Chapter 2: Policy texts: structured representations

We talk
as if
Women
are newcomers
to the planet,
as if Women
are new-arrivals
hanging in the wings….

From 'Integration of Women', by Grace Mera Molisa (1987: 14-15)

Policy operates as a technology of knowledge within LDC development discourse by reducing analysis to a set format that locates agency and rests upon essentialist representations of women. This chapter identifies three ways that policy functions and operates as a technology of knowledge in LDC discourse: firstly through the structuring of analysis in a set and defined structure; secondly through the recommendations and who is asked to do what; and thirdly through the use of reductionist, essentialist representations.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the term policy, and the way in which I have used the term in this analysis of LDC policy tests. Policy is located as an instrument in the production and reproduction of discourses with an inbuilt relationship with culture and power. The chapter then outlines the processes involved in the production of UN policy texts focused in this chapter, before commencing a comparison between the three major policy documents that have been produced about the LDCs, the three international ten-year programs of action adopted by the United Nations, which together cover the period 1971-2011. These documents are the Substantial New Programme of Action of the 1980s; the Paris Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s; and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries adopted in Brussels in 2001. Each of these UN policy documents were the product of a major UN conference, and endorsed at a session of the UN General Assembly (UNGASS) by all UN member countries. The chapter commences the discussion of these three texts with a discussion of the politics of representation of women from the third world, which can be found in these three texts as they represent or conceal LDC woman. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the ways in which each of the three texts is dependent on gendered assumptions of the social, economic context of development, in essence one which is 'culture-free'. This is visible through the constant reliance on a representation of passive, authentic essentialist LDC woman, who may have potential but is only able to exercise limited agency.

I argue throughout this chapter that gender analysis plays a critical role in identifying and examining the discursive boundaries of LDC discourse and the operation of policy as a technology of knowledge. In exploring the operation of policy as a technology of knowledge within LDC development discourse, gender analysis reveals and highlights the essentialist and universalizing assumptions within the representation of women. This is visible as discursive continuities within all three LDC policy texts. A key way that this representation functions as part of the technology of knowledge is through what I term a repeated in/visibility, of presences through both explicit reference and textual absence. A second way that it functions is through the continued separation of the social and economic spheres, a characteristic apparent in UNCDP administration of LDC category and data which will be discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. The third way policy operates as a technology of knowledge identifiable through gender analysis is via the linkage or not of LDC situation and status analysis within the policy texts with recommendations for action.

Policy

Policy as a term is used to refer to many different texts and actions. For example, within the boundaries of democratic state functioning and operation, policy platforms are taken to electorates by political parties, which are then translated into public policy positions and initiatives. Policy as a term is also used to refer to the positions of non-state organisations and institutions as statements of values and principles that are implemented through various programs or activities. Policy can also be used to refer to the actions of an individual working within the constraints of an institution or organisation, "I'm sorry I can't do that, it's against our policy". Bridgman and Davis define public policy by its characteristics, as intentionally designed to achieve a particular purpose; it involves decisions and consequences; is structured; is political and dynamic (Bridgman and Davis 2000: 3). Policy then, as a term, can be understood as functioning at the individual, institutional, private or public sector and political levels. It can exist in a wide variety of formats, from legislation to a program, to the actions of a particular government department, organisation or individual. Policy can be viewed as the product of compromises between institutional and political perspectives and imperatives and independent analysis (Fisher and Forester 1993). Just as policy can take various forms and be used by various actors and organisations, policy development processes are varied. Within government there is a policy cycle, which involves research and analysis, decisions and the adoption of policy choices, implementation, review and evaluation, followed by new policy development (Bridgman and Davis 2000: 223-27). Within organisations policies are regularly reviewed, updated and endorsed. Key aspects of policy that are examined are the degree of participation in its formation, and implementation, both issues that are used to judge the effectiveness and impact of policy. Participation through consultation is a critical tenet of policy development processes in the analysis, recommendation and implementation stages. It raises the question of who is speaking and the voices that are heard.

Fisher and Forester (1993) argue that policy is the product of context, and cannot be separated from the institutional environment, and the politics thereof, that produced it. Policies exist within specific institutional, historical and cultural

contexts, and are not just products of particular perspectives or research findings, but are the products of the interactions between specific social and economic factors. Wuyts (1992a) argues that a feature of development policy is the construction of the policy space or sphere as one that requires particular technical inputs and expertise to manage, a factor which acts to separate the policy process and its identified problems and proposed recommendations from the intended beneficiaries.

> Policy prescriptions often convey the impression that such solutions are available, precisely because the prescriptions are often abstractions of the process of policy itself. (Wuyts 1992b: 284).

Shore and Wright's collection of essays (1997) draws on Foucault to explore the operation of policy within the exercise of contemporary governance and power. They argue that in assessing the roles and operations of policy in contemporary society, policy can be read as "language and power, policy as cultural agent, and policy as political technology- governmentality and subjectivity" (Shore and Wright 1997: 4). In calling for policy to become a new and stronger focus of anthropology, Shore and Wright argue that policies are a significant expression of socio-economic structure, organisation and culture, reflecting and creating relationships between individuals and institutions. Methods of reading policy include the mechanisms of classification, narratives that promote or criticize particular perspectives and discursive mechanisms that give expression to some voices and silence others. A key dynamic identified is the ways in which policies can be read as functioning as a political technology, a tool for states to transform individual perceptions and behaviours through the introduction of new ideologies. This dynamic of policy as political technology in this collection of essays is different to the technology of knowledge concept I am using in this thesis, as it is based primarily on a notion of the focus of policy being the micro aspects of the lives of populations, as in public housing tenancy policy, or care for elderly people in retirement homes. The UN LDC policy operates in a realm where policy recommendations are separated from implementation, and there is limited recognition of the lives of populations within nation states, let alone any efforts to intervene in them. Despite this difference, a policy characteristic identified and explored in these essays is that that the policy process itself becomes increasingly intricate and the domain of experts isolated and separated from the policy subjects.

This understanding fits with the contention in this chapter that these UN LDC policy texts operate as a technology of knowledge within LDC development discourse. In the creation of these policy texts, the policy development process and product are defined in structure and format in advance; the participation is defined in advance and occurs through specific processes; and the process becomes a technical one of refining language for negotiation and agreement. In essence, the policy process becomes the focus of the policy development process itself, and requires specialized knowledge to manage and engage with it. The resultant policy documents conform to a structure and format defined by the process and protocols that govern documents that are the outcomes of UN conferences. The ways policy operates as a technology of knowledge are through voice and representation, agency and structure: factors that interact to produce a policy text that is 'culture free'.

The exclusion of culture from the sphere of discursive relevance is a feature of LDC development discourse. This has been identified as a feature of development discourse more broadly, which has not only separated culture from the social and economic, but has not placed it on the same level of importance (Bhavnani, Foran and Kurian 2003: 4). While culture has been viewed as static, belonging to traditional societies, particular ethnicities or classes, contemporary understandings of culture or the cultural see it as the "practices and processes intrinsic to all social relations and structures" (Schech and Haggis 2000: 29). As such the cultural cannot be separated from the social and economic and spiritual aspects of the lives of individuals and communities, and the production and reproduction of discourses is an inherent reflection of complex cultural contexts. This understanding of culture positions it as dynamic and central to all relationships:

> [In other words], culture as lived experience insists on an agentic notion of human beings and is thus understood as a dynamic set of relationships through which inequalities are created and challenged, rather than as a singular property that resides within an individual, group or nation. (Bhavnani, Foran and Kurian 2003: 4)

In highlighting gendered dynamics within development discourses and practices I am recognising the importance of appreciating cultural dynamics, relationships and interpretations of development. The LDC development discourse is dependent on the modernisation approaches discursive separation of the cultural, viewed always as traditional and backward, from the modern, viewed as 'culture-free'. This discursive dependence on a separation of the cultural from the social and economic is visible through the following discussion as I read the three UN LDC policy texts through a gender lens assessing the representation of women in LDCs.

UN policy processes

The process that precedes the formation of a major UN policy text is defined well in advance. The policy text is generally the result of a major conference, which is attended by all member states, which by the conclusion of the conference have reached an agreement and negotiated a text that can be adopted by consensus. This text is then presented to a session of the UN General Assembly (UNGASS) for final adoption by all UN member states, again by consensus. The conference is convened by a nominated UN agency, which undertakes all preparatory work and secretariat functions for the conference organisation. All other UN agencies are expected to participate, contribute ideas, and attend both the conference and provide support during advance preparations. In advance of the major conference, there are a series of formal and informal meetings on various nominated topics with various attendance restrictions. For example there may be a UN interagency meeting on a particular theme or topic relevant to the conference topic, to which attendance is limited to UN agency representatives. What is common to all major conferences is the series of three formal meetings which debate issues relevant to the conference topic and develop draft text for the policy document. These 'Preparatory Committee Meetings' are referred to as 'PrepComs,' and are frequently held at UN headquarters in New York. These meetings are attended by delegations of officials from each member country. Civil society participation in these processes is defined in advance. A member country can include civil society representatives on its delegation, providing those particular NGO representatives with the opportunity to influence the issues raised and voting actions of that particular country. NGOs can also apply to be registered to the conference itself,

and to attend the PrepComs, which provides them with observer status to particular sessions of the meeting. Outside of official delegation membership, NGOs as civil society representatives can work together to raise issues, and develop and distribute policy platform statements on particular issues. NGOs can also lobby official government delegations for the inclusion or exclusion of particular phrases, issues or language in the policy text negotiation and drafting process. The nature of these policy development processes is exclusive. Financial and material resources are required to attend; knowledge and experience of UN processes is required to influence; and written and spoken literacy in one of the UN languages is an absolute must. These are opportunities for the educated elite with access to resources to exercise influence.

The structure of the policy texts is defined in advance, and negotiated as part of the PrepCom and conference meetings. They do have common core elements, and they are all long. These two main common elements are the inclusion of analytic discussion, which outlines issues associated with the topic, and the inclusion of recommendations for action, or an action plan, which identifies particular steps that should be taken by particular identified actors. These UN policy texts can include a declaration at the front, which highlights key issues and the findings of the main text, but this is not always the case. Therefore, it can be seen that within the United Nations, documents such as these ten-year programs of action are created and produced through specific series of meetings and processes where language is debated, negotiated and approved. This chapter uses the term policy in a specific way, to refer to these policy texts adopted by the United Nations General Assembly as the three decade-long international plans or programs of action on LDCs.

These three policy texts, the Substantial New Programme of Action of the 1980s (SNPA), the Paris Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s (POA 1991) and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries adopted in Brussels in 2001 (POA 2001) are all the products of the policy development processes outlined above. UNCTAD has been the convening agency for all three conferences. The production of the SNPA in 1981, the first of these decade long policy strategies, was the result of concern that despite the creation of the category LDC, little progress addressing the development challenges was being made. UNCTAD, as the convening agency, developed the proposal to hold an international conference and to develop this ten-year policy strategy. This proposal, a brief resolution, was adopted as the Comprehensive Platform of Action in 1978. It had two phases: the first 1978-1981 was termed the immediate programme of action, which was to mobilise international attention towards the situation of the LDCs and to prepare for the development of a longer-term ten-year plan of international action 1981-1991. That the immediate programme of action was to prepare a conference and a longer programme of action is an indication of how within LDC development discourse, policy processes become the focus, and are seen as an end in themselves. The POA 1991 and POA 2001 are the efforts to update the analysis and recommendations for LDCs established in the first and subsequent policy texts. In this chapter then, the term ‘policy’ refers to these specific texts, which are products of particular policy development processes.

Preliminary exercises in mathematics

This section identifies the ways in which women and gender perspectives have been included in LDC policy. There are a number of ways in which to approach this. One is simple matter of basic mathematics, to identify the number of times in which women or gendered perspectives have been incorporated into the major documents of LDC policy: the three ten year plans of action, from the SNPA of the 1980s, to the POA 1991 and then the current POA 2001.

In 1980 women and related issues were mentioned in six of the document's 128 paragraphs. In 1990, 18 of the document's 144 paragraphs mentioned women and related issues. In 2001, 42 of the document's 116 paragraphs mentioned women and related issues. This is a clear increase from 5% to 36% within these major policy documents[19].

The results of these simple calculations lead to further questions: does an increase in the number of mentions of women and related issues mean that a gradual sea change has occurred and that over the thirty years since the first plan was formulated, these issues have assumed a greater prominence? Does this mean that international policy that articulates as a fundamental aim the alleviation of poverty in the countries identified as LDCs is responding to the feminisation of poverty?

Gender analysis highlights these questions, and also highlights the discursive boundaries of the LDC policy structure and the way that it constructs and structures voice, agency and representation. In seeking to respond to these questions that have been identified, the process is to constantly ask: What was said? How was it said? When and where in the document was it said? When was it not said? What does this reveal about the construction of womanhood, gender and development within these debates, within these policy documents, within these programmes for action?

Authenticity and essential third world women

As outlined above, the participation in policy formation is highly structured, organized and is by virtue of the expense and nature of engagement available, limited to elites. The act of speaking for others and the politics of representation are the subject of significant debates among feminist and development theorists (Bulbeck 1998; Mohanty 1991, 1997; Minh-ha 1989; Narayan 1997; Pettman 1996, Rajan 1993; Wood 2001). Spivak's explorations of this issue have highlighted the violence of the processes of knowledge-making about others, as highlighted in the tale of Draupadi discussed in the Introduction. Recently, she has reflected on Western interest in hearing the voices of people from the 'third world' and the

[19] In the decades for UN development international strategies there are six brief mentions of women in total in these international development policy documents spanning four decades, and in none of these documents is there a single section clearly focused on articulating and addressing issues for women, or the role and contribution of women in and towards 'development'. Exploring the relationships between these UN decade for development documents, the UN LDC policy texts and the UN women's decades policy documents 1975, 1980, 1985 and 1995 would be an interesting exercise in mapping discourses, the production of knowledges and UN development institutional relationships. It is a direction of further research from the findings of this thesis, but is beyond the scope of this MA.

associated demand for a certain type of authenticity. The demand is for authentic voices, established through visible cultural difference, through dress and demeanor, and presentation of personal localised testimonies that may refer to present day development challenges, but not the history of European invasion and colonization:

> The current mood, in the radical fringe of humanistic Northern pedagogy, of uncritical enthusiasm for the Third World, makes a demand upon the inhabitant of that Third World to speak up as an authentic ethnic fully representative of his or her tradition. This demand in principle ignores an open secret: that an ethnicity untroubled by the vicissitudes of history and neatly accessible as an object of investigation is a confection to which the disciplinary pieties of the anthropologist, the intellectual curiosity of the early colonials and the European scholars partly inspired by them, as well as the indigenous elite nationalists, by way of the culture of imperialism, contributed to their labours, and the (proper) object (of investigation) is therefore 'lost'. (Spivak 1999:60-61)

Wood (2001) argues that this demand for authenticity is a key issue for postmodern and postcolonial influenced feminist theoreticians and researchers, who in the interest of challenging homogenous representations of women seek to listen and hear the diversity of women's voices, particularly those of women in developing countries. In tracing and locating 'development' and 'aid' in the contemporary continuation of the social, political, economic and cultural threads that produced imperialism and are reproducing globalisation, Spivak locates the voices from 'the South' that are heard in 'the North', both through the dynamics of the power to choose and request an "authentic" story, and the dynamics of the voice, identity and location of speaking. A key issue within this is the sense of language being co-opted, used in a different context and having its sense and meaning changed, diffusing challenges to authority.

The representation of women as homogenous, reliant on essentialist notions of a universal womanhood, has been challenged effectively in feminist literature from a variety of contexts for decades and it remains a critical issue in feminist and gender and development literatures. In reflecting on academic and other feminist approaches and analyses of literature, and relating this to forms of what she terms as 'unexamined universalist feminism' active within the United Nations, Spivak expressed grave concerns about the positioning and representation of women from the 'Third World':

> It seems particularly unfortunate when the emergent perspective of feminist criticism reproduces the axioms of imperialism. An isolationist admiration for the literature of the female subject in Europe and Anglo-America establishes the high feminist norm. It is supported and operated by an information-retrieval approach to "Third World" (the term is increasingly, and insultingly, "emergent") literature, which often employs a deliberately "non-theoretical" methodology with self-conscious rectitude. (Spivak 1999:114)

In this argument, Spivak highlights the politics of representation, of speech, of re-presenting women from category 'third world' that hide and conceal through the very process of 'making visible':

> Between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object-formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine

> nothingness, but into a violent shuttling that is the displaced figuration of the 'third world woman' caught between tradition and modernization, culturalism and development. (Spivak 1999:304)

Dynamics of representation: LDC woman

These complex dynamics of representing women from the third world and the demand for a pre-determined authenticity is clearly evident in the UN policy processes and documents under discussion here. This demand for authenticity is visible in the UN LDC policy language as a constructed 'real poor woman' or 'real poor person', a silent suffering victim not yet aided by the benefits of development. The voices of individuals are not heard within these policy texts, but the discursive constructions and assumptions are identifiable through the simplistic construction of their identity. 'The poor' are always the other, the history and violence of colonialism is hidden, and culture is static. Women are always victim, and rarely are identified or recognised as having agency within family, community or national settings. The following section of this chapter will draw out examples for this point in highlighting the reductionist representations of women in the gender analysis of the three UN LDC policy documents.

In examining the appearances of references to women within these UN LDC policy texts, it becomes clear that the discursive space and boundaries of policy structure the way in which women are represented. The lack of diverse voices, the reliance on essentialist and universalizing assumptions about women, the separation of the social and economic and variations in the location of agency are common to all the UN LDC policy texts.

The Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries

The document that was negotiated and adopted at the First United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Paris in 1981, was the SNPA. This document formed the second component of the Comprehensive Plan of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in 1978. As a ten year plan, this document sought to mobilise the international community of governments over a longer time period in the anticipation that sustained and focused activities would be able to make a significant difference in the status of the countries that were then within the LDC category.

The policy text is structured as a formal UN document endorsed by the UNGASS. There are three major chapters. The first, 'General situation and national measures,' seeks to provide an overview of critical issues of concern, and proposes agreed steps that should be adopted within LDCs. The second, 'International support measures,' provides an outline of work to be undertaken as part of the SNPA for the 1980s for the LDCs by the UN agencies and donor country governments. The third chapter, 'Arrangements for implementation, follow-up and review,' provides an outline of mechanisms within the UN committee and meeting systems by which progress can be monitored and assessed. The five gender-specific mentions of women are in the first chapter. The priority issues for international support, monitoring, assessment and review, do not include women.

The first chapter includes references to women within the general situation analysis, a characteristic of the socio-economic political landscape within LDCs that merits some attention at the national level alone. This chapter, in outlining the general situation in LDCs and agreed national level measures and actions, has ten titled sections. This is the list within this policy text of the critical issues that characterise or can distill the general situation, the context of LDCs. These issues are, in order of appearance in the document:

(a) Food and agriculture,
(b) Human resources and social development,
(c) Natural resources and energy,
(d) Manufacturing industry,
(e) Physical and institutional infrastructure,
(f) Environment,
(g) Transformational investments
(h) Land-locked and island least developed countries
(i) Foreign trade, and
(j) Disaster assistance.

The two issues discussed that include text referring to or related to women are the first two, food and agriculture and human resources and social development. The exclusion of any mention of women in the other eight sections of the document is stark, particularly the section on manufacturing industry, an area in which so much work on the emergence of light export-oriented industries within developing countries has documented the fact that the majority of the workforce were women, whether the industry was textiles, clothing and footwear, or electronics (Bulbeck 1998; Ong 1987; Pearson [1991] 2001; Pettman 1996; Standing [1999] 2001). The lack of an overt mention of women within section J, disaster assistance, is also particularly noteworthy as there is no mention of women, despite well documented evidence that within any natural disaster it is women and children who are usually affected the most severely[20] (Baden et al 1998: 6; Enarson 2000; Hyndman 1998; Minza 2005; Rees, Pittaway and Bartolomei 2005).

The section on food and agriculture is divided into five specific points for discussion, focused on specific aspects of food and agriculture as a general issue within least development countries that are of concern. The five sections are, in order of appearance, 'food strategies', 'food security', 'food production', 'forestry, fisheries and livestock', and 'rural development'. The sole point where there is a mention of women within this section is in the point on rural development:

> Within the framework of a transformation of rural life in its economic, social, cultural, institutional and human aspects, policies are needed which recognise the role of women in rural development and ensure their equitable accesses to productive resources, especially land and water resources, and to inputs, markets and services. (SNPA 1981: para 19)

The important role of women in developing countries in food and agriculture has been well documented by researchers (Boserup 1971; Ukeje 2006). By the time of

[20] There is an emerging literature about the gendered impacts of the December 2004 Tsunami. See Minza (2005) and Rees, Pittaway and Bartolomei (2005) for work documenting the gendered impacts of this tsunami in Aceh Indonesia and Sri Lanka respectively.

the first UN conference on the LDCs, the contributions of women as farmers to food and agricultural production was recognised within UN policy, such as the policy outcome document from the first United Nations Conference for Women (UNCW), held in Mexico in the first International Women's Year in 1975, and in the policy outcome document from the Mid-term Review Conference (MTRC) held in Copenhagen in 1980 (UNCW 1975; MTRC 1980). Given this, it is interesting to note that there is no mention of women in the policy text's discussion of food strategies, food security, food production, forestry, or fisheries and livestock.

The visibility/invisibility of women within this analytic section in the SNPA demonstrates one of the ways in which gender analysis highlights the operation of policy as a technology of knowledge. The reference to women is singular, implying homogeneity with a single set of experiences and issues affecting and of relevance to women. Read with the lens of gender analysis, the silences in the policy text become visible and surprising. The rationale for the exclusions is not known, but can be interpreted as the result of discursive assumptions about the relevance of gender to what is viewed as an economic domain: the expansion of production in the agriculture and other natural resources sectors. This separation of the economic and social is another way in which gender analysis highlights the operation of policy as a technology of knowledge. The discursive space of LDC policy is one where only certain information is deemed relevant for inclusion, and in this case gender is defined as outside the discursive borders of relevance. The definition of development within LDC policy discourse is highlighted through this gender analysis. As identified in the discussion in Chapter 1 the achievement of 'development' is predicated upon and requires nothing more than total transformation of local culture and social and economic life. It is a culture-free analysis, which is unable to recognise the socially constructed assumptions within the discourse. What is sadly and disappointingly ironic is that the text in this discussion that does include a reference to women, calls for policies to recognise women's roles in rural development, but is unable to do so itself. A third area where policy operates as a technology of knowledge is through the structure, where the text identifies who is required to take action to address a particular issue. In this case, while the LDC policy text has been unable to link gender and poverty alleviation in its analysis of agricultural issues in LDCs, it is the LDCs themselves which are identified as the sole actors required to implement these new initiatives. Agency is not located with international community, donors, the international financial institutions, UN agencies, but rests solely with LDC governments. I am not arguing that this is an issue for LDC governments to ignore because national policy is an important expression of national priorities and resourcing. Rather it is the limited number of actors requested to take action on this importance of policies to promote women's role in rural development that highlights the low discursive priority that has been placed on the issue within this LDC policy text.

The same dynamics are identifiable throughout the text. It is in the second section of the first chapter, 'Human Resources and Social Development', that the four other overt references to women appear within the SNPA. The first of these is within the section on 'Human Resources'. One of the three paragraphs in this section states:

> Women play an indispensable role in the development process. Appropriate measures must be taken to pursue the objective of

> strengthening women's equal participation both as agents and beneficiaries in all sectors and at all levels of development planning, monitoring and implementation. Sufficient attention must be paid to women's access to property. The least developed countries should, within the framework for their development plans and priorities, and as an important contribution to the achievements of their development goals, formulate policies and programmes aimed at enhancing the role of women in the development process. (SNPA 1981: para 23)

What is immediately visible is that agency 'should' be taken, and the responsibility for action is located at the national level, within the LDCs and not with donors, international agencies, or any other international actors within the development process. The language 'should' softens the policy text and requirement for action, away from an essential action to a 'maybe if you get around to it'. Similarly, the use of the word 'appropriate' for example, begs the question appropriate for whom? Is this 'appropriate' for women within communities in least developed countries, as in the catch cry of feminist environmental movement about technology, 'if it's not appropriate for women it's not appropriate!' (Pietila and Vickers 1990; Lechte 1994) or 'appropriate' as in a comfortable no-commitment limit for governments, government agencies, international development actors with multiple priorities and concerns.

The SNPA, as a negotiated document adopted by consensus by all UN member countries provides situation analysis and recommendations for action. These qualifiers around agency for this recommendation reveal that it is not a priority issue within the LDC discourse. The representation of women within this paragraph is as silent, busy, actors who require assistance to become more engaged with development to support the development project. In not recognizing the diverse current roles of women in social, economic and cultural life, this recommendation requires women in LDCs to become even busier even if it doesn't help or does harm. There is no acknowledgement of the diversity of women's experiences and roles within LDC societies, varying current and potential engagements with development and whether it has provided, or can provide social and economic improvements or will lead to social, economic and cultural harm. One way in which policy functions as a technology of knowledge within LDC discourse is by becoming the focus of the policy itself. In both this instance, and in the previous section discussion on agriculture, the stated action required was the creation of policy. Policy becomes the discursive focus, the priority and the action required, it is an action and end in itself.

The second reference to women in the Human Resources and Social Development section is in the sub-section titled 'Education and culture'. This section outlines a component within the SNPA of a programme of improving access to and participation in education in the LDCs. These three paragraphs in this section of the policy text outline the need for education programmes to address current inequalities of access to education, address the cultural relevance of education and ensure that cultural identities and values are promoted within education as 'an essential part of national development'. The reference to women is in the text about access to education:

> ...Due attention will be given to meeting the educational needs of women to enable them to develop their potential. (SNPA 1981: para 26)

The use of the words 'due attention' is interesting. The phrase is undefined and unqualified, inhabiting that space that allows for interpretation of the statement as both supporting a strong or weak focus on implementing this component of the SNPA. This policy language highlights the limited agency attached to actions involving improving the status of women. Gender analysis highlights the discursive boundaries that determine what is considered relevant for action by multiple actors, and those issues (related to women) which are included in the text but are not viewed as significant.

The next point in which women are overtly mentioned within the text is in the Health and Nutrition part of the Human Resources and Social Development section. This section has four paragraphs that outline LDC population health and nutrition status. This section has a strong focus on primary health care as the core of national-level health policies, strategies and plans of action, and states that "…primary health care should also include…maternal and child care, including family planning" (SNPA 1981: para 37) within its approach. The reference to women is almost in an aside, through inclusion of a mention to health services women require in social roles as reproducers and primary caregivers within families and communities. Again the actions and responsibility for addressing this is located within LDCs themselves, and not adopted or supported explicitly at any other point in the text.

The final explicit mention of women within the document is in the section on population policies within the Human Resources and Social Development section. This sub-section argues that:

> Population policies should be considered as an integral part of overall development policies. Within the framework of national demographic policies, countries will take appropriate measures for family planning and population control. Emphasis will be given to biomedical and social science research into safer, more efficient and more widely acceptable techniques of family planning. Attention will also be paid to motivational activities, population education, information and efficient delivery services. The voluntary nature of population control measures should be upheld and promoted. Possibilities for the full participation of both men and women in population programmes should be created or increased. (SNPA 1981: para 39)

There are many and varied aspects of population policies, particularly their history within development practice of control over women's bodies, including forced sterilizations (Correa 1994). It has been and remains a highly contested field of policy and activity. The difficulties associated with the practice of population policies are inferred in the SNPA text by the focus on research for safer and more widely acceptable techniques, and the need for attention to motivational activities. One of the aspects of the text of interest here again, is the tentativeness of the language: "…should be considered…" in the first sentence, matched with "…possibilities for the…" and "…should be…" in the fifth and last sentences.

Gender analysis of the SNPA highlights the reductionist LDC policy format and structure, which limits representation and agency on issues outside the discursive boundaries. While there are some references to women within the document, the silences and absences speak volumes about the limited essentialist and

universalizing assumptions of womanhood and women's roles within LDC societies. The social and economic spheres are separated within the policy discourse, and there is limited ability for the discursive space to recognise cultural construction and difference in praxis. The gender analysis highlights the limited range of issues and roles for women identified and recognised within LDC discourse as relevant. The understandings of gender roles in the SNPA are clearly located within the boundaries of the 'women in development' debate, discussed previously in Chapter 1. Women are identified as productive economic and social actors that are human resources for development, who need to be developed to their full potential so they can be full and economically active participants in the development process. The assumed universalism and homogeneity is evident in the way that the policy text assumes that all women within LDCs are identified as playing the same roles, requiring the same assistance, with no reference to difference. The method of policy as technology of knowledge within LDC discourse is visible in the ways that policy becomes the focus of the policy, and listed as the proposed action within the SNPA.

The Paris Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s

The second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Paris in 1991, re-examined the status of the LDCs. The operative methods and functions of policy as a technology of knowledge within LDC development discourse are visible within this document. Policy is the focus of policy, and continues to be promoted within the policy text. Gender analysis highlights the discursive boundaries of the reductionist policy format that structures what is considered relevant where, which can be seen in the repeated visibility/invisibility in the representations of women, in the separation of social and economic spheres, and in the location of agency.

In the introduction to the Conference Declaration and Programme of Action the Secretary General of UNCTAD K. K. S. Dadzie, who was the Convenor of the Conference, identified that the economic situation of the LDCs as a whole had worsened and social conditions had 'barely, if at all improved' during the period of the SNPA[21]. He identified the conference as an opportunity to 'revitalize the development of these countries' (POA 1991: para 1). The Conference Declaration documents the solemn commitment of national governments to implement the programme of action, and 'a unanimous determination to promote an ambitious development policy' (POA 1991: para 4). The introduction outlines the objectives behind the development of a second ten year policy strategy, namely to "arrest the further deterioration in their socio-economic situation, to reactivate and accelerate growth and development in these countries and, in the process, to set them on the path of sustained economic growth and development" (POA 1991: para 3). The Declaration provides further insight into the source of motivation for the preparation of this second Programme of Action:

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[21] The Conference Declaration itself obtusely acknowledges this with the statement in its third paragraph:

> We believe that the deterioration in the economic, social and ecological situation of most of the least developed countries during the 1980s is not irreversible. (POA 1991: para 3)

> Refusal to accept the marginalisation of the least developed countries is an ethical imperative. It also corresponds to the long-term interests of the international community. In an increasingly interdependent world, the maintenance or deepening of the gap between the rich and the poor nations contains serious seeds of tension. Our world will not enjoy lasting peace without respect for the United Nations Charter, international commitments and shared development. These are the objectives of our Programme of Action. (POA 1991: para 16)

While the fact that there had been deterioration in the social and economic indicators of LDCs during the period of the first UN LDC policy strategy is acknowledged, the discursive response is further policy.

The final endorsed policy text has a Conference Declaration, followed by the detail of the ten-year Programme of Action itself, which features analysis of LDC status and identified actions to address concerns. The Programme of Action outlines five priority areas 'in order to inspire national action': macro-economic policy; human resources; reverse environmental degradation; promote rural development; and develop a diversified productive sector. The Programme of Action itself begins with a contextual section, titled "Assessment of the socio-economic situation in the 1980s."

This section is followed by the Programme of Action itself, which is structured into six sections:

- Introduction
- Basic principles
- Global framework
- Mobilising and Developing Human Capacities in the Least Developed Countries
- Development, particularly expansion and modernisation of the economic base
- Arrangements for implementation, follow-up and monitoring and review.

In the following discussion I will move through the document tracing the points where women are identified or highlighted. Gender analysis of this text highlights aspects of how policy functions as a technology of knowledge through the structured representations of women.

There is a single reference to women in the declaration, within the text of paragraph nine, which outlines the five priority areas of action. It is in the text about the second priority area for action, human resources:

> To develop human resources, by making population, both men and women, the actors and beneficiaries of development, by respecting human rights and social justice, and by applying effective population, health, education, training and employment opportunities. (POA 1991: para 9)

Here women are identified as 'actors and beneficiaries of development', as equally entitled as men in LDCs to be participants within the development process and recipients of development benefits. These benefits are outlined in part in the second section of the sentence, and the ones listed first are in the social sphere, with population (read access to and use of contraception or family planning) is listed first of all. Another interesting aspect of this paragraph is the emphasis on the potential of women and men in LDCs, with the focus on the need to 'develop' human resources. The text does not acknowledge the current roles, activities,

relationships, contributions by women and men in LDCs within their communities, and it assumes that the development benefits will indeed benefit them. This forward-looking approach constructs both women and men in LDCs as potential vessels for future work, inadequate at present. This is not to argue that the 'development benefits' identified – improved contemporary socio-economic status in the areas of reproductive health, health and education are irrelevant – rather it is to highlight the discursive construction of women in LDCs, and in this instance men, as homogenous, as potential actors and passive recipients of assistance. Human resources are described within this introduction in ways that do not even acknowledge the current strength, efforts, roles and activity of individuals and communities in LDCs as useful or even noteworthy.

The assessment of the socio-economic situation in the 1980s is in three parts: national policies and measures; external environment; and a conclusion. There is only one overt reference to women within this assessment. It appears in the first section on national policies and measures, highlighted as the fourth of eight key issues. This section is titled 'The Role of Women' and the text reads:

> Despite the efforts undertaken by various national and international bodies, women continued to face the following obstacles which prevented them from being full agents and beneficiaries of development, such as: attitudes which tended to perpetuate the inferior status of women; the unequal access of women to education, training, employment, earning and to the means of production; the inadequate participation of women in decision-making; and inadequacies in government policies and structures with regard to the integration of women in development. (POA 1991: para 12)

This section provides an insight into the discursive construction of women in this LDC policy document as passive victims and potential actors, as outside, not involved or not integrated into the processes and actions of development, and as a neglected social, political and economic resource within the LDCs that could be harnessed.

The marginal status that this paragraph outlines and advocates against is mirrored by the text itself. This is the sole point in the policy document's assessment of the socio-economic situation in the 1980s that mentions women. This paragraph follows sections discussing Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), agriculture and human resources without any mention of women or gender. This textual silence on gender and women is all the more remarkable given the extensive literature on SAPs and the especially deleterious effect they have had on women (Ashfar and Dennis 1992; Bruin and Siwakoti 1994; Carby-Mutambirwa 1994; Cornia, Jolly and Stewart 1987; Hammond and McGowan 1992; Stewart 1995). This paragraph is followed by analysis on the environment, natural disasters, institutional and physical infrastructure, the enterprise sector, trade, resource flows and LDC debt problems and a conclusion to the overall assessment, which also makes no explicit mention of women. Aside from the inference of a 'do as I say not as I do' sentiment, this presence through absence promotes an understanding of the role of women in development as a marginal affair, a side issue, a separate activity, that is not part of the 'main game' and that the main 'actors and beneficiaries' of development are male. This demonstrates the repeated visibility/invisibility that characterises the representation of women within LDC

policy and highlights the function of policy as a technology of knowledge, defining what is relevant or not in particular spaces.

Within the Programme of Action itself, there are overt references to women in 16 of its 144 paragraphs[22]. The part of the Programme of Action titled 'Basic Principles' outlines four basic principles embodied within the document:

- Success depends on a shared responsibility and a strengthened partnership for the growth and development of LDCs;
- The LDCs have the primary responsibility for the formulation and effective implementation of appropriate policies and priorities for their growth and development;
- The strengthened partnership for development necessitates adequate external support from the LDCs' development partners; and
- Commitments undertaken should be measurable and sufficiently transparent to enable monitoring and assessment of the Programme of Action for the 1990s.

There are references to women in the descriptive text outlining both the second and third principles. Principle two identifies six areas, termed 'common policy axes' which should be adopted by each LDC. These six common policy axes refer on the whole to economic factors, the importance of structural adjustment and the increased expansion of economic production. The overt reference to women is in the text for the common policy axis that calls for the adoption of social policies that reduce poverty by creating employment and open avenues for broader participation in economic production. Women are identified as a vulnerable group to be a focus of these appropriate health, education and nutrition social programmes. The initiation of these 'appropriate social programmes' is identified as the sole responsibility of each LDC, not of development partners.

The descriptive text within principle three outlines a number of common axes of commitments that should be pursued by the international community. The difference in the language of these two principles is worthy of comment. The principle that calls for action by the LDCs sees the use of definite, clear and unambiguous language. The principle that calls for action by the international community is limited, circumscribed by the use of the undefined word "adequate" begging the question adequate for whom? Adequate in the face of domestic pressures to increase domestic spending, adequate in the face of domestic pressures that call for a reduction in overseas aid, or adequate in the face of the inequitable distribution of global economic wealth and resources? The mention of women occurs in the following paragraph:

> Specific initiatives as discussed later and including, but not restricted to, human resource development, land reform and rural development, rehabilitation and expansion of the productive base, more efficient

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[22] The first of these 16 references is the only overt mention of women in the Introduction:

> Men and women should participate equally in all development activities at all levels of the decision-making process. (POA 1991: para 3)

This reference conveys the role of women as equal participants, with an emphasis on decision-making. A difference in status between men and women, and the tensions of historic and contemporary experiences of gender-based discrimination is not mentioned at all.

> management of the public sector, greater scope for the private sector and advancement of women. (POA 1991: para 11(d))

This paragraph is one of the few moments in any of the four major policy documents on LDCs where the international community commits, however ambiguously, to include assistance for LDCs to address gender inequalities. The location of the mention of women as the last phrase, after a number of economic components, including the facilitation of greater scope for the private sector, provides further evidence for the location of an understanding of women/gender within development processes as marginal.

The operation of policy as a technology of knowledge is visible through this gender analysis of the LDC policy text. Issues are identified as relevant or not to particular topics, women are frequently excluded from the discursive space of relevance. This section of 'Basic Principles' highlights the homogenous, essential and universalizing representation of women that is a characteristic of the reductionist representations of policy operating as a technology of knowledge. The representation is of women in LDCs as all the same. The focus is on women as passive recipients or silent vulnerable potential vessels to support development activities. The agency of women is limited and constrained. The policy recommendation for action again places emphasis on the LDCs to exercise agency, and while for the first time the broader range of international actors are also requested to take action in the policy text, the agency is qualified, softened by ambiguity. The places within the policy text that include references to women are marginal, surrounded by long tracts of analysis and recommendations that are gender-blind.

The next two parts of the document continue to reveal this reductionist representation of women and limited location of agency, highlighting through gender analysis the operation of policy as a technology of knowledge in LDC development discourse. The Global Framework, the outline of the five main areas where energies should be focused to address the situation of the LDCs, tellingly does not incorporate a single overt reference to women. It outlines a macroeconomic policy framework; issues associated with financing growth and development through domestic and external resources; the external indebtedness of the LDCs; issues of diversification, access to markets within external trade and strengthening economic and technical cooperation between LDCs and other developing countries. This absence or invisibility of women within this section highlights the discursive separation of the social and economic within LDC policy.

The fourth part of the Programme of Action is titled 'Mobilising and developing human capacities in the Least Developed Countries'. This section of twenty paragraphs is where the majority of the overt references to women appear in the Programme of Action, incorporated in half of the paragraphs in this part of the document. The first reference in this part is in the first sentence of the first paragraph and echoes the text of the introduction to the Programme of Action itself:

> Men and women are the essential resource and beneficiaries of the development of the Least Developed Countries. (POA 1991: para 63)

The language is a little stronger, and what is interesting to note with the repetition of this phrase is that the essential resource and beneficiaries of development are not

a separated set of economic factors such as finance or debt, or identified ingredients to increased economic production, such as transport or communications, but people. The gender equality emphasis highlights women as resources to be harnessed for development, and women as worthy recipients of the gains of development.

The paragraph continues to identify two main areas of human resources policy for LDCs, the first of which is "The full involvement, integration and participation of all groups, especially women" (POA 1991, para 63). The focus of the second is the provision of education and social services. There are three issues arising from this to discuss. The first is the emphasis on involvement, integration and participation, as if the status quo comprises a number of idle passive uninvolved subjects. A second aspect is the introduction of an acknowledgement that there are a number of differences within communities in LDCs by the use of the phrase 'all groups'. The third aspect is the 'particularly women', as it locates women outside any other existing group within communities, and as particularly uninvolved in socio-economic life. This is followed by:

> The creation of an environment conducive to releasing the full energies and potential of all men and women to contribute to the improvement of the societies of the least developed countries is a prerequisite for widening and developing the productive base and hence attainment of sustained development. (POA 1991: para 63)

As with the previous overt reference to women, which focused on women as uninvolved subjects, the third reference in this paragraph makes explicit the unquestioned discursive assumption that the involvement of women is to assist in the achievement of national economic development aims. The less explicit undercurrent is the assumption that current work undertaken by women is not economically productive work, not valued and remains unacknowledged, locked into a space of the unknown and therefore unreal. Gender analysis reveals the limited analysis of socio-economic status and situation within LDCs. LDC policy discourse is unable to recognise existing production by women, both inside and outside the formal economy. It is unable to recognise the diversity of social, economic and cultural roles women have within families and communities in LDCs, and the contribution of these to social and economic stability and growth. The reductionism required by the policy structure reduces and simplifies the representation of women, and therefore the representation of LDC communities to flat homogenous discursive stereotypes.

This introductory paragraph to the fourth part of the document is spilt into two sections, the first of which is titled 'The Involvement of the Actors'. This begins with a discussion of the approach to development, and includes a statement on participation. Women are mentioned in the first sentence:

> Development should be human centered and broadly based, offering equal opportunities to all people, both women and men, to participate fully and freely, in economic, social, cultural and political activities. All countries should, therefore, broaden popular participation in the development process and ensure the full utilization of human resources and potential. (POA 1991: para 64)

In this paragraph the involvement of women as actors within development is premised upon the need for countries to maximise human resources for the success

of the development project. The next reference to women is a call for "fully integrating women into the development process" (POA 1991: para 65) within a broader call for participatory development involving a variety of parties, indigenous organisations, NGOs, the public and private sector, as well as women. Agency is again located with LDCs, qualified by the use of 'should'.

The discussion of the involvement of the actors covers a number of key areas – including improving institutional capacities; the role of public enterprises; the role of the LDC private-enterprise sector; and the role of non-governmental organisations – none of which includes a reference to women. The full participation of women in the development process is identified as a separate key area for discussion in section 4:

> 4. Full participation of women in the development process
> 72. Appropriate measures should be taken by the least developed countries fully to mobilise and involve women, both as agents and beneficiaries of the development process. Their role in development should be strengthened, inter alia, through better access to health care, including voluntary family planning, education and training, and to rural credit. LDCs are invited to ratify and implement all United Nations conventions against all forms of discrimination towards women.
> 73. The development and mobilization of women as an important component of overall human resources, within the circumstances peculiar to each least developed country, especially in the following areas would greatly enhance the development prospects of their countries:
> (a) Encouraging the media and various systems of education to convey information giving a realistic and positive image of women
> (b) Promoting the establishment of women's associations in order for women to be conscious of their rights and to defend these rights themselves;
> (c) Creating greater awareness among men and associating them with the elaboration and implementation of measures to promote the role of women;
> (d) Ensuring women's full participation in the decision-making process, particularly in the design and evaluation of projects, and the administration of funds intended to promote the role of women in development. (POA 1991: para 72 - 73)

These two paragraphs reiterate the emphasis that has been placed on women when referring to participation in development to be mobilised, involved and developed, without an overt statement acknowledging the existing contribution of women to their communities. The emphasis in the representation of women is again focused on the role of women as *potential* productive actors in the formal economy, as *potential* contributors to development.

The second major part of this section is titled 'The Strengthening of Human Capital'. The introductory paragraph to this part of the document identifies three key areas that can strengthen human capital in LDCs: population policies, education and training and health services. These three key areas are given a very strong focus in this part of the text. These three key areas are linked to women's status and role with the following reference:

> …Furthermore, action on these three areas has a direct and positive impact on the status and role of women and on their contribution to improvement

> of social and economic conditions in the Least Developed Countries. (POA 1991: para 76)

This statement is extended in the ensuing discussion of each of the key areas, each of which includes a specific mention of women. Within the paragraphs on population policies, the call for governments to promote family planning asks for these efforts to occur "…taking into account the specific concerns of women and children" (POA 1991: para 78). In the paragraphs about education and training, the discrepancies between literacy rates of men and boys and women and girls are highlighted with the following call: "Special emphasis has to be given to improved access for girls and women to education facilities" (POA 1991: para 80). In the paragraphs about health services, rates of maternal morbidity and mortality are highlighted, and the call for increased preventative health measures includes a call for the implementation of safe motherhood programmes which include "…adequate care and nutrition during the period of pregnancy, at childbirth and during lactation" (POA 1991: para 83). All of these references to women are focused on women's roles as primary caregivers, and in the social sphere.

The following part of the document, part five, titled 'Development, particularly expansion and modernisation of the economic base', is the part of the document where the remaining overt references to women appear. This part of the document is divided into five sections: The first is titled 'Rural development, modernisation of agricultural production and food security'. This section identifies and discusses five key issues: agriculture, development of fisheries resources, rural development, food security and food aid. The only one of these sections that includes any reference to women is the first, agriculture. The text in this section outlines ways in which LDCs should support small holders, major producers of food crops. This emphasis is made with an acknowledgment that the majority of agricultural producers in LDCs are small landholders who play a vital role in food security and employment. This acknowledgement is followed by the following sentence:

> Women's role in food production should be similarly strengthened through the recognition of the need for laws and regulations ensuring equal access to more efficient food-processing technologies, credit, land tenure and agricultural training and support services. (POA 1991: para 87)

This sentence identifies an issue that has been identified as a cause of concern for women: lack of access to legal title for land ownership. However, what is again interesting in the choice of language is that it does not acknowledge the current role of women as major agricultural producers within the subsistence and smallholding sectors of agriculture in LDCs, and women are still cast in the role of requiring strengthening. This is a further demonstration of the operation of policy as a technology of knowledge through reductionist representations, which are highlighted in gender analysis with the repeated visibility/invisibility of references to women.

The next two parts of this LDC policy text discuss the 'Development of industrial, service, scientific and technological base', and 'Infrastructure'. The last major topic discussed in part five of the text on 'development, particularly expansion and modernisation of the economic base' is titled 'Environment and disaster mitigation, preparedness and prevention'. The discussion of this topic identifies two main issues, 'Environment and development in the least developed countries', and 'Disaster mitigation, preparedness and prevention'. Both of these sections include

references to women. The first section calls for the development of national environmental management plans. The two places women are mentioned identify that:

> Women should be involved in these plans, especially in forest and land management programmes. They should also be involved in the choice and dissemination of appropriate technologies that would facilitate their household and productive activities while respecting the rhythm of renewal of the natural resource base…
>
> Women should be associated with the establishment of warning systems and follow-up on natural calamities, as well as of programmes aimed at reducing post-harvest losses and food wastage. (POA 1991: para 119)

Both of these focus on participation in decision-making, but qualify the recommendation with 'should'. This softened recommendation places the actions that involve women in the marginal and non-essential basket, to be implemented by LDCs alone.

The second section of this part of the document discusses 'Disaster mitigation, preparedness and prevention', and argues for LDCs to "continue efforts to stimulate among their population in general a clear perception of the benefits of disaster preparation and prevention" (POA 1991: para 123) and calls for the development and implementation of pilot projects in un-identified 'disaster prone' LDCs. The following sentence contains the reference to women in this discussion:

> Special attention should be given to women and children because of their vulnerability during disasters. (POA 1991: para 123)

The identified vulnerability of women during disasters is acknowledged, but unlike the previous discussion, this does not lead to an argument that women should also be involved in disaster mitigation, preparedness and prevention plans and activities. The experience of women during disasters is acknowledged; the role, activities and contribution of women is not. The latter is the last reference to women in the text.

The LDC policy text then features a discussion about the special problems of certain groups of LDCs, identified as landlocked and island LDCs, and does not include any reference to women. The final part of the document, 'Arrangements for implementation, follow-up and monitoring and review' identifies actions and commitments at the national, regional and global levels and does not include a single reference to women. The tentativeness of "should" and "appropriate" in previous sections is clarified in this final one with a resounding silence in this section of the document that identifies how the programme of action for LDCs for the 1990s will be transferred into actions and accountability. "Should" is clearly not "will".

In examining the POA 1991, gender analysis highlights the reductionism policy requires in representation and agency and in so doing highlights the operation of policy as a technology of knowledge within LDC discourse. The ways in which policy becomes a focus of policy itself was demonstrated in the discussion and citations from the POA 1991 introduction. Throughout the policy text women are invisible where they are in the daily life of communities within LDCs. The reductionism of policy determines what issues are relevant when, and women are frequently excluded. In highlighting the limited gender analysis in the POA 1991,

this analysis highlights the way in which the whole UN LDC policy analysis is limited. The way in which the policy text functions, the more important the issue, the more agents are engaged in actions to address it. All actions, save one, that included specific reference to women were to be implemented by LDCs alone, without any other engagement from other actors. These actions were not only all qualified by language that softened the imperative to act, 'should' not 'must', or the undefined 'appropriate' and 'due attention', but were also all excluded from the priority recommendations included in the final section of the text that listed implementation actions, those requiring follow-up and review. The same modes and functions identified as operation of policy as a technology of knowledge reducing representations and limiting agency identified in the SNPA continued within the POA 1991.

Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries 2001-2010

This document was adopted by the United Nations in Brussels on 20 May 2001 at the conclusion of the Third UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries. It is the third ten-year plan formulated and adopted by consensus by each of the member states within the UN to address the status of the LDCs. There are four major sections within this policy document, 'Introduction', 'Objectives', 'Framework for Partnership' and 'Arrangements for Implementation and Follow-up and Monitoring and Review'. The objectives section includes for the first time 'Cross-cutting issues', the identification of issues that interact and inter-relate with all others. Within this structure, the policy text includes both analysis of LDC status and recommended actions by LDCs and development partners. Through gender analysis of the text, the reductionism required of this negotiated policy document highlights the discursive assumptions in the representations of women, and the allocation of agency to address particular issues. These reveal some of the discursive boundaries interacting with the operation of policy as a technology of knowledge within LDC discourse. These elements and operations are common to the 2001 LDC policy text, as they were in the LDC policy documents for the 1990s and the 1980s.

The Introduction, which outlines the status of LDCs and the outcomes of the previous UN LDC Conferences, describes the current situation:

> The Least Developed Countries (LDCs) represent the poorest and weakest segment of the international community. The economic and social development of these countries represents a major challenge for LDCs themselves, as well as for their development partners. (POA 2001: para 1)
>
> Ten years after the adoption of the Paris Programme of Action by the Second United Nations Conference on LDCs in 1990, the objectives and goals set therein have not been achieved… For their part the LDCs have pursued economic reform programmes set out in the previous Programmes of Action...The results of these reform efforts have been below expectations. (POA 2001: para 2)

The language used to describe the current situation is of helplessness. LDCs are defined as the poorest and weakest, with limited agency and ability. This text is an acknowledgement of a deterioration of LDC economic status. Given the acknowledgement of a deterioration of the socioeconomic situation in LDCs in the POA 1991, it implies that the situation in 2001 is worse than it was when these

policies began in 1981. Further, as with the acknowledgement in the POA 1991, more policy is provided and developed as a response. This is a demonstration of the way within the LDC development discourse policy operates as a technology of knowledge by becoming the focus of policy. Policy becomes an end in itself, regardless of its impact or effects.

The first major section of this policy text is the 'Objectives' of the POA 2001. This section includes three references to women/gender. The first mention is also a key point of difference from the previous documents, the inclusion of gender equality within the list of cross cutting issues in the document:

> The Programme of Action recognises the following as cross-cutting priority issues: poverty eradication, gender equality, employment, governance at national and international levels, capacity building, sustainable development, special problems of landlocked and small island LDCs, and challenges faced by LDCs affected by conflict. (POA 2001: para 8)

Cross-cutting issues are those that have been identified as a priority in all aspects of the POA 2001, which should thread through and inform each of the analyses, descriptions and actions. Cross-cutting issues can be described as the major content areas of a document, as they inform each and every aspect of the text. However, to assess the real priority that is placed on these issues within the policy context it is critical to look at the commitments that are made. An explicit overt and clearly stated commitment to a particular action or course of action is a far greater tool for accountability than an implicit one resulting from inclusion in the cross-cutting issues. Gender equality is included in the list of issues, but the real test of discursive relevance is whether the gender equality issues are included in recommendations, and the answer is rarely.

The second reference to gender issues is in the paragraph that outlines the objectives of poverty eradication:

> Poverty eradication requires a broad approach, taking into account not only the sheer economic aspects, but also the social, human and environmental dimension. This implies an increased focus on issues like good governance at national and international levels and the fight against corruption, respect for all internationally recognised human rights, gender issues, capacity and institutional building, social services supply and environmental concerns. The majority of the poor live in rural areas. Increasing the sustainable productive capacity of agriculture and fisheries and the income of people working in these sectors in LDCs is therefore a key priority. Women remain the vast majority of the poor in both economic and non-economic terms. (POA 2001: para 9)

This paragraph begins by outlining the approach required in working towards the eradication of poverty, interspersed with descriptive statements. Gender is included in the list of issues on which action is required for effective poverty eradication, but this is not in any way linked with the statement in the last sentence. In fact the statement in the last sentence is not linked with the rest of the text at all. It is included, but as no conclusions are drawn from it, despite its inclusion it is as if it is not even there, as if it is invisible. This is a further demonstration of policy operating as a technology of knowledge, defining discursive relevance through both the inclusion and exclusion of information and through the ways in which information is included.

The third reference to women is one of the rare moments within this LDC policy document where a reference to women/gender merits an entire separate paragraph:

> There are important linkages between development, poverty reduction and gender equality. Gender equality and gender mainstreaming are therefore essential strategic components for poverty reduction. (POA 2001: para 11)

The linkages between development, poverty reduction and gender equality are acknowledged in this brief paragraph. The brevity of the paragraph, particularly in the context of fulsome discussions and descriptions of issues in other paragraphs, is a further demonstration of policy operating as a technology of knowledge through the definition of what is relevance and placement of priority on the inclusion of words and actions in policy text. These linkages between development, poverty reduction and gender equity are not stated, described, or explained, just stated as important. Why are they important? How are they important? Who are they important to? What does it mean for this statement to be included? The lack of definition surrounding 'important' acts as a qualifier in the policy text. The interpretation of the operation of policy as a technology of knowledge within LDC discourse is identifiable in the second sentence: gender equality and gender mainstreaming are identified as 'essential strategic components for poverty reduction', but without an analysis of how, why, where, when and for whom, this statement rings hollow. It is ironic that in a document that mentions gender mainstreaming, it fails to do this in terms of its own practice.

The second major section of the document is titled "Framework for Partnership". This is the section with the bulk of the document text. It begins with an introduction[23] to the Framework, and then outlines seven major commitments:

- Fostering a people-centered policy framework;
- Good governance at national and international levels;
- Building human and institutional capacities;
- Building productive capacities to make globalisation work for LDCs;
- Enhancing the role of trade in development;
- Reducing vulnerability and protecting the environment; and
- Mobilising financial resources.

Within each of these seven commitments, a wide range of issues and actions are identified. There are overt references to women and gender equality issues in each of the texts related to each of these seven commitments, but the references are varied, not consistent and not linked to a coherent gender analysis. The

[23] The introduction to the Framework outlines some aspects to the approach of implementing the Programme of Action, namely the commitments it incorporates, the need for LDCs to implement the actions outlined, and the assistance that will be provided by development partners. It identified five considerations to guide the implementation of the Programme of Action: an integrated approach which is long-term, comprehensive and links "economic and other objectives of development" (POA 2001: para 21(a)), genuine partnership which is open, transparent and underpinned by political will; country ownership, the joint identification of development priorities by LDCs and their development partners; market considerations, the need for a mix of public-private sector initiatives; and result orientation, the need for concrete outcomes to "sustain public confidence in the development partnership between LDCs and their development partners" (POA 2001: para 21(e)).

representation of women is homogenous and universalizing, and the agency attached to the recommendations varies. These modes of policy operating as a technology of knowledge within LDC development discourse through the reductionism required of the policy format, the allocation of priority to issues, and the relevance attached to information included and excluded are all visible in the text of the Framework. This next section of the discussion will use gender analysis to explore the representation of women and the location and context of references to women as a way of identifying ways in which policy operates as a technology of knowledge.

The first major commitment, "Fostering a people-centered policy framework," begins with an introductory paragraph reiterating the objective of the policy framework to create an "…enabling environment for national and international actions to eradicate poverty…" (POA 2001: para 22). The second paragraph continues by outlining the components of an effective poverty eradication strategy:

> An effective poverty eradication strategy should aim at strengthening physical, social and human capacities, including through equal access to production resources and social, health and education services. Empowering the poor in bringing about this social transformation and articulating their interests and views is crucial. LDCs, with the help of their development partners, must facilitate this process by creating an enabling environment in terms of policy, law making and institutions while improving the scope and effectiveness of service delivery vis a vis the poor. There is a need to empower women and redress gender inequality by mainstreaming the gender perspective in policy, legal and institutional frameworks. There is a further need to engage the energies of young people who currently form more than 50 per cent of the population of LDCs. (POA 2001: para 23)

Building on the previous statement in the objectives section about poverty eradication, this paragraph in the text of the first commitment provides an outline of the components of an effective poverty eradication strategy. What is of interest is that the strength of the language about women within the objectives section is lessened in this paragraph - 'important' and 'essential strategic component' become 'a need', a need that is undefined and unconnected to the previous sentences which describe effective poverty eradication strategies. The sentence about women does not begin with a 'this requires' in reference to the previous sentence about facilitating enabling environments for effective poverty eradication, it begins which the unconnected opening 'there is a need'. The policy language is softening agency, and the references to women and gender equity are occurring without context, which is a demonstration of ways in which policy is operating as a technology of knowledge.

The rest of the text within Commitment 1, as with the text about each of the commitments, is divided into a list of actions. The first is the list of actions by LDCs, the second a list of actions to be taken by development partners. There are fifteen actions listed in total, six to be completed by LDCs, and nine by development partners. Only one of these actions makes any overt reference to women, the first action in the list of actions to be undertaken by LDCs:

> Supporting initiatives that help empower people living in poverty, especially women, and promoting their capacities to enable them to

> improve their access to and better utilise available opportunities, basic social and other types of services, as well as productive resources. (POA 2001: para 24(i)(a))

There is no mention of women when linkages between various levels and sectors of economic activity are mentioned, despite the well-documented roles of women's labour in the formal economy including agricultural, micro and small enterprises and light export oriented industries (Heyzer, Lycklama a Nieholt and Weerakoon 1994; Thomas 2001; Ukeje 2006; Valadez 1996). Neither is there a reference to women when strengthening national statistical systems is highlighted, despite the well-documented gaps in sex-disaggregated data (Elson 2001). What is of particular interest is that none of the actions by development partners make any overt mention of women. This begs the question, whose business is women's business? Are development partners gender blind? Significantly, this highlights the way in which policy operates to place priorities on central and marginal issues. The fact that 'especially women' were mentioned in one of these actions is significant, the fact that it was not seen as a priority to note 'especially women' in any of the other fifteen actions is even more so.

The second commitment is titled 'Good governance at national and international levels'. This commitment focuses on the good governance through transparency, democratic processes, protection of human rights and equitable rule-based international trade and economic relations. It proposes nineteen actions, the majority of which are to be taken by LDCs, with only six proposed for development partners. There are two overt references to women in the actions, both in the list of actions to be taken by LDCs:

> Striving to fully protect and promote gender equality, non-discrimination and the empowerment of women as effective means contributing to the eradication of poverty, elimination of hunger, combating disease and stimulating growth and sustainable development. (POA 2001: para 29(i)(h))

This paragraph includes the linkage of activity between poverty eradication and specific initiatives which promote gender equality and address discrimination against women, however this inclusion is mediated by the use of the undefined and immeasurable 'striving'. The second overt reference to women is in the following paragraph:

> Promoting effective representation and participation of women in all spheres of decision-making, including the political process at all levels. (POA 2001: para 29(i)(h)).

There is no overt mention of women/gender issues in actions by development partners. Again, this is a demonstration of a way in which policy as a technology of knowledge operates through the location of agency. The more significant the recommendation, the more actors required implement it and to exercise agency. The less significant, the less actors, if any recommendation is formed at all.

The third commitment is titled 'Building human and institutional capacities'. This commitment identifies five key areas and outlines actions for both LDCs and their development partners for each one. These five key areas are:

- Social infrastructure and social service delivery;
- Population;

- Education and training;
- Health, nutrition and sanitation;
- Social integration.

Each key area includes recommended actions on women and gender issues as does the introductory text for this commitment. The first paragraph of this section opens with the statement:

> LDCs' greatest assets are their women, men and children, whose potentials as both agents and beneficiaries of development must be fully realized. (POA 2001: para 30).

What is significant in the way in which references to gender equity and women are treated in this section, is that this analysis and discussion is focused on the social sphere. The discursive separation of the social and economic is apparent in various ways, but the way in which gender is significantly more relevant in the social sphere highlights the assumed roles of women embedded within the text. This discursive assumption views women as located within the social sphere, not economic, and as passive waiting potential agents and beneficiaries, whose labour could be harnessed for the benefit of LDC economic development, not as active valued current contributors to economic stability and growth.

The first of the key areas, 'social infrastructure and social service delivery', includes actions that highlight the importance of public sector investment in social services. Issues included are fostering the involvement of the private sector, and the encouragement of coordination and partnerships between various development partners and LDCs. An overt reference to gender equality is made once, in the list of six actions to be taken by LDCs:

> Offering training, including on the job training, to social service providers, particularly to teachers and health care personnel, taking into account gender equality. (POA 2001: para 32 (c))

The phrase 'taking into account gender equality' is undefined and unmeasured. It is not clear whether this is referring to the importance of ensuring women have access to this training, or whether this training include gender awareness and equality measures, or both. The marginality of this inclusion reveals the way in which policy language operating as a technology of knowledge acts to place relevance on some information and content, and places other information outside the frame of importance. There are no overt mentions of women or gender issues in the list of actions by development partners, which is a further demonstration of the way in which policy, operating as a technology of knowledge, places these issues out of the sphere of relevance and central importance.

The following two key areas 'Population', and 'Education and training', highlight another way in policy operates as a technology of knowledge. A particular issue can be included in a policy text, defined as relevant, not because of the content and significance of the issue to the analysis at hand, but because it has been included in another policy document. Policy makes issues within policy relevant. The key area 'Population' is based on the actions and commitments within the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), and its five-year review report (ICPD+5). These documents have been hailed as critical to the promotion and advancement of gender equality within the UN system. Two goals and targets are identified which are central to the commitments in the latter documents, a

commitment to accessible reproductive health through primary health care systems by 2015; and a commitment to make safe, effective, affordable and acceptable family planning and contraceptive methods available (POA 2001: para 34(a) and 34 (b)). Six actions to be undertaken by LDCs and development partners are listed, but only one makes an overt reference to women and gender issues. It is in the list of actions by LDCs:

> Strengthening basic health care system and increasing access to and availability of the widest range of quality health care, including reproductive and sexual health care and promoting reproductive rights as defined in the ICPD Programme of Action, in the broader context of health sector reform, with particular emphasis on maternal and child health. (POA 2001: para 35(i) (b)).

The issues are included because they have been included in the ICPD and ICPD+5 policy documents. They become relevant to the LDC policy text through their appearance in another policy text, not because of the breadth and sophistication of the analysis that has been undertaken into LDC status. The marginality of gender quality and women's issues to LDC policy text is highlighted by the fact that it is LDCs alone who are recommended to implement the action that includes overt reference to women.

The same dynamic is present in the text on 'Education and training'. The three goals and targets for this key area all make overt reference to women:

> (a) Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
> (b) Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
> (c) Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality. (POA 2001: para 36)

Each of these goals and targets are reiterated from previous international commitments at the 2000 United Nations Education for All Conference, within the Dakar Framework for Action. Their repetition here indicates the emphasis that is being placed on education and literacy of women and girl children as part of this international poverty eradication strategy, and highlights the way in which policy operates as a technology of knowledge as policy makes issues relevant for policy. The list of actions features five overt references to women and gender issues. Four of these references are incorporated into the list of eleven actions to be undertaken by LDCs, and cover issues of implementing the outcomes of the UN Education for All Conference "integrated into a wider poverty reduction and development framework"; redressing bias in educational policies; measures to reduce formal education drop-out rates; and non-formal adult literacy education (POA 2001: para 37 (ii)). Each of these makes overt reference to women and girls within the context of initiatives for both girls and boys, and women and men. There is only one overt reference to women and gender issues in the list of actions to be taken by development partners:

> Supporting initiatives to overcome barriers to girls' education, and achieving expanded and improved learning for girls. (POA 2001: para 37 (ii) (h))

This is a further demonstration of the way in which the location, or allocation of implementation agency within LDC policy, reveals the discursive priority and degree of relevance attached to the issue at hand.

The key area 'Health, nutrition and sanitation', further demonstrates these dynamics of policy as a technology of knowledge. Within this section, information is included because it has been included in other policy texts. The text in this section begins by identifying twelve goals and targets for policies and measures to be undertaken by both LDCs and development partners. These goals and targets are a mix between reiterated commitments from previous UN conferences[24] and newly established goals and targets arising from the LDC Conference. They cover topics such as infant mortality, undernourishment, safe drinking water, HIV/AIDS and other infectious and communicable diseases and child health. The following are the four goals and targets that include a reference to women and gender related issues:

> (a) Reducing the maternal mortality rate by three quarters of the current rate by 2015.
>
> (g) Increasing the percentage of women receiving maternal and prenatal care by 60 per cent.
>
> (h) Halving malnutrition among pregnant women and among pre-school children in LDCs by 2015.
>
> (j) Promoting child health and survival and reducing disparities between and within developed and developing countries as quickly as possible, with particular attention to eliminating the pattern of excess and preventable mortality among girl infants and children. (POA 2001: para 38)

While women and gender issues are overtly mentioned in one quarter of the goals and targets included, there is only one overt reference in the list of sixteen actions to be taken by LDCs and the development partners. There is a clear disjunction between the aims and the actions that will be measured and assessed in the reviews of the strategy. Through this difference, it can be seen that the LDC discursive priority is placed away from the goals and targets specific to women.

The actions to be taken by LDCs cover issues of public and private investment in health services; public nutrition policy; communicable disease prevention; social services infrastructure support; HIV/AIDS; national research on traditional health knowledge; child health; and safe water. The sole overt reference to women and gender issues is in the first action in the list:

> Developing health systems in which special attention is given to the poorest sectors of society by promoting community participation, including, when possible, useful and proven traditional structures, in planning and managing basic health services, including health promotion and disease prevention, bearing in mind the gender aspect. (POA 2001: para 39 (a)).

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[24] The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) 1994, the outcomes of the ICPD five year review in 1999; The Rome Declaration on World Food Security 1996; Millennium Declaration, General Assembly resolution 2000.

The actions to be taken by development partners refer to enhancing official development assistance on safe water initiatives, support for food programmes, health infrastructures, HIV/AIDS programmes, epidemic control, research on environmental pollution and health, and importance of traditional health knowledge. None of these actions include any overt reference to women or gender issues.

The fifth key area identified as part of the commitment to building human and institutional capacities in LDCs is titled 'Social integration'. This area focuses on the need for strategies to specifically address social exclusion fostered by poverty, disadvantage and discrimination. There are two specific references to women and gender issues in the list of actions to be undertaken, both of which are allocated to LDCs. The first of these is a list of issues that should be addressed through education programmes emphasizing tolerance, and 'sex' is an issue included in the list. The second reference is in an action seeking to strengthen micro-credit programmes focused on people living in poverty, 'particularly women'. The latter phrase is at the end of the sentence, tacked on, reading almost as an afterthought. There are no references to women and gender issues in the list of actions by development partners.

The fourth commitment is titled 'Building productive capacities to make globalisation work for LDCs'. This commitment seeks to address the impact of globalisation on the LDCs. The analysis within this section states that LDCs have been left out of the globalisation loop, and need to undertake structural reform to ensure that they are involved and access the benefits. The introductory text focuses on the impediments to LDC economic growth and development and critical factors to stimulate a productive capacity, and does include a reference to women:

> The capacity of LDCs to accelerate growth and sustainable development is impeded by various structural and supply side constraints. Among these constraints are low productivity; insufficient financial resources; inadequate physical and social infrastructure; lack of skilled human resources; degradation of the environment; weak institutional capacities, including trade support services, in both public and private sectors; low technological capacity; lack of an enabling environment to support entrepreneurship and promote public and private partnership; and lack of access of the poor, particularly women, to productive resources and services…(POA 2001: para 42)

The reference represents women as needy, passive actors waiting for the opportunity to become productive resources themselves. There is no acknowledgement of the existing productive roles played by women in social and economic life in LDC communities. This introductory text is followed by six goals and targets, which are focused on transport and communications infrastructure, roads, railways, ports, airports, and telephones and computer literacy. None of these goals or targets includes any references to women, which is further evidence of the discursive separation of the social and economic, and the assumed location of women in the social sphere, away from economic production.

This commitment to build productive capacities to make globalisation work for LDCs focuses on actions in eight key areas. The first of these key areas is physical infrastructure that covers issues of physical infrastructure for energy, transport,

communications, and the need for public and private investment. There is no overt mention of women or gender issues in either the actions to be undertaken by LDCs or the actions to be undertaken by development partners. The second key area is technology. This examines issues surrounding the need to access, acquire and upgrade technologies. Again, there is no overt mention of women and gender issues in the actions by LDCs or development partners. The third key area is 'Enterprise development'. This introductory text does include an overt reference to women when discussing the role of the private sector in poverty eradication:

> The private sector can play a crucial role in poverty eradication by contributing to economic growth and creating employment. Specific attention should be given to the needs of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, including enterprises owned by female entrepreneurs, and to the development of a sustainable financial sector. (POA 2001: para 52)

In the list of actions in this key area, three are targeted at LDCs and four are aimed at development partners. Only one of these actions includes an overt reference to women, and it is within the list of actions by LDCs:

> Creating an enabling environment for the development of entrepreneurship, including by providing access to finance, including new and innovative forms of financing, as well as targeted business support services to micro, small and medium sized enterprises in rural and urban areas, including female entrepreneurs. (POA 2001: para 53 (a))

The reference to women in productive roles, creating businesses and economic opportunities as entrepreneurs is included at the end, not integrated into the main text of the paragraph. This placement in the text reveals the inclusion as an afterthought, as a mention of a marginal issue.

The fourth key area identified is 'Energy', and there is no overt reference to women in the introductory text, the actions to be undertaken by LDCs or the list of actions to be undertaken by development partners. The fifth key area identified is 'Agriculture and agro-industries'. This key area focuses on agriculture as a sector of economic production. The introductory text identifies the 'pivotal' role of the agricultural sector in LDCs, given its dominance as a major area of production. This section focuses on strategies to improve the productiveness of agriculture for export and addresses the need for investment in infrastructure and extension of better practices. The introductory text does include an overt reference to women:

> …It [increasing the productive capacity of the agriculture sector] requires new investments in regional and national agricultural and fishery research and rural infrastructure, extension of better farming and fishing practices and innovative and sustainable technologies, as well as marketing better advice, structure and effective finance and greater tenure security, including access to and control over land by female farmers irrespective of their marital status. (POA 2001: para 57)

The eighteen actions by LDCs and development partners to address this key area included one overt reference to women, in the third action in the list of 11 to be undertaken by LDCs:

> Increasing access of the poor, particularly women, to support services and productive resources, especially land, water, credit and extension services. (POA 2001: para 58 i (c)).

The sixth key area that has been identified is titled 'Manufacturing and Mining'. There is no mention of women in this section, in either the introductory text or the

list of actions, despite the well-established predominance of women's labour in the light industrial manufacturing sector, and the significant role of that sector in the growth of non-agricultural export oriented industries (Bulbeck 1998; Heyzer, Lycklama a Nieholt and Weerakoon 1994; Ong 1987; Pearson [1991] 2001; Pettman 1996; Standing [1999] 2001).

The key area 'Rural development and food security' within commitment four of the Framework for Partnership, 'Building productive capacities to make globalisation work for LDCs', includes the largest number of overt mentions of women in this section of the text. The focus of this key area is the importance of food security within poverty eradication strategies, which are themselves identified as a fundamental cornerstone of sustainable rural development:

> Lack of food security is the most typical face of poverty for both urban and rural people in LDCs. Some 70 percent of the poor and food insecure are rural dwellers, many of whom are small farmers who produce on the brink of survival, or landless people trying to sell their labour. Poverty eradication is critical in improving access to food. Food and nutritional security must be part of a larger framework of sustainable rural development and of poverty eradication. In many countries, women are responsible for the bulk of food production, but they need the right to own land and to inherit land, inter alia in order to obtain credit and training, as well as tools, and to increase the productivity of the land and to be able to better feed themselves and their families… (POA 2001: para 61)

This acknowledgement of the numerical predominance of women within the agricultural labour force is unique within this document. Previous statements regarding the importance of women's labour and contribution as agents and beneficiaries of the development process have the potential to be interpreted as broad, sweeping generalizations, not linked to a specific well recognised, documented and acknowledged fact. This has not been recognised in the previous two LDC policy texts. The acknowledgement is firmly within essentialist and universalizing representations of women. There is no acknowledgement of the diversity of women in LDCs, and the diversity of their contributions to social, economic and cultural life, stability and growth. The final key area identified as a component of building productive capacities to make globalisation work for LDCs is titled "Sustainable tourism". There is no overt reference to women in either the introductory text, the list of actions to be undertaken by LDCs or the list of actions to be undertaken by development partners, despite the well documented evidence on the importance of women's labour within the hospitality, hotel and tourism sector (Enloe 1990)[25].

The fifth commitment within the framework for partnership is titled 'Enhancing the role of trade in development'. There is no mention of women in the introductory text. This commitment highlights three key areas. The First of these is titled 'Trade, commodities and regional trading arrangements'. This area includes eleven specific actions to be taken by LDCs, one of which makes specific mention of women:

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[25] The linkage of women's labour in this sector with sexual exploitation is also well established, and another factor that is not mentioned (Enloe 1990).

> Implementing measures to enable women in LDCs, especially women entrepreneurs, to exploit the opportunities created by trade policy reforms and to mitigate any negative effects on them of these reforms. (POA 2001: para 67(j)).

This is the only specific mention of women in this commitment and there is not a single overt reference to women or gender equality in these actions. There is no discussion of the real and potential adverse impact of trade liberalization and globalisation on 'developing countries' and women within them, acting to increase wealth/poverty disparities and in some situations specifically impact negatively on women's status (Beneria [1999] 2001; Fontana, Joekes and Masika 1998; Sen [1996] 2001). In this section thirty-five actions are recommended for development partners to implement. These include addressing issues of LDC access to markets, special and differential treatment in the WTO, access to the WTO, standard setting and quality controls and other trade related technical cooperation. The fact that this section identifies such a large number of actions for implementation reveals the economic bias in the discursive placement of priority, importance and relevance on issues included in this policy document. The two other key areas highlighted for action in this commitment are titled 'Services' and reducing the impact of 'External shocks'. 'Services' refers to services such as tourism, transport and business services as a source of foreign exchange, diversifying exports and economic production base. 'External shocks' refers to external economic shocks such as dramatic falls in commodity prices, or increases in energy imports. Neither of these sections includes a specific reference to women, despite the role of women in service industries (Fontana, Joekes and Masika 1998).

The sixth major commitment within the framework for partnership is titled 'Reducing Vulnerability and Protecting the Environment'. This commitment focused on two main areas for action 'Protecting the Environment' and 'Alleviating Vulnerability to External Shocks'. There is one overt reference to women in the introductory paragraph:

> …LDCs are at present contributing the least to the emission of greenhouse gasses, while they are the most vulnerable and have the least capacity to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change. Such vulnerabilities generate considerable uncertainties and impair the development prospects of these countries, and they tend to affect the poor most, in particular women and children. (POA 2001: para 73)

In relation to protecting the environment, the action in the list for LDCs to implement, indicating again the status and discursive relevance attached to the implementation of actions involving women:

> Strengthening the important role of women in land and forest management and in the choice and dissemination of appropriate technology. (POA 2001: para 75(i)(d))

The action to be undertaken by LDCs (again note that this is in the list of actions to be undertaken by LDCs, not by development partners), in relation to alleviating vulnerability to natural shocks is:

> Strengthening disaster mitigation and mechanisms, with a particular focus on the poor, especially women and children, and with the involvement of local communities and NGOs in disaster mitigation, early warning systems and preparedness and relief efforts. (POA 2001: para 77(i)(a))

In both lists of actions in these key areas there are overt references to women; however there is no reference in the list of actions to be undertaken by development partners.

The final commitment within the Framework for Partnership is titled 'Mobilising Financial Resources'. This addresses the need to harness funds to implement the objectives, priorities and targets within each of the commitments in the Programme of Action. The introductory text includes the following paragraph:

> There is an immediate need to mobilise the financial resources that are required to implement the objectives and priorities as well as the targets that are set out in this Programme of Action aimed at the sustainable development of the LDCs. However, there is very limited scope, in the foreseeable future, to meet the multiple development finance requirement of LDCs with domestic resources because of sluggish growth or economic stagnation, widespread poverty and a weak domestic corporate sector. The large investment requirements of LDCs imply a need for new and additional resources and efforts to increase ODA to LDCs supportive of national programmes of action, including poverty eradication strategies. (POA 2001: para 79)

This paragraph is a clear statement that in order for this policy to be implemented, it is dependent on the provision of new and additional resources from development partners. This paragraph reveals that even within the policy text itself, there is an acknowledgement that the actions to be implemented by LDCs alone are likely to remain unimplemented. This section identifies four key areas for action within this commitment, 'Domestic resource mobilization', 'Aid and its effectiveness', 'External debt', 'Foreign Direct Investment and other private external flows'. There is a specific reference to women in the first of these sections, 'Domestic resource mobilization'. It identifies a number of actions, one of which includes specific reference to women, within the list of actions to be taken by LDCs:

> Promoting innovative financial mechanisms such as microcredit programmes to mobilise savings and deliver financial services to the poor, including small holders and the self-employed, particularly women, within an appropriate legal and regulatory framework. (POA 2001: para 80 (i)(d))

The way in which this reference to women is included is as if an afterthought. It is not included in the main structure of the sentence, indicating again the marginality of women and gender equality issues within LDC discourse. There is no specific reference to women in any of the remaining areas within this text. The lack of a specific reference to women within the text on aid and its effectiveness is particularly noteworthy, given the emerging body of literature documenting the ways in which aid policies and practices have displaced women from traditional roles and adversely impacted on their status within communities (Byrne and Baden 1995:6). Similarly, the lack of an overt reference to women and the gendered impact of external debt and SAPs are worthy of note, which is also an area that has been well documented (Acosta-Belen and Bose 1990; Beneria [1999] 2001; Catagay and Ozler [1995] 2001; Sen and Grown 1992; Sen [1996] 2001). This text and section marks the conclusion of this chapter.

Chapter 3 of the document is titled 'Arrangements for implementation, follow-up and monitoring and review'. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first is titled 'Main orientations for implementation and follow-up,' and outlines the need

for national, regional and global level follow-up, regular monitoring of progress at all levels, and outlines a role for the United Nations and its organisations in facilitating "coordinated implementation as well as coherence in the follow-up." (POA 2001: para 98). The second section is titled "National, regional and global level arrangements". This begins by linking, for the first time, the Programme of Action with LDCs' own national development frameworks, and other existing poverty eradication strategies including Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP), UN Common Country Assessments (CCA), and UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF) and the World Bank's country review process. The section then details the need for sub-regional and regional level and global level follow-up within the United Nations agencies and General Assembly. At no point in this chapter is there any overt or specific reference to women, or any national, sub-regional, regional or international policy, strategies or agreements that have been developed to address discrimination against women. This is a notable absence in itself, and particularly so given that the few mentions of women throughout the POA 2001 are not included in the list of items for monitoring and review. Is a once off appearance, an odd mention in the text, enough? The absence implies that the references in the text do not merit implementation, follow-up, monitoring and review.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that policy operates as a technology of knowledge within LDC development discourse. The chapter began by contextualising UN LDC policy texts and processes as both products of and reproducing development discourse. It argued that the separation of culture from the economic and social in LDC discourse was visible through the representation of women in these LDC policy texts. Drawing on Spivak (1999) and Wood (2001), this reading of the representation of women is positioned in the debates about the discursive demand for a pre-determined authenticity of women in the third world, which is essentialist, reductionist, homogenizing and always with less agency than men and women from 'the North'. The chapter then examined the three UN LDC policy texts in detail, focusing on the representation of women in LDCs. I argued that gender analysis of the representation of women in LDC policy plays a critical role in identifying the operation of policy as a technology of knowledge within LDC development discourse.

The most recent UN LDC policy text had the most references to women out of the three, but despite that numeric increase it is clear in all three texts that gender equity is marginal in LDC development discourse. In the SNPA 1981, women are mentioned in reference to food and agriculture, human resource development, education, maternal health and population control policies. It is stated that women have an 'indispensable role' to play within LDC development, but this rings hollow when there are so few references to women, they are focused on women's roles as primary carers and the social sphere, and position all LDC women as passive victims with limited agency. In the POA 1991, references are made to the involvement of women in decision-making, in relation to health services, education and nutrition, agriculture and disaster mitigation. The document calls on women and men to be recognised as actors and beneficiaries of development, and for

women to have full participation in the development process. Again, the reductionist representation of LDC women is as all the same, passive victims or passive potential actors, whose main relevance is in relation to the social sector and roles as primary carers. Most tellingly, none of the recommendations in the text of POA 1991 are granted the discursive priority within the policy text to be included in the list of POA actions for implementation, monitoring and review.

In the POA 2001, the number of issues where a reference to women broadened, significantly to include references to women's roles in the formal economy, access to micro-credit and female entrepreneurs. The majority of references continued to be in relation to the social sectors, and women's roles in family life. Again, as with the two previous policy texts, and despite this document including the strongest and clearest language about the importance of mainstreaming gender equality, promoting the participation of women in development and decision making, there is no reference to any of these recommendations in the final list of the POA 2001's prioritized recommendations for implementation, follow-up and review.

In each of the three documents, references to gender equality and women appear on the whole in the context of other discussions, rarely if ever on their own terms, and are often mentioned in the context of the long list of issues that need to be addressed, or in an undefined statement. The marginality of these issues is highlighted by the way that the recommendations for action operate within the text. Throughout the entire text of each of the three documents, recommendations for implementation appear in the context of analysis of the situation in LDCs in relation to a particular topic. These are linked to an implementing agent, a LDC or one of the LDC development partners such as multilateral UN agencies, the international community more broadly, bilateral donors and so on. The discursive dynamic within policy operating as a technology of knowledge is that the more important an issue, the more recommendations there will be, and the more agents are involved in implementation. The key section for implementation, 'Arrangements for Implementation, Follow-up, Monitoring and Review' in both POA 1991 and POA 2001 contains the list of recommendations that will receive the most international attention in assessments of the implementation progress of this LDC policy text. While there are some recommendations with references to women and gender equity in the main text, none of the recommendations in the final section include any reference to women. Further, the majority of these discursively lower prioritized recommendations are to be implemented by LDCs with no engagement of other development partners.

These modes of policy as a technology of knowledge within LDC development discourse operate through the reductionism required of the policy format: the allocation of priority to issues, and the relevance attached to information included and excluded are all visible in the text. The reductionist format leads to reductionist, homogenous and universalizing representations of women in each of the three LDC policy documents. Although the three documents cover three decades, the ways in which policy operates as a technology of knowledge continues in a similar fashion in each one. LDC development discourse represents development policy and praxis as if it is culture-free, and as such is unable to move beyond representations of women in LDCs that are dependent on reductionist, homogenous and essentialist assumptions of an authentic LDC woman.