pg. 93

¹⁶³ *Ibid.* Pg. 94-95.

¹⁶⁴ Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan. RAWA. [Access: 31 October 2010] www.rawa.org

¹⁶⁵ Crawford, Alex. (21 October 2010). *Struggles Are a Way of Life for Afghan Women*. In: Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA). [Access: 31 October 2010] <http://www.rawa.org/temp/runews/2010/10/21/struggles-are-a-way-of-life-for-afghan-women.html>

feminist principles of equality in politics, employment and education would take precedence over social protection, conflict resolution, access to resources like food and medicine, or maternal and child health.

5. Summary of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy

ANDS is the country's development agenda for the years 2008-2013, although, like all PRSPs it is a long-term strategy meant to continue beyond 2013. Because of the conditions in Afghanistan, the development strategy is one of nation building and involves plans for "security, governance, economic growth and poverty reduction."¹⁶⁶ The concept of nation-building in Afghanistan refers to intentional interference in a state or economy that is perceived to be dysfunctional, unstable or failed; a condition to be overcome with build-up of government infrastructure, involvement of civil society and economic assistance.¹⁶⁷ Nation building in Afghanistan also refers to the need in the country to centralize the power of government and to find a national identity, since the country's religion, for the purpose of nation building, is not a unifying factor as there are Sunni and Shi'a splits. Although most ethnic groups follow only the Sunni or Shi'a practices, others, like the Hazara are divided. In addition to difficulties with finding unifying factors among the various ethnic groups, there is also a clear disconnect between the urban and rural areas of Afghanistan. The Afghan state has tried slowly to gain access to local population by establishing tribal leaders, who are representatives to the Afghan state. Yet, many rural populations remain untrusting of the central government and organize themselves into small governing units, including courts and dispute tribunals.¹⁶⁸

The vision for the country, as noted in the ANDS, is:

"...stable Islamic constitutional democracy at peace with itself and its neighbors, standing in full dignity in the international family...tolerant, united, and pluralistic nation that honors its Islamic heritage and the deep seated aspirations toward participation, justice, and equal rights for all...society of hope and prosperity based on a strong, private-sector led market economy, social equity, and environmental sustainability."¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Title Page.

¹⁶⁷ Stephenson, Carolyn. (January 2005). Nation Building. In: Beyond Intractability Project. Boulder, Colorado: University of Colorado. Paragraph 1. [Access: 26 October 2010] http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/nation_building/

¹⁶⁸ Rasuly-Palczek, Gabrielle. (March 2010). University of Vienna Lecture: Rebuilding Afghanistan – Local Policies versus State Policies.

¹⁶⁹ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-1013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. i.

The three areas of focus for the development strategy involve security, governance, and economic and social development. The goals are described as follows:

“Security: Achieve nationwide stabilization, strengthen law enforcement, and improve personal security for every Afghan; Governance, rule of law and human rights: Strengthen democratic processes in institutions, human rights, the rule of law, delivery of public services and government accountability; Economic and social development: Reduce poverty, ensure sustainable development through a private-sector-led market economy, improve human development indicators, and make significant progress toward the Millennium Development Goals.”¹⁷⁰

The future prosperity of the country is linked directly to poverty reduction through development of a private-sector-led economy.¹⁷¹ In fact, privatization of state enterprise, private investment, private sector growth and market economy are recurring themes throughout the ANDS.

Many of the sector development strategies are based on Afghanistan’s obligations under the MDGs¹⁷² and the Afghanistan Compact.¹⁷³ The Afghanistan Compact is the outcome of the 2006 London Conference on Afghanistan, where the international community promised aid continuity in exchange for establishment of security, governance, and social and economic development in the country. “The Afghan Government [...] commits itself to realizing this shared vision of the future; the international community, in turn, commits itself to provide resources and support to realize this vision.”¹⁷⁴ The document lists a number of benchmarks including the involvement of the international security forces, the establishment of the Afghan National Army, anti-corruption, public administration reform, land reform, observance of human rights, and infrastructure construction. The agreement resembles a ‘to do list’ that includes meeting set requirements like provision of electricity to a percentage of population or “enabling regulatory environment for profitable extraction of Afghanistan’s mineral and natural resources”¹⁷⁵ as well as simplification of legislation related to investment and creation of a strategy to privatize state-owned enterprise. The London Conference

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. Pg. i.

¹⁷¹ Ibid. Pg. iii-vi.

¹⁷² See Appendix Pg. 157.

¹⁷³ See Appendix Pg. 161.

¹⁷⁴ Afghanistan Compact. (2006). [Access: 26 October 2010] http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/afghanistan_compact.pdf Pg. 2 PDF.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. Pg. 9 PDF.

on Afghanistan involved 50 participant countries, where nearly half belonged to Europe. Canada, Australia and the United States were also present.¹⁷⁶ Following the organization of the Afghanistan Compact, ANDS separated its main sectors (pillars) into security, governance, and economic and social development.

5.1 ANDS process and assessments

According to ANDS, to reach its security benchmark, the government must assume control over Afghanistan's territory against illegal armed groups, who often receive their funds from narcotic cultivation. Containment of illegal armed groups is a complex issue, because of their infiltration in governments and police institutions.¹⁷⁷ The benchmarks for governance are concerned with domestic law, justice and human rights. The sector is in dire need of development. ANDS reveals that in 2000, the World Bank voted Afghanistan's governance as one of the least "quality" in the world. One of the problems with governance is the confusion between roles of state and non-state institutions and their roles in governance as well as lack of a core-periphery type system of authority.¹⁷⁸ Development of economy and society requires the formation of sector specific strategies. For economic growth, ANDS seems to base its policies on the neoliberal framework as the strategic objective is "to enable the private sector to lead [the country's] development within a competitive market-based economy in which the government is the policy maker and regulator of the economy, not the competitor."¹⁷⁹ Creating an environment that promotes and enables a competitive private sector is the focus of Afghanistan's government and (not surprisingly) the donors.¹⁸⁰ The privatization of public enterprise is on the agenda. ANDS envisions Afghanistan as a "trading hub," where a system of open trade will be implemented and protectionist policies will be considered from a cost-benefit perspective. To assist development of the private sector, as well as growth of infrastructure and exploitation of natural resources, the regulatory framework will

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. Pg. 16 PDF.

¹⁷⁷ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-1013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 5-6, 53-54.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. Pg. 6.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. Pg. 7.

¹⁸⁰ See Afghanistan Information Management Service (AIMS). (2004). List of Donor Countries and Organizations for Afghanistan. [Access: 26 October 2010] http://www.aims.org.af/services/database/standards/other/donor_list/donor_list.pdf

be designed as “investor friendly” to encourage international interest.¹⁸¹ According to ANDS, preparing the strategy was an extensive and lengthy process of data collection. The main data collection methods included input gathered from the national and sub-national consultations, NRVA 2005, and APPPA, leading to the ANDS’ Poverty Profile, on which the poverty reduction policies are said to be based.

5.1.1 Participation

According to ANDS, “at the core of the [strategy] is a policy of ‘Afghanization’, meaning that ANDS has been fully developed and owned by Afghanistan.”¹⁸² Although ANDS does not directly define ownership, it states that “extensive participatory process [took place in ANDS preparation] to ensure ownership.”¹⁸³ Chambers and Pettit define ownership as implying “national and local autonomy,” but being often “limited by aid agencies’ influence on policies.”¹⁸⁴ The preparation of ANDS took three years and is said to have been thoroughly participatory in order to “seed the emergence of a grass root democracy, ensuring ownership from people from all corners and walks of life, civil society, private sector, religious establishments, international community and all government institutions at the national and sub-national level.”¹⁸⁵ Although ANDS does not allude to the level or quality of their participation, 17,000 people took part in the consultation process and nearly half were women. Furthermore, ANDS states that the participatory process was of greater scope than normally expected.¹⁸⁶

The consultation process involved work on national and sub-national levels. The sub-national consultations were done to strengthen the core-periphery relationship within the country and involved the civil society. The inputs from consultations were included in policies of various sectors of security, governance, economy and society. It is additionally noted, that the international community was “extensively involved in the development and

¹⁸¹ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 7-15.

¹⁸² Ibid. Pg. 1

¹⁸³ Ibid. Pg. 6.

¹⁸⁴ Chambers, Robert and Jethro Pettit. *Shifting Power to Make a Difference*. Pg. 144.

¹⁸⁵ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 17.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

preparation of the ANDS.”¹⁸⁷ The consultation with civil society involved numerous actors, including NGOs, local village councils and grassroots associations. The progress is said to have been monitored by national media, TV, internet and radio.¹⁸⁸

Poverty reduction projects were designed on the basis of regional needs and sectors have been prioritized on a national and sub-national (provincial) level, meaning that the provincial development plans were derived from the sub-national consultations. This allowed local communities to “prioritize, sequence, plan and be involved in the implementation of projects.”¹⁸⁹ The sub-national consultations are said to have taken place in three rounds across the country from March 2007 to March 2008 and included priorities as voiced by rural communities, urban communities, vulnerable social groups (nomads, refugees, disabled), and women. The priorities are the most urgent needs of each province. In this regard, ANDS appears to have a bottom up approach, where the input from sub-national consultations was included in the provincial development projects, which influenced the overall sectoral priorities of ANDS.¹⁹⁰ There is a global and local design to ANDS, meaning that some projects are implemented at provincial or sub-national and others at national levels. Individual provincial budgets exist as part of the national budget for implementation of the ANDS. On a national level, the sectors of highest priority are agriculture, security, education, governance, health, private sector, roads, infrastructure and social protection, although each province has its own sectoral focus based on most urgent needs.¹⁹¹

5.1.2 National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2005

ANDS uses findings from the NRVA 2005, spanning one season (summer) as basis for policy formulations in ANDS. Findings from the NRVA 2007 (spring) are also used for ANDS’ policies. For the purpose of this research, only the questionnaire and findings of the NRVA 2005 are analyzed. NRVA 2007 is only officially available as NRVA 2007/2008 because the survey was continuing at the time ANDS was developed. Therefore, NRVA 2007 survey findings used

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. Pg. 20.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. Pg. 21-22.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

as basis for ANDS policies are only available as part of NRVA 2007/2008 publication, meaning that it would be impossible to separate which information was utilized and which was not. The NRVA 2005 was a survey conducted during the summer of 2005. The assessment surveyed 30,822¹⁹² households among nomad, rural and urban population. It was the largest survey conducted in Afghanistan at the time. The assessment is considered the “landmark in the reconstruction of [the] country in the post-Taliban era.”¹⁹³ The survey includes the perception of Afghan households on “health care, housing, access to information, agricultural constraints, shocks and attitudes, past program participation and intervention preferences [in addition to] quantifiable data on demographics, electricity, drinking water and sanitation, agriculture, livestock, dietary diversity and the Millennium Development Goals.”¹⁹⁴ The assessment was supported with funds by the European Commission and conducted by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD). The survey’s purpose was to collect valuable data to improve policy and programming in order to achieve poverty reduction.¹⁹⁵ The key findings show that after the age of 24, women experience higher mortality rates than men in the same age group. This is related to what is deemed to be a “cumulative effect of disadvantageous conditions for women.”¹⁹⁶ These conditions include shortage of health facilities, poor nutrition, and common practice of marriages of girls under the age of 15. The higher death rates of women are telling, especially given the state of war in the last decades in Afghanistan, where higher death rates for men would be expected. In order, to improve the situation for women, policies should focus on education, health facilities, and improvements in rural areas.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹² See National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2005 (NRVA 2005). (June 2007). Ministry of Rehabilitation and Development and the Central Statistics Office in Kabul, Afghanistan. Copyright: ASA Institut für Sektoranalyse und Politikberatung GmbH in Rheinbach, Germany. Pg. 4 : The sample of 30,822 households was divided as follows: 1,735 nomad households, 23,220 rural households, and 5,867 urban households.

¹⁹³ Ibid. Pg. 7.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. Pg. 9.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. Pg. xiv.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. Pg. xiv.

Methodology

The main objective of NRVA 2005 was to collect information about nomad, rural and urban households. The household questionnaire is composed of 18 different sections; each including relevant questions related to the household. The questionnaire was the core instrument for data collection.¹⁹⁸ The survey's findings were constrained by the limited time span. The nomadic population includes different groups, such as long range and short range nomads; however, any socio-economic differences were not accounted for in the survey. Additionally, 12 districts (11 in the province of Zabul and one in Kandahar) were considered unsafe, allowing only male surveyors access to households and collecting information from male household heads on female directed questions.¹⁹⁹

The questionnaire was composed of 18 sections and the information regarding the sections is as following: 1. **Household Register and Education**, including questions, among others, about household members' literacy, education levels, and school enrollment; 2. **Housing**, including questions, among others, describing the type of family dwelling, type of ownership, disputes over ownership, physical condition of the dwelling, monthly costs related to the dwelling; 3. **Household Facilities**, including questions, among others, about access to electricity, cooking fuel, heating; 4. **Drinking Water**, including questions, among others, about the source of drinking water as well as monthly payment for access to water; 5. **Access to Credit**, including questions, among others, about outstanding and past loans, the amount of loans, purpose of loans; 6. **Livestock**, including questions regarding the type of livestock owned; 7. **Agriculture and Land Tenure**, including questions, among others, about ownership and acquirement of the land as well as any disputes over ownership of the land, how irrigation of the land is managed, the type of harvest produced from the land; 8. **Migration, Remittance and Social Network**, including questions, among others, about the source of income and frequency of remittances as well as the time spent away from home; 9. **Sources of Income**, including information regarding the member of the household responsible for particular income generating activity; 10. **Household Expenditures**, including information regarding the type of food, goods and services for which money is spent; 11. **Cash for**

¹⁹⁸ Ibid. Pg. 3.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. Pg. 7.

Work, including questions about household members' participation in programs or projects sponsored by the government aimed at increasing household cash in-take; 12. **Food Aid and Iodized Salt**, includes questions regarding food programs in which household members participate in as well as the household members knowledge about iodized salt; 13. **Household Shocks and Coping Strategies**; 14. **HIV/AIDS**, including general knowledge about the disease; 15. **Food Consumption**; 16. **Maternal and Child Health**; 17. **Children 0-59 Months**, including questions, among others, about the age at marriage, still births and live births, surviving children, number of pregnancies, family planning methods; 18. **HIV/AIDS and Literacy Test**, including the same questions as asked in section 14, in addition to demonstrating the ability to read.²⁰⁰ The first 14 sections were answered by male heads of household, while the last four sections were answered by female members of the household.²⁰¹ The NRVA 2005 considered the household to be the unit of analysis.²⁰²

Findings

The socio-economic situation was separated into the following findings: population demographics, education, access to information and health, housing and services, household income and credit availability, and agriculture.²⁰³ Population by gender is 54% male and 46% female. An average time for women to give birth in a lifetime is 6.6 times. Most households are headed by males, and households have an average of 6 to 8 members (nomad – 7.4, rural – 7.5, and urban – 6.6). Female headed households amount to 2% for the whole country, but are higher in some provinces (ex. 9% in Nimroz). 4% of male and 3% of female headed households have a disabled head of household.²⁰⁴ Findings related to education show high female illiteracy levels, in addition to data segregated for nomad, rural and urban households. The national literacy average for women is 18%

²⁰⁰ National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Survey – Household Questionnaire – Final 2005. (2005). Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development and the Central Statistics Office in Kabul, Afghanistan. [Access: 21 November 2010] <http://www.ihsn.org/home/?q=activities/catalog/surveys/ihsn/004-2005-001> Pg. 1.

²⁰¹ National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2005 (NRVA 2005). (June 2007). Ministry of Rehabilitation and Development and the Central Statistics Office. Pg. 3.

²⁰² Ibid. Pg. 4.

²⁰³ Ibid. Pg. iv-v.

²⁰⁴ Ibid. Pg. 9-10.

and men 36%, with an overall 28%. The nomad households have lowest overall literacy rates of 6%, followed by rural 23% and urban 56%.²⁰⁵ The highest female literacy rates are found in Kabul, Balkh and Hirat, due to women's easier access to education and the lowest rates are in provinces considered "highly insecure, traditional and [possessing] limited educational facilities."²⁰⁶ The national average for primary school attendance is 37%, with 29% female and 43% male. There are significant differences in the overall averages for nomad, rural and urban primary school enrollment with an overall average of 9%, 36%, and 53% respectively with significant gender gaps in nomad and rural enrollment with 6% female to 11% male and 27% female to 44% male respectively. The least difference is observed in urban areas with 51% female enrollment rate to 55% male.²⁰⁷ Health data focuses largely on female health. The most common age for women to marry is 20; however, there are 52,700 cases of 10-11 year old girls being married as well. This represents a rate of 13 out of 1000 women being married in childhood. For women, giving birth in a health facility or NGO center is not common, with only 19% of deliveries supervised by professionals. Questions regarding perceptions of health facilities were asked of both male and female consultation groups separately and found lack of health provisions to be an overwhelming problem for the country, especially for women, who have higher death rates, although specific female health problems were not surveyed.²⁰⁸

5.1.3 Afghanistan Participatory Poverty Pilot Assessment

APPPA was "a project aimed at collecting, documenting, disseminating and advocating the perspectives of the poor...[It] also aimed to disseminate and advocate the 'voices of the poor' more broadly throughout the development community in Afghanistan."²⁰⁹ APPPA's main purpose was to document poverty as it was understood by the poor and it aimed to complement that data collected through the NRVA 2005. Another reason for APPPA was

²⁰⁵ Ibid. Pg. 11.

²⁰⁶ Ibid. Pg. 13.

²⁰⁷ Ibid. Pg. 14.

²⁰⁸ Ibid. Pg. 17-19.

²⁰⁹ Adlparvar, Naysan. (April 2008). Afghanistan Pilot Participatory Poverty Assessment (APPPA) Summary Report. Kabul: Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR). [Access: 16 April 2011] <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Reports/APPPA/default.asp> Pg. 7.

to bridge the gap between the poor in Afghanistan and the policy makers preparing ANDS; to assist them in overcoming “the limited availability of qualitative understanding of poverty in Afghanistan.”²¹⁰ The project was funded by UNDP, USAID, Oxfam Great Britain and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The collection and preparation of data took about a year from May 2007 to May 2008. Just like the NRVA 2005, APPPA claims that some limitations do exist in the project.²¹¹ Unlike NRVA; however, where the findings were adjusted to reflect the entire population of Afghanistan,²¹² APPPA could not guarantee such application of its data.²¹³

Methodology

APPPA consisted of two components: data collection and policy advocacy, meaning that the information collected was used as arguments in policy recommendations. The assessment component consisted of four phases: preparation, training on qualitative data collection, field research, and data analysis. Interviewers consisted of male and female only teams, with a team leader assigned to each due to cultural norms dictating the separation of genders in public meetings.²¹⁴ The main role of the researchers was to facilitate small group discussions, enabling all participants to take turns speaking, as well as clarifying misunderstandings or alleviating conflict.²¹⁵ The overall methodological approach was based on the belief that “Afghans need to be meaningfully included – identifying their personal understanding of poverty – in developing approaches to

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ See Afghanistan Pilot Participatory Poverty Assessment (APPPA) Introduction and Context. (April 2008). [Access: 16 April 2011] <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Reports/APPPA/default.asp> Pg. 19 : APPPA is a pilot project and involves only a limited amount of field work (4 out of 34 provinces). Additionally, methodology was tested and changed throughout the process, to ensure learning and flexibility; therefore, “the findings and policy recommendations emerging from the APPPA cannot be considered to fully represent the perspectives of all ‘poor’ Afghans.

²¹² See National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2005 (NRVA 2005). (June 2007). Ministry of Rehabilitation and Development and the Central Statistics Office. Pg. 1-2 : “The NRVA 2005 survey [...] was a massive and concerted effort in which very isolated areas in the country were sampled [therefore the NRVA 2005] is statistically representative at provincial and national level.”

²¹³ Afghanistan Pilot Participatory Poverty Assessment (APPPA) Introduction and Context. (April 2008). Pg. 19.

²¹⁴ Ibid. Pg. 24-26.

²¹⁵ Ibid. Pg. 32.

tackling poverty.”²¹⁶ The investigative framework for the project was a series of questions as well as specific themes and was based on the Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF):

“The SLF is a model that makes clear many of the interacting factors affecting people’s livelihoods and, in the case of APPPA, is a useful tool in structuring points of investigation into people’s lives and the way they fall into, come out of, or remain in poverty. Components of the SLF include people or households’ strengths and weaknesses (assets) and how they use them (livelihood strategies) in the ever changing external environment (vulnerability context) in which they live, to achieve their objectives in life (livelihood outcomes)...SLF also looks at the interaction between these factors and the role that formal and informal structures (e.g. local government) and processes (e.g. local cultural traditions) have on the lives of the ‘poor’.”²¹⁷

Based on the SLF, the APPPA team formulated five main questions that the project aimed to answer:

“Who are the ‘poor’ and how do they perceive poverty and related issues? What assets to the ‘poor’ have and how do they use such assets to construct their livelihoods? What have been the major changes for people over time – in their states of poverty – and what factors influenced these changes? What resources, socio-economic and gender relationships, organizations, institutions, and services are relevant to different groups among the ‘poor’? What scope is there for informing the ANDS to improve development policies, practices and institutions in favor of the ‘poor’?”²¹⁸

Furthermore, the APPPA staff developed a set of themes in order to not restrict themselves to simply asking questions, which was thought to may have resulted in “non-creative” answers from participants. The goal was to allow the participants the necessary freedom to effectively communicate their perceptions. Additionally, the development of methodology was ongoing to ensure that necessary adjustments were made based on feedback and learning. The project also divided their findings into groups based on age and gender to allow for streamlining of the findings.²¹⁹ For more detailed analysis, perspectives from groups of specific ethnic or tribal relationship were separated from the perspectives of groups with different religious adherences, groups of refugees, land owners, or persons who were mentally or physically disabled.²²⁰ The total sampling size was 2,626

²¹⁶ Ibid. Pg. 29.

²¹⁷ Ibid. Pg. 29.

²¹⁸ Ibid. Pg. 30.

²¹⁹ Ibid. Pg. 30-31.

²²⁰ Ibid. Pg. 32.

of which 1,158 were male and 1,468 were female from four provinces: Badakhshan, Nangarhar, Uruzgan, and Herat.²²¹

Findings

To start with, many of the APPPA researchers were greeted with anger, which stemmed from the Afghan communities' "frustration with the government and dissatisfaction over NGOs' delivery of services and projects."²²² In terms of poverty perceptions, most often participants described poverty as "a lack of financial and material assets, mostly lack of housing, money, livestock, land and food."²²³ Poverty was also perceived as "marginalization from services and employment opportunities, illiteracy/low education levels, ill-health, lack of respect from others or lack of sons or daughters."²²⁴ Additionally, the participants stated that feelings of "insecurity, powerlessness, and helplessness"²²⁵ often result from living in poverty. For some women, poverty was seen as "the inability to participate actively, or be 'visible' in everyday life."²²⁶ Vulnerability was also related to poverty and meant the likelihood to become exposed to poverty following natural disasters or other calamitous events, economic shocks or trends, and the ups and downs suffered from seasonal changes. (Note: The poor's perception of poverty as lack of financial and material assets and marginalization from employment, social services and education contradicts post-development theory in its criticism of universal human rights (3.4.2) as well as its stance on poverty being relative, voluntary or spiritual (3). Article 6 of CESCR expresses that citizens of a member state have "the right to work, which includes the right of everyone to the opportunity to gain his living by work which he freely chooses or accepts...[the state] will take appropriate steps to safeguard this rights."²²⁷ Article 9 imparts the right to social security; article 11

²²¹ Ibid. Pg. 41.

²²² Ibid. Pg. 35.

²²³ Afghanistan Pilot Participatory Poverty Assessment (APPPA) Findings and Implications. (April 2008). [Access: 16 April 2011] <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Reports/APPPA/default.asp> Pg. 64.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid. Pg. 67.

²²⁷ Ghandhi, P.R. (2004). Blackstone's International Human Rights Documents. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966). Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pg. 82.

indicates the right to food and adequate housing, article 12 indicates the right to mental and physical health, and article 13 recognizes the right to free primary education, vocational training as well as higher education.²²⁸ Although the experience of poverty is relative, the Afghan people define their poverty, as many would, as a lack of basic human needs, which include food, housing, health, education and the means to achieve them, including job opportunities and/or availability of social protection).

For the purpose of allowing participants to analyze poverty in greater depth, the concept of poverty was divided into more detailed levels, including poor, not so poor, *avara* (people with pain and no house), *binavaa* (people with no way to move forward in life), middle, rich, and the very rich.²²⁹ The participants' perception of each level was based upon the assets a person may possess, the coping strategies they may use, his or her social capital, and social characteristics. For example, those considered poor "live in a room (with no carpet) in someone else's home; cannot afford even a mud house, [have] no land or livestock, [and] cannot afford food or clothing."²³⁰ In terms of coping strategies, the poor, lacking a working male member of the household, had to beg for money, or borrow money from others, resulting in mounting debt. Socially, they had no power or respect within the community. The poor often are perceived to be illiterate and in some cases, mentally or physically disabled.²³¹ APPPA captured the different levels of poverty in the four provinces studied. For example, the province of Herat included 30% poor, Badakhshan 35-40%, Uruzgan 70%, and Nangarhar 98% poor.²³²

The project also found that the most vulnerable in the provinces were people, who lacked a support network, women and girls, illiterate and uneducated, and large families. Some of the female participants discussed their inability to make decisions, in and out of the home, as well as their inability to receive priority in food and health. High percentage of women experience violence and forced marriage and in one village, women reported a nearly 100% rate of

²²⁸ Ibid. 82-85.

²²⁹ Afghanistan Pilot Participatory Poverty Assessment (APPPA) Findings and Implications. (April 2008). Pg. 67.

²³⁰ Ibid. Pg. 69.

²³¹ See Ibid : Refers to Characteristics and Distribution of Households by Level of Poverty in Herat.

²³² Ibid. Pg. 69-71.

incidence.²³³ Discussions of poverty led the project participants to the concepts of rights and entitlements. The terminology used related to rights perceived as god-given, rights as entitlements, or rights one is entitled to automatically under certain situation (disability, homelessness, widowhood). The rights perceived as entitled to by humans included security, education, good health, just government, freedom of expression, work, sufficient food, clean water, a reasonable standard of living, own land and livestock, own a house, be involved in decision-making, equality, vote, access to natural resources, practice Islam, and citizenship.²³⁴ Specific to gender equality, the concept of rights deals not with whether men as opposed to women have more rights, but the amount of a particular right, men and women are entitled to. For example, the participants discussed the right to use public park space for recreation. It was believed that everyone has the right to use the space; however, based on information specified in the Quran, women are entitled to 20% of the public park space and men to 80%. The findings in APPPA also refer to women's confusion at the concept of rights: "In a number of cases, the concept of entitlements was so alien to female participants that they found it exceptionally hard to comment on the topic."²³⁵ Discrimination and denial of rights was seen as more likely to occur for the poor and marginalized, especially those with no financial support or women, ethnic or religious minorities or the disabled. Discrimination is not only a general phenomenon in communities, but also within households. In some cases, discrimination against women is "legitimized" with Islam or local traditions. However, a female participant believed that discrimination against women was a sign of Afghanistan's "rotting culture," not Islam.²³⁶ (Note: Women's perception of poverty as including violence and discrimination, as well as unfair distribution of resources and lack of power and influence, shows that the rights desired by the women participating in APPPA match the rights imparted on women by CEDAW. Article 7 and 8 refer to women's empowerment in decision making, article 10 and 11 discuss equal access to education and employment, and article

²³³ Ibid. Pg. 72.

²³⁴ Ibid. Pg. 73.

²³⁵ Ibid. Pg. 74.

²³⁶ Ibid.

12 and 14 call for equal distribution of healthcare and social security programs.)²³⁷

5.1.4 Poverty diagnosis in ANDS

ANDS states that its policies are based on evidence and the poverty profile of the country is the evidence. ANDS describes its pursuit for knowledge about poverty: “The Government’s participatory approach to poverty diagnostics involved enabling poor communities and their institutions to participate effectively in defining, analyzing, and monitoring poverty as they experience it. This work was also conducted in the most remote and conflict affected communities in Afghanistan.”²³⁸ Furthermore, ANDS claims that the poverty profile was sensitive as to the provincial differences in poverty: “As a result of provincial and district planning, different targeting of poverty reduction programs/interventions have been considered to establish a best fit between poverty profile and poverty actions.”²³⁹ The chapter on poverty analysis is structured into information about: 1. Data collection, poverty measurements and estimates, 2. Poverty estimates, 3. Poverty in Afghanistan: Main characteristics of inequality, 4. Most important causes of poverty: poverty correlates, 5. Who the poor are: the most vulnerable groups, 6. Poverty framework for poverty reduction, and 7. High priority sectors for poverty reduction. Each item above is divided into further subsections, where data and findings on the specific issues and indicators of poverty are presented.²⁴⁰

Data collection, poverty measurements and estimates²⁴¹

ANDS uses the participatory consultations and two surveys, NRVA 2005 and APPPA, to develop Afghanistan’s poverty profile. However, ANDS does state that the knowledge of “specific nature of poverty in Afghanistan is restricted by the considerable quality and quantity limitations, with the NRVA comprising the majority of

²³⁷ Gandhi, P.R. (2004). Blackstone’s International Human Rights Documents. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979). Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pg. 95-100.

²³⁸ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 20.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ See Ibid. Pg. 27-36.

²⁴¹ See Ibid. Pg. 27-28.

information available,”²⁴² and that ANDS’ sub-national consultations “have contributed to a far deeper understanding of the specific nature of poverty in Afghanistan.”²⁴³ The main measurement of poverty in Afghanistan was the cost of basic needs analysis (CBN). The CBN poverty line is “the level of per capita expenditure at which the members of a household can be expected to meet their basic needs comprised of food and non-food items.”²⁴⁴ Both, the 2005 and 2007 NRVA have found the CBN poverty line to be about USD 14 per month.²⁴⁵

Poverty estimates²⁴⁶

42% live under the poverty line with income of USD 14 per month, although 20% of the remaining population lives very close to the poverty line, indicating high vulnerability. 45% experience food poverty, where they are unable to purchase enough food to meet the daily intake of 2,100 calories per day. Food poverty varies by season. Most households have the highest consumption in the summer following the harvest and have the least consumption in winter, with more significant restrictions in March.

Poverty in Afghanistan: Main characteristics of inequality²⁴⁷

Inequality was also measured for Afghanistan and although the Gini coefficient was low, it is unarguably due to an overall presence of poverty in the country. Yet high inequality does exist between many segments of Afghan society. For example, changes in levels of poverty are significant between rural, nomadic or urban populations. Poverty is mostly observed among the nomad and rural populations²⁴⁸ in comparison to the urban.²⁴⁹ Nomads have become poor since they were forced to settle and could no longer rely on

²⁴² Ibid. Pg. 27.

²⁴³ Ibid. Pg. 28.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ See Ibid. Pg. 28-29.

²⁴⁷ See Ibid. Pg. 29-31.

²⁴⁸ See Ibid. Pg. 30 : Rural poverty is mainly based on food insecurity and deficient access to basic public services and infrastructure. The poorest of the rural population are those without any education, are illiterate, live in remote mountainous regions and possess no land or livestock.

²⁴⁹ See Ibid. Pg. 31 : Urban poverty in Afghanistan often results from low wage labor or insecure income, not sufficient to purchase basic needs. The low income or income fluctuation leads to increased indebtedness and results in a “poverty trap.”

migration for livelihood. Those who settled did so due to loss of livestock from droughts or high crime rates, prohibiting movement. Overall those in Afghan society who depend on livestock and agriculture are most distressed and those who consume the most, earn money from trade and services and have higher literacy rates. This explains why people living in urban areas experience less poverty, although are not free from it. Inequality between men and women is also high in Afghanistan. Women do not participate in paid labor and are dependent on families or husbands. Women also experience higher levels of illiteracy and lower participation in education. Households headed by females usually have the highest level of poverty as access to employment and education is lacking.

Most important causes of poverty: poverty correlates²⁵⁰

Most important causes and correlations of poverty are overall low literacy levels in the country, dependence on agriculture, lacking asset ownership and limited crop diversity, no access to education and health facilities. Other causes include indebtedness due to lack of job security, remoteness and lacking access to main roads, natural disasters, and female headed household or disabled head of household.

Who the poor are: the most vulnerable groups²⁵¹

While poverty is present in higher numbers among rural and nomad populations, the poverty rates in urban population is also increasing. The groups that are considered most vulnerable to poverty are families with large number of children, female headed households, the disabled, and the internally displaced. Afghanistan has a high number of children and a small portion of the population of working adults. Children from such families become the most vulnerable, because they may work to supplement the family income. By working, they are unable to continue school and therefore, continue to live in poverty throughout their life. Additionally, infants and children up to five years of age are extremely vulnerable, because of their higher nutritional requirements. The female headed households, accounting for 2.5% of Afghan households, are especially vulnerable, since many of the households do not possess a single “able bodied income earner.” Afghanistan also has one of the highest numbers of

²⁵⁰ See Ibid. Pg. 31-33.

²⁵¹ See Ibid. Pg. 33.

disabled persons in the world, estimated at 800,000, with a 90% unemployment rate. Finally, the presence of natural disasters and the ongoing war create a large number of displaced persons. The growing urban poverty is due largely to migration patterns of the rural poor moving into cities in hopes of better economic opportunities.

Policy framework and high priority sectors policies for poverty reduction²⁵²

ANDS believes poverty in Afghanistan to be complex and multidimensional. ANDS plans to fight poverty from the bottom up as well as the top down, although the focus remains on creation of a strong private sector led growth which should be the basis for poverty reduction. This means that the private sector is seen as the job creator and “main instrument of poverty reduction,” along with “fiscally affordable social protection safety nets” for the poor. Generating employment and labor market policies is considered to be one of the most important policies for poverty reduction and will be possible with strong private sector growth. To achieve this, the gas, oil and mining sector will be expanded for privatization. Priority will be given to sectors that relate most to poverty including security, education, health and social protection as sectors relying on public spending. The government is also said to focus public resources on the poorest of the poor (women headed households, nomads, displaced) as well as areas and regions with the poorest populations (rural, remote). The agriculture sector is to receive extra support as a key sector for reducing poverty. This includes providing access to markets and programs to support crop diversification, targeted livestock, and farming technology. Finally, coordinating with NGOs on relief efforts will allow the organizations to deliver services to the Afghan poor as well.

5.2 The national development strategy

The National Development Strategy includes poverty reduction strategies for numerous sub-sectors of the security, governance/rule of law and human rights, and economic and social development sectors. A number of cross-cutting issues relevant to the conditions of the country’s sectors are mainstreamed into the sector policies. The cross-cutting issues include anti-corruption, gender equality, counter-narcotics, environment, regional cooperation, and capacity building.

²⁵² See Ibid. Pg. 33-36.

5.2.1 Gender equity as cross-cutting issue

Gender equity, not gender equality is listed as the cross-cutting issue among all sectors throughout ANDS. The goal of including gender equity as one of the cross-cutting issues in the ANDS is to improve women's lives by overturning years of historical disadvantage suffered by women.²⁵³ The ultimate goal of gender equity is gender equality, which is defined as "condition where women and men fully enjoy their rights, equally contribute to and enjoy the benefits of development and neither is prevented from pursuing what is fair, good and necessary to live a full and satisfying life."²⁵⁴ ANDS points to Afghanistan's commitments under the MDGs, Afghanistan Compact, CEDAW, and constitutional provisions as expressing obligations to be fulfilled by the government in relation to gender equality. Therefore, ANDS policies aim to include women in government administration and other political entities, provide access to education, health and employment, productive assets as well as control over the income and assets, access to justice and reduction of exposure to violence. The strategy is hoped to result in overall social equality for women, where their views are equal to those of men in the public sphere, policy debate and decision making. Mainstreaming of gender in ANDS attempts to accomplish three main outcomes, including significant amount of government entities implementing gender equality efforts, quantifiable results in the improvement of women's status as measured by literacy rates or equal wage, and an overall social acceptance of gender equality.²⁵⁵

According to ANDS, the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) has been charged with monitoring the progress of the government in promoting gender equality. MOWA has a long history in Afghanistan dating back to 1943, when it was a union located in Kabul and organized to train and educate women. The union was called the Women's Grand Organization and was supported further in 1945 by the sister of the late King Amanullah. The organization's name and location changed over time and in 1963, it became incorporated into the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. After 1978, the organization split into an association and a council and with government support, branched out in Kabul and to provinces. The activities of the council were social and political in nature, whereas

²⁵³ Ibid. Pg. 147.

²⁵⁴ Ibid. Pg. 147-148.

²⁵⁵ Ibid. Pg. 148.

the activities of the organizations involved vocational training like sewing, carpet weaving, flower making, and decorating among others. The organization was forbidden in 1996 by the Taliban and in 2001, MOWA convened according to agreements of the Bonn Conference²⁵⁶ and the subsequent establishment of the Interim Administration. From that point on, MOWA became a policy making entity instead of a charity organization. The responsibility of MOWA is to “implement political and social policy of the government in order to secure and expand legal rights of women and ensure the rule of law in their lives within its activity area.”²⁵⁷

MOWA is the lead agency in the government charged with mainstreaming gender within the Afghan government. It is the main body in charge of making sure that all of the government’s policies ensure equality for men and women. The ministry works jointly with the international community and non-governmental organizations. MOWA developed the National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA), which is a fundamental component of ANDS. It is the responsibility of MOWA to implement NAPWA into the ANDS. NAPWA is a 10 year action plan focusing on implementing the commitments made to gender equality. The action plan focuses on sectors it believes are of most relevance to women in the country and those include security, legal protection and human rights, leadership and political participation, economy/work and poverty, health, and education. The action steps to be taken consider the commitment of the Afghan government to MDGs and the Afghanistan Compact.²⁵⁸ MOWA’s partners and capacity builders are USAID, UNDP, United Nations Development Fund for Women

²⁵⁶ See Public Broadcasting Service. (2001). Filling the Vacuum: The Bonn Conference. [Access: 26 October 2010] <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/campaign/withus/cbonn.html> : On November 27, 2001, various delegates of Afghan ethnic groups convened a meeting in Bonn, Germany under the auspices of the United Nations in order to create a plan for an interim post-Taliban government. The interim administration included 29 appointed members for administrative areas including defense, finance, rural development, return of refugees and others; among them was women’s affairs.

²⁵⁷ Ministry of Women’s Affairs of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (MOWA). Introduction to MOWA. [Access: 26 October 2010] http://mowa.gov.af/english/?page_id=30

²⁵⁸ United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) Afghanistan. Institutional Capacity Building of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MOWA): The National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA). In: Programmes. [Access: 26 October 2010] <http://www.unifem.org/afghanistan/prog/MOWA/napwa.html>

(UNIFEM) and the Asia Foundation, among others.²⁵⁹ UNIFEM originally assisted MOWA with project implementation. Current projects focus on women's access to transportation without exposure to harassment and promoting women's role in religious activities.²⁶⁰ In short, the Afghan government mandates MOWA to mainstream gender into the national strategy, but MOWA needs the help of UNIFEM for capacity to implement NAPWA.

5.2.2 ANDS sectors and poverty reduction

The main theme of ANDS is poverty reduction through private sector growth. "High, sustainable, broad-based economic growth and the preparation of a viable macroeconomic framework are indispensable for poverty reduction and employment creation. The overall growth strategy of the ANDS is based on a firm policy of private sector led growth."²⁶¹ According to ANDS, recent economic performance in Afghanistan has been possible due to public investment in reconstruction resulting from inflows of foreign aid (at the time of ANDS 40% of GDP). Foreign assistance to Afghanistan has averaged 40% of GDP over a five year period (2003-2008). Dependence on foreign aid is not a sustainable model for future growth; therefore, private economic activity is seen as necessary for long-term well-being of the country and it should result in adequate domestic return for continuation of the country's goals.²⁶² A 7-9% annual growth in GDP is expected to decrease poverty.²⁶³ Seeing the investment and productivity as key factors for economic growth, the goal is to gain large enough investment to employ the country's resources to highest productivity.²⁶⁴ ANDS is structured into sectors under the areas of security, governance, and social and economic development. The security sector is a stand-alone sector of which the focus is on creating a sound administration, justice and judicial

²⁵⁹ Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Working with our Partners. [Access 24 April 2011] <http://www.mowagov.af/en/Page/1337>

²⁶⁰ United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) Afghanistan. Institutional Capacity Building of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA): Women's Equal Access to Public Transportation. In: Programmes. [Access: 26 October 2010] <http://www.unifem.org/afghanistan/prog/MOWA/transportation.html>

²⁶¹ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 39.

²⁶² Ibid. Pg. 39-41.

²⁶³ Ibid. Pg. 34.

²⁶⁴ Ibid. Pg. 47.

systems, and improving relations with neighbors and international allies. The sector for governance, rule of law and human rights is also a stand-alone sector and focuses on improving governance, public administration, human rights, justice, and religious affairs. The economic and social sector is the largest and is further divided into sub-sectors as following: private sector development, energy, water and irrigation, agriculture and rural development, transport, information and communication technology, urban development, mining, health and nutrition, education, culture/youth and media, social protection, and refugees/returnees and internally displaced persons. The summary of ANDS by sector and the relevant sub-sectors is presented in the appendix to this text.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁵ See Appendix Pg. 157-174.

6. Gender in PRSP preparation and ANDS

PRSPs are countries' long-term development strategies meant to be implemented for years, even decades after their initial creation. The preparation of a country's PRSP is often a long process, involving consultations on a national and sub-national as well as international level. Additionally, the PRSPs are created in two stages: an interim and a final report. The interim reports are preliminary plans and are often prepared by countries to allow for quicker access to funds²⁶⁶ from the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund. Presumably, any potential policy problems noticed in the interim strategy would be corrected in the final version. The PRSPs are perceived by some in the aid giving community as the most effective comprehensive frameworks for poverty reduction currently available. The PRSPs are "to be prepared by governments and used to prioritize the use of public and external resources for poverty reduction impact."²⁶⁷ The key underlying principles of the PRSP process is that the process of PRSP creation and implementation is "country driven, results oriented, comprehensive, partnership-oriented and [possessing a] long-term perspective."²⁶⁸

In order to facilitate PRSP writing, the World Bank has created the PRSP Sourcebook. The PRSP Sourcebook includes chapters on numerous topics suggesting effective approaches to PRSP development that keep in line with the underlying principles of the PRSP process. The chapters include information on poverty measurements and analysis, participation, gender, and monitoring and evaluation among other chapters that refer more specifically to

²⁶⁶ Bell, Emma. (March 2003). Gender and PRSPs: With Experiences from Tanzania, Bolivia, Viet Nam, and Mozambique: Prepared for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Denmark. Bridge Institute of Development Studies. Pg. 3.

²⁶⁷ Operations Evaluations Department (OED) World Bank. (28 February 2003). OED Review of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) Process. Approach Paper. Pg. 1.

²⁶⁸ See The World Bank. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. [Access: 12 November 2010] <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/PROJ ECTS/0,,contentMDK:20120705~menuPK:51557~pagePK:41367~piPK:51533~theSitePK:40941,00.html> : The principles are explained as following: 1. Country driven – involving broad-based participation, 2. Results-oriented – focused on outcomes that benefit the poor, 3. Comprehensive – understands the multi-dimensional nature of poverty, 4. Partnership-oriented – engages coordinated participation of development partners, and 5. Long-term perspective – envisions poverty reduction to be sustainable in the long-term.

creation of sector strategies like social protection, health and nutrition, education, transport, or energy and mining. The Sourcebook is a “guide to assist countries in developing and strengthening poverty reduction strategies.”²⁶⁹ Although the Sourcebook was written by the World Bank staff, “its intent is only suggestive, and [...] may be selectively used as a resource to provide information about possible approaches,”²⁷⁰ and therefore is neither a requirement nor an obligation for PRSP countries to use for creation of a new national plan, especially in cases, where other methods and practices are already in place. The countries are encouraged to use “existing materials as much as possible.”²⁷¹ Despite encouraging local approaches and local participation, the World Bank, as discussed in the introduction to this text and as seen in World Bank’s own statements²⁷², advocates steadily for the inclusion of gender and gender equality in countries’ development agendas. In addition, some non-profit watch groups have organized to ensure that gender and gender equality are properly addressed and planned for in PRSPs.²⁷³ Whether presence of gender mainstreaming in the PRSP is strong or weak, it has become an important issue in PRSP preparation, because of the perceived link between gender equality and economic growth; however, as uncovered by Oxfam, many PRSPs do not meaningfully

²⁶⁹ World Bank. (2002). Preface. In: *A Sourcebook for Poverty Reduction Strategies*. Jeni Klugman [ed.]. Washington, DC: World Bank. Pg. vii.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² See World Bank. *The World Bank and Gender Equality: At a Glance*. [Access: 13 November 2010] <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTGENDER/0,,contentMDK:22386117~pagePK:210058~piPK:210062~theSitePK:336868,00.html> : The World Bank acknowledges improvements in education related to increased enrollment rates for girls in developing countries; however, sees a lagging progress in improving women’s economic opportunities. As a result, the Bank is focusing, to a large extent, on improving women’s economic well-being. Since 2008, especially, the Bank is “committed to new measures to boost women’s economic empowerment” and in 2007, the Bank launched a four-year action plan titled *Gender Equality as Smart Economics (GAP)*. The plan focuses on women’s empowerment in economic sectors like energy, transport, water sanitation, agriculture, private sector development and finance. The focus on economic empowerment is based on the assumption by the Bank that “women’s labor force participation and earnings are associated with reduced poverty and faster growth. This is why the GAP concentrates on facilitating girls’ transition from school to work.”

²⁷³ Oxfam International. (January 2004). From ‘Donorship’ to Ownership: Moving Towards PRSP Round Two. Oxfam Briefing Paper.

mainstream gender and focus mainly on women's basic needs and reduce women to 'vulnerable group', instead of "attempt[ing] a more thorough and comprehensive analysis of inequalities between men and women..."²⁷⁴

6.1 Gender in PRSP

As a large and influential organization of the international development apparatus, the World Bank has branded gender inequality as a cause for poverty and has deemed poverty to be a condition of lack of economic growth. As a result, the link between economic empowerment and women's well-being was formed. The role of women in development has been perceived as one of great importance and the involvement of women in developing societies as invaluable. As a result, gender has become mainstreamed into nearly all development declarations and projects including the MDGs,²⁷⁵ PRSPs, as well as work of smaller actors like NGOs. The PRSPs are often related to the MDGs in the sense that the former are designed to achieve the latter.

The PRSP Sourcebook is a World Bank publication that assists and guides staff working in PRSP preparation on issues regarding data collection, participation, and gender mainstreaming among others. An entire chapter of the Sourcebook is dedicated to gender considerations in PRSP preparation.²⁷⁶ Gender equality is often considered a cross-cutting issue in PRSPs as political, legislative, law enforcement, and social and economic activities are of equal importance to men and women; however, due to gender roles, the activities may impact men and women differently. The Afghanistan PRSP lists gender equity among its cross-cutting issues next to regional cooperation, counter narcotics, anti-corruption, capacity development and environment. The cross-cutting issues are seen as subjects of importance to each sector, whether it refers to education, transportation or energy and are seen as factors needed for successful sector development. Although it often refers to gender

²⁷⁴ Ibid. Pg. 25.

²⁷⁵ See Appendix Pg. 158 or see Annan, Kofi. (21 March 2005). A/59/2005. In Larger Freedom: Toward Development, Security and Human Rights for All. United Nations. General Assembly: Fifty-Ninth Session. Pg. 8-9 : The document describes the Millennium Development Goals with Goals 2, 3 and 5 focusing on equal access to primary education, "[eliminating] gender disparity" in all levels of education by 2015, and improving maternal health.

²⁷⁶ Bamberger, Michael et al. Chapter 10: Gender. Pg. 335-374.

equity, not equality, by definition the former helps to achieve the latter. Equity refers often to equality in justice or economic resources. In the judicial sense, equity is “freedom from bias or favoritism.”²⁷⁷ In the economic sense, equity is “the money value of property”²⁷⁸ and refers to “a right, claim, or interest existing or valid in equity.”²⁷⁹ The gender equity referred to in the cross-cutting issues relates mainly to the freedom from bias, because cross-cutting issues in the PRSP are applied throughout all sectors (governance, law and human rights, security, and social and economic). Equality means the state of being equal, with equal meaning “like in quality, nature or status”²⁸⁰ or “like for each member of a group, class, or society.”²⁸¹ Equitable access to resources for men and women should result in gender equality; therefore, equity should lead to equality. Gender analysis involves determining the specific factors of poverty for men and women respectively and determining the causes for unequal access to resources. The gender inequalities in the PRSP preparing country are also measured with tools such the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), Gender-related Development Index (GDI), or the Country Gender Assessment (CGA), which addresses the nature of gender caused disparities. The results should allow the policy makers to focus on indicators with “highest gender impact,” such as “water access” or “time saving” technology, and prioritize the policies and programs that focus on those indicators.²⁸²

Gender equality is also a significant goal for ANDS. “The ANDS’ goal for gender equality is an Afghanistan where women and men enjoy security, equal rights and equal opportunities in all spheres of life.”²⁸³ To some extent, all sectors of ANDS attempt to include a gender perspective; however, only few deal with the issue of domestic violence or violence against women in general, although the suffering of Afghan women from violence is widespread (see Introduction). The security sector lacks a strong gender focus; despite security being

²⁷⁷ Merriam-Webster Dictionary. Equity. [Access: 12 November 2010] <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/equity>

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Merriam-Webster Dictionary. Equal. [Access: 12 November 2010] <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/equal>

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Bamberger, Michael et al. Chapter 10: Gender. Pg. 335-336.

²⁸³ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 13-14.

considered a dimension of gender poverty (6.3.2). The policies in the sector (in terms of gender) focus mainly on employment for women, as well as eliminating violence and harassment in the workplace only.²⁸⁴ The justice and rule of law section of the good governance sector focus on “strengthen[ing] institutional response to stop violence against women.”²⁸⁵ The social protection under the social and economic sector mentions that nearly 31% of reported cases of violence are related to physical violence.²⁸⁶ Although it does not provide specific ideas, ANDS states that the social protection will focus mainly on population ‘at risk’, which includes victims of violence (women and children) and victims of trafficking.²⁸⁷ Sources other than ANDS report additional threats to women and girls in the form of education-related violence that uses physical attacks and “scare tactics” intended to dissuade female education.²⁸⁸ Another form of violence ANDS may refer to (although without branding it as so) is financial abuse.²⁸⁹ It states that “vast majority of women do not participate in paid economic activities making them highly dependent on their husbands or families.”²⁹⁰ Although female unemployment could result from sources like overall high unemployment rates or lack of childcare facilities, ANDS suggests that women’s paid employment outside of the home may “[offend] cultural sensitivities.”²⁹¹ In general, ANDS does not focus to a large extent on violence against women as the phrase itself is mentioned only twice in the document and other related phrases like ‘gender violence’, ‘gender specific violence’ or ‘domestic violence’ are not

²⁸⁴ Ibid. Pg. 60.

²⁸⁵ Ibid. Pg. 201.

²⁸⁶ See Ibid. Pg. 124 : The information is based on a study conducted by UNIFEM. The study concluded that from 1,327 registered cases of violence, 30.7% were attributed to physical violence.

²⁸⁷ Ibid. Pg. 125-126.

²⁸⁸ See Care International. (23 November 2009). Report Finds Girls’ Schools in Afghanistan Face Highest Risks of Violence; Suggests Steps for Preventing Attacks. Care Newsroom. [Access: 29 November 2010] <http://www.care.org/newsroom/articles/2009/11/girls-schools-afghanistan-violence-attacks-20091123.asp>

²⁸⁹ See Newfoundland Labrador Canada. Violence Prevention Initiative. Types of Violence and Abuse. Financial Abuse. [Access: 29 November 2010] <http://www.gov.nf.ca/VPI/types/index.html#financialabuse> : Financial abuse refers to control of one’s financial resources without consent. This includes forbidding one to work outside of the home or not allowing one to attend school.

²⁹⁰ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 31.

²⁹¹ Ibid. Pg. 136.

found in ANDS. Additionally, violence is not mentioned meaningfully in NRVA 2005 or APPPA. The NRVA 2005 questionnaire discusses household exposure to external violence and is located in the male section of the form.²⁹² NRVA 2005 quotes a World Health Organization report suggesting that early marriages and domestic violence are “factors that exacerbate female mortality.”²⁹³ On the other hand, APPPA was conducted as a gender disaggregated survey; therefore, the findings reflected more clearly a gender perspective, where women addressed their inability to make decisions as well as the issue of violence that they often face (5.1.3).

The remaining sectors of ANDS focus to a degree on high impact gender indicators. For example, the focus for the private sector is to design employment practices that promote female paid labor. The energy sector perceived the establishment of micro-installations as improving access to energy, making household tasks less burdensome for women. The water and irrigation sector aims to improve water access in order to allow women to save time required to collect water as well as improve the health of mothers and children by providing clean water to households. The transportation sector aims to make transportation for women not only available, but safe and free of harassment, by providing private transportation companies with subsidies and incentives to provide equally transport for men and women. All other sectors of ANDS also refer to specific indicators and efforts directed at advancing gender equality.²⁹⁴ Finally, in terms of advancing sectors based on high impact gender indicators, the ANDS does not offer sector priorities in relation to gender equality, only in relation to poverty reduction.²⁹⁵ Even then, priorities are not given within sectors, only specific policies are mentioned. For example, the most pressing policies within agriculture and rural development relate to providing greater access to markets

²⁹² National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Survey – Household Questionnaire – Final 2005. (2005). Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development and the Central Statistics Office in Kabul, Afghanistan. Section 13. Pg. 14.

²⁹³ See National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2005 (NRVA 2005). (June 2007). Ministry of Rehabilitation and Development and the Central Statistics Office in Kabul, Afghanistan. Pg. 17.

²⁹⁴ More detailed information about specific sector plans is available in the Appendix Pg. 166-174.

²⁹⁵ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 34-36.

and diversification of crops and livestock.²⁹⁶ The prioritization of sectors based on gender equality impacts is left to MOWA and the agency's design and implementation of NAPWA (5.2.1), which, despite being called a fundamental component of ANDS, is not explicitly described or summarized within the document. Most of the information about the goals and activities related to NAPWA are available on the UNIFEM website.²⁹⁷

According to the Sourcebook, focusing on gender in development planning allows for greater efficiency, because inequality is "costly to development," in the sense that "rigid gender roles" pose an obstacle to poverty reduction due to a favored perception of women as reproductive beings, limiting their participation in agricultural activities, land or asset ownership, access to bank loans, or education. Generally, women work longer than men and exert less political influence and participation (although this is also true for poor men). Even educated women often receive smaller pay or are accepted only into jobs perceived as female appropriate.²⁹⁸

Improving gender equality, not only improves women's lives, but benefits the overall society, as can be seen in the lowering of government corruption with increased participation of women. According to Dollar et al., numerous behavioral studies have found that women are "more trust-worthy and public-spirited than men."²⁹⁹ The research for the World Bank was based on a hypothesis formulated on the basis of experimental studies that found women to be more likely to "exhibit 'helping' behavior," base decisions on social issues, "score highly on 'integrity tests,'" "take stronger stances on ethical behavior," and "behave more generously when faced with economic decisions."³⁰⁰ Some scholarship suggests that women are less likely to take part in risky behavior, because female roles most often relate to caring for families, meaning that women are already

²⁹⁶ Ibid. Pg. 35.

²⁹⁷ See UNIFEM Afghanistan. Institutional Capacity Building of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA). [Access: 29 November 2010] <http://www.unifem.org/Afghanistan/prog/MOWA/ands.html>

²⁹⁸ Bamberger, Michael et al. Chapter 10: Gender. Pg. 340-341.

²⁹⁹ Dollar, David et al. (October 1999). Are Women Really the "Fairer" Sex? Corruption and Women in Government. Policy Research Report on Gender and Development Working Paper Series, No. World Bank Development Research Group. Pg. Title Page.

³⁰⁰ Ibid. Pg. 1.

entrusted with certain positions in society.³⁰¹ The authors believe that the results of such studies are often used by development institutions or feminists to argue for placement of more women in political positions, pointing to various failures of male dominated political establishments. Using literature of the studies, as well as own empirical findings on women's participation in governments and subsequent measurements of corruption, the authors found that "at the country level, higher rates of female participation in government are associated with lower levels of corruption."³⁰²

The Afghanistan strategy for governance mandates a percentage of women to the national assembly.³⁰³ Furthermore, seats for women are to be mandated in district elections, for municipal and village councils, and for civil service positions.³⁰⁴ The national assembly is in charge of "ratification, modification or abrogation of laws..., approval of social, cultural, economic [...] programs, approval of state budget..., [...], ratification of international treaties and agreements, or abrogation of membership under them..."³⁰⁵ The governance sector for Afghanistan refers also to the justice system and religious affairs, creating a "unified judicial system with an organizational structure that is headed by the Supreme Court."³⁰⁶ The Supreme Court has been appointed by the National Assembly in August 2006,³⁰⁷ however, it is not specified whether judicial positions, especially on the Supreme Court, have a mandated amount of seats for women. The policy descriptions on women's participation in the justice system is referred to only in the sense that "justice institutions [are to be] professionally staffed by men and women who are equally remunerated according to their competencies and qualifications,"³⁰⁸ and that the education for justice professionals is to "[pay] specific

³⁰¹ Anti-Corruption Research Network (ACRN). Gender and Corruption. [Access: 30 November 2010] <http://corruptionresearchnetwork.org/resources/frontpage-articles/gender-and-corruption>

³⁰² Dollar, David et al. (October 1999). Are Women Really the "Fairer" Sex? Corruption and Women in Government. Pg. 6.

³⁰³ See Appendix Pg. 166.

³⁰⁴ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 70.

³⁰⁵ Office of the President. The National Assembly. <http://www.president.gov.af/Contents/69/Documents/211/NationalAssembly.html>

³⁰⁶ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 64.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Ibid. Pg. 66.

attention to women.”³⁰⁹ Although the national strategy calls for stronger participation of women in government, it does not explicitly state that the increase in women’s political participation is meant to reduce or weaken corruption. Even if, it cannot be estimated to what extent women would or could impact the levels of corruption. According to the Anti-Corruption Research Network, a non-profit organization facilitated by Transparency International, gender and corruption is only a topic of recent interest, although some econometric studies (further confirmed by Dollar et al.) have already found a link between “higher representation of women in government and lower levels of corruption.”³¹⁰ Although, the link may be due to the fact that it is the liberal democratic institutions that promote higher representation of women in decision making positions and those same institutions “provide more effective checks on corruption.”³¹¹ Afghanistan is plagued with severe levels of corruption. ANDS states that the country quality of governance was ranked in the bottom one percent of all countries in 2000, partly due to high levels of corruption.³¹² If the level of corruption is linked to the number of women in government, then 27% of women in the first assembly and 17% in the second may not provide a sufficient change or influence, given the level of corruption in Afghanistan as well as the perceived limited role women play in decision making (5.1.3). In the recent years, organizations and media outlets like RAWA,³¹³ the Wall Street Journal³¹⁴ and most recently documents from Wikileaks³¹⁵ have shed light on the high level of corruption in

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Anti-Corruption Research Network (ACRN). Gender and Corruption.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 6.

³¹³ See Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA). [Access: 30 November 2010] <http://www.rawa.org/index.php> : RAWA is “the oldest political/social organization of Afghan women struggling for peace, freedom, democracy and women’s rights in fundamentalism-blighted Afghanistan since 1977” and see Abawi, Atia. (5 July 2010). Afghanistan Corruption Twist. In: Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan. [Access: 30 November 2010] <http://www.rawa.org/temp/runews/2010/07/05/Afghanistan-corruption-twist.html>

³¹⁴ See Spiegel, Peter and Matthew Rosenberg. (28 June 2010). Afghan Aid on Hold as Corruption Is Probed. In: The Wall Street Journal. [Access: 30 November 2010] <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703279704575334860231154660.html>

³¹⁵ See Shane, Scott and Andrew H. Lehren. (28 November 2010). Leaked Cables Offer Raw Look at U.S. Diplomacy. The New York Times. [Access: 30 November 2010] http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/29/world/29cables.html?_r=1&no_interstitial

the country. Because of widespread corruption and perception of women's roles, Afghan women in government posts, who attempt to openly fight corruption, have to fight against powerful interests. Malalai Joya was a 27 year old member of the first assembly, who was forced out of government after publicly criticizing other members of the parliament for uncivil acts and corruption related to drug trafficking. Her mission was to "remove warlords from the parliament [as part of a greater attempt to] achieve true equality and human rights for Afghan women."³¹⁶

6.2 Participation and gender

Equal gender participation, not only as a stand-alone topic, but also one related to gender equality is an important part of PRSP preparation. According to the PRSP Sourcebook, participation to the greatest extent possible is needed in order for diverse views to be reflected in "poverty diagnosis, selection of public actions, and evaluation of outcomes and impacts, and to ensure commitment of all groups to the PRS process."³¹⁷ A PRSP that successfully addresses the issues of importance to men and women as well as existing inequalities within economic and social sectors should include equal participation of women. The Sourcebook lists steps that could be taken to ensure equal participation. It includes identifying all stakeholders and inviting them to participate in events that are part of the PRSP process, allowing sufficient preparation time and allowing for time flexibility, ensuring financial support to enable participation and relying on local organizations to arrange meetings. Additionally, it is important to make sure that the participation is one of quality and adds meaningfulness to the process.³¹⁸ "Participation is the process by which stakeholders influence and share control over priority setting, policymaking, resource allocations, and/or program implementation."³¹⁹ The findings from NRVA 2005 were often quoted throughout ANDS, especially in the poverty profile showing that the assessment and the participation that took place had a strong

³¹⁶ Public Broadcasting Service. (11 September 2010). A Woman among Warlords: Afghanistan National Assembly. [Access: 30 November 2010] <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/episodes/a-woman-among-warlords/afghanistans-national-assembly/67/>

³¹⁷ Bamberger, Michael et al. Chapter 10: Gender. Pg. 335.

³¹⁸ Ibid. Pg. 344.

³¹⁹ Tikare, Seema et al. Chapter 7: Participation. In: A Sourcebook for Poverty Reduction Strategies. (2002). Jeni Klugman [ed]. Washington, DC: World Bank. Pg. 237.

impact on ANDS' poverty reducing policies. For example, NRVA 2005 findings indicated that female headed households were most vulnerable, they comprised 2.5% of all households in Afghanistan and were "highly vulnerable to economic shocks" and were often without any income.³²⁰ As a result, the social protection sector focused on providing benefits to poor female headed households.³²¹ ANDS states that the NRVA is the main and most important tool for assessing poverty.³²² Various findings from NRVA 2005 were quoted at least 20 times throughout ANDS. In comparison, APPPA findings were mentioned on four occasions, three of which were direct quotes from survey participants. The assessment, although more participatory than NRVA 2005, in the sense that it allowed for more creative and more open methods of participating (5.1.3), was not participatory in the sense that it allowed the stakeholders influence over policy making. In fact, the participants were initially disappointed and frustrated that "the APPPA would not deliver tangible or material benefits to participants."³²³ Worthy of noting is that NRVA 2005 was much less representative in terms of equal gender participation (in data collection) than APPPA, yet more relied upon in ANDS. According to the Sourcebook, participation is a long-term process that should exist throughout all stages of the PRSP, including the initial negotiation stages, where the stakeholders decide what participation means and how it will be conducted, as well as its expected outcomes. The stakeholders, presumably, also have a chance during negotiations to define the meaning of poverty. For ANDS, APPPA was an assessment that was entirely devoted to defining and determining the nature of poverty in Afghanistan. The Sourcebook lists the principles that should guide the participation process to make it more effective. The principles are country ownership, outcome orientation, inclusion, transparency, sustainability and continuous improvement.³²⁴

Overall, the idea of participation is one of great scope and difficulty as extensive inclusion of all identified stakeholders, throughout all levels and all topics of the PRSP process from

³²⁰ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 33.

³²¹ Ibid. Pg. 140-141.

³²² Ibid. Pg. 34, 177.

³²³ Afghanistan Pilot Participatory Poverty Assessment (APPPA) Introduction and Context. (April 2008). Pg. 35.

³²⁴ Tikare, Seema et al. Chapter 7: Participation. Pg. 237-243.

planning of participation, to participatory events, policy formulation, program implementation and finally monitoring of outcomes is unlikely. Additionally, participation on a macroeconomic level is a lot more difficult to accomplish and tends to take place on a microeconomic level, also called project level.³²⁵ Macroeconomic participation refers to policy level participation, based on the Sourcebook's statement that "various stakeholders can interact with governments to affect processes at the macroeconomic level."³²⁶ The idea of microeconomic participation versus macroeconomic participation is therefore important in PRSP preparation. Although true participation is inherently difficult, it is still more likely to only be meaningful on a micro level, meaning that the input collected by PRSP writers from local participation may never influence government policies, because of the lack of direct contact between local communities and governments.

Finally, equal gender participation may also prove difficult, if women have time or financial constraints, and are not compensated for their involvement, or when women's contribution in a particular society is seen as less valuable. When the steps in the participation process include data and input gathering on a local level with the eventual goal of impacting government policy, reaching the macroeconomic level is difficult as it sets local ideas on a long upward journey to government approval. Participation is a concept long advocated for in development, despite concerns of feasibility. Achieving meaningful gender participation can be difficult, as meetings are often scheduled without much advance notice, which makes it difficult for women's groups to organize in time, or for female participants to arrange transportation or care for their children. In other cases, women are just hesitant, when asked to publically express an opinion.³²⁷ In the development of Afghanistan's strategy, occasionally women were not able to participate due to security reasons, resulting in men answering all of the questions (5.1.2). Women participating in APPPA seemed to have given the most candid complaints and opinions about numerous topics, ranging from inability to make decisions, limited access to food and

³²⁵ Ibid. Pg. 237.

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Zuckerman, Elaine. (2002). 'Engendering' Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs): The Issues and the Challenges. In: Gender and Development – an Oxfam Journal. Vol. 10. No. 3. Oxford. Pg. 1-2 PDF.

health (in comparison to men), fate of their daughters, harassment to discourage education, to inconsiderate or controlling husbands, denial of rights, and increased cultural acceptance of discrimination against women.³²⁸ Unfortunately, APPPA's findings are not given large consideration in ANDS.

Country ownership is a phrase often used, when referring to the preparation and implementation of a PRSP and is considered to influence the level of success or failure of a country development strategy. As a response to criticism of the SAPs, the World Bank deserted conditionality in favor of country ownership and civil society partnership. The Bank has recognized the "role for states in building the institutions necessary for free markets to flourish, and IFIs [the International Financial Institutions] articulate explicit social concerns regarding inclusion of the marginalized, poverty eradication, and equity."³²⁹ ANDS mentions the idea of country ownership on several occasions referring to ownership and 'Afghanization' as resulting from "extensive consultation both at national and sub-national levels."³³⁰ Ownership is also discussed in the sense of public support. ANDS states that "public support for the successful implementation of the ANDS is essential. Therefore, Government has developed the ANDS over the course of the past three years through a thoroughly participatory manner, to seed the emergence of a grassroots democracy, ensuring ownership from people from all corners of life..."³³¹ In this case, country ownership is tied to participation and involvement of the country men and women in creation of the national development strategy. According to UNIFEM, country ownership also refers to the developing country's capability to "direct development policies and coordinate action."³³² In this case, country ownership refers to the country's control over implementation of the national strategy. In ANDS, the government

³²⁸ Afghanistan Pilot Participatory Poverty Assessment (APPPA) Findings and Implications. (April 2008). Pg. 72, 74, 75.

³²⁹ Bedford, Kate. (2009). *Developing Partnerships: Gender, Sexuality, and the Reformed World Bank*. Pg. xiv.

³³⁰ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). *A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction*. Pg. vii

³³¹ *Ibid.* Pg. 17.

³³² United National Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). *New Aid Agenda: Making Aid Effectiveness Work for Gender Equality*. [Access: 13 November 2010] http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/MDGsAndGenderEquality_5_NewAidAgenda.pdf Pg. 1 PDF.

also expresses its desire to have control over implementation of its policies, when it states that “the government would like to see increased core budget support (direct budget support), giving greater ownership and enabling a more effective allocation of resources based on needs and priorities.”³³³ Yet the aforementioned corruption and weak governance structures (5.1) may show that country ownership in this sense is not possible.

In terms of Afghanistan’s ‘country ownership’ related to extensive participation and support from civil society, the three main methods of data collection from participations (national and sub-national consultations, NRVA 2005 and APPPA) differ in their accomplishment of ‘country ownership’. ANDS states that in comparison to NRVA 2005, the “sub-national consultation process has contributed to a far deeper understanding of the specific nature of poverty in the Afghan context,”³³⁴ despite the consultation process involving 17,000 people³³⁵ and the NRVA 2005 collecting information on nearly 31,000 households (5.1.2). The 17,000 participants are described as “provincial governors, provincial representative bodies, representative village councils, parliamentarians representing each province, local civil society, representatives of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and prominent individuals.”³³⁶ The sub-consultations took place from March 2007 to March 2008 (5.1.1), and the NRVA 2005 was conducted during the summer season only (5.1.2). Both assessments were conducted in all 34 provinces.³³⁷ It is known that the NRVA 2005 surveys were conducted on average in less than two hours;³³⁸ however, ANDS does not specify the time spent with consultations. In comparison to NRVA 2005 and the sub-national consultations, APPPA was a small scale survey, where despite taking a year’s time to complete, focused

³³³ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 14.

³³⁴ Ibid. Pg. 28.

³³⁵ Ibid. Pg. 17.

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2005 (NRVA 2005). (June 2007). Ministry of Rehabilitation and Development and the Central Statistics Office in Kabul, Afghanistan. Pg. xiv and Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 28.

³³⁸ National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2005 (NRVA 2005). (June 2007). Ministry of Rehabilitation and Development and the Central Statistics Office in Kabul, Afghanistan. Pg. 4.

on four provinces and only 2,626 participants (5.1.3). All three participatory assessments claim equal gender representation with ANDS' 47% women participants³³⁹; NRVA's 2005 separated questionnaire sections and APPPA's 56% female participants (5.1.3). The extent to which women participated and exchanged ideas are not clear in the sub-national consultations, except that they "directly participated in the consultation process."³⁴⁰ Although NRVA 2005 did separate women's questions from men's, men had a significantly larger portion of the questions, which were related to assets, agriculture, income and expenditures, while women's questions focused on food consumption, maternal health and children (5.1.2). Even questions directly related to women like the age of every child bearing woman within the household, were included in the male section of the questionnaire.³⁴¹ APPPA was the survey most sensitive to gender differences shown by the separation of all participatory events into groups of men and women,³⁴² in addition to collecting perspectives from groups representing different ethnicities, religions, or social statuses (5.1.3), although not organizing the findings based on this. Due to APPPA being a qualitative survey, those conducting the surveys were able to gather information in more creative ways, hence increasing the meaningfulness of the participation by leaving questions open-ended and allowing for group as well as individual reflections, and reflections from people in remote areas with the use of participatory video processes.³⁴³ The use of video as a form of reporting has been shown to provide information that is more open and honest.³⁴⁴

³³⁹ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 17.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2005 (NRVA 2005). (June 2007). Ministry of Rehabilitation and Development and the Central Statistics Office in Kabul, Afghanistan. Pg. 6.

³⁴² Adlparvar, Naysan. (April 2008). Afghanistan Pilot Participatory Poverty Assessment (APPPA) Summary Report. Pg. 8.

³⁴³ Ibid. Pg. 9.

³⁴⁴ See Owusu, Charles. (2004). An International NGO's Staff Reflections on Power, Procedures and Relationships. Pg. 112 : In order to improve its quality of work and relationships with local communities, the international organization ActionAid underwent an internal transformation and adapted a Accountability, Learning and Planning System as a way to continuously improve its fieldwork and reporting. Creating video reports as alternatives to report writing resulted in more honest and self-critical reflections by the NGO staff.

In terms of ‘country ownership’ related to Afghanistan’s ability to develop and implement policies, the extensive involvement of the international community, not only in form of aid, but military support weakens the image of ANDS as a country owned strategy. In addition, Afghanistan’s commitment to MDGs as well as the overall acceptance by PRSP writers of MDGs as basis for PRSP policy, although not necessarily negative, proves that much of Afghanistan’s policy or policy framework had already been decided prior to when sub-national consultations or any poverty assessments took place. The London Conference on Afghanistan and the resulting Afghanistan Compact took place in January/February 2006 and the Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy (I-ANDS) was issued in May 2006 and included the same benchmarks as were decided at the Conference, including security, governance, rule of law and human rights, and economic and social development, and their respective sectors including mining, road construction, air transportation, counter narcotics, strengthening of law enforcement, or Afghan cultural heritage, among others.³⁴⁵ According to I-ANDS, the Afghanistan Compact “provides a framework for partnership between the Government and the international community...[as a] political commitment.”³⁴⁶ It goes on to state that the “government will implement its obligations under the Afghanistan Compact through the I-ANDS and ANDS.”³⁴⁷ Therefore, the Afghanistan Compact agreements take precedence over the participatory input made by Afghans during the sub-national consultations. As example, ANDS reported that there was “a considerable expectation [from the public] for the Government to provide [mining] sector support”³⁴⁸ and pointed out that such belief “reflected a lack of market-based thinking.”³⁴⁹ Instead, it notes, that investments in mining are to be strictly commercial and therefore, a role for the private sector.³⁵⁰ One of the Afghanistan Compact benchmarks is the agreement to facilitate a regulatory framework that will allow a “profitable

³⁴⁵ See Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy (I-ANDS). (May 2006). An Interim Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction.

³⁴⁶ Ibid. Pg. 5.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 107.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

extraction of Afghanistan's minerals and natural resources...in order to attract domestic and foreign investment..."³⁵¹ Hence, the expectations of the Afghans are given less weight as the expectations of the international community.

6.3 Data collection and gender

The Sourcebook provides various indicators and measurements of well-being. The correlates of well-being are poverty, inequality and vulnerability.³⁵² The Sourcebook also emphasizes the need by researchers to understand dimensions of gender poverty; therefore, data collection for poverty analysis should be gender specific.³⁵³ For this Oxfam promotes sex-disaggregated data with the belief that it will contribute to PRSPs that are strong on gender issues.³⁵⁴ In case gender specific data is missing, it is due to the lack of awareness by researchers of its significance, not due to the unavailability of data collection methods.³⁵⁵ Household surveys especially need to be disaggregated, since high income or high consumption levels do not automatically indicate that the benefit is spread equally to all members of the household. As example, the WID research (1975-1985) showed that "increasing resources to male household heads did not automatically confer benefits to women and children."³⁵⁶ To engender poverty analysis, the Sourcebook also promotes the use of gender disaggregated data or an overall compilation of a CGA³⁵⁷ and states that, for data gathering purposes, the dimensions of poverty to be considered, that are related to gender, are opportunity, capabilities, security and empowerment.³⁵⁸

Poverty measurements continue to evolve. More and more, in the last 25 years, "approaches to poverty [measurements and

³⁵¹ Afghanistan Compact. (2006). Pg. 9.

³⁵² See Coudouel, Aline et al. Chapter 1: Poverty Measurement and Analysis. In: A Sourcebook for Poverty Reduction Strategies. (2002). Jeni Klugman |ed|. Washington, DC: World Bank. Pg. 29-60.

³⁵³ Bamberger, Michael et al. Chapter 10: Gender. Pg. 335.

³⁵⁴ Zuckerman, Elaine. (2002). 'Engendering' Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs): The Issues and the Challenges. Pg. 5 PDF.

³⁵⁵ Bamberger, Michael et al. Sourcebook. Chapter 10: Gender. Pg. 345.

³⁵⁶ Chant, Sylvia. Contributions of a Gender Perspective to the Analysis of Poverty. In: Women and Gender Equity in Development Theory and Practice: Institutions, Resources, and Mobilization. (2006). Jane S. Jaquette and Gale Summerfield |eds|. Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press. Pg. 88.

³⁵⁷ Bamberger, Michael et al. Sourcebook. Chapter 10: Gender. Pg. 336.

³⁵⁸ See Appendix Pg. 165.

definitions] have become more holistic. This has encompassed a shift...from a narrow focus on income and consumption to recognition of poverty as a multidimensional phenomenon.”³⁵⁹ Additionally, concepts like power or empowerment have become more prominent in poverty assessments and in poverty reduction strategies.³⁶⁰ Despite improvements in data collection, reflecting separate considerations for men and women on a policy level is still limited. In the case of Uganda’s PRSP preparation, women’s groups participated actively (on a sub-national level), resulting in disaggregated data, which was later aggregated for use in national consultations, weakening women’s ability to influence policy.³⁶¹

Despite strong advocacy for data disaggregation by the development community and the World Bank, much data collected from the NRVA 2005 surveys, with exception of demographics, health and education is presented as aggregated (5.1.2). Household is used as the unit of analysis,³⁶² not the individual men and women within the household. Data collected on the population’s access to information is aggregated (disaggregated only on social group level) and asks about information sources including mass media, social networks, local leaders, media and government, and national political parties.³⁶³ Questions about sources of information were asked in section 8, referring to sources of information about jobs, political, government, and health related issues, as well as section 12 and 15, referring to the respondent’s source of information about iodized salt.³⁶⁴ As stated before, section 8 and 12 are for male respondents only. Data related to house ownership is also aggregated and shows high ownership by purchase (13%) or inheritance (72%) rates; where 44% of inherited homes do not possess a proof of ownership. Others

³⁵⁹ Chant, Sylvia. *Contributions of a Gender Perspective to the Analysis of Poverty*. Pg. 87.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Zuckerman, Elaine. (2002). ‘Engendering’ Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs): The Issues and the Challenges. Pg. 1-2 PDF.

³⁶² National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2005 (NRVA 2005). (June 2007). Ministry of Rehabilitation and Development and the Central Statistics Office in Kabul, Afghanistan. Pg. 4.

³⁶³ Ibid. Pg. 16.

³⁶⁴ National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Survey – Household Questionnaire – Final 2005. (2005). Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development and the Central Statistics Office in Kabul, Afghanistan. Pg. 9, 13, 18.

consider themselves to be tenants or squatters.³⁶⁵ Disaggregated information on household ownership or perceived ownership should have been conducted especially that women experience “cultural obstacles” to ownership and inheritance of property, especially in “remote and tribal communities”.³⁶⁶ Although, according to ANDS, women in general experience property rights related discrimination: “Loss of women’s inheritance entitlements to male relatives and denial of their property rights prevents women from using collateral and limits access to loans for creating employment opportunities.”³⁶⁷ Lack of home ownership in urban areas is seen as a contributing factor to poverty, due to significant allocation of resources toward meeting rent obligations.³⁶⁸ Furthermore, household specific topics such as access to safe drinking water, toilets, electricity, lighting, heating, and cooking fuel were not gender specific,³⁶⁹ despite cooking being related to “traditional women’s household [tasks]”³⁷⁰ and water collection being women’s responsibility in the household.³⁷¹ This data was reported in ANDS, likely being collected during the sub-national consultation. It shows that information on gender roles would have been important for the NRVA 2005 design in order to ask questions of the appropriate persons within the household, although studies of gender roles may not be necessary, if the same data collection questions are posed to both men and women. Housing, household facilities, and drinking water topics are allocated to the male section of the NRVA 2005 questionnaire, as was asset ownership within the household.³⁷² As a result, data about assets owned referred to items such as jewelry, electronic devices, home furnishings, transportation,

³⁶⁵ National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2005 (NRVA 2005). (June 2007). Ministry of Rehabilitation and Development and the Central Statistics Office in Kabul, Afghanistan. Pg. 21.

³⁶⁶ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 148.

³⁶⁷ Ibid. Pg. 127.

³⁶⁸ Ibid. Pg. 32.

³⁶⁹ See National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2005 (NRVA 2005). (June 2007). Ministry of Rehabilitation and Development and the Central Statistics Office in Kabul, Afghanistan. Pg. 24-36.

³⁷⁰ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 135.

³⁷¹ Ibid. Pg. 84.

³⁷² National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Survey – Household Questionnaire – Final 2005. (2005). Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development and the Central Statistics Office in Kabul, Afghanistan. Pg. 1.

and communication devices was aggregated for the entire household.³⁷³ Small property allocation among men and women in the household could have proven important, especially that gender equality is viewed partially as equal access to resources (including ownership) and that, gender equality or gender specific rights in Afghanistan often refer to allocation of resources or entitlements³⁷⁴. Income analysis was based mainly on determining the sources of income for each household and not the actual amounts earned through these activities; however, the data was also aggregated.³⁷⁵ The part related to sources of income is located in section 9 of the survey questionnaire³⁷⁶ and was directed at male respondents only. Income activities include livestock farming, agriculture, opium, trade and services, manufacturing, funds from family members living abroad and/or working as migrants, government payments, or other wage labor. It was found that nearly 50% of all households surveyed were involved in some form of agricultural labor, followed by other wage labor (33%), trade (27%), and livestock farming (23%).³⁷⁷ The findings on household income are also aggregated, although the survey did ask to name the persons (men, women, or children)

³⁷³ National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2005 (NRVA 2005). (June 2007). Ministry of Rehabilitation and Development and the Central Statistics Office in Kabul, Afghanistan. Pg. 36-37.

³⁷⁴ See Adlparvar, Naysan. (April 2008). Afghanistan Pilot Participatory Poverty Assessment (APPPA) Summary Report. Pg. 11 : The concept of 'rights' in Afghanistan is typically related to rights derived from or granted in religion or government; however, more often rights are based on traditional or cultural norms (although they are viewed as lesser in importance). Additionally, the idea of rights in Afghanistan is much different from the "western and liberal concept of equal rights." Possessing a 'right' in Afghanistan refers to a person's ability to access certain entitlements granted under this 'right'. This means that men and women are seen as having equal rights; however, "to differing degrees of entitlement," where men have access to larger entitlements than women.

³⁷⁵ National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2005 (NRVA 2005). (June 2007). Ministry of Rehabilitation and Development and the Central Statistics Office in Kabul, Afghanistan. Pg. 37.

³⁷⁶ National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Survey – Household Questionnaire – Final 2005. (2005). Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development and the Central Statistics Office in Kabul, Afghanistan. Pg. 1.

³⁷⁷ National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2005 (NRVA 2005). (June 2007). Ministry of Rehabilitation and Development and the Central Statistics Office in Kabul, Afghanistan. Pg. 37-38.

participating in the income generating activities.³⁷⁸ The Sourcebook would argue that such data collection is not sufficient, when “gender-relevant questions are included in the survey, but the information is not collected from the right person...In some cases, information about the needs, attitudes, time use, or consumption patterns of all household members is obtained from a single interview, usually with the so-called (usually male) household head.”³⁷⁹ The findings of the survey focus further on agriculture, especially garden plots, which are owned by 21% of households involved in agriculture and provide at least 86% of the owning households with some produce benefits. Of the nomadic groups, who own garden plots, at least 98% derive benefits from this land.³⁸⁰ According to ANDS, majority of women, especially in rural areas, “actively contribute to the household income through employment (often unpaid) in agriculture and livestock activities;”³⁸¹ however, because data on benefits from agriculture is not disaggregated, it is not clear if the benefits are equally distributed to all members of the household. The survey questionnaire (in the male respondent) section, asks only whether the “[respondent’s] household benefits from any produce grown in the garden plot.”³⁸²

Data on household income or benefits from income should be disaggregated as possession of income or benefit by a household does not automatically mean the benefit will be evenly distributed to all members, especially women. According to the Sourcebook, “intra-household inequalities” have been evident in development; however, no systematic measurements have been conducted. In case that surveys are not capable of capturing such inequalities, alternative measures like nutrition, education or health could be used to uncover inequalities within households.³⁸³ The NRVA 2005 questionnaire does compensate for its aggregate data collection, by asking female

³⁷⁸ National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Survey – Household Questionnaire – Final 2005. (2005). Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development and the Central Statistics Office in Kabul, Afghanistan. Pg. 10.

³⁷⁹ Bamberger, Michael et al. Chapter 10: Gender. Pg. 347.

³⁸⁰ National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2005 (NRVA 2005). (June 2007). Ministry of Rehabilitation and Development and the Central Statistics Office in Kabul, Afghanistan. Pg. 42-43.

³⁸¹ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 31.

³⁸² National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Survey – Household Questionnaire – Final 2005. (2005). Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development and the Central Statistics Office in Kabul, Afghanistan. Pg. 6.

³⁸³ Coudouel, Aline et al. Chapter 1: Poverty Measurement and Analysis. Pg. 31.

respondents whether they can decide how to spend the income they have earned.³⁸⁴ The survey does not focus on determining intrahousehold inequalities through non-quantitative data like female health, as the health section of the questionnaire focuses on maternal child health only, not the state of health of the women in the household.³⁸⁵ Because NRVA 2005 was structured to collect information on households as whole units, it is no surprise that the resulting ANDS poverty profile (5.1.2) speaks of poverty measurements like food consumption, income, or poverty causes, or nature of urban versus rural poverty in an aggregated sense. APPPA was the survey, simply by nature of its purpose and methodology, that allowed a clear view of poverty as experienced by men and women separately, although its scope and significance in the poverty profile is minute in comparison to the NRVA 2005.

6.3.1 PRSP measurement of well-being

The PRSP Sourcebook chapter dealing directly with poverty measurement and analysis focuses on calculating, analyzing and designing solutions for poverty, inequality and vulnerability.³⁸⁶ The Sourcebook then views poverty, inequality and vulnerability as variables responsible for the overall well-being of an individual. The Sourcebook views poverty as availability of resources to meet needs, inequality as access to those resources, and vulnerability as the presence of being at risk for possible poverty and inequality or intensification thereof.³⁸⁷ The overall well-being of a person is a combination of poverty, inequality and vulnerability measures. The Sourcebook defines poverty as: "...whether households or individuals possess enough resources or abilities to meet their current needs."³⁸⁸

Consumption is a preferred method of calculation, because, according to the Sourcebook, consumption is a better indicator of well-being, as income fluctuates seasonally and may actually not be used for consumption, when families consume what they individually produce. Consumption may also be a better measure, when

³⁸⁴ National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Survey – Household Questionnaire – Final 2005. (2005). Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development and the Central Statistics Office in Kabul, Afghanistan. Pg. 12.

³⁸⁵ Ibid. Pg. 19-20.

³⁸⁶ Coudouel, Aline et al. Chapter 1: Poverty Measurement and Analysis. Pg. 29.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

determining household's abilities to access credit markets or savings during times of low or negative income due to unsuccessful harvest or other causes.³⁸⁹ Otherwise, income may be a better measurement as it can show the sources (if diverse) for comparison with other sources of income,³⁹⁰ which could presumably show the security or stability of the household income. The non-monetary items are also considered in calculating poverty and include education, health and nutrition.³⁹¹ Finally, after data collection, the researchers must decide where poverty starts and ends. "Poverty lines are cut-off points separating the poor from the non-poor."³⁹² A relative poverty line can be denoted as below a percentage of the national median income or as an absolute poverty line that is usually a standard figure based on the cost of basic needs calculation.³⁹³ ANDS employs the measure of consumption to define poverty with the CBN, which refers to the per capita monthly spending needed for a household to meet its essential food and non-food items.³⁹⁴ The CBN is a gender aggregated figure.

Although women's participation in APPPA was equal to men's, in terms of numbers, and specific quotes from female participants show that women also viewed poverty in an economic sense by stating that poverty related to lack of money, health, power or education,³⁹⁵ the female opinion moved beyond material or physical well-being to 'cultural' well-being stating that "decision-making power" about all household and family related concerns belongs exclusively to men, among other complaints (5.1.3). ANDS seems incapable of absorbing cultural aspects of poverty, instead links them to physical and material well-being. For example, while discussing gender inequality, ANDS states that women often lack access to education and employment and that "female headed households are closely correlated with the high poverty due to lack of

³⁸⁹ Ibid. Pg. 30-31.

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

³⁹¹ Ibid. Pg. 32-33.

³⁹² Ibid. Pg. 33.

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 28.

³⁹⁵ See Afghanistan Pilot Participatory Poverty Assessment (APPPA) Findings and Implications. (April 2008). Pg. 67 : Direct participant quotes listed in the APPPA survey are referred to as 'voices of the poor' and are referred to in ANDS Pg. 25 as "[having] informed the overall policy framework and the poverty profile as well as the various sectoral priorities."

education and employment opportunities.”³⁹⁶ According to the footnote attributed to this statement, ANDS bases it on the following quote listed in APPPA: “We women have no rights or decision making power. The men make decisions inside and outside the house. This is normal for us.”³⁹⁷ The quote (from a survey aimed specifically at detailing perceptions of poverty) refers only to decision making power within a family or a household, not to earning income. ANDS evaluated the notion of denial of rights and decision making, as stemming from limited job and education opportunities. Decision making is not always linked to earnings. Women in some parts of Afghanistan are deeply involved in agricultural work and work in the same areas as men. In addition, they are involved in opium, livestock and dairy production, and contribute to generating export products like dried fruits or handcraft; however, much of their efforts are not individually rewarded: “Even when women’s domestic production such as carpet weaving forms the main income of the household,”³⁹⁸ they rarely control the marketing, sale or delivery of the products. Women are in charge of household work. Decision making power is also not always related to earning an income as could be seen in some cases of microcredit in Afghanistan, where women could own and operate businesses, but income and decision making was still controlled by males within the household;³⁹⁹ therefore, the APPPA

³⁹⁶ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 31.

³⁹⁷ See Ibid. footnote 22.

³⁹⁸ World Bank. Executive Summary. Afghanistan: Role of Women in Afghanistan’s Future (Afghanistan Gender Report). [Access: 7 December 2010] <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/SOUTHASIAEXT/Resources/223546-1151200256097/exesummary.pdf> Pg. xiv.

³⁹⁹ See Zand, Sogol. (September 2010). The Impact of Microfinance Programmes on Women’s Lives – A Case Study in Parwan. In: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) Case Study Series. Laura Kim |eds| : The purpose of the study was to determine how the Afghan women benefitted from the use of microcredit. The AREU conducted research in one village (predominantly Tajik) in the district of Charikar in the Parwan province, where a Microfinance Institution (MFI) gave loans exclusively to women. The research was conducted on a household level and, according to the executive summary found that: 1. Empowerment did not result directly and only from having access to microloans, but it was largely dependent on “existing family dynamics and power of women as well as the quality and processes of the MFI programme...” Furthermore, the study concluded that “there have not been significant changes in decision-making power, gender division of labour and the range and location of women’s activities.”

quote refers more to perceived women's roles in society (whether based on culture, tradition or religion), rather than physical or material lack, showing that women's perception of poverty or its causes goes beyond finance, whereas the battle against poverty (in ANDS) mostly involves a narrow focus on access to money and tangible assets. By stating that women's poverty relates to lacking job opportunities, ANDS neglects to address the issue of social, cultural or traditional mores as influencing factors in gender (in)equality or poverty.

Inequality is another aspect of well-being and is considered to be "relative poverty" in the sense that it is a comparison to the situation of well-being experienced by other members of society. The level of inequality is measured by a pattern of distribution and mainly deals with distribution of income and consumption as a measure of inequality. Inequality is much more difficult to measure than poverty, because it is a multi-dimensional concept meaning that inequality can exist not only in distribution of income or consumption, but also of land or any other related variables. The Gini coefficient is the most commonly used measure of inequality and measures disparities in income distribution. The inequalities can also be calculated among groups or types of incomes as well, meaning that in some countries, the income of agricultural groups is subject to most unequal distribution,⁴⁰⁰ whereas urban areas or groups of people working in a specific sector may experience much less inequality of income distribution. Inequality is a topic discussed to a large extent in the ANDS' poverty analysis showing existence of disparities between social groups, communities, as well as female headed households' experiencing large levels of inequality (5.1.4). During the APPPA participatory meetings, in order to define who was considered to be poor or rich, various items and issues (assets, coping strategies, social capital, and social characteristics) were discussed that were either perceived to cause disparity among households or arise from poverty or wealth. For example, the perceived rich in the Badakhshan province possess a home, land, different types of animals, 10 types of trees, and sufficient clothing. The social capital is their power and respect in the community, as well as connection to the government. Such persons are also educated and can afford private healthcare.

Women's roles continued to be limited to the household, even in cases, where women accessed and invested their microcredit.

⁴⁰⁰ Coudouel, Aline et al. Chapter 1: Poverty Measurement and Analysis. Pg. 46-49.

The very poor possess assets of little value, cannot work and must beg for money, and many are illiterate, widows or disabled.⁴⁰¹

Vulnerability is another aspect of well-being and is seen as insecurity, meaning the “vulnerability to a decline in well-being.”⁴⁰² It is defined as “the probability or risk today of being in poverty or falling into deeper poverty in the future.”⁴⁰³ The perception of vulnerability perpetuates poverty as it is a cause for behavioral changes such as fear of investment. The causes of vulnerability exist on many levels including individual, local or national. A family illness, civil unrest or national disasters can affect the intensity of vulnerability. This could explain why farmers may be quite vulnerable as their harvest is most affected by weather and why the poor are the most vulnerable as the smaller changes may affect their level of vulnerability due to their lack of alternatives or backup such as savings or assets. From the three dimensions of well-being, vulnerability is the most difficult to measure, but it is a measure of the probability of falling into poverty, or possibly falling deeper into poverty.⁴⁰⁴ Estimation of vulnerability can be achieved to some extent by analyzing “trends in levels and patters of poverty over time⁴⁰⁵” or by studying qualitative factors such as personal access to support networks or coping strategies.⁴⁰⁶ According to ANDS, vulnerability is presented, based on the NRVA 2005 finding, as a relevant location to the poverty line, stating that nearly 20% of those above the poverty line are still in close proximity to it. ANDS also found that the Afghan society is vulnerable to “conflict, natural disasters, decreasing rule of law, increasing basic costs, increasing population, food insecurity, [and] winterization,”⁴⁰⁷ exposure to which increases one’s chance of poverty. ANDS declares female headed households as most vulnerable, next to families with large number of small children, the disabled, and the internal migrants.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰¹ Afghanistan Pilot Participatory Poverty Assessment (APPPA) Findings and Implications. (April 2008). Pg. 70.

⁴⁰² Coudouel, Aline et al. Chapter 1: Poverty Measurement and Analysis. Pg. 54.

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid. Pg. 54-55.

⁴⁰⁵ See Ibid. Pg. 55 : Such trends are observable through data showing “movements in and out of poverty, entry and exit probability” or “length and frequency of poverty spells.”

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 29, 31.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid. Pg. 33.

6.3.2 Dimensions of poverty related to gender

The PRSP Sourcebook describes the dimensions of poverty related to gender as opportunity, capabilities, security and empowerment and the dimensions' indicators. Because men and women experience poverty differently, such differences must be researched and analyzed in order to design appropriate programs to address the cause of poverty. The following concepts are dimensions of poverty related to gender that may be experienced differently by men and women, and are therefore related to gender equality:

“Opportunity: access to employment and productive resources; Capabilities: access to education and health or social institutions that improve capabilities; Security: freedom of economic insecurity and civil or domestic violence; Empowerment: access to participation and decision making on the household, community and/or national level.”⁴⁰⁹

The Sourcebook states that an unequal access to capital and assets is indicative of reduced opportunities and can be measured with information provided on credit records or data provided by financial institutions. Uneven access to education indicates reduction in the population's capabilities and can be measured by household surveys or school records. Exposure to violence indicates the level of security a person feels and can be measured from discussions with focus groups or set-up of case studies. Finally, the ability to control household resources leads to stronger empowerment, which is measurable with household surveys, observations or case studies.⁴¹⁰ Based on this information, one can conclude that conditions where opportunities, capabilities, security and empowerment are unequal among men and women, poverty is higher. The Sourcebook specifies the indicators of the dimension as well as the ways to measure them.⁴¹¹ ANDS focuses most on the improvement of opportunities and capabilities for women. According to the chart, all of the dimensions can be measured through household surveys, focus group or direct participation by stakeholders, and observation, in addition to other more direct methods. The national and sub-national consultations, NRVA 2005, and APPPA can be considered sufficient measurements, at least of the opportunity and capabilities dimension. The NRVA 2005 questionnaire does ask for sources of income as well as gender of the income earners, in addition to ownership of

⁴⁰⁹ Bamberger, Michael et al. Chapter 10: Gender. Pg. 341.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid. Pg. 347.

⁴¹¹ The full chart on the specific indicators for dimension of poverty related to gender and their measurements is available on Pg. 165 of the Appendix.

items (electronics, cars, house, land, livestock, etc.) and sources, amounts and frequency of the household's loans, if any. The questionnaire's measurement of capabilities involves information about school enrollment of all household members (6-13 years old only) as well as the highest level of education attained by each household member and numerous questions about maternal health and health provision such as number of pregnancies and surviving infants, and place of delivery. Questions specific to education, income, and assets were directed at males, and maternal health and children were asked of women.⁴¹² Men were even asked to specify the age of women in household. The survey's design made it unable to confirm or link the information provided by males in sections 1-14 with the information given by females in sections 15-18.⁴¹³

NRVA 2005 did not serve to collect extensive demographic information and many human development indicators are not specified in the ANDS. Women's shorter life span in comparison to men is discussed; however, there is no scientific data on the causes, except for women being at greater risk because of early marriage and pregnancies.⁴¹⁴ In terms of maternal mortality, the main portion of the strategy paper states only that the rate is high.⁴¹⁵ NRVA 2005 recommends that, because of higher death rates of women, as a result of the "cumulative effect of disadvantageous conditions for women [...] a demographic study should assess these findings as soon as possible."⁴¹⁶ Although the survey suggests that women's lack of well-being stems from issues like health care access, early marriage and child-bearing age, and poor nutrition, the survey urges to "identify the causes of higher mortality rates for women,"⁴¹⁷ in order to create relevant policies that will redress the problem. The dimension 'empowerment' is also important to ANDS in the form of

⁴¹² National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Survey – Household Questionnaire – Final 2005. (2005). Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development and the Central Statistics Office in Kabul, Afghanistan. Pg. 2, 5-6, 10, 19.

⁴¹³ See National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2005 (NRVA 2005). (June 2007). Ministry of Rehabilitation and Development and the Central Statistics Office in Kabul, Afghanistan. Pg. 6.

⁴¹⁴ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 124.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid. Pg. 11, 14, 108, 125, 148, 158.

⁴¹⁶ National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2005 (NRVA 2005). (June 2007). Ministry of Rehabilitation and Development and the Central Statistics Office in Kabul, Afghanistan. Pg. 73.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid. Pg. 74.

governmental participation and numerous policy ideas and/or promises aimed at involving women in decision-making processes.⁴¹⁸ The issue of gender related security such as security from violence was not included in the NRVA 2005 and received a small mention in the APPPA,⁴¹⁹ and does not appear to have been meaningfully addressed in national and sub-national consultations due to lack of extensive discussion about security from violence and greater focus given to economic and social security. From a female perspective, MOWA's strategic objective for women's advancement is to "[promote] legal and physical protection for women, including from exploitation."⁴²⁰ Part of the reason, why women's issues of physical security are not made prominent in ANDS is the lack of reference thereto in the Afghanistan Compact and weak stipulations in the MDGs. The Afghanistan Compact focuses only on reducing poverty in female-headed households and increasing their employment rates.⁴²¹ MDGs goal 3 refers to reduction of gender inequality through equal access to education; however, goal 1 on eradicating hunger, goal 8 target 17 on easing access to life saving medicine, and target 18 on improving availability of technology does not consider that improving access to these may not improve gender equality, if gender is not mainstreamed into the respective policies. Although goals 4 and 5 focus on reducing mother and child mortality⁴²², the MDGs do not discuss taking measures to increase life expectancies or to end child marriage. This is especially relevant to a country like Afghanistan, where a cultural norm assigns priority of access by gender, women have higher death rates, and some become child wives. Lack of gender mainstreaming in the MDGs is especially concerning since the 1995 ECSOC declaration on the importance of mainstreaming gender in the agencies of the United Nations, encouraging its adoption by member states in dealing with their programs and policies (4).

⁴¹⁸ See Appendix Pg. 165.

⁴¹⁹ See Afghanistan Pilot Participatory Poverty Assessment (APPPA) Findings and Implications. (April 2008). Pg. 72.

⁴²⁰ World Bank. (March 2005). Afghanistan National Reconstruction and Poverty Reduction – The Role of Women in Afghanistan's Future. [Access: 7 December 2010] <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/AFGHANISTANEXTN/Resources/AfghanistanGenderReport.pdf> Pg. 9

⁴²¹ Afghanistan Compact. (2006). Pg. 11

⁴²² See Appendix Pg. 157.

6.3.3 Country gender assessment

CGAs seem to be of importance to all international and regional financial institutions dealing with development reconstruction projects, including the African Development Bank Group⁴²³, Asian Development Bank⁴²⁴ and the World Bank. For the World Bank, the CGAs are created from the gender specific data collections as well as information provided by governments or non-governmental organizations and serve as basis for creating gender sensitive policies and programs development and reconstruction programs. The CGA usually “addresses the nature of gender-based differences and disparities.”⁴²⁵ The CGA is a separate document or exists as part of the greater poverty assessment of a country that comprises of “a country gender profile; a review of the country’s institutional and policy context and its gender implications; and a set of suggested policy and operational interventions.”⁴²⁶ The CGA normally includes the following information in its profile section: the varied socioeconomic roles for men and women, gender based disproportional access to assets and other productive resources, disparities in human development indicators⁴²⁷ between men and women, gender inequalities in partaking in local and national economic development decisions, and legal frameworks or social mores that cause gender inequality.⁴²⁸ “Because gender issues cut across virtually all aspects of the economy and society, CGAs examine a range of substantive areas⁴²⁹ [...] to ensure that priority

⁴²³ African Development Group. Country Gender Profiles. In: Documents. [Access: 04 August 2010] <http://www.afdb.org/en/documents/project-operations/country-gender-profiles/>

⁴²⁴ Asian Development Bank. Country Gender Assessments. In: Gender and Development. [Access: 04 August 2010] <http://www.adb.org/gender/cga.asp>

⁴²⁵ Bamberger, Michael et al. Chapter 10: Gender. Pg. 336.

⁴²⁶ Ibid. Pg. 353.

⁴²⁷ See United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Composite Indices – HDI and Beyond. [Access: 18 November 2010] <http://hdr.undp.org/en/humandev/indices/> : The human development index (HDI) is determined by measuring three basic dimensions of human development. Those dimensions are life expectancy at birth, literacy rates and overall level of enrollment in educational institutions, and GDP per capita.

⁴²⁸ World Bank. (2002). Annex I Gender: Technical Notes. In: A Sourcebook for Poverty Reduction Strategies. Jeni Klugman |ed|. Washington, DC: World Bank. Pg. 586.

⁴²⁹ The substantive areas include (for example, agriculture, education, energy, the environment, the financial sector, health, infrastructure, the labor market, social protection, the private sector, rural development, transport, and water and sanitation).

gender-related development issues are equally identified.”⁴³⁰ Not only does the CGA compare differences between men and women, it also scrutinizes gender inequalities among different groups like low or high income groups or among different ethnic groups in a country. Furthermore, the CGA assesses a country’s institutional and policy context by determining its existing frameworks and their potential to achieve development goals⁴³¹ or their current influence on gender equality or lack thereof. Finally, the CGA provides suggestions for policy prioritization that outlines action to be taken to effectively reduce gender inequality and poverty.⁴³²

Afghanistan’s CGA was issued in March 2005 titled *Afghanistan National Reconstruction and Poverty Reduction – The Role of Women in Afghanistan*. The report is a synthesis of existing data to recommend necessary actions to be taken in order to “enhance growth, poverty reduction and human well-being.”⁴³³ The assessment’s main objective is to determine the best way to mainstream gender into development policies to ensure women are not just involved in, but also benefit from the process.⁴³⁴ The assessment introduces the policy and institutional framework for women’s advancement in areas of health, education, work and employment, legal rights and influence, and the negative consequences of continuing inequality.⁴³⁵ According to the executive summary, attempts to question or change women’s role in Afghanistan has been met with resistance by those who feel any change would be “un-Islamic and a challenge to the sanctity of the faith and family.”⁴³⁶ The assessment includes discussion of women’s socioeconomic roles, stating especially that economic activity would most likely be considered as a last resort for struggling families and that women’s incomes are greatly smaller than those of men. Women’s lack of educational skills, illiteracy, high fertility rate of 6.3,

⁴³⁰ World Bank. (2002). Annex I Gender: Technical Notes. Pg. 586.

⁴³¹ Some of the gender related development goals often associated with country development strategies include implementing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), CEDAW, or the Beijing Platform for Action.

⁴³² World Bank. (2002). Annex I Gender: Technical Notes. Pg. 586.

⁴³³ World Bank. Executive Summary. Afghanistan: Role of Women in Afghanistan’s Future (Afghanistan Gender Report). Pg. xi-xii.

⁴³⁴ World Bank. (March 2005). Afghanistan National Reconstruction and Poverty Reduction – The Role of Women in Afghanistan’s Future. Pg. 4

⁴³⁵ Ibid.

⁴³⁶ World Bank. Executive Summary. Afghanistan: Role of Women in Afghanistan’s Future (Afghanistan Gender Report). Pg. xi.

as well as women's role in subsistence production causes women to be most concerned with child care and any health issues related to it. Women's roles as representatives of family honor and reputation place severe restrictions on them, in addition to the legal system (which is greatly disorganized), that favors men. Women's limited or non-existing access to assets and disregard for women's legal right to inherit property is also discussed in the CGA.⁴³⁷

The CGA also includes gender disparities in human development and other indicators including death rates, gross enrollment ratios, percent of female teachers and professors, women's gainful activities, daily wages, percentage of women who have no decision making rights with regard to various household, asset and family decisions,⁴³⁸ among others. Although the death rates are specific only to the province Badgis and reflect information collected in 2000,⁴³⁹ the data substantiate the NRVA 2005 findings⁴⁴⁰ by showing that in the 15-49 age group, women are three times more likely to die than men.⁴⁴¹ As recommended in the Sourcebook, the CGA includes gender disparities in school enrollment and various employment activities from regional perspectives (relative location and provinces) as well as among wealth groups, respectively;⁴⁴² however any focus on gender disparities or gender roles among regions, wealth or ethnic groups is mentioned only intermittently, not in any detailed or organized fashion.

In a country like Afghanistan, studying gender roles from the perspectives of ethnic groups or income groups may be necessary to receive data that will make for effective policies. The Pashtun ethnic group, for example, has its own cultural traditions and conservative interpretations of gender roles.⁴⁴³ The Hazara women enjoy a higher

⁴³⁷ Ibid. Pg. xiv-xv.

⁴³⁸ World Bank. (March 2005). *Afghanistan National Reconstruction and Poverty Reduction – The Role of Women in Afghanistan's Future*. Pg. 19, 36, 43-44, 58, 64, 81.

⁴³⁹ Ibid. Pg. 19.

⁴⁴⁰ See National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2005 (NRVA 2005). (June 2007). Ministry of Rehabilitation and Development and the Central Statistics Office in Kabul, Afghanistan. Pg. xiv : "Data shows that the female to male ratio starts to decline above 24 years of age. There are higher mortality rates for women above 24 years of age compared to those rates of men in the same age groups."

⁴⁴¹ World Bank. (March 2005). *Afghanistan National Reconstruction and Poverty Reduction – The Role of Women in Afghanistan's Future*. Pg. 19.

⁴⁴² Ibid. Pg. 37, 62.

⁴⁴³ Rasuly-Palczek, Gabrielle. (March 2010). *Rebuilding Afghanistan: Local Politics versus State Policies* Lecture : Females guarantee the further existence of the

status and more freedom, especially in politics, education and employment.⁴⁴⁴ Because of differences in gender status among ethnic groups, attempts to bring gender equality in decision making, education, health, or employment may be futile, as national policies stemming from aggregated data may be too homogenous to reach all women in Afghanistan. LeGates believes that difference among women has been an important issue in contemporary feminism – “The challenge is to acknowledge women’s diversity while simultaneously describing their oppression as a group.”⁴⁴⁵ Care International promotes awareness about the need for local community based approaches to education. In regions or ethnic groups that are reluctant or forbid girls to study, local approaches “can improve social acceptance of education and mitigate the risk of attack on Afghan schools...especially girls.”⁴⁴⁶ Communities are more likely to embrace education of women, if they learn about the benefits and have a decision making role over certain aspects of education.⁴⁴⁷

Because the Afghanistan’s gender report was not mentioned in the ANDS, it is not clear to what extent the CGA, if at all, influenced or was considered in ANDS policy development; however, the suggestions of the report mirror the gender policy

Pashtuns but are nevertheless of socially lower rank than males. “Since women are physically and morally weaker than men, they need to be protected from physical attacks. They also need to be protected against attacks on their moral integrity. Sexual relations for a woman are allowed solely within the confines of marriage. Sexual rights are in the sole possession of the husband.”

⁴⁴⁴ Larson, Marisa. (17 June 2008). Hazara People. In: National Geographic. [Access: 20 May 2010] http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/geopedia/Hazara_People : Hazaras have become leaders in today’s Afghanistan. Education is important to the Hazara and the literacy rates are higher than the national average. Nearly all children—both boys and girls—attend basic schools and universities. While Afghan women in many areas struggle for recognition of basic rights, Hazara women are achieving greater advances than women in other groups. Some 80% of eligible girls attend school in the Hazara region—a stark contrast to 10% in five southern provinces. Hazara women are not required to be secluded from men and they participate in many roles in the new Afghan government. Additionally, women in the Fuladi province began farming in 2004 in an effort to support themselves, a program initiated by social welfare worker Sabera Sakhi. They quickly advanced to the top level of wage earners in the area.

⁴⁴⁵ LeGates, Marlene. (2001). In *Their Time: A History of Feminism in Western Society*. Pg. 2.

⁴⁴⁶ Care International. (23 November 2009). Report Finds Girl’s Schools in Afghanistan Face Highest Risk of Violence; Suggests Steps for Preventing Attacks.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

suggested in ANDS, meaning that it includes improving and supporting women's employment in the education and health fields, broadening women's involvement in agriculture (provide training, credit and access to markets), assisting female-headed households in job skill development, strengthening law to enforce women's equal rights in marriage (includes age), divorce and inheritance, and finally collecting sufficient sex-disaggregated data to monitor gender involvement and improvement in disparities as development programs become implemented.⁴⁴⁸ MOWA is the agency dedicated to implementing and monitoring gender mainstreaming in ANDS, the CGA is most relevant to the agency; however, this brings up the question of MOWA's power within the Afghan government.

6.4 Gender mainstreaming and PRSP engendering methods

Mainstreaming gender into PRSPs refers to focusing on gender equality in the poverty reduction strategy of a particular country. This means that women's and men's participatory input is reflected in the policy and programs designed to reduce poverty. Gender mainstreaming is a prominent topic in development institutions as well as governmental agencies. The concept of mainstreaming was the product of the UNECSOC to amend for the lack of gender perspectives in the work of the United Nations: "In recognition of the fact that a gender perspective has not yet been fully integrated into the mainstream of the United Nations Activities, the Council wishes to promote a coordinated and coherent policy of gender mainstreaming by further clarifying the concept of mainstreaming..."⁴⁴⁹ The adoption of gender mainstreaming was encouraged for all actors of the United Nations system. The following definition was provided:

"Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that

⁴⁴⁸ World Bank. Executive Summary. Afghanistan: Role of Women in Afghanistan's Future (Afghanistan Gender Report). Pg. xvi.

⁴⁴⁹ United Nations. (18 September 1997). A/52/3. Gender Mainstreaming: Extract from Report of the Economic and Social Council for 1997. [Access: 04 August 2010] <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/GMS.PDF> Pg. 2.

women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.⁴⁵⁰

As previously discussed, there are different methods that have been adapted from the past to mainstream gender into PRSP, one being the WID used in the past and the more recent GAD approach advocated by organizations like Oxfam, who see their role in development as monitoring, guiding and maintaining gender mainstreaming in development projects.⁴⁵¹ WID faced criticism for addressing gender equality from an economic perspective and perceiving women's roles in development as purely economic and valuing their potential contribution to development rather than development's contribution to them. Today, the PRSPs that follow the WID approach, present women's issues, aside from economic empowerment, as mostly related to the education or health sector and are nearly ignored in all others. Because of this, using the WID approach to mainstreaming is considered obsolete.⁴⁵²

The WID emerged in the 1970s as a way to convince the development apparatus that focusing on women's roles in development would result in economic growth. The response was of an overwhelming acceptance from the development sector, but eventually, implementation of policies based on this belief had undesirable results. Demands for productive labor were placed on women without considering their needs. At the same time in the U.S., women's participation in productive labor was also seen as the solution to poverty. The WID approach received its momentum from Ester Boserup's research findings that determined African women's pre-colonial roles were not limited to household activities, but extended to agricultural work, which in turn elevated their status and blamed colonial and post-war intervention.⁴⁵³ The GAD approach involved moving the gender equality argument outside of the economic realm to compare the roles of men and women, and to obtain a clear view of inequalities. The GAD method for mainstreaming gender into PRSP is preferred by the development community today, because it studies the inequalities that exist between men and women and design programs to reduce the

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁵¹ Zuckerman, Elaine. (2002). 'Engendering' Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs): The Issues and the Challenges.

⁴⁵² Ibid. Pg. 2 PDF.

⁴⁵³ Razavi, Shahrashoub and Carol Miller. (1 February 1995). From WID to GAD: Conceptual Shifts in the Women and Development Discourse. Pg. 1-6.

inequalities.⁴⁵⁴ Such programs included assistance with childcare or transportation as well as easing women's household task in order to make paid employment less burdensome.

ANDS uses both methods of mainstreaming, WID and GAD, although it leans much more on GAD. Both methods assume that women must become involved in development for it to be successful. Although, post-development points out that women have always been involved in development, even if they played an indirect, supportive role (3.6), just not always in an economic sense, while men took on productive tasks. The policies presented in the various social and economic sectors of ANDS⁴⁵⁵ focus on promoting employment, as well as providing job training and education. This suggests that ANDS views women as missing from development and attempts to place them in income generating activities to compensate for their absence. Both methods focus on women's needs to generate income, although the WID method mainly focuses on income generation as taking place concurrently with homemaking activities, whereas GAD looks at employment in all sectors, as well as other inequalities within the sectors that are not always related to economic needs. ANDS attempts to account for inequalities in all sectors, especially governance and law, education, health and social protection, and also attempts to connect women's equality to income generation by training women to learn traditionally male work skills and ease women's access to traditionally male employment including the mining sector. This is a distinguishing factor for GAD. Additionally, in the water and irrigation sector, ANDS policies consider women's roles and domestic responsibilities for household water supply, while the telecommunications and transportation sectors address the need for women's access to technology and road transport, to give women ability to stay connected within the community, country and outside. ANDS is also more GAD focused in the sense that it attempts to maintain (through subsidies provision) women's access to transportation and day care centers⁴⁵⁶ to support employment, realizing that, unlike the WID approach, women do not have free time for employment unless their reproductive roles are supported.

⁴⁵⁴ Zuckerman, Elaine. (2002). 'Engendering' Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs): The Issues and the Challenges.

⁴⁵⁵ See Appendix Pg. 167, 169, 171-174 : The sectors include education, social protection, healthcare, mining, transport, agriculture, and the private sector.

⁴⁵⁶ See Appendix Pg. 169, 174.

The Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Union (AREU) researched the practice of gender mainstreaming in Afghanistan based on the ANDS policy formulation and found the effort stalled by lack of financial support and political will. The critique was written by a researcher for AREU in 2008 and refers to the Interim ANDS (I-ANDS). It is not reflective of how the final ANDS is being implemented in terms of gender equality; however, as the mechanisms for implementation are extensive and bureaucratic, involve numerous agencies and institutions as well as money and most of all will, the 2008 critique of the interim report can be considered a general overview of how gender equality is implemented in the country. Despite sluggish implementation, the author contends that despite the weak and insubstantial gender mainstreaming in Afghanistan, the fact that a national plan with focus on gender equality exists with a separate NAPWA and that a government agency MOWA, has the authority to monitor mainstreaming of gender is an enormous achievement and should be seen as a positive first step.⁴⁵⁷

The difficulties with mainstreaming are attributed, to some extent, to the way I-ANDS presented gender equality benchmarks, considering the significant gender inequality and perception of gender roles in the country. The benchmarks are “vague, highly ambitious, and as such largely unachievable.”⁴⁵⁸ Vague and general policy statements may be difficult to implement on a micro scale. The same can be said for ANDS. The language used to describe goals and desired outcomes of gender equality are idealistic and romanticized. ANDS states that its main goal for gender equality is for men and women to enjoy equal security, rights and opportunities in all aspects of life, as well as “increasing leadership and participation in all spheres of life...greater economic opportunities and access to control over productive assets and income...adequate access to justice...[and] reduced vulnerability to violence in public and domestic spheres.”⁴⁵⁹ Although the discussion of specific sector policies contains more detailed information, it is still highly vague. For example, the security sector’s proposals for gender equality

⁴⁵⁷ Wordsworth, Anna. (February 2008). *Moving to the Mainstream: Integrating Gender in Afghanistan’s National Policy*. Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit: Working Paper Series. Pg. 6-9, 16.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.* Pg. 6.

⁴⁵⁹ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). *A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction*. Pg. 14.

include “[increasing] awareness of gender and rights, raising women’s decision-making role and ensuring that women have equal employment opportunities within the sector...[ensuring] reduction of violence and harassment against women in the workplace...recognizing in all policies and programs that men and women have equal rights and responsibilities through the security sector.”⁴⁶⁰ Although the proposals are positive steps, they are vague and ambitious, however, this can be largely contributed to the scale and scope of any national strategy paper. Esteva and Prakash, in favor of local approaches, would most likely argue against the comprehensive and universal approach to a national strategy, since individuals, groups, villages and cities are complex entities that are best dealt with locally, because no one, not even global organizations are capable of *global knowledge* (3.4).

Considering the APPPA findings regarding gender inequality in the country, especially the statement that the mistreatment of women stems from the ruins of Afghan culture, in addition to statistics about violence against women, lack of social protection institutions, and the enormous scale of government corruption, it remains questionable whether the government is capable, or willing, to implement and monitor progress on women’s rights. Additionally, the enormity of the problems may require much more detailed analysis of the situation, where solutions are implemented on a local level, based on same level of analysis. Other problems included the population’s inexperience with the concept of gender, as the concept is quite new and a direct translation in Dari or Pashtu has not yet been created. Most often, for simplicity, the term that denotes “constructed social roles and power dynamics”⁴⁶¹ is reduced to sex. One must also keep in mind that other unofficial languages are used in the Afghan culture. Because many Afghans see gender roles as stemming from natural order, the idea of socially constructed gender norms is difficult to conceptualize. This could discourage government members’ willingness or ability to consider a culturally irrelevant idea.⁴⁶² Because gender roles are perceived as naturally given roles, it may also prove difficult for researchers to determine whether the subjects fulfilling gender roles involve voluntary or

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid. Pg. 60.

⁴⁶¹ Wordsworth, Anna. (February 2008). *Moving to the Mainstream: Integrating Gender in Afghanistan’s National Policy*. Pg. 22.

⁴⁶² Ibid. Pg. 23.

forced actions, and whether ‘voluntary’ or ‘forced’ are irrelevant concepts. This relates to both the civilian population and government officials, and the agencies that are supposed to mainstream gender into their daily work and projects. Gender mechanisms like working groups, women’s *shuras* (local community discussion or decision making groups) or the international technical assistants are underfunded and overextended in their work.

Finally, the author believes that as of now, the political will to implement gender mainstreaming has been limited. In fact, despite ANDS professing that “MOWA’s status as lead ministry for women’s advancement will be maintained and strengthened,”⁴⁶³ MOWA’s existence continues to depend upon the amount of money allocated for the agency’s budget and approved by the lower house of parliament. There is not a stable support for MOWA, but to some extent it is a result of parliament disapproving of the detached and disconnected nature of the agency, whose purpose would be better served if it became fully integrated in the function of the government.⁴⁶⁴ Women government institutions and agencies are known to have been excluded, underfunded or in some cases dissolved by governments. Patriarchy is a “prevailing institutional ideology of personnel in both donor and recipient agencies”⁴⁶⁵ and likely in governments of patriarchal societies.

6.5 Concluding remarks

A large and important aspect of international development is the methods that are used to measure and express reality. “The search is always for criteria for indicators enabling situational evaluations to be made – all of course objective – which will be genuinely universal and trans-cultural.”⁴⁶⁶ The difficult question is whether global or universal measurements are capable of expressing local realities. The issue of context and cultural values arises. Measuring wide-ranging gender dimensions of poverty like opportunity, capabilities, security and empowerment is difficult in local context. Women in industrialized

⁴⁶³ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 148.

⁴⁶⁴ Wordsworth, Anna. (February 2008). Moving to the Mainstream: Integrating Gender in Afghanistan’s National Policy. Pg. 6-9, 16.

⁴⁶⁵ Hirschmann, David. From “Home Economics” to “Microfinance”: Gender Rhetoric and Bureaucratic Resistance. Pg. 72.

⁴⁶⁶ Latouche, Serge. Paradoxical Growth. In: Post-Development Reader. Majid Rahnema and Victoria Bawtree | eds |. (1997). London: Zed Books. Pg. 135.

countries may assign different levels of importance to having certain opportunities than women in developing countries. Additionally, words like security and empowerment may have different meanings in different cultures and on individual levels. Despite this, “modern science [continues to be] projected as a universal, value-free system of knowledge which has displaced all other belief and knowledge systems by its universality and value-neutrality, and by the logic of its method arrived at objective claims about nature.”⁴⁶⁷ APPPA discovered that the concept of socially constructed gender roles could not be defined and was difficult for participants to comprehend. At the same time some aspects of overall poverty were shown to be universal, not only in the fact that poverty was considered by the survey participants to have many dimensions and manifestations, but also what they considered poverty to mean. It was found that perceptions of poverty differed greatly from area to area and referred to lacks of material assets, security, opportunity for employment, options, food as well as education and health. For women especially, poverty meant lack of visibility or active participation. The poor also saw some contributors of poverty to be outside their control such as natural disasters, seasonal harvest, increase in prices, ineffective service from social institutions and corruption.⁴⁶⁸

Overall, the preparation of ANDS included a real and genuine effort to include women in the national and sub-national consultations, NRVA 2005 and APPPA, although women’s roles in participation have been restricted as shown by the NRVA 2005 questionnaire design. Some of the assessment findings were included in the ANDS Poverty Profile, with NRVA 2005 showing more relevance than APPPA. The final poverty profile in ANDS focused on national as well as regional (provincial) poverty data, on which ANDS based its policies. NRVA 2005 as well as the sub-national consultations represented all provinces, while APPPA took place in only four. NRVA 2005 and sub-national consultations divided their findings into social groups – urban, rural and nomadic. As a result, ANDS’ policies focus largely on effective programs for urban and rural populations. Although APPPA claims to have considered input from ethnic group and other perspectives, the assessment was neither

⁴⁶⁷ Shiva, Vandana. (1989). *Western Science and Its Destruction of Local Knowledge*. Pg. 162.

⁴⁶⁸ Adlparvar, Naysan. (April 2008). *Afghanistan Pilot Participatory Poverty Assessment (APPPA) Summary Report*. Pg. 10-12.

designed nor meant for analysis of difference and similarities between ethnic groups.

The influence of the CGA on ANDS' policies cannot be determined as the CGA involved data already existing and did not involve new data collection; however, it presents a picture of the changes in gender roles (mainly related to education, employment and decision making). Some discussion related to traditions and social norms like early marriage age, family and marriage customs or external forces like conflict and war, resulting in widowhood are added to the overall analysis of gender roles and are reflected in ANDS Poverty Profile. Additionally, policy suggestions in the CGA are also reflected in ANDS. Overall, there is a connection between the findings of NRVA 2005, APPPA, the CGA and the ANDS Poverty Profile, on which Afghanistan development policies are based.

The main inadequacies in ANDS' data collection is the lack of sufficient and meaningful data disaggregation in respect to gender, as well as gender disaggregated data among Afghanistan's ethnic groups. Obtaining "meaningful data on any aspect of women's lives,"⁴⁶⁹ especially from macro-level statistics is difficult, considering that aggregated data cannot provide effective source for gender neutral policies, let alone "gender aware" policies.⁴⁷⁰ Disaggregation of data is a problem in ANDS; however, this is a difficult aspect of any national strategy, to consider women's and men's problems separately, but to incorporate them into the same strategy, stating the policy frameworks in a general sense, but detailed enough to ensure gender mainstreaming receives attention.

⁴⁶⁹ Hirschmann, David. From "Home Economics" to "Microfinance": Gender Rhetoric and Bureaucratic Resistance. Pg. 89.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid.

7. Gender equality in ANDS

In ANDS, the concept of gender equality has been constructed under the framework of the nation state and the private sector. The nation state provides equality in law and political participation, while the private sector sets the stage for economic equality. Based on the policies set out by ANDS, the strategy envisions the future Afghan state as based on neoliberal principles. ANDS calls for a centralized government effort to regulate the economy, but only to the extent of providing a favorable environment for private sector growth and privatization of public works, meant to maintain economic stability and provide government revenue. The private sector growth is also to be advanced by foreign investment.

In ANDS, the goals for gender equality are mainly in areas of political, legal and economic equality, showing that gender equality is to result from political participation, legal protection and economic opportunities. Social sectors like health and education address gender equality to a large extent as well, but only in the sense that development in these sectors will lead to economic development. According to ANDS, “efforts [are taking place] to improve education...universities have been opened and there are increasing opportunities for vocational training...vocational training will become an increasing focus of attention...to address [...] staff shortages, overbuilding, lack of standardization in training courses, and qualifications that are difficult for potential employers to assess.”⁴⁷¹ The relationship between increase in health provisions and decrease in poverty rates are also recognized in ANDS. Access to basic health services has “contributed to a lowering of poverty rates [in areas where Basic Package of Health Services had become available].”⁴⁷² This shows that the improvements in health and education reduce poverty and are means to achieve economic ends, since “significantly reducing poverty will require substantially increasing employment which depends on maintaining high rates of economic growth.”⁴⁷³ In addition to social dimensions of gender equality tied to economic equality, the cultural dimensions of gender equality are minimally addressed. ANDS’ sections on religious affairs

⁴⁷¹ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 10-11.

⁴⁷² Ibid. Pg. 32.

⁴⁷³ Ibid. Pg. 4.

(part of governance, rule of law, and human rights) and the culture, youth and media sector provide the opportunity to discuss gender equality; however, Religious Affairs does not address the issue and the cultural sector of ANDS, while promoting cultural expression and recreational activities, does not specify any policies aimed at achieving gender equality. Overall, the stated goals for gender equality are equal enjoyment of “security, equal rights and equal opportunities in all spheres of life,”⁴⁷⁴ resulting in government’s awareness of gender equality in all aspects of government functions and administration; improvements in women’s access to education, health, economic opportunities (including access to assets and income); and access to justice and reduced vulnerability to public and domestic violence.⁴⁷⁵ As a result, the main ways ANDS addresses gender issues within the nation state framework are through political, legal and economic interventions.

In ANDS, the three dimensions of gender equality are political, legal and economic. The dimensions of gender related poverty (opportunity, capabilities, security and empowerment)⁴⁷⁶, relate closely to the three dimensions of gender equality in the ANDS, as they refer to access to productive resources and employment, including education and health, and civil protection, and empowerment through decision making, including on a national level. NAPWA also focuses on areas like security, legal protection and human rights, leadership and political participation, economy/work and poverty, health, and education (5.2.1). Although the security sector is related to gender equality, in ANDS it focuses mainly on improving the national army and coordinating with the international forces. Naturally, gender specific issues under the topic of security include civil and domestic violence. These issues were assigned to other sectors like social protection and governance, rule of law and human rights.

7.1 Political participation

According to the PRSP Sourcebook, involving women in government positions and decision making roles decreases the level of corruption (6.1). The governance sector of ANDS deals with political participation and envisions strengthening democracy in the

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid. Pg. 14.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁶ See Appendix Pg. 165.

country and increasing government accountability.⁴⁷⁷ In order to increase women's participation in political life, the constitution mandates the number of women in the national assembly.⁴⁷⁸ The mandate is for national and sub-nation government agencies.⁴⁷⁹ Furthermore, to enhance women's influence in decision making positions, senior government officials are trained on specific gender issues. Leadership institutes for women are planned to activate and develop women's political participation.⁴⁸⁰

7.2 Legal protection

Policies to establish a legal framework for the country are described under the governance sector and focus on improving the rule of law and human rights. The achievement of human rights for women is based on Afghanistan's commitment to CEDAW (5.2.1). The legal system is largely responsible for the protection of women's rights. It involves not only creating special laws that protect women, such as laws against harassment and violence, and protection of women as witnesses, but also to make the entire population aware of women's equal status in law. Additionally, ANDS calls for affirmative action for women as a legislative measure, one that has already taken effect in governance with a mandated number of seats in government. Affirmative action in governance also relates to seats in district elections, municipal and village councils, as well as civil service.⁴⁸¹ Affirmative action is also planned for employment in the education sector.⁴⁸² Because laws alone are not enough, there are plans to create special institutions for women to turn to, when they are faced with violence.⁴⁸³ Some social and economic development sectors also focus on legal representation for women as in the case of the water and irrigation sector, where the goal is to resolve gender inequality in existing legislation related to the water and irrigation sector.⁴⁸⁴ It is not clear what inequality is present in existing legislation; however,

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid. Pg. 61.

⁴⁷⁸ See Appendix Pg. 166.

⁴⁷⁹ Afghanistan National Assembly. [Access: 3 September 2010] <http://www.nationalassembly.af/index.php?id=4>

⁴⁸⁰ See Appendix Pg. 167.

⁴⁸¹ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 70.

⁴⁸² Ibid. Pg. 118 and see Appendix Pg. 173.

⁴⁸³ See Appendix Pg. 167.

⁴⁸⁴ See Appendix Pg. 168.

based on APPPA's findings showing that gender equality is often related to entitlements (5.1.3), the inequalities referred to may include lack of priority in access to water.

7.3 Economic opportunities

According to the World Bank, lack of economic growth leads to poverty. Gender inequality also leads to poverty, because it leads to economic decline (6.1). The economic goals for Afghanistan focus on economic growth through infrastructural improvements, agricultural modernization, and natural resource exploitation, involving foreign investment and stimulating employment. The security sector in ANDS is outside the scope of the economic and social development, however, it focuses to a large extent on improving women's employment and decision making in the sector.⁴⁸⁵ Efforts to develop the private sector in the country are primarily for the purpose of job creation. Especially for women, the goal is to create a women specific employment strategy that will focus on rewarding women's participation in productive labor.⁴⁸⁶ In general, World Bank's efforts at improving gender equality reveal an approach focusing mainly on job and income creation. To show "what the World Bank is doing for gender equality,"⁴⁸⁷ the Bank states that it "is working to increase women's economic opportunity by investing in better access to jobs, land rights, financial services, agricultural inputs and infrastructure."⁴⁸⁸ The Bank currently has a four year gender equality initiative called *Gender Action Plan: Gender Equality as Smart Economics*. The objective of the plan is to help in fulfilling the third goal⁴⁸⁹ of the MDGs. The plan focuses not only on improving women's access to employment, but also on helping girls in transitioning from school to work, because "increased women's labor force participation and earnings are associated with reduced poverty and faster growth."⁴⁹⁰ The Bank's view on gender equality reflects those of post World War Two feminists, whose ideas about employment were based on Engel

⁴⁸⁵ See Appendix Pg. 166.

⁴⁸⁶ See Appendix Pg. 167.

⁴⁸⁷ World Bank. Gender and Development. [Access: 26 December 2010] <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTGENDER/0,,menuPK:336874~pagePK:149018~piPK:149093~theSitePK:336868,00.html>

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁹ See Appendix Pg. 157.

⁴⁹⁰ World Bank. Gender and Development.

and Bebel's writings saying that "economic independence [is] as a precondition of human (and women's) liberation."⁴⁹¹

In ANDS, most of the sectors focus to some extent on women's productive labor as means of achieving gender equality. The agriculture and mining sectors focus only on employment in their policies for gender equality. In agriculture, there is a push to create income generating activities for women, as well as promote training for self-employment and business start-up on the basis of microcredit provisions. As there are currently no women involved in mining, a special initiative directed at employing women in mining is planned.⁴⁹² Sectors like transportation, telecommunications, health, education, and social protection focus on other aspects of women's lives in addition to policies aimed at increasing employment for women. The policies in the transportation sector seek to train and employ women in government transport agencies as well as provide subsidies to private transport companies in exchange for equal services for men and women. The telecommunication sector envisions improvements in communication technology as beneficial for women in order to remain in contact or to gain contact to other provinces and throughout the country, especially in cases, where it is not safe for women to travel. Additionally, expansion of the telecommunication sector is thought to ease women's ability to generate income by allowing women to work from home in case of cultural restrictions. The health sector focuses largely on providing women and children with quality health services like maternal care or confidential HIV testing. Women's employment in the sector is encouraged, not only for the purpose of income generation, but also to provide women with female only staff as a way to overcome cultural prohibitions in seeking healthcare. The education sector focuses on increasing girls' enrollment in school and women's employment as teachers. A minimum goal for the education workforce is 35% female employment. Additionally, the sector aims to provide women with university education and to reach a gender balance among university professors. Educating women in literacy as well as training for jobs in literacy teaching is also cited as expected policy. The social protection sector focuses on providing microcredit financing to women, employment, and provisions in form of subsidies, money or food. Social protection also focuses on enforcing existing laws by

⁴⁹¹ Kaplan, Gisela. (1992). *Contemporary Western European Feminism*. Pg. 32.

⁴⁹² See Appendix Pg. 169, 171.

providing women access to legal advice and by providing assistance to women suffering from violence.⁴⁹³ The sectors that lack any focus on female employment are energy, water and irrigation, urban development, and culture/youth and media.⁴⁹⁴

7.4 Western feminism and gender equality

Using the GAD method to mainstream gender policies into ANDS, the poverty reduction strategy paper closely reflects the contemporary western feminist beliefs about gender equality as it perceives political equality, right to employment and legal protection of civil liberties as important aspects of gender equality. From the perspective of law, ANDS promotes gender equality by eliminating inequality from existing laws, creating laws to protect women, creating institutions that will help in enforcing these laws, and promoting awareness in society of women's equal rights within the law. Afghanistan has also ratified the CEDAW and sees this as a significant instrument to advance gender equality. Political representation is also promoted to the extent that it is mandated within political institutions in the country. From the economic perspective, ANDS is clear on establishing a link between income and equality in the country's poverty profile: "Gender inequality is an important characteristic of poverty in Afghanistan. The vast majority of women do not participate in paid economic activities making them highly dependent on their husbands or families."⁴⁹⁵ Women's professional undertakings are also limited to jobs deemed suitable for women and ANDS seems to promote women's employment in the fields considered traditionally male like security, transportation and mining. Overall, income generation is promoted as the gateway to gender equality and social protection. Enhancing women's income generating activities in agriculture, and increasing women's employment in health and education is also a policy plan in the country's strategy for gender equality. Microcredit provision to women in agriculture is further proof that women's access to money and income generation is seen as a factor in equality.

⁴⁹³ See Appendix Pg. 169, 170, 172-174.

⁴⁹⁴ See Appendix Pg. 168, 170, 173.

⁴⁹⁵ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 31.

7.5 Implementing a western model of gender equality

Although ANDS largely uses the GAD method of gender mainstreaming and focuses to a large extent on gender issues in different aspects of society, ANDS is not an effective tool to achieve gender equality in Afghanistan. For one, to a large extent, the poverty paper uses the western feminist model of equality that focuses, in a highly general fashion, on laws, politics and economic participation as the principal means of equality. Although not all sectors focus on formal labor participation as means of gender equality, the idea that gender inequality causes poverty, and that poverty is reduced through economic growth and increase in employment opportunities, shows that economic empowerment, along with political participation and legal protection is ANDS' formula for gender equality in Afghanistan. The same formula has continued to evolve in many western countries with variable success and failure, although from a general perspective, gender equality has improved in Europe. ANDS' reliance on the general and basic model of gender equality as has been practiced in Europe and North America for over a century, lacks a deeper analysis of this model's limitations and deficiencies. For example, women's right to work in western cultures has been well recognized, however, the women continue to struggle for equal pay. According to the European Women's Lobby, there is a 17.5% gender pay gap in Europe despite equal pay guaranteed under the 1957 founding treaty of the EU. Tackling the issue would require states to address the complex causes of pay inequality, including unequal distribution of paid and non-paid work and the separation of jobs by gender.⁴⁹⁶ The following sections, 7.5.1 Legal equality and gender equality; 7.5.2 Economic equality and gender equality; and 7.5.3 Economic equality and gender equality, focus on some of the deficiencies of the western model of gender equality by using examples from countries Austria, Denmark, Poland and Switzerland to underline the continuing inequalities in Europe and what effect these lingering inequalities may have on achieving gender equality in Afghanistan if the issues are not properly addressed in the country's policies (and ANDS).

World Bank's statistical database on gender equality appears to show that gender equality is of concern in all areas of the world

⁴⁹⁶ European Women's Lobby. (3 March 2011). First European Equal Pay Day Must Be Followed by Concrete Targets and Multidimensional Strategy, Says European Women's Lobby. [Access: 15 March 2011] <http://www.womenlobby.org/spip.php?article1263&lang=en>

except North America and Western Europe, since all of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries are excluded from statistical reporting on gender equality indicators like literacy rates, female school enrollment, labor participation, unemployment, participation in national parliament, or age at marriage. This shows that agencies like the World Bank perceive gender equality to result from or be reflected by the above indicators,⁴⁹⁷ related to employment and political participation. This shows that the World Bank values economic participation as the top indicator of equality along with political participation. Although many ANDS' benchmarks for Afghan women's empowerment reflect the standards (based on CEDAW) for achieving gender equality as perceived by the DAC countries, it is clear from NGO shadow reports submitted to the CEDAW committee that many women within those countries are still fighting for equality despite legal protections, economic opportunities, and open access to political participation. It possibly shows that the concept of gender equality goes outside of the economic, political and legal scope and that the international community or the nation state has a limited capacity to ensure it; therefore, state implemented strategies endorsed by the international community like the poverty reduction papers have only limited influence on gender equality.

In addition to questions about the effectiveness of western feminism to achieve equality, especially in Afghanistan, there are clear issues of country ownership, when it comes to policies in ANDS, not only from the point of participation, but also implementation. The international community was heavily involved in and influenced the process of creating ANDS, from MDGs to CEDAW, to the more specific Afghanistan Compact. The sole concept of gender equality itself is puzzling to many Afghans, as was noted in APPPA. One could question, whether attempting to achieve a result that is either undesirable or culturally not comprehensible or impermeable, is actually achievable. Sherman argues that although ANDS is ambitious with clearly defined objectives, the plan is at risk of failure because of its basis in "fundamentally flawed assumptions about the nature of Afghanistan's political, economic, and social realities – including the

⁴⁹⁷ World Bank. Gender Stats. [Access: 31 August 2010] <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTGENDER/EXTANATTOOLS/EXTSTATINDDATA/EXTGENDERSTATS/0,,menuPK:3237391~pagePK:64168427~piPK:64168435~theSitePK:3237336,00.html>

capacity [...] for implementation...’’⁴⁹⁸ Furthermore, questions about the government’s ability to implement the plan arise due to weak governance, high levels of corruption, and factionalism.⁴⁹⁹ The following sections address problems experienced by women in the Western European countries and how these problems point to the likelihood that ANDS’ policies do not go deep enough to address the underlying causes of gender inequality.

7.5.1 Legal equality and gender equality

Equality before the law does not mean equality in practice. National laws do not always protect women and in some cases cause women harm. This results from a variety of reasons, whether it be lawmakers’ or the police’s failure to fully understand root causes of social problems as well as lawmakers or police having limited comprehension of which actions are criminal and which seem criminal but are a result of victimization. The NGO Shadow Report for Austria shows that despite promising laws, effectiveness results from appropriate implementation.⁵⁰⁰ Some laws, like anti-prostitution laws, in effect penalize the victims, because they fail to address the root cause of prostitution.⁵⁰¹ In some cases, domestic violence laws are weak and ineffective, despite their aim to protect women. Finally, resorting to legal protection is not always an effective or a practical solution, especially if a resolution is urgent. Because of this, a highly structured legal system or legal rights it imparts are far from

⁴⁹⁸ Sherman, Jake. (February 2009). The Afghan National Development Strategy: The Right Plan at the Wrong Time? In: Journal of Security Sector Management. Vol. 7. No. 1. Pg. 1.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid. Pg. 5.

⁵⁰⁰ See NGO Shadow Report Austria on CEDAW. (October 2006). Women’s NGO Platform. [Access: 18 August 2010] <http://www.iwraw-ap.org/resources/pdf/Austria%20Shadow%20Report.pdf> : In order to facilitate and improve criminal prosecution of the offense of human trafficking, Austria amended and added new provisions to its penal code such as defining the act of human smuggling and expanding the judicial system’s reach to prosecute for crimes of exploitation when unable to prove the offense of human trafficking. The 2006 Shadow Report states that despite the changes to the criminal code in 2004, in reference to trafficking in persons law, “in practice, no significant execution can be discerned.” Furthermore, large percentage of women affected by trafficking were not recognized as victims and became deported, in addition to receiving penalties for breaking prostitution, residence and personal identification laws.

⁵⁰¹ MacKinnon, Catherine. (2005). *Women’s Lives, Men’s Laws*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. Pg. 33.

attainable, and therefore legal rights and legal protection are not sufficient in achieving gender equality:

“Most women will tell you that law has little to do with their everyday lives...The lives of women in poverty are circumscribed by rules and regulations that they know are stacked and enforced against them...Many women encounter official obstacles, but few have the law in their hands. If a woman complains to the police of a crime against her, the law is in the hands of a prosecutor. On the civil side, it usually takes money to get the law to work for you...Most [women] become criminals for responding in kind to male violence against them, for crimes of poverty, for being involved with a man who committed a crime [...], or for prostitution – being sold by men to men for what men value women for, and then being devalued and considered a criminal for it.”⁵⁰²

The international human rights regime or more specifically, in the case of Austria’s trafficking laws, the CEDAW is far from capable of protecting women, when needed. Because the international treaties must be ratified by state and adapted into law by the state, the responsibility for their realization lies with the state. Afghanistan ratified the CEDAW on 5 March 2003 and did not make any reservations to the convention, but it also has not reported progress regarding the application of the convention in domestic law and policy to the CEDAW Committee. Following the ratification of the convention, the countries must follow the guidelines of the CEDAW Committee; “[t]he Convention obliges States parties to submit to the Secretary-General a report on the legislative, judicial, administrative or other measures that they have adopted to implement the Convention within a year after its entry into force and then at least every four years thereafter or whenever the CEDAW Committee so requests.”⁵⁰³ The entry into force is 30 days after “the date of the deposit of its own instrument of ratification or accession.”⁵⁰⁴ Afghanistan’s non-reporting can be reflective not only of the lack of urgency, but also an inability by the state to implement not only its own policies, but also those set forth in CEDAW. Lastly, any effect of CEDAW on gender equality in Afghan law can be weakened, when “in most non-urban areas customary legal systems continue to operate [that] are usually based on traditional tribunals...”⁵⁰⁵ and that

⁵⁰² Ibid. Pg. 32-33.

⁵⁰³ United Nations Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). (1979). Article 27.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁵ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 64.

the Afghan government faces major difficulties in its attempts to unify various factions into a centralized nation state (3.2). For example, the weak application of state law is evident when marriage of girls at an early age is still common in Afghanistan, despite legislation prohibiting underage marriage. An estimated 57% of girls marry before the age of 16.⁵⁰⁶ A 2006 report by the National Public Radio (NPR), resulting from studies of the rural areas in Afghanistan, stated that marriages of girls as young as 11 years old result from a family's need to settle debts or disputes.⁵⁰⁷ As a result, some traditional practices, especially in remote areas of Afghanistan may stand in opposition to central government law that protects human rights. Therefore, ratifying the CEDAW and basing state laws upon this Convention does little to influence women's rights in areas outside of government influence. ANDS focuses mainly on restructuring the state laws and the official justice system, which handles only 20% of cases. The rest are handled by local justice systems, which often violate human rights, especially of women and children.⁵⁰⁸

7.5.2 Economic equality and gender equality

In the part of the world considered by the World Bank to be developed, women are still struggling for equality in areas of employment, job opportunities and equal pay. For example, the NGO Shadow Report for Austria shows that, in some cases, women are faced with limited career options after starting a family. Of the women employed, only 49% fall under the definition of full-time employment and part-time employment accounts for 39% of the women employed. This surpasses the EU rate of 31%. Nearly half of the women working part-time cite family obligations as the reason for remaining in part-time position, which are rarely created for qualified or skilled jobs, meaning that they offer low pay and deprive employees of continued education or promotion. The shortage of child care options in Austria is a large contributor to women's inability to continue a successful career. Under the Barcelona Goal, Austria is to aim for a 33% child care rate for children less than 3

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid. Pg. 124.

⁵⁰⁷ National Public Radio (NPR). (7 July 2006). Photo Op: Child Brides in Afghanistan. [Access: 31 December 2010] <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5541006>

⁵⁰⁸ Sherman, Jake. (February 2009). The Afghan National Development Strategy: The Right Plan at the Wrong Time? Pg. 6.

years of age, which at its current growing rate of 0.7% annually, the goal would be reached in 30 years.⁵⁰⁹ The situation in Austria reflects a common phenomenon that has been widely publicized, where women receive less pay than men and that they often face challenges balancing home and work life, when faced with family and job responsibilities. In Denmark, the government claims to have overcome problems with day care provisions, leading to an overall 70% rate of employment for the female workforce; however, issues of traditionally gender segregated employment and a gender salary gap (12-19%) continue to exist.⁵¹⁰

Besides promoting gender equality through employment (and economic empowerment) in general, ANDS does not address any preventative steps to be taken (ex. labor law or monitoring measures) to ensure that employment provides women with sufficient income (or full-time employment), job security and fringe benefits to ensure meaningful empowerment and economic independence. There are no references to topics like minimum wage or fringe benefits in ANDS and considering the global nature of ANDS, topics of this detail are outside of scope of the poverty paper. Policies in the governance, rule of law and human rights sector involve some legal measures for regulating labor, however, they refers only to public administration employees' pay, recruitment methods, skills requirements, and performance reviews.⁵¹¹ Protecting women in employment, especially in developing countries, is of great importance as women are more likely to experience economic or sexual exploitation (3.6), especially in a country like Afghanistan, where legal frameworks are weak and female employment is not common. Simply, the access to material resources, education, or vocational training “are unlikely to have significant impact on women’s empowerment without social, cultural, and legal structures of gender inequality, both within and beyond domestic domain.”⁵¹² Access to resources may improve women’s

⁵⁰⁹ NGO Shadow Report Austria on CEDAW. (October 2006). Women’s NGO Platform. Pg. 32-34.

⁵¹⁰ Denmark.dk Official Website of Denmark. The Danish Societal Model: Can You Deal with Deadlines and Diapers? [Access: 28 December 2010] <http://www.denmark.dk/en/menu/About-Denmark/ProfileSheets/CanYouDealWithDeadlinesAndDiapers/>

⁵¹¹ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 63.

⁵¹² Chant, Sylvia. Contributions of a Gender Perspective to the Analysis of Poverty. Pg. 101.

lives, but cannot guarantee empowerment.⁵¹³ Whether women choose part-time work out of need or choice, it is much more likely that part-time work is “typically badly paid and is characterized by low job security, the absence of fringe benefits and the unlikelihood of promotion opportunities. [It] is no way to economic independence or out of traditional female roles. It is designed to supplement income [and] for the employer it guarantees a cheap labor force...”⁵¹⁴

ANDS’ goal to include women in economic activities can be harmful to women and families without provisions like daycare. Additionally one must consider that a western feminist idea of economic equality, where women work in a formal job market, may not apply in some developing countries’ communities, where gendered labor is not perceived as inequality, but more as a part of culture or a practicality. The strategies often assume that women can easily remove themselves from raising children and taking care of families in order to partake in productive labor. By inserting women into the work force in developing countries, women are exposed to salary discrimination, and in some cases, sexual exploitation. ANDS takes a similar approach by mostly ignoring women’s domestic roles, when discussing privatization and job growth. The only mention of assisting women with paid employment is to provide transportation and day care centers for children. The policies for transportation⁵¹⁵ are much clearer than those for child care centers. Child care centers are planned to result from reorganization of the orphanages to “provide day care services for other children ‘at risk’.”⁵¹⁶ There are additional plans to “develop the network of day care centers throughout the country,”⁵¹⁷ although it is not clear if those day care centers are a separate project meant to provide any and all working women with child care, or if the project refers to the aforementioned reorganization of orphanages.

In most development discourse as well as in the ANDS, there is a belief that women want to be part of the national economy. It may be that women want income generating activities; however, they may not wish to produce goods for markets over which they have no

⁵¹³ Ibid.

⁵¹⁴ Kaplan, Gisela. (1992). *Contemporary Western European Feminism* Ibid. Pg. 32-33.

⁵¹⁵ See Appendix Pg. 169.

⁵¹⁶ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). *A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction*. Pg. 126, 232.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid. Pg. 232.

control (3.6). Women, rightfully so, benefit from economic empowerment, but the benefit does not lead to equality, when women do not have equitable access to jobs, earnings, and do not receive support in their roles as mothers and family caretakers. It has been noted that profit-led export oriented economies fail to provide gender equality, because they do not provide for income equality.⁵¹⁸ Profit-led export oriented economy is promoted in ANDS and strategies in the agricultural sector will further contribute to inequality with agricultural commercialization and micro-credit provisions. Microcredit is discussed mainly in the agricultural sector for women's income generating activities, mainly as entrepreneurial endeavors. It is envisioned that women's access to financial resources will bring them closer to equality with men.

Microfinance

In a section *Achievements Since 2001*,⁵¹⁹ ANDS discusses the establishment of 13 microfinance institutions that “[provide] services to almost 200,000 active clients in 27 provinces.”⁵²⁰ Microfinance is also listed as a social protection program with a reach of 340,000 recipients⁵²¹ and is said to be a dominant market based method for social protection, with plans to further expand and strengthen the arrangement in the future.⁵²² Additionally, microfinance access is planned for vulnerable groups like refugees and internally displaced persons.⁵²³ Microfinance Investment is a government agency responsible for development of “a concrete strategy...to significantly expand the outreach and range of financial products and services, especially targeting small and medium enterprises.”⁵²⁴

ANDS promotes the use of microfinance in development, despite the fact that microfinance schemes have been shown to negatively impact women, because the lender practices are often unethical or do not focus on gender equality as much as on profit.

⁵¹⁸ Seguino, Stephanie and Caren Grown. (2005). Gender Equity and Globalization: Macroeconomic Policy for Developing Countries. In: Munich Personal RePEc Archive. University of Vermont: Levy Economics Institute. Pg. 1-3.

⁵¹⁹ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 1.

⁵²⁰ Ibid. Pg. 3.

⁵²¹ Ibid. Pg. 124.

⁵²² Ibid. Pg. 127.

⁵²³ Ibid. Pg. 133.

⁵²⁴ Ibid. Pg. 204.

Microfinance schemes differ, but are often not successful in reducing poverty. Some microfinance comes in form of loans that are supervised and administered in installments. The contract requires the borrower to purchase input (for business) directly from the creditor and to sell products at predetermined prices to predetermined wholesalers.⁵²⁵ In addition, business ownership for women does not automatically mean that the women will have control over the earnings. Organizations like World Bank or USAID that fervently encourage microcredit as prescription for poverty reduction do not mention how insignificant the contribution of microcredit is, even when the provisions are ethical and allow for full control over the loan. The main goal of microfinance is to start small business, without considering that not everyone can be or will end up being an entrepreneur or a business owner (as is the case in North America or Europe, where business owners constitute a minority of the population). This means that many microloans are used for consumption, not business development and further income generation. This is not always negative as money is spent on health or education, or helps even-out unstable income flows, but the stories often coming from development agencies about business growth and poverty eradication are at most preposterous and at least misleading. Additionally, as markets in many developing countries are complex and involve merchant hierarchies,⁵²⁶ the simple formula of loans leading to business development to repayment, and to sustainable income source does not always fit the reality. Another negative aspect of formal microcredit is that the practice replaces informal credit practices present in all developing countries like borrowing from family or friends.⁵²⁷ From a post-development perspective, this is negative, as it replaces a traditional way of living, however, formal lending may be a positive step in Afghanistan by helping to eliminate the tradition of offering girl children as a form of debt repayment (7.5.1).

Finally, scientific testing of the results of microcredit is difficult, showing that the claims of extraordinary success like “remarkable gains not only in income and consumption but also in

⁵²⁵ Simmons, Pam. (1992). ‘Women in Development’: A Threat to Liberation. Pg. 247.

⁵²⁶ Dichter, Thomas. (15 February 2007). A Second Look at Microfinance: The Sequence of Growth and Credit in Economic History. Cato Institute: Center for Global Liberty and Prosperity – Development Policy Briefing Paper. Pg. 1-5.

⁵²⁷ Dichter, Thomas. Hype and Hope: The Worrisome State of the Microcredit Movement. [Access: 2 September 2010] www.microfinancegateway.org

health, education, and social empowerment⁵²⁸ are speculative. Many of the microcredit studies that painted the practice in a positive light have faced criticism for the methodology used. For example, the main challenge is in finding a control group: “it is difficult and expensive to find a group of people who are like the loan recipients in all relevant ways except for not having gotten a loan.”⁵²⁹ Additionally, long-term observations of poor in India, Bangladesh and South Africa (living on \$2 per day) prove that it is highly unlikely that microloans will be used for investments and are rather used to maintain or supplement cash flows, especially that being poor does not afford one opportunities to start a business. Being poor means to continuously manage cash flows in order to meet basic consumption needs. “The poor use credit and savings not only to smooth out consumption, but also to deal with emergencies [...] and to accumulate the larger sums they need to seize opportunities (occasionally including business opportunities) and pay for big-ticket expenses like education, weddings, or funerals.”⁵³⁰

The problems associated with microcredit supply have been well document and ANDS fails to address if and how the Afghan government of the international community will monitor the provision of microcredit, especially, in rural areas to ensure its effectiveness and prohibit possible predatory tactics by creditors. Although ANDS plans for an “[establishment of] a consumer protection agency to define, communicate and protect consumer rights,”⁵³¹ there are no specific plans to establish consumer protection for microcredit users, although consumer protection regulations are planned for other service provisions like information communication and technology.⁵³²

Agriculture

The commercialization of agriculture involves introduction of mass technologies, and as it did in colonial and post-colonial Africa, it may lead to gender inequality, when women’s agricultural labor (paid or non-paid) or their roles in sustainable farming are replaced by

⁵²⁸ Rosenberg, Richard. (January 2010). Does Microcredit Really Help Poor People? Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP). Pg. 1.

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

⁵³⁰ Ibid. Pg. 2.

⁵³¹ See Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 208.

⁵³² Ibid. Pg. 98.

technologies and cultivation of cash crop. The case of Africa is discussed below in this section. The problems with the way ANDS envisions the agricultural sector are manifold; however, the most obvious commercial farming and land privatization can be harmful to gender equality. Commercial farming, through technology transfer, diminishes women's participation in agriculture and takes away livelihoods of nomadic groups⁵³³, in addition to causing harm to farmers and animals (3.4.1). Land privatization itself, in the form of re-concentration⁵³⁴ has taken place throughout history, mainly in times of agrarian reforms. Such redistribution attempts are usually initiated by the "elites where the poor [lose] access to and control over land resources."⁵³⁵ Although land privatization reforms may not directly result in gender inequality, it can lead to continuation of poverty or deepening thereof, causing the poorest and most vulnerable Afghans (including female headed households⁵³⁶) to face further decrease of their social and financial status. In addition, due to Afghanistan's gender discriminatory property ownership and inheritance rights⁵³⁷, in case mass land privatization reforms begin prior to addressing the issues of right to ownership, in law and in practice, women may face further set-backs due to land re-concentration reforms, if they are still prohibited from owning property. Additionally, as majority of the population lives in rural areas and participates in some sort of farming, private land ownership by the elite or by private enterprise may result in further exploitation of the landless and poor, as already is the case. An example is village named Panjao in the Bamyan province, where families "[having] no land or shelter [...] are locked into exploitive sharecropping cycles in order to secure some accommodation that landlords provide."⁵³⁸

⁵³³ Ibid. Pg. 30 : Afghan Kuchis (nomads) depend upon official recognition (by government or local authorities) of traditional pasture rights to sustain livelihoods.

⁵³⁴ Borras Jr., Saturnino M. and Jennifer C. Franco. (May 2008). How Land Policies Impact Land-Based Wealth and Power Transfer – OSC Brief 2. United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Pg. 2 : Re-concentration is a land reform type that involves "land-based wealth and power transfers from the state, community or small family farm holders to landed classes, corporate entities, state and community groups."

⁵³⁵ Ibid.

⁵³⁶ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 87, 125.

⁵³⁷ Ibid. Pg. 127.

⁵³⁸ Grace, Jo. (February 2005). Who Owns the Farm? Rural Women's Access to Land and Livestock. Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit: Working Paper Series. Pg. 5.

In Afghanistan, like in many rural societies, women and men's roles are defined and divided, although not necessarily rigid. Agricultural activities account for a large portion of the population's paid and unpaid income and it is seen as a sector to provide most of the initial jobs as the reconstruction begins.⁵³⁹ ANDS concedes that women in Afghanistan are highly involved in agriculture "...women, especially in rural areas, actively contribute to the household income through employment (often unpaid) in agriculture and livestock activities."⁵⁴⁰ Because women are involved in agricultural activities, even if unpaid, commercialization of agriculture may hurt them, and in effect work against gender equality, when their labor is replaced by technological advancements. In addition, involvement of aid workers, seeking to assist Afghans in development and improvement of their agriculture can work against gender equality, if the aid workers do not consider existing gender roles, especially that "the distribution of responsibilities and power at home has a major impact on who can participate in and influence the more public parts of the cultural life, where rules and regulations about both public and private life are made."⁵⁴¹ This is particularly important in light of Ester Boserup's research about women's loss of status in Sub-Saharan Africa following colonial and post-colonial practices that replaced traditional female farming activities with new technologies. As a result of "dominant Western notions"⁵⁴² the knowledge of the modern technologies was transferred to male members of the household.⁵⁴³

Women's involvement in agriculture in Afghanistan varies among ethnic groups. The women of the Hazara ethnic group (living in rural areas) are known for their successful agricultural undertakings. Most Hazaras live in the mountainous central highlands, although some have moved to Kabul. The Hazara women in the Fuladi province began farming in 2004 in an effort to support themselves. The program was initiated by social welfare worker

⁵³⁹ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 51, 88.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid. Pg. 31.

⁵⁴¹ Moller Okin, Susan et al. (1999). *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* New Jersey: Princeton University Press. Pg. 13.

⁵⁴² Razavi, Shahrashoub and Carol Miller. (1 February 1995). From WID to GAD: Conceptual Shifts in the Women and Development Discourse. Pg. 4.

⁵⁴³ Ibid. Pg. 3-4. Note: The source for this information cited in Raavi, Shahrashoub and Carol Miller is Boserup, E. (1970). *Women's Role in Economic Development*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Sabera Sakhi and the women quickly advanced to the top level of wage earners in the area.⁵⁴⁴ In the province Bamyan, the Hazara women participate in all agricultural activities except for “plowing, planting and separating the wheat from husk and irrigating;”⁵⁴⁵ however, they do “collect stones, turn the soil where oxen can’t reach during plowing, and break up hard large clumps of soil.”⁵⁴⁶ Additionally, women collect herbs for medicinal preparations, take care of livestock, feed and milk the animals, spin wool and make rugs, create dairy products, and create fertilizer out of waste products.⁵⁴⁷ Women of the Nuristani nomadic ethnic group plow the fields while the men herd the flocks and process the dairy products. In other nomadic groups, the women care for young lambs and kids and make a wide variety of dairy products, for sale as well as family use. They spin the wool removed by men and weave the fabric for tents. Other work such as carpet making belongs to the women. When on the move, it is the women who put up and take down the tents.⁵⁴⁸ Despite, both men and women taking part in agricultural work and women being largely the ones in charge of livestock care, “organizations still work with men in livestock and veterinary training [in villages where women’s work involves maintenance of livestock].”⁵⁴⁹ Work in agriculture is often seen as a male profession causing development institutions to focus mostly on male involvement, which then may negatively impact gender equality.

7.5.3 Political equality and gender equality

Political participation of women continues to be an aspect of gender equality that persists to be least fulfilled. Many gender equality advocates lament the lack of women’s participation in government. Even European countries have difficulty maintaining equal representation of women in parliament or in decision making roles. For example, Switzerland’s report to the CEDAW Committee concedes that much has to be done to eliminate gender disparities in the country. In regards to government participation, women do

⁵⁴⁴ Larson, Marisa. (17 June 2008). Hazara People.

⁵⁴⁵ Grace, Jo. (February 2005). Who Owns the Farm? Rural Women’s Access to Land and Livestock. Pg. 6.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁸ Afghanistan: A Country Study. (2001). Gender Roles.

⁵⁴⁹ Grace, Jo. (February 2005). Who Owns the Farm? Rural Women’s Access to Land and Livestock. Pg. 7.

represent 50% of the electorate, but only a quarter of the members of federal and cantonal parliaments and governments. The lack of gender balance in government prohibits women from participating equally in decision making and having a fair input on policy formulation.⁵⁵⁰ In Poland, the participation of women in elected offices has increased in the recent years; however, it did not translate into significant number of roles with access to decision making. Only 20% of women (92 women out of 460 total seats) are representatives in the Polish senate (lower house of the parliament). This is partly due to instated legal quotas, requiring both genders to represent no less than 35% each of the total number of candidates running for seats in the Polish senate.⁵⁵¹ Even in cases where women are members of governments, their participation does not always translate into influence. Upholding women's rights is especially difficult in times when ultra conservative parties gain power and focus on limiting women's rights, even those that have already been codified. Shift in politics is almost always synonymous with shift in women's rights. This was most evident in Poland after the dissolution of the Soviet Block, where women's rights to health and abortion under the communist rule changed significantly following implementation of a democratic but religiously influenced government. This further proves that legally mandated rights for women, as discussed above, are inadequate as they can be overturned.

In the developing countries, mandating women's political participation is often a result of development policies endorsed by donors, and as in the case of Afghanistan, the results of political affirmative action have been stalled by political will and funding for MOWA (6.4). NAPWA (to be implemented by the Ministry) has gained some capacity from UNIFEM to operate (5.2.1). In 2002, UNIFEM established a program in Afghanistan to promote women's participation in reconstruction of the country. UNIFEM has worked in partnership with MOWA "to build its staff capacity and program

⁵⁵⁰ NGO Shadow Report Switzerland on CEDAW. (April 2008). NGO Coordination post Beijing Switzerland Amnesty International. [Access: 22 August 2010] http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/AI_Swiss_Section_Germany_cedaw42_report.pdf Pg. 17.

⁵⁵¹ Quota Project: Global Database of Quotas for Women. Poland. Project Partners: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Stockholm University, Inter-Parliamentary Union. [Access: 24 April 2011] <http://www.quotaproject.org/uid/countryview.cfm?country=179#additional>

to advance women's rights [to overcome] the challenge of reaching out to women in the provinces through the establishment of Women's Development Centers."⁵⁵² Overall, the national women's machineries are considered to be weak as they have little influence and have to work with other departments, donors and NGOs. Because most gender related strategies are assigned to the national women's machineries for implementation and monitoring,⁵⁵³ women's political agendas are often given least priority. This shows that despite participation, women's perceived political legitimacy is a strong force dictating the eventual influence women can exert on national policies.

7.6 Can ANDS achieve poverty reduction?

From the perspective of post-development theory, ANDS' neoliberal policies cannot contribute to poverty reduction, because the policies focus on privatization, foreign investment, and dependence on the global market for economic growth. According to some scholars like David Harvey, such policies may actually lead to increase in poverty. Privatization may lead to loss of merit goods like education, health or social housing. Foreign investment can lead to environmental damage or transfer of resources outside of the communities, especially when regulatory frameworks are weakened to attract foreign investment. Open market can weaken local business, when imported goods trump the prices of locally made products.

7.6.1 Privatization

ANDS focuses on privatizing most sectors of the economic and social development. These include energy, water and irrigation, agriculture, transportation, technology, urban development, mining and media, albeit the energy and water sectors are to be publicly monitored. The education sector is to be initially sponsored by the government, although ANDS calls for "[developing] the strategy for

⁵⁵² See UN Women. Women's Centers in Afghanistan. [Access: 24 April 2011] <http://www.unifem-usnc.org/progafghanwomen> : The centers have allowed women to meet in safety, have access to social services (vocational training, health education, literacy courses, legal and psychological support) and share in discussion.

⁵⁵³ Bell, Emma. (March 2003). Gender and PRSPs: with Experiences from Tanzania, Bolivia, Viet Nam, and Mozambique: Prepared for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Denmark. Pg. 16.

privatization of kindergartens”⁵⁵⁴ and to significantly increase “the potential role of the private sector in the strategy for education.”⁵⁵⁵ Health is the only sector escaping privatization. For the time being, Afghanistan aims to continue implementing its Basic Package of Health Services to cover at least 90% of the population.⁵⁵⁶ Overall, ANDS goal to privatize state owned enterprises is as follows:

“The Government will continue the program of privatization and corporatization of state owned enterprises, a process that is presently on schedule. This will: (i) improve the level of efficiency in the economy; (ii) assist in eliminating corruption; (iii) encourage better resource allocation; and (iv) generate increase government revenue.”⁵⁵⁷

According to Harvey, privatization and commoditization of public enterprise leads to poverty, because it tends to redistribute income to the already wealthy, rather than generate wealth and income. Harvey calls this accumulation by dispossession.⁵⁵⁸ This results in a transfer of public rights to the private sector and to the few who can afford it,⁵⁵⁹ as is the case with confiscating common land ownership rights and transforming them into private rights. Access to resources is then limited to those with money and property, while the poor remain poor or slip deeper into poverty.

Privatization in Afghanistan is seemingly leading to corruption, where privatization of state owned companies results in transfer of ownership to families of government officials, all the while doing nothing to decrease poverty. Companies like the Ghorī Cement Factory and the Karkar Coal Mine (that provides fuel for the factory) are owned by investment firms operated by Mahmoud Karzai, the brother of the president and other family members of government officials. The cement company is supposed to “[supply] building materials for much of the country, [generate] cash and jobs

⁵⁵⁴ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 235.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid. Pg. 11.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid. Pg. 108.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid. Pg. 75.

⁵⁵⁸ See Harvey, David. (2006). A Brief History of Neoliberalism. Pg. 161 : Accumulation by dispossession involves “the revision of common property rights won through years of hard class struggle (the right to a state pension, to welfare, to national health care) into private domain [that] has been one of the most egregious of all policies of dispossession, often procured against the broad political will of the population.”

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid.

and [improve] the lives of some of the world's poorest people."⁵⁶⁰ Instead the workers remain poor, show physical signs of deterioration, and fear for safety due to mine conditions. This is an example of how "...the most influential members of the Afghan elite who live in palatial villas in Kabul and Dubai reneged on promises of better conditions for fellow countrymen struggling to feed their families on salaries of about \$3 a day."⁵⁶¹

7.6.2 Social protection

Providing social protection to the poor is a goal of ANDS, yet the continuing war, high government corruption, and planned privatization of state enterprise stand in the way of providing much needed government assistance. The social protection in Afghanistan involves implementing strategies aimed to meet the benchmarks and targets of the Afghanistan Compact and the MDGs. The goals include alleviating hunger and malnutrition, reducing poverty rates in chronically poor female-headed households and increasing their levels of employment, assisting the disabled with employment and education, as well as providing the disabled with government employment through affirmative action, rehabilitating drug users, reforming pension plans, implementing a system of disaster preparedness.⁵⁶² The government estimates, it will need USD 2 billion per year "just to keep the poorest and most vulnerable above poverty line."⁵⁶³ The government plans to gradually remove some social protection like subsidies for the poor including money for fuel, pensions, and kindergartens.⁵⁶⁴ Despite extremely high levels of poverty in Afghanistan and large budget needed for social protection, the allocation of donor aid and domestic revenue is lowest to the social protection sector. The social protection sector receives the least funding out of all the sectors. For the years 2008/2009, funding for social protections was estimated at USD 192 million and is to

⁵⁶⁰ Landay, Jonathan S. (14 November 2010). Factory, Coal Mine Show Connections Matter Most in Afghan Business. In: McClatchy Newspapers. [Access: 30 December 2010] <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2010/11/14/103393/afghan-business-model-connections.html>

⁵⁶¹ Ibid.

⁵⁶² Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 124-125.

⁵⁶³ Ibid. Pg. 124.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid. Pg. 126.

gradually increase to USD 449 million for 2012/2013.⁵⁶⁵ The strategy for the social protection sector is seen as “critical to the Government’s ongoing poverty reduction efforts”⁵⁶⁶ and is also central to accomplishing the MDGs and the stipulations outlines in the Afghanistan Compact. This includes reducing hunger, improving child nutrition, assisting the unemployed and disabled, rehabilitating drug users, providing pensions, and preparing an effective system of disaster preparedness.⁵⁶⁷ In comparison, the security sector was allocated USD 3.2 billion for 2008/2009; the amount gradually decreasing to 2.9 billion for 2012/2013.⁵⁶⁸ The amount allocated for social protection in the overall budget does not come near the USD 2 billion that are needed.

At the time, when USD 2 billion annually are needed for the poor, Afghanistan’s reconstruction and economic growth seems to fuel corruptions and also benefit the wealthy, as an estimated USD 3.65 billion annually leaves the country and is transferred to Dubai. Both Afghanistan government and the international community have yet to determine whether this money comes from illegal drug trade, extortion or misuse of donor funds. The US officials believe that at the least, some of the money comes from aid projects and the US’ and its allies’ contracts to provide security, supplies and reconstruction work, in addition to profits from opium trade and extortion by Taliban. It is believed though that most of this money is legitimate and a product of the growing economy and must be moved to a country with a stable banking system.⁵⁶⁹ However, Dubai is known to be a country, “where wealthy Afghans have long parked their lawfully and unlawfully earned money,”⁵⁷⁰ showing that the growing economy and reconstruction efforts are making the rich even richer, while the poor (composing the large majority of the population), continue to struggle with food and other basic needs.

In order to attract investment in the social and economic sectors, ANDS calls for an investment friendly regulatory framework and an environment that enables private sector growth. Based on

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid. Pg. 50.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid. Pg. 123.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid. Pg. 125.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid. Pg. 50.

⁵⁶⁹ Abi-Habib, Maria. (22 July 2010). U.S. Checks Afghan Cash Flow. In: Wall Street Journal Online. [Access: 20 August 2010] <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704421304575383092608041522.html>

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid.

Harvey's criticism of neoliberal policies, investment friendly frameworks are a euphemism for "rolling back of regulatory frameworks designed to protect labor and the environment from degradation"⁵⁷¹ resulting in the loss of rights. It should be said that it was deregulation of the financial system that allowed for predation, fraud, ponzi schemes and losses of life savings and pension funds⁵⁷² for the average citizens in recent history. Deregulation to enable privatization is the surest way to cut a population from social protection:

"To allow the market mechanism to be sole director of the fate of human beings and their natural environment, even of the amount and use of purchasing power, would result in the demolition of society...Robbed of the protective covering of cultural institutions, human beings would perish from the effects of social exposure; they would die as victims of acute social dislocation through vice, perversion, crime and starvation. Nature would be reduced to its elements, neighborhoods and landscapes defiled, rivers polluted...[and] the power to produce food and raw materials destroyed."⁵⁷³

The countries that reduced the influence of neoliberalism within their own borders, like Sweden, have fared comparably better than countries, like the U.K that have fully embraced it. The indices for quality of life are much higher in Sweden, where the poverty rate is 6.3% compared to U.K's 15.7%.⁵⁷⁴ The Gini coefficient (after taxes and transfers) is 0.23 in Sweden and 0.34 in the U.K, whereas in the U.S it is 0.38.⁵⁷⁵

7.6.3 Global market

ANDS is a development strategy that attempts to open Afghanistan's natural and human resources to international exploitation. This is most evident in attempts to open Afghanistan's natural resources to foreign investment.⁵⁷⁶ By attracting foreign investment with (previously mentioned) investment friendly policy frameworks, Afghanistan is in danger of experiencing environmental degradation as a result of extensive mineral extraction. The U.S. estimates the

⁵⁷¹ Harvey, David. (2006). *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Pg. 161.

⁵⁷² Ibid.

⁵⁷³ Polanyi, Karl. (1954). *The Great Transformation*. Boston: Beacon Press. Pg. 73.

⁵⁷⁴ Harvey, David. (2006). *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Pg. 156.

⁵⁷⁵ Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). *Income Distribution – Inequality – Country Tables*. <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?QueryId=11112&QueryType=View>

⁵⁷⁶ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). *A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction*. Pg. 187.

natural resources in Afghanistan to be worth USD 1 trillion. There is understandable fear of the natural resource curse⁵⁷⁷ and its effects on the already poor people in Afghanistan. The likelihood of mineral resource richness to bring prosperity to the poor is unlikely and just like in South Africa, when the sector was opened to private investment; the mining rights were leased to foreign companies.⁵⁷⁸

ANDS asserts that private sector growth will alleviate poverty and states that steady GDP growth will lead to continual reduction of poverty.⁵⁷⁹ However, according to Stiglitz, GDP is not the appropriate method to measure poverty reduction and the number tells little of the well-being experienced by individuals in the country. It does not reflect actual social well-being, which is exactly what economic growth is said to provide. This is even more so in countries with heavy foreign investment. Although GDP is often used as a measure of societal well-being, it is neither a good measure for social or economic performance. First, it does not express how individuals are affected. Second, GDP can increase, but people can be “worse off.” Thirdly, GDP says nothing about environmental sustainability. As developing countries adapt neoliberal policies, increase privatization and open their markets, there will be activity within the country, which will increase the GDP, yet much of the income created will travel outside of the country, despite most of the environmental damage being done within.⁵⁸⁰ China’s involvement in Africa is another example of increased GDP growth with negative

⁵⁷⁷ Marron, Donald. (15 June 2010). Afghanistan and the Natural Resource Curse. In: Christian Science Monitor.

⁵⁷⁸ See Coleman, Matthew and Kevin Williams. (2008). South Africa’s Bilateral Investment Treaties, Black Economic Empowerment and Mining: A Fragmented Meeting? In: Business Law International. Vol. 9. No. 1 : The authors describe the ongoing dispute registered at the International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes filed by mineral mining companies (Italian and Benelux) against South Africa’s claimed attempt to comply with provisions of the Convention on Elimination of Racial Discrimination by implementing Black Economic Empowerment domestic regulations aiming to provide the historically disadvantaged blacks with percentage of mineral resources of the country, which according to the mining companies, violate the provision of the bilateral investment treaties.

⁵⁷⁹ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 34.

⁵⁸⁰ Stiglitz, Joseph. (5 February 2008). Discussion at the Asia Society: The Economics of Information. Time: 1 hour 11 minutes (9 minutes). Fora TV. [Access: 17 August 2010] http://fora.tv/2008/02/05/Joseph_Stiglitz_Economics_of_Information#fullprogram

side effects. China's involvement in Africa is commendable by some, like Dambisa Moyo, who is an international economist and author of *Dead Aid*. Responding to China's lack of conditionality, when dealing with African countries, Moyo replied, saying that "what the Chinese have been able to do across Africa is commendable. Their approach is very much focused on business and less so on charity and the notion that we should be doling out handouts...that's not to say that it is perfect and we obviously need to focus on policy making and ensuring that African policy makers are acting in the best interests of Africans..."⁵⁸¹ However, China's negative influence cannot be overlooked and the issue of the need to make policies beneficial to local communities is not communicated strongly enough. China has found in Africa another place for new sources of energy. In terms of trade in oil, China is mostly involved in Nigeria, Sudan and Angola, following U.S and EU's companies' exit due to public pressure to reprimand the countries' human rights records. Chinese firms often underbid local African companies and the Chinese corporations do not help out with unemployment problems, because they bring their own Chinese labor with them. Additionally, China gains a market for its own products. As cheap Chinese goods flood the market, initiatives like African clothing businesses or other manual labor which Africans can sell on local markets are destroyed.⁵⁸² China has also begun its involvement in Afghanistan in 2007, when it won a bid for mining rights near the Aynak village. The Chinese state owned company China Metallurgical Group Corporation has been granted the rights for 25 years and plans to extract 11 million tons of copper through the time period.⁵⁸³ Although the details of the contract are not known, any concern about the potential negative influence including environmental damage with no significant positive impact on the Afghan population in the form of new jobs or profit from the minerals, should not be overlooked, especially in light of Afghanistan's lack of extensive legal framework, stable justice system

⁵⁸¹ CNN Inside Africa. (2 May 2009). Against Foreign Aid; Refugee Footballers. (Transcript of Interview with Dambisa Moyo). [Access: 30 December 2010] http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0905/02/i_if.01.html

⁵⁸² Brookes, Peter. (9 February 2007). Into Africa: China's Grab for Influence and Oil – Heritage Lecture Number 1006. The Heritage Foundation. & Lyman, Princeton N. (21 July 2005). China's Rising Role in Africa: Presentation to the US-China Commission July 21, 2005.

⁵⁸³ Wines, Michael. (29 December 2009). China Willing to Spend Big on Afghan Commerce. In: The New York Times.

and presence of a corrupt government. Furthermore, a lot of reconstruction work taking place in Afghanistan is done by foreign companies, using foreign labor. The construction of a modern railroad system (from Uzbek-Afghan border into north of Afghanistan) is taking place in Afghanistan, but is being done by an Uzbekistani state company employing construction crews from Uzbekistan.⁵⁸⁴ This is not to say that the existence of a transportation system in itself is not beneficial to the country, yet the economic impact could be greater for Afghans if they benefited directly from new jobs created within their communities. In this case, because of activities within the countries, the GDP would rise with no immediate impact on the well being of local communities. This however, is a great problem in Afghanistan, because of high numbers of illiterate and unskilled labor. In case demand for labor grows, there may not be enough skilled workers needed to accommodate jobs. This is the case with preparation for jobs in the police force in Afghanistan. The training is inadequate due to high numbers of illiterate and low skilled workers combined with high demand for police officers. As a result, the focus is “not to develop a well-trained, highly skilled, professional police force capable of preventing and investigating crimes, and doing so in a manner that upholds citizens’ rights.”⁵⁸⁵ Because of conditions in the country like lack of infrastructure and businesses, poor job skills and lack of transparency, Afghans must rely on external help to achieve economic growth. This coupled with corruption and instability may still stimulate economic growth, yet do little to improve overall well-being of the poor.

⁵⁸⁴ Watson, Ivan. (27 September 2010). After Nearly a Century, a Modern Afghan Railroad is under Construction.

⁵⁸⁵ Sherman, Jake. (February 2009). The Afghan National Development Strategy: The Right Plan at the Wrong Time? Pg. 5.

8. Conclusion

The main goal of this research is to determine whether suggested policy strategies in ANDS represent an effective approach to achieving gender equality and poverty reduction in Afghanistan. An effective approach means one that produces the sought after or desired effects, achieving what it is meant to achieve. The research began with the introduction of relevant aspects of post-development theory like World Bank's cultural influence in developing countries; environmental degradation resulting from development policies; lack of social protection under neoliberal policies; belief in global knowledge, including global human rights, in place of local practices; gap in development discourse and practice; as well as the negative impact development has had on women (Chapter 3). The overall position of post-development theory is that development is harmful, because of the cultural transfer that takes place from one part of the world to another, displacing local ways of living through the ever growing influence of the developed countries and their institutions like the World Bank.

To address the issue of poverty reduction and to determine whether ANDS can achieve its own mandate to lower poverty, one must return to ANDS' definition of poverty and the perceived steps and solutions to poverty. Poverty in ANDS is defined as inability to meet the costs of basic needs and is measured as CBN.⁵⁸⁶ According to ANDS, generation of employment is a step toward poverty reduction. "Significantly reducing poverty will require substantially increasing employment, which depends on maintaining high rates of economic growth in the years ahead."⁵⁸⁷ Furthermore, ANDS sees the emergence of a middle class as a way to sustain economic growth and poverty reduction; "The ANDS largely focuses on the next five years, but reflects Afghanistan's long term goals which include the elimination of poverty through the emergence of a vibrant middle class, an efficient and stable democratic political environment and security throughout the country."⁵⁸⁸ Finally, security is also described as having a role in poverty reduction. "Security and stability in all

⁵⁸⁶ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 28.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid. Pg. 4.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid. Pg. 6.

parts of the country is essential for economic growth and poverty reduction.”⁵⁸⁹

Some aspects of post-development theory can be used to criticize ANDS potential ineffectiveness at reducing poverty. Post-development often criticizes, what it perceives to be, industrialized countries’ belief in global knowledge or acceptance of universal principles that are either ineffective in local contexts or harm local cultures. This relates to the issue of security in Afghanistan and the ANDS strategies for achieving security. As stated above, security is needed for economic growth and the desire for security is reflected in ANDS’ provincial profiles, where 17 of 34 provinces ranked security as top issue of concern. Much of ANDS is based on benchmarks already established in the Afghanistan Compact and goals are reflective of Afghanistan’s obligations under the Millennium Development Goals, despite talk of extensive participation taking place throughout the process of creating ANDS, showing heavy influence of the international community. Based on Sherman’s perspective (Chapter 7), it is the presence and influence of the international community that is negatively affecting the chances to eradicate violence, because security policies are created on the basis of international communities’ incorrect perception of Afghanistan’s social realities. The problem also involves the incompatibility between short-term and long-term security goals. Overall, “no common strategy for the security sector has emerged in practice.”⁵⁹⁰

ANDS’ desire for a thriving middle class, as stated above, may seem contradicted by its reliance on neoliberal policies. ANDS focuses heavily on privatization of sectors, including Afghanistan’s vast reserves of mineral deposits, advocated for in the Afghanistan Compact. David Harvey, as stated in Chapter 7, criticizes neoliberal policies for creating income inequalities and allowing for concentration of wealth at the top. Harvey argues that neoliberal

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid. Pg. 5.

⁵⁹⁰ See Sherman, Jake. (February 2009). *The Afghan National Development Strategy: The Right Plan at the Wrong Time?* Pg. 4-5 : Long-term strategy focuses on strengthening institutions to facilitate the rule of law, the short-term focuses on strengthening government’s legitimacy to fight insurgency. The connection between long-term and short-term is not well coordinated and Afghan police forces have inadequate, often confusing training that does not set specific tasks, but blurs the activities of law enforcement with combating insurgency. When the police force cannot perform its law enforcement properly, the government loses legitimacy and the population turns to insurgency.

policies in the UK and U.S. in the 1980s did not lead to economic growth, instead to income inequalities.⁵⁹¹ Although income inequality is not currently an issue in Afghanistan, because of the vast number of Afghans (nearly 50% of Afghans live under poverty line and 20% are close to the poverty line)⁵⁹², the “emergence of an opulent elite”⁵⁹³ in a country plagued with severe poverty is alarming, in addition to reports of relatives of government officials benefiting from privatization of state assets. So far the environment for establishing a thriving middle class is frail. Finally, ANDS’ strategy that economic growth will be a stimulant for poverty reduction is a weak argument; especially that economic growth in Afghanistan will be measured by increase in GDP.⁵⁹⁴ As discussed in Chapter 7, GDP growth resulting from activities like foreign investment does not translate directly into individual well-being as economic activity in the country does not fully disclose the benefit, if any, transferred to the country’s population. Therefore, growth in GDP will not automatically lead to poverty reduction.

Returning to the focal point of the research is the question of ANDS’ effectiveness at achieving gender equality in the country. The World Bank relies on the western feminist paradigm to develop ideas about how to achieve gender equality and as was shown in Chapter 7, female economic empowerment seems to be the focal point for the Bank. Subsequently, the Bank’s vision of gender equality is transformed into policies aimed at achieving gender equality; policies like affirmative action, increase in access to education or increased political representation. As was pointed out in Chapter 4 of this text, the liberal feminist paradigm for equality that focuses on law, political and economic power has not yet been proven to be fully effective and in some cases, western feminist ideas have proven to be harmful in developing countries. In the case of the WID policies in developing countries, where income generating activities for women seemed like an easy tool for empowerment, the preceding lack of knowledge and understanding of women’s concurrent roles, caused

⁵⁹¹ Harvey, David. (2006). *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Pg. 88.

⁵⁹² Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). *A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction*. Pg. 28-29.

⁵⁹³ Walsh, Declan. (21 January 2006). Gap between Rich and Poor Widens in Afghanistan. In: San Francisco Chronicle. In: Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA). [Access: 18 January 2011] <http://www.rawa.org/gap.htm>

⁵⁹⁴ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). *A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction*. Pg. 34.

women to become overburdened, contributing further to inequality. The research also discussed the need to consider the diversity of feminism and question the applicability or relevance (and hence effectiveness) of western feminism in non-western societies. Where some women in industrialized countries may face the maternal dilemma, some women in developing countries see their status rise with the number of children they have (4.4). Perception matters and scholars have called for diversity and sensitivity. Yet, a study conducted by the Washington Crisis Committee, discussed in Chapter 4 of this text, stated that in comparison to women in developing countries, the poor women of Europe still have a reasonable living standard. Such statements reflect what post-development scholar Escobar fears, that the industrialized nations define the developing nation's reality (3.5), allowing and justifying interventions, or at least branding a culture, society or a nation as inferior in some way. In the same way, the World Bank sees political participation, legal protection, and economic opportunity as tools for women's empowerment and attempts to transfer the ideas to countries that are perceived by the World Bank to lack the tools.

Another critique of western feminism raised in Chapter 4 was that it fails to consider race or ethnicity as factors contributing to inequality. This criticism is greatly applicable to Afghanistan, where gender roles differ among ethnic groups. This is not to take away the already vast achievements of western feminism, only to point out that not only must the industrialized countries continue making progress at home, but also must consider western feminism's relevance in non-western cultures. Some aspects of western feminism can be of little importance to women with sick or hungry children and as has been pointed out by RAWA, women in Afghanistan do face unique problems in need of urgent solutions, other than lack of political power or economic empowerment. On the other hand, the APPPA survey has proven that there is some universality in how poverty or gender inequality is perceived in Afghanistan (5.1.3).

To determine the effectiveness of ANDS in achieving gender equality, one must return to the definition of gender equality. According to the World Bank, gender equality is an approach that attempts to identify the issues facing men and women that prohibit them from receiving equal benefits from development intervention (Introduction). According to ANDS, gender equality is a "condition where women and men fully enjoy their rights, equally contribute to and enjoy the benefits of development and neither is prevented from

pursuing what is fair, good, and necessary to live a full and satisfying life.”⁵⁹⁵ “The ANDS goal for gender equality is an Afghanistan where women and men enjoy security, equal rights and equal opportunities in all spheres of life.”⁵⁹⁶ Clearly, it is not possible to foretell, whether ANDS will eventually lead to gender equality, or if parts of ANDS are responsible for any progress that has already occurred or will occur in the future, especially that no time period has been mentioned; however, it is possible to point out the strengths and weaknesses within the document and estimate their impact on gender equality.

The development of ANDS is a success in itself, simply for the task is time consuming, requiring enormous efforts at planning, participation and coordination. In addition to developing the strategy, Wordsworth feels that including a focus on gender equality as a cross-cutting issue is a great triumph (6.4). Many weaknesses of ANDS stem from its very preparation as is the case of the much relied on NRVA 2005. Despite World Bank’s Sourcebook underlining the importance of gender disaggregated data, the NRVA 2005 questionnaire’s design disregards data disaggregation. ANDS does relay, however, that sub-national consultations contributed significant input for policies and that the consultations involved equal participation of women, yet it is difficult to estimate the meaningfulness of gender participation as no detailed data exist outlining the format of sub-national consultations (5.1.1). Additionally, the combined data presented in ANDS’ poverty profile is also aggregated, suggesting that the input from sub-national consultations was either collected in an aggregated fashion or was later presented as such. Although the NRVA 2005 has weaknesses related to gender, the survey does address the issue of women’s inequality, especially in terms of mortality rate, stating that gender inequality in Afghanistan is based on cumulative effects of numerous problems faced by Afghan women ranging from poor access to healthcare to cultural practices. The NRVA 2005 recognizes its own short-comings and urges for a more detailed survey to identify causes of women’s higher mortality rates in order to establish appropriate policies. Aggregated data collection is the biggest weakness of NRVA 2005. In the questionnaire, men were asked for input related to asset ownership, exposure to violence, household income sources and

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid. Pg. 147.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid. Pg. 14.

expenses, whereas women's questions were limited to children and maternal health. APPPA, on the other hand, raised the issue of women experiencing discrimination and marginalization within households (5.1.3); however, it was a qualitative and a complementary survey that was seldom referred to throughout ANDS. Having had a clearer picture of intra-household gender dynamics may have oriented policy to a more gendered perspective. In its general criticism of PRSPs, Oxfam sees it as a problem that women's issues are largely confined to health or education.⁵⁹⁷ APPPA was a survey much more focused on equal participation by women, yet it was a survey meant only to complement NRVA 2005. It was of much lesser scope and therefore could not guarantee to reflect the entire population of Afghanistan. One large problem with the NRVA 2005 as well as the ANDS in general is the treatment of Afghanistan as a homogenous country. Especially in NRVA 2005, there is no attempt to study gender related issues on the basis of ethnic group or social status. There is some attempt to do this in APPPA (focus on ethnic and religious affiliations, as well as groups of refugees or physically disabled persons); however, the total sampling size was less than 3,000 persons from only four out of thirty-four provinces.

Gender was fairly well mainstreamed into the ANDS. By relying largely on the GAD approach, ANDS focused on gender related issues in most sectors; however, as Wordsworth put it, the benchmarks are too ambitious and unachievable (6.4). On a positive side, the existence of NAPWA points to an effort by Afghanistan to focus on women's issues separately and to monitor implementation of programs for empowerment of women. However, as was discussed in the research, MOWA's capacity to implement NAPWA is questionable as continuing funding for the Ministry is not certain. In addition, despite NAPWA being described in the ANDS as a fundamental part of the strategy, there is no section in ANDS outlining what NAPWA actually consists of. MOWA's capability to stand for women in Afghanistan has recently been questioned and backlash erupted over proposals by the Afghan government to place international NGO-run women's shelters under the control of MOWA. The new proposal would require a government panel to decide on individual women's eligibility to access a shelter, which many women's activists fear will not be able to withstand pressure

⁵⁹⁷ Zuckerman, Elaine. (2002). 'Engendering' Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs): The Issues and the Challenges. Pg. 2 PDF.

from conservative and religious groups as well as from any well-connected or influential family members of women seeking shelter from violence. Additionally, based on the findings of Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, MOWA does not have the budget, expertise and staff to be able to handle the complex management of women shelters.⁵⁹⁸

Most of all, the evidence that exposes ANDS' unlikely effectiveness in the area of gender equality is the meager focus the issue of 'domestic violence or violence against women' receives. Violence against women often leads to women's exposure to poverty, as women trying to escape violent situations, especially those who are mothers, experience the financial hardships of single motherhood, separation and divorce, as well as loss of financial security.⁵⁹⁹ If employment for women in Afghanistan is currently scarce, making financial situation of abused women already difficult, introduction of employment opportunities for women as part of ANDS will not necessarily contribute to poverty reduction if the violence persists, at least not female poverty reduction. According to UNIFEM, "human rights and safety of women and girls must be at the forefront of the NAP [National Action Plan], specifically laid out in the laws, policies, protocols and programmes that are covered or linked to the NAP...[and furthermore] NAPs should have a clear and broad definition of gender-based violence that is inclusive of all forms and manifestations of violence against women and girls."⁶⁰⁰ These recommendations were issued in 2010, two years after the development of ANDS. As of now, ANDS does not have a specific National Action Plan to combat domestic violence.

Based on the high involvement of the international community and large influence of the Afghanistan Compact on ANDS, the true participation of Afghan women and their impact on

⁵⁹⁸ Rubin, Alissa J. (10 February 2011). Afghan Proposal Would Clamp Down on Women's Shelters. In: New York Times. [Access: 27 February 2011] http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/11/world/asia/11shelter.html?_r=2

⁵⁹⁹ Women against Violence Europe (WAVE). (2009). The Poverty Risks of Women Affected by Violence and Their Children: Report on the Socioeconomic situation in Austria. Vienna: WAVE/European Network and European Info Centre against Violence. Pg. 8-12.

⁶⁰⁰ United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). (September 2010). Introductory Brief and Suggestions: Formulating NATIONAL ACTION PLANS (NAPs) to END VIOLENCE against WOMEN and GIRLS. From: Expert Group Meeting Organized by the Division on the Advancement of Women (part of UN Women) on National Action Plans, Trinidad and Tobago. Pg. 4.

policy can be legitimately questioned. Although each sector has some focus on empowering women, the general model for equality aims for employment, legal rights and political power, which is still working itself out in many European countries, where women struggle with discriminatory legal systems, lower wages, and balancing of family and work life. Although any closing of the status gap between men and women in Europe, “at least in certain important areas of social life [...] has been the direct outcome of women’s legal victories,”⁶⁰¹ even if a large part of the strategy involves enforcing gender equality through legal means (national laws), the potential ineffectiveness of this strategy lies in the Afghan government’s inability to gain legitimacy in rural areas, as well as the fact that tribal courts handle large volumes of legal cases (7.5.1). Establishment of legal norms has only a limited effect in elimination of harmful practices. Reports to CEDAW Committee as well as observations and recommendations of the CEDAW Committee for different countries have shown that laws are not enough. This was previously pointed out in the text, using the example of Austria, regarding a law on human trafficking (7.5.1). Another serious example are the ineffective laws of Bangladesh, where the CEDAW Committee stated that “while commending the State party for the range of efforts to address violence against women, including the enactment of Domestic Violence Act, Prevention of Cruelty to Women and Children Act, Acid Crime Control Act, Child Marriage Restraint Act and Dowry Prohibition Act, the Committee remains concerned that the prevalence of violence against women and girls, including domestic violence, rape, acid throwing, dowry-related violence, fatwa-instigated violence, and sexual harassment in the workplace persist in the country.”⁶⁰² The situation of implementing legal frameworks in Afghanistan is similar, as was discussed in the case of child marriages that continue to occur at high rates, despite legal prohibition thereof (7.5.1). In addition, ANDS’ push for microcredit and agricultural modernization runs the risk of being useless or in some cases harmful, if women are unable to control income, are exposed to

⁶⁰¹ Moghissi, Haideh. (1999). *Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism: The Limits of Post-Modern Analysis*. Pg. 96.

⁶⁰² United Nations Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women Committee 48th Session. (17 January – 4 February 2011). *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Bangladesh*. [Access: 27 February 2011] <http://www2.ohchr.org/tbru/cedaw/CEDAW-C-BGD-CO-7.pdf>

unfair credit practices, or if their agricultural roles diminish as a result of modern technology, especially if development agencies focus technology transfer and training on men, as has been shown to be standard practice in some Afghan agricultural projects.

Finally, as was seen in the discussion of PRSP measurement of well-being (6.3.1), ANDS comes up short when faced with the opportunity to analyze gender inequality from a cultural perspective. By showing that many working women in Afghanistan (and around the world) do not have control over their income, it defeats ANDS' and World Bank's central idea that employment for women equals liberation. PRSPs in their nature are neither designed to nor are meant to address the issue of cultural or traditional roadblocks to gender equality. In the end, accomplishing the highly ambitious goals may simply be impossible at this time or in the near future, because of the lack of country ownership, not only in the sense of ownership of ANDS, as in participation, by the Afghan people, but also, because the Afghan government is either too weak or too corrupt to carry out its implementation. Only time will eventually show ANDS' effectiveness, but based on the information uncovered in this research, there is an evident mismatch between the desperate condition of Afghan women and the efforts taken to involve Afghan women in giving input or suggesting solutions. Additionally, in comparison to the destituteness Afghan women face, the policy efforts in ANDS seem either weak in intensity, indirect or misplaced. As the NRVA 2005 pointed out, women in Afghanistan face enormous challenges resulting from a multitude of unfavorable circumstances. In addition to persistence of these unfavorable circumstances, Afghan women seem to be preparing to refight some already hard-won battles, like the availability of independent safe havens for women victims of violence, resulting from the government's concessions to the Taliban and other radical groups – concessions resulting from government's inability to contain the radical groups largely due to the government's inability to gain legitimacy (and hence authority) in rural parts of Afghanistan. This lack of legitimacy stems from the Afghan public's perception and international community and agencies' declaration that the Afghan government is corrupt. In such case, the potential for ANDS to be an effective policy is hindered from the start by a government not committed to the hard work, transparency and strategic vision (3.2) that is necessary to rebuild Afghanistan.

APPENDIX

1. Millennium Development Goals

The United Nations Millennium Declaration Millennium was adopted in 2000 by all member states. By signing the declaration, the member states “committed their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty and setting out a series of time-bound targets.” The deadline to meet the targets was established for 2015 and the target became known as the Millennium Development Goals⁶⁰³ (MDGs).

1.1 The 8 Millennium Development Goals⁶⁰⁴

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day.

Target 2: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

Target 3: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015.

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

Target 5: Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate.

Goal 5: Improve maternal health

Target 6: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio.

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Target 7: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.

⁶⁰³ United Nations. Millennium Development Goals – We Can End Poverty 2015. [Access: 26 October 2010] <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml>

⁶⁰⁴ Millennium Development Goals as presented in: Annan, Kofi. (21 March 2005). A/59/2005. In *Larger Freedom: Toward Development, Security and Human Rights for All*. Pg. 8-10.

Target 8: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources.

Target 10: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

Target 11: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers.

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

Target 12: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system.

Target 13: Address the special needs of the least developed countries (includes tariff- and quota-free access for least developed countries exports; enhanced program of debt relief for heavily indebted countries and cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction).

Target 14: Address the special needs of landlocked countries and small island developing States.

Target 15: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term.

Target 16: In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth.

Target 17: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries.

Target 18: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication.

Note: For a more detailed list of MDGs, see <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

1.2 In Larger Freedom by Kofi Annan

In 2005, the Secretary General Kofi Annan, as a follow-up to the outcomes of the 2005 Millennium Summit, submitted a report to the General Assembly detailing, although generally the progress of the

Millennium Development Project. In his report, titled *In Larger Freedom: Toward Development, Security and Human Rights for All*, Annan wrote that, in the next 10 years, the member states can halve the global poverty and stop the spread of major known diseases, in addition to reducing the prevalence of violent conflict and terrorism. He went on to say, “All conditions are in place for us to do so. In an era of global interdependence, the glue of common interest, if properly perceived, should bind all States together in this cause, as should the impulses of our common humanity.”⁶⁰⁵ He goes on to concede that, since the adaptation of the Millennium Declaration, much has happened in the world that may stand in the way of achieving the goals. “Small networks of non-State actors – terrorists – have, since the horrendous attacks of 11 September 2001, made the most powerful States feel vulnerable. At the same time, many States have begun to feel that the sheer imbalance of power in the world is a source of instability...Meanwhile, over 40 countries have been scarred by violent conflict [and] the number of internally displaced stands at roughly 25 million...the global refugee population is 11 to 12 million.”⁶⁰⁶ The letter eventually addresses how countries should implement the MDGs by stating that “each developing country has primary responsibility for its own development [and] developed countries [should] undertake that developing countries which adopt transparent, credible and properly costed development strategies will receive the full support they need, in the form of increased development assistance, a more development-oriented trade system and wider and deeper debt relief.”⁶⁰⁷ The developing countries are addressed as having the responsibility to strengthen governance, combat corruption and put in place policies and investments to drive private-sector-led growth and maximize domestic resources available to fund national development strategies. In order to accomplish the MDGs, Annan states that countries have to adopt them in their national strategies: “[...] each developing country with extreme poverty should by 2006 adopt and begin to implement a national development strategy bold enough to meet the Millennium Development Goals targets for 2015.”⁶⁰⁸ In their national development strategies the governments are told to focus specific

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid. Pg. 3.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid. Pg. 4.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid. Pg. 12.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid.

priorities including the following: gender equality (overcoming pervasive gender bias), the environment (investing in better resource management), rural development (increasing food output and incomes), urban development (promoting jobs, upgrading slums and developing alternatives to new slum formation), health systems (ensuring universal access to essential services), education (ensuring universal primary, expanded secondary and higher education), and science, technology and innovation (building national capacities). In final references to national strategies, Annan states that “starting in 2005, developing countries that put forward sound, transparent and accountable national strategies and require increased development assistance should receive a sufficient increase in aid, or sufficient quality and arriving with sufficient speed to enable them to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.”⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid. Pg. 17.

2. Afghanistan Compact

The Afghanistan Compact resulted from the London Conference of 2006 that took place from 31 January until 1 February. The conference included a series of consultations between Afghanistan and the United Nations and the international community in order to develop a framework of coordinating cooperation between Afghanistan and the international community. It is a political commitment by all the parties involved.⁶¹⁰

2.1 Benchmarks and timelines

Security Benchmarks include:

- International security forces
- Afghan national army
- Afghan national and border police
- Disbandment of illegal armed groups
- Counter-narcotics
- Mine action and ammunition

Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights Benchmarks include:

- Public administrative reform
- Anti-corruption
- Census and statistics
- National assembly
- Elections
- Gender
- Rule of law
- Land registration
- Counter-narcotics
- Human rights

Economic and Social Development Benchmarks include:

- Infrastructure and natural resources
 - Roads
 - Air transport
 - Energy
 - Mining and natural resources

⁶¹⁰ Afghanistan Compact. (2006).

- Water resource management
- Urban development
- Environment
- Education
 - Primary and secondary education
 - Higher education
 - Skills development
 - Afghan cultural heritage
- Health
 - Health and nutrition
- Agriculture and rural development
 - Agriculture and livestock
 - Comprehensive rural development
 - Counter-narcotics
- Social protection
 - Poverty reduction
 - Humanitarian and disaster response
 - Disabled
 - Employment of youth and demobilized soldiers
 - Refugees and IDPs
 - Vulnerable women
 - Counter-narcotic
- Economic governance and private sector development
- Financial management
- Domestic revenues
- Private sector development and trade
- Financial services and markets
- Regional cooperation

Note: For detailed information on specific benchmark policies, please view the Afghanistan Compact on http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/Afghanistan_compact.pdf

2.2 Participants at the London Conference on Afghanistan

Participating Countries

- Afghanistan (co-Chair)
- Australia
- Austria
- Bahrain

Belgium
Brazil
Brunei
Bulgaria
Canada
China
Czech Republic
Denmark
Egypt
Finland
France
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Iceland
India
Iran
Italy
Japan
Jordan
Kazakhstan
Korea (Republic of)
Kuwait
Kyrgyzstan
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malaysia
Netherlands
New Zealand
Norway
Pakistan
Poland
Portugal
Qatar
Romania
Russia
Saudi Arabia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
Tajikistan

Turkey
Turkmenistan
United Arab Emirates
United Kingdom (co-Chair)
United States of America
Uzbekistan

Participating Organizations

Aga Khan Foundation
Asian Development Bank
European Commission
European Union
Islamic Development Bank
International Monetary Fund
North Atlantic Treaty
Organization
Organization of Islamic Conference
Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
United Nations (co-Chair)
World Bank

Observers

Argentina
Chile
Croatia
Cyprus
Estonia
Ireland
Latvia
Macedonia (FYR)
Malta
Oman
Singapore
Slovakia
Slovenia

3. Indicators of dimensions of poverty related to gender and their measurement		
Dimension of poverty	Indicators	Measurement
Opportunity	Time budgets and time poverty	Household surveys, focus groups, direct observation
	Employment and labor force participation	Household and labor market surveys
	Capital and assets	Household surveys, records of credit, finance institutions
Capabilities	Demographic indicators: infant mortality and life expectancy	Household and health surveys, clinic records, anthropometric studies, national and sectoral statistical records
	Education	Household surveys and school records
	Health and nutrition	Household surveys, clinic records, participant observations, focus groups
	Qualitative indicators: culture, freedom and autonomy	Focus groups, participant observation, national quality of life surveys
Security	Economic vulnerability	Household surveys, focus groups, participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques such as timelines and periods of stress, diaries
	Exposure to violence	Focus groups, participant observation, case studies
	Social capital	Household surveys and inter-household transfer studies
Empowerment	Political empowerment	Voting records, key informants, participant observation
	Control over household resources	Household surveys, case studies, participant observation, key informants, focus groups

Source: Bamberger, Michael et al. Chapter 10: Gender. Pg. 347.

4. Summary of ANDS⁶¹¹

SECURITY

Policy framework

To win the battle with Taliban, the government must focus on improving the well-being of the population, in order to have its legitimacy as a central authority recognized. The government must focus on providing agricultural alternatives to poppy cultivation effort, disarm illegal armed groups by enforcing newly enacted weapons laws and fight government and police corruption. Remnants of war, mines and various explosives must be cleared throughout the country and Afghanistan's national army and police force developed in accordance with Afghanistan Compact benchmarks.

Gender equality - cross-cutting issues

Improving employment opportunities for women in the security sector as well as ensuring decision making power for women will improve gender equality. Protecting women from violence and harassment in the workplace is also a goal of the sector.

Policy actions or activities relevant to gender equality

No specific programs are listed

GOVERNANCE, RULE OF LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Policy framework

The issues of corruption, capacity building and respect for the human rights of girls and women are to be addressed in this sector. To improve women's access to political decision making, affirmative action is used to enact a mandated number of seats in government bodies and agencies. The national assembly is bicameral with the first having 249 member and the second 102. The first assembly must compose 27% elected women and the second 17%; however, the second cameral are a group of women appointed experts, not elected officials.⁶¹² The first assembly is referred to as the Wolesi Jirga (House of People) and the second as Meshrano Jirga (House of Elders). The seats on the national assembly are reserved for women under the Constitution.⁶¹³ The sector focuses also on policies to create efficient private sector regulations to stimulate activity and economic growth. Finally, the judicial system is to become centralized, but based on the restorative nature

⁶¹¹ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction.

⁶¹² National Assembly of Afghanistan. The Tradition of Assembly Life in Afghanistan. [Access: 9 June 2010] <http://www.nationalassembly.af/index.php?id=4>

⁶¹³ Office of the President. The National Assembly.

derived from the traditional systems operating in rural areas.
Gender equality - cross-cutting issues
Implementing affirmative action in the government will mandate an allocation of a minimum amount of seats in government agencies on national and sub-national level for women, hence promoting decision making for women in the country.
Policy actions or activities relevant to gender equality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Introduce affirmative action for women •Launch leadership institute for women •Establish women's councils on sub-national levels •Make senior government officials aware of gender issues •Realize, protect, promote and extend human rights •Improve the public's awareness of women's legal rights •Enact sexual harassment laws and enforcement mechanisms •Improve detention facilities for female offenders •Enable universities to take on female students and staff •Develop special programs for legal education with focus on women's involvement •Strengthen institutions to stop violence against women •Create family response units linked with special victims units, staffed by all female police officers •Create legislation to provide for specific protection of witnesses or victims, especially women

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PRIVATE SECTOR

Policy framework
The country is committed to becoming a member of the WTO and signing numerous bilateral and multilateral treaties to stimulate trade in addition to divesting government assets for privatization and providing a legal environment that enables private sector growth by lowering the cost of doing business.
Gender equality - cross-cutting issues
The main goal of private sector development is to generate opportunities for jobs and education.
Policy actions or activities relevant to gender equality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Increase the offer of financial services in rural areas with special concern for women •Provide vocational and technical education •Create private sector employment strategy for women, promoting pro-women employment practices

ENERGY

Policy framework
Current donor and government funds will be used to build hydro-power infrastructure, which will further improve agriculture and water management. The sector is to be opened for private investment as government and donor funds will not suffice to realize the full capacity of the sector. The priority projects are: infrastructure building, legal reform, improvement of environment for private investment, expansion of public access to power grid, micro energy off-grid power sector (hydro, solar, waste) for access in rural areas.
Gender equality - cross-cutting issues
By improving access to energy, especially micro-installations, traditional household work can be eased through efficient stoves or quicker access to water.
Policy actions or activities relevant to gender equality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Mainstream gender into all policies created for the sector •Make the public aware of opportunities available to them in the sector •Focus on equal distribution of energy sources for both men and women

WATER AND IRRIGATION

Policy framework
The government will be the central standard setting body regarding development and management of water resources at the national level. The government will attract investment in the sector in order to achieve a fully integrated sector that deals with all water related fields such as urban and rural water supply, irrigation and drainage, hydro power, sanitation, flood protection and environmental concerns.
Gender equality - cross-cutting issues
Women in Afghanistan are responsible for bringing drinking water for the household. Improving water delivery systems would save women time and improve safety, as collecting water may require long distances of travel. Clean drinking water will further ease women's roles by decreasing water born diseases and child mortality.
Policy actions or activities relevant to gender equality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Improve existing water supply in all villages and cities •Provide access to drinking water and sanitation in rural areas •Find and resolve any gender inequalities in existing legislation related to water works

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Policy framework
One of the most important goals is to stop poppy cultivation and assist farmers with development of legal crops. There are smaller programs implemented for poor within the farming community as well as programs that will jump start the commercialization of agriculture in Afghanistan and prepare the sector for export. In order to increase private investment, to stimulate commercial farming, the government will release publicly owned land and open it for bidding, as it plans to do with mineral resources, although it does not specify if other countries' citizens are allowed to make land investments in Afghanistan or if the land is nationalized. Therefore a mix of public support and private investment is planned to implement development in the sector. An important aspect of improving agriculture is strengthening of local governing mechanisms, meaning that legal roles of village councils as well as community development councils will be defined, although local power will be derived from central government.
Gender equality - cross-cutting issues
Development in the agricultural sector will allow women to gain new skills and capacities, and encourage income producing activities to increase the overall levels of household income. As projects are designed on a local level, women's participation and community representation can be monitored and is built into the projects.
Policy actions or activities relevant to gender equality
•Focus on gender in agricultural planning and implementation •Encourage local communities to focus on gender issues in agricultural undertakings •Train for self-employment and entrepreneurship based on micro-credit schemes

TRANSPORT

Policy framework
The policy framework will focus to a large extent on improving rural roads as access to transportation will allow access to markets and provide rural households with more opportunities. The work in the sector will focus on determining the practicability of building a national and foreign connecting railway system, building another airport in Kabul as well as opening the air transportation sector to private investment and competition.
Gender equality - cross-cutting issues
The focus in the sector will be on female participation in the government transport agencies by creation of training opportunities for women.

Policy actions or activities relevant to gender equality
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| •Provide subsidies to bus operators to provide equal access for all to transportation |
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INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Policy framework

<p>Policies in the sector aim to increase internet and mobile telephone access to remote areas and to cover most of the highly populated areas. Additionally, efforts are made to attract private investment in the communications field. Government services are also connected to the internet and websites such as e-government, e-health and e-commerce will be available to the population. There is an expectation that the communications sector will bring USD 100 million revenue through taxation for the government by 2010. Furthermore, legal frameworks will continue to be developed to keep up with issues related to communications such as service provision, consumer protection and rights, data privacy, domain registrations and e-transactions among others. There is also hope that communications technology will be available in educational institutions including primary and secondary schools.</p>
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Gender equality - cross-cutting issues
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<p>Women face restrictions on travel due to security concerns and are not able to communicate with other parts of the province, region, and country or internationally; therefore, a communication network will assist with greater connectivity for women. Access to communication media will enable women to work from home and conduct transactions from home without offending cultural sensitivities.</p>
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Policy actions or activities relevant to gender equality
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No specific programs are listed

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Policy framework

<p>City planning along with land distribution, registration, and property taxation is a priority. There is also an attempt to develop an urban center on the land north of Kabul city called the Dehzabz. This project will involve government for planning only and will be sponsored mainly by private investment. As most of the Dehzabz belongs to the country, the sale of the land for private investment will generate revenue for development of the new city as well as infrastructure development in Kabul. The housing construction will also focus on private investment and generating flexible loans for housing purchase, but will also provide subsidies for poor families.</p>

Gender equality - cross-cutting issues
Residents of urban areas will benefit from improved living conditions as well as from new schools that will be built as part of the urbanization scheme. This could improve the levels of women's education. Women are expected to receive access to finance to purchase homes.
Policy actions or activities relevant to gender equality
•Provide housing subsidies for poor households •Grant land tenure to current residents in informal settlement areas •Establish gender mainstreaming in all policies and reforms

MINING

Policy framework
The goal is to transform the sector so that it can operate privately. Contracts will be distributed on a bidding basis. Currently the Ministry of Mines is responsible for production of minerals, but it will transfer that role to private firms and will take over as a policy maker and oversight institution instead. Although it appears that, based on sub-national consultations, the local communities feel they lack knowledge of opportunities available to them in the mining sector, they also reflect “a lack of market-based thinking and considerable expectation for the Government to provide sector support.” The ANDS goes further to state that “investments in the mining sector are primarily commercial decisions that should be taken by the private sector.” ⁶¹⁴
Gender equality - cross-cutting issues
As there have been no women involved in mining, there is an attempt to start a “Women in Mining” initiative to generate employment for women in the sector.
Policy actions or activities relevant to gender equality
•Mainstream gender into all policies

⁶¹⁴ Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). (2008-2013). A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction. Pg. 107.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Policy framework
<p>The overall policy is to develop a strategy to centrally regulate healthcare provision in the country. There is an effort to integrate primary health care, hospital, disease control, nutrition and reproductive health under one directorate, and to create and sustain the universal health package provision called the Basic Package of Health Services. The plan is to organize national and international health organization to provide efficient service and reduce overlapping as well as decentralizing health management at a local level. The sector will also address issues like drug addiction, smoking and mental health. Policies will focus on integration of public, donor and private sector in medicine as well as providing a legal and regulatory framework guiding the provision of health. Eventually there will be consideration of the role of private sector in the healthcare field as it may be more efficient. There is also an attempt to enable private investment in the field, but that is mainly discussed in terms of pharmaceutical companies.</p>
Gender equality - cross-cutting issues
<p>Reproductive services will be granted a special focus to assist with all levels and aspects of pregnancy, birth and post care. The Basic Package of Health is focusing on women's needs, there is intense focus on providing all health facilities with female staff and increase the overall number of women in the field throughout the country and raising awareness of gender related health issues as well as of the importance and of women's decision making roles in relation to health practices.</p>
Policy actions or activities relevant to gender equality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Establish confidential HIV testing centers •Establish awareness campaign about drug use and create drug rehabilitation centers •Develop an integrated maternal and child health care system •Create programs that cater specifically to gender related health issues, especially health of females and mothers

EDUCATION

Policy framework
The policy focuses on equal access, quality and relevance of education in society. Equal access means gender equality on all levels of education as well as urban and rural areas. The quality improvements focus on training teachers to possess thorough knowledge of teaching subjects as well as receive effective teaching methods. The relevance simply refers to education as contributing to success in the work place. The policy framework will also focus on standard setting and monitoring of progress as well as determining best ways to finance education.
Gender equality - cross-cutting issues
There is a strong push to place girls in school and women to work as educators. The goals are specific to allow for females to compose at least 35% of the teaching staff and girl's enrollment does not lag severely behind that of boys. As the ANDS connects education directly to future employment opportunities, as was seen in energy and transportation sectors, women will have easier access to high skilled jobs.
Policy actions or activities relevant to gender equality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Increase the number of teachers in primary and secondary education and re-employ former teachers •Build a national program for literacy and non-formal education •Establish and strengthen teacher training universities •Adopt programs that provide incentives for females who left school to resume their education •Advocate for girl enrollment in schools •Create college preparation classes for females •Construct pro-women facilities at secondary schools such as dormitories •Separate all statistics by gender •Provide policies to stimulate gender balance in university staff, mainly professors •Target vulnerable groups and women for vocational training •Build job placement centers in all provinces •Adopt a strategy to increase women's participation in sports

CULTURE, YOUTH AND MEDIA

Policy framework
The policies will focus on establishing cultural artifact databases, museums, promotion of live culture including dance and music. The development of the media sector will be based on private investment, which is seen as providing a sufficient framework for independence. The involvement of youth in the sector will focus on providing government programs as well as informal education dealing with issues such as leadership, conflict and conflict resolution and involving youth in voluntary efforts related to the country's development.
Gender equality - cross-cutting issues

“Gender will be a core issue covered in all state media.” ⁶¹⁵
Policy actions or activities relevant to gender equality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Promote music, cinema and arts •Use media as platform for discourse on gender equality •Engage youth in the political and development process •Establish a youth volunteer corps in the field of gender equality •Promote knowledge of gender equality issues among the youth

SOCIAL PROTECTION

Policy framework
<p>The framework will focus on improving the lives of children, finding employment for women running female headed households, disaster preparedness, assistance to disabled and their integration into society as well as employing women and disabled into government administration (20 and 3% respectively). Programs for social protections are to be sustained from government revenue resulting from private sector growth. The availability of some programs will depend on government revenue and will come with conditions such as enrollment of children in school and health check-up visits. From the private sector approach, the population will receive assistance in the form of microcredit provisions. Additionally, pensions will be partially funded by individual employees in addition to government contributions. This sector will focus greatly on coordination of effort with non-governmental organizations.</p>
Gender equality - cross-cutting issues
<p>The programs will focus on providing assistance to “chronically poor female households,” as well as women suffering from violence. Regulation will focus on establishing women’s rights to inherit and assist women in gaining legal advice and improving their access to justice. Women’s rights to inherit will provide them with assets or collateral needed to receive financing such as microcredit.</p>
Policy actions or activities relevant to gender equality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Approve a new law providing privileges for disabled •Regulate labor protection •Enable comprehensive programs to assist female headed households •Develop standards and regulations for establishing day care centers in orphanages •Develop children’s day care centers throughout the country •Develop policies to deal with children breaking the law and children living with mothers in detention facilities •Distribute food parcels in winter time •Conclude agreements with neighboring countries for protection of Afghan migrant workers •Provide vocational training for widows, poor and disabled women •Develop programs for women’s capacity building and encouragement of economic activities

⁶¹⁵ Ibid. Pg. 138.

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