Gender and Technologies of Knowledge in Development Discourse:

Analysing United Nations Least Developed Country Policy 1971-2004

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Abbreviations

APQLI	Augmented Physical Quality of Life Index
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CCA	United Nations Common Country Assessment
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EDI	Economic Diversification Index
EU	European Union
EVI	Economic Vulnerability Index
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation
GAD	Gender and Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
GNP	Gross National Product
HAI	Human Assets Index
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
ICPD	UN International Conference on Population and Development 1994-2004
ICPD+5	UN International Conference on Population and Development Five Year Review 1999
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDA	International Development Association
LDC	Least Developed Country
LICUS	Low Income Countries Under Stress
MTRC 1980	UN Conference on Women, Mid-Term Review Conference 1980
OECD DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Assistance Committee
POA 1991	UN Program of Action on the Least Developed Countries 1991- 2001
POA 2001	UN Program of Action on the Least Developed Countries 2001- 2011
PrepCom	Preparatory Committee Meeting
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SNPA	UN Substantial New Program of Action for the Least Developed Countries 1981- 1991
UN	United Nations
UNCDF	UN Capital Development Fund
UNCDP	UN Committee for Development Planning
UNCTAD	UN Conference on Trade and Development
UNCW 1975	UN Conference on Women 1975
UNDAF	UN Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	UN Development Program
UNGASS	UN General Assembly Session
UNIDO	UN Industrial Development Organisation
WAD	Women and Development
WID	Women in Development
WSIS	UN World Summit on Information Society
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Abstract

The United Nations category Least Developed Country (LDC) was created in 1971 to ameliorate conditions in countries the UN identified as the poorest of the poor. Its administration and operation within UN development discourse has not been explored previously in academic analysis. This thesis explores this rich archive of development discourse. It seeks to situate the LDC category as a vehicle that both produces and is a product of development discourse, and uses gender analysis as a critical tool to identify the ways in which the LDC category discourse operates. The thesis draws on Foucauldian theory to develop and use the concept 'technologies of knowledge', which places the dynamics of LDC discourse into relief. Three technologies of knowledge are identified: LDC policy, classification through criteria, and data. The ways each of these technologies of knowledge operates are explored through detailed readings of over thirty years of UN policy documents that form the thesis's primary source material.

A central question within this thesis is: If the majority of the world's poor are women, where are the women in the policy about the countries that are the poorest of the poor? In focusing the analysis on the representation of women in LDCs, I place women at the centre of the analytic stage, as opposed to the marginal position I have found they occupy within LDC discourse. Through this analysis of the reductionist representations of LDC women, I explore the gendered dynamics of development discourse.

Exploring the operation of these three technologies of knowledge reveals some of the discursive boundaries of UN LDC category discourse, particularly through its inability to incorporate gender analysis. The discussion of these three technologies of knowledge – policy, classification through criteria, and data – is framed by discussions of development and gender. The discussion on development positions this analysis within post-development critiques of development policy, practice and theory. The discussion on gender positions this analysis within the trajectory of postmodern and postcolonial influenced feminist engagements with development as a theory and praxis, particularly with debates about the representation of women in the third world.

This case study of the operation of development discourse usefully highlights gendered dynamics of discursive ways of knowing.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Sarah Goulding

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Words empty out with age. Die and rise again, accordingly invested with new meanings, and always equipped with a secondhand memory.

Trinh T. Minh-ha (1989: 79)

Criticism must think of itself as life-enhancing and constitutively opposed to every form of tyranny, domination, and abuse; its social goals are non-coercive knowledge produced in the interests of human freedom.

Edward Said ([1983] 1991:29)

*While I was sitting in the Grande Salle de Conference of one of the European
Union buildings in Brussels, during the first plenary forum of the Non Government
Forum for the Third United Nations (UN) Conference for the Least Developed
Countries (LDCs) in May 2001, an exchange occurred between a delegate from the
Maldives and the plenary session chair, a representative of a Washington-based
American Non-Government Organization (NGO). As the chair was outlining the
structure of the three-day NGO Forum, and the focus of various sessions, the
delegate from the Maldives asked the question 'When will we be discussing the
criteria for the LDCs?' The Maldives had been identified as being at the point of
graduation from the category, and the delegate expressed concern about who
would be making this important decision, and the potential negative impacts on his
country. A delegate from Vanuatu immediately supported his intervention with the
following words about her country's people: 'other people define us to be poor'.
Subsequently the delegate from Cape Verde expressed grave concerns about the
impact on his country of leaving the group and being classified as 'more
developed'.*

*As a number of other participants from NGOs in LDCs began to request speaking
rights in response to this, the chair briskly brought the discussion to a close by
stating that there was no time for that discussion; the purpose of this NGO Forum
would be and had to be the discussion of the draft document for the Third UN
strategy for the LDCs which would be the exclusive focus of deliberations at the
UN conference over the coming days. This comment was then reinforced by the
British co-chair of the session who stated that he couldn't imagine why such an
issue was even raised when the entire purpose of everyone present was to ensure
that countries left the LDC grouping, an achievement which should be a cause for
celebration. The delegate from the Maldives tried to reply, but the chairs of the
session quickly moved discussion onto another topic and he fell and stayed silent.*

*Later during the UN Conference itself I was with representatives of the NGO
Gender Caucus, which included women from Togo, Benin and Uganda, as we
advocated for stronger references to women in the text. When we sought a meeting
with the female head of the European Union delegation she refused to engage in
any discussion. Her response was 'Gender issues? No. You just can't get
everything into this document.'*

This conference, held in Brussels in May 2001, was open to representatives of all
national governments, and NGOs. My attendance and participation in the Third
UN Conference on the LDCs and the associated NGO Forum was a critical starting
point for the research for this thesis. I attended as a delegate from the World
Young Women's Christian Association, an organization with consultative status at
the United Nations that provides services and support to women in over 100
countries world wide, including in many of the LDCs. Together with other NGO

representatives I worked to form the Conference's Gender Caucus and advocated for the inclusion of references to women and gendered poverty in the LDC strategies. This conflict about priority topics for discussion outlined in the anecdote above remained unresolved and despite this incident, the criteria for determining LDCs status were never listed on the agenda of the meeting at the NGO Forum. These two incidents not only highlighted a significant difference of views and perspectives between these NGO conference delegates and session chairs, the gender caucus representatives and official government delegations. It also highlighted the inequitable power relationships between those who set and those who attempted to challenge these meetings agendas, and the different cultural, economic and social locations of those divergent perspectives.

The conference produced a document to guide UN policy and international assistance to the LDCs over the coming ten years. The LDCs are a grouping of countries identified by the UN as the poorest of the poor in the so-called Third World, which by virtue of this status require specific focused attention and development assistance. Normally such UN documents circulate through various international communities with great authority as if carved in stone. Attending this conference provided a privileged insight into the contested power dynamics engaged in the construction of international UN development policy. The experience highlighted the stark difference in position and power between those individuals, such as myself, who have the privilege of participating in these events, and those whose lives are being described. These incidents highlighted the inequitable power dynamics in the creation of these development texts. Witnessing this process opened the door for readings of these texts that saw them not as carved in stone but as fragile as eggshells, able to be cracked open with the simple question: where are the women?

The worldliness of texts

What becomes clear through these incidents of challenge and rebuff is that these UN policy documents are worldly, to use Edward Said's term, not only because they perform a worldly task of guiding policy and decision-making, or because they are about poverty – fundamentally worldly matters – but because of the way they function as a product of development discourse. These UN policy documents are a way of knowing in development discourse. It is through repeatedly asking questions, such as "where are the women?" that the productive nature of development discourse becomes visible. Said's arguments about the worldliness of texts, the materiality of their creation and interpretation, provide new insights into literary and cultural texts in ways useful for understanding development as discourse. In identifying and invoking the network of material and cultural affiliations within texts, the socio-political and economic context of their creation, their readers, their critics and their modes of interpretations, Said challenges the academic disciplinary tendency to isolate and confine the interpretation of literary and other texts (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 1999). In *Culture and Imperialism* (Said [1993] 1994), Said responds to the dominant literary readings of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* that focus on her use of wit and her social observations of the intrigues that surrounded the engagements and marriages of women of a certain social class in England in the early 1800s. Said challenges the authority of the

dominant critical readings of this text by identifying the network of multiple affiliations within the text which link it, this light romantic comedy of manners, with the dispossession, violence, racism and genocide associated with the slave trade and the praxis of colonialism in the colony-dependent British economy of Regency England.

The core subjects of the text, the domestic affairs of the Bertram family and those associated with them in 'civilized society', and the main protagonist Fanny Price, appear to have no relationship at all with texts focused on the impact and consequences of colonization and empire. All Said does is ask the very simple question: "Where is the money coming from?" With this one question Sir Thomas Bertram's estate in Antigua changes from a minor aside in a sentence, a place to "be away to", a location to "grow up" his eldest spendthrift son, a rationale behind the shifting willingness to be a benevolent benefactor to Fanny Price, into a location of the harshness and violence of the slave trade.

> The time was now come when Sir Thomas expected his sister-in-law to claim her share in their niece, the change in Mrs Norris' situation, and the improvement in Fanny's age, seeming not merely to do away any former objection to their living together, but even to give it the most decided eligibility; and as his own circumstances were rendered less fair than heretofore, by some recent losses on his West India estate, in addition to his eldest son's extravagance, it became not undesirable to himself to be relieved from the expense of her support, and the obligation of her future provision. (Austen [1814] 1962:356)

Said's question 'Where is the money coming from?" brings an altogether different perspective into view about the concerns and affairs of the young women, young men and their families that are the subject of Austen's delicate and witty prose.

Said's analysis then proceeds to demonstrate the mechanisms by which the values, lives and social mores of the civilized society documented in the text are dependent upon the distant sugar estates of Antigua, and so associates this novel of civility with the cultural justifications for the racist social and economic violence that underpinned the way of life of imperialist Britain. In this way, Said's exploration of the network of affiliations within the text reveals Austen's use of a constant "geographical and spatial clarification" (Said [1993] 1994: 102). This analysis is then relocated within a study of the tropes within British literature that provided cultural justification for colonialism. Austen's text and those of other British literary writers are analysed for their ways of treating the wider world, the imperial environment. Said argues that the canon of British literature, by virtue of the selective focus of its texts, celebrates the nature of 'civilized' England, a home of values, morals, order, beauty, good things and good people.

> But positive ideas of this sort do more than validate 'our' world. They also tend to devalue other worlds and, perhaps more significantly from a retrospective point of view, they do not prevent or inhibit or give resistance to horrendously unattractive imperialist practices. (Said [1993] 1994: 97)

By virtue of their celebration of the tropes of 'civil' society, Said argues that texts such as Austen's in the celebrated canon of British literature mask and separate themselves from their relationships with the world.

In drawing on Said's analysis to start this examination of the UN LDC category I am exploring texts that are 'of the world' in their very making, texts that are worldly in their context, content, creation and interpretation. Policy and strategy on development produced by the United Nations is overtly 'of the world' in its manner of creation, through negotiation and consensus agreement with representatives of every member country. The issues of marginality, dispossession, violence, and poverty are the very topics addressed. These policy and strategy documents are developed, interpreted and used to redress the injustices they identify. Academic disciplinary specialization and criticism does not confine their interpretation and understanding to a space away from 'the world'.

The question central to Said's concept of worldliness is, "Who addresses us in the text?" ([1984] 1991) In asking this, Said seeks to identify, explore and reveal the tropes and discourses affiliated to and within the text and the dominant readings of it. Said's concept of worldliness provides a useful analytic tool in identifying and exploring the discourses of international development policy. The very act of asking who addresses us in the text opens doors to different readings. What are the sources of knowledge? How are these texts read in the context of what they say and argue? And most importantly from a feminist perspective, where are the women?

Who is speaking?

This thesis draws on these questions to re-read development discourse via an exploration of UN LDC category, through both the work of the UN Committee that oversees the administration of the category itself, the UN Committee for Development Policy (formerly the UN Committee for Development Planning) and through the 10 year international plans of action to improve the situation of the LDCs which have been developed and endorsed by all UN member states since 1971. A key issue to explore within this LDC category discourse analysis are the questions of what is known and how it is known in these texts.

While membership of this UN committee and the delegates at the international meetings that develop and endorse UN policy and plans comprise representatives from all over the globe, including individuals with LDC nationality and LDC country delegates, there is no question that these individuals are not 'the poor'. These delegates and representatives are not those for whom poverty, ill health, dispossession and marginality are daily life. The very ability to be present at these events locates these individuals as literate, identified as authorities within their field and country, with access to opportunities and sources of funds. In international development practice, these participants can be identified as privileged, viewers or voyeurs of the poverty of others, and representatives of modernity (Pigg 1996:161). In her work Pigg locates development practioners, researchers and policy-makers as unwitting or unconscious representatives of modernity who despite motivations of goodwill, cannot be separated from the harm – violence, dispossession, poverty – colonial and post-colonial eras have generated. As such, those in the authorship role for these UN policy documents are, to draw from Said, associated through the network of affiliations with the disruption and violence of colonialism, the inequities of globalisation and the fundamental socio-

political and economic change that is the bread-and-butter business of 'doing development'.

The writings of Gayatri Spivak are useful here in acknowledging these questions of who addresses us in UN development policy texts. In exploring the dynamics of the privileged interested observer in her work on the politics of representation, Spivak (1987) argues that there is an inherent violence present in the act of knowing and speaking for others, in becoming an acknowledged expert and authority on the lives and culture of others, and in the documentation, creation and use of this knowledge. This is particularly the case for those who become experts in fields associated with gender and development, where there are stark inequalities in the socio-economic positions of external experts and those who are 'known', for whom gender violence and chronic poverty are the stuff of daily life. An example of Spivak's arguments is found in her discussion of a story written by Bengali writer and activist Mahasweta Devi, about an Indian academic specialist on rural tribal communities. This example locates the representative of modernity with exacerbating violence and poverty.

In this story Senanayak, a Bengali academic specialist in indigenous combat and politics is asked and accepts involvement in a military police search for Santal[1] guerrilla fighter, Draupadi (also known as Dopdi) Mehjen. She has been involved in attacks on farms that have illegally bored extra waterholes during a severe drought, and police stations where fellow fighters have been imprisoned, tortured and killed. Senanayak's years of academic specialisation and research on the customs and warfare methods of forest-dwelling tribal communities stand him in good stead in advising and guiding the police raids. Draupadi is duly captured, interrogated, multiply raped and tortured. The story concludes with Draupadi, still alive after her night of torture by the military police, tearing her sari so it cannot be worn and confronting Senanayak as she is brought to him for the morning's interrogation:

> The commotion is as if the alarm had sounded in a prison. Senanayak walks out surprised and sees Draupadi, naked, walking towards him in the bright sunlight with her head high. The nervous guards trail behind.
>
> What is this? He is about to cry but stops.
>
> Draupadi stands before him, naked. Thigh and pubic hair matted with dry blood. Two breasts, two wounds.
>
> What is this? He is about to bark.
>
> Draupadi comes closer. Stands with her hand on her hip, laughs and says, the object of your search Dopdi Mejhen. You asked them to make me up, don't you want to see how they made me?
>
> Where are her clothes?

---

[1] Santal is the name of an indigenous tribe, identified as one of the Austro-Asiatic Munda tribes, living in West Bengal, India (Devi in Spivak 1987:187).

Won't put them on, *sir*. Tearing them.

Draupadi's black body comes even closer. Draupadi shakes with an indomitable laughter that Senanayak simply cannot understand. Her ravaged lips bleed as she begins laughing, Draupadi wipes the blood on her palm and says in a voice that is terrifying, sky splitting, and sharp as her ululation, 'What's the use of clothes? You can strip me, but how can you clothe me again? Are you a man?…

Draupadi pushes Senanayak with her two mangled breasts, and for the first time Senanayak is afraid to stand before an unarmed target, terribly afraid. (Devi 1981 in Spivak 1987:196)

As Draupadi stands before Senanayak, it is the confrontation with the results of the use of his knowledge, of the reality of the violence associated with its use, which renders him speechless and afraid. In her commentary on this story, Spivak acknowledges the relationship between her own writing and violence, a relationship which is always present in the growth of academic and other literature associated with interdisciplinary 'development studies', particularly the literature on the situation of women in the third world. It is a difficult and troubling association to find oneself identified and located as actively involved, or at best quietly complicit, with the promotion of marginality, violation and dispossession.

We grieve for our third world sisters; we grieve and rejoice that they must lose themselves and become as much like us as possible in order to be "free"; we congratulate ourselves on our specialist's knowledge of them.... When we speak for ourselves we urge with conviction: the personal is political. For the rest of the world's women, the sense of whose personal micrology is difficult (though not impossible) for us to acquire, we fall back on a colonialist theory of most efficient information retrieval. We will not be able to speak to the women out there if we depend completely on Western-trained informants. As I see their photographs in women's studies journals or on book jackets - indeed, as I look in the glass - it is Senanayak with his anti-fascist paperback that I behold. (Spivak 1987:179)

Spivak's use of this story by Mahasweta Devi brings to the fore the violence, present, past and future, associated with knowledge making. This story dramatises the violence of contemporary knowledge and expertise about developing countries. The knowledge practices used by Senanayak are those of the colonial authority in orientalist literatures, the specialists in colonial cultures documented by Said in *Orientalism* ([1978] 1991). In this story, the connection between knowledge and its use in facilitating violent dispossession and quelling of resistance is clear, direct and unambiguous. This story provides a connection between the seeming untouchable objectivity of UN policy and, as Said would term it, its links to the world. It reminds us to ask, Where are the women, their voices and experiences? Devi's story informs readings about the violence associated with the development of policy and bureaucratic administration of the LDC category that seeks to define who are the poorest amongst the poor without the participation or awareness of 'the poor' themselves.

I have reflected on this difference in power and knowledge making through the experience of participating in the LDC conference in 2001. As a white western

woman with the position and privilege of wealth, race and higher education, I had the privilege of participating in the conference about the countries defined as the poorest of the poor amidst the palatial marble lined halls of the European Parliament and Commission buildings. The contrast with the lives of the women in LDCs whose voices struggled for any discursive attention at the conference was and remains stark. The lack of voice through the lack of any form of participation in a discourse that produces material effects through the provision and targeting of aid finance is a violent disenfranchisement.

Development as discourse

Foucauldian and post-structuralist understandings of power/knowledge have heavily influenced the emerging discourse analysis of development. The analysis of development discourse draws explicitly on the work within development studies of Raymond Apthorpe (1996, 1997), Arturo Escobar (1984-85, 1995), Gustavo Esteva (1992), James Ferguson (1990), Chandra Mohanty (1991, 1997), Uma Narayan (1997), Stacey Lee Pigg (1996), Wolfgang Sachs (1992), and Gayatri Spivak (1987, 1996, 1999). In various ways these authors investigate the genealogy of the term 'development', situating its use in specific contemporary social, political and economic contexts, each rooted in particular imperial and colonial histories. It is an analysis rooted in an interest in exploring not only how knowledge is produced and reproduced, but for whom (the West or the Rest?) and the power dynamics involved (Hall 1992). This exploration of the conceptual filiations associated with development as a concept, theory and praxis, challenge the *realpolitik* assumption that development is an objective, commonsense, geographically and historically universal concept. The violence of knowledge-making identified in Pigg (1996) and Spivak (1987, 1996, 1999) can be seen in the unqualified failure of these efforts by the UN to alleviate poverty in countries identified as the poorest of the poor through the creation of category LDC.

Drawing on Foucault I argue that there are specific elements that operate within LDC discourse that can be identified as tools that organise information and produce knowledge, which I have termed 'technologies of knowledge'. Gender analysis provides the entry point identifying discursive boundaries that function to determine what information is considered valid within UN LDC development discourse. I define gender analysis as a process of identifying the gendered differences and inequalities between the social, economic and cultural experiences of diverse women and men, that recognises both the position of the researcher and the 'knowledge object'. It is when these discursive boundaries are visible that the operation of these technologies of knowledge can be explored. I define technologies of knowledge as devices within discourse that function to produce knowledge in a variety of ways and have material effects and consequences. These technologies of knowledge within development discourse, and their interaction with gender analysis, are what I examine in this thesis, with UN LDC category as a case study.

The UN has played a significant role in the production of development discourse, initiating the first of a series of Decades for Development in 1961 to coordinate international efforts to alleviate extreme poverty and reach discursively defined

goals of social and economic growth. According to Escobar (1995) this process commenced and constitutes a discursive "making and unmaking" of the third world in development discourse.

As part of this production of development discourse in the post Second World War period, the United Nations created a new classification in 1971, the Least Developed Country (LDC), to describe the "poorest and most economically weak of the developing countries, with formidable economic, institutional and human resources problems, which are often compounded by geographical handicaps and natural and man-made disasters" (UN Capital Development Fund 2006). The LDC category established and administered by the UN identifies a grouping of countries that are the 'poorest of the poor', facing the greatest challenges and obstacles to sustained social and economic change that would ameliorate the difficulties faced by their populations. In the three decades since this discursive act of creation, the number of countries classified as Least Developed has increased from 25 to 50. These countries have a combined population of approximately 600 million people, who comprise roughly 10% of the world's total population but who receive only one tenth of one percent of its income (UN Capital Development Fund 2006).

Table 1: List of Least Developed Countries as at 2005

Afghanistan	Guinea	Sao Tome and Principe
Angola	Guinea-Bissau	Senegal
Bangladesh	Haiti	Sierra Leone
Benin	Kiribati	Solomon Islands
Bhutan	Lao People's Democratic	Somalia
Burkina Faso	Republic	Sudan
Burundi	Lesotho	Timor-Leste
Cambodia	Liberia	Togo
Cape Verde	Madagascar	Tuvalu
Central African Republic	Malawi	Uganda
Chad	Mali	United Republic of Tanzania
Comoros	Mauritania	Vanuatu
Democratic Republic of Congo	Mozambique	Yemen
Djibouti	Myanmar (Burma)	Zambia
Equatorial Guinea	Nepal	
Eritrea	Niger	
Ethiopia	Rwanda	
Gambia	Samoa	

Source: UNCDP 2000: para 109

Since the introduction of the LDC classification, these countries identified by the UN as the 'poorest of the poor' have been the specific objects of many international programmes, policies and strategies through efforts facilitated by LDC strategies and many others. However this classification initially designed to aid developing countries has seemingly had the opposite effect: not only has the number of countries classified as LDCs increased; further, it is recognised that inequality in the global economy is increasingly marginalising these countries as their indebtedness outstrips national GDP, a greater number of the world's population are living in poverty (World Bank 2000), and in many countries the economic and social conditions for economic growth are worsening (Akubue 2000; Arrighi 2002; Haque 2002). The LDC category is also used outside the UN. In

recent years the LDC category emerged as a critical issue within the Doha Round (or 'Development Round') of World Trade Organisation (WTO) talks, which sought to attain new trading benefits for LDCs (WTO 2000; WTO 2001; WTO 2006) as an attempt to address this situation[2].

There is the question of why one should examine a seemingly ignored category of UN policy, given that there have been so many international policy strategies produced by the UN on such a broad range of topics. Wolfe (1996) has argued that UN policy processes function as face-saving rituals for countries who like to appear as if they are addressing issues of human rights and development, particularly when it comes time to review implementation:

> The institutional imperatives to identify 'progress' that took at face value the 'national achievements' reported by governments, and the normative declarations approved by those governments, clashed with observable reality. (Wolfe 1996:1)

The procedures established within the collegial 'family of nations' (Hyndman 1998) at the UN ensured that bureaucracy numbed research reports and strategies:

> An intergovernmental body might direct the Secretariat to prepare a report for its next meeting on how to satisfy all human needs. Half a dozen functionaries would strain to do so. The result, which might be expected to have a reception equivalent to that of one of the great documentary landmarks of human history, would be tepidly approved or criticized and would disappear without trace into government archives and the storerooms of the issuing organisations, rarely remembered even by other functionaries preparing subsequent 'practical' reports. It might receive a brief mention in the more conscientious newspapers when it appeared, but scholarly journals would not trouble to review it. (Wolfe 1996:2)

This appears to be the fate of the LDC category. Created in 1971 as a mechanism to increase development assistance and effectiveness to the 'poorest of the poor', after ten years little had been achieved and the discursive response was to prepare a ten-year policy plan. The admitted lack of any improvement in LDC category countries at the conclusion of this first ten years led to a predictable discursive response, another ten-year plan. A third ten-year plan is in place now. As noted previously, at no point in my research for this thesis have I been able to identify any scholarly work analysing this category LDC. It is the productivity of LDC as a category within development discourse that is of such interest to me. Bringing this category out of the archives and into the realm of study is an act of forensic exploration of the production and reproduction of LDC category, and as such provides useful insights into development as discourse more broadly.

It is important to note that this category 'LDC' is different to the category 'Less Developed Countries' that was explored in James Ferguson's influential text on development in Lesotho (1994). Ferguson is describing a classification developed and used by the World Bank for internal fund allocation and development activity purposes. Given the prominence of the World Bank, the term has been taken up by

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[2] An example of these benefits can be seen in the initiative launched by the European Union (EU) In advance of this round of talks. The 'Everything But Arms' initiative was designed to give all LDCs equal access to EU markets for all products, goods and services except military manufactures (UNCTAD 2002: 224; Cernat et al 2003)

other multilateral and bilateral lending and development assistance organisations. Both 'Least Developed Country' and 'Less Developed Country' are part of a wide variety of classifications and groupings used by various development agencies and institutions, each of which may or may not be associated with an analytic approach and praxis[3]. For example, a term that emerged in the mid 1990s was 'HIPC', Highly Indebted Poor Country, which was associated with new strategies for debt-relief (Easterly 2002; Gautam 2003). One of the more recent terms to emerge from the World Bank is 'LICUS', Low-Income Countries Under Stress (World Bank 2005), associated with the provision of new grants for a small range of development activities to support basic social services (for example, for countries who have defaulted on loans, or who may have recently been or currently are in conflict).

This thesis is a study of development discourse through the core texts associated with the administration of the UN's category LDC over thirty years, including UN committee reports, international UN strategies and data. It focuses on the construction and generation of a discourse. As a discourse analysis of international development policy and its administration, this study pays particular attention to the presence or absence of gender as a way of placing third world women at the centre and starting point of analysis (Bhavnani, Foran and Kurian 2003). In so doing, this project will explore some of the ways in which development is a site of contest and debate, both in its praxis and in its conceptual foundations. A particular contribution of this thesis is the bringing together of post-modern influenced critiques of development with gender analysis, a noticeable absence from the seminal work of Escobar[4], Esteva, Ferguson and Sachs.

With the use of gender analysis, the thesis will explore three key areas of development discourse: I have termed 'technologies of knowledge', policy, classification and data. The central contention of this thesis is that UN policy on the LDCs provides an important, useful, and previously ignored example of how development functions as a discourse, and that a critical characteristic is that it is constrained in its ability to comprehend, describe and promote change in developing countries. After extensive reviews of the literature, it has become clear that the UN's LDC category has not been the subject of academic research or analysis. In exploring the way that this category operates as a discourse I have focused on assessing how the category includes and excludes gender analysis in its operation. This fundamental connection is based on an understanding that as women are over-represented in the populations who are the 'poorest of the poor', gender analysis is critical to policy initiatives designed to ameliorate poverty in the group of countries that identified as the 'poorest of the poor'.

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[3] The production of new terminologies and categories is a characteristic of international development discourse, and constantly subject to debate. See Liou and Ding (2002) for an interesting debate about the inadequacy of broad categories and large groupings of developing small states, which concludes that new categories are required.

[4] I am aware that Escobar has collaborated with Wendy Harcourt to produce *Women and the Politics of Place*, published by Kumarian Press in October 2005. Unfortunately due to problems with the Australian distributors, I have not been able to obtain this in time to include it in this thesis.

Gendered Perspectives

Since the category LDC was created by the UN gender disparities continue to exist, and are prevalent in every region of the world in various forms (King and Mason 2001). These persisting gender-based inequalities are evident in terms of morbidity, mortality, health, poverty, education, and access to services, employment, credit, land, basic rights, and levels of participation in decision-making. An increasing feminisation of poverty has been frequently linked with the implementation of structural adjustment policies, and with the increasing prevalence of female-headed households, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America (Ashfar and Dennis 1992; Baden et al 1998:4; Beneria and Bisnath 1996; Stewart 1995). This information has been used to argue that as national poverty disparities increase, there is an increasingly greater impact on women (Simmons 1992). This is not to say that all women are poor, and all the poor are women, to paraphrase Kabeer (1994). It is, rather, an argument that the gendered dimensions of poverty are a critical component of the social context is any given country or community. It is an argument that if one is to focus on the poorest of the poor, then surely one should focus on women.

This leads to a core question within this project: If the LDC category is designed to alleviate poverty in the countries that have been identified as the 'poorest of the poor', to what extent do these strategies recognise women in LDCs and the gendered disparities in the prevalence of poverty? This question then leads to others. How are the gendered dimensions of poverty present in these international policy texts about the LDCs? How is the 'network of filiations' (to paraphrase Said) present when searching policy texts for acknowledgements of gendered disparities? How does the appearance or absence of gendered approaches and strategies play out existing tensions in the production and reproduction of development discourse?

This thesis' exploration of development discourse is situated within postcolonial and feminist readings of gender and development, such as those by Bhavnani, Foran and Kurian (2003), Marchand and Parpart (1996), Mohanty (1991, 1997), Narayan (1997), and Spivak (1999). In this it will examine aspects of the politics of representation of women and poverty, with a particular focus on the UN international policy on the LDC as a site of contested gendered development discourse. In charting the making and unmaking of the LDC within development discourse, this thesis will identify the presences and absences of the gender analysis.

The analysis will apply key questions to identify the status of gender analysis within the intergovernmental development texts produced at the start of each ten-year UN plan for the LDCs: Is development considered to be gender-neutral in the construction of these policies? When is gender important within this discourse and when is it silenced? Where gender is brought into development discourse, what theoretical models of gender and development are being employed? What are the processes of discursive construction and production of the identities, communities, needs and priorities of the global poor and global women? This thesis highlights that, at a time when gender analysis in international development practice grew in prominence and recognition with the series of UN international conferences on the

status of women in 1975, 1980, 1985 and 1995, it was poorly applied when used in these international development strategies for LDCs. Gender analysis in international development practice and research in these three decades has not only increased in prominence and recognition, but has also undergone major changes in approach from women in development (Boserup 1971), to women and development (Mies 1982, 1986; Visvanathan 1997), to gender and development (Moser 1993; Ostergaard 1992; Wallace and March 1991) and gender mainstreaming (Woodford-Berger 2004; Subrahmanian 2004). This is discussed in detail in Chapter 1 as part of the discussion that locates this thesis within postmodern-influenced critiques of development theory and praxis, and feminist interventions in development discourse.

Technologies of Knowledge

My reading of LDC category is influenced by Foucauldian theories of knowledge-making which have identified the ways in which discourse functions both as a means of producing knowledge and wielding power. This relationship and the phrase 'technologies of knowledge' is explained in Chapter 1. It is based on the postmodernist insight that all knowledge is based on a paradigm of what 'counts' as knowledge, what information can incorporated as valid within a particular discipline or way of knowing. Chapter 1 locates the methodology and research approach of this thesis within postmodern-influenced readings of development as discourse, and the body of feminist interventions and critiques of development theory and praxis. This case study of UN LDC category explores the ways in which it functions as a discourse of development. This analysis of how the category LDC functions within development discourse charts what I propose are three key identifiable technologies of knowledge: policy, categorisation using criteria, and data. Throughout the thesis gender analysis is critical in identifying and exploring how these technologies of knowledge operate.

The discussion of these three technologies of knowledge – policy, category criteria and data – is framed by a discussion of development discourse and gender analysis in Chapter 1 'Key concepts and analytical approach'. The discussion on gender positions this analysis as influenced by the trajectory of feminist engagements with development as both as a theoretical discourse and as praxis. The discussion on development positions this work within post-development critiques of development policy, practice and theory. In reading all these texts about the UN LDC category and policy what has become clear, and what I document in Chapters 2, 3 and 4, is a repeated shifting of LDC women from invisibility to visibility and back again. Discursive gendered assumptions are visible through both many absences and some rare specific mentions of LDC women. The analysis in this thesis highlights gendered aspects of the boundaries of what development is, whom it is for and how it can be understood.

Chapter 2 'Policy texts: structured representations' focuses on an analysis of this technology of knowledge, policy. Policy articulates definitions of conceptions of development, and outlines endorsed authoritative directions for action, through recommendations for a wide range of actors with influence. This chapter explores the ways in which women have been represented in the three ten-year long

international strategies adopted by the United Nations General Assembly to alleviate poverty in the LDCs, covering the periods 1981-1991, 1991- 2001 and 2001- 2011. This discussion focuses on the ways that processes of policy formation and recommendation constrain analysis of the situation in LDCs. The analysis covers thirty years of international development policy through these major policy strategies. While there is some change over this period, the gender roles represented are limited. In addition, despite the rhetoric to the contrary, gender analysis and issues of importance to women remain marginal to the central policy recommendations. Furthermore, these policy initiatives tend to locate agency/responsibility for women's issues solely with the LDCs themselves, without supporting recommendations for assistance with the full range of development partners, including donors and multilateral agencies. What becomes clear in this examination is that throughout this time period these policies are unable to move beyond a narrow, 'culture-free' analysis of the situation in LDCs and as a consequence, are unable to move beyond a narrow development approach in which gender is always marginal.

Chapter 3 'Category LDC: acts of administration' focuses on the creation and administration of the category itself as a technology of knowledge. This chapter focuses on the way in which the category LDC is defined. It is based on extensive primary research of the reports of the body that oversees the administration of the countries included, the United Nations Committee for Development Planning (UNCDP) 1981-2004. This research revealed the significance of the criteria in administration of the LDC category. The chapter begins with a discussion of the constitution of the UNCDP. It then explores in detail the ways in which gender is introduced into the analysis undertaken by this UN Committee, identifying the gender roles identified by the Committee as relevant to LDCs in development planning and policy. This discussion is followed by an examination of the criteria used in determining LDC status and identifying the factors that have been the main drivers behind changes implemented over time. It becomes clear that the criteria invite a narrow, mechanistic and limited range of knowledge of development context. The chapter undertakes a detailed survey of the ways in which the Committee has applied the LDC criteria in making its determinations about which countries have been included or excluded and why. I argue in this chapter that the process of administering the category LDC seems to produce a circular self-referential discourse where every issue and every country's situation seems to come back to the criteria and the difference between the information they include and what is outside their scope. This circular mode of operation inhibits the ability for this discourse to incorporate broader issues in LDC country assessments and reviews. I argue that fundamentally, this characteristic of this technology of knowledge inhibits the UNCDP's ability to introduce and apply gender analysis to its work and recommendations.

Chapter 4, 'Data- knowing by numbers' focuses on data as a technology of knowledge. Data are the types of policy facts used by this administrative regime in defining, categorising, analysing and monitoring the development context in LDCs. I argue that data operates as a technology of knowledge in LDC discourse to limit the type of information used in understanding the dynamics of poverty in LDCs. This chapter is based on research on the data within the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Least Developed Countries Reports from

2002 and 2004. None of the data used in determining LDC status is disaggregated by sex, neither is the data used in the poverty analyses produced in these two reports. The chapter explores what this data reveals about LDCs as well as analysing what is 'outside the frame'. The chapter begins with a discussion of the use of the nation-state as a unit of analysis, and draws on feminist critiques of international relations and liberal economics to question the utility of this reliance on national level aggregates. This examination of data focuses on the three LDC criteria. Focusing first on the low- income criteria, the chapter explores readings of national poverty indicators, notably how these can reveal comparative information about the differences between nation states but are limited in their ability to describe poverty in the countries themselves. The chapter then discusses the other two criteria, national economic vulnerability and human assets and reveals the limits of these criteria in identifying the complexity of the development context in the LDCs. This is made explicit in a specific discussion of the development impacts of HIV/AIDS and conflict, both factors currently excluded from the range of formal policy facts used in LDC policy analysis. Throughout this discussion, the inability of the data to incorporate information that would enable gender analysis is used as an illustrator of how the data operates as a technology of knowledge in LDC category discourse.

The conclusion reframes the initial questions asked in the introduction about the relationship between LDCs and gender, and the worldly operation of policy texts, with a summary of the three technologies of knowledge and how they have revealed some of the discursive boundaries of UN LDC policy, particularly through its inability to incorporate gender analysis.

At the outset of this thesis I would like to state that my argument does not address *realpolitik* questions about the failure of LDC strategy to alleviate poverty. In so doing, I want to make clear that I do not argue that the invisibility of gender is the sole cause of this failure, nor is the lack of gender analysis the key to the inadequacy of LDC policy. This would deny the role and significance of the many other contributing factors to the current state of affairs in those countries identified as LDCs, including shifts in trade and commodity prices; the impact of globalisation; HIV/AIDS; national levels of indebtedness and the impact of structural adjustment reforms; the impact of the high reliance on aid; and the presence of internal and external civil unrest, destabilization, overt conflict and warfare. Rather, through this exploration of UN LDC development discourse, I will be exploring how these strategies operate when the gendered nature of poverty is *not* a central concern. What this analysis of LDCs category and policy provides is an appreciation of the connections that can be made between gender analysis and analysis of the operation of development as discourse. Through this work this thesis seeks to place women in the third world at the centre of analysis, and provide a modality for recognising the importance of critical reflection within development theory and praxis.

Chapter 1: Key concepts and analytical approach

What is immediately clear in beginning to research the LDC category within UN development discourse is the glaring absence of academic literature on the subject of the LDC category. In the years since this project commenced in 1999, the situation hasn't changed. While there is material produced about the category by governments[5] and UN agencies, and there are no analytic studies describing the evolution and changes in the development of this category, there are no analytic works exploring the linkages between shifts in policy emphasis of the LDC category with the wider debates within development discourse, or indeed international relations. Mawdsley and Rigg (2002) observed a similar absence of discourse analysis in their survey of the World Bank's World Development Reports 1978 to 2002.

This absence of academic work on this rich source of material about development continues to be a source of curiosity. Why is it that the UN's international LDC policy focusing on alleviating poverty in a group of countries defined and categorized as the poorest of the poor has not attracted academic researchers? Why is it that the disjunction between the continued international LDC policy efforts by the UN and the development trajectory of these LDC countries towards an increasing and entrenched socioeconomic poverty over the last 30 years has not caught the attention of development research specialists and analysts to examine the LDC category? Particularly as there are now extensive bodies of research into poverty alleviation strategies and efforts by international institutions such as the World Bank (Ferguson 1990; Mawdsley and Rigg 2002; Shepherd 2001) and the United Nations Agencies (Hyndman 1998; Wolfe 1996) and those of bilateral donors (Edwards and Hulme 1998; Lensink and White 1999) and non-government organisations (Botes and van Rensburg 2000; Fernando 1997). These questions are not ones for me to answer, but they are a driver behind the longevity of my personal interest in this particular project. They have also defined the research approach required, and its difficulties.

This chapter begins with an outline of the research methodology, focusing on the primary texts and archival material located and examined in undertaking this thesis research. This discussion on research methodology outlines the primary document research and the key sources used. The chapter then locates this archival material as a product of development discourse, by moving through an outline of the postmodern-influenced readings of development as discourse and gender and development that have influenced the thesis. I then introduce the concept of the technologies of knowledge that will be drawn upon in the ensuing three chapters. This is located explicitly within Foucauldian theory, and linked with Escobar's use

[5] See Productivity Commission (2002) for an example of national government study. This is an assessment of the impact on the Australian economy and businesses of removing tariffs on LDC exported goods to Australia.

of Foucauldian theory in his analyses of development as discourse. The chapter is then divided into two key sections, titled 'Analysing gender' and 'Analysing development'. The section' Analysing gender' locates the approach to gender analysis used in the thesis within the rich and diverse trajectory of feminist engagements with development. The discussion then links the three main approaches within development studies, Women in Development (WID), Women and Development (WAD), and Gender and Development (GAD), and the post-colonial critiques of these three approaches. This section then introduces the approach used to gender analysis in the thesis, before outlining a key premise of the approach, the feminisation of poverty. The section 'Analysing development' begins with various definitions of development, and then outlines key models of development theory: the modernisation and dependency schools. The section then moves into a discussion of post-development critiques of development, which link development discourse with Western European enlightenment metanarratives. It then moves through a discussion of three core elements of development discourse: with the concepts of poverty, planning and progress that are identifiable in the LDC development discourse. It concludes with a discussion of Shestra's tale of being introduced to development as discourse and praxis that demonstrates the discursive dependence of development on these three concepts and their transformative interaction with local cultures.

Accessing the archives

Given the absence of secondary literature on LDC category and policy, the dominant research methodology has been primary document research. This has led to a strong emphasis on identifying and recording debates and issues as outlined in these primary documents to establish the basis for analysis and discussion. The research for Chapter 2 involved locating and examining in detail the UN's three decade long policies for LDCs adopted in 1981, 1991 and 2001. I was able to attend the 2001 UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries as a representative of the World YWCA, an international women's organisation with consultative status at the United Nations and participated as a member of the NGO Gender Caucus. The experience of observing the dynamics in the UN production of a policy text, particularly seeing who is heard and when, led me to identify, analyse and question LDC development texts' discursive authority. In accordance with feminist research methodologies that use self-reflexivity to locate the researcher, I have considered my own position, as one with a physical voice present in the discussion where the text was negotiated. I have contrasted this with the position of those whom the text is about and for but who were not present. This disparity and power inequity this identified gives this process of questioning the authority of the LDC discourse even more urgency.

The research for Chapter 3 involved significant documentary research. The history of the development debates and changes within the LDC category are found in the minutes and reports of the United Nations Committee for Development Planning. Created in 1965, this Committee reports to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and since the creation of the category of LDC in 1971, has been mandated by ECOSOC to monitor the international development socio-economic context of LDCs, and assess the composition and criterion used within

the LDC category. The research has involved sifting through years of musty yellowed UN documents. A number of early records of this Committee's operation have not been available to this research project, as they have been lost, misplaced or destroyed in Australian collections[6]. The assistance of librarians at the State Library of South Australia and the State Library of New South Wales has been invaluable in locating records of the meetings of this Committee in the 1980s and onwards, and the associated resolutions within the United Nations Economic and Social Council. This research project has used ECOSOC records as the primary material for the Committee's early work from 1965. I have undertaken a thorough reading of reports from the United Nations Committee for Development Planning (UNCDP), now known as the Committee for Development Policy, for the twenty-three year period 1981- 2004.

The main objective of this primary research for Chapters 2 and 3 has been to look at the ways in which the boundaries of the category LDC have changed, in terms of the criteria which define it, and in terms of the way in which it has been both a chart of the increased prevalence of poverty in the world, through the increase of countries within the category, and the way in which the pressures to shift the measurement of the category have been a result of individual countries seeking to join the grouping for the perceived benefits it can accrue to them. The primary source documents that are available have been able to illustrate this over the last two decades.

The research for Chapter 4 involved close examination of the two most recent Least Developed Country reports produced by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) from 2002 and 2004. This has focused Chapter 4 on the most recent approaches and data available. I should note that these reports have no formal relationship informing the work of the UNCDP in administering the LDC category. The differences in the historical approach adopted to the examination of the UNCDP activities and the international policy documents and the shorter-term approach to the data analysis is a result of the research process itself. The initial focus of this thesis was the three ten-year international LDC programmes of action documents, which sparked an interest in the institutional practices and organisations that were associated with the LDC category, their origin and changes to the category over time. This institutional context for LDC category administration became a major focus of the research and analysis processes. The examination of data on LDCs began as a tool to gain a sense of current poverty levels in LDCs after more than thirty years of efforts to address this via the LDC category and the three ten-year programmes of action. This examination was driven by concern as all three UN LDC policy texts talk about how poverty in LDCs has increased and I wanted to get a sense of what these new levels of poverty were. However far from obtaining a clear sense of poverty levels, the process of examining these data reports in the context of the UNCDP records and the international policy texts made me realise the discursive authority of data and the limited picture it presents within LDC development discourse. This is particularly the case in the way that data structures what is known within LDC

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[6] As this is a Masters research thesis, I have focused my research efforts on library collections that are accessible within the available travel and time restrictions of part time study.

category development discourse about poverty in LDCs. The contemporary focus of the chapter on data provides connections with the current UN LDC policy 2001-2011 and the more recent meetings with the UNCDP, creating a means to feature contemporary LDC development discursive practices within this historical survey. This contemporary emphasis highlights that the issues of gender blind policy and practice, and discursive limitations to LDC analysis identified throughout this thesis, are not things of the past, but are very much of the here and now.

Approaching analysis

In this analysis, I have drawn insights from the work of others, but have not sought to re-apply in this case study of LDC category and policy an approach established and applied in other analyses of UN development discourses. Clearly a critical text is Ferguson's (1990) seminal analysis of World Bank policy and practice in Lesotho. Using the stark disjunction of established facts about Lesotho between academic historical discourse and a 1975 World Bank country report, Ferguson draws on Foucault to analyse the production of development knowledge. In this work Ferguson charts the making of Lesotho into a 'Less Developed Country', with specific attributes requiring specific forms of development assistance from the World Bank, and then maps the effects of this through the design assumptions and implementation effects of a five year joint World Bank–Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) development project.

This is a different LDC category to the category LDC that I am examining in this thesis. It is not simply a matter of different nomenclature in the acronym, 'Less' versus 'Least'. Lesotho is both a 'Less Developed Country' in the World Bank report analysed by Ferguson, and a 'Least Developed Country' according to the United Nations Committee for Development Planning (UNCDP). These two categories LDC are different in several ways. Firstly, there is the different institutional home, the World Bank and the UNCDP within the UN. Secondly, there is the role of these different institutions within development praxis, the World Bank as an implementing agency of development assistance, and the UNCDP as an observer, documenter and measurer of development trends. The effects of these differences are that the terms are used in different ways. The LDC characteristics identified by the World Bank form the basis of a poverty problem analysis that has direct links to a development fix or 'cure'. The UNCDP, without such a direct link to funded development activities, seeks to ensure that its recommendations and analysis have authority and credibility so they can exercise influence over development activities supported by national governments and development agencies. As a result the UNCDP attempts to increase the rigour of the criteria that determine category LDC and processes by which the criteria are applied.

These differences aside, Ferguson's analysis identifies some critical characteristics 'development' and of category LDC produced in the development discourse on Lesotho, which also appear in the discourse of this category LDC. Notably, Ferguson argues that the development discourse produces knowledge about Lesotho that means it is defined as a LDC, requiring "the technical, apolitical, 'development' intervention" (Ferguson 1990:28). The nature of the 'development' intervention is defined by Ferguson as the conflation of two distinct meanings: a

progression over time of a national economy to modern industrial capitalism and the alleviation or eradication of poverty amongst the population of a given nation state. Ferguson argues that the characteristics of Lesotho becoming a LDC requiring development assistance are that it has an 'aboriginal economy', is predominantly 'agricultural', has a 'national economy' and is subject to the principle of 'governmentality'. Another important linkage between the operations of the two categories LDC is the use of statistics to develop analysis that supports the argument that Lesotho is a LDC, which is explored in Chapter 3.

A critical point where my analysis departs from Ferguson's is the absence of gender analysis within his work. This thesis identifies a critical role for gender analysis. Asking the questions 'where are the women?' and 'who are the women?' exposes key constructs within development discourse, making an important entry point into analysis that does not repeat the assumed gender neutrality that development discourse frequently implicitly claims. Ferguson's work does not use any gender analysis in examining the effects of World Bank LDC policy and project effects in Lesotho. In this he continues the gender-blind traits of the World Bank's policy and project documents that are the subject of his study. This lack of attention to gender effects is interesting to note in itself, as by 1990 the prominence of gender analysis had been well established within development studies and praxis, but it also leads to some key questions about the World Bank work that are ignored in Ferguson's study. For example, Ferguson notes the history of predominantly male labour migration for wages, and contrasts this to the World Bank construction of the Lesotho population as farmers, but fails to note that this construction is gender blind. Critical questions about the gendered assumptions and effects within the World Bank policy paper and project are not raised or explored. Who are the farmers if 60% of the adult male labour force in Lesotho is waged labour in South Africa? What are the assumptions about who owns land, livestock and can get access to credit that are operating in project design and implementation? What are the impacts of these assumptions on the status of women?

Cooks and Isgro (2005) provide a useful example of analysis on UN policy that unlike Ferguson's work on LDCs, attempts to integrate gender analysis and development discourse analysis. This is outlined in their essay on the UN's 'Cyber Summit', the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). The texts analysed by Cooks and Isgro are those that were produced at the December 2003 WSIS, and the Preparatory Committee meetings in advance. Cooks and Isgro identify the assumptions about gender and development and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) within these texts and to assess the policy biases that will influence funding decisions for future UN 'women and ICT' projects. This reading adapts a 'technology–context scheme' developed by Houston and Jackson (2003, cited in Cooks and Isgro 2005:4-5) to analyse the relationship between the use of ICTs in different contexts. This scheme identifies four different approaches and puts these forward as four quadrants of a methodological schema that can be applied to assess issues, projects and policies. Cooks and Isgro adapt this schema and include an explicit gender analysis, proposing four new quadrants of questions to apply in analysis: technological determinism; technology as change agent; context as a filter; and integration.

While ICT specific, this analysis provides a useful example of a method to analyse UN policy texts that seeks to link gender analysis and post-development recognition of the importance of culture. However it is it too mechanistic as a methodology to be useful in this exercise examining LDC category. Firstly, the neatness of the dividing lines between the four areas doesn't recognise the fluidity required of recognition of multiplicity, and the interaction between different factors. Secondly, there is little room to recognise the inherent fallibility of the analytic exercise: to paraphrase Lorde (1981), the master's tools are still being used to break down the master's house. The lack of recognition of the power/knowledge dynamic in discourse production in the Cooks and Isgro analysis means that the dominant discourse dynamics are unidentified and unexplored. The presented common-sense objectivity of UN policy is unquestioned (master's house), and a scientifically objective methodology applied (master's tools).

The analysis I am undertaking and this work by Cooks and Isgro share a commitment to question and analyse constructions of gender and development discourse in UN policy, recognising the influence policy has in fund allocation and development practice, but their reductionist approach is too confining. I prefer to think of the analysis in this thesis as raising questions and exploring issues rather than reducing analysis to an authoritative schema that defines the questions and responses in advance. This is precisely an example of how knowledge is produced, setting up limitations on what is seen as knowledge, what is valid, with the potential to exclude information that crosses borders between quadrants, or sits outside the boxes, and produces an analysis that conforms to the approach.

Drawing explicitly on Foucault, Apthorpe (1996) proposes a methodology for reading development policy using discourse analysis. Termed an 'emancipatory reading,' this methodology focuses on development policy and examines in particular the mechanisms of 'framing', 'naming', 'numbering' and 'coding' that operate within development policy, particularly within the writing of policy texts:

> This study views policy as being analysis as well as policy, and analysis as being policy as well as analysis. Deeply to read policy and analysis of policy is to find devices of framing, naming and numbering, the sense-making codes of composition, and the ways in which analysis and policy are driven as well as served by them. These devices and codes operate within and beyond the writing immediately in view. So a closer reading requires a total picture of reason, rules, responsibility, authority and community as well as just text, subtext and context. (Apthorpe 1996: 16-17)

It is the both the spirit and some elements of the proposed praxis of this 'emancipatory reading' that I will draw upon in the discussions of the processes of categorising and classifying; data analysis and policy texts as technologies of knowledge within LDC discourse.

Technologies of Knowledge

The phrase 'technologies of knowledge' is inspired by the work of Michel Foucault, and seeks to indicate the way regimes of knowledge are also bound up with material practices and physical structures in a nexus of power/knowledge, such that they can be accurately called 'technologies'. The development of Foucault's work involves an increasing recognition that the knowledges of the human sciences are not simply intellectual practices, but material practices with

outcomes in the real world, just as a theoretical knowledge of explosives has a 'technological' outcome in the production of weapons.

In *The Order of Things* ([1966] 1973), Foucault was concerned with "the two great discontinuities in the 'episteme' of Western culture" (Foucault 1973: xxii), the beginning of the Classical age in the mid-seventeenth century, and the beginning of the modern age at the start of the nineteenth century. His analysis focuses on the sciences of philology, biology and political economy, and is primarily concerned with the external boundaries and internal structures of these disciplines as systems of thought, with the limitations of what it is possible to think in a given episteme.

In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* ([1966] 2004), Foucault laid out a methodological treatise for analysing the "rules of formation" of discourses of knowledge, and in particular, how discursive formations define their objects of study; produce authoritative speaking positions for their practitioners; lay out rules for the production of concepts; and produce strategies for the creation and expansion of knowledge (see *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Part 2, "The Discursive Regularities" (Foucault 2004: 21-85)). Here again, Foucault's primary focus is with the "conceptual foundation" of discourses, knowledge as an intellectual construct rather than as a form of material practice. It is not until *Discipline and Punish* ([1975] 1991), that Foucault begins to outline how systems of thought are also integrated with physical structures and material practices to produce a "technology of knowledge".

Michel Foucault's work is concerned to show that the rise of the so-called human sciences is inseparable from the rise of a new form of 'disciplinary' power used in the administration of individuals and populations through a range of discourses, from medicine and psychiatry, education and criminology. For Foucault, in an extension of the concept of 'panopticism' used in the model prisons of the nineteenth century, the techniques for the construction of knowledge about human populations – identification, classification, separation, measurement, surveillance and punishment or discipline – are also techniques in the exercise of disciplinary power to produce docile subjects, self-governing individuals and manageable populations:

> 'Discipline' may be identified neither with an institution nor with an apparatus; it is a type of power, a modality for its exercise, comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, targets; it is a 'physics' or an 'anatomy' of power, a technology. (Foucault 1991: 215)

For Foucault, this inter-penetration of power and knowledge involves not just new modes of thinking but also a range of physical structures and material practices and therefore should be thought of as a technology of power/knowledge.

> The formation of knowledge and the increase of power regularly reinforce one another in a circular process. At this point, the disciplines [cross] the 'technological' threshold. (Foucault 1991: 224)

In using the model of the panopticon, Foucault is concerned to show that the modern disciplinary modality of power/knowledge involves not just new modes of thought, but is also embedded in physical structures and material practices and activities which mean it is more properly considered as a technology for the management of human populations rather than simply a philosophy or a paradigm.

It is also in these intersections between modes of thought and praxis Foucault highlights the ways in which power is not simply exercised through coercive acts by a singular authority but has productive effects and impacts throughout society.

Escobar was an early proponent of the importance of Foucauldian discourse analysis in development studies. In an early article (1984-85), Escobar identifies 'development' as a grand narrative supporting inequitable political and economic relations between developed and 'developing countries':

> [The first one is] the discourse on the underdevelopment of the Third World constructed by the developed countries. This discourse is associated with the whole apparatus of development (from international organisations, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, to local-level development agencies) as well as the large number of theories of development produced especially by international organisations and by scholars at North American and European campuses. (Escobar 1984-85: 383)[7]

In this article Escobar argues that Foucauldian discourse analysis is critical:

> …without examining development as discourse we cannot understand the systematic ways in which the Western developed countries have been able to manage and control and, in many ways, even create the Third World politically, economically, sociologically and culturally; and that, although underdevelopment is a very real historical formation, it has given rise to a series of practices (promoted by discourses of the West) which constitute one of the most powerful mechanisms for insuring domination over the Third World today. (Escobar 1984-5: 384)

Escobar refers specifically to the elements that constitute development discourse and their modes of interaction as 'technologies':

> In this way, development will be seen, not as a matter of scientific knowledge, a body of theories and programs concerned with the achievement of true progress, but rather as a series of political technologies intended to manage and give shape to the reality of the Third World. (Escobar 1984-85: 384)

The phrase 'technologies of knowledge' fits well with this Foucauldian reading of development discourse. Escobar uses the term 'technologies' to describe both the structure of development discourse and the interactions between power and knowledge that make and are created by development praxis. This praxis, or 'deployment of development' as Escobar terms it, occurs in three major strategies: the identification and incorporation of problems into the sphere of relevance to development discourse; the creation of new specialist 'scientific and technical'

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[7] Escobar's work has provoked debate from a variety of perspectives. Grillo (1997) provides analysis of the use of discourse analysis and Foucauldian and post-structuralist readings of development. His reading of work by Escobar, as well as Ferguson and Hobart provides a cautionary tale to simplistic readings of their analyses that could see the complexity of these works reduced to simplistic arguments that 'development is bad'. Grillo's call to recognise multiplicity within analysis of development discourses is particularly useful for this analysis where essential and universalizing statements about women are the focus. Escobar's has not been the sole focus of these criticisms. Cecile Jackson's 1997 essay is an example of the criticism of postmodern influenced readings of gender and development debates and praxis.

areas of expertise required to address these problems; and the formation of new institutions to implement and oversight development practices. These are particularly relevant to this study of the creation of category LDC within development discourse and praxis, which involves institutional oversight, regular administration of membership and the creation of specific policy texts.

The phrase technologies of knowledge also locate the emphasis of this study of LDC category as a discourse analysis, where I identify key elements within the discourse, how they operate and some of the discursive effects. This work does not argue that these discursive operations effects are the expression of a particular ideology (Van Dijk 1995) as that would be a different thesis.

Following Foucault, and post-modern development theorists, I use the phrase 'technologies of knowledge' to suggest this inter-relationship of three aspects of development discourse: systems of thought (theories of economic development, inequality, etc); material practices (institutions such as the World Bank & IMF; loan and investment practices; bureaucratic procedures such as planning, statistical measurement and reporting against projected outcomes); and physical structures (where, on the model of the panopticon, typical development infrastructure – such as roads, schools, hospitals, communication systems – should be seen, not just as enabling economic development, but also as enabling the exercise of disciplinary power through the management and control of individuals and populations). The focus of this study is not on the discursive effects in terms of material practices and produced behaviours of populations, but on the internal mechanics of the produced knowledge about the LDCs and their populations within development discourse. A precise definition of the phrase 'technologies of knowledge' then is as a group of discursive devices, which function in a range of ways within the LDC discourse to produce knowledge and have material effects due to both their subject matter and modes of interaction within the discourse.

In examining gender and the operation of LDC development discourse through technologies of knowledge the discussion in this thesis is linked, as the discipline of development studies itself is linked, to a wide variety of fields: for example, international relations, economics, anthropology, geography, political science, sociology, philosophy, women's studies, gender studies and cultural studies. Before outlining the approach to gender analysis, I will locate this thesis and approach within the field of writing on women, gender and development.

Analysing Gender

This thesis is positioned within the terrain of post-modern and post-colonial influenced readings and critiques of the relationships between women, gender, culture and development. In undertaking this analysis and reading of LDC development discourse the thesis draws on rich and diverse traditions of feminist scholarship within both development and women's studies that has sought to describe and theorise women's experiences and lives in society. The following discussion will outline aspects of this tradition of feminist scholarship, and introduce key terms, assumptions and approaches I draw upon in undertaking a gender analysis of the technologies of knowledge of LDC category's operation.

In *The Second Sex* Simone de Beauvoir (1961) explored the historical and contemporary social experiences and status of women, concluding that the men viewed themselves as fundamentally different and superior to women and that the status of women is as 'the other'. This argument has been developed and extended in multiple and various ways by rich and diverse groupings of feminist theorists and researchers who have documented and theorized women's lives and status. Feminist approaches are themselves subject to considerable debate within feminist research and praxis, and have been broadly characterised into several streams with divergent views and perspectives on the position and status of women in society and contest terminology and definitions, for example:

> Gender is a contested term that has been analysed from different perspectives and with differing assumptions. It covers conceptions of sexuality and reproduction; sexual difference, embodiment, the social constitution of male, female, intersex, other masculinity, femininity; ideas, discourses, practices, subjectivities and social relationships. (Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002: 172)

The main strands of contemporary Western feminist thought can be identified as liberal, Marxist, radical, psychoanalytic and postmodern (Eisenstein 1984; Grieve and Burns 1986; Tong 1989). These Western feminist approaches have been challenged in multiple ways through interventions by women of colour who have argued the importance of recognizing the dynamics of racism in feminist analysis and in placing the stories and experiences of women of colour in the forefront of analysis (hooks 1981; James 1985; Moragan and Anzaldua 1981; Morrison 1993; Prescod-Roberts and Steele 1980; Purcell 2002; Williams, 1991). Throughout this debate and exchange, and despite this contestation of terminology, a fundamental characteristic of feminist readings of women's lives is the distinction between biological sex and gender roles (Oakley 1972). This is conceptualized as the ways in which the physical characteristics of women, particularly in relation to reproduction, are distinct from what has been identified as the tropes of women's socially ascribed roles, identified as gender characteristics. The former is constant, while the latter tropes are permeable and transitory, changing with historical and contemporary context, socio-economic position, culture, geography, and age.

This theoretical insight is a core element of contemporary feminist debate, and a central conceptual underpinning of the various ways in which feminist scholars have written and theorized about women and development. The three well acknowledged approaches are women in development (WID), women and development (WAD), and gender and development (GAD) theory and praxis (Marchand and Parpart 1995; Moser 1995; Parpart, Connelly and Barriteau 2000; Rathgeber 1995; Schech and Haggis 2000; Visvanathan 1997). Each of these major areas of feminist approach to development criticism, theory, advocacy and practice has a relationship with the major Western feminist approaches and theories of development.

The WID approach is aligned with liberal feminism and the modernisation model of development (Chowdhry 1995; Rathgeber 1995; Visvanathan 1997):

> Liberal-feminist analysis makes distinct the public-private dichotomy at the heart of modernization theorizing and policy development. It is easy to ignore women's contribution in the public domain because it is assumed

> that women work, and should work, within households. (Barriteau 2000: 168)

WID is closely associated with the early and critically influential contributions of Boserup (1970) about women in agriculture and Rogers' (1980) study of male bias in the development process, which influenced the emergence of the WID approach and its adoption by institutions (Koczberski 1998). In essence these arguments are that women have important contributions to make to development and need to be integrated into it, from the perspective of equitable rights to access the benefits of development. WID scholars, practioners and advocates challenged gendered assumptions about women's roles in developing societies that were influencing the implementation of development initiatives:

> The assumptions development planners make about women in society are almost never stated, but are all the more powerful for that reason. It is thought 'natural' that a woman's place is in the home and that she has a very specific set of tasks which are thought to be universal because they are based on the biological imperatives of sex. The most important role for women, defining their entire life, is portrayed as the bearing and bringing up of children. A man, on the other hand, is seen as the 'natural' head of the family, its representative in the outside world, and therefore the person with home planners will deal. (Rogers 1980:11)

Recent threads of this WID approach, known as the 'anti-poverty approach,' have argued that integrating women in development is an effective approach to alleviating poverty given their roles in supporting households. There is also the 'efficiency approach', which argued that integrating women in development is efficient as women have significant untapped labour which could be used productively in the formal economy and promote national economic growth (Moser 1995; Schech and Haggis 2000). The focus of the WID approach is on women, separated from a focus on their social roles. The core argument is that in not integrating women into these efforts the impacts of development on women are negative and there are missed opportunities for the greater success of development efforts. The WID approach still has significant influence within the contemporary practice of development institutions (Koczberski 1998).

The WAD approach developed as a feminist reaction and response to the WID approach, and argues from Marxist, socialist-feminist and dependency theorist perspectives that there is critical need to examine the dynamics of capitalism with women's experiences of development (Visvanathan 1997). In their preface to *The Women, Gender and Development Reader* (1997), editors Visvanathan, Duggan, Nisonoff and Wiegersma outline the emergence of WAD networks in North American universities in the 1970s and 1980s as researchers expressed concern about the lack of analysis of capitalism in WID and sought to share and promote research that linked studies of women's status and experiences of exploitation and subordination with explorations of international political economy and class differences. WAD also formed as a distinct approach in response to the perceived inadequacies of traditional Marxist and socialist theorizing that subordinated 'the woman question' to the class struggle (Pearson, Whitehead and Young [1981] 1984). The emergence of the WAD approach has been associated with the influential studies of Maria Mies (1982, 1986). In *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*, Mies argues that there is a fundamental relationship between capitalism and patriarchy:

> …it became clear to me that the confusions in the feminist movement worldwide will continue unless we understand that 'the woman question' in the context of all social relations that constitute our reality today, that means in the context of a global division of labour under the dictates of capital accumulation. The subordination and exploitation of women, nature and colonies are the precondition for the continuation of this model. (Mies 1986:2)

Mies' study *The Lace Makers of Narsapur* (1982) identified relationships between the exploited labour of third world women, whose products were purchased by women in developed countries. It outlined her thesis that capitalism was reinforcing patriarchal subordination of women, and challenged simplistic notions of a universal sisterhood where all women were the same, as clearly in this study, capitalism advantaged some women over others.

The WAD approach is also associated with studies of Trans National Corporations and the reliance of some forms of national economic development, particularly the development of new export-oriented industries, on women's labour in textile, garment, food processing and electronics Export Processing Zones (Iremonger and Hill 1998; Pettman 1996; Sasabe 1994; Sobieralski 2003; Valadez 1999).

> Socialist-feminist theories have contributed to the extensive examination of the ways women's labour is exploited in factories and export-processing zones. They have also documented how women receive lower wages for comparable work. They reveal the feminisation of certain occupations that occurred as women entered the labour force in increasing numbers. As the men moved out of certain occupations, these because "ghettoized" as women's work, with an accompanying decrease in status and wages. (Barriteau 2000: 168)

A central argument of the WAD approach in examining international divisions of labour is that the issue is not that women aren't integrated into development, but that women are in ways that are exploitative (Visvanathan 1997). More recent work from the WAD approach has linked the capitalist exploitation of women with the exploitation of the environment associated with international capitalism (Visvanathan 1997). This includes feminist theoretical debates and interventions charting the global nature of women's subjugation and the relationships between capitalist and military activity and women's exploitation, particularly through international divisions of labour (Enloe 1990; Enloe and Cohn 2003; Heyzer, Lycklama a Nieholt and Weerakoon 1994; Mies 1986; Pettman 1996; Thomas 2001; Valadez 1996). The WAD approach has been criticized for essentialist representations of women as victims of both capitalism and patriarchy (Schech and Haggis 2000).

The GAD approach emerged in the 1980s and seeks to take a broader perspective on cultural differences, recognizing that there were inherent assumptions about women's roles in society in both the WID and WAD approaches that could not readily apply in the diverse cultural settings that are the developing world. It sought to build on the WAD focus on political economy and to shift the focus from universalist representations of women to gender relations:

> We wanted to develop a theory of gender which was integrated into and informed by the general analysis of the changing world economy. Our aim was to develop analytical and conceptual tools to encompass not only

economic relations but also what have been termed the relations of
everyday life. In our discussions we found unhelpful many standard terms
current in discussions of women's position in society – such as exploitation,
oppression or patriarchy. (Pearson, Whitehead and Young 1984)

The GAD approach sought to recognise that relations between women and men
were not static and fixed, but changed as society and culture itself changed. It
recognised that development is not a singular act or linear path, but a complex
process of change (Visvanathan 1997: 23). A key aspect was identifying a key role
for the state in improving the status of women (Young 1997). GAD is also linked
with a heightened emphasis on the importance of the involvement of women
drawing on local knowledge themselves in determining appropriate development
activities, to promote women's empowerment (Schech and Haggis 2000).

The GAD approach sought to influence the practice of development agencies and
institutions, through gender planning, gender training, development project
implementation, evaluation and review (Ostergaard 1992). Feminist interventions
within development praxis have advocated for an increased focus on women and
gender considerations at the level of 'doing development', in project design,
planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and now in the field of
'gender mainstreaming' and analysing the achievements of these efforts (Moser
1995; Williams Seed and Mwau 1994; Woodford-Berger 2004; Koczberski 1998).
A contemporary approach used in development policy and practice is promoting
gender mainstreaming, which has sought to ensure that the marginality that has
been associated with separate women-oriented initiatives is usurped by the
incorporation of gender analysis and the implementation of gender specific
strategies that improve the status of women in all development initiatives (Reeves
and Baden 2000:12). This has been allied with an increased focus on the
description of the experiences of individual women, women's groups, and women
as a population group outlining gender-based differences and inequalities in
societies, countries, and regions. The gender mainstreaming approach has been
challenged in recent times as leading to a total loss of emphasis on issues affecting
women (Woodford-Berger 2004; Eyben 2004; Standing 2004; Subramanium 2004;
Mukhopadhyay 2004).

The WID, WAD and GAD approaches and associated development praxis have
been challenged by the perspectives of women from developing countries and from
post-colonial feminist theorists (Bhavnani, Foran and Kurian 2003; Mohanty and
Alexander 1997; Mohanty, Russo and Torres 1991; Minh-ha 1989; Narayan 1997;
Rajan 1993; Sittirak 1998; Spivak 1996), who have highlighted the politics of the
representation of women in developing countries:

> Feminist theories and critiques of development are instrumental in
> revealing that the countries of the South are not culturally, politically or
> economically homogenous. Nor are gender relations experienced in the
> same manner by all Third World women. Black feminist Audre Lorde has
> warned of the danger of implying that all women suffer the same
> oppression because they are women…black feminists have argued that this
> ignores the varieties and degrees of women's subordination. It also ignores
> how these experiences change with a woman's race, class, and cultural
> setting. There is more variation among countries in the South than among
> industrialised societies of the North. … The tendency to homogenize the

concept of The Third World woman and assume the universal applicability of these approaches to development creates specific problems for women in the South. (Parpart, Connelly and Barriteau 2000: 168-168)

These arguments highlight the ways in which WID/WAD/GAD approaches have claims to knowledge that locate expertise in the West. There has been a response to the charge that white Western women have imposed western feminist values and approaches with the emergence of broad, sweeping analyses of 'women in Africa', 'women in Asia', 'women in Latin America', 'women in the Pacific' and 'women in the Middle-east' by western women positioned as experts of an exotic other[8]. A criticism of these analyses is that they over simplify and homogenise and in the very desire to 'let women's voices be heard' have silenced diversity, experience and culture. A response to this concern has been an emergence of third world feminist scholars recording and promoting the perspectives and experiences of women in developing countries themselves to ensure these views were visible and in a stronger position to influence broader debates (Nnaemeka 1998).

In analysing WID/WAD/GAD as discourses, Sylvester (1996) argues that recognizing gender as a social construct challenges the ability of discourses to impose perspectives about the characteristics of 'women':

We can only assume that gender is a historically contingent set of local social assignments that we must discern and query, just as many of us routinely query terms like "development" or "progress". It seems obvious to say that people are not necessarily what they are called. Yet to query "women" can seem unnecessary and strange because women is so often a given. Surely all of us know women when we see them! But do we? Whose notions of "women" guide our vision and potentially freeze people in relation to their bodies and usual social assignments? What do people called women call themselves? Are there gaps between the usual self-confident understanding of women we speak about and the self-understandings that people negotiate for themselves in local contexts? (Sylvester 1996:184)

Sylvester argues that in accepting that gender is a social construction, one has to accept that as such gender identities change, shift and alter over time, through and in status, socio-economic and cultural position and circumstance. As a consequence the process of 'identifying women' is not simple or straightforward or value-free. The process of identifying women is complex, involves multiples perspectives and positions. The 'woman' and 'women' identified during the 'identification' and 'knowing' processes may experience themselves and their lives in different ways.

These post-colonial challenges to ways of knowing identify that classic WID and WAD approaches can treat women in developing countries as homogenous with the same views, perspectives and experiences; as powerless victims of patriarchy and/or colonialism and capitalism; and with set current and future social roles and interactions with development and social change (Goetz 1991). These challenges to universal concepts of womanhood require new approaches:

As a result of taking difference into account, feminist theorists are moving away from characterizing women as whole and alike toward distinguishing personal and separable identities for individual women and groups of

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[8] See de Ishtar 1994 and Brooks 1995 for examples of these analyses. They focus on 'women in the Pacific' and 'women in the Middle East' respectively.

women. In place of figuring out what one particular "thing" makes women women, most feminists are now differentiating women. (Moss and Matwychuk 2000: 82-83)

Narayan (1988) argues that in challenging discursive gender essentialism, a cultural essentialism also needs to be challenged:

While gender essentialism often equates the problems, interests and locations of some dominant groups of men and women with those of "all men" and "all women," cultural essentialism often equates the values, worldviews and practices of some socially dominant groups with those of "all members of the culture." (Narayan 1998: 88)

This discursive reliance on gender and cultural essentialisms is also apparent within third world feminist challenges against local fundamentalisms that find themselves positioned as "cultural traitors corrupted by the seduction of Western values" against a localised cultural essentialism (Narayan 1988:96). Narayan calls for the development of feminist approaches that challenge metanarratives of cultural and gender essentialism as an urgent task. There are some criticisms of these arguments. Including a concern that concepts of sisterhood for collective organising and agency are made problematic and that these critiques do not provide space to alleviate or ameliorate poverty (Jackson 1997). Responses to this concern have highlighted the ways that critiques of the politics of representation that draw on postcolonialism lead to new ways of theorizing and praxis, as McEwan (2001) argues:

Postcolonial feminisms therefore have the potential to contribute to the critical exploration of relationships between cultural power and global economic power. Moreover they point towards a radical reclaiming of the political that is occurring in the field of development and in the broader field of transformation. (McEwan 2001:107)

Bhavnani, Foran and Kurian (2003) propose new visions of theoretical ways forward that link women, culture and development, placing women at the centre of analysis away from discursive margins and placing culture on a par with political economy, recognising both the social construction of gender relations and the diversity of cultural positions. Postcolonial critiques of feminist theories of development are useful in linking the authority of Western dominated discourses with the exercise of Western power   The analysis of discourses, including WID/WAD/GAD identifies important insights into the historical antecedents of discourse and praxis, but also identifies new connections and principles for further analysis.

Gender analysis

Gender analysis within development studies has developed in various ways over the years and different trajectories of WID/WAD/GAD theorist and practioner writings. A definition of gender analysis is:

The systematic gathering and examination of information on gender differences and social relations in order to identify, understand and redress inequities based on gender. (Reeves and Baden 2000: 6)

Reeves and Baden (2000) describe gender analysis as a tool for development planning and practioners the components and approach of which is influenced by the particular institution involved. In this is it is linked to the programmes of gender training and policies of gender mainstreaming that have been adopted by development institutions such as bilateral donors, NGOs and multilateral agencies.

The work of Caroline Moser (1995) has been influential in establishing approaches to gender analysis in her work on gender planning. She articulated an approach that identified gender roles, and differentiated between meeting basic gender needs that supported women fulfilling social roles and responsibilities and strategic gender needs, which supported women's empowerment. In so doing she sought to develop a new approach to gender planning which integrated gender analysis within development institution training and project planning practices. This approach is reliant on homogenous notions of gender roles and has a strong emphasis on women's roles in the household. Reeves and Baden describe a newer social relations approach that has a broader focus and looks at gendered power relations in the community, the private and public sectors as well as the household:

> The aim is to understand the dynamics of gender relations in different institutional contexts and thereby to identify women's bargaining position and formulate strategies to improve this. (Reeves and Baden 2000: 6)

Reeves and Baden note that this approach has not been widely adopted by development institutions.

A commonality between these different approaches is that they all sit within realist epistemologies that assume that 'reality' can be understood and described by an objective researcher. Foucauldian theory provides feminist researchers with new freedom to explore what knowledge has been presented to be common sense, identifying and analysing the ways of knowing within different discourses:

> [Foucauldian theory] unsettles what is taken for granted in existing ways of thinking so that people are free or at least freer to recognise how authoritative knowledge is socially constituted …it shifts the focus of empirical investigation onto how discourses are constituted, the varying ways in which texts/evidence can be read, and what effects particular forms of knowledge have. (Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002:88)

In their survey of feminist research methodologies Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002) describe feminist approaches to gender analysis as fundamentally based on a theory of gender and power. They identify three critical components to contemporary feminist analyses of gender relations. The first component is a commitment to exploring relations between knowledge and power, "assuming the inseparability of politics, theory and epistemology" (Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002: 65). This involves challenging and opposing enlightenment traditions that depend on gendered hierarchical dualisms between the public and private, which locates women in subordinate discursive positions aligned with nature and lack of reason. It also involves challenging the enlightenment tradition of a scientific research method assuming that a singular approach to knowledge can create a full and total representation of reality. The second component Ramazanoglu and Holland identify is the importance placed on locating the researcher, and making the researcher and reader visible within the analytic approach. The third component is a commitment to take into account the full diversity of women's lives and experiences and the complexity of power relationships between women. This component challenges assumptions that women and men operate as universal categories.

In linking an exploration of technologies of knowledge with gender analysis in this thesis I am drawing most closely on these feminist approaches to gender analysis and the rich tradition of feminist engagements with development discourse and

praxis. Throughout the analysis of primary material on LDCs I draw on this approach outlined by Ramazanoglu and Holland to unsettle discursive assumptions, identify and disturb a discursive reliance on the universal and identify discursive dynamics of the politics of representing women in the third world. The precise definition of gender analysis in this thesis is the process of identifying the gendered differences and inequalities between the social, economic and cultural experiences of diverse women and men, recognizing that the inequitable positions of researcher and 'knowledge object' mean that all attempts to represent reality can only ever provide a partial picture.

Feminisation of poverty

A foundation of this thesis is the premise that women, particularly women in LDC countries, are disproportionately represented amongst the poorest of the poor. By using gender analysis as the starting point I have sought to shift third world women from the marginal place LDC category discourse has allocated them, to the centre of the analytic stage. The feminisation of poverty and the overrepresentation of women amongst the poor are facts that have been adopted by international development organisations such as Oxfam International, multilateral bodies such as the World Bank and the United Nations Development Fund for Women, and academic researchers. This is based on a conception of poverty as multidimensional; that understands poverty as a material fact with material effects and also as the result of the interconnections between institutions and ideologies that are gendered (Beneria and Bisnath 1996; Narayan et al 2000). It is also based on an acceptance of the existence and perpetuation of gender inequalities that discriminate against women (King and Mason 2001: 4). As Schech argues:

> After all, systematic and widespread gender inequality in opportunity, representation and decision-making in the household and in society has long been recognised to exacerbate women's poverty, and was highlighted in the World Bank's consultations with the poor as a formidable barrier to poverty reduction (Narayan et al 2000). (Schech 2006: 1)

However, while there are studies on the gendered impacts of globalisation and structural adjustment, there is rarely substantive quantitative data to substantiate this. A rare example of data that does demonstrate an increase in poverty amongst women over time is cited by Baden et al, which is based on aggregations of household survey data disaggregated by sex. There is no such data available within official LDC texts, either in considerations by the UNCDP, the reports by UNCTAD or the UN policies.

Table 2: Total number of rural people living below the poverty line by sex, 1965-70 and 1988 (in millions).

	1965-1970	1988	% change
Women	383,673	564,000	47.0
Men	288,832	375,481	30.0
Total	672,505	939,481	39.7

Source: IFAD cited by Buvinic in 1993, cited by Baden et al 1998:17

This lack of internationally comparable longitudinal quantitative data is concerning (Elson 2001). In part as a response to this lack of specificity to the assertion of

women as the poorest of the poor, the growth of female-headed households is frequently used as a proxy measure for the feminisation of poverty (Chant 2004). This has been challenged as a measure for its inherent homogenizing assumptions which do not take account of the diversity of women's lives and the circumstances in which they may be heading a household, particularly if female –headed households become a disproportionately dominant 'target' of development assistance efforts in a particular community (Chant 2004: 19-22). Similarly, the prevalence of women in the unstable informal labour market is identified as a reason why there is a disproportionate representation of women in poverty and vulnerable to poverty (UNIFEM 2005). However concerns about the lack of 'hard data' replicates a discursive priority placed on the numeric, measured and quantified. It should not obviate the significance of my imperative to focus on the discursive constructions of the diverse lives and experiences of women living in LDCs. Data disaggregated by sex may be marginal to the data collectors, but I will not use this as an excuse to repeat and continue this discursive marginality in my thesis.

Analysing Development

As a discipline and praxis development studies is relatively young, emerging only in the 1950s out of the Truman Doctrine in the US (Escobar 1995) and in the discursive relationships between colonial and newly independent states (Cooper 1997). However, it has only been relatively recently that the discipline itself has emerged as a key area of focus (Cowan and Shenton 1996; Escobar 1995; Ferguson 1990; Munck and O'Hearn 1999; Pieterse 1991; Rahnema and Bawtree 1997; Sachs 1992; Sittirak 1998; Spivak 1999), as postmodern and postcolonial theoretical interventions in related fields and disciplines within the humanities and the social sciences have begun to influence an increasing number of researchers, practitioners and theoreticians. Foucauldian readings of discourse and institutional practices have played a significant role in this area of study (Apthorpe 1996, 1997; Briggs 2002; Escobar 1984-85).

It has been observed that defining development is difficult, as there are many different meanings (Cowan and Shenton 1996: 3) and definitions. Ferguson (1990) argues that development has two particular meanings which, despite their differences, are linked. The first meaning or definition of development is the notion of a movement of a national economy towards modern industrial capitalism. The second meaning or definition of development is an altruistic one, promoting improved quality of life and the alleviation or eradication of poverty.

> It should be clear upon inspection that the development of capitalism and the elimination of poverty are, if not positively antithetic (as many neo-Marxists argue), at any rate not identical. But it seems to be a theoretical necessity in 'development' discourse … for the two notions of 'development' to be co-present and even conflated. This is nowhere more apparent that in the definition of countries full of poor people as 'less developed countries'.   The implicit argument is of the sort known to logicians as a fallacy of equivocation, of the form: (1) all banks have money; (2) every river has two banks; therefore (3) all rivers have money. The fallacy, of course, consists in changing the meaning of one of the terms

> of the syllogisms in the middle of the implication. The 'development' version goes as follows: (1) poor countries are (by definition) 'less developed'; (2) less developed countries are (by another definition) those which have not yet been fully brought into the modern economy; therefore, (3) poor countries are those which have not yet been fully brought into the modern economy. (Ferguson 1990:55-6)

The conflation of these two definitions, particularly the assumption within the second definition that all functions are good as they are provided with goodwill to alleviate poverty and suffering, has the function of de-politicizing actions proposed and undertaken in the name of 'development'. This turns development discourse into an 'anti-politics machine', by which actions as fundamental as changing land tenure systems are seen in discursive terms as merely technical acts, neutralized by their technical nature and the good outcomes that are assumed to be the result.

Models of development

In terms of models of development, Hart (2001) has a useful description of models belonging to either capital 'D' or small 'd' development:

> 'big D' development defined as the post-second world war project of intervention in the 'third world' that emerged in the context of decolonisation and the cold war, and 'little d' development or the development of capitalism as a geographically uneven, profoundly contradictory set of historical processes. (Hart 2001: 650)

In making this distinction Hart draws on the changes and challenges to the World Bank's market based approach to promoting national growth and development, termed the Washington Consensus. She highlights challenges to this approach from both the recognition of the role of the state in the East Asian economic miracle of the early 1990s, and the response by the IMF and World Bank to the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s, which she argues exacerbated the crisis. Hart argues that despite these challenges to the Washington Consensus, there has been little fundamental change to the development model. Hart also draws on post-development critiques that have analysed the ahistorical notion of development as an immanent process by locating its dependence on culturally specific Western European enlightenment notions of progress and trusteeship. Hart argues that as the dynamics of globalisation are intersecting with post-development analyses there is an increasing discursive focus on the local, which is represented as passive recipient of global forces. Hart calls for development studies to engage with 'big D' development by confronting its relationships with the dynamics of 'little d' development, namely capitalist growth.

Ferguson (1990) has a different distinction: he argues that development studies as a discipline has been characterised by two major strands. One strand within the discipline of development studies concerns the business of 'doing development'. The other strand identifies universal/global theories of development and/or describes the historical and contemporary dynamics and relations of and between nations or institutions (i.e. national histories and descriptors of roots of poverty, colonial and neo-colonial impacts, and international financial institutions). The strand concerning the business of 'doing development' or development praxis incorporates a strong focus on debates about appropriate methodologies, projects and approaches. This strand within development studies can be dominated by publications by organisations and institutions engaged in development, such as the

United Nations Development Program (UNDP), The World Bank, bilateral development agencies such as the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), and international Non-Government Organisations, such as Oxfam International.   Work within the other major strand observes the international context of development policy and praxis and has identified its historical antecedents in colonialism and the notion of trusteeship (Cowan and Shenton 1996). This strand of development studies has theorized the two major theoretical approaches to development – modernisation and dependency (Cooks and Isgro 2005).

Both Hart (2001) and Ferguson (1990) acknowledge the dominance in development studies of the critical and ideological differences between modernisation and dependency approaches. The modernisation theory is based on adapting principles of capitalism to developed country settings focusing on increasing national growth in anticipation of the trickle down effect to benefit the poor as economic growth takes off (Rostow 1963).   This approach is still enshrined in the Washington Consensus of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund institutions as described by Hart (2001), and in the approaches of bilateral donor agencies that focus on promoting growth through liberalising the market and free trade (AusAID 2006).   The modernisation approach has argued that there are paths to achieve development through economic growth that are linear, ahistorical and universally applicable regardless of national history, culture, and the dynamics of the international economy.   It is based on a fundamental "us and them" distinction between the 'West', developed and modern societies which are then positioned as the aspiration for all, and the 'rest', countries who are defined as undeveloped, traditional and backward (Hall 1992). Modernisation theory has been criticized for its ethnocentrism, eurocentrism, inability to predict effects and outcomes, and simplification of the social and political change that accompanies the development process (Scott 1996: 23).   As Hart (2002) argues, despite these challenges it is remains a critical force in neoliberal economics based approaches in critical development institutions.

The theory of dependency and underdevelopment (Frank 1966) criticizes modernisation development practices and their effects. It argues that despite the fact that this is a post-colonial era for most developing countries, the imperialist global economy continues to function and international economic inequalities are persisting or being exacerbated. There is a new form of economic colonialism where, for example, raw materials and light manufactures are produced in the developing world and profits sent to corporate headquarters in the developed world. It criticizes the universalism inherent in the modernisation model, which assumes what has worked for the developed countries is the correct path for the undeveloped (Cowan and Shenton 1996: 9):

> If the now under-developed were really to follow the stages of growth of the now developed ones, they would have to find still other peoples to exploit into underdevelopment, as the now developed countries did before them. (Frank [1969: 46] cited in Pieterse 1991: 14)

Underdevelopment, the exacerbation of poverty and international economic disparities, is seen as a result of capitalist development.   The problem of increasing poverty is too much development rather than too little.   Currently there are calls to

re-visit the insights of dependency theory in light of globalisation and the cultural focus of post-development critiques of development (Kapoor 2002).

Over time there has been a series of changes in development practice, as practioners and theorists identified difficulties and failures associated with different approaches over time, ranging from human capital development, technological development, basic needs, women in development, structural adjustment and sustainable development (Rathberger 1996). Eva Rathberger argues, "...in each case, the failures of earlier strategies have led to the establishment of new approaches." (Rathgeber 1996:204-5). These different approaches are allied on the whole as variations on a theme of the modernisation approach, promoting capitalism with various different human faces. Despite the ideological differences between modernisation and dependency schools, there are discursive similarities and there has been little change in the core assumptions within the business of 'doing development' over time (Pieterse 1991; Rathberger 1996).

Post-development critiques

As noted previously, it has only been in the last ten years or so that the basic question 'what is development?' has been raised within the field of development studies. Until this questioning, development itself had been universally unquestioned as a concept, and had been understood as a process, a set of actions, and an outcome:

> It may be worthwhile to focus in future on what constitutes agreed-upon approaches in the field of development studies and practice and on the language used to justify and popularize different perspectives. As we have seen, development discourse is largely based on assumptions that have not changed substantially during the past thirty years and that never have been questioned very closely. Development practice has generally involved a heavy infusion of resources from outside with a predilection towards the "technological fix" (Stamp 1989). Development theorists and practioners have learned little from past mistakes, nor have they fundamentally changed their way of thinking or their mode of operation. As a result, isolated knowledge in the form of case studies or academic papers generated in either the North or the South has had relatively little impact on most development practice. (Rathgeber 1996:219)

While debates may have occurred about the appropriate processes by which development should or did occur development had been understood and unquestioned as a goal that was beneficial and desirable that alleviated poverty and improved living standards (Rapley 2004). Development as a concept was not historicised, and its reliance on discursive assumptions about progress, poverty and planning were unexplored.

In the opening chapter of *The Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (1999), Spivak analyses the trajectories of Hegel, Marx and Kant to determine the positioning and location of postcolonial studies. Spivak argues that that without deconstructive rigour, studies of development in former colonial countries can unwittingly be aligned with and within the position of the 'native informant', the colonial object

that made violent suppression of the colonial encounter, indeed terra nullius, possible[9]. This position of the native informant is diverse, varied and complex:

> Even if history is a grand narrative, my point is that the subject-position of the native-informant, crucial yet foreclosed, is also historically and therefore geopolitically inscribed[10]. (Spivak 1999:344)

In this discussion of Hegel, Marx and Kant, whose work has exercised a major influence over contemporary thought and society, Spivak traces their relationships with the cultural contexts that produced imperialism. A brief summary of an aspect of her argument is that the enlightenment tradition which produced imperialism, and the racist pseudo-sciences such as craniometry[11] which legitimised it, formed a set of cultural justifications that have now produced the discourses of 'development' and 'aid':

> These moves, in various guises, still inhabit and inhibit our attempts to overcome the limitations imposed on us by the newest division of the world, to the extent that, as the North continues ostensibly to "aid" the South – as formerly imperialism "civilised" the New World – the South's crucial assistance to the North in keeping up its resource hungry lifestyle is forever foreclosed. (Spivak 1999: 344)

Recent writing has drawn on these analyses of the colonial roots of development praxis and policy to challenge the absence of any discussion of race within development discourse, arguing that dominant development is 'colour-blind', and the impact of discursive continuities with the colonial era is visible in outcomes, techniques and modes of knowing[12] (Kothari 2006; White 2002). Cowan and Shenton's influential text *Doctrines of Development* (1996) locates Western European philosophical notions of progress, trusteeship and order with the origin of the concept and process of development in both the pre and post Second World War era. Drawing on the work of Malthus, Comte and Mill, Cowan and Shenton locate what they term the 'invention of development' with the work of these

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[9] "I think of the "native informant" as a name for that mark of expulsion from the name of Man – a mark crossing out the impossibility of the ethical relation" (Spivak 1999:6).

[10] Spivak's use of the concept of 'foreclosure' is borrowed from Lacanian psychoanalysis. Loosely, Spivak argues that it refers to a kind of self-repression that rejects the accompanying emotional result, the 'affect'. In using this concept to refer to the praxis of imperialism, Spivak argues that 'foreclosing' occurred when the violent consequences of this 'civilising mission' not only were repressed as a memory and event, but the emotional 'affect' was rejected as well (Spivak 1999:4-5).

[11] Craniometry was one of the forms of scientific racism that had widespread currency in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Developed by the American Samuel George Morton, it was a theory that differentiated intelligence through the ranking of brain sizes of different races, by measuring skull capacity. Morton's experiments consisted of the filling of the cranial cavity with mustard seeds in his early experiments, and later with lead shot, then recording the cubic inch size. His belief in racial superiority guided his statistical calculations, juggling groupings of measurements in order to reach the results that validated his conviction that the racial intelligence rankings placed blacks at the bottom, Indians in the middle and whites at the top (Carrigan 1988:9).

[12] See the recent special issue of *Progress in Development Studies* vol. 6, no, 1 edited by Uma Kothari for a series of interesting and challenging articles about the importance of defining 'race' as a concept to apply to analyses of development discourse and praxis.

philosophers, and the processes of dramatic social change that accompanied industrialisation in Western Europe. Pieterse (1991) also explores these historical antecedents, locating modernisation theory and developmentalism with the Western European tradition of enlightenment thinking and the pre-eminence of nineteenth century economics, both Marxist and liberal which is borne out in discursive continuities:

> […what these traditions] have in common is economism, centrism and teleology: economism because economic growth is the centrepiece of social change, teleology in that the common assumption is goal-oriented development, centrism because development (or underdevelopment, according to the dependency view) is led from where it is furthest advanced – the metropolitan world. (Pieterse 1991: 15)

Spivak's work argues that the deconstructive act is defined as simultaneously an undoing and embracing. It identifies and locates deconstruction as a praxis for that which one "cannot not desire, cannot not wish to inhabit however much I (we) wish also to change it" (Spivak 1996:7). Deconstruction recognises its own risk as an analytic approach, as it has an inherent fallibility:

> Operating necessarily from the inside, borrowing all the strategic and economic resources of subversion from the old structure, borrowing them structurally, that is to say, without being able to isolate their elements and atoms, the enterprise of deconstruction always falls prey to its own work. (Derrida 1976:24)

Spivak locates her deconstructive approach as based on Derrida's notion of the experience of the impossible, which she describes as a blurred and vulnerable state. This is identified as different from the earlier Derridean concept of the necessary yet impossible, that

> …insisted that all institutions of origin concealed the splitting off from something other than the origin in order for the origin to be instituted. This was a making indeterminate of any answer to questions of origin, as to what it was from which the supposedly original thing or thought, in description or definition, was being differentiated. It is this question, instituted at the origin, that had to be guarded or kept as a task in the first phase of deconstruction. (Spivak 1999: 426)

It is this concept of the experience of the impossible that Spivak uses to analyse the experience of gift, ethics and justice within the world. She argues that this experience is impossible as it exists within global and local contexts of violence and inequality. The act of deconstruction traces the relationship between what she identifies as pairs, the act and the method through which the act could be possible but isn't: gift and responsibility, justice and the law, ethics and politics. In this argument that deconstructs development discourse as a universalising grand narrative, Spivak is positing a call for applying the analytic approach in an act of "deconstruction without reserve" (Spivak 1999: 430).

Spivak's and Escobar's work sits within the literature that is loosely termed 'post-development' (Brigg 2002; Ferguson 1990; Rahnema and Bawtree 1997; Rapley 2004; Sachs 1992) as it has been influenced by post-modern theories and approaches and aligns itself with studies of the dynamics of the post-colonial era

that question dominance of eurocentric metanarratives[13]. In drawing on Foucault, and this body of literature, this thesis is positioned within post-development influenced debates which acknowledge and explore the relationships between discourse and power that determine what is known and how. Feminist work within development studies has made important contributions to post-development critiques of development praxis and discourse (Bhavnani, Foran and Kurian 2003; Mohanty 1991, 1997; Schech and Haggis 2000; Wood 2001). In drawing explicitly on feminist post-modern influenced critiques of development discourse and praxis, this thesis explores the position and representation of women in development discourse.

Thus discourse analysis is a critical tool in understanding the underlying assumptions inherent within development discourse and praxis, particularly in identifying the discursive position allocated to women. Discourse analysis provides important tools to explore the productive discursive relationships involved in the appearance and adoption of development as concept and as aspiration, for as Cooper argues "the meanings of development reflected the engagement of local mobilization with global discourses, and of local discourses with global structures of power" (Cooper 1997:83). The concepts of poverty, planning and progress are inherent in these functions of development as a discourse over time and throughout the various changes in aspects of development practice. Within these concepts, development discourse defines and locates agency and power. Spivak explores this dynamic linkage between identity, the politics of voice and representation and agency, and the enlightenment imperial origins of the theory and praxis of development. This is a critique that is part of the development theories over the years that have linked aid and trade engagement with a new form of relationship between former colonies and colonizers.

> For the great narrative of Development is not dead…My generation in India, born before Independence, realises only too well that many of the functionaries of the civilising mission of imperialism were well meaning. The point here is not personal accusations. And in fact what these functionaries gave was often what I call an enabling violation – a rape that produces a healthy child, whose existence cannot be advanced as a justification for the rape. Imperialism cannot be justified by the fact that India has railways and I speak English well. Many of the functionaries of the civilising mission were well meaning; but alas, you can do good with contempt or paternal-maternal-sororal benevolence in your heart. And today, you can knife the poor nation in the back and offer band-aids for a photo-opportunity. Scapegoating colonialism in the direst possible way shields the new imperialism of exploitation in development. (Spivak 1999: 371)

The multiple aspects of the development endeavour that are characterised by failure have driven this analysis. In recent years this has emerged as the debate on the effectiveness of aid and development assistance[14] (Thomas 2004). This failure

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[13] This questioning of development as discourse is associated with the emergence of critiques of associated disciplines, such as anthropology, which have become inextricably linked with development praxis (Ferguson 1997).

[14] However there is a tendency for this debate to operate within a framework that doesn't question the overall project, and focuses instead on the mechanics of 'doing development'.

is understood as the negative social and economic impacts of the innumerable development initiatives that have caused harm, as well as in terms of what could be termed as a fundamental fallacy of the endeavour – addressing the inequitable distribution of global wealth and poverty[15].

Poverty

Esteva argues the term 'development' is linked to 'growth, evolution and maturation' (Esteva 1992: 10). Its origins as a biological term and use in the context of 'development discourse' means it comes as a concept and a term with implied meanings such as natural, evolution, progress, growth, movement for the bigger and better. The consequence is that the converse also applies: the current state is at best a state of potential, an inferior state, lacking, undeveloped. Esteva argues that the use of the term 'development' in the Truman doctrine defined the majority of the world's population as 'under-developed' and poor[16]. This was a description of a difference in monetary wealth and modern social structures and services. It was also an immediate assertion of Western cultural values and assumptions. Poverty is identified, created, made. It can be identified by others, and imposed.

In his 1972 work *Stone Age Economics* Marshall Sahlins argued for a rethinking of anthropological and economic definitions of affluence, need and necessity and poverty through recognising the inherent values within these disciplinary based readings and interpretations of subsistence economies and hunter gatherer communities. This discussion is based on Aboriginal society compared to other contemporary social situations:

> Poverty is not a small amount of goods, nor is it just a relation between means and ends; above all, it is a relation between people. Poverty is a social status. As such it is the invention of civilisation. It has grown with civilisation, at once as an invidious distinction between classes and more importantly as a tributary relation- that can render agrarian peasants more susceptible to natural catastrophes than any winter camp of Alaskan Eskimo. (Sahlins [1972] 1997:19)

This outlines an understanding of poverty as a cultural construct, which can change dependent on the perspective and vantage point held.

This is an analysis that has been echoed in Indigenous peoples' histories of colonization. It includes changes to perceptions of poverty comparing pre-colonial and colonial interactions and exposures:

This tendency attributes problems about the effectiveness of development and the expenditure of the aid dollar to poor monitoring and evaluation, poor design, poor implementation, poor ownership or poor participation of recipients in all the above. An interesting collection of recent Australian articles that demonstrates precisely this point is in Thomas, Pam (ed.) 2004, *International Perspectives on Aid Effectiveness.* Development Studies Bulletin No. 65, The Development Studies Network, The Australian National University: Canberra.

[15] This inequality is stark. Sachs states 'in 1960, the Northern countries were 20 times riches than the Southern, in 1980 46 times' (Sachs 1992:3).

[16] Truman's speech is deconstructed and analysed powerfully in Escobar's 1995 text *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World.*

> 'Poverty' has only recently been introduced to Native Communities...for thousands of years people subsisted from the land and ocean along the west coast of Alaska. It is a hard life, but it had none of the frustrations and stigmas of poverty, for the people were not poor. Living from the land sustained life and evolved the Yupik culture, a culture in which wealth was the common wealth of the people as provided by the earth, whether food was plentiful or scarce among the people. This sharing created a bond between people that helped ensure survival. Life was hard then, but people found life satisfying. Today life is getting easier, but it is no longer satisfying. ...With the first Russian traders came the idea of wealth and poverty. These new people added to the process of living the purpose of accumulation. ... The new economic system... began replacing food and furs with cash, cooperation with competition, sharing with accumulating... Fortunately a cure has been found for measles. A cure has not been found for our 'poverty'. (Davidson and the Association of Village Council Presidents [1974] cited in Clarkson, Morrissette and Regallet 1997: 45)

In working to alleviate/eradicate poverty, the way 'development' functions as a discourse is premised on an imposed definition of poverty.

The way the concept of poverty functions in development discourse is frequently as an objective, quantifiable fact. The way in which this can operate is used in a discussion of the dynamics of poverty described in Chapter 4. As the dynamics of development approaches have changed over time, poverty has assumed a stronger emphasis and role in development assistance. This has been linked to an agenda of focusing on the participation by 'the poor' in development initiatives and planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation[17]. The growth of techniques to increase community participation in development assistance, via conducting Participatory Poverty Assessments and Participatory Rural Appraisals is evidence of this interest in 'putting the last first' (Botes and van Rensburg 2000; Chambers 1983, 2004), as is the increased interest effective strategies for civil society engagement and strengthening (Low and Davenport 2002). Major international development institutions have adopted this language and approaches. The World Bank undertook major consultations with 'the poor' in preparing its 2000 World Development Report, titled 'Attacking Poverty' (Narayan et al 2000; Williams and McIlwaine 2003). Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers have become a major tool for national level development planning and assistance by the International Financial Institutions and multilateral development agencies (World Bank 2006; UNDP 2001; Verheul and Rowson 2001). The Asian Development Bank has pioneered the use of participatory poverty analysis in the pacific region (Abbott and Pollard 2004). What is clear is that the cultural and historical aspects of poverty cannot be excised from the way in which poverty functions within development discourse.

Planning

The concept of planning has a pivotal position within development discourse as a theoretical approach and a tool of development assistance. Within development

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[17] For example, see this study by Tinker (1993) 'Evaluation of the organisation for development and support of street food vendors in the city of Mina: Model for empowering the working poor'.

discourse planning is promoted both as a response to poverty at the village level and a requirement for improved functioning of the state and national economic development. A feature of the way the concept of planning works is a reliance on defining a 'problem', to which some form of planning is inevitably the appropriate response. The concept has been and continues to be used within development discourse as a neutral term, without reference to its historical social, cultural and economic origins and as such without understanding of the significant social change it requires and creates.

Escobar (1992) traces the history of the term to a specific series of responses in Western Europe to the social and economic change that occurred with the advent of the industrial era, namely town planning and social services planning to address population pressures in cities that had occurred with mass urbanization and at the national level, economic planning. Drawing on Foucauldian insights of the relationship between knowledge disciplines and practices, Escobar outlines the ways in which those new responses of planning created specific roles for the state in daily life. Planning required changes that were both ideological and physical: its effects produced or created ordered governable subjects. These disciplines of planning "have shaped not only social structures and institutions, but also the way in which people experience life and construct themselves as subjects" (Escobar 1992:133). This production of governable subjects requires a produced and accepted conformity. The removal of difference in this process has major effects and impacts. For example, the creation of the concept of the modern economy separated the economic from the social spheres as forms of capitalism strengthened, and other forms of social and economic organisation, such as subsistence activities, were marginalized. The origins of the concept of planning in this specific context of industrializing Western Europe mean:

> In short, planning redefines social and economic life in accordance with the criteria of rationality, efficiency and morality, which are consonant with the history and needs of capitalist, industrial society, but not short of the Third World. (Escobar 1992: 134-5)

Escobar's essay highlights the ways in which planning is a central concept within development discourse and praxis. In the immediate post Second World War period which saw the creation of critical development institutions such as the World Bank, and the creation of the modern United Nations, planning plays a critical role. Planning was the neutral science required by developing countries to develop. Within this aspect of development discourse, the introduction of planning is required to address national social and economic ills, which are identified as a result of the absence of effective planning from the state. Thus not only is a lack of planning is a problem that requires rectification by planning, the histories of colonial exploitation and the dynamics of the international political economy are also and simultaneously ignored. Escobar highlights the significance of planning as a method and a concept within development discourse with the following quote from the first UN Development Decade:

> The ground has been cleared for a non-doctrinaire consideration of the real problems of development, namely saving, training and planning, and for action on them. In particular, the advantages in dealing with the various problems not piecemeal, but by a comprehensive approach through sound development planning, became more fully apparent…Careful development

planning can be a potent means of mobilising…latent resources for a rational solution of the problems involved. (United Nations 1962 cited in Escobar 1992: 136)

Escobar's essay charts the ways in which planning has not stayed still as a concept within development discourse and praxis. It has changed over time as new approaches and emphases have evolved in development praxis, providing mandates for involvement in the most intimate aspects of people's lives[18]:

> From the emphasis on growth and national planning in the 1950s, to the Green Revolution and sectoral and regional planning of the 1960s and '70s, including 'Basic Needs' and local level planning in the '70s and '80s, to environmental planning for 'sustainable development' and planning to 'incorporate' women, or the grassroots into development in the '80s, the scope and vaulting ambitions of planning have not ceased to grow. (Escobar 1992: 137)

In shifting his discussion explicitly into the Foucauldian territory of the relationships between knowledge and power, Escobar explores the way in which planning within development has been used as a conceptual neutral science, utterly rational and logical, devoid of the contaminating influence of cultural specificity and the overt understanding of the way in which planning is both a tool of domination and a productive force. Escobar highlights the ways in which planning as a discipline shifts culture, social and economic organisation and is a mode of exercising power:

> Planning relies upon, and proceeds through, various practices regarded as rational or objective, but which are in fact highly ideological and political. First of all as with other development domains, knowledge produced in the First World about the Third World gives a certain visibility to specific realities in the latter, thus making them targets of power. (Escobar 1992: 140)

Planning, in this reading, is a way within development praxis to focus on the most intimate aspects of people's lives, such as planning for reproductive health or nutrition, and separate them from other aspects of life, society, economy and culture. The rationality and neutrality ascribed to planning hides the way in which planning is the modality of reconciling complex competing concerns and issues – planning of some sort or another is the fail-safe development solution to whatever problems or needs are identified, be it poverty, population growth rates, public health, transport or lack of international capital for economic investment. Escobar is blunt about the detrimental effects of planning within development. He argues that the planning approach within the green revolution and integrated rural development projects has:

> …in general contributed not only to the growing pauperisation of rural people, but also to aggravated problems of malnutrition and higher…the impact of many development programmes has been particularly negative on

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[18] The United Nations Programme of Action for Population and Development 1994 and its reviews in 1999 and 2004 make recommendations on reproductive health and access to contraception, and is a demonstration of the way in which planning as a concept within development is now engaged in the most intimate aspects of people's daily lives.

women and indigenous peoples, as development projects appropriate or destroy their basis for survival. (Escobar 1992:141)

The forms of planning described by Escobar are all gender-blind, and in so doing perpetuate the Western European enlightenment tradition of a gendered separation between the public and private spheres. As such, the planning concept in various guises has been unable within development to recognise the roles of women and their importance in social and economic life in developing country settings. A key example is the role of women in many developing countries as the primary producers of subsistence agriculture, yet development plans for agricultural improvement have frequently targeted men as smallholder farmers (Boserup 1970; Ukeje 2006).

This Foucauldian reading of planning as a concept highlights the cultural specificity of the term's genealogy, and identifies the ways in which the unquestioning use of the concept within development praxis has seen it play a critical and influential role. I would argue that the specific impacts of planning as a concept and discipline within development praxis cannot be separated from the overall development enterprise and the inequity of international political economy. In this essay Escobar gives a little too much credit to planning as a discipline in identifying the negative and productive impacts of the term within development. The concept of planning is further explored in *Encountering Development* (1995) where it is placed in a broader context of development discourse and praxis. Planning is a critical term within development praxis and discourse, but it sits alongside the invention of poverty, the assumed concept of progress, the idea of modernity, and the concept of helping as pivotal concepts that form the complex discursive world in which development occurs.

Progress

The idea of progress is a core assumption within development discourse. It is the concept of an inevitable path that can be followed, into a modernised and industrialised future. The concept of progress became dominant, promoted in the eighteenth and nineteenth century with the industrial revolution, increasing dominance of science and technology, and forms of national political structures – parliament, democracy and the nation-state. It inevitably leads to divisions: those supporting the aspirations of progress, those who are engaged in progress, those who have achieved a state of progress and those who have not. Progress was a core concept in the colonial endeavour, and as such became incorporated into the structural and conceptual legacies upon independence. The phrase fell into disfavour after the Second World War, which was seen as a climax of the achievement of modern progress. However the associated set of interpretations and associations of the term 'progress' found a new life within development discourse (Sbert 1992; Schech and Haggis 2000:15). This legacy of the term progress within development praxis has been explored by a number of theorists, including the influential sociologist Teodor Shanin (1997) who drew on his work analysing the survival strategies amongst informal peasant economies to map the historical and philosophical antecedents of the concept:

> The idea of progress is the major philosophical legacy left by the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries to the contemporary social sciences.

The idea was secular, departing from the mediaeval mind set where everything could be explained by God's will, and it offered a powerful and pervasive supra-theory that ordered and interpreted everything within the life of humanity – past, present and future. The core of the concept, and its derivations and the images attached to it have been overwhelmingly simple and straightforward. With a few temporary deviations, all societies are advancing naturally and consistently 'up', on a route from poverty and barbarism, despotism and ignorance to riches, civilisation, democracy and rationality, the highest expression of which is science. This is also an irreversible movement from an endless diversity of particularities, wasteful of human energies and economic resources, to a world unified and simplified into the most rational arrangement. It is therefore a movement from badness to goodness and from mindlessness to knowledge, which gave this message its ethical promise, its optimism and its reformist 'punch'. (Shanin 1997:65)

These functions of the term 'progress' within colonial, industrial and economic discourse emerge time and time again within development discourse. Escobar gives an example of the re-emergence of progress as a core assumption, unquestioningly, by the dominant development literature promoting the 'green revolution' (Escobar 1995: 159-160).

This is not to mean that these discursive associations with the term 'development' are not contested on many different levels in many different spaces and places:

People in rural Africa, Asia and Latin America experience 'development' in several ways. They experience in practice processes that are described to them as development, in terms of official discourse inspired by or dressed up in an idiom of Western origin. They can evaluate these processes for themselves in terms of material loss and gain, as well as set them in relation to the values they themselves have for what is a good life. But they also get the ideological message itself. They scrutinise it for its validity in relation to local ideas and also for its consistency with the practical process they have seen. Do the ideal claims of development agree with the praxis? Much of this evaluation is a collective process, interwoven with the routines of daily life. (Gudrun Dahl and Gemetchu Megeressa [1992] 1997: 52)

The personal experience of and resistance to the productive nature of the grand narrative of development discourse is highlighted in Nadnra Shestra's powerful tale of growing up in Nepal. The intersections between poverty, identified by others and then self-identified, planning and the notion of progress where all that had occurred before was singularly characterised as backward and anti-development are all explored in this personal account of the seductive and productive power of development discourse within developing country social networks and cultural paradigms:

This personal narrative reveals how and why the discourse of development, with the help of foreign aid, solidifies the colonial mindset in the post-imperial world, crafting cultural values, thinking, behaviour and actions. (Shestra 1995: 266)

The emergence of development as a concept and praxis in Nepal occurred in the 1950s, and as a concept and praxis it became known by a Nepali word *bikas,* and its opposite was *abikas*. The associations of *bikas* were with educated elites, large

capital projects such as roads, hospitals and dams, and with a working life not involved with manual labour. The opposite of *bikas,* the people labelled *abikasi* were the poor, the uneducated, those involved with agricultural subsistence and manual labour. *Bikas* was progress, modernity, science, technology and all that was required to achieve it. *Abikas* was poverty, the poor, the uneducated, cultural beliefs and aspirations that were incompatible with *bikas.* In Shestra's article about his personal experience growing up in Nepal, the grand narrative of development is exposed as a tool of social, cultural and economic change on such a massive scale that it separated parents from their children:

> Many students felt ashamed to be seen in public with their parents. The new education gave us the impression that our parent's manual labour was antithetical to *bikas*. So we sneered at manual work, thinking that it was something only an *abikiasi* or intellectually underdeveloped' mind would do. It was not for the high-minded *bikasis*. The new educational system was producing a whole new way of thinking about the value of labour. (Shestra 1995: 268-9)

Shestra's personal account of the impact of *bikas* showcases the cultural impact of development discourse, and the way in which it has a negatively impacted on people's self-reliance and experience of poverty. Shestra's article provides insight into how key concepts within development discourse and praxis – poverty, planning and progress – are productive concepts in this significant social, cultural and economic change. Shestra is associated with the self-reflexivity in development studies influenced by Foucault, Said and postmodern or 'post-development' theorists. What is clear is that in challenging the grand narrative of development, theorists such as Shestra, Escobar, Sachs, Esteva and Ferguson question, deconstruct and explore development as discourse without any gender analysis. In asking the questions 'where are the women?' and 'who are the women?' in this thesis the gendered nature of the grand metanarrative of development is revealed, and with it the conceptual seams of LDC development discourse are readied for some analytic unpicking.

Conclusion

This chapter began by describing the research approach and source material. In summarising the thesis's emphasis on primary source material, I outlined the lack of secondary literature that had analysed the existence and operation of the LDC category itself. The main focus of the chapter is outlining and identifying approaches I have drawn upon in undertaking this analysis of the LDC category. I began by detailing the distinction between category 'LDC' and Ferguson's influential post-modern influenced critique of development policy and practice of the World Bank's Less Developed Country category and its operations in Lesotho. The discussion then outlined aspects of Foucauldian analysis that have been drawn upon by theorists and analysts, (including Apthorpe and Cooper) of development discourse and function and introduced the key analytic concepts used in assessing the operations of LDC category discourse, technologies of knowledge. In introducing this concept I demonstrate how it is grounded in Foucauldian theory and linked to Escobar's analysis of development as discourse.

The chapter then locates the approach to gender analysis in the thesis's postmodern and postcolonial influenced critiques of development discourse. It begins this discussion by locating these critiques within the trajectory of feminist engagements with development. This includes tracing the WID, WAD and GAD debates linking them with theories of feminism and models of development. The postmodern and postcolonial influenced have challenged the essentialised notions of gender and culture in these approaches. The chapter then outlines a core premise of the thesis, the feminisation of poverty. The chapter then proceeds with an analysis of development, outlining the distinctions between the two main models of development theory, the modernisation and dependency approaches. It then locates this thesis's research approach with post-development critiques that criticize enlightenment metanarratives and situates core concepts within development discourse – poverty, planning and progress – with their historical philosophical roots, and their interaction with culture.

This thesis explicitly draws on Foucauldian discourse analysis and gender analysis to examine the ways in which LDC category operates within development discourse. This analysis recognises that readings of gender and development discourse are complex, associated with multiple interpretations, analyses and theories. Neither term exists in an environment where it can operate as an objective descriptor, excised from socio-economic, cultural and historical uses and associations. The interactions and intersections between gender analysis and development theory, policy and practice are complex and have changed over time. Despite taking place at the same time as the growth of critical analyses of development practice, and the emergence of gender and development debates and theories, United Nations policy and analysis of the Least Developed Countries is characterised by the absence of an acknowledgement of this complexity, and frequently of any recognition that there is an interaction between gender and development at all. The technologies of knowledge – policy, categorization and data – are ways in which category LDC operates within development discourse. Gender analysis is an important starting point, to interpreting the ways in which these technologies function, and provides important insights into category LDC and development discourse.

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

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[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

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[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

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[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.

Chapter 3: Category LDC: acts of administration

This chapter explores the technology of knowledge of classification through the administration of the criteria used to determine category LDC. The chapter draws on close readings of over twenty years of records of meetings of the United Nations Committee for Development Planning, now known as the Committee for Development Policy (UNCDP) 1981- 2004. The chapter begins by locating the LDC category as a product of the institutional discourse of the UN, based within the gendered liberal humanism associated with the formation of the UN and the emergence of the discourse of development in the post-Second World War era where former colonies became independent.   The LDC category and the UNCDP are thus located as discursive products of the UN, like the prolific declarations, resolutions, organisations, agencies, international plans, categories and so on, linked as products and vehicles for reproduction of development discourse. The chapter then conducts a survey of the representation of women in the assessments of LDC criteria, context and issues undertaken by the UNCDP. The chapter concludes with a close assessment of the UNCDP's administrative processes in assessing, applying and reviewing LDC criteria, assessing countries for inclusion and graduation from the LDC group.

I argue that this technology of knowledge operates within development discourse by defining and creating specialised information for the administration of the LDC category. Gender analysis reveals the limits of the conceptual underpinnings of the LDC criteria and the specialised information required for the administration of the category. Readings of the primary source material show that the gender bias in the Committee's operations is not addressed; particularly as the LDC criteria and their application become an increasingly important focus of the Committee's work. Throughout the discussion, I argue that the gendered assumptions and limits at the core of this technology of knowledge mean that gender is always in the discursive position of marginal relevance.

Acts of definition

> Other people define us to be poor.
>
> *Intervention from a delegate from Vanuatu during a plenary session at the NGO Forum on Least Developed Countries, Brussels 2001.*
>
> But why even use "Third World", a somewhat problematic term which many now consider outdated? And why make an argument which privileges the social location, experiences, and identities of Third-World women workers, as opposed to any other group of workers, male or female? Certainly, there are problems with the term "Third World." It is inadequate in comprehensively characterizing the economic, political, racial and

> cultural differences within the borders of Third-World nations. But in comparison with other similar formulations like "North/South" and "advanced/underdeveloped nations", "Third World" retains a certain heuristic value and explanatory specificity in relation to the inheritance of colonialism and contemporary neocolonial economic and geopolitical processes that the other formulations lack.
> (Mohanty 1997:7)

The creation of the category Least Developed Country by the United Nations is as a product of the UN's discourse of liberal humanism and development. This act of definition, of discursive production of a new category in 1971, is a result of assumptions about development, and the discursive need to assist the 'family of nations'. The idea of the family of nations, this liberal humanism, and the development discourse emergent at the same time, is based on fundamentally gendered assumptions about who is in the family. Hyndman argues the UN's liberal humanism is a product of the reaction against the atrocities of the Second World War, which was supported by the discrediting of racist so-called scientific theories of racial differences and supremacy:

> Authorised by science, the 'birth' of a universal subject was timely. Poised between the victory over fascism and the horror of the Holocaust, the politically significant emergence of the 'united family of man' was legitimized by evolutionary biology and physical anthropology. The rallying point for humanists was that the scientific differences among individuals of the same so-called 'race' were greater than those among different 'races', the political corollary of which was the 'birth of UN humanism' and its attendant declarations, legislation, and human rights instruments which shape the humanitarian terrain today.
> (Hyndman 1998: 247)

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which proclaimed the rights of 'universal man', based on an equal brotherhood of men and nations, enshrined this gendered approach. As this discourse of liberal humanism was informing and forming the creation of the United Nations, the need to address poverty in all nations was becoming similarly significant as the UN produced and reproduced a new discourse of development.

In the opening of his seminal 1995 text *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*, Arturo Escobar cites Truman's 1949 presidential address that outlined his doctrine, and approach to global poverty and development. This provides a clear, powerful post Second World War referent for the emergence and consolidation of 'development' as a hegemonic discourse:

> More than half the people of the world are living in conditions approaching misery. Their food is inadequate, they are victims of disease. Their economic life is primitive and stagnant. Their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas. For the first time in history humanity possesses the knowledge and the skill to relieve the suffering of these people… I believe that we should make available to peace-loving peoples the benefits of our store of technical knowledge in order to help them realize their aspirations for a better life…What we envisage is a program of development based on the concepts of democratic fair dealing…Greater production is the key to prosperity and peace. And

> key to greater production is a wider and more vigorous application of
> modern scientific and technical knowledge.
> (Truman [1949] 1964 cited in Escobar 1995:3)

Escobar then demonstrates the prominence swiftly reached by 'development' as discourse with a quotation from a 1951 meeting of the newly formed United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs convened to elaborate 'Measures for the Economic Development of Underdeveloped Countries':

> There is a sense in which rapid economic progress is impossible without
> painful adjustments. Ancient philosophies have to be scrapped; old social
> institutions have to disintegrate; bonds of caste, creed and race have to
> burst; and large numbers of persons who cannot keep up with progress have
> to have their expectations of a comfortable life frustrated. Very few
> communities are willing to pay the full price of economic progress.
> (United Nations 1951 cited in Escobar 1995:4)

This idealized process and perspective is enshrined by Lerner in his account of social change in Balgat village, Turkey as an aspirational tale of the benefits of modernisation and development (Lerner [1958] 2002). The modernisation theory of the 1950's (Rostow 1963) discussed previously in Chapter 1 was dominant at this time and became well entrenched in the development approach of the United Nations (de Senarclens [1988] 1997).

The emergence and consolidation of development as discourse within the United Nations system occurred as the body gradually became a stronger forum for former colonies and newly independent states to exercise international influence. With these shifts in the United Nations, 'development' discourse shifted from being the doctrine of a white president of the United States of America, and a group of international experts reporting to a body politically dominated by the USA, to become a mechanism to mobilize for political advantage, redress and assistance.

> When the UN was founded in 1945 it had fifty-one members, each
> represented in the General Assembly. Today the membership is 159. (sic)
> Virtually all of the states admitted after 1956 are newly independent states.
> Before 1957, the membership was such that the United States could count
> on being in the majority on virtually every issue. But the new membership
> deprived the United States of that certainty.
> (Jones 1988:601)

With this growth in membership and change in membership composition, the UN then became a forum for the production of contested discourses of development through the diplomatic pressure exercised by these newly independent former colonial countries. Part of this dynamic saw issues of development shift from the approach Escobar documents above, to put it crudely 'they need to drop the old and come in with our new' analysis, to one which by the 1970s adopted a much stronger analysis of international political economy and advocated preferential international terms of trade, amongst other issues. The discursive acts of definition that produced the LDC category occurred within this context of increased efforts within the UN to create international initiatives that could address poverty and promote economic and social development. As Cooper and Packard (1997) state, development as a concept was attractive to both the newly independent countries, and their former colonizers:

> Unlike the earlier claims of Europe to inherent superiority or a 'civilising
> mission,' the notion of development appealed as much to leaders of

'underdeveloped' societies as to the people of developed countries, and it gave citizens in both categories a share in the intellectual universe and in the moral community that grew up around the world-wide development initiative of the post-World War II era.
(Cooper and Packard 1997:1)

Certainly this observation of the productive discursive power is reflected in the later discussion in this chapter which looks at some records of the UN Committee for Development Planning (UNCDP) debates when countries are resisting leaving the category when it has been identified that the socio-economic conditions have improved to the point where, according to the application of definitions, they are no longer amongst the LDCs.

So, it is at the time that newly independent states within the United Nations General Assembly are flexing their political will and strength that the first United Nations Decade of Development was established (in 1961), the United Nations Committee for Development Planning (UNCDP) was formed (in 1965) and the concept of the 'Least Developed Country' or LDC was defined and adopted (in 1971). The purpose of this category was to identify a group of countries that were, on a number of economic and social indicators, the poorest in the world, with the aim of formulating specific development policy addressed to their specific circumstances. The term 'Least Developed Country' is associated with the terms the 'third world', the 'underdeveloped', and the global 'South'. A critical charge levied against the latter terms is their lack of specificity, the ease with which they define all which is not 'the West', 'advanced', 'the North' into a global homogenous other, an 'other' characterised variously by its poverty, need, suffering and struggle, conflict, corruption, oppression and disadvantage (Cowan and Shenton 1996; Escobar 1995; Hall 1992; Mohanty 1991) [26]. Within this contestation, the category LDC provides some definitional clarity. It now refers to a specific group of 50 countries who have defined themselves and been defined by the United Nations as the nations that are, according to a specific set of criteria, the poorest, least advantaged countries of the world.

The term LDC operates within the discourses of development to provide an imperative to action, for international, intergovernmental, and non-governmental agencies, and national aid and development programmes, challenging them all to focus their efforts on the poorest of the poor. The term 'third world' leads to charges of homogeneity, of a discursive construction that locates, defines, constrains, excludes and preconceives, based in a set of values that are produced by and reproduce Eurocentric, patriarchal, racist, colonialist and imperialist

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[26] The use of these terms leads to significant reflection on the part of theorists who wish to avoid this genealogy of the term. Chandra Mohanty calls on a specific background for the term 'Third world' to justify and locate or position her use of it in her text. In her discussion of Ella Shohat and Robert Stam's, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* Mohanty notes that "Shohat and Stam draw attention to the adoption of "third world" at the 1955 Bandung Conference of the 'non-aligned' African and Asian nations, an adoption which was premised on the solidarity of these nations around the anti-colonial struggles in Vietnam and Algeria. This is the genealogy of the term I choose to invoke here." (Mohanty et al 1991:p. 357)

discourses. The term 'Least Developed Country' is a product of the same discourses, and is cut from the same cloth.

The definition of category LDC by the UN is located in the increasing role of development discourse within the United Nations. It is a product of a prolific discourse that produced also produced plans, agencies, programmes, resolutions and declarations and continually reviewed, revised and defined again anew. This productivity of definitions, plans and products is demonstrated with the proclamation of the 1960s as the 'Decade for Development' and the creation of the United Nations Development Program, which was followed by a second, third and fourth decades in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s[27]. Jones (1988) reflects:

> The aim of the first development decade was to achieve a five percent per year economic growth amongst developing countries and to raise foreign assistance to a level of one percent of the annual gross national products of the industrialized states. During this period, however, unilateral nonmilitary aid did not increase substantially, and the UN's own programs were only a little more successful than they had been. The modest successes of the UNDP did, however, restore hope for collective advancement.
> (Jones 1988: 621)

The first United Nations Development Decade, 1961-1971, sought to implement *A Programme for International Economic Cooperation*. Halfway through this first decade, the UN Committee for Development Planning was formed, and towards the end of the first decade, the category LDC was created. Both the creation of the UNCDP and category LDC were initiatives in response to perceived gaps in effectively promoting and implementing a development agenda at that time. The perceived lack of progress for LDC's within these broader international efforts on development led to the commencement of specific international policy efforts for LDCs, with the UN developing three similar decade long plans to improve the status of LDCs from 1981 [28].

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[27] The resolutions and programs of action associated with these Decades of Development would themselves make a fascinating study in the discourse of development from 1960s to today, however that is another and different project.

[28] From the creation of the LDC category in 1971, LDCs were specifically mentioned in these broader UN decades for development documents. The *International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade 1971-1981* included a specific section on Least Developed Countries, titled 'Special measures in favour of the least developed among the developing countries'. In 1975, halfway through the time period allocated for the implementation of this International Development Strategy for the Second UN Development Decade, a new strategy was formed, *The Declaration and the Programme of Action on the Establishment on a New International Economic Order*. This 1975 document sought to address the inequities and imbalances of the international economy, identifying these as a major impediment to development and obstacle to world peace and security. The *International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade 1981-1991* included a specific section titled 'Least developed countries, most seriously affected countries, developing island countries and land-locked developing countries'. The text on 'most seriously affected countries' referred to countries severely affected by sudden and steep changes in the prices of essential imports. The *International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade 1991-2001* also included a section on 'Special Situations, Including those of the Least Developed Countries'. The commencement of the LDC specific decade long plans by the

This productivity of UN development discourse is also seen in the emergence of a series of United Nations resolutions[29], conferences, organisations and activities. This included the establishment of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which monitored the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade and had sought in the early 1970s to develop a clear mandate for international trade that provided structural preferences for developing countries [30]. The early years of the United Nations saw a strong technical assistance focus, with initiatives such as the 'Expanded Program of Technical Assistance'[31] and later with

UN from 1981 is a clear indication that the inclusion of specific paragraphs for LDCs within this broader documents was not considered sufficient attention to promote improvement in LDC status.

[29] A series of significant resolutions were passed on international trade and development from 1957 onwards. These included 1957 General Assembly resolution 1027 (XI) Development of International Economic Cooperation and the Expansion of International Trade; 1958 General Assembly resolution 1318 (XIII) Promotion of the International Flow of Private Capital; 1959 General Assembly resolution 1421 (XIV) Strengthening and Development of the World Market and Improvement of the Trade Conditions of the Economically Less Developed Countries.

[30] For example, Agenda item 10 of the eleventh session of UNCTAD 'Special measures in favour of the least developed among the developing countries' incorporates an Annex 'Agreed conclusions of the Special Committee on Preferences' which puts forward a proposal for UNCTAD adoption to pressure the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade negotiations:

> 'The Special Committee on Preferences:
> 1. Recalls that in its resolution 21 (II), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development recognised the unanimous agreement in favour of the early establishment of a mutually acceptable system of generalized, non-reciprocal, non-discriminatory preferences which would be beneficial to the developing countries.
> 2. Further recalls the agreement that the objectives of the generalized, non-reciprocal, non-discriminatory system of preferences in favour of the developing countries, including special measures in favour of the least developed among the developing countries, should be: (a) to increase their export earnings; (b) to promote their industrialization; and (c) to accelerate their rates of economic growth."
> (UNCTAD 1971)

[31] This scheme was established in the early 1950s. United Nations General Assembly resolution 519 A (VI) from its 360th plenary meeting on 12 January 1952 outlines that this scheme included the establishment of training and demonstration centers in specific countries on particular technical issues through the provision of pilot plants, research centers, financial and other support for the placement of technical experts requested, for the adoption and implementation of this technical expertise, and the placement of teams of foremen, workers and technicians from developing countries to business operations in industrialized countries. Its operations fit neatly with Rostow's then influential modernisation theory on development, which listed technological skills and assets as one of the sharp stimuli, as he termed them, which could lead to the beginning of a take off into self-sustained growth (Rostow 1963). As a further aside, while on the whole international donor development activity now has a strong focus on capacity-building of indigenous institutions and assessment of appropriateness, the bald Rostow approach can still be seen, for example, in the contemporary Taiwanese aid agricultural projects, such as demonstration rice farms for Solomon Islands. The funds and operations allocated to the

a Technical Assistance Board, as well as through the activities of other UN agencies such as the Food and Agricultural Organisation, the World Health Organisation and the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation.

Some shifts in the UN's development approach of the 1950s did occur over time within the UN and within its affiliated institutions. Martha Finnemore (1997) argues that the late 1960s and early 1970s was a time of significant change within UN development discourse that saw the institutionalization of poverty reduction as a critical focus for development efforts within the World Bank as opposed to increasing national Gross National Product (GNP). The emergence of category LDC in 1971 and calls for an increased focus on alleviating poverty in the countries identified as 'the poorest of the poor' aligns with this discursive shift in these UN and affiliated institutions[32]. Finnemore argues that this discursive emphasis saw a major shift in official rhetoric and operational practice, with increasing emphasis on World Bank projects in more social sectors of smallholder agriculture and education. This openness to the social sectors does not seems to have permeated the workings of the UNCDP in its administration of category LDC, which remains centrally focused on narrow economistic definitions of poverty and development, where change is only measured in increased national GNP which is assumed to benefit the population as a whole.

The definition and creation of LDC as a category is a result of complex dynamics within the UN as an institution with the shifting power relationships between member states as more and more former colonial newly independent states joined the organisation and sought to ensure that their countries benefited from opportunities for assistance. The act of definition of category LDC is located as one of the many discursive products of the UN and its liberal humanism and approach to development. This origin of category LDC at a time when former colonized countries were seeking advantages has not challenged the term's discursive foundations in development policy and praxis. The LDC category is the creation of the UN's liberal humanism and development discourse, with all its Western post-enlightenment baggage attached.

Committee for Development Planning

The United Nations Committee for Development Planning (UNCDP) was established as a UN committee reporting and making recommendations to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which has representation from all UN member states. Given this timing and political dynamics within the United Nations General Assembly, the articulated purpose and need for this group provides important insights into how development discourse is operating in this institutional context. It is clear from the text of the resolution that formed the group that there was, at the time and within the membership of the United Nations General Assembly, an increasing interest in planning, notably the

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Expanded Program of Technical Assistance program were combined into the United Nations Development Program in the 1960s to implement the first UN Development Decade (Jones 1988:621).

[32] Mawdsley and Rigg (2002) locate the production of the first World Development Report by the World Bank in 1978 with this shift.

use of economic projections in planning within the members of the 'international community' associated with the United Nations. The resolution to the ECOSOC itself is titled 'Economic planning and projections', and notes 'with satisfaction' the announced formation of a group of 'highly qualified experts representing different planning systems'. The role of this group was outlined as follows:

> The functions of this group should be, *inter alia*:
> (a) To consider and evaluate the programmes and activities of the organs of the United Nations and of the specialised agencies relating to economic planning and projections and to propose measures for their improvement for consideration by the Council;
> (b) To consider and evaluate, *inter alia*, the progress made, within the framework of the activities of the United Nations and the specialised agencies, in the transfer of knowledge to developing countries and in the training of personnel of those countries in economic planning and projections;
> (c) To analyse, with the help of the organs of the United Nations and of the specialised agencies, the major trends of planning and programming in the world, the principal problems and the solutions they are receiving, and in particular the progress made in that connexion relevant to the development of the less- developed regions;
> (d) To study individual questions in the field of economic planning and programming referred to it by the Council, by the Secretary General or by the executive heads of the specialised agencies;
> (e) To make any suggestion it may consider useful concerning the scope of its terms of reference;
> (f) To make a provisional report to the forty-first session of the Council. (ECOSOC 1965)

While this Committee sought to promote development planning, it was not in a position to actually implement any of its suggestions in developing countries. This work of the UNCDP had little real world impact and effects, as it was not directly related to the implementation of development assistance in LDCs or any other developing country. Escobar's analysis of development planning, as outlined in Chapter 1, is useful in locating the UNCDP's work as a product of and reproducing the emphasis of a western notion of uniform progress within development discourse.

The UNCDP had its first meeting from 2nd to 11th May 1966. Over the years, the Committee has had its mandate shift and change through a series of General Assembly and ECOSOC resolutions[33]. A significant addition to the Committee's role was the responsibility for reviewing both the list of LDCs and the criteria for identifying them. This role was allocated to the Committee when the category LDC was created in 1971.

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[33] For example, see United Nations Economic and Social Council Official Records 1995. Resolution 1995/215 'Committee for Development Planning', 10 February 1995. This resolution called for nominations to the Committee membership, asked it to review working methods and sought the Chair of the Committee to provide annual presentations on the outcomes of the Committee's discussions to the Economic and Social Council.

In 1999, forty-four years after the UNCDP was first established, it was reviewed as part of a wider review of committees and functions within ECOSOC. As a result it was re-named the Committee for Development Policy[34]. The membership requirements of the Committee for Development Planning and the Committee for Development Policy remained the same, a group of individual experts nominated in their personal capacity[35]. The role and functions of the Committee for Development Planning and the Committee for Development Policy remained similar[36]: a remit to assess world trends and emerging issues within and impacting upon international development prospects and assistance, and a continuing role in reviewing the list of least developed countries. It would continue to make recommendations and report to ECOSOC and ultimately through this body to the General Assembly. A key difference in the mandate of the Committee for Development Policy is that it now is formally required to review the list of LDCs in its entirety, and the criteria used for these assessments, each three years.

Gender perspectives and policy shifts

Gender analysis is a notable absence from operation of the category LDC through under the administration of the UNCDP. In applying a gender lens to the operation of category LDC, this thesis has identified limitations to the information used in the creation and administration of the category itself. In terms of the information used to form and inform the LDC category criteria and their administration, which is the core way in which the category operates as a technology of knowledge, gender sensitive information is excluded. This is an act that renders attempts by the UNCDP to include some aspects of gender sensitivity in its analysis marginal.

Gender-blind criteria, gender-blind reviews

Gender analysis is not included in the criteria for determining category LDC. The criteria have been and remain gender blind. When the LDC category was first created by the United Nations in 1971, the initial criteria outlined for the definition of the category were as follows:

> Countries having all three of the following characteristics should almost certainly be classified as least developed: per capita gross domestic product of $100 or less, share of manufacturing in total gross domestic product of 10 percent or less, and literacy rate – proportion of literate persons in the

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[34] Given the similarity of titles and function, I have used the abbreviation UNCDP to refer to both Committees throughout. For the text of the resolution on these changes see United Nations Economic and Social Council *Official Records* 1998. Resolution 1998/46 'Further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields' 47th plenary meeting, 31 July 1998.

[35] A breadth of geographic representation has always been a key feature of membership. In more recent times this has included experts of LDC nationalities. This has also been accompanied by an interest in the committee membership becoming varied, particularly in terms of the increasing the breadth and difference of skills, discipline knowledge and experience base brought to the Committee's work through its members.

[36] In the past, the Committee for Development Planning was able to set its own work agenda. The change to the Committee for Development Policy has seen the Economic and Social Council itself become much more engaged with the issues addressed by the Committee, tasking it on an annual basis with issues to examine, and approving the Committee's annual work plan.

age group of fifteen years and more – of 20 percent or less. In addition, certain borderline cases should also be considered eligible for inclusion in this classification. Countries with per capita gross product of $100 or less, but with a manufacturing ratio or literacy rate somewhat exceeding the limits just suggested, should be included, especially if their average real rate of growth during recent years has been exceptionally low. Similarly, countries where per capita gross product is over $100, but is no more than $120, and which satisfy other criteria should also be included. In considering the borderline cases, however, judgement would have to be exercised to take account of the special circumstances that may have distorted the recent picture. (ECOSOC 1971)

All of these criteria are macro country level data, and none of these criteria include any reference to women or gender analysis. The information used for these criteria is always numeric, the consequences of which is explored in detail in Chapter 3, notably the way data functions as a technology of knowledge in LDC discourse. Here I want to focus on the fact that despite being quantitative, the criteria do focus on people and bodies, attested to by the inclusion of literacy, and later on health data have been identified as key issues for inclusion in the criteria. What is clear is that gender has and is consistently outside the scope of relevant information for consideration. The three reviews of the criteria that have occurred since the category LDC was created, in 1992, 1997 and 2002, have not included gender analysis in sphere of defined relevant information for consideration. Within this discursive terrain, gender is placed outside the specialized knowledge developed for administration of the LDC category.

The 1992 review of the criteria for determining category LDC was the first major review of the criteria since the category's creation. This comprehensive review focused on a broad range of issues, including the relevance of the criteria themselves within the broader development setting, and the composition of each of the criteria used to determine category LDC. This review saw fundamental changes to the composition of the criteria. An Economic Diversification Index (EDI) was developed to take into account a broader range of indicators considered important for assessing the strength of a national economy. Similarly, an Augmented Physical Quality of Life Index (APQLI) was developed to take into account a broader range of social indicators covering population health and education status. As an outcome of this review, a series of rolling reviews were scheduled. The UNCDP was required to review the entire list of countries within the category, and to review the criteria and their composition every three years. The 1997 review was the first of these now regular larger-scale reviews that included a review of the criteria as well as countries within the LDC category. This revised components of both the EDI and the APQLI. A 1999 review, the first meeting since the UNCDP was revamped as the Committee for Development Policy, had a similar broad scope. It revised the EDI to include issues of geographic vulnerability and was renamed the Economic Vulnerability Index, the EVI. The 2002 review also assessed various data sources used within the EVI and renamed the APQLI the Human Assets Index (HAI).

It is clear that in examining the criteria in each of these reviews, the gendered dimensions and nature of economic activity and poverty did not even make it to the table for consideration. Data sources are not disaggregated by sex, and indicators of

economic activity do not examine participation in the informal sector or unpaid labour. The pre-eminent development constraints are understood in two terms, macro-economic constraints and geographic constraints. For example, simple single indicator data of national literacy rates as an indicator of social conditions is changed in 1997 to a broader index of data covering a range of issues. The incorporation of health and education status issues in the criteria relates, in simplistic economic terms, to the 'supply' side of development, a need to have a healthy and educated workforce. The creation of the APQLI/HAI within category LDC criteria occurs without any reference to gender issues, and no data disaggregated by sex is sought for use in the assessment of country socio-economic context or surveys of the international development environment.

Gender and policy shifts

There have been some efforts by the UNCDP to examine gender as an issue relevant to countries within category LDC. However, what emerges from reading the records of these meetings of the UNCDP is that the absences of gender as a relevant factor in the criteria for category LDC places gender as such a marginal issue it isn't even considered as an issue of significance. When gender is included in UNCDP analysis of LDCs it is clearly outside the main game, so to speak. In identifying this trend within UNCDP operations, it is clear that the discursive world of the UNCDP is isolated from broader gender policy debates within the United Nations. The United Nations 1975 International Women's Year and then Decade, the 1980 mid-term conference in Copenhagen, the 1985 Nairobi International Women's Conference and the resultant ten-year plan the Forward Looking Strategies, do not appear to have touched the workings of or been considered as remotely relevant to the UNCDP. It is only at the UNCDP's twenty-fourth session in 1988 that gender is mentioned for the first time as an issue relevant to development. This is after twelve years of significant international policy debates and three major UN conferences promoting policy to address gender inequality (Pietila and Vickers 1990). After all, its' not as if in 1988 women suddenly appeared in the LDC countries and hadn't been living and working and contributing to social and economic and cultural life in them previously. It is just in 1988 the UNCDP noticed women for the first time. This raises questions of why then? and why this session?, questions which I will explore in part in the discussion below. This gender-blind approach is a demonstration of the discursive boundaries operating within the technologies of knowledge, defining the (ir) relevance of information sources by the narrow, mechanistic gender-blind criteria that determine category LDC. What this thesis research demonstrates is that gender analysis (asking the question where are the women here when everyone else is talking about them?) provides an important tool to see that the technologies of knowledge operate within the development discourse of the category LDC by defining discursive limits of relevant information. Further, gender analysis is a key tool in opening these discursive boundaries for questioning.

Examination of UNCDP records reveals that when gender is included in analysis and discussion, it appears in three ways. The first is that gender always appears in the context of a broader issue or debate and is never mentioned as an issue that deserves the Committee's consideration on its own terms. Secondly, references to women are always essentialist, portraying third world women as victims. Thirdly, these references are fleeting. While gender may be included as an issue within a

broad policy recommendation made by the Committee, it disappears as an issue of concern when other issues are discussed or debated, and from one meeting to the next.

The first of the three ways that gender analysis appears within the UNCDP is in the context of a discussion of something else. In 1988, in advance of a broader review and preparations for the Third UN Strategy for Development, the UNCDP outlined a series of significant concerns about the current process and practice of international development:

> In the 1980s debt-distressed countries have cut investment, reduced public expenditure and imposed deflationary contraction on their economies. In the low-income countries the share of public expenditure on education and health fell by 40 percent and 20 per cent, respectively; in contrast, expenditure on defence and general administration rose.
> The pendulum has swung too far towards the neglect of human development. When Governments face the need of adjusting to short-term economic and fiscal constraints, there are policy choices to be made. For reasons of both efficiency and equity, the objectives of policy should be to safeguard human development programmes in order to reduce inefficiency and to improve delivery and targeting… (UNCDP 1988: para 8-9)

As a result of these concerns, the UNCDP proposes a shift in development policy approach, proposing a 'human capabilities approach to development'. This marks a shift away from a strict modernisation approach to development. This human capabilities approach to development is outlined in a session of the committee that maintains the emphasis in committee reports on stating a grave concern at the 'extensive and acute poverty in the world', and notably includes the first stated overt recognition of difference between country contexts in relation to development policy positions:

> In formulating recommendations on a development strategy for the 1990s, Governments will have to take into account the diversity of country experience and the fact that policy options available to countries at a low level of development are severely limited. (UNCDP 1988: para 10)

Amartya Sen and John Rawls, both of whom are referred to explicitly in the report of this session of the UNCDP, heavily influence the introduction of the 'human capabilities approach to development' and are both cited in the report:

> "The process of economic development", as Amartya Sen has said, "can be seen as a process of expanding the capabilities of people". That is, we are ultimately concerned with what people are capable or incapable of doing or being. Can they live long lives? Can they be well nourished? Can they escape avoidable illness? Can they obtain dignity and self-respect?…According to this view, development is concerned with much more than extending the supplies of commodities...Development planners have traditionally concentrated on the production of goods and services and on rates of growth. Increased physical output has been assumed to give rise to greater economic welfare. More recently, greater emphasis has been placed on the distribution of goods among people and to considerations of need and equity. The philosopher John Rawls defined deprivation in terms

of the availability of "primary goods" or "things it is supposed a rational man wants, whatever else he wants." (UNCDP 1988: para 51-53)

The human capabilities approach, as articulated and proposed in this session of the UNCDP is understood as a process "which puts the wellbeing of people first, which regards human beings simultaneously as both the means and the ends of social economy policy" (UNCDP 1988: para 87). It has a focus on what is required by people and communities, rather than the macro economic environment, and incorporates equity of distribution as a central component of the approach. Accordingly, the focus of a human capabilities approach to development is on basic social goods and services: education, water and sanitation, food security and health services. This is aligned with the shift from the classic modernisation model of development outlined in Chapter 1.

So, it is in this context of the human capabilities approach to development that the first references are made to women. This occurs in relation to three issues: access to health services, the distribution of incomes, and access to education. The issue of access to health services is understood and described in the Committee's report as related to the roles of women as primary caregivers, and the impact of women's work in this context on the wellbeing of families, children, the elderly, and the sick. It makes specific reference to the impact of women's nutrition during pregnancy on birth weight and consequent health status of babies and relationship to infant mortality. This discussion concludes with the following argument about the increased significance that women's health and status assumes within a human capabilities approach to development:

> In most developing countries, women have much less access to education, jobs, income and power than men. Women's levels of health and nutrition are often inferior to men's. Women generally account for the largest proportion of deprived people. The improvement of human capabilities requires, in particular, that the capabilities of women be improved.
> (UNCDP 1988: para 95)

It is clear in this text that women in LDCs are viewed and perceived as victims. The gender disparity and inequality between men and women is recorded. Women are mentioned in the context of their disadvantage, and as people whose capabilities require improvement. There is no recognition of the diverse complex social, economic and cultural roles women play in different communities in LDC countries. There is no recognition that women in LDC countries have strengths, existing capacities and make important contributions to social, cultural and economic life in their communities and countries. There is no recognition that women in LDCs may be different from each other, indeed that women within a given LDC may have different life experiences, opportunities and contributions. The representation is of women in LDCs as all the same, as victims with capabilities requiring improvement.

The second issue raised about gender in the UNCDP discussion of the human capabilities approach is about the issue of access to income. This is discussed in the context of distribution of incomes and benefits of social development programming. In the text of this discussion, the UNCDP notes that there is an assumption that all social development or 'human development' programmes disproportionately benefit the poor. The Committee argues that a human capabilities approach identifies beneficiaries differently, and that contemporary

human development programming disproportionately benefits male heads of households, based in urban areas with (relatively) middle or high incomes and that women living in rural areas and those with relatively low incomes benefit far less than is understood: a result of urban bias in program development and implementation. This representation of LDC women is as victims, excluded from the benefits of development. As with the previous example, this representation assumes all women in LDCs are the same.

The final issue raised as relating to women in the UNCDP report is the issue of access to education in the context of discrimination against women and girls' participation in eduction. The report cites:

> …on average, the illiteracy rates among females in the developing countries are 75 per cent higher than among males – i.e. 49 percent among women as opposed to 28 per cent among men. In primary school women account for 44 per cent of the pupils in the developing countries; in secondary schools 39 per cent, in tertiary education 36 percent. In the least developed countries the situation is even worse: women account for only 20 percent of those studying tertiary education and 11 per cent of the teaching staff in tertiary education. (UNCDP 1988: para 114)

The representation of women in LDCs in this example in terms of aggregated quantitative data is reductionist. It represents all women in LDCs as the same, and as homogenous victims of the lack of development in their countries.

The treatment of these three issues – health services, access to incomes, and access to education – highlight that the explicit consideration of women's issues and concerns within the UNCDP is reliant on essentialist representations of women as victims, with narrowly defined needs and issues of concern. Further, there is no recognition at all that women in different LDC countries, or even women within any given LDC, may have different needs or issues of concern or relevance to their socio-economic status. All three issues and their examples, though particularly the first one, relate to meeting the basic needs of women to assist them to fulfil currently prescribed social and cultural roles. The second and third issues – access to incomes and access to education – are both discussed in the context of women's exclusion from benefit, either by poor planning and implementation in the case of the first one, or in terms of explicit discrimination in the second case. The human capabilities approach to development is outlined as one that can by its definition incorporate a focus on women's issues and needs. The critical issue revealed through the language adopted by the UNCDP is that women are viewed as 'passive', 'needy', 'requiring', 'without capabilities'. Women in LDC countries are not viewed, described or understood as agents in their own capability development with strengths, contributions, assets and resources that can be and are mobilised.

The Committee concludes this discussion of the human capabilities approach with an argument for development planning and assistance to incorporate a strong focus on human capabilities, basic goods and social services within the broader dominance of macro-economic considerations of promoting economic growth, and to avoid the tendency "to consider education, health and social services as consumer goods – luxuries to be afforded in good times but not in bad" (UNCDP 1988: para 132):

> The Committee advocates that a broader view be taken of the development process- one that encompasses not only the growth of national per capita income and improvements in its distribution but also the enhancement of the capabilities of women and men to be and do more things and lead fuller lives. Education, health and nutrition have an important role to play in helping people develop their capabilities. The enhancement of capabilities is both an end in itself and a means to higher production and income. (UNCDP 1988: para 134)

Despite these strong words and argument, the Committee's own practice reveals that the relationship between the proposed human capabilities approach and the administration of the category LDC is very clear: nonexistent. This demonstrates the third way in which gender appears within UNCDP category LDC discourse; transitory and of limited relevance to other discussions.

Following the strong argument for the introduction of the human capabilities approach in the twenty-fourth session, in an ensuing discussion at the same meeting the Committee considered whether LDC status should be recommended for Mozambique and Zambia. In allocating Mozambique LDC status, the Committee noted that since independence in 1975, the economic status of Mozambique had declined. The two key sources of foreign exchange, remittances and earnings from transit services have both declined as the number of work permits granted to neighbouring countries decreased and alternate ports and routes were used. The Committee noted the negative impact of internal unrest, droughts, floods, cyclones on internal infrastructure and the economy, and the debt service ratio (in 1987) was estimated at 270% (UNCDP 1988: para 138). In this assessment, none of the issues highlighted in the human capabilities approach discussion were brought into consideration and discussion. This demonstrates how references to gender are fleeting and transitory, included one moment and excluded the next. In the very same session that the Committee proposed a new approach to development, and mentioned gender issues for the first time, when it came to conducting an assessment of LDC status it reverted to technocratic considerations within the limits and boundaries of the confirmed indicators. The Committee is unable to apply its recommendation about a changed approach to development to its own work.

These three characteristics of the way in which gender analysis appears within UNCDP are apparent in other sessions of the UNCDP. In the 1989 session of the Committee for Development Planning, the focus is on preparations for the negotiation of the Third International Development Strategy 1981-1991. The Committee for Development Planning identifies and recommends four key elements to be incorporated in this new strategy: "accelerated economic growth, greater concern for human development, an absolute reduction in the number of people suffering from severe poverty and deprivation and restraining the deterioration in the physical environment" (UNCDP 1989: para 7).

The explicit discussion of women arises in the context of a continued elaboration of the human capabilities approach to development, which was raised, but not applied, in the previous session of the Committee. The status of women is explicitly identified as an issue for development planning international policy:

> Women represent more than half the world's population yet in many countries lag behind men in school enrolment, nutrition and health, and life expectancy in age groups below 50 years…Equality of opportunity for women is particularly necessary in all aspects of development (UNCDP 1989: para 11).

The essentialist representation of women in LDC countries as passive victims, recipients of development assistance with limited spheres of activity and interest continues. In this session, the UNCDP discusses women and children at the same time. The phrase 'Half our people, all our future: women and children" (UNCDP 1989: para 149) provides a good indication of this essentialist representation of women as passive victims waiting assistance. A discussion on human resources and development outlines the Committee's suggestion for the key element for the Third International Development Strategy:

> The recommended approach during the next ten years is to emphasise those aspects of expenditure on human development which are akin to capital formation and to give lower priority to the purely social welfare aspects of expenditure programmes…there are important linkages between women's health, female life expectancy, the education of young women, the birth rate and population growth. (UNCDP 1989: para 147)

The UNCDP is focusing on essentialist characterisations of women with roles in society, culture and the economy limited to their roles in reproduction and as primary caregivers within family life.

This essentialist representation of the LDC woman in this UNCDP discussion is demonstrated during further deliberations in their report where the Committee outlines women's roles and status:

> The crucial role of women in development has come to be acknowledged. Women in the third world perform the fundamental tasks of feeding and nurturing the population. They are responsible (particularly in Africa) for growing and marketing most of the food crops. They do most of the food preparation, obtain the water and fuel for the household, are responsible for health, nutrition and hygiene, and provide the early education of the young. Increasingly, too, women are engaged in wage employment or self-employment in the modern sector of the economy. It is not surprising that women are so important since they are, after all, half our people. (UNCDP 1989: para 149)

Women's roles in reproduction, as primary carers in family life, are clearly the focus. The acknowledgement that women are engaged in the 'modern' sector of the economy has an almost surprised quality to it. The issue of gender-based discrimination is raised later in the Committee's discussion:

> Yet in many countries women have been neglected by development programmes and discriminated against by public policy. Female literacy rates are lower than men's. Female enrolment rates in all three levels of education are usually lower than men's. Females spend less time in education than males, probably because from the age of five upwards girls are expected to work in the home and in the fields. The nutrition and health of women are often neglected in favour of those of men. In India, Bangladesh and Pakistan there is evidence of discriminatory feeding and health practices favoring male children right from childhood. Despite the fact that women enjoy a biological advantage in longevity over men, life

expectancy for women in many developing countries is lower than for men in age groups below 50 years. This is largely due to two facts. First, there is generally a higher mortality rate for female than for male children above five years of age and secondly, there is higher mortality rate for women of child bearing age (15-44) than for men of corresponding years. In addition, in India and Pakistan, contrary to the usual pattern, the mortality rate among infant girls zero to five years old is higher than for boys in the same age group. These patterns of mortality rate are indicative of discrimination against girls from the time of birth onwards. (UNCDP 1989: para 150)

This discussion of gender-based discrimination occurs in terms of its negative impact on women's literacy rates, nutrition and health status, and is provided as evidence and rationale for the 'neglect' of women by development programmes and public policy. After the brief acknowledgement of agency and contribution to agriculture and the 'modern economy', LDC women are firmly repositioned back into their roles as silent suffering victims of their culture, their nation's lack of development and international development activities.

The Committee does identify gender as a key issue to be addressed in the UN's Third International Development Strategy. Drawing upon combined emphasis of both the critical contribution of women in social spheres in developing countries and women's negative experience of gender-based discrimination, the UNCDP argues these factors form the rationale for proposed altered policy priorities:

In the 1990s the task is to translate greater understanding of the problems of women into altered priorities. It is essential that women receive equal access to education and training programmes, to health and nutrition services and, in the sphere of production, to credit, extension services, technology and income-generating activities. Beyond this, sufficient investments favouring women are needed – e.g. in safe motherhood and in labour saving devices of particular relevance to women, such as more fuel-efficient methods of cooking, less labour intensive ways of preparing food and more accessible sources of water, field and fodder. Empowering women for development should have high returns in terms of increased output, greater equity and social progress. (UNCDP 1989: para 151)

While it is commendable that the Committee identifies gender as an issue to be addressed in the Third International Development Strategy, the representation of women's roles is very limited. This text clearly locates women in a passive role: no consultation required to work out what all women living in developing countries need, clearly all the same things. The emphasis is strongly on promoting 'altered priorities', to use the Committee's phrase, related to a gender role as primary carers in family life and social reproduction. The 'sphere of production' is included within the scope of the altered priorities, but is not the primary emphasis.

The inclusion of gender issues and references to women in the UNCDP's recommendations for the Third International Development Strategy could be seen as a key marker of change in the relevance and significance attached to these concerns by the Committee. However, within the very same meeting of the UNCDP, this recommendation is immediately followed by an example of how marginalised gender issues are within LDC development discourse. The Committee discusses the importance of incorporating a global strategy for water in development into the Third International Development Strategy. This proposed

global water strategy identifies issues, impacts, priorities and strategies for action. The Committee proposes this without any kind of gender analysis or sensitivity. Despite having articulated very clearly the importance of 'altering priorities' to take into account gender-based discrimination and include an explicit focus on women's roles in family and social care in development planning, the Committee's discussion on the global strategy for water only includes one explicit reference to women and gender issues and implications, which is to the role of women as gatherers of water, walking long distances, and the impact this has on the amount of water available for per person daily consumption. The point being made explicitly by the UNCDP is that where safe drinking water is available in villages and communities, consumption is considerably higher, and water-borne diseases are considerably less prevalent. The central point being made by the Committee with this point is not to raise issues of gender and water, and ensure that they are incorporated in their proposed global water and development strategy, but to demonstrate that there is considerable unsatisfied demand for water consumption to meet basic hygiene standards (UNCDP 1989: para 208). This example demonstrates again the transitory nature of the relevance of gender analysis within the discursive world of the UNCDP. If gender issues are raised, they are marginalised to discussions focused on women.

This characteristic of the way gender is treated within UNCDP discourse on LDCs is further shown in this 1989 session. The Committee also considered the criteria for the identification of the least developed among developing countries. In their deliberations issues of locational vulnerabilities were raised, "such as prevailing climatic and weather conditions, size, remoteness and being landlocked" (UNCDP 1989: para 320). The potential for including a quality of life index, and impacts of government policy on social and economic life were also raised. There was no mention of the use of gender-disaggregated data, or any form of gender analysis in the criteria or the recommended methodology for their use.

The UNCDP's 1988 and 1989 sessions are highly significant, being the first sessions where considerable discussion was devoted to issues of the status of women, and the engagement of women in development. This included a specific commitment in the 1989 session to recommend that priorities within international development planning and policy include a stronger focus on women, albeit in ways that focused on gender roles of women as primary caregivers in family life and that positioned women as passive actors in development. In this context, the discussion in the 1989 session is particularly significant, as in both the example of the proposed global water and development strategy and in the discussion on criteria for identification of the least developed among the developing countries, the Committee demonstrates a very limited capacity to integrate the gender analysis and 'altered priorities' it is proposing into its own work and discussions, despite having concluded earlier in the session's discussions how integral women are to development policy and planning.

In 1990 the UNCDP continues the focus on preparations and recommendations for international development strategy and policy. This session focused on poverty, producing analytical findings on the prevalence of poverty, assessing the definitions and locations of poverty and developing policy conclusions. This

session continues the argument for a stronger focus on the 'human capabilities approach' proposed in the 1988 session:

> Persistent poverty is a product of inappropriate structures and poor policies. A major characteristic of the poor is their lack of productive physical assets and human capital…Poverty alleviation should not be viewed as a matter of charity.
>
> During the 1980s, the numbers of the absolute poor increased in the developing countries as a whole. In Africa, the absolute poor have also increased as a proportion of the total population. In most countries implementing structural programmes, the incidence of poverty has risen. The poor should be seen as having the potential to become highly productive; investing in poverty alleviation should be seen as having a potentially high rate of return. (UNCDP 1990: para 18- 21)

This discussion about the definition and location of poverty is important. The UNCDP defines absolute poverty in terms of inadequate nutrition and severe deprivation of basic needs. A distinction is made between the geographic location of the largest populations with highest prevalence of absolute poverty, Asia, and the geographic location of countries with the highest percentage of population in absolute poverty, Africa. A distinction is also made between the regions where absolute poverty is more prevalent in rural and urban areas. The Committee continues this discussion by identifying major characteristics of the poor in rural and urban areas:

> …In the rural areas they tend to be the landless or near-landless agricultural and non-farm workers, small landowning peasants, pastoralists, nomads and fishermen. In the urban areas, they are the unskilled, untrained and unschooled people; their productivity is low and they lack physical capital. A high proportion of the poor are women. In all countries households headed by women are the poorest in the community. The poor suffer from undernutrition even when they spend three quarters of their income on food. Their children are generally below average weight for age and suffer from impaired mental and physical development, which jeopardises their ability to become productively employed as adults. Ill health among the poor is widespread and saps their energy, reduces family incomes and prevents children from taking full advantage of such opportunities for education as exist. Illiteracy is high, life expectancy is relatively low and infant and child mortality rates are well above average. (UNCDP 1990: para 122)

This is important to highlight as it shows that the UNCDP has started to recognise the feminisation of poverty in LDCs. However, the way in which it is raised and treated is only as relevant information to be noted in observations about LDC development contexts. It is not given any priority by the UNCDP, and is definitely not treated as a core development issue for the UNCDP to engage with in its work promoting improvements in LDC social and economic status.

In this discussion about poverty, it is clear that while the UNCDP has attempted to discuss both the prevalence of absolute poverty and the characteristics of 'the poor' in terms that recognise difference, the language and expression reveals that the underlying understandings come from reliance on a uni-dimensional liberal economic perspective that treats populations with a conceptual homogeneity. This is demonstrated through the very limited set of characteristics available to 'the

poor' in rural areas and in urban areas in this text, all of which focus on a lack of agency, strength and capacity. The description of women is solely in the context of family responsibilities, and the discussion of children outlines an irreparable cycle of hopelessness, from poor mother to weak infant to ill, poor adult. Despite this, it is clear that the Committee had made a strong connection between gender inequality and poverty, made explicit in the following:

> …what is needed is (not) more anti-poverty projects but a development strategy centred on the elimination of poverty, including a general improvement of women's social, economic, cultural, and legal status. A well-conceived development strategy should aim at accelerating growth and eliminating poverty simultaneously. (UNCDP 1990: para 24)

This position is reinforced by a recommendation that 'a well conceived strategy' would include reforms to enhance women's participation in public life and promote accessible family planning (UNCDP 1990: para 26)[37]. It is further reinforced by a recommendation that the impact of development strategies in their entirety, not just the development activities labelled "anti-poverty", should be assessed terms of their impact on "the poor", with a specific emphasis on gendered impacts (UNCDP 1990: para 25).

The next concrete mention of gender or women by the UNCDP is two years later in 1992. In this session, the Committee re-examines the international context for development cooperation efforts, with a significant focus on institutional reform of the United Nations and its agencies. It is in the course of a discussion on the linkages between environmental issues, development issues, poverty and economic reform processes in developing countries that a gender perspective is introduced and a specific discussion is noted on the impact of economic reform on women:

> African women are a particularly vulnerable group in the face of declining real incomes and public sector supports, especially in low-income rural areas, because it is mainly up to them to find compensatory means to uphold family consumption and welfare. Normally, husbands and fathers transfer only part of their income to the family budget. When their income declines, they do not necessarily transfer higher budget proportions of it to the active household budget dispensed by women. This situation leads to a greater work burden and more severe time constraints imposed on women.

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[37] The full proposition by the UNCDP is as follows:
> A well conceived strategy should include a broad and consistent set of measures, including most of those indicated below in summary form and expanded upon in chapter IV:
> a) Redistribution of land;
> b) Greater provision of agricultural services and rural infrastructure;
> c) Greater investment in the development of human resources;
> d) Removal of bias against the poor in expenditures on infrastructure;
> e) Social and legal reforms to enhance the full participation of women in economic and social institutions;
> f) Removal of unnecessary constraints on urban industry, especially small scale enterprises, ensuring that prices of credit and other inputs reflect real scarcities;
> g) Family planning programmes and provision of birth control facilities;
> h) Greater democracy and participation of the poor in local electoral politics and in the creation of organizations that support their cause.
> (UNCDP 1990: para 26)

The above situation, in turn, has an adverse effect on women's production incentives, and this is especially so in peasant agriculture, because simultaneous increases in both food and cash-crop production is likely to accrue to men. Women's rational reluctance to be redeployed to unremunerated work on export crops obviously weakens the efficacy of price incentives for export promotion. (UNCDP 1992: paras 159-160)

This emphasis on women is focused on the roles of women as primary caregivers in the family context, responsible for family social and economic welfare and nutrition. It contrasts gender differences in how income earned is allocated to family welfare. In the context of economic reform initiatives that are negatively impacting on the ability for both men and women to earn incomes and on the level of incomes earned, this text highlights a gender disparity in both the impact in terms of time required to work to earn cash income and in incentives to engage in the cash economy. In this discussion the UNCDP argues that there are gender differences in the perceived equation between work activities that seek to ensure family food security and work activities that promote national economic growth. What this example also does is represent all African women as the same, with the same experiences and roles in all countries and cultures. This example also represents all African women as victims – victims of both discrimination in the household, and as victims of poorly performing national economies.

The discussion in this meeting of the UNCDP includes a discussion critical of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP), and notes the gendered dimensions of the negative impacts that were being identified. Explicit mention of the negative impact on women as a result of declining levels of health and education social service provision is made. The Committee also records the emergence of negative gendered impacts of SAP land reform, particularly on the ability of women to access land title. This recognition of the negative gendered impact of land reform initiatives indicates that the UNCDP has an appreciation of the intersection between women's human rights and development. This is the first time that women are represented as potential actors within and contributors to development. This recognition is reinforced with an explicit citation of a resolution by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) that acknowledges the importance of women's participation in decision-making, women's productive roles, and women's roles as providers of basic care (UNCDP 1992: para 222). Despite this shift in acknowledging the active roles and rights of women to land in LDC countries, UNCDP LDC development discourse is still representing LDC women as homogenous victims.

The characteristic of gender as of transitory or fleeting relevance to LDC discourse continues throughout subsequent sessions of the UNCDP. The Committee's twenty-ninth session in 1994 includes a strong outline of the overall objectives of development, arguing that the nexus between foreign aid as a modality of foreign policy and development assistance has been broken with the end of the cold war era, and that development assistance is now more closely focused on poverty reduction:

The ultimate objectives of development are easy to list. We are concerned to reduce global poverty and raise the standard of living of millions of people whose material wellbeing is extraordinarily low; we are interested in

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expanding the range of choice open to people so that they may choose for themselves more satisfying lives; and we are concerned to enhance the capabilities of people everywhere so that women and men may come closer to fulfilling their potential. Development is thus about putting people first: the ultimate focus of policy and initiative must be on human development 'rethinking the framework for development cooperation'. (UNCDP 1994: para 1)

These ultimate objectives of development are articulated without a context/problem analysis- and the only indication that they include or are sensitive to gender analysis is that women are mentioned before men in the phrase about people's potential being filled. The only reference to gender analysis in the rest of the records of discussion from this meeting of UNCDP is in relation to maternal mortality as a critical indicator of women's status and the overall national health indicators[38].

In 1999, at the first session of the Committee for Development Policy, the key topic for discussion is the role of employment and work in poverty eradication. The full and formal title includes an explicit reference to women, 'The role of employment and work, particularly of women, in poverty eradication in the context of globalisation'. For the first time in the Committee's deliberations, gender is an explicit focus of the discussion. The gender analysis, as outlined in the records of the meeting, is an improvement on that in previous years, beginning with the following acknowledgement:

Evidence suggests that poverty is especially prominent among women, thereby making it essential that policies to combat gender inequalities form an important component of all efforts to reduce poverty. (UNCDP 1999: para 4)

The deliberations focus on the benefits of globalisation more generally, and then outline the negative impacts of globalisation on LDC economies, identifying where the globalisation has increased LDC economic vulnerabilities. The Asian financial crises of 1997 and 1998 and the visible impacts on socio-economic status provide the general cautionary framework for the discussion, without dominating the content. The key gender specific benefit of globalisation listed in the discussion is the increased participation of women in the workforce, and the associated increased in household and broader social status, a benefit based on the feminisation of the export oriented labour force experienced in East Asia (UNCDP 1999: para 35). The discussion on negative impacts of globalisation on LDCs focused on the

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[38] The UNCDP noted the inequity revealed by international comparisons of maternal mortality data:

Maternal mortality rates are a good indicator of the health situation and status of women. Maternal mortality is the largest cause of death among women of reproductive age in most developing countries. In less developed regions, there were on average 450 deaths for 100,000 live births between 1980 and 1985 against 30 in developed countries. Since those rates are higher in countries with crude mortality rates, they should follow the general trends of mortality and improve by the year 2000. But the wide disparities among countries are not likely to disappear, especially as the increase of life expectancy is expected to be slower in Africa, for example, which accounts for 30 per cent of maternal deaths as opposed to 18 per cent of births. (UNCDP 1994: para 93)

tendency for the economic benefits associated with globalisation to be distributed unevenly, increasing disparities of wealth between and within countries[39]. The negative impact of globalisation that received the most discussion was the increased vulnerability of LDCs. This was understood in several ways: as a result of increased exposure to international markets as a result of financial liberalisation; changes in the domestic labour market as a result of increased openness to trade competition; and the negative impacts associated with what the Committee described as the 'forces behind globalisation – technological change, liberalisation and increased competition' (UNCDP 1999: para 45). The other factors identified include increased environmental degradation as a result of increased primary commodity trade, notably the unsustainable rate of natural resource extraction. The Committee noted that the combined negative impact of all these factors could undermine LDC social cohesion, exacerbate social and economic inequalities, and increase social tension.

In tracing the gender specific impacts of globalisation the Committee's focus on formal employment and the formal labour market led to the identification of issues associated with the ability of women to participate in the formal labour market, and associated with women's participation in specific sectors. The Committee notes pro-growth development agenda requires understanding and attention to the poor:

> Increasing gender equality is crucial to successful efforts to reduce poverty, because evidence suggests that poverty appears to be overwhelmingly female. Data based on a number of indicators of the gender gap for different regions show that, for developing countries as a whole, the adult literacy rate is 16 percentage points higher for men than for women; female school enrolment – even at the primary level – is 13 per cent lower than the level for males; and women's share of earned income is a third of the total. (UNCDP 1999: para 59)

For example, the Committee outlined the gender disparity in accessing new technologies and the new social and economic opportunities available, a consequence of gender-based inequality of access to education and training. The formal employment opportunities most likely to be available to women are in labour-intensive industries where wages are low and jobs are unstable (Pearson [1991] 2001; Standing [1999] 2001). The vulnerability to trade downturns can result in rapid downsizing and high job loss (UNIFEM 2005). The other patterns of employment opportunities for women noted by the Committee are in the informal sector, in home-based work, temporary or casual employment- all unstable, with low wages and poor conditions.

In shifting to examining policy options available to address some of these issues, the Committee's report outlines national and international policy recommendations

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[39] The UNCDP discussion on globalisation included the following text:
> The Committee noted that the overall net economic benefits of globalisation worldwide have been positive, but that the distribution of these gains have not been even, neither between nor within countries. For example, countries that account for 70 per cent of world population receive only 10 per cent of FDI flows. The least developed countries, with 10 per cent of the world's people, have less than 2 per cent of world trade. While globalisation offers many opportunities, not all possess the full capability to take advantage of them. (UNCDP 1999: para 36)

on several issues: policies for growth and job creation, policies to improve capabilities, policies on income distribution and the alleviation of poverty, policies to correct for market failures and to smooth adjustment, policies to strengthen governance. The only ones to include both an international and national recommendation that included specific reference to women are in the policy recommendations on income distribution and the alleviation of poverty. These policy recommendations include ensuring national poverty alleviation strategies have a focus on women; addressing the gender disparity in access to education and skill development; addressing legislative discrimination against women; and increasing opportunities for women to participate in national decision making.

This analysis and set of policy options outlines a much stronger focus on gender analysis within UNCDP deliberations. The focus is on addressing women's poverty, as women are the majority of the poor; and on ensuring women are not discriminated against in access to education and workforce development opportunities. The focus is not on women as primary caregivers, nor is it on women as economic agents to improve national economic performance. The agenda is not far from a human rights framework, focused on rights to live free from all forms of social, economic and cultural discrimination.

Unfortunately, this was the Committee's last significant discussion on gender and development. The 2000 session of the Committee included major discussion on the role of information technology in development and on identifying recommendations for future international development strategies. The discussion on the latter was quite brief, and noted the importance of a full review of previous strategies identifying strengths and weaknesses. It made no reference to the need for an international development strategy to make reference to women and use gender analysis. The discussion on information technology explored a wide range of benefits and risks associated with information technology in developing countries, focusing on the economic benefits and new economic development opportunities, as well as the importance of ensuring that an international digital divide between LDCs and developed countries was not exacerbated. The sole and ineffectual token reference to gender analysis is in the list of policy recommendations for adoption by the United Nations and bilateral donors:

> Building human and organisational capabilities for the productive use of IT, not only leading to the increased use of IT throughout the economy, but also taking into account gender equity and the need to help ensure the empowerment of women in cyberspace. (UNCDP 2000: para 50(f))

In a lengthy Committee report, this brief sentence is the sole reference to gender and women. This demonstrates the way in which gender issues continue to be marginal to LDC development discourse and are mentioned in passing.

The UNCDP explored this interest in information technology and development again in 2002. The focus of discussion this time was the social sectors – health and education and the widening disparity between least developed countries and others in health and literacy outcomes.

> …At the basic level of education, the gender gap is persistent throughout, especially in the least developed countries, where only 62 per cent of girls are enrolled in primary schools and only 38 per cent of women are literate. (UNCDP 2002: para 62).

The Committee's discussion explored the disjunction between the opportunities available with the emergence of the international knowledge-based economies and associated aspirations, and the continuing challenges for least developed countries to meet basic health and education needs. The references to gender in this discussion are focused on the section that discusses policy recommendations.

Women's literacy is identified as critical in promoting improvements to population health and education outcomes in the discussion that outlines the importance of linkages between education and health services. This focuses on women's contribution to social and economic life as primary caregivers in households, and the role of women in contributing to formal and informal economic activity:

> In this light, women's literacy is an important key to improving health, nutrition and education in the family and to empowering women to participate more in decision-making in society. Investing in formal and informal education and training for girls and women, with its high social and economic return, has proved to be one of the best means of achieving economic growth that is both sustained and sustainable. Governments, the private sector and civil society should ensure that schools and informal systems of education play a stronger role in preventing infection from communicable diseases, especially HIV infection. Education should also play a role in eliminating discrimination against women through the inclusion of gender-sensitive education about safer sex and responsible behaviour. (UNCDP 2002: para 81)

The overarching policy recommendation is for comprehensive capacity building strategies to be developed that encompass both formal and informal education and health systems and workforces. The Committee recommends in particular that these strategies recognise the current levels of gender inequality in accessing formal education, and the pressure of social, cultural and household commitments on the ability of women and girls to access formal and informal education and training. In this light, the Committee highlights the need for both formal and informal education and training to be flexible, and focuses on functional skills development appropriate and relevant to the culture and community. This analysis highlights both women's productive and reproductive roles in society, and through its use of a framework that highlights gender inequalities, and supports a human rights based approach that addresses discrimination. However it is unclear whether in this case the Committee is arguing this from a human rights perspective or a more general and economic efficiency 'gender equality promotes economic development' perspective.

The UNCDP's 2003 session examined the issue of rural development, with the topic 'Promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development'. This discussion focused on the importance of rural development as a major plank of development strategies in least developed countries. In outlining the causes and consequences of poverty in rural areas in LDCs, the Committee focus on health and education services and status, the degree of rural-urban migration, and environmental degradation. In discussing health and education services and outcomes, the Committee's sole reference to women is in a discussion about school dropouts:

This is particularly true for girls, as the education of girls and women has a wide impact, given their role as family and community caregivers.
(UNCDP 2003: para 8)

The discussion on health focuses completely on communicable diseases. While HIV/AIDS is mentioned, the major focus is on insect-borne and water-borne diseases. There is no reference to maternal mortality and morbidity. In discussing rural-urban migration, two explicit references are made to women. The first is in relation to the impact on women in becoming heads of households as a result of male migration to urban centres for formal employment. The second is in relation to the vulnerability of women and girls to trafficking and slavery in unfamiliar urban environments if they move.

This gender analysis focuses on issues facing women in rural and urban areas, but is entirely based on a perspective of women as powerless victims, and does not outline the contributions and agency women bring to development efforts. This limited analysis comes through in the major findings and policy recommendations of the Committee. Four key priority areas are identified for action:

(a) Expanding education and health services and providing incentives for rural people to take advantage of them;
(b) Increasing agricultural productivity and non-farm activities through the use of technology, diversification and access to inputs and credit;
(c) Improving access to local, national and global markets;
(d) Examining all policies through "rural lenses" with a special focus on women. (UNCDP 2003: para 14)

There are references to women in (a) and (d). In the first priority area, the Committee argues that reducing gender discrimination would contribute to rural poverty reduction as part of a general argument that improved health and education status tends to be associated with improvements in other development objectives. The specific focus is on health care services and mother and child health programmes. It is of interest that despite it being widely acknowledged that the majority of rural farmers are women, there are no references to women in the second recommendation, nor any indication that gender analysis has been brought to these policy suggestions. The final recommendation is a broad strategic policy oriented catch-all. What is of interest here is that there is, finally, an acknowledgement about the diverse and complex roles of women in rural communities:

…In all cases, the gender dimension should be taken into special consideration, as women and girls often constitute a majority of the rural population and therefore stand to be the most important contributors to, as well as beneficiaries of, accelerated rural development; and in many of the poorest developing countries, women account for the largest share of agricultural output. Specific needs of women and the issue of the removal of constraints on their full participation in economic activity should be addressed as a matter of urgency. (UNCDP 2003: para 32)

Point (d) and the following text demonstrate an appreciation of what is required for gender mainstreaming. This is the first time that this has occurred in UNCDP discussions and is an important shift in the LDC development discourse. However this acknowledgement of the importance of a rural lens with a special focus on women is not applied across the board in UNCDP analyses of LDC development context.

The UNCDP's 2004 session is a further demonstration of the transitory way in which gender becomes relevant or disappears from view. The main focus of the session is on developing recommendations for a transition strategy for LDC countries to graduate from the category, and recommending the Maldives and Cape Verde for graduation from LDC status. In the papers prepared for the Committee's consideration, a report on mobilising resources to eradicate poverty in the LDCs was considered as a key document:

> These countries are characterised primarily by very high levels of rural population who depend on agriculture for their livelihood, the majority of those living below the dollar-a-day poverty line are women and youths... Without significant increased access to financial resources, vulnerable groups such as small farmers, women and children, in the rural areas in particular, have little chance of producing their way out of poverty… Myriad benefits have been attributed to micro-finance programs. The Grameen Bank has been credited with addressing the structural determinants of poverty, economic and social status of women, and sources of vulnerability. (Binger 2004: pp 14, 17)

This 23-page report included these three specific references to women where it was clear that gender analysis was considered relevant. The remainder and substance of the report, on trading preferences, roles of bilateral donors and multilateral financial institutions, debt sustainability and development of the rural sector was gender blind. These three references to women were all asides, minor observations of the essentialist LDC woman's development context and experience.

This gender analysis of the UNCDP meetings over more than twenty years reveals that there are limits to the information and knowledge deemed relevant to category LDC. In highlighting the discursive boundaries of category LDC, gender analysis demonstrates that there is a narrow conceptual basis to the category itself; to the criteria, and to the analysis it produces. In undertaking gender analysis into the technology of knowledge classification into criteria, it is clear that gender is not a factor ever considered relevant to be included in the criteria for determining LDC status, and this means that efforts to include gender sensitivity into the work of the UNCDP struggle to have more than marginal relevance. This is demonstrated through the ways in which efforts to include gender sensitivity occurred. Gender analysis always appears in the context of another issue or debate, and is never considered significant enough an issue to be raised on its own terms. Gender references are always to homogenous third world woman as victim or passive recipient of assistance, never as an actor in development. Gender references are transitory within and between UNCDP sessions, mentioned in one part of a discussion but ignored in other aspects of the same discussion, or mentioned in one session and then essentially ignored in the next. The UNCDP's defined specialised nature of information relevant to category LDC is so limited that it took over a decade's worth of high profile and significant activism within the United Nations system on the status of women and the importance of gender sensitivity for the first references to women to appear in the official records of discussions. Gender analysis is a powerful tool for demonstrating the discursive limits of category LDC, and the technology of knowledge classification into criteria.

Creating and administering category LDC

The criteria used to define category LDC establish boundaries for LDC development discourse. The way in which the technology of knowledge classification into criteria operates is limited and constrained by these discursive limits. Gender analysis plays a critical role highlighting LDC discursive boundaries, and once these boundaries are visible, they can be explored further. What I have identified is that the main ways this technology of knowledge operates are firstly through the case- by-case determinations of country inclusion or exclusion from LDC category; secondly through the reviews of the list of LDC countries; and thirdly through the reviews of the criteria themselves. Through each of these operations two main dynamics can be identified. The first dynamic is the way the UNCDP develops and refines its own processes and procedures for analysis. The second dynamic is through the way the UNCDP focuses on increasingly specific information. These two dynamics in the LDC development discourse further limit and define the information used and analysis produced by the UNCDP about countries within the LDC grouping. They also influence UNCDP considerations about countries included in the grouping and the reviews of the LDC category itself. This section of the chapter will explore the productive nature of LDC development discourse through the operation of this technology of knowledge, identified through UNCDP meeting records and reports.

A productive category

The category LDC itself is productive. In real terms, LDC status accords trading preferences and arguably preferential access to multilateral and bilateral development assistance. While being classified as being one of the poorest of the poor countries in the world may not immediately seem to be something a country would seek out, these benefits have created precisely this dynamic. From 1971 to the present day countries have sought inclusion in the LDC category (see Table 3 for details of countries included on the list). This dynamic underscores the operation of this technology of knowledge and LDC development discourse.

It is clear from debates within the UNCTAD at the time the criteria for determining category LDC were set in 1971 that the definition was a source of contention as countries sought to be included within the category. Records of the debates at the Trade and Development Board of UNCTAD in 1972 include an intervention by Mr Olmedio Virreria from Bolivia on the matter of 'Special Measures in favour of the least developed among the developing countries including land-locked countries', seeking to include Bolivia in the category. He mounted a passionate argument for the inclusion of land-locked countries:

> Because of its special situation, Bolivia regarded itself as one of the least developed among the developing countries. The criteria used to identify such countries should be reviewed; the Trade and Development Board and the Economic and Social Council had reaffirmed the need for continuing to work on their identification. Bolivia therefore requested the UNCTAD secretariat to pursue that task in co-operation with the Committee for Development Planning. (UNCTAD 3-25 October 1972 and 7-11 May 1973: para 116)

The substance of the Bolivian case rested on the observation that:

Non-access to the sea should be taken into consideration in the identification of the least developed among the developing countries; that was shown by the fact that of 18 land-locked countries 13 were to be found among the 25 on the provisional list…It was worth emphasising that the inclusion of non-access to the sea in the criteria would add only two Latin American and two African countries to the list already drawn up.
(UNCTAD 3-25 October 1972 and 7-11 May 1973: para 118)

Bolivia's push for a review was bolstered, ironically enough, by support from small island states such as Madagascar. While not incorporating a specific call for the review of the criteria, the Economic Commission for Africa was concerned that the criteria for the category have a specific focus on African countries. [40]

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[40] The Official Records of the Economic Commission for Africa include a special resolution from the Conference of Ministers at their 163rd meeting on the 13th February 1971 on the special measures in favour of the least developed among the developing countries supporting this initiative, and requests that the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa "examine any concrete measures which may be decided in favour of the least developed countries and take account of their measures in order to ensure their appropriateness to the economic development of African countries" (ECOSOC 1970- 1971: paras 115-116). Resolution 232(X) from the same meeting called for the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa to develop a specific program for the African LDCs for the 1970s that could be taken to coming international meetings including the June 1971 Special International Conference of the UNIDO (ECOSOC 1970- 1971: para 123).

Table 3: List of the Least Developed Countries by date of inclusion in the list.

	Country	Date of inclusion on the list
1	Afghanistan	1971
2	Benin	1971
3	Bhutan	1971
4	Botswana	1971 (until 1995)
5	Burkina Faso	1971
6	Burundi	1971
7	Chad	1971
8	Ethiopia	1971
9	Guinea	1971
10	Haiti	1971
11	Lao Peoples Democratic Republic	1971
12	Lesotho	1971
13	Malawi	1971
14	Maldives	1971
15	Mali	1971
16	Nepal	1971
17	Niger	1971
18	Rwanda	1971
19	Samoa	1971
20	Somalia	1971
21	Sudan	1971
22	Uganda	1971
23	United Republic of Tanzania	1971
24	Yemen	1971
25	Bangladesh	1975
26	Central African Republic	1975
27	Democratic Yemen	1975
28	Gambia	1975
29	Cape Verde	1977
30	Comoros	1977
31	Guinea Bissau	1981
32	Djibouti	1982
33	Equatorial Guinea	1982
34	Sao Tome and Principe	1982
35	Sierra Leone	1982
36	Togo	1982
37	Vanuatu	1985
38	Tuvalu	1986
39	Kiribati	1986
40	Mauritania	1986
41	Myanmar (Burma)	1987
42	Mozambique	1988
43	Liberia	1990
44	Cambodia	1991
45	Madagascar	1991
46	Solomon Islands	1991
47	Zaire	1991
48	Zambia	1991
49	Angola	1995
50	Eritrea	1995
51	Timor-Leste	2003

Sources: UNCDP 1988, 1990, 1991, 1995 and 2003.

It is also clear from the records of debates at this time that the motive for seeking inclusion in the category was the perceived additional benefits that would accrue, both in terms of special trade-related measures and additional development financing from bilateral donors, international financial institutions and intergovernmental organisations. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) had both taken steps to place an additional priority on assistance to the LDC countries, and donor countries such as the US and Japan were both providing or indicating their interest in providing additional funds to support the agreed special measures for the least developed among developing countries[41].

Despite consistent reiteration by the UNCDP and the UN more generally from the 1980s onwards that additional resources had failed to materialise, the perception of increased benefits to those countries within the LDC group continued[42]. It can be seen through these debates and discussions, that the LDC category itself is productive. The growth in numbers of countries in the category is not just a marker of deteriorating development contexts, but also a marker of the degree of interest amongst many countries in being included in the group to maximise development assistance. This dynamic underscores or provides the setting for the ways in which the technology of knowledge, classification into criteria, operates within LDC development discourse.

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[41] During the debates on special measures to assist the least developed among developing countries at the 326th meeting of the Trade and Development Board on 12th October 1972 the US, for example, outlined that it had pledged to increase official development assistance to the 25 identified least developed countries in 1973 by $US10 million from the previous year's commitment to those countries. Japan indicated that they would be contributing $US15 million to UNDP for additional assistance to African LDCs (UNCTAD 1972 - 1973: paras 143-154).

[42] The 1982 session of the Committee outlines the Committee's concern at the status of the international economy. The Committee's report notes that 1981 saw a prolonged slow-down in economic growth; per capita output of developing countries fell, leading to major foreign-exchange shortages in some countries that affected basic service provision and production. The extent of the Committee's concern is highlighted when they noted that 'in such circumstances the objectives of the International Development Strategy for the present decade seem to be vitiated from the start.' (UNCDP 1982: para 13). These observations about the international economy and the significant difficulties being experienced by developing countries are accompanied by a concern about a 'rising tide of protectionist sentiment and the hardening attitude towards aid policies' (UNCDP 1982: para 16) and the fall in the proportion of development assistance through multilateral channels, both through the UNDP and the International Development Association (IDA). These sentiments continue in future years. In the UNCDP's 1986 session it is of interest to note that in the first chapter of the Committee's report of this session the Committee observed the following:

> Until the flow of development finance is restored, prospects for adequate growth and social progress in many of the world's poorest nations will remain negligible, whatever efforts their Governments make to put their own house in order. (UNCDP 1986: para 4)

The criteria create the context

The fact that the criteria themselves become the focus of the UNCDP demonstrates the productivity of LDC development discourse. Records of the UNCDP meetings reveal that the UNCDP expressed concern about the restrictive nature of LDC category criteria in the Committee's considerations of LDC country status over many years. In examining the UNCDP reports of their reviews of the LDC criteria, it is clear that this the boundaries of the LDC development discourse produce both a specific approach and results from the process of conducting general reviews of the criteria. In examining the records of these reviews, it is apparent that the review process is always one where regardless of any identified challenge to the relevance and utility of the LDC category, the Committee works to refine the criteria by establishing a set of specialised processes and protocols for what the review should consider and how. These processes and procedures, and the identification of the specific information required, mark the LDC criteria themselves becoming an increasing focus of the UNCDP's work.

This highlights a key way in which this technology of knowledge operates through the processes and procedures and information privileged in the conduct of these reviews of the LDC criteria. Two key characteristics of the operation of the technology of knowledge classification into criteria are identifiable from UNCDP reports. Firstly, that the LDC criteria themselves have become a major focus of the work of the UNCDP with ever more elaborate and specialized processes for criteria use, assessment and review. Secondly, that despite the Committee expressing frequent concerns about the content and limitations of the LDC criteria, when given the opportunity to review their composition and structure, the narrow limits of the criteria themselves appear to limit the scope of the issues considered relevant by the UNCDP to the category. As a result the range of issues included within the review and the category remains limited. The initial criteria for determining LDC status set the discursive terrain, and while it appears that there is some change over time to the criteria and the function of the category, the LDC category's core narrow mechanistic limits remain.

The first UNCDP review of the criteria for assessing and determining LDC status occurred in 1992 during the Committee's Twenty Seventh Session. This review also included an assessment of the benefit in maintaining the category at all. However, far from this assessment incorporating analysis of the benefits to those countries classified as LDCs over the past twenty years, it focused on the utility of the category to the supply side of 'international development' – usage by donors. This is highly pertinent in terms of context of LDC development discourse within a broader context of productive development discourse in general and the power/knowledge dynamics between the 'West and the Rest' (Hall 1992). In terms of these donor perspectives, the Committee for Development Planning identified that donors used a range of criteria in allocating development assistance, and the role of the LDC criteria in decision-making about levels and types of assistance was marginal. This very recognition shows that the initially envisaged power, in fact the original major purpose, of establishing the category and its criteria, in terms of becoming an internationally agreed arbiter of country economic status and need for increased assistance, had not been adopted by the donor community (UNCDP 1991: para 215- 217). This is clearly a demonstration of power sitting

where the purse strings are, i.e. with bilateral donors, whose motivations include their national interest (for example the objective of the Australian aid program begins with the phrase "to advance Australia's national interest" (AusAID 2006)). In this review the Committee determined that the overall objective of the category itself is to "identify countries afflicted by poverty combined with severe structural weaknesses which impede the achievement of sustained development" (UNCDP 1992: para 42). Despite documenting misgivings about the utility of the category for and by donor organisations, the UNCDP determines that the LDC category list, and the administration of the criteria are, in essence, their own reward. The discursive boundaries are circular. The existence of the category LDC creates criteria and a need to administer the list of countries within the grouping, which justifies the utility of the category.

The key components of this first review were as follows: the determination of overall objectives for the category as a whole, an examination of the specific criteria, and a consideration of rules for country inclusion or graduation from the category. The review then applied the new criteria to the list of LDCs and made determinations for inclusion and graduation. The original criteria used when the category was first developed were "a blend of structural features that could result in slow growth and the indefinite perpetuation of poverty (geographical location, climate, small size, undeveloped human resources and inadequate economic infrastructure) and low average income itself" (UNCDP 1992: para 215). Population size was set at 75 million or less, which was retained as a factor in determination of least developed country status. A key issue within this set of criteria was the emphasis on population size, which meant that the countries with large populations, who would have a larger population of poor people, were excluded from the category. In assessing the criteria, the UNCDP was concerned about the availability of and variation in quality of data for various countries.

The UNCDP had noted concerns about the availability and quality of data in the assessment of criteria for the determination of LDC status since the category was first created in 1971. Therefore, in reviewing the criteria the Committee was concerned that data used in application of criteria be robust and sound, whether used as a single data source indicator or as part of an index, in a way that is clear, readily understood and not so volatile as to be subject to frequent or dramatic change. This is a decision that reveals the way in which the data, the information source, is determining the type of information considered within scope for the criteria. It reveals that the technology of knowledge classification into criteria operates by requiring certain types of information, in certain forms, which dictates or pre-determines the information that will be used and considered as relevant.

In the 1991 assessment of the criteria, the UNCDP agreed to stay with the overall structure of the previous criteria used to determine LDC status, and no subsequent review has sought to expand the number of criteria used to determine LDC status. The 1991 review of the LDC criteria was the most comprehensive undertaken to date, and featured significant change to two of the criteria, those used to assess national economic strength and population social welfare. For both these criteria, the use of a single indicator was discontinued in favour of an index that included several indicators. The indicator of population poverty level was not altered, despite recognition of a variety of other ways to assess population poverty levels.

The UNCDP based this decision on practical considerations, as this data was presumed broadly available in most countries seeking assessment for inclusion in the list. The availability of data is determining the criteria, which is determining the LDC grouping. This privileging of specific data sources is a characteristic of the operation of the technology of knowledge classification into criteria, and is apparent in all the UNCDP reviews of the LDC criteria.

The two key criteria that were altered as a result of the 1991 review had been applied – share of manufacturing in gross domestic product and adult literacy rates. The former indicator of the relative weakness/strength of the structure of the economy was altered to ensure that the availability of natural resources was considered, as was the share of employment in industry, per capita electricity consumption and export concentration ratio (UNCDP 1992: para 235). This was termed the Economic Diversification Index (EDI), based on identified available data. The second criteria had used the adult literacy rate as a single indicator of the strength/weakness of human resource capital in LDCs. Adult literacy rates were used as a single indictor of population human resources. The UNCDP identified this as limited as it did not reflect any aspects of population health status at all, nor did it reflect population levels of education achievement. Accordingly, a composite indicator was proposed, termed the Augmented Physical Quality of Life Index (APQLI). This was based on four indicators covering both health and education status. The two health-related indicators within the index were average life expectancy at birth, and per capita calorie supply. The two education-related indicators within the index were combined ratio of primary and secondary school enrolments, and the adult literacy rate (UNCDP 1991: para 234).

The conduct of the first review of the LDC criteria created a demand for regular triennial reviews of the criteria.[43] Later reviews in 1994, 1997, 2000 and 2003 altered the data sources used within these indices to include other issues and changed their names[44]. In 2000 the EDI became the Economic Vulnerability

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[43] The report back from the presentation of the outcomes of this review is recorded in the UNCDP's Twenty-eighth session. This notes that the results of the review were endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly, on the proviso that the Committee continued to identify improvements to the criteria themselves, and the interpretations associated with their use in determinations of countries being included or excluded from the LDC category (UNCDP 1992: para 237). See resolution 46/206 from the second committee of the forty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly "Report of the Committee for Development Planning: criteria for identifying Least Developed Countries".

[44] For example in the 1997 review the composition of the EDI was assessed and the Committee recommended that this indicator be revised, and per capita energy consumption be used in its place. The rationale for this was that energy consumption per capita was a broader indicator of the availability and level of access to energy for development than electricity usage, clearly dependent on access to electricity within a formal grid network. In the 1999 review the UNCDP recommended that the APQLI use under-five child mortality data in place of life expectancy at birth data, based on the quality of data available. A further recommendation was made to change the source of data on nutrition, also based on the quality of data available. In the 1997 review the Committee also recommended a change to the measure of GDP used in order to better take into account inflation rates. This change was to replace the current measure, of 'a three year average of per capita GDP, expressed in United States dollars at current official exchange rate by per capita GDP for a

Index, including data on incidence of natural disasters[45]. The APQLI became known as the Human Assets Index (HAI) in 2003. What is clear in examining the records of the UNCDP discussions is that in each of these changes a paramount consideration has been the widespread availability of quantitative data that can be used in country assessments:

> The Committee stresses that the credibility of its triennial review of the list is partly dependent on the fact that it uses data collected on an internationally comparable basis by specialised agencies of the United Nations system, such as [the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations] FAO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the World Health Organisation. (UNCDP 2003: para 18)

This demonstrates that the scope of issues that can be included in the assessment of LDC status is limited to the issues where there is widespread data availability. The data determines the criteria, which determine whether a country is assessed as eligible for LDC status. In the 1998 review focused on the merit of two specific indicators. The first was the use of average Gross National Product (GNP) per capita in place of the current indicator, average Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita. The recommendation of the Committee was that the use of GNP per capita did provide significantly different data for some countries than that provided by GDP data; however it did not lead to overall different outcomes or conclusions when applied in specific country situations. The Committee "felt it was unclear as to which might be a better indicator of the development capabilities of countries" (UNCDP 1998: para 233). Further, while the UNCDP recognised in 1994 that a natural disasters have major social and economic impacts on developing countries, particularly for small island states, it was not included within the criteria until 2003 when the EDI was replaced by the Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI) and 'the Committee was informed that the quality of internationally comparable data on the number of people displaced by natural disasters had improved significantly' (UNCDP 2003: para 11).

With the technology of knowledge classification into criteria operating by making the criteria themselves the focus of LDC discourse, the discursive boundaries are reinforced with each review. In this review the UNCDP also considered both national governance methods and human rights issues in reviewing the indicators for determination of LDC status. In this consideration the Committee noted that both issues have important relationships to development outcomes, but were of the view that it would be inappropriate to use them in 'decisions relating to the

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benchmark year (in order words, the same year for all countries) converted to United States Dollars at the country's average exchange rates over three years' (UNCDP 1999: para 126).

[45] The Committee commenced working on the development of an EVI in 2000. The composition of the EVI was recommended as an index based on five indicators: the degree of concentration of exports; the extent of the instability of goods and services exports; the degree of the instability of agricultural production; the share of manufacturing and services, including transport and communications, in national Gross Domestic Product; and population size (UNCDP 2000: para 68). This issue had been discussed in detail in the UNCDP's 1998 session, however the Committee's final recommendation at that time was not to proceed with the inclusion of a new indicator that addressed these development constraints or issues because it did not sit within the current composition of the EDI.

inclusion in, or exclusion from, the list of least developed countries' (UNCDP 1991: para 231). These issues were outside the discursive boundaries, and not able to be included in quantitative assessments, and so remained outside the scope of relevant information for analysis.

The reviews also focused on the processes used in undertaking country assessments and general reviews of the list of countries within the LDC group[46]. For example, in the 1991 review the Committee determined that while the criteria themselves may be focused on a prescribed set of data, when assessing whether a country should be classified or unclassified as a LDC, a series of other data should be considered. It recommended that in deliberations about whether a country should be included in the LDC category an additional four indicators were to be examined. The first was a natural endowment index based on agricultural land per capita, exports of minerals as a percentage of total exports, average rainfall and rainfall variability. The second was an assessment of the climate, and its impact on the stability of agricultural production. The third was a measure of the exports of petroleum as a percentage of total exports, and the fourth was the percentage of GDP that is official development assistance (UNCDP 1991: para 240). In the 1998 review the UNCDP recommended that methodology of application of these criteria during country assessments and general reviews be changed so the data within composite indices was scaled, with maximum and minimum values, rather than presented as a single figure. These changes indicate how in undertaking regular reviews the processes and procedures for the application of the criteria become increasingly complex, refined and specialised.

The 2003 general review further demonstrates how these discursive limitations operate through the technology of knowledge, classification into criteria. The UNCDP's preparatory discussions in 2002 acknowledged that there were particular development challenges faced by countries with economies in transition that had

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[46] For example in the 1991 review the process for identifying which countries fell within the LDC grouping was outlined:

> For those developing countries that meet the per capita GDP criterion and whose population size does not exceed 75 million, eligibility for least developed status will be determined in three stages. First, a core list of least developed countries will be identified among those that fall below the cut-off point on both indexes. Next, the remaining countries will be assessed on the basis of a set of more qualitative indicators – namely, being landlocked, having a small population (1 million or less), being an island (or islands), and having climatic disadvantages – such as proneness to drought, floods and cyclones – on a case by case basis. If any of these countries falls below the cut-off point on either index and is landlocked, or is an island, or has a population of 1 million or less or suffers from frequent cyclones, droughts and floods, it may be included on the list. At each stage of assessment, the Committee will consider the APQLI or the EDI or both as well as the component indicators of the indexes. Moreover, in borderline cases, consideration of the additional structural characteristics mentioned above will be considered.
> If the assessment of eligibility on the basis of the above criteria and procedures turns out to be inconclusive with regard to one or more countries, the Committee might commission in depth studies before reaching a definitive conclusion.
> (UNCDP 1991: para 242- 243)

been members of the former Soviet Union, and decided to include them in the broad list of countries assessed against the LDC criteria. (UNCDP 2002: para 151-152). In advance of this general review of the LDC list, a separate meeting on the LDC criteria reporting to the Committee for Development Policy considered the merit of this proposal and recommended against it. This reveals again how the discursive boundaries of this technology of knowledge operate, privileging the established and refined processes and procedures above all other considerations. This meeting noted that several countries with former socialist economies[47] now had a low average gross national income per capita, some lower than countries within the LDC category. However, they had strong human capital as a result of the emphasis on public education and health care in the socialist economy. For countries to be included on the list of LDCs they needed to meet the thresholds for inclusion against all three LDC criteria. The concern was that the thresholds for one of the LDC criteria, the Human Assets Index (HAI), are set at the points along the range of all scores for all countries included in the assessment, and the current high levels of human capital in these countries would distort the overall index. As a result of this concern, this meeting of experts recommended that these countries not be included in the formal assessments as part of the 2003 review. The desire not to distort the index is considered of greater importance than the development challenges and context facing these former socialist countries.

Within each of these changed identified in the reviews of the LDC criteria it is clear that none of these changes made any reference to gender issues, or sought disaggregation of data by sex for use in assessment of country socio-economic context. It is clear that in examining these criteria, the gendered dimensions and nature of economic activity and poverty did not even make it to the table for consideration. Data sources are not disaggregated by sex, and indicators of economic activity don't examine participation in the informal sector, or unpaid labour. The pre-eminent development constraints are understood in two terms – macro-economic constraints and geographic constraints. The incorporation of health and education status issues in the criteria relates, in simplistic economic terms, to the 'supply' side of development, a need to have a healthy and educated workforce. In neither case was there a recommendation on introducing data disaggregated by sex as part of the analysis.

What this examination of the UNCDP records of the reviews of the LDC criteria highlights is that the technology of knowledge classification into criteria operates by making the criteria themselves, their composition and the ways they are applied, a major focus of LDC discourse. Issues impacting on development contexts are not included in the LDC criteria as data is not available. Countries are not included in the LDC grouping so they do not distort the index. While utility of the category itself was questioned in the first review, the existence of the category and the criteria themselves is justification enough to continue to administer them and refine the processes by which they are applied. Further, while the largest number of changes occurred in 1991, it is clear that in this review, as in all future reviews, the discursive boundaries set by the first established LDC criteria continue to frame

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[47] These countries were identified as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The World Bank classifies all nine countries as low-income countries.

and limit the scope of all reviews. Gender analysis, for example, is never even identified as an issue of relevance.

Assessing inclusion in the LDC list

The perception of the category as a source of benefits for developing countries has continued to see countries applying for membership. The discursive limits of the category, and its productivity, are revealed through the following close examination of some cases of where the UNCDP has assessed countries for inclusion and graduation. These cases demonstrate the narrowness of the criteria being used to assess a country's development status for the LDC category. In particular it reveals not only that gender is ignored but that even factors such as civil unrest and conflict are also left out of consideration. By considering cases from the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, a sense of the ways in which the process has been refined over time can also be ascertained.   The following discussion will examine the experiences of a number of countries who have requested inclusion in the category and been assessed by the UNCDP. What becomes clear is how often the limits of the LDC development discourse lead to situations where critical information about a country's context, such as significant internal conflict, is excluded from consideration.

This process of assessing countries for inclusion in the LDC list is a key way that the technology of knowledge classification into criteria operates. This assessment is prompted by two events: the request of a specific country to be included in the LDC category, or a general review of the list identifying countries that can be included. The latter is the key event that triggers an assessment and recommendation for a specific country to 'graduate' from the list of countries within the LDC grouping. Through examination of the UNCDP records it is clear that these assessments have become increasingly specialised with carefully documented explanations for each decision, no doubt a result of the interest and benefits that are seen to accrue to countries within the category. Each time a country is assessed; specific data about that country is sought and benchmarked against specific aggregates that are updated each time an assessment is undertaken.

The report from the Committee's session in 1981 outlines the committee's discussions of requests, supported by the United Nations General Assembly, for the consideration of several countries to join the LDC category: Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles and Tonga. The Committee determined the status of these countries in relation to the LDC criteria on the basis of contemporary data, notably per capita GDP, share of manufacturing output in total gross national product and the rate of adult literacy.   On the basis of this data alone, the Committee determined that only Guinea-Bissau was eligible for LDC status. It is of interest to note that the report of the Committee's deliberations also includes the following statements:

> The Committee wants to underline, as it has done in earlier reviews, the need for using the category of the least developed countries in an appropriate and flexible manner in matters relating to the terms and allocation of international assistance in different fields.
> In the present exercise, the Committee applied the existing criteria, updated for change in prices and real growth of per capita GDP of the world market economies, as it was asked to do. The experience obtained on this occasion

and in past years in reviewing the list of the least developed countries has led the Committee to the view that fresh appraisal of the criteria used for the identification of the least developed countries has become highly desirable and that the possibility of revising the present criteria deserves to be explored at an appropriate time.

The broader question of the usefulness of the various country groupings deserves more attention. The United Nations system has recognised different groupings of disadvantaged developing countries, but several of them overlap – least developed countries, developing island economies, land-locked, most seriously affected countries. The possibility of rethinking and tidying up the various groupings should therefore be explored. (UNCDP 1981: para 105-107)

This example outlines the uncertainty that the Committee experienced in making determinations on the basis of limited criteria that were not able to reflect the complexity of a country's development context. It clearly indicates that the Committee is of the view that a review is required, not just of the criteria related to the LDC category, but of the other categories that had emerged, notably land-locked countries, island countries and most seriously affected countries. This uncertainty may reflect the Committee's sense that the potential for additional resources and trade concessions, combined with the difficult international development context, and the act of definition which had led to exclusions such as Bolivia as cited previously, had seen countries form multiple new coalitions and create new categories in order to access additional assistance, i.e. specific UNDP programmes, or other development initiatives associated with multilateral development assistance. It is at least arguable that the Committee felt that the emergence of new and different categories arose from a view that this was splitting the development assistance kitty too many ways. This example is a demonstration of the discursive boundaries at play within the technology of knowledge classification into criteria. Specific data is identified for benchmarking a particular country against international aggregates. It also demonstrates the way that only 10 years into the operation of the category; the criteria themselves are becoming a major focus of the Committee's work.

During the 1982 session, the Committee was requested by the Economic and Social Council to consider Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone and Togo for inclusion into the LDC category. It is worth noting that three of these countries were considered and rejected in the previous session of the Committee for Development Planning. As cited previously, the Committee assessed data relating to the criteria for each of the countries listed above, and determined on this occasion that Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone and Togo should be added to the list[48]. During these deliberations, the UNCDP expressed concern about the criteria for determination of LDC status:

The Committee wishes to underline what it has already stated in earlier reviews of this kind – that in its opinion the criteria used for the identification

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[48] See United Nations Economic and Social Council *Official Records* 1982. Resolution 1982/41 'Identification of the least developed among the developing countries', 48th plenary meeting from 27th July 1982.

of the least developed countries deserve to be reappraised, only so as to allow
for a meaningful consideration of cases on the margin, where the weakness of
the statistical information could have a bearing on the decisions of the
Committee on these matters. (UNCDP 1982: para 104)

This interest in the review of the criteria, and careful consideration of the purposes
and roles of the use of the category in the allocation of bilateral and multilateral
development assistance, and in special trade concessions, was clearly an important
issue for the Committee. The perceived or actual benefits that were seen as
accruing to countries saw repeated efforts by some countries to have their position
and status assessed. After the determination of the Committee in 1982, Liberia
provided data for reconsideration of its status in both 1983 and 1984[49]. Each time it
was met with repeated determinations by the Committee that its development
context was not so dire to be included in the list of the least developed among the
developing countries.   In each case, the Committee repeated its concern about the
need for a review of the criteria. In 1983 reaching the conclusion that 'no useful
purposes would be served by reference to the Committee of further cases of
countries to be considered for identification as least developed countries under the
existing criteria' (UNCDP 1984: para 129).

The case of Liberia seems to have triggered the Committee's unease particularly
sharply because of the Liberian government's repeated applications for its case to
be reconsidered. After its rejection in 1982, Liberia petitioned again in 1983 and
1984. Each time it met with repeated determinations against inclusion as a LDC.
It was, however, not until 1990 that Liberia was accorded inclusion in the LDC
category and then only with the intervention of the Economic and Social Council
who requested a reconsideration[50]. As with previous assessments, the Committee
examined information provided by the Government of Liberia, and a report
prepared by the Secretariat of the Committee on Liberian data benchmarked against
aggregates determined for use in assessments of the LDC criterion that year.   By
this time in 1990, Liberia had been in a state of civil unrest and disturbances
deteriorating to a coup d'etat that ultimately led to horrific internal conflict and
lawlessness so complex that still to this day it has not been resolved into a full
lasting lawful peace, and the country is referred to as a 'failed state' (Pham
2004)[51].   The eventual success of Liberia was based on the assessment of the
Committee that while Liberia had a strong natural resource base of both forest
resources and minerals, and good conditions for agricultural activity, GDP per
capita was not only low, it had declined consistently over the previous two
decades. Accordingly, Liberia was recommended for inclusion in the LDC list
(UNCDP 1990: paras 159-162). This deterioration in the legitimacy of the state

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[49] See UNCDP 1983 and UNCDP 1984 for details.

[50] See Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/206 of 9 February 1990.

[51] Pham documents that "…by August 1, 1990, over 5000 Liberians had died in the
conflict and some 345,000 had fled their country for shelter in neighbouring states:
225,000 in Guinea, 150,000 in Cote d'Ivoire, and 70,000 in Sierra Leone…In the first year
of the civil war alone, a full third of Liberia's estimated pre-war population of 2.64 million
had fled the country…As late as the end of 2002, despite the relative peace established in
the immediate aftermath of the 1997 elections and extensive efforts at repatriation or third
country asylum, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees still counted 274,516
Liberian refugees…" (Pham 2004: 102, 144).

and complex and costly conflict is not even mentioned in any of the UNCDP assessments of Liberia as a LDC[52]. This information and country context is entirely outside the discursive boundaries of the information considered relevant in the operation of the technology of knowledge classification into criteria.

The difficulties faced by Liberia in seeking inclusion in the LDC list did not deter other countries for seeking LDC category status. The longstanding concerns expressed by the Committee about the effectiveness of the criteria in assessing countries for inclusion in the LDC list have not been a deterrent either. What is interesting, in comparison to the Liberian example, is that these factors and 'development challenges' facing the tiny coral atoll nation of Kiribati do sit within the domain of legitimate and relevant information to be considered by the UNCDP. They are within the discursive boundaries of the LDC technology of knowledge classification into criteria and accordingly are included in consideration.

In 1984-5 Vanuatu, Kiribati and Tuvalu, who sought an assessment by the UNCDP for LDC status, had sought support for their request in advance from both the United Nations Economic and Social Council and the United Nations General Assembly[53]. In the UNCDP's 1984-5 session the status of these three countries was reviewed on the basis of updated data against the criteria. On the basis of these assessments, the Committee determined that Vanuatu was eligible for inclusion on the list, 'on the basis of the existing criteria, and in the light of the available data' (UNCDP 1984-1985: para 115). The Committee refrained from making a final determination on the status of Kiribati and Tuvalu, reporting that the Committee was

> …sceptical of the existing criteria for the determination of eligibility of countries for inclusion in the list of the least developed countries. Furthermore, it is the considered opinion of the Committee that, if it is to be meaningful, the establishment of a new set of criteria must involve a clear definition of the purpose that the list of the least developed countries is meant to serve. (UNCDP 1985: para 116)

This clearly articulated reticence by the UNCDP to make a determination was not accepted and again the cases of Kiribati and Tuvalu, two of the Pacific's 'micro-states', were brought to the Committee's attention for consideration in the Committee's twenty-second session the following year[54]. On this occasion, they were recommended for inclusion on the list of LDCs.

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[52] The Committee for Development Planning also notes "Adverse developments in the production and exports of iron ore and other products have contributed to a large outflow of capital, a decline in the rate of investment and the near collapse of the financial system" (ibid: para 161). There is no mention of internal conflict, the breakdown of law and order and the loss of legitimacy to the state.

[53] See United Nations Economic and Social Council resolution 1984/58 of 26 July 1984 and the General Assembly, resolution 39/198 of 17 December 1984.

[54] The case of Mauritania was also brought to the Committee this year at the request of a General Assembly resolution and a decision of the Economic and Social Council. See United Nations General Assembly resolution 40/219 of 17 December 1985 and the Economic and Social Council Official Records, decision 103 of 7 February 1986.

During this assessment the Committee had, as in previous assessments, determined the specific information that would be used to benchmark LDC criteria, and adjusted the lower and upper limits of the per capita GDP criterion to reflect movements in the international economy (at this time the limits were set at $353-423). Data from Kiribati identified that the per capita GDP was $300 (phosphate mining had just ceased due to the exhaustion of supplies of the mineral in the territory). The per capita GDP in Tuvalu was $400, and in Mauritania per capita GDP had declined since 1981 when it was over $400, to $320 in 1985. The inclusion of these aspects of the committee's consideration is not to imply in this case that the GDP per capita criterion was the sole socio-economic data considered by the Committee. The descriptions of the three states in the Committee's report detail numerous issues. For example in the case of Kiribati, national geography as a small island state comprising 21 isolated coral atolls, a highly dispersed population of 65,000, a lack of a skilled labour force, low levels of literacy, dependence on copra and remittances as the major economic structure, high costs of public infrastructure and service delivery, and prevalence of geographic disasters such as hurricanes and cyclones were all noted by the Committee in their consideration of Kiribati as a LDC.

The methods of specific information and increasingly specialised procedures and processes for determining LDC status against the LDC criteria as the key ways the technology of knowledge operate are seen throughout the UNCDP's assessments of country status. The discursive boundaries are revealed as narrow, and despite the Committee's stated concern about the limits of the criteria, information and the processes remain limited. The case of Zambia, considered in 1987 and 1988 reveals that despite a significant and dramatic deterioration in the country's socio-economic status, because it does not currently conform to the criteria, it was not recommended for inclusion in the list[55]. This decision is made recognising and noting that in addition to significant impact of price deteriorations in the main export, copper, Zambian physical infrastructure is in a state of disrepair, industry was operating at around 40 per cent of capacity, the debt service ratio is estimated at over 100 percent and economic reform measures were not producing anticipated positive effects. This decision is made despite the potential, however remote, that any available benefits for being in the category could ameliorate the current situation and decline. The discursive boundaries of the category are not permitted to consider any preventive measures for countries not yet within the current scope of LDC criteria.

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[55] The Committee notes that no improvement in Zambia's economic position has taken place since the previous sitting of the Committee, and indications were that the economic situation was deteriorating significantly. However, the Committee determined that 'the existing LDC criteria and procedures for their application did not warrant the inclusion of that country in the list' (UNCDP 1988: para 141). The Committee's concern at the inflexibility of the LDC criteria and agreed procedures is very clear, and indicates that with new data the committee would willingly reconsider Zambia's eligibility for inclusion in the LDC list. The Committee for Development Planning notes that the significant economic driver in the Zambian economy, the price of copper, had retained high prices over the previous twelve months while GDP had declined. This was of particular concern to the Committee for Development Planning as it had been projected that copper prices were likely to drop, and the annual levels of copper production in Zambia was not likely to increase.

Namibia is another case in point about the discursive boundaries of the operation of the technology of knowledge, classification into criteria. In 1991 the UNCDP assessed Namibia, then a newly independent nation, at the request of the General Assembly (UNCDP 1991).[56] In reviewing the data, the Committee came to the view that while recognising the existence of significant income inequality within Namibia, the average GDP per capita, combined with the strength of the natural resource base and adult literacy rates meant that it could not be classified as an LDC at that point in time. This is despite acknowledgement of the significant inequality in the distribution of GDP per capita[57]. A further example of discursive boundaries limiting analysis and decisions about LDC status is identified in the cases of the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia, considered for LDC status in the 1992 session of the UNCDP. The Committee determined that neither country met the criteria. What is of interest with this discussion is that the Committee did note that both countries were extremely dependent on overseas aid. This aid dollar dependence was not a factor identified within the LDC criteria or the processes for assessment, and so accordingly despite its significance as a development issue, is outside the scope for consideration in assessing the economic vulnerability of these two countries.

Again in 2003, with the Committee's decision to include Timor Leste on the basis of its very low HAI and Gross National Income (GNI) statistics, no attention was accorded to conflict and violence in constructing the country's socio-economic situation. In assessing the country against the LDC criteria the UNCDP noted the level of GNI per capita was $478 and the HAI was 36.4, both well below the cut-off points for inclusion in the category least developed country. The level of economic vulnerability could not be calculated, as the required data was not available. The Committee did not note the history of violent Indonesian invasion and colonialism, or the violence and conflict that was associated with the move to independence (Inbaraj 1995)[58]. These again, were issues outside the scope of consideration, outside the discursive boundaries of the LDC criteria and were excluded by the technology of knowledge, classification into criteria.

This discussion has highlighted the way that the technology of knowledge classification into criteria operates when considering countries for inclusion in the LDC category. The UNCDP's reliance on specific information and processes operate within established discursive boundaries. These limits are revealed

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[56] See General Assembly Resolution 25/198 1991

[57] The Committee does record its recognition that average GDP – estimated at between $960 and $1,450 – is not a strong indicator of the income status of the majority of the population:

> The Committee took note of the fact that the income distribution of the country is highly skewed and that the average per capita income of the non-white population engaged in traditional activities could be as low as $65. (UNCDP 1991: para 262)

[58] Inbaraj documents the toll of the conflict and violence in Timor Leste on the population in the lead up to independence:

> Catholic clergy, Timorese refugees, and foreign aid workers estimate that at least 200,000 Timorese died in military actions or from starvation and illness in the period 1976-80. Some estimates run as high as 230,000 out of a pre-invasion population of some 650,000. (Inbaraj 1995: 68)

through examination of the records of UNCDP meetings where it becomes clear that issues such as civil conflict, invasion and dependence on development assistance are not recognised appropriately, if at all, as critical issues affecting country status that could be included in the country assessment processes. The productive nature of the category itself is also clear in the way in which the anticipated benefits are a driver for some countries to seek inclusion for many years. This dynamic is stronger than any recognition that there are weaknesses in the LDC criteria, and that the benefits that could accrue to countries with LDC status are insufficient to make a significant impact on national development prospects.

General reviews: graduating from category LDC

In this section I turn to a second part of the Committee's work, reviewing the list of LDC countries in entirety. This is a process that has led to recommendations for countries to graduate from the group. The ways in which the Committee determines this process are explored through the cases of Vanuatu and The Maldives, which were considered over several years. This demonstrates that a second way that the technology of knowledge classification into criteria operates is through the specialised processes and procedures and recommendations used in the conduct of these general reviews of all countries on the LDC list. As with country case-by-case assessments, specific upper and lower limits were set for LDC criteria benchmark data for countries to join or graduate from the category. A specific process was also established for countries that were identified as having the socio-economic status that no longer accorded inclusion in the category. The detailed records of the UNCDP indicate how much effort was involved in undertaking these reviews. They are the main substance of discussion in each of the sessions of the UNCDP when these reviews occur. These reviews are the product of the discursive limits established by the LDC category and the technology of knowledge classification into criteria. Each assessment process in each of these general reviews takes the criteria as they are established, and does not include any further information, country context or data. Needless to say gender analysis is not a part of these general reviews, and the lack of it highlights the discursive boundaries operating in this technology of knowledge.

It was in 1994 that the UN General Assembly first recommended that a general review of the entire list of countries within and outside the category to be conducted every three years. This review was to recommend the inclusion or graduation of countries from the LDC category outside of specific requests from different countries. The first of these general reviews occurred during the Twenty-Ninth Session of the UNCDP in 1994. As a result of the assessments, the Committee recommended that two countries be added to this list, Angola and Eritrea. This general review also determined that all countries that were within the grouping should remain, with the exception of Botswana and Vanuatu. A specific process was developed to assess countries for 'graduation' from the LDC category. After the initial assessment that the country met criteria for graduation, it would be notified and then would be re-assessed again in three years time at the next general review. Botswana had previously been recommended for graduation from the category, and this was confirmed by Botswana. Vanuatu had not been recommended for graduation from the category previously, so it was expected that a three-year waiting period should commence during which Vanuatu's context

would be examined closely with a view to a stronger recommendation on graduation being formulated at the end of the three-year period.

The next general review by the UNCDP of the LDC countries took place in 1997 and confirmed that the majority of countries on the list should remain within the category[59]. The review identified five countries to be recommended for graduation from the list. Vanuatu, recommended for graduation from the category in the previous review in 1994, was recommended for graduation again. The rationale for this second recommendation included the general stability of the country, an improved performance in GDP and positive indicators on the augmented physical quality of life index. The other countries recommended for graduation were Maldives, Samoa, Cape Verde and Myanmar, data from all of which placed them past the thresholds for graduation against all indicators. The Committee recommended that all four should remain on the list for the next three years, and be formally assessed for graduation at the time of the next general review in 2000. The recommendation on Vanuatu was not accepted by Vanuatu, and Vanuatu has remained regularly reviewed and included on the list of LDCs.

In 2000, the UNCDP [60] undertook a further review of the list of LDCs. This review was based on an assessment of 67 countries, including all currently classified as LDCs[61]. In the assessment process, the Committee determined that the cut-off level for inclusion in the category should be $900 GDP per capita. The cut-off point for the APQLI was set at 59, and for the EVI was set at 36. For graduation from the category, the cut-off points were set at 15% more than the inclusion cut-off point for the GDP per capita and the APQLI, and 15% lower than the inclusion cut-off point for the EVI[62]. In terms of countries identified as meeting the thresholds for graduation from the category, the Committee assessed Vanuatu, Samoa, Cape Verde and the Maldives[63]. Vanuatu had been assessed

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[59] In assessing countries currently not within the LDC category, the UNCDP did not recommend any countries for inclusion in the list in the 1997 review. The country that was assessed most closely for inclusion in the grouping was Cameroon. The Committee reported that this was in large part due to a sharp decline in GDP due to fifty percent currency devaluation. Despite this dramatic decline in economic stability, the Committee recommended that Cameroon not be included in the list as it still had strong export performance, despite its major export concentration in a single product, petroleum.

[60] The UN Committee for Development Planning became the UN Committee for Development Policy in 1999, with the first session taking of the new Committee taking place on 26-30 April 1999.

[61] The other countries included in the list used in the review were countries that had been classified as low-income countries by the World Bank.

[62] In terms of additional factors highlighted in this 2000 review, the key one is about the population size limit for inclusion in the LDC grouping. This was highlighted by the examination of Nigeria during the review, which met each of the criteria for inclusion in the category with the exception of the restriction on population size. The Committee noted that Bangladesh was included in the category in the very early days of its existence, prior to the introduction of a limit on population size, to ensure that the category was focused on countries with small economies. The Committee also noted that Bangladesh did not meet the criteria for graduating from the category.

[63] With Samoa, the assessment identified that it only met one of the criteria for graduation from the category, as there had been an economic stagnation and GDP per capita had

several times previously by the Committee, but with the new criteria and cut-off points adopted for this review Vanuatu only met one of the thresholds for graduation from the category: its' per capita GDP of $1,400 was well above the cut-off point of $1035 per capita GDP. On both the APQLI and the EVI, Vanuatu was below the graduation cut-off point. Accordingly, the Committee determined that Vanuatu should remain classified as a LDC. This is particularly noteworthy, as it is when a broader range of socio-economic information is included in the criteria and analysis that a fuller analysis of the development context and challenges facing Vanuatu can be undertaken by the Committee in this review and country assessment, and as a result of this broader analysis, Vanuatu remains within the LDC category. This review also assessed countries for inclusion in the category, and in this session identified that the Congo met the criteria for inclusion. However the Committee decided not to recommend its inclusion, based on the view that the key factor in its social and economic deterioration was civil war, and the volatility of national income as a result of its reliance on oil exports. This was an example where the impact of civil war was recognised, but because it was not in the criteria the Congo was not recommended for inclusion.

The case of the Maldives is of interest as the resistance expressed by the Maldives challenged the discursive boundaries of what issues are relevant for consideration by the UNCDP. While the UNCDP had been undertaking country assessments for inclusion and graduation from the category, it had not once considered the potential impact that a change out of LDC status would have in general, or in any particular country. It is in the 2000 review that the UNCDP determined that the Maldives met all three criteria for graduation from the category and recommended that it no longer be included on the list of LDCs. This recommendation was re-assessed during the UNCDP's 2001 session, prompted in large part by the concerns expressed by the Government of the Maldives about the negative impact on their national economy if they were to lose their LDC classification. ECOSOC did not support the UNCDP's recommendation that the Maldives leave the LDC category, based on the concerns expressed by the government of the Maldives. In the decision not to support this recommendation, ECOSOC made four requests of the

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declined, and as a small island developing state, it had a very low rank on the EVI. As a result of this assessment, Samoa retained its LDC status. In terms of Cape Verde, the Committee noted that while it met two threshold criteria for leaving the category, namely GDP per capita and the APQLI, it was one of the most vulnerable countries according to the EVI. As a result, the Committee determined that no recommendation should be made about Cape Verde leaving the category but that it should be re-examined at the next full review. As a result of this 2000 review, three new countries were identified for potential inclusion in the LDC category: the Congo, Ghana and Senegal. In the case of Ghana, the Committee noted that it had been identified as eligible to be included in the list in 1994, and decided that it would not accept the offer to become a member of the LDC group. In the case of Senegal, the Committee noted it was 'well below the thresholds for inclusion on both the GDP per capita and the APQLI, and is more than 10 per cent above the EVI threshold' (UNCDP 2000: para 93). Out of the three countries identified as potential new LDC, only Senegal was recommended by the Committee to proceed for endorsement by the Economic and Social Council, and it has determined that it will not be included in the list. The Government of Senegal supported the Committee's recommendation that it be classified as a LDC, and accordingly the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted this recommendation in 2001.

UNCDP: firstly, that it review its decision; secondly that work be undertaken to identify ways in which a smooth transition could be made from LDC status; thirdly, that it examine the benefits of LDC status in general, and the impact of these on the Maldives in particular; and fourthly, that it assess the formal statement of concern submitted by the Government of the Maldives to the Economic and Social Council on this issue.

The response of the UNCDP to this ECOSOC request is interesting and demonstrates again the discursive limits of the LDC category and the technology of knowledge, classification into criteria. The UNCDP determined in its re-assessment in 2001 that the Maldives no longer met LDC criteria. Concerns about environmental vulnerability and the threat of rising sea levels raised by the government of the Maldives were acknowledged as development challenges, but as the issue was outside the scope of the LDC criteria it had no impact on the UNCDP's decision-making process[64]. UNCDP consultations with development partners in 2002 identified that donor behaviour was determined by other factors, not LDC status[65].

> A number of bilateral partners indicated that the context of graduation would have little, if any, impact on their treatment of graduating countries in terms of aid flows and technical assistance, because these have not been necessarily allocated on the basis of least developed country status…(UNCDP 2002: para 164).

The UNCDP identified that the major impact of the change from LDC status was identified as resulting from trade related concessions and preferences. It was clear, particularly within the WTO framework, that there were specific concessions available to LDCs. On the whole these related to longer time frames to implement requirements of specific agreements, specific technical assistance and the availability of concessions[66]. The UNCDP focused its discussion about a transition period, and determined to re-assess the Maldives in 2003 as part of the next scheduled general review. The 2003 general review identified the Maldives again

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[64] The UNCDP assessment in 2001 did assess the vulnerability profile of the country, which determined that the country was highly vulnerable, but continued with its previous recommendation that rather than seeing this as a rationale for retaining LDC status, the Maldives receive special assistance to address its concerns about environmental vulnerability particularly in relation to rising sea levels.

[65] The consultation process in gathering information from key development partners and assessing the potential negative implications for the Maldives if it graduated from the LDC category was underway during the fourth session of the UNCDP in 2002. In terms of the issue of a smooth transition, it was recommended that both a meeting of experts and a roundtable of key development partners be convened to develop strategies to support the country through the phase post-graduation from LDC status. The initial information available to the Committee providing an overview of the benefits of inclusion in the category showed that losing LDC classification would in actual fact make little difference to the level of assistance provided.

[66] For example, LDCs have seven years to eliminate trade-related investment measures that are not in accordance with the Agreement of Trade-Related Investment Measures, while developing countries have a transitional period of five years. A second example is that LDCs have an automatic exemption from the requirement to eliminate all subsidies on exports. This also applies to countries outside the LDC category, but only if per capita income is below $1000.

as a country for 'graduation' from the LDC category[67]. This was the third time Maldives has been assessed and identified as meeting the criteria cut-off points. The Government of the Maldives, who are continuing to argue that their country cannot afford to lose the benefits that have been accorded with the LDC status, has still not accepted this UNCDP decision. At the request of the Economic and Social Council, the 2004 session of the Committee reviewed the decision to recommend that the Maldives met the criteria for graduation, and confirmed this recommendation (UNCDP 2004: para 1-4)[68]. The discussions generated by this continued concern of the Maldives are ongoing, and were a feature of the UNCDP's 2004 session[69]. The repeated challenges by the Maldives to the UNCDP decision produced the first assessment by the Committee of the impact of leaving the category on a particular country context and development prospects. The narrow discursive limits still ensured that only information linked to the criteria was privileged and considered relevant. Information and issues outside the discursive boundaries of the LDC category criteria remained outside scope of analysis. The technology of knowledge functions by privileging the maintenance of the structure, composition and 'integrity' of the criteria above challenges to the discursive boundaries of the LDC category.

This specialised information and processes for analysis and assessment that are the methods for how the technology of knowledge operates can be seen in detail in each of the reviews. In the 2003 general review the UNCDP examined a list of sixty-five countries and assessed all current LDCs and some other low-income countries against the criteria, assessing them against the thresholds for inclusion and graduation. The three criteria were used in the assessment. The first criterion, gross national income per capita, was set at a three-year average of $750 for

[67] In terms of the countries identified for consideration for graduation both Cape Verde and Maldives were above the thresholds for graduation with the HAI, with respective scores of 72 and 65.2 respectively. Both countries also had high GNI per capita, with Cape Verde at $1,323 and Maldives at $1,983. This is the second time Cape Verde has met the criteria cut-off points, and accordingly it was recommended for graduation. The other countries that were identified as meeting two criteria cut–off points, the requirement for graduation from the least developed country category, were Samoa, Kiribati and Tuvalu. As this was the first time Samoa had met these criteria, it was recommended that the country be re-examined at the 2006 review to see if it continues to meet these criteria, at which point it should be recommended to graduate from the LDC category. Neither Kiribati nor Tuvalu has met the criteria for graduation previously. The Committee noted that both were "the two most economically vulnerable countries in the initial list according to the EVI" (UNCDP 2003: para 23).

[68] Cape Verde was also reconsidered and identified again by the UNCDP at its 2004 session as a country that no longer met the criteria for inclusion in the LDC category.

[69] In its 2004 discussion about the potential negative impact on countries leaving the category, the UNCDP noted a report provided by the Commonwealth Secretariat on the concerns expressed by countries about the impact of the loss of benefits associated with inclusion in the category. The Committee recommended that the broad international community develop broader strategies to address a smooth transition for countries graduating from the category, particularly small-island developing States. These views were confirmed by the UNCDP's 2004 session, with a proposal to form an 'Ad hoc country advisory group' comprising all key stakeholders for a particular country, who would work on strategies to support transition from LDC status upon initial identification by the Committee, as a pre-graduation initiative, and in the post-graduation period.

inclusion and a three-year average of $900 for graduation. The Human Assets Index (HAI) was set at 55, with a 10 percent variation for graduation, set at 61. The Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI) was included twice, with the inclusion in the second version of data on the number of people displaced by natural disasters. The threshold for inclusion was set at 37, and the 10 per cent variation for graduation was set at 33. In the version of the EVI that included the number of people displaced by natural disasters, the threshold for inclusion was set at 38, and the threshold for graduation was set at 34.

The general reviews of LDC countries against the criteria have developed specialized processes and procedures, reliant on specific information. A major dynamic within these reviews is the identification of countries to 'graduate' from the category, recommendations that are rarely welcomed by countries themselves. Examination of the UNCDP meeting records has identified that in the function of general reviews, the technology of knowledge classification into criteria operates in the following three ways: information outside the discursive boundaries established by the criteria is not considered relevant; the purpose of the category is paramount above concerns expressed by countries about their own development future if excluded from the grouping; and the processes and procedures used in analysis are privileged above difficulties faced by countries outside the grouping in addressing national socio-economic challenges. These three characteristics of the operation of this technology of knowledge are products of the discursive boundaries of category LDC, and underscore the limitations to the analysis produced by the UNCDP in administering the LDC criteria.   The limits established by the LDC discourse are so closed that it is only upon specific request that the UNCDP notes that there may be an impact on countries shifting out of the LDC category. The UNCDP records reveal that recommendations for countries to graduate from the category are being made on the basis of narrow, mechanistic assessments against defined criteria without a full and broad analysis of their development challenges and socio-economic context. The discussion in this section has highlighted the cases of Vanuatu and the Maldives to demonstrate the significance of the discursive boundaries established within the criteria as they operate through this technology of knowledge, classification into criteria.   What becomes clear is that the technology of knowledge classification into criteria has made the criteria themselves such a focus of the discourse that the information they draw on and the processes and procedures the UNCDP use in analysis and application are considered of greater importance than any other identifiable development issue or country context.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the modes of operation of the LDC category, through its creation and definition by the UN, to the administration of its membership by the UNCDP, occur within a discursive environment and context that limits analysis and understanding of the complexity of development.   The chapter commenced by locating the production of LDC category and the body charged with administering it, the UNCDP, as discursive products of the UN and its discourse of liberal humanism and modernisation as development.   The chapter then proceeded with a close examination of the work of the UNCDP over twenty years, 1981-2004, with a

focus on the representation of women and the administrative processes developed and applied in country assessments. The chapter identified that the LDC criteria themselves are gendered, with no scope for inclusion of information about gender dynamics and the status of women. Despite three reviews of the criteria, this gendered basis has not been challenged or changed. The chapter then traces the appearances of references to women in the UNCDP's discussions of LDC development context. What becomes clear is that there are three ways in which this occurs. The first is always in context of another topic or discussion, never on its own terms. This is examined through a discussion of the first references to women in the 1988 and 1989 UNCDP sessions, which were arguing for the introduction of a human capabilities approach to development, as opposed to an economics based modernisation model. The second way in which the UNCDP discussion includes references to women is through transitory or fleeting mentions, which are not followed up even in the same session's discussion let alone in future meetings. The final way in which references to women are made is through the use of reductionist, homogenizing essentialist representations of LDC women as passive victims or potential agents. These three ways in which women are represented in the UNCDP discussions are explored with detailed examples from the UNCDP sessions 1988 to 2004. It is clear that despite the length of time, there is no change in the discursive marginality assigned to gender analysis and the relevance of women to development context, policy and praxis in LDC development discourse. I argue that this is a result of the marginality of gender within the LDC criteria.

The chapter then outlines the ways in which the LDC category, as a product of UN development discourse and liberal humanism, is itself productive through the perceived benefits attached to membership. This discussion is followed by a detailed discussion of the ways the UNCDP administers the LDC category. The gender analysis of the representation of women in UNCDP discussions revealed discursive boundaries of what information is identified as relevant or not within the administration of the LDC category. This limitation to the analysis of LDCs is apparent in the analysis of the UNCDP's administration of LDC category. This chapter explores this through the UNCDP's discursive boundaries of relevant information included in country assessments as part of the processes of assessing countries for inclusion in the LDC group. This was explored in relation to several country case studies, including Liberia and East Timor, where information such as significant civil conflict or instability was excluded from the sphere of relevant information. The discussion of the dynamics of UNCDP's administration of graduating from the LDC category has a particular focus on the case studies of Vanuatu and the Maldives, both of which are resistant to the recommendations to leave the group. What is clear in these discussions of the UNCDP's administration of the LDC category is the way in which the LDC criteria act to inform and set limits on what information is considered relevant in these assessments. Through this process of administration, the processes of administration become ever more elaborate and detailed, creating and requiring specific knowledge and information. The LDC criteria and the processes by which they are applied become a significant focus of the UNCDP's work, rather than the broader objective of alleviating poverty.

In examining the records of the UNCDP in detail, this chapter has sought to identify the ways in which the technology of knowledge, classification into criteria, operates within the development discourse of category LDC. Gender analysis identified the discursive limits of the category LDC, and the way that the criteria and the category itself become a focus. It also identified that when gender analysis was undertaken, the analysis was transitory, was always marginal and relied on conceptual homogeneity of women in LDC countries as victims and/or passive recipients of development assistance. This analysis demonstrated that gender analysis is a critical tool in identifying and revealing boundaries to the LDC category discourse, and the operations of the technology of knowledge classification into criteria.   The discursive boundaries of category LDC criteria were explored further through an examination of three ways in which the criteria are used within the discourse: in country assessments, in general reviews of the list of LDCs, and in reviews of the criteria themselves. This established that these technologies of knowledge operate by focusing on increasingly specific information and developing and refining processes, procedures and protocols for analysis. These characteristics not only fundamentally inhibit the analysis produced by the UNCDP about LDCs, but also limit the information considered within scope of relevance. In examining the records of the reviews of the criteria themselves, what is apparent is that the existence of the category justifies its own existence, data availability determines what information is considered valid, the processes of reviews and becomes the focus of the UNCDP, and any changes that are made do not alter the core boundaries of the category. The discursive boundaries are set, and produce ever more elaborate and complex information and knowledge about the criteria, rather than about the dynamics of development challenges facing the LDCs themselves.

Chapter 4: Data: knowing by numbers

Data as a technology of knowledge within LDC discourse operates by defining the area of relevant analysis, and in so doing, constrains the analysis that can be undertaken and produced. This chapter explores the ways in which data functions as a technology of knowledge in the three criteria used to define category LDC: national income, national economic vulnerability, and national human resources. The chapter is based on analysis of data from the two most recent analyses produced by UNCTAD for its biannual publication, The Least Developed Countries Reports for 2002 and 2004. The chapter commences with a gender analysis of the ways that the data operates as a technology of knowledge, identifying the existence and presence of discursive boundaries, and the conceptual limitations these boundaries create. A discussion of the three criteria follow, which is followed in turn by a discussion of two issues excluded from the data-based analysis within LDC discourse: conflict and HIV/AIDS. This chapter continues the argument outlined in Chapter 1 and established in Chapter 2, that gender analysis provides critical insight into the discursive boundaries within LDC development discourse and the operation of the technologies of knowledge that function within it. It aims to demonstrate how data as a technology of knowledge operates within LDC discourse, through assessment of what it includes and excludes, and how preserving the integrity of the data becomes a more significant issue within LDC discourse than producing a fuller analysis of development. What is particularly clear within this chapter, through the specific focus on data, is the dominance of macroeconomic factors within LDC criteria and LDC analysis.

The chapter will demonstrate that data functions as a technology of knowledge in three clear ways. Firstly, LDC data provides a limited view of any given LDC through national level data that treats all LDCs as homogenous. Secondly, and as a result of the first factor, data limits the analysis that can be undertaken within LDC countries themselves, between countries within the LDC group, and between countries within and outside the LDC category. Thirdly, data in LDC privileges a narrow definition of economic issues that excludes issues that not only have significant impacts on broader national development context, but also have very concrete social economic impacts.

The data "frame"

Political realism defines the world as a grouping of nation-states, acting and interacting through the use of power as rational single entities motivated by self-interest (Morgenthau 1959). The sovereign state is always taken as a given and each one is seen as essentially the same as another. Feminist challenges to international relations as a discipline and discourse have asked questions about how states have been constituted historically, and how they are currently being sustained (Peterson 1992; Sylvester 1994). These feminist challenges have

highlighted the narrow conceptions of political realism, which formed the ground of the study of international relations, and which determined international relations discipline-based ways of knowing. Further, feminist challenges have highlighted exclusions from the discipline's historic focus on the high politics of principal actors, whose exercise of power had the potential to affect the global balance of economic, political and military power (Jones 1988).

In starting this discussion of LDC data, it is prudent to acknowledge there are discursive linkages between the primacy granted to the nation state as the unit of analysis in political realism, and in the focus on the nation as a single entity in LDC discourse. Both the disciplines of international relations and the liberal economics biased discourse of the LDC category share a limited capacity to recognise and examine intra-state dynamics and differences:

> International relations is a discipline concerned with the fate of the world; but the world within which it deals is a fragmentary and distorted version of the world in which we live. (Grant and Newland 1991:1)

On the whole, the data 'frame' is the nation-state in LDC discourse, as it is the analytic unit in political realism.

Feminist challenges to political realism in international relations have now long argued and demonstrated that a reliance on the nation-state as the unit of analysis not only leads to simplistic representations of any given country and relationships between them, but produces interpretations and analysis that can only be a fragment of 'reality' as they do not delve beneath the national level to the complexity of dynamics within countries themselves. These feminist arguments have included highlighting the separation of gender and the discipline into separate spheres (Halliday 1991), and the dependence of the discourse on gendered assumptions of the state, citizenship, power and security (Elshtain 1992; Grant 1991; Keohane 1991). The reliance on the nation state as the single unit of analysis within LDC discourse leads to similar discursive limitations and a dependence on gendered assumptions of not only the state, but of what is relevant to analysis. This emphasis on the nation state as a unit of analysis within both LDC category discourse and international relations reinforces an assumption of homogeneity among nations and obscures intra-state and inter-state differences. Feminist challenges to international relations have demonstrated how the relevance of gender and the experiences and lives of women is defined as irrelevant to the discipline (Peterson 1992; Sylvester 1992; Tickner 1991). These issues play out through the operation of data as a technology of knowledge in LDC discourse. For the purposes of comparison and analysis, the data used in LDC criteria and analysis is a small set of statistics that are assumed to be available in all countries. As a result, the analysis of development context within a given LDC is limited to the small range of issues that are identified in the criteria themselves, which can be sought and applied in the same way in all LDC and non-LDC countries.

Knowing poverty

As discussed in Chapter 1, poverty is a cultural construct, that can change depending on the perspective and vantage point held (Sahlins 1997), a fact echoed in the stories of Indigenous peoples' experiences of colonisation (Davidson et al 1997). The analysis within these two UNCTAD LDC Status Reports is occurring in the context of major national and international debates on the definition and

measurement of poverty, at individual, household and population levels. "How many poor people are there in the world? This simple question is surprisingly difficult to answer" (Reddy and Pogge 2003:3). This debate does recognise the limitations of data defined and driven poverty analysis, particularly if the analysis is used to develop and support particular recommendations for action to alleviate poverty. Much of this debate, however, is about attempting to fit a broader recognition and understanding of the factors that contribute to poverty into specific data analysis methodologies. It does not recognise the cultural construction of how poverty is known, defined and experienced. In this way we can see that data is continuing to operate as a technology of knowledge, becoming the focus itself of discussion, rather than poverty, and in so doing making that discussion increasingly technical and specialized.

One perspective within this debate argues for the use of household-level estimates of poverty. These estimates can focus on the resources required for a minimum acceptable standard of living. Household-based methodologies have been challenged by alternatives that focus on the capacity, ability or inability of households to be self-reliant. The argument is that the experiences of resource poverty can be transitory, and mitigated by social networks, and there is a greater need for responses to address the ongoing social exclusion experienced by those people who are unable to be self-reliant (Haveman 2001). Other aspects of the debate about the measurement of poverty include the assumptions made of what and who is included in the unit of measurement. For example, when the unit of measurement is a household, who does that include? If households are compared to each other, how accurate can the comparison be if one household is small, and another is larger?[70]

Methodologies for estimating national levels of poverty are also subject to considerable debate. Reddy and Pogge (2003) take considerable issue with the assumptions and methodologies within the poverty estimates produced by the World Bank. They argue that the World Bank's estimates of the level, geographic distribution and trends of poverty should not be accepted. The first error they identify is the reliance upon a poorly defined poverty line that isn't linked to a clear understanding or concept of what poverty is in terms of the capacity or lack thereof to access and command resources. The second, and more technical error, is related to the fact that national currency equivalents to the global poverty line, and its changes over time as currency values fluctuate, have not been addressed, as purchasing power parity factors that would allow "meaningful and accurate identification" (Reddy and Pogge 2003:4) have not been used. The third critical error identified relates to the methods by which quite limited country level data has been extended and extrapolated, to produce numbers which are given to six digits in some World Bank publications, giving the figures the appearance of gold plated precision, when in fact they are in essence highly uncertain (Reddy and Pogge 2003:4).
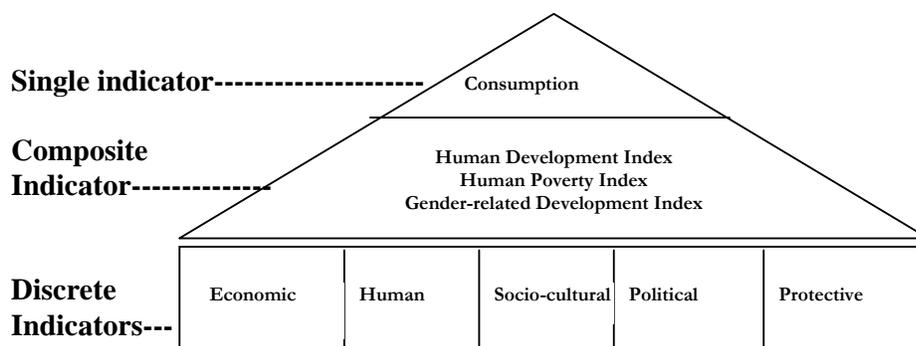
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[70] Recent Australian research identified that an underestimation of Indigenous poverty rates in Australia was occurring due to the inability of standard household poverty rate comparative data to recognise the larger and multigenerational composition of households (Hunter, Kennedy and Biddle 2002).

Critiques such as this force an acknowledgment that a degree of approximation will always be required when looking at poverty estimates, as poverty, by its very nature, is not a universal standard measure, and cannot be assessed and measured with the same precision and degree of agreement as, for example, physical distance, height and weight. Reddy and Pogge (2003) argue that the poverty estimates they criticize as fundamentally inappropriate and misleading have been used by the World Bank in its World Development Reports in both 2000 and 2001 to argue that global poverty is decreasing, and that the World Bank is on the right track with policy successes in the reduction of poverty world wide:

> The questions of how many poor people there are in the world, how poor they are, where they live, and how these facts are changing over time are clearly very important ones. The Bank's estimates of global income poverty are influential not only because of their importance and usefulness, but because the Bank is currently the only producer of such estimates (Reddy and Pogge 2003:3).

The ability to reduce poverty from complexity to simple numbers is profoundly problematic. Given this, a critical issue at hand in the production of poverty estimates is their use as authoritative policy knowledge. Data is an evidence base for the development, implementation, evaluation and justification of policy and strategies. Data also becomes the objective authority in assessing the scope and scale of the issue to hand, and fundamentally influences decisions about what priority should be assigned to addressing it, and what resources are required. To justify the use of particular numbers in measuring poverty, the methods of production of the data and the analysis become the focus, a key way in which data operates as a technology of knowledge.

Figure 1: Relationship between Discrete, Composite and Single Indicators

Single indicator--------------------- Consumption

Composite Indicator-------------- Human Development Index / Human Poverty Index / Gender-related Development Index

Discrete Indicators--- | Economic | Human | Socio-cultural | Political | Protective |

(Source: OECD 2001: figure 2 cited in UNCTAD 2002 chart 6:41)

The UNCTAD 2002 report itself acknowledges that poverty estimates are based on a simple notion where poverty is understood not only in economic terms but also as an experience or state that is characterised by multiple interrelated factors of cultural, political, social and individual origins (UNCTAD 2002:49). This approach does not account for the multidimensional characteristics of poverty. Accordingly, while the 2002 UNCTAD report acknowledges that the complexity of poverty analysis requires the use of multiple methodologies, it does not apply them. This issue of the complex nature of poverty has been increasingly recognised in other studies, including the importance of ensuring that issues that are not strictly

economic are incorporated into poverty analyses[71], but not this one. The above diagram illustrates the relationships between different indicators of poverty. An attempt to reflect this complexity is through the development of composite indices, bringing together a number of different factors into a single indicator, such as the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index. Another approach is to identify aspects of individual or community lives that can become a single indicator of more complex phenomena, such as the use of the number of women in elected parliaments as an indicator of the extent of women's engagement in public decision-making.

These are data-based studies and approaches, which are limited by their focus and emphasis on numbers. Narayan's (2000) *Voices of the Poor* studies for the World Bank's 2000/1 World Development Report highlighted the importance of participatory qualitative studies of poverty and the importance of consultation and engagement with 'the poor' in defining poverty[72]. These studies highlighted that the definitions of poverty held by 'the poor' varied significantly from a narrow view of poverty as low cash income and absence of assets. The report puts forward a view of poverty as a pronounced deprivation of well-being. By promoting the view of poverty as multidimensional, affecting all aspects of life and livelihoods, these reports move far beyond reductionist indicator based representations of poverty that seek to 'add numbers and stir' to include additional issues in definitions used to measure and assess population poverty levels (Narayan 2000: 30-44)[73]. These views of alternative and broader definitions of poverty sit within

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[71] In outlining the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) research agenda, Rwegasira (2001) describes in how it has been broadened with the inclusion of a poverty research focus, which has in turn raised challenges to traditional economics research and analysis methodologies:

> Following the completion of that first phase of the poverty project, research is being extended by AERC beyond measurement concerns, given that new data sets have become available in a number of African countries and that new methodological contributions to poverty analysis have emerged. Quite apart from these reasons, poverty reduction has, of course, assumed continuing and increasing importance as a policy target in Sub-Saharan African (and in other low-income countries). In addition, it is now recognised that poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon, reflecting also deprivation in non-economic aspects of life such as spiritual or immaterial assets, and lack of voice and empowerment in society. Despite measurement difficulties, there is a need to being to bring to the fore non-economic facts in the study of poverty and in the formulation of poverty reduction policies.
> (Rwegasira 2001:5)

[72] Narayan's reports (2000) argue that poverty is multidimensional, with contributing factors that not only intersect but interact and compound each other. Poverty is defined as the interaction of material poverty, physical weakness, bad social (including gender) relations, insecurity and vulnerability and powerlessness, and is linked with other factors including places, livelihoods and assets, incapabilities, exclusion from institutions, weak support organisations, subjection to insulting behaviour. Chambers (2001) argues that the breadth of this definition is a significant challenge to the World Bank's narrow institutional definition of poverty, but that significant factors are still ignored in the studies such as the degree of discrimination 'the poor' experience from the police.

[73] The special issue of the *Journal for International Development* (2001, Vol. 13) on the World Bank's 2000/1 World Development Report features a series of articles that highlight

the context of post-development debates that demonstrate that poverty as a concept can operate as a social and cultural construct (Esteva 1992), that demonstrate the diversity of poverty in different places and within different communities (Shepherd 2001), and that argue that contemporary poverty is a result of inequitable distribution and creation of a loss of entitlement to access basic goods within the market, rather than an absence of basic goods required for survival (Wuyts 1992a: 21-22).

Despite the significance of this World Bank report, the 2002 UNCTAD report is quite open about continuing the adoption of a single poverty indicator as fundamentally a pragmatic one, based on the desire for internationally comparable numerical information. The report argues that private consumption estimates derived from national accounts are more reliable than household survey data, because of differences in household survey aims and methodologies in different countries, and indeed also within the same country at different times. Two case studies are cited, Mali and Tanzania:

> For example, according to household-survey-based estimates, 16.5 percent of the population of Mali was living in poverty in 1989 and 72.3 per cent in 1994, and 48.5 per cent of the population of the United Republic of Tanzania was living in poverty in 1991 and 19.9 per cent in 1993.
> (UNCTAD 2002: 51)

An additional factor is that there is more likely to be a similar approach to the production of national accounts, a factor supportive of international comparisons. Furthermore the report cites new research that has identified that the results of national accounts-based poverty estimates correlate more closely with other indicators of poverty than some household survey-based national estimates (Karshenas 2001 cited in UNCTAD 2002: 47). The final supportive rationale for the use of national accounts-based estimates is that household survey-based estimates only exist for specific years in specific countries, whereas national accounts are produced more broadly and on a more regular basis. This poverty analysis demonstrates how data is operating as a technology of knowledge where the availability of the data, and preserving the integrity of data analysis methods, become more important within LDC discourse than producing a fuller analysis of development in LDCs.

There are clear implications here for the international comparison of gendered aspects of poverty. As long as national accounts are not based on gender-disaggregated data, this methodology will never be able to provide a tool for international comparative analysis of the prevalence and extent of women's poverty. Data that excludes women will not be altered to ensure the integrity of the analysis of data over time.

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the complexity of poverty, and the significance of the innovations within this report, and its limitations. For example, Barnett and Whiteside (2001) write about the limited incorporation of HIV/AIDS within the report; Moser (2001) writes about the innovative use of (in)security as a concept in understanding poverty, and the issues which are absent from the analysis of social protection requirements.

Counting with blindfolds: gender blind numbers in LDC discourse

The LDCs are identified and defined through three factors: low income, human resources, and economic vulnerability (UNCTAD 2002). The current population of men, women and children living in LDCs is estimated at 614 million (UNCTAD 2002), over one tenth of the global population[74]. How are these women, men and children known through the data that is considered the essential objective evidence base of international policy making and determination? What does this evidence reveal? These are questions that sit outside the boundaries of the data in LDC discourse.

Gender analysis is a critical tool for identifying the limits and boundaries of development discourse. Gender analysis of the ways in which data operates as a technology of knowledge within LDC discourse reveals a total absence of gender awareness. This is one of the inevitable by-products of the data used in LDC category assessments being limited to national level data. Gender analysis, particularly the question 'Where are the women?', identifies the fundamental inability of national level data to reveal any information about the dynamics of poverty, economic activity and social development *within* a country. The privileging of national level data in LDC discourse reduces knowledge of particular LDCs and their populations, or those being assessed for LDC status, to single numbers. The feminisation of poverty, degree of women's participation in the formal economy, the equity of health and education status between men and women in a given LDC are all questions that cannot be asked of or answered by the national level data used in the LDC criteria. This is a result of the lack of any data disaggregated by sex, the focus on the nation-state as the unit of analysis and the emphasis on high-level aggregations through indices. The only analysis that can be produced with national level data is comparisons between different LDCs, or comparisons between LDCs and other countries not in the LDC grouping. Asking the question 'Where are the women?' not only reveals that women cannot be seen within the single numbers produced for national level data, it also highlights the fact that gender issues are totally excluded from the field of analysis. Further, asking this simple question also reveals methods by which data operates as a technology of knowledge within LDC discourse. Data are the privileged policy facts, used to determine LDC status and the prime tool of analysis. The limited frame of national level data not only means that dynamics within any particular LDC are invisible, and that critical development issues are excluded from the analysis, but also means that the only type of analysis that can be produced is limited to national level comparisons.

The most cursory examination of the three LDC criteria – low income, economic vulnerability and human assets – identifies that economic factors dominate the determination and analyses of LDC status and context. As feminist challenges to international relations identified the discursive boundaries of the discipline briefly outlined in the previous section, feminist analysis of economics has identified critical foundational assumptions within the discipline that reveal the lack of

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[74] UNAIDS (2000) estimated the global population at 5.9 billion. This places the estimated LDC population of 614 million at 10.3% of the global population.

objectivity in the so-called objective science. The focus on choices to meet material needs as the core expression of agency within economics has been challenged by feminist economists, who have argued instead for economics to focus on the ways people meet their basic needs for survival, and the goods required (Ferber and Nelson 1993):

> The line between needs and wants is not distinct, and yet one certainly can say that a Guatemalan orphan needs her daily bowl of soup more than the overfed North American needs a second piece of cake…Such a definition of economics need not rule out studies of choice or of exchange, but it does displace them from the core of economics. It does not rule out study of the provision of conveniences or luxuries as well as more basic needs, but it does not give them equal priority. Voluntary exchange is part of the process of provisioning, but so are gift-giving and coercion. Organised impersonal markets are one locus of economic activity, but so are households, governments, and other more personal or informal human organisations. (Nelson 1993:33)

Feminist economists challenge the broad discipline of economics by highlighting the gender bias within it, and in so doing highlight the discursive limits of the analysis it has been producing.

The lack of gender analysis within economics leads to an inability to recognise the difference between how men and women are positioned within society and in relationship to the economy, as well as each other (Whitehead and Lockwood 1999:551). This has been well demonstrated as a result of the foundational assumptions of the discipline of economics on the Western European enlightenment tradition of the private/public dichotomy (Elson 2001; Ferber and Nelson 1993). The construction of women as 'different' and consequently inferior to men has been an integral aspect of the ideological and social subordination of women in European cultures (Eisenstein 1984:20; Connell in Grieve and Burns 1986; Tong 1989). This construction of womanhood is premised on the public/private dichotomy, or the mind/body split. Masculinity is associated with the public domain, the economic, the mind, reason, logic, intellect, strength, industry and progress. Femininity is associated with the private domain, the household, the domestic, the body, intuition, emotion, weakness and nature. It is a value-laden dichotomy with superiority and importance associated with masculinity, and inferiority, unimportance and frivolity associated with femininity.

The core assumption within liberal economics is that there are free agents, who exercise choice to select the optimal goods and services needed or wanted from available resources. This free agent is forever a male adult, operating without constraints.

> Economic theory's conception of selfhood and individual agency is located in Western cultural traditions as well as being distinctly androcentric. Economic man is the Western romantic hero, a transcendent individual able to make choices and attain goals. (Strassman 1993:61)

The free agent is not a baby being breastfed for survival, not an elderly person dependent on assistance, not an ill or disabled person requiring support to meet needs, and not a woman whose very ability to enter the market may be determined and restricted by social and cultural norms. This core assumption has remained foundational within the discipline of economics. It is visible through gender

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analysis in the inclusions and exclusions of economic data within development economics and LDC category data analysis.

For example, in their analysis of IMF and World Bank macroeconomic policies Elson and Cagatay (2000) identify that the macroeconomic and the social are located as separate and different within this discourse. Elson and Cagatay argue that this discursive separation is unable to recognise the interdependence between the two factors or domains, a critical requirement of policy that is to integrate the social and economic:

> A starting point is the recognition that macroeconomic aggregates – public expenditure and revenue, public debt, GNP, the money supply – are bearers of social relations and are imbued with social values. It is not the real resources of a country which set the functioning limits to how much revenue a government can raise or how much it can borrow or how much it can spend. It is the balance of social power, the pattern of social norms, the structure of social institutions, the degree of social consensus, the perceptions of the key players and the framework of market regulation that prevails, both nationally and internationally. (Elson and Cagatay 2000:1360)

This strand of economics assumes that the same economic assumptions can apply worldwide. Even with the emergence of a specific field of economics focused on development challenges, it has continued the methodological assumptions that are based on the core of rational man exercising individual choice that is characteristics of broader economics. Elson argues that this form of economics is fundamentally flawed:

> The same set of stylized facts will not fit the whole world. This was indeed the premise of 'development economics'. However, there is no longer, if indeed there ever was, a neat bifurcation between a set of stylized facts that fit 'developed countries' and a set that fit 'developing countries'. A much richer typology is needed. (Elson 2001:3)

This was of course a core assumption within the modernisation theory of development, promoting uniform progress through development planning from a backward traditional culture to a projected ideal future based on an image of the industrialized West (Corbidge 1995; Cowan and Shenton 1996; Pieterse 1991). The recognition that simple assumptions about what will work in developing countries do not account for the diversity of developing country contexts is a criticism of this model of development (Scott 1996; Schech and Haggis 2002). Ghosh (2001) argues that current development economics literature has not challenged this core foundation of neo-liberal market economics and neoclassical economics, and the models produced demonstrate this:

> The models now being developed all tend to be based on the notion that prices and quantities are simultaneously determined through the market mechanism, with relative prices being the crucial factors determining resource allocation as well as the level and composition of output. This holds whether the focus of attention is the pattern of shareholding tenancy or semiformal rural credit markets or a developing economy engaging in international trade. (Ghosh 2001:3)

As discussed at the start of this chapter, feminist challenges to international relations identified the discursive limitations of analysis that uses the nation state as the core unit of analysis. Feminist challenges to and within economics identify the discursive barriers created by the foundational assumption of economic man as the free agent exercising rational choice. Key points to highlight within the context of the following analysis of data on LDCs are firstly, the separation of the economic and the social, and secondly, the way that the discourse determines the data that is collected and determined as useful. The numbers are gender-blind but do not need to be; data can be improved.

> …the continuing need to improve economic and social data, both qualitative and quantitative. Just to give one example. A lot of attention is focused on targets for reducing income-poverty. There is also concern about the feminisation of poverty. But no one is producing the data that will allow us to track to what extent women are disproportionately income-poor; and whether this is increasing or decreasing. (Elson 2001:16)

LDC data: the privileged policy facts

The discussion in Chapter 3 established the ways in which the LDC category criteria operated as a technology of knowledge, excluding certain types of information, with administrative procedures and protocols that became increasingly specialized and complex as time passed on. Data are the privileged policy facts used in the administration of the criteria, and are the focus of the biannual LDC reports produced by UNCTAD. These reports are produced separate to the work of the UNCDP, and do not have any relationship with the administration of the LDC category. They are produced for the purposes of highlighting the status of LDCs within the broader international community. What is clear in examining the data used in LDC status assessment and in the reports produced by UNCTAD is that data operates as a technology of knowledge in its own right, creating specific dynamics within LDC discourse. Data is used as a certain type of evidence that has validity, authority and credibility in the international policy environment of LDC discourse, and is generally considered objective and unbiased[75]. This discursive presumption is based on the ability of data to reflect reality, and is privileged in the analysis undertaken as the type of information that becomes policy fact.

This use of data as a way to lend authority to commentary within development discourse is discussed by Ferguson in his analysis of World Bank constructions of Lesotho as a 'less developed country' (Ferguson 1990: 40-55). Ferguson notes that the World Bank report uses statistics to support its construction of Lesotho as a LDC requiring specific development assistance. He notes these functions in two ways, which despite appearing to be contradictory do not hinder the World Bank's analysis. Firstly, Ferguson notes the World Bank's concern about the lack of national statistics, and the quality and reliability of those statistics that are

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[75] There is of course a major inter- and intra-disciplinary debate about quantitative as opposed to qualitative social research methodologies, which has been highly influential in debates of appropriate and effective monitoring and evaluation of development activities. It is appropriate to acknowledge this debate to indicate the intensity of debates about the nature of information used in knowledge formation and decision-making (Bowling 1997; Feuerstein 1986; Patton, 1987; Sarantakos 1998).

available. This does not, he observes, provide enough cause for the World Bank to refrain from statistical analysis or from drawing conclusions from it. The World Bank's report acknowledges that the data that forms the basis of charts and figures are 'virtually non-existent' statistics and 'unreliable information' (Ferguson 1990: 40-1), but the charts, analysis and figures are created regardless. Furthermore, they are then used to support specific arguments about the characteristics of Lesotho as a LDC.

The same 'well the numbers are no good but they prove the point just the same' approach is also used by UNCDP and UNCTAD in their analysis about the LDCs. This chapter discusses data in terms of each of the key areas that form the LDC criteria: income, human resources and economic vulnerability. This leads into a discussion of two critical areas of international policy and development activity that are not factored into the LDC criteria, conflict and HIV/AIDS. In each of these discussions I explore the ways in which the possibility of gender analysis is excluded by the type of data that is used, and identify the discursive limitations to the analyses produced by this LDC discourse.

Low income

In determining LDC status, the low-income criterion is measured by the level of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita. At the time of the 2000 triennial review of the LDC list by the UN Committee for Development Policy, the low income threshold for a country's inclusion in the LDC category was a per capita GDP of $US 900. The threshold for graduation from the LDC category was $US 1,035 (UNCTAD 2002:i). As an indicator of overall national economy strength, Gross Domestic Product aggregates the total value of all final goods and services produced in an economy over a one-year period. It is used as an international economic benchmark.

> Gross domestic product can be measured in three ways:
> (a) The sum of the value added by each industry in producing the year's output (the output method)
> (b) The sum of factor incomes received from producing the year's output (the income method)
> (c) The sum of expenditures on the year's domestic output of goods and services (the expenditure method). (Pass, Lowes and Davies 1993)

This standard measure of a nation's overall levels of income, employment, and prices is determined by the interaction of all measured spending and production decisions made by all households, firms, government agencies, and others in the economy. This is a basic measure of a nation's economic output and income and provides the total market value of all final goods and services produced in the economy, within a given set of political boundaries, in a given period of time, usually one year.

As a measure, none of the standard methods for the calculation of Gross Domestic Product measure the contribution of unpaid, non-wage, or informal economic activity. Marilyn Waring's (1988) influential analysis on the non-measurement, non-valuation, and consequent non-recognition of women's informal and non-waged labour in these national accounts argues that this and other standard measures of national economic activity are fundamentally inaccurate due to their

exclusion of a significant proportion of the labour and goods produced within a given national society:

> And yet on these figures are based development planning, socio-economic policy formation, and the establishment of national priorities. These women simply do not show up when policy makers plan. (Waring 1988:70)

Waring argues that the United Nations System of National Accounts, the basis for the production of internationally comparable economic data, and the standard to which national governments seek to ensure compliance and consistency, is fundamentally flawed. Waring argues that these flaws are due to the ideological biases associated with the definitions of its core terms - value, labour, production, reproduction - that exclude the measurement of factors such as peace; safety; a sustainable, clean and unpolluted environment; unpaid labour; individual, family and community self-sufficiency; and informal small trade[76]. It is a system that, due to its international adoption and currency, is now self-sustaining. To alter the system would then mean that the entire preceding years of data would no longer be a basis for comparative analysis and observance of trends over time. While reports[77] have stated that preserving the continuity of a data source is not sufficient justification to continue to exclude gender sensitive data, the reality is that the data continues to operate as a technology of knowledge: the maintenance of a dataset once created becomes a priority, above ensuring that the information it includes is a useful and accurate representation of a reality.

The LDC criterion for low income is based on a system of international economic measurement that excludes significant labour and activity by women and children (Gurumurthy 2002). It is this invisibility in the national accounts that, to paraphrase Waring, means that this labour, these women, these communities, 'simply do not show up', in the authoritative information that is a critical basis of UN policy on the LDCs. Gender analysis highlights the limitations of the analysis that can be produced within the discursive boundaries that produce LDC data, including GDP and GNP. This data, however disputed as an accurate indicator of the sum of national economic goods and services output due to the invisibility of gender that it enshrines, is the data that is given discursive prominence within LDC development discourse. It is in examining the reliance on this data, as a single indicator of population income levels in LDC countries, that the first two ways that data operates as a technology of knowledge can be identified. Examining the use of this data reveals the way that the data assumes homogeneity amongst LDCs, and the resultant limitations of the analysis that can be produced by and with this data.

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[76] In tracing the development of this system of economic measurement and assessment, Waring (1988) locates its recent origins in the imperative for altered national economic management during the Second World War, outlined in an influential article by John Maynard Keynes and Richard Stone titled 'The National Income and Expenditure of the United Kingdom, and How to Pay for the War.' This origin, she argues, has necessarily led to a system that does not place a value on, or even seek to measure, peace, welfare, health, safety, the 'non-economic' work and labour of women, and the difference between the use of renewable and non-renewable resources, but does place a positive economic value on military expenditure and manufacturing.

[77] Waring refers to a 1983 report from INSTRAW by an expert group which concluded that 'collection of data in a form that misrepresented the situation of women should not be justified solely on the grounds of maintaining comparability of historical time series" (INSTRAW 1983 cited in Waring 1988: 250).

The following analysis of per capita GDP in LDCs provides some insight into the knowledge that is used as an authority in the formation of international policy on the LDCs, and the way that data operates as a technology of knowledge in LDC discourse assuming homogeneity and limiting analysis. The reliance on this data to examine trends in national economic growth which are currently measured, and identify comparable trends between countries and regional groupings, limits the understanding and appreciation of the complexity of development issues that can be produced with analysis. Table 3 lists the per capita GDP, population levels and annual average growth rates for each of the LDCs and each of the major country groupings. It reveals that, in the period from 1980-1999, the increase in average per capita GDP across the LDCs was only $4 (a 1.4% increase), while across all developing countries the average per capita GDP increased by $433 or 48.5% over the same period. In comparison, the increase in developed market economy countries was $ 8201, a 44.4% increase from the 1980 levels of $ 18,891 to the 1999 levels of $ 26,692.

The reliance on single indicator national level data limits the ability to explore why this difference has occurred in this timeframe, and what the factors is that differentiate the LDCs as a group from the other countries included in the analysis. The national level data, and reliance upon it as the key unit of analysis implies an assumed homogeneity amongst LDCs. This homogeneity operates through the assumption that the levels of population income in LDC group as a whole, and the individual countries classified as LDCs, can be identified and analysed by the same single indicators. However, even through analysis of the data itself, questions are raised about the differences between LDCs, but the data does not allow further analysis to explore how and why.

Table 4: Per Capita GDP and Population, Levels and Growth by Country Groups

Country Groupings	Per Capita GDP (In 1999 $US dollars)		Annual average growth rates of per capita real GDP (%)		Population		
					Level (millions)	Annual average growth rates (%)	
	1980	*1999*	*1980-1990*	*1990-1999*	*1999*	*1980-1990*	*1990-1999*
All LDCs	284	288	-0.2	1.1	637.4	2.5	2.5
All developing countries	893	1 326	1.9	3.0	4 770.7	2.1	1.7
Developed market economy countries	18 491	26 692	2.5	1.6	889.5	0.7	0.6
Countries in Eastern Europe	2881	2405	2.0	-3.6	318.2	0.6	-0.2
Afghanistan	..	..	..	..	21.9	-1.2	4.6
Angola	909	685	0.8	-3.0	12.5	2.7	3.4
Bangladesh	228	361	1.9	3.1	126.9	2.2	1.6
Benin	354	405	-0.5	1.9	5.9	3.0	2.7
Bhutan	434	733	4.6	4.0	0.6	2.6	2.2
Burkina Faso	189	228	0.8	1.0	11.6	2.8	2.8
Burundi	131	107	1.4	-4.9	6.6	2.8	2.1
Cambodia	..	285	..	2.1	10.9	3.1	2.7
Cape Verde	774	1289	3.6	3.0	0.4	1.7	2.3
Central African Republic	357	297	-1.0	-0.3	3.5	2.4	2.1
Chad	179	211	3.4	-1.3	7.5	2.5	3.0
Comoros	401	291	-0.3	-3.3	0.7	3.1	2.8
Dem. Rep. Of the Congo	350	115	-1.6	-8.3	50.3	3.3	3.4
Djibouti	..	..	..	..	0.6	6.4	2.1
Equatorial Guinea	..	1575	-2.9	-1.2	0.4	5.1	2.6
Eritrea	..	180	..	1.6(a)	3.7	1.7	2.9
Ethiopia	97	107	0.1	1.9	61.1	2.8	2.7
Gambia	360	345	-0.1	-0.8	1.3	3.7	3.6
Guinea	481	502	-0.5	1.3	7.4	2.5	2.8
Guinea-Bissau	202	186	1.2	-1.8	1.2	2.0	2.2
Haiti	808	485	-2.6	-2.8	8.1	2.4	1.7
Kiribati	679	732	-1.0	1.8	0.1	1.7	1.4
Lao PDR	147	259	2.0	3.7	5.3	2.7	2.7
Lesotho	309	415	1.8	2.0	2.1	2.5	2.3
Liberia	..	..	..	..	2.9	3.6	1.0
Madagascar	353	241	-1.6	-1.6	15.5	2.7	3.3
Malawi	168	171	-1.8	2.6	10.6	4.4	1.3
Maldives	481	1359	6.3	4.4	0.3	3.2	2.9
Mali	235	248	0.2	1.0	11.0	2.6	2.4
Mauritania	371	369	-0.8	1.3	2.6	2.7	2.8
Mozambique	196	209	-1.5	2.5	19.3	1.5	3.6
Myanmar	..	..	..	..	45.1	1.8	1.2
Nepal	142	210	1.9	2.2	23.4	2.6	2.5
Niger	309	199	-3.3	-0.9	10.4	3.3	3.4
Rwanda	322	270	-1.2	-1.3	7.2	3.4	-0.1
Samoa	1 264	1 250	0.7	0.8	0.2	0.3	1.1
Sao Tome and Principe	..	328	-4.4	-0.4	0.1	2.4	2.2
Senegal	482	519	0.2	0.7	9.2	2.8	2.6
Sierra Leone	314	142	-1.8	-6.4	4.7	2.2	1.8
Solomon Islands	602	806	2.9	0.3	0.4	3.6	3.3
Somalia	..	..	..	..	9.7	2.9	2.3
Sudan	249	345	-2.1	6.1	28.9	2.6	2.0
Togo	453	334	-1.3	-0.4	4.5	3.0	2.8
Tuvalu (b)	..	1931	..	2.2	0.0	1.3	2.8
Uganda	185	300	0.7	4.3	21.1	2.2	2.8
United Republic of Tanzania	307	268	-0.5	-0.9	32.8	3.2	2.9
Vanuatu	1 328	1 327	0.6	-0.3	0.2	2.5	2.5
Yemen	..	387	..	-0.7	17.5	3.4	4.7
Zambia	505	370	-1.3	-2.1	9.0	2.3	2.4

Source: UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2001, World Bank, World Development Indicators 2001, CDROM cited in UNCTAD Least Developed Countries Report 2002: 247

(a)   1993-1999   (b)   Population 11,000 and area 30 km squared

This minimal figure for average per capita growth in the LDCs might be taken to imply a generalized stasis in LDCs in comparison to the significant increases in all developing countries and developed market economies. However, analysis of individual LDC country data in Table 4 reveals significant variation between countries, including both significant increases and significant decreases in per capita GDP[78]. What this national level data reveals is that the situation in all LDCs is not the same. There is no homogeneity amongst LDC member countries, a factor that can be demonstrated through examination of the data itself.

What again becomes clear, as was identified with the previous issue of the difference between LDCs as a group and other countries included in the analysis, is that the data does not allow further analysis of the reasons why there are differences between LDCs. What is hidden is what these national economic aggregates mean for the majority of the population in these particular countries. Without sub-national level data or analysis it is not possible to identify if there are any similarities between those countries where per capita income grew or dropped. It is fair to assume that the distribution of income is not as simple as the simple division of total GDP by total population. Gender analysis challenges the utility of these figures as an analysis of poverty distribution at the national level, raising questions about who and what is being measured, and what do these figures actually mean? In this way, examination of the data used in the LDC low income criterion, GDP, identifies boundaries of LDC discourse and highlights two ways in which data operates as a technology of knowledge. Gender analysis identifies the limitations of both the nation state as a single unit of analysis, and of GDP as a catch-all of national economic activity. Examination of the data reveals that an assumed homogeneity is operating, which expects that all countries that are LDCs can be identified with single national level indicator data, and this national level data frame significantly limits the type of analysis that can be undertaken and produced about LDCs.

Poverty analysis

The limited ability of GDP to reflect population incomes was recognised in the 2002 LDC Report by UNCTAD. This report featured new poverty estimates for LDCs and analysis of the dynamics and distribution of poverty at the country level. Using data for 39 LDCs covering the period 1965-1999, the report seeks to provide a tool for the analysis of poverty in different LDCs over time. What is clear that even in this new work prepared by UNCTAD that recognises the limitations of GDP based analysis of national incomes used in the LDC criteria, data continues to operate as a technology of knowledge. This occurs through the imperative to use quantitative data that is available at the national level in the largest number of LDCs, which defines what is analysed, and what analysis is produced. In this way, despite recognition of the weakness of the LDC criteria definition of poverty, the very definition of poverty adopted in this new poverty analysis is data driven. By

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[78] The data in Table 4 illustrates that significant drops in per capita income occurred in Angola (a 24.6% fall), Burundi, (18.3%), Comoros (27.4%), Democratic Republic of Congo (67.1%), Haiti (39.9%), Madagascar (31.7%), Niger (35.6%), Sierra Leone, (54.8%) and Zambia (26.7%). During the same period significant increases in per capita GDP occurred in Bhutan (a 68.9% increase), Cape Verde (79.4%), the Maldives (182.5%), the Solomon Islands (33.9%) and Uganda (62.2%).

this I mean that comparative statistical analysis, the data, requires a representation of poverty in terms of a single, readily available, quantifiable indicator.

> The new estimates are based on a simple notion of what poverty is. Poverty is understood in absolute terms as the inability to attain a minimally adequate standard of living. The standard of living is measured by the level of private consumption, and those who are poor are identified by adopting the $1-a-day and $2-a-day international poverty lines, which are now conventionally used to make internationally comparable estimates of global poverty. These international poverty lines specify the level below which private consumption is considered inadequate, and are measured, again in line with current practice, using purchasing parity exchange rates, which seek to correct for differences in the cost of living between countries. (UNCTAD 2002:ii)

In other words, because it is available and other people use it, the data is used, not because it provides an appropriate representation of poverty.

The way in which data operates as a technology of knowledge by defining what can be analysed and therefore what analysis can be produced can be seen by examining the 2002 UNCTAD report of the dynamics of poverty in the LDCs. The summary in Table 5 indicates that 80.7% of the population in LDCs is estimated to be living on less than $2 a day, and 50.1 % on less than $1 per day. There is a regional difference, in that the estimates of poverty in the African LDCs are higher than the LDC average, and the Asian LDCs significantly lower than the LDC average. The stark international inequalities of this distribution of poverty are highlighted through the differences of average GDP per capita per day, where the average in Switzerland is identified as almost $US 100, compared to the LDC average of less than $US 1.

Table 5: GDP per capita per day, LDCs and Selected OECD Countries, 1999

	GDP per capita per day	Percentage share of population living on less than:	
	Current $	*$ 1 per day*	*$ 2 per day*
Weighted averages			
LDCs	0.72	50.1	80.7
African LDCs	0.65	64.9	87.5
Asian LDCs	0.88	23.0	68.2
Selected OECD countries			
United States	90.1	..	..
Switzerland	99.3	..	..
Sweden	73.8	..	..
Japan	94.1	..	..
France	66.9	..	..
United Kingdom	66.4	..	..

Source: UNCTAD secretariat estimates based on World Bank, *World Development Indicators* 2001, CD Rom, and Karshenas 2001 cited in UNCTAD 2002: 52.

The report argues that it is this high percentage of the population living on less that $1 per day that indicates the extent to which extreme poverty is a general feature of the population. It identifies, through this poverty analysis, that a critical feature of the nature and dynamics of poverty in the LDCs is that it is so prevalent as to be a general characteristic. These poverty estimates refer to a population of 495 million people living on less than $2 a day, and 307 million people living on less than $1 a

day. A question arises as to what extent this level of poverty is different from that of other developing countries. Using 1985 purchasing power parity data, Table 5 outlines the percentage of the population who fall within the scope of the international poverty lines of living on $1 a day and $2 a day. In comparing LDCs as a group, regional groupings of African and Asian LDCs, and a group of other developing countries, this table outlines the differences between those country/regional groupings in terms of the extent of the population living below the $1 a day and $2 a day poverty lines. It also outlines what this means in terms of average daily consumption for those who are living on less than $1 a day or less than $2 a day in those country/regional groupings.

What is clear within this analysis is that again it is all based on a single indicator and the nation as the unit of analysis, key ways in which data operates as a technology of knowledge through assumed homogeneity of LDCs which limits determines what can be done in the way of further analysis. In this way, while international comparisons are possible, and are possible over specified time periods, no analysis is possible of why these differences may exist, and if there are any similarities at the sub-national level within LDCs that may explain why poverty has increased in severity and prevalence.

The data in Table 6 reveals that, while there has been a steady reduction in the percentage of the population in "other developing countries" who are living below these poverty lines – from 44.8% below $1 per day and 82.8% below $2 a day in 1965-1969, to 7.5% below $1 a day and 35.3% below $2 a day in 1995-1999 – the corresponding figures for LDCs have increased slightly, from 48.0% below $1 per day and 80.0% below $2 a day in 1965-1969, to 50.1% below $1 a day and 80.7% below $2 a day in 1995-1999. Moreover, within the LDC grouping, there were significant reductions in poverty figures for Asian LDCs over the same period, from 35.5% to 23.0% living below $1 a day, and from 78.8% to 68.2% living below $2 a day. On the other hand, there were significant increases in the same figures for African LDCs, from 55.8% to 64.9% living below $1 a day, and from 82.0% to 87.5% living below $2 a day.

In other words, over this period the proportion of the population living below $1 a day fell by 83% in the 22 other developing countries (from 44.8% to 7.5%), and fell by 35% in the Asian LDCs (from 35.5% to 23%). In the African LDCs, this figure *increased* by 16% (from 55.8% to 64.9%) over the same period. Analysis of the figures for the proportion of the population living below $2 a day yields similar results, with a fall of 57% in the developing countries (from 82.8% to 35.3%) and a fall of 13% in the Asian LDCs (from 78.8% to 68.2%), compared to an increase of 7% in the African LDCs, from (82.0% to 87.5%). This is a clear indication of a significant divergence in the prevalence of severe poverty, where the 'development achievement' of reduced poverty in developing countries has not translated to the LDCs as a whole, and in particular the LDCs in Africa. Table 6 also indicates that this divergence is not only apparent in terms of the percentage of the population living in poverty, but in terms of the average daily consumption of those who are living below either the $1 a day or $2 a day international poverty lines.

Table 6: Poverty Trends in LDCs and other Developing Countries, 1965-1999
(a) (1985 Purchasing Power Parity $1 and $2 international poverty lines)

	1965-1969		1975-1979		1985-1989		1995-1999	
	$1 per day	*$2 per day*	*$1 per day*	*$2 per day*	*$1 per day*	*$2 per day*	*$1 per day*	*$2 per day*
Population share (%)								
39 LDCs (b)	48.0	80.0	48.5	82.1	49.0	81.9	50.1	80.7
African LDCs	55.8	82.0	56.4	83.7	61.9	87.0	64.9	87.5
Asian LDCs	35.5	78.8	25.9	79.6	27.6	73.4	23.0	68.2
22 other developing countries (c)	44.8	82.8	32.5	76.5	15.0	61.6	7.5	35.3
Number of people (millions)								
39 LDCs (b)	125.4	211.1	164.0	277.5	216.0	360.5	278.8	449.3
African LDCs	89.6	131.7	117.4	174.4	170.5	239.5	233.5	315.1
Asian LDCs	35.6	79.1	46.5	102.9	45.2	120.3	44.8	133.3
22 other developing countries (c)	760.0	1405.0	697.0	1639.7	389.3	1599.0	229.2	1084.2
Average daily consumption (1985 PPP$)								
39 LDCs (b)	0.70	1.07	0.71	1.07	0.69	1.06	0.64	1.03
African LDCs	0.64	0.95	0.66	0.96	0.64	0.90	0.59	0.86
Asian LDCs	0.84	1.27	0.85	1.27	0.89	1.37	0.90	1.42
22 other developing countries (c)	0.86	1.17	0.91	1.30	0.96	1.53	0.93	1.65

Source: UNCTAD secretariat estimates based on World Bank World Development Indicators 2001, and Karshenas (2001) cited in UNCTAD 2002: 59.
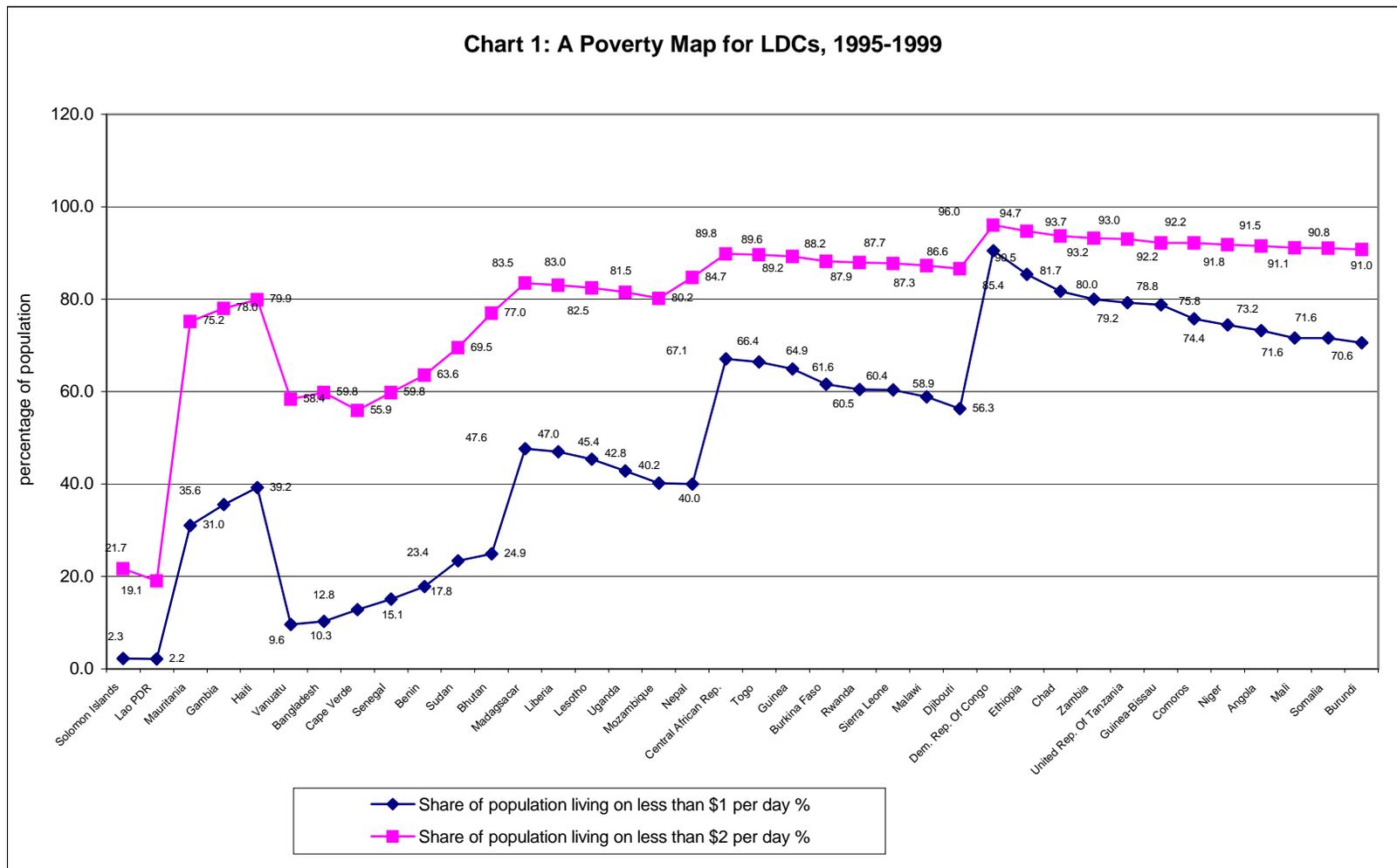(a) Country group averages are weighted averages
(b) LDCs sample composition is: (African Group) Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Dem. Rep. Of the Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Haiti, (Asian Group) Bangladesh, Bhutan, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, (Island LDCs) Cape Verde, Comoros, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.
(c) Other developing countries sample composition is: Algeria, Cameroon, China, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey and Zimbabwe.

The average daily consumption for those living below in $1 a day and $2 a day in the developing countries has gradually increased over the 1965-1969 to 1995-1999 time period. For the population living in LDCs on less than $1 a day or $2 a day, average daily consumption has decreased, by a factor of 4% for those living on less than $2 a day ($1.03 to $1.07), and by a factor of 9% for those living on less than $1 a day (from $0.70 in 1965-1969 to $0.64 in 1995-1999). This analysis highlights that poverty in the LDCs as a group has not only slightly increased in terms of the percentage of the population living below international poverty lines, but also has also significantly increased in severity, measured in terms of decreased average daily consumption levels.

The data in Chart 1, A Poverty Map for the Least Developed Countries 1995-1999, indicates the spread and distribution of poverty within the LDCs, revealing the extent to which extreme poverty is a feature of the population. This data reveals that where there is a high percentage of the population living on less than $2 a day, a significant share of the population is living on less than $1 a day.

Chart 1: A Poverty Map for LDCs, 1995-1999

percentage of population

120.0

100.0

80.0

60.0

40.0

20.0

0.0

Share of population living on less than $1 per day %
Share of population living on less than $2 per day %

Solomon Islands, Lao PDR, Mauritania, Gambia, Haiti, Vanuatu, Bangladesh, Cape Verde, Senegal, Benin, Sudan, Bhutan, Madagascar, Liberia, Lesotho, Uganda, Mozambique, Nepal, Central African Rep., Togo, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Malawi, Djibouti, Dem. Rep. Of Congo, Ethiopia, Chad, Zambia, United Rep. Of Tanzania, Guinea-Bissau, Comoros, Niger, Angola, Mali, Somalia, Burundi

$1 per day values: 2.3, 2.2, 35.6, 31.0, 39.2, 9.6, 10.3, 12.8, 15.1, 17.8, 23.4, 24.9, 47.0, 45.4, 42.8, 40.2, 40.0, 67.1, 66.4, 64.9, 61.6, 60.5, 60.4, 58.9, 56.3, 90.5, 85.4, 81.7, 80.0, 79.2, 78.8, 75.8, 74.4, 73.2, 71.6, 71.6, 70.6

47.6

$2 per day values: 21.7, 19.1, 75.2, 78.0, 79.9, 58.4, 59.8, 55.9, 59.8, 63.6, 69.5, 77.0, 83.5, 83.0, 82.5, 81.5, 80.2, 84.7, 89.8, 89.6, 89.2, 88.2, 87.9, 87.7, 87.3, 86.6, 96.0, 94.7, 93.7, 93.2, 93.0, 92.2, 91.8, 91.5, 91.1, 90.8, 91.0

Source: UNCTAD secretariat estimates based on Karshenas (2001) in UNCTAD 2002:55.
Note: This is based on international poverty line in 1985 purchasing power parity dollars. These estimates do not conform to estimates based on a national poverty line.

The country disparities within the LDC grouping are also clearly demonstrated in Chart 1. For 36 of the 38 countries included in these poverty estimates, over 50% of the population is living on less than $2 a day, and for 20 LDCs, over 50% of the population is living on less than $1 a day. It is only in one LDC, Lao PDR, that the percentage of the population living on less than $2 a day is less than 20% of the total population. It is only in three LDCs, Lao PDR, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, that the percentage of the population living on less than $1 a day is less than 10% of the total population. For twelve LDCs (Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Chad, Zambia, United Republic of Tanzania, Guinea-Bissau, Comoros, Niger, Angola, Mali, Somalia and Burundi) over 90% of the population is living on less than $2 a day, and over 70% of the population is living on less than $1 a day.

In examining the differences between the levels of poverty between individual countries in the LDC grouping, there is clearly a sub-group, apparent on a regional level, in which severe poverty is more prevalent:

> In all African Least Developed Countries, and all the Asian Least Developed Countries, with the exception of one, the share of the population living on less than $2 a day was close to and often well over 60 per cent in the late 1990s. (UNCTAD 2002:54)

What the data in this 2002 UNCTAD poverty analysis reveals is that unlike in the developing countries group, poverty in LDCs has been sustained over time, increased in severity and affected an increased percentage of the population. What the data doesn't reveal is contributing factors within the LDCs that could be seen through broader analysis of poverty that wasn't driven by the need to reduce a complex experience to a single indicator. What the data also doesn't reveal is how many of the people whose poverty has increased in severity are women. Gender analysis reveals the discursive boundaries present in the reliance on data within LDC discourse, the limitations of the nation as a unit of analysis and in the limitations and bias of the assumptions within economics.

This 2002 UNCTAD poverty analysis produces international comparisons that increase concern about the prevalence of poverty, but is fundamentally limited and constrained in what information it can produce by the data it uses. This poverty analysis is as limited as the LDC low income criterion in its reliance on single indicator data, on the use of the nation as the unit of analysis and on the assumed homogeneity this implies amongst LDCs. In this way, data operates as a technology of knowledge within LDC discourse, making itself the focus, defining what can be analysed and the analysis than can be produced, and becomes more important within LDC discourse than producing a fuller analysis of development in LDCs.

Economic vulnerability

The Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI) functions within the LDC criteria as the indicator of national economic strength or weakness and is used by the UNCDP in assessing LDC status. Gender analysis, by asking the question 'Where are the women?', highlights the discursive boundaries of the EVI within LDC development discourse and brings the issue of what exactly is being measured into

question. When exploring the EVI, even in its own limited macroeconomic terms, it is identifiable that significant issues are excluded from its scope. The EVI is an indicator at the national level, and as such effectively hides the diversity between LDC economies. As a national level indicator, the analysis that can be produced by the EVI data is limited to national level comparisons, and issues operating at the sub-national level cannot be explored. Despite being a composite index, the EVI excludes critical issues relevant to national economic strength, and does not in any way reflect the activity of the informal economy, levels of population participation in the formal economy, and the measurement of women's economic activity.

The EVI has been designed to reflect the degree of structural difficulty facing national development in LDCs. It is a composite index defined as follows:

> The EVI used by the Committee is therefore the average of five indicators: (a) merchandise export concentration; (b) instability of export earnings; (c) instability of agricultural production; (d) share of manufacturing and modern services in GDP; and (e) population size. (UNCDP 2003: para 10)

The EVI, as outlined in Chapter 2, is the result of a series of changes made to the measurement of national economic strength used in the LDC criteria. It is the criterion that have been subject to the most changes during the UNCDP reviews of the LDC criteria, and between it and the human assets index, is the most complex. The EVI now incorporates five factors designed to incorporate a set of indicators that cover a broad range of complex factors that promote or inhibit economic development. It also includes data that covers the impact of environmental issues on national economic development, namely the degree to which a country is prone to major natural disasters. The indicator that covers these issues is the instability of agricultural production, which recognizes not only that natural disasters impact on cropping cycles and as a result on the primary goods that are a feature of production profiles in LDCs, but also recognizes that the major nutrition source of the majority of people in a given country is subsistence agriculture. In 2003 a variation was introduced that included publication of a second version of the EVI with data on the percentage of the population displaced by natural disasters[79].

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[79] These changes were discussed fully in the section on reviewing the LDC criteria in Chapter 3. The EVI has been refined over time to reflect the broad range of issues that the UNCDP identified as critical to national economic development. It originated as two separate indicators: share of manufacturing in national exports and population size. The considerable changes over time have included changes to the data included in the index, and to the analysis undertaken with that data, as well as the type of data used to assess particular component factors. A key change incorporated in the EVI is the recognition of the relative importance of the primary commodity agricultural sector and manufacturing sectors in LDCs.

Table 7: Key Indicators: Least developed and other low-income countries including economies in transition (in $USD)

Country (1)	Population 2002 (Millions)	Per capita Gross National Income (GNI)	Human Assets Index (HAI)	Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI)	EVI (Modified) (2)
LDC Afghanistan	23.3	523	11.6	50.1	49.9
LDC Angola	13.9	447	25.6	48.5	46.8
Armenia	3.8	523	79.4	30.7	34.0
Azerbaijan	8.1	607	72.8	38.9	40.6
LDC Bangladesh	143.4	447	25.6	48.5	46.8
LDC Benin	6.6	367	40.2	57.0	56.4
LDC Bhutan	2.2	600	40.4	40.6	41.0
LDC Burkina Faso	12.2	217	26.5	49.3	47.0
LDC Burundi	6.7	110	19.7	53.8	49.6
LDC Cambodia	13.8	263	44.5	49.7	48.1
Cameroon	15.5	583	43.8	31.9	31.2
LDC Cape Verde	0.4	**1 323**	**72.0**	55.5	56.7
LDC Central African Republic	3.8	277	29.9	43.1	42.0
LDC Chad	8.4	203	26.1	59.2	56.6
LDC Comoros	0.7	387	38.1	59.1	58.7
Congo	3.2	610	55.2	50.3	46.8
Cote d'Ivoire	16.7	687	43.0	25.4	25.9
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	22.6	440	62.9	32.8	29.5
LDC Democratic Republic of the Congo	54.3	100	34.3	40.8	42.3
LDC Djibouti	0.7	873	30.2	48.6	49.5
LDC Equatorial Guinea	0.5	743	47.2	64.4	55.8
LDC Eritrea	4.0	190	32.8	51.7	50.2
LDC Ethiopia	66.0	100	25.2	42.0	40.7
LDC Gambia	1.4	340	34.0	60.8	56.5
Georgia	5.2	647	76.2	47.6	48.2
Ghana	20.2	337	57.9	40.9	41.9
LDC Guinea	8.4	447	30.3	42.1	40.0
LDC Guinea-Bissau	1.3	170	31.2	64.6	60.7
LDC Haiti	8.4	493	35.3	41.7	43.5
India	1 041.1	450	55.7	13.5	19.6
Indonesia	217.5	610	73.6	18.1	21.9
Kenya	31.9	350	49.3	28.4	29.0
LDC Kiribati	0.1	**923**	**67.5**	64.8	60.4
Kyrgyzstan	5.0	287	77.6	38.2	39.9
LDC Lao People's Democratic Republic	5.5	297	46.4	43.9	43.4
LDC Lesotho	2.1	573	45.4	44.2	44.5
LDC Liberia	3.3	285	38.7	63.1	58.3
LDC Madagascar	16.9	253	37.9	21.6	27.0
LDC Malawi	11.8	177	39.0	49.0	49.4
LDC Maldives	0.3	**1 983**	**65.2**	33.6	37.5
LDC Mali	12.0	230	19.9	47.5	45.4
LDC Mauritania	2.8	377	38.2	38.9	37.7
Moldova, Republic of	4.3	397	81.1	39.6	39.1
Mongolia	2.6	393	63.3	50.0	48.9
LDC Mozambique	19.0	220	20.0	35.6	39.2
LDC Myanmar	49.0	282	60.0	45.4	45.6
LDC Nepal	24.2	240	47.1	**29.5**	**31.0**
Nicaragua	5.3	395	60.8	39.4	42.5
LDC Niger	11.6	180	14.2	54.1	53.1
Nigeria	120.0	267	52.3	52.8	51.1
Pakistan	148.7	437	45.5	20.2	26.1
Papua New Guinea	5.0	673	46.2	36.1	38.6
LDC Rwanda	8.1	230	34.1	63.3	59.6

LDC Samoa	0.2	**1 447**	**88.8**	40.9	50.8
LDC Sao Tome and Principe	0.1	280	55.8	41.8	37.0
LDC Senegal	9.9	490	38.1	38.4	38.8
LDC Sierra Leone	4.8	130	21.7	45.7	43.3
LDC Solomon Islands	0.5	657	47.3	46.7	49.1
LDC Somalia	9.6	177	8.5	55.4	53.1
LDC Sudan	32.6	333	46.4	45.2	46.5
Tajikistan	6.2	173	69.5	37.7	39.1
LDC Tanzania, United Republic of	36.8	263	41.1	**28.3**	**30.2**
LDC Timor-Leste (3)	0.8	478	36.4	n.a.	n.a.
LDC Togo	4.8	293	48.6	41.5	42.8
Turkmenistan	4.9	780	84.5	60.9	53.8
LDC Tuvalu	0.01	**1 383**	**63.7**	70.3	67.3
LDC Uganda	24.8	297	39.8	43.2	41.6
Ukraine	48.7	723	86.3	23.8	26.1
Uzbekistan	25.6	607	81.3	40.3	36.3
LDC Vanuatu	0.2	**1 083**	57.4	44.5	46.4
Viet Nam	80.2	390	72.7	37.1	39.4
LDC Yemen	19.9	423	46.8	49.1	49.0
LDC Zambia	10.9	317	43.4	49.3	47.6
Zimbabwe	13.1	463	56.5	33.7	30.3

Source: UNCDP 2003: pages 18-20. Notes: (1) Thresholds for inclusion in the list of least developed countries are population less than 75 million; per capita Gross National Income (GNI) less than $750; Human Assets Index (HAI) less than 55; and Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI) greater than 37. A country must meet all the criteria. Thresholds for graduation from the list are: per capita GNI greater than $900; HAI greater than 61; and EVI less than 33. A country must meet at least two criteria to be eligible for graduation. The letters "LDC" before a country name indicate a country that is currently designated as a Least Developed Country. Figures in boldface type indicate a graduation criterion that has been met by a current least developed country; (2) EVI with a sixth component: percentage of population displaced by natural disasters; (3) Data unavailable.

The data in Table 7 illustrates the list of LDCs, other low-income countries and countries from the former Soviet Union with economies in transition to capitalist economies. This is the data used in the 2003 review of the LDCs. In this review the EVI score for inclusion in the LDC grouping was greater than 37, and graduation from the LDC grouping required a score lower than 33. The table shows that the average EVI for all countries in the LDC grouping was 47.9. The average for the second EVI scores, which include the data on the percentage of the population displaced by natural disasters, was 47.2. The range of EVI scores within the LDC grouping was significant. The countries that scored relatively well on the EVI included Madagascar with 21.6 and 27, Tanzania with 28.3 and 30.2, and Nepal with 29.5 and 31. The countries that scored poorly on the EVI included Tuvalu with scores of 70.3 and 67.3, Kiribati with scores of 64.8 and 60.8, Guinea-Bissau with scores of 64.6 and 60.7 and Equatorial Guinea with scores of 64.4 and 55.8.

These measures of structural inhibitors or constraints to development continue to provide an incomplete picture of economic and environmental vulnerability within the LDCs. The EVI, despite significant changes to indicators and data sources, continues to miss factors critical to economic functioning and development prospects, such as the degree of reliance on external donor funding for national development activities.

Table 8: Total financial flows and ODA from all sources to individual LDCs

(Net disbursements in millions of dollars)

	Total financial flows					Of which: ODA				
	1985	1990	1996	1998	2000	1985	1990	1996	1998	2000
In current dollars per capita										
All LDCs	23.3	33.4	24.5	23.3	20	22.4	31.4	23.0	19.7	19
All developing countries	12.1	19.4	43.2	40.7	39	8.6	13.1	12.4	10.7	10
In constant 1990 dollars (million) (a)										
All LDCs	13051	16876	12737	13384	12485	12561	16020	11926	11276	11769
All developing countries	56293	79731	173896	178513	179597	40060	56517	49888	46794	48375
In constant 1990 dollars per capita (a)										
All LDCs	29.2	33.4	21.7	21.8	19	28.1	31.7	20.3	18.4	18
All developing countries	15.2	19.4	38.2	38.0	37	10.8	13.8	11.0	10.0	10

Source: UNCTAD secretariat estimates, mainly based on OECD, Geographical Distribution of Financial Flows to Aid Recipients, 1996-2000, published in UNCTAD 2002: 271
(a) UNCTAD Secretariat has used the unit value index of imports as the deflator

The data in Table 8 outlines the levels of overseas development assistance funding and total financial flows to developing and least developed countries over time. For example, in 1998, overseas development assistance comprised 84% of total financial flows to LDCs. This compares to overseas development assistance accounting for 26% of total financial flows to all developing countries in the same year. Table 8 also reveals the overall decline in the overall levels of financial flows and the overall levels of overseas development assistance to LDCs, both as total flows and in levels per capita. It also reveals the degree of variation in total financial flows and overseas development assistance over the time period 1985-1998. For example, this table highlights that while the overall amount of overseas development assistance provided to all developing countries increased, the amount provided to LDCs actually decreased from $12.561 billion in 1985 to $11.276 billion in 1998. This was not a constant fall however, as the total overseas development assistance to LDCs increased to a high of $16020 million in 1990 before falling to $11961 million in 1996. The impact of this at per capita levels was significant, falling from $28.1 to $18.4 dollars per capita.

The EVI attempts to reveal the inherent high rate of economic vulnerability experienced by LDCs and in particular highlights the difficulties faced by small island economies. The EVI has changed over time as a measure of national structural vulnerability, seeking to recognise a range of different factors on national development activity and prospects. These changes, however, continue to exclude factors that have a significant impact on national economic development, such as reliance on overseas development assistance within total national financial flows. The EVI however, despite including five factors within the index, still operates as a single national level indicator, implying and assuming national level homogeneity amongst LDCs. Data is operating as a technology of knowledge through the emphasis placed on determining and refining the process and methodology of

measuring economic strength, and through the reduction of complex and diverse national economic characteristics to a single national level indicator. The latter means that despite the inclusion of a five separate sources of data (which in themselves are only partial indicators of formal economic activity and strength) to form the index, the only analyses that can be produced remain national level comparisons. The ability to compare aspects of economic activity within a specific LDC, or between different LDCs, or between specific LDCs and other countries is limited.

Human Assets

Examination of the Human Assets Index (HAI), the only non-economic indicator for the determination of LDC status, confirms the ways in which data operates as a technology of knowledge in LDC development discourse. Gender analysis highlights the absence of gender-disaggregated data within the index, and the resultant inability to conduct any gender-based analysis of human capital within LDCs. It also highlights the separation of the social and economic spheres within the LDC criteria and data. Once discursive boundaries are identified, the limitations and exclusions of the HAI become evident. As with both the low income and the EVI data, the HAI reduces complex and multifaceted and interconnecting social, cultural, economic and spiritual domains to a single national level index. Despite being comprised of several different indicators, the HAI continues to operate as a technology of knowledge by assuming homogeneity amongst LDCs in both reducing this complexity of the human capital within a national population to a single national level indicator, and in turn restricting and constraining the analysis than can be produced to national level comparisons. The privileging of the measurable and economic within the data used is evidenced in this examination of the HAI data, as it is a less complex indicator and is separated from economic domains.

The HAI is a composite index designed to provide a scaleable and rank-able numeric indicator of the overall national levels and strength of human capital. It is an index that has been developed by the UNCDP for the express purpose of being used in determinations of inclusion or graduation from the LDC category. The composition of the HAI has changed over time in the UNCDP reviews discussed and outlined in Chapter 2. Currently the HAI is comprised of the following data: the average calorie consumption per capita as a percentage of minimum calorie requirements for nutrition; the under-five child mortality rate as a measure of population health status; and a composite measure that includes both the adult literacy rate and the overall ratio of students enrolled in secondary school compared to the population of that age group for education. While the HAI is currently comprised of data with indicators on nutrition, health and education, it has included different data in previous years. Initially the criterion was the national adult literacy rate, as a single indicator. Over time, and through debate, discussion and review, the indicator incorporated additional elements to give a broader indicator of national human resources, previously named the Augmented Physical Quality of Life Index.

Table 7 provides data on the HAI scores for each country currently listed as a LDC, and other low-income countries that were either assessed as part of the UNCDP's 2003 review, or included in discussion during the review process. The average HAI score for countries within the LDC grouping is 39.2. In 2003 the point for inclusion in the LDC grouping was 55, and the point for graduation was 61. The wide disparity between countries within the LDC grouping noted in the discussion of the low-income criterion is also apparent with this indicator. HAI scores range from 63.7 in Tuvalu, 65.2 in Maldives, 67.5 in Kiribati, 72 in Cape Verde and 88.8 in Samoa to 19.9 in Mali, 19.7 in Burundi, 14.2 in Niger, 11.6 in Afghanistan and 8.5 in Somalia. The discussion in Chapter 3 noted that, in its 2003 review, the UNCDP was concerned about the difficulties experienced by former Soviet Union countries as their economies made the transition from socialist state-run economies to capitalist economies. The Committee noted the strength of the human capital as a result of previous national policy on basic social services. The data in Table 7 data indicates that the average HAI in the nine countries with economies in transition is 78.7, with the scores ranging from 69.5 in Tajikistan to 86.3 in Ukraine, all well above the cut off point of 55 for inclusion in the LDC category. Data operates as a technology of knowledge by shifting the focus of attention away from the issues at hand, the alleviation of poverty, to the processes and methods associated with the administration of data. The integrity of the index was upheld by not including these countries within the LDC category.

What the information Table 7 does not indicate is the changes in these indices over time, whether the situation in these LDCs is improving or declining. Analysis by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) assessed the under-five child mortality rate, a component of the HAI, at 1990 and 2000 for both LDCs and other developing countries. Not only did this analysis indicate that in both years there was a major difference in the average child mortality rate between LDCs and other developed countries, but also indicated a slight increase in the gap between them. The average under-five child mortality rate in LDCs was 182 per 1000 live births in 1990 and 162 deaths per 1000 live births in 2000. In other developing countries it was 85 per 1000 in 1990, and had fallen to 69 per 1000 by 2000. Further analysis by UNICEF indicates that, in terms of a wide range of social indicators pertinent to child and population health and well being, the situation in LDCs was markedly worse than in other developing countries. The percentage of children under 5 with who are moderately and severely underweight between 1995-2000 was 40% in LDCs, and 27% in other developing countries. The percentage of the population with access to improved drinking water in rural areas in LDCs was 54%, compared to 73% in other developing countries (UNICEF 2001).

The UNICEF analysis provides a more complex and comprehensive indicator of the human resource profile in LDCs than the single indicator of the HAI. It also provides, quite usefully, data disaggregated by sex, providing an indication of the status of women in LDCs. For example, between 1995 and 2000, 28% of all births in LDCs were attended by a trained health person, compared to 57% in other developing countries. The percentage of the adult female population who were illiterate was 56% in LDCs, compared to 31% in other developing countries (UNICEF 2001:4). Analysis by the United Nations Development Fund for Women

(UNIFEM) identified that in Sub-Saharan Africa, of the ten countries who actually had a decline in the net female secondary level enrolment ratio, the majority were least developed countries (UNIFEM 2000: 20).

Table 9 highlights some additional indicators about the status of women in LDCs compared to the situation in all developing countries. This illustrates the disparity in the status of women in LDCs. The data on female primary school enrolment rates in LDCs indicate a positive improvement over that time, with the rate rising from 54% in 1980 to 62% in 1997. However, even this improvement does not bring the 1997 rate in LDCs (62%) close to the 1980 rate in other developing countries (85%). The same disparity applies to female secondary school enrolment rates, where the rate in LDCs in 1997 (15%) is not even close to the rate in all developing countries in 1980 (28%).

Table 9: Indicators about the Status of Women in LDCs

	All LDCs	All developing countries
Percentage of women attended during childbirth by trained personnel 1990-1998	26%	54%
Adult literacy rate	38%	60%
Primary school enrolment rate – 1980	54%	85%
Primary school enrolment rate – 1997	62%	95%
Secondary school enrolment rate – 1980	9%	28%
Secondary school enrolment rate – 1997	15%	46%
Average age of first marriage – 1997	20%	
Total fertility rate (births per woman) – 1998	5%	
Percentage of women in total labour force – 1998	41%	
Percentage of women in total agricultural labour force – 1997	83%	
Women legislators – 1996	9%	
Decision makers in all ministries – 1998	9%	

Source: UNCTAD 2002: 261.

The data on the percentage of women in the formal labour force is interesting, as is the percentage of women in the total agricultural labour force. The data in the HAI provides very little insight in terms of the complex intersections between social factors that are crucial to the development of human capital: intersections that frequently have a very high correlation with women's roles in society. For example, the under-five child mortality rate has a high correlation with the degree of health care received by women in both antenatal and post-natal periods, as well as access to social and health care services. It also has a high correlation with maternal nutrition levels, household income levels, and women's levels of literacy (Feuerstein 1986:132; UNICEF 2001:3).

The HAI data reveals the impact in LDCs of decades of poor development outcomes in terms of building human resources. However, as an indicator, critical issues about population capacity are excluded, and the way that it functions as a technology of knowledge limits both the interpretation of the data, and the analysis that can be produced with it. The HAI highlights the separation of the social from the economic in the LDC criteria, and the privileging of economic data within LDC discourse. The HAI is one of three LDC criteria and it is the only one that includes

social issues. The privileging of the economic data within LDC development discourse is clearly evident in the fact that while the UNCDP has developed an index for economic vulnerability that now reflects 5 different factors to reflect the complexity of factors that impact upon and inhibit economic development, which is still limited, the HAI is based on a more limited set of indicators, which are separated from economic domains. Gender analysis not only highlights this separation of the social from the economic, but also the lack of gender disaggregated data, even on issues as fundamentally connected to women as child mortality rates, unlike other analyses such as those of UNICEF and UNIFEM. The HAI is limited in terms of the data that is used within it, and the type of analysis that can be produced. Like the low income and EVI criterion, the HAI reduces complexity within LDCs to a single national level indicator, assuming homogeneity and constraining the ability to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the complex social situation and background for development within each of these LDCs. The single national level indicator data also constrains the analysis that can be undertaken between countries within the LDC group, and between LDCs and other countries[80]. This impacts on the quality of analysis able to be undertaken with the HAI as a guide in the formation of LDC policy.

Outside the window

The boundaries of the definitions of poverty and the criteria used within LDC discourse exclude data of critical issues that fundamentally affect the development trajectory within individual countries. The result of this is that the analysis that is produced by LDC data is limited in scope and reductionist. HIV/AIDS and conflict are two issues that have fundamental impacts on development prospects for affected countries. These are issues that are excluded from analysis within the LDC criteria, and by the data. They are outside the data frame, not visible with the use of the nation state as the unit of analysis and representation within LDC discourse. They are hidden by the homogenizing data that does not include sub-national level information, and excludes all but the narrowest of economic issues. They are both issues with profound social and economic impacts which, whether they are recognised explicitly in the criteria or not, impact on the social and economic data of affected LDCs. They are issues with significant gender impacts that would be highlighted in gender-disaggregated data if it was used within LDC analysis. The 2004 UNCTAD report on LDCs recognised the importance of both issues and included them in the report for the first time, but as noted previously, this report has no relationship with the UNCDP and the administration of the LDC category and criteria. The following discussion is a demonstration of the severity and complexity of issues that are outside the data frame, outside the view of the window that defines the discursive boundaries of the data and issues considered relevant within LDC discourse. It highlights the significant absences and gaps within the analysis produced by the LDC discourse.

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[80] For example, see Wagstaff (2002) for a discussion on the complex interactions between health status, the prevalence and increase in inequalities in health status, and economic growth and rising average per capita incomes.

HIV/AIDS

> Since the early 1990s, it has been clear that HIV would help undermine development in countries badly affected by the virus. Warnings about falling life expectancy, increasing numbers of orphans, extra costs for business and the destruction of family and community structures are not new.
>
> These effects are becoming increasingly visible in the hardest-hit region of all, sub-Saharan Africa, where HIV is now deadlier than war itself: in 1998, 200,000 Africans died in war but more than 2 million died of AIDS. AIDS has become a full-blown development crisis. Its social and economic consequences are felt widely not only in health but in education, industry, agriculture, transport, human resources and the economy in general. This wildly destabilizing effect is also affecting already fragile and complex geopolitical systems.
>
> As a result, AIDS is rapidly becoming the key issue for human security in sub-Saharan Africa. AIDS in Africa was chosen as the theme for the United Nations Security Council meeting on 10 January 2000 – the first time that body had dealt with a development issue. (UNAIDS 2000:21)

UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, has estimated the total global incidence of HIV/AIDS amongst adults and children as 42 million (UNAIDS 2002:38). The region with the most people living with HIV/AIDS is Sub-Saharan Africa, where an estimated 29.4 million adults and children are living with the disease. The severity of the HIV/AIDS crisis can be measured in one sense by the fact that in 1991, estimates of the global prevalence for 2001 projected that five million people would have died, and that a total of nine million people would be infected. The current global figures are more than four times that amount (UNAIDS 2001:7).

The data in Table 10 shows Sub-Saharan Africa – a geographic region with ten percent of the global population – accounts for 70% of the adults and children living with HIV/AIDS in the world, 70% of the adults and children worldwide who were newly infected with HIV in 2002, and 77% of all the adult and child deaths due to HIV/AIDS in the world occurred in Sub-Saharan Africa.[81].

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[81] The region that is the next most affected by the prevalence of HIV/AIDS is Southern and South East Asia, with 14.3% of the total global population of people living with HIV/AIDS, and the region with the third highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS across the three indicators of prevalence outlined in Table 10 is Latin America. UNAIDS (2002) outlines the rationale for identifying Latin America as the region with the third highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS. The North American region (comprising the United States of America and Canada) has the same prevalence as the Latin American region for the estimated numbers of people living with HIV/AIDS. The rate of new infection in North America is lower, with an estimated 45,000 new infections in 2002, 0.9% of the global total, compared to the estimated 150,000 new infections in 2002 that occurred in Latin America. The estimated number of deaths in North America was 15,000, 0.5% of the global total, which is also lower than the 1.9% of Latin America.

Table 10: HIV/AIDS Prevalence Estimates by Region, 2002 and 1999

Region	Adults and Children estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS, end 2002	Estimated Number of Adults and Children Newly Infected with HIV During 2002	Estimated Adult and Child Deaths due to HIV/AIDS during 2002	Population Estimate, 1999
Australia and New Zealand	15 000	500	<100	22 522 000
Caribbean	440 000	60 000	42 000	32 024 000
East Asia and Pacific	1 200 000	270 000	45 000	1 477 678 000
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	1 200 000	250 000	25 000	391 537 000
Latin America	1 500 000	150 000	60 000	473 388 000
North Africa and Middle East	550 000	83 000	37 000	336 496 000
North America	1 500 000	45 000	15 000	306 931 000
South and South East Asia	6 000 000	700 000	440 000	1 920 326 000
Sub Saharan Africa	29 400 000	3 500 000	2 400 000	596 272 000
Western Europe	570 000	30 000	8 000	401 691 000
Global Total	42 000 000	5 000 000	3 100 000	5 958 865 000

Source: HIV/AIDS estimates are from UNAIDS/WHO. 2002. *AIDS Epidemic Update December 2002*. UNAIDS/02.46E Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and World Health Organisation, Geneva: 38-41; population estimates are from UNAIDS. 2000. *Economics in HIV/AIDS Planning: Getting Priorities Right.* UNAIDS/00.23E June 2000. Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, Geneva: 124-132.

This data in Table 10 indicates is that there is a significant geographic concentration of the total population living with HIV/AIDS. It also reveals that worldwide, these regional disparities are pronounced[82]. This geographic concentration is associated with significant national poverty. Sub-Saharan Africa is a region that includes twenty-eight, or almost two thirds of all the nations that have been classified as least developed countries. UNCTAD's 2004 LDC Report includes a chapter on HIV/AIDS, which identified that 25.5% of all men living with HIV in the world lived in LDCs; 35% of all women living with HIV in the world lived in LDCs; 46% of all children living with HIV in the world lived in LDCs; almost 50% of all child deaths from HIV/AIDS occurred in LDCs, 48.5 % of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS live in LDCs (UNCTAD 2004:35).

The impact of HIV/AIDS was originally understood in the context of the health of individuals, and the cost of their health and medical care. A significant body of work has emerged that is attempting to identify and document the broader impact of HIV/AIDS, not only on individuals, but on families, on households, on communities, on businesses, and on the economy[83]. UNCTAD's 2004 LDC report

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[82] It is important to note that the population growth rate in LDCs is increasing while it is decreasing in other developing countries. In the period 1990-1999 the average annual population growth rate in LDCs was 2.5%.   In the same time period the average annual population growth rate was 1.6% in other developing countries (UNICEF 2001: 4). As HIV is a sexually transmitted infection, the increased population growth rate is an indicator of more rapid spread of HIV/AIDS.

[83] There is of course also a body of literature on successful strategies to address HIV/AIDS. This has included a strong emphasis on documenting the difficulties of addressing HIV/AIDS in conflict-affected countries with weak governments and civil

records the economic and social impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in terms of the macroeconomic impact, noting that studies have identified that the rate of growth in Sub-Saharan Africa have declined by 2- 4% as a result of AIDS. It also acknowledged the significant impact on agriculture, both export oriented and subsistence, as labour productivity is affected; the impact on the public sector as health costs dramatically increase and workers providing essential public services in health and education sectors amongst others are unable to work. The social impacts were identified as decreasing school attendance and enrolment, particularly amongst girls, as they are required to stay home and care for ill family members, and high financial strain on families as household income falls as members are unable to work, seeking to pay high health care costs and finally the expense of a funeral[84] (UNCTAD 2004: 37-38).

A significant focus of the literature and published studies is on the increasing number of children who have been orphaned as a result of HIV/AIDS. This work has been conducted in the awareness that the loss of family and social contexts will have a critical impact on children's physical, social, emotional and educational development, which will in turn have a major impact on their adult lives (Mustard and McCain 1999; UNICEF 2001).

> Loss of one or both parents, depending on specific cultural traditions and level of family/household endowment is likely to decrease physical, emotional and mental welfare of the child. This is a gendered impact and there is some evidence that the effects on girls are even worse than those on boys. Orphaned children are very frequently likely to lose any property to which they may have had entitlements, their education will suffer or be entirely lost and they will become vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation and thus run a very high risk of becoming infected with HIV. (Barnett, Whiteside and Desmond 2000: 26-27)

The emergence of gendered impacts of HIV/AIDS is identified as a key issue in the 2004 UNCTAD report and in other literature. The impact of an adult death on households and families can be summarized as follows:

> The overall economic impact of an adult death on surviving household members varies according to three characteristics: (a) those of the deceased individual such as age, gender, income and cause of death (b) those of the household itself, such as composition and asset array (c) those of the community such as attitudes towards helping needy households and the general availability of resources - the level of life - in the community (d) the impact of an AIDS death may, because of its protracted nature, result in a lengthy depletion of household resources thus resulting in greater and more enduring hardship than some other causes of death (e) there is some evidence that women bear a heavy burden of the household impact at all

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society organisations (Muller 2005).

[84] The broader socio-economic impact of HIV/AIDS can be seen through assessing the significance of the financial impact on households and families of the funerals of children who had died as a result of HIV/AIDS. It has been estimated that in Kinshasa, Zaire, the cost of a funeral and feeding funeral guests is eleven months salary for an average wage earner (Barnett, Whiteside and Desmond 2000:19).

stages from early childhood when they may be less well nourished or
removed from school to save money for care costs of a sick parent, through
stigmatisation on the death of a husband to a lonely and impoverished
widowhood. (Barnett, Whiteside and Desmond 2000: 25)

This significant gender impact of HIV/AIDS is closely linked with the experience
of sexual violence against women, and significant economic disadvantage[85].

The data in Table 11 indicates the heterogeneity of women's contexts in becoming
infected, living with, and the transmission of HIV/AIDS[86]. It also highlights that
the region of Sub-Saharan Africa, home to two-thirds of the LDCs, is a site where
the gendered socio-economic impacts of HIV/AIDS are becoming increasingly
visible, now that women comprise the majority of the affected population.

Table 11: Women's HIV/AIDS Prevalence by Geographic Region, 2000

Region	Women (15-49) living with HIV/AIDS (a)
Sub-Saharan Africa	12 900 000
East Asia and Pacific	66 000
Australia and New Zealand	1 100
South and South East Asia	1 900 000
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	110 000
Western Europe	130 000
North Africa and the Middle East	42 000
North America	180 000
Caribbean	130 000
Latin America	300 000
Global Total	15 700 000

Source: UNAIDS. 2000. *Economics in HIV/AIDS Planning: Getting Priorities Right.*
UNAIDS/00.23E June2000. Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, Geneva: 119-135.
(a) This age group has been identified given the span of childbearing years

[85] UNAIDS and the World Health Organisation are seeking to develop a broader range of
gender sensitive indicators of the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, and have collated data from
various national surveys, and other sources. The three key indicators that they have
identified are women seeking antenatal care in major urban areas, women seeking antenatal
care outside major urban areas, and prevalence rates of women working as sex workers in
urban centers. This data is not collected routinely, and is not available for a number of
countries. Much of it is reliant upon estimates based on surveys, which have been
conducted using various different methodologies and survey approaches. Country level
comparative tables are published (see, for example UNAIDS 2000), however the inclusion
of regional estimates for these specific gender-sensitive indicators is difficult given the
above issues about data quality and integrity.

[86] The patterns of geographic concentration of the prevalence of HIV/AIDS amongst
women aged 15-49 is consistent with the earlier noted distribution of regional-level
prevalence rates. 82.2% of the total global population of women aged 15-49 living with
HIV/AIDS are living in Sub-Saharan Africa. Within this region, women comprise over
half (55.1%) of all adults living with HIV/AIDS. The second-highest rates of prevalence
are in South and South East Asia, which accounts for 12.1% of the global population of
women 15-49 years living with HIV/AIDS, and where women comprise over a third
(35.2%) of all adults living with HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS 2000).

Economic impact

> The HIV/AIDS epidemic shows us that at this time, and in an age of advanced globalisation, it is necessary for us to re-evaluate our approach to assessing returns to investments. Assessment methods rooted in early nineteenth-century philosophies just will not meet the intellectual and moral challenges raised by this kind of event in the early years of the twenty-first century. (Barnett and Clement 2005:245)

The economic impact of HIV/AIDS is identifiable through the impact of increased mortality and morbidity. The review by Barnett et al (2000) indicates that the economic impact of HIV/AIDS is measured through a number of indicators including the impact on national demographics, and in particular the population of 'working' age[87]; the impact on agricultural and rural sectors; the impact on the operation of businesses; and the impact on public expenditure. Within the agricultural sector, the capacity of families and rural communities to continue with self-sustainable agriculture is significantly affected as a result of the poor health status of adults in the household (Mutangadura et al 1999). Large-scale commercial agricultural industries are also affected. Studies of a sugar estate in Zambia and a tea estate in Malawi identified that HIV/AIDS has had a major impact on these commercial agricultural sector operations:

> (The) epidemic is affecting what are essentially rural/agricultural factories as the industrial sector is being affected - through loss of key skilled personnel, disruptions of chained production processes, increases in health and welfare payments, early retirements – in sum slow but sure alterations in process, personnel and cost structures of these agricultural enterprises. (Barnett, Whiteside and Desmond 2000: 22)

The IMF published its first ever report on a social issue with *The Macroeconomics of HIVAIDS*, released on World Aids Day December 1, 2004. In an essay in this publication, Haaker argues, "HIVAIDS affects the economy and economic development through its adverse impact on the social fabric itself" (Haaker 2004:42). Haaker defined the social fabric as the total mix of social and cultural organisations that form the functioning of the state, as well as the informal and private sector organisations and bodies that operate within a given society. He argued "HIV/AIDS does have a serious impact on traditional economic measures such as economic growth, income per capita, and investment, but it does so by affecting very diverse areas of public, social and economic life" (Haaker 2004:42). Impacts on the national economy were identified as at household, family, community, business[88] both formal and informal sector, public sector services[89]

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[87] In particular, the loss of professionals in key sectors has been identified as a critical issue. For example, a significant impact on the education system has been identified, given the number of teachers who are living with or have died as a result of HIV/AIDS (UNICEF 2001).

[88] Barnett, Whiteside and Desmond (2000) note that there are a limited number of studies focused on the impact of HIV/AIDS on the private sector. They report that while a number of businesses have commissioned studies of the impact of HIV/AIDS on their company, the final reports have been kept secret, with commercial-in-confidence status. They identified that the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in many countries is having a significant impact on business operations and development, and causing a number of management

and the effective functioning of the state. Haaker argues, "HIV/AIDS is the most serious impediment to economic growth and development in these countries" (Haaker 2004:90). The very nature of HIV/AIDS challenges traditional economics models, and requires the social sphere to be given centrality in modeling economic impacts:

> The centre stage is given over to the formation of human capital as the main wellspring of economic growth, in which the transmission of capacities and knowledge across generations within nuclear or extended family structures plays a vital role. (Bell, Devarajan and Gersbach 2004:99)

HIV/AIDS will continue to have a major impact on the lives of women, men, children, families, communities and countries. The slow-acting nature of the virus, with its capacity to incubate for many years, means that the nature of the epidemic is gradual and long-term rather than immediate. It is clear that for the countries that have been identified as the least developed the capacity for effective epidemic prevention is poor, given the limited capacity for public health system expenditure. It is also clear that particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, a region that is home to two thirds of the states categorized as LDCs, HIV/AIDS will continue to have a major impact on national economic growth, stability and social capital. The intersection of the social devastation associated with these statistics with issues of poverty, gender inequality, education, and national economic vulnerability is a powerful one.

This discussion demonstrates that the discursive separation of the social and economic spheres highlighted by feminist economists creates false distinctions as the interrelationships and interdependence are ignored. HIV/AIDS has not been identified as a specific issue within the criteria that defines a country as 'least developed'. This is a significant exclusion that demonstrates the limited nature of policy evidence used in the application of the LDC category. It is clear that, despite this exclusion, the nature and impact of HIV/AIDS, through the extremity of national epidemics and their socio-economic impact, will affect the data that comprise the current indices that are used to assess and monitor the socio-economic context of the LDCs.

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issues. They do report that some research studies have been done exploring the specific impact of discrimination against employees living with HIV/AIDS. This includes discrimination by co-workers, and by employers, in terms of screening and in terms of worker education to address stigma issues:

> One phenomenon which has been noted by several of these writers is that in the face of the epidemic, employers appear to be tempted to push their sick workers into invalidity status followed by retirement for reasons of ill health if this is likely to reduce the company or enterprise's financial liabilities. (Barnett, Whiteside and Desmond 2000: 24)

[89] In terms of the impact on the public sector, the costs to national public health systems for the care of people living with HIV/AIDS has been identified as a major issue, particularly in country contexts where many of the LDCs have comparably small national health budgets. UNAIDS projections of AIDS treatment costs as a percentage of the budget of health departments estimated that by 2005 in severely affected countries, over 60% of the Ministry of Health budget would be spent on treating people with HIV/AIDS and related illnesses (UNAIDS 2000).

Conflict

Violent conflict, in all its forms, either civil or between states, takes place at immense cost to social, economic, cultural and spiritual life in communities and has a profound impact on development where and when it occurs:

> Most violent conflicts these days are taking place in developing countries. The costs of these wars are immense and can throw back a country's development efforts by years or even decades. Among them are human costs, peacekeeping and humanitarian costs, commercial and reconstruction costs, and political costs. (Leonhardt 2001: 238)

This recognition of the costs and impact of conflict can be defined in terms of their opposite, the conditions of a sustainable peace. Reychler (2001) defined this concept of sustainable peace as follows:

> …a situation characterised by the absence of physical violence, the elimination of unacceptable political, economic, and cultural forms of discrimination, a high level of internal and external legitimacy or support, self-sustainability; and a propensity to enhance the constructive transformation of conflicts. (Reychler 2001: 12).

The presence and impact of conflict is clearly a critical factor impacting on all the criteria for LDCs, but is not reflected in any way in the indicators and so is excluded in any consideration in determining and analysing LDC status. Moreover, when the issue has been raised in the recent past, i.e. 2000, in relation to whether a country should be granted LDC status, a recommendation supporting entry into the category has been denied based on the notion that conflict is a temporary situation[90] (UNCDP 2000:para 91).

The 2004 UNCTAD report on the LDCs does, for the first time, formally recognise conflict as a critical issue for analysis. This change demonstrates a significant shift in the recognition placed on the impact of conflict on development, and the complexity of the analysis demonstrates recognition of the complexity of the issues associated with conflict:

> It is now well recognised that each and every conflict is different, with its own antecedents, complex relationships between actors, issues, structures and processes. (Reychler 2001: 3-20)

Most notably, it recognises the fact that conflicts are not a temporary occurrence to be readily resolved with a quick peace agreement. This involves an understanding that conflicts have complex and long-term roots in social, economic and cultural structures, and require major efforts and assistance efforts not only to achieve a

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[90] The full record of the debate is as follows:

> In the case of the Congo, the statistics show that its level of income (per capita GDP) and of human resources (APQLI) are now just below the thresholds for inclusion in the list of least developed countries, reflecting a recent general deterioration in its economic and social situation associated with civil war. Its high level of economic vulnerability is associated with its status as an oil exporter. The Committee therefore decided not to recommend the Congo for inclusion in the list of least developed countries at this time, but to give special attention to its case at the next triennial review. (UNCDP 2000: para 91)

cessation of armed violence, but to bring about resolution of these root causes in order to avoid the re-emergence of conflict at a later point in time (Duffield 1994).

This UNCTAD report documents the prevalence of conflict in LDCs:

> Data show that during every decade since 1970 the proportion of conflict-affected countries was higher amongst the LDCs than amongst other developing countries. In the 1970s, 36 per cent of the 2002 list of 49 LDCs experienced civil conflicts as compared with less than 25 per cent of other developing countries. But in the 1990-2001 period over 60 per cent of the 2002 list of LDCs experienced civil conflicts as compared to less than 25 per cent of other developing countries. Over 40 per cent of conflict-affected countries were LDCs in the 1970s and 1980s. But this proportion increased to 50 per cent in the period 1990-1995 and to 58 per cent in 1996-2001.
>
> In the period 1970-2001, there were 12 countries (7 African and 5 Asian) from the 2002 list of LDCs that experienced at least 18 consecutive years of civil conflict. It should be noted that one third of them joined the LDC group after decades of civil conflict. Civil conflicts ended in 1992 in two of the twelve countries. But they emerged in other LDCs in 1990s. Since 1990, a further 8 LDCs (7 African and one Asian) have experienced at least six years of war or civil strife according to the Uppsala/PRIO database.[91]
> (UNCTAD 2004: 163)

In 2002, the year used in this data analysis, there were 21 major armed conflicts in 19 different locations around the world (Eriksson, Sollenberg and Wallensteen, 2003).

The report concludes that this high prevalence of conflict in LDCs indicates that the economic vulnerability of these countries makes them more prone to some forms of conflict. This analysis has been confirmed by a recent World Bank report on civil war:

> Most wars are now civil wars. Even though international wars attract enormous global attention, they have become infrequent and brief. Civil wars usually attract less attention, but they have become increasingly common and typically go on for years. This report argues that civil war is now an important issue for development. War retards development, but conversely development retards war. This double causation gives rise to virtuous and vicious cycles. Where development succeeds, countries

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[91] The Uppsala/PRIO database defines a conflict as one in which there is an armed conflict between the government and at least one other entity, which results in a minimum of 25 conflict-related deaths in a given year. The twelve countries that experienced over a decade ongoing conflict were Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Chad, Ethiopia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mozambique, Myanmar, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. The countries where conflict ended were Bangladesh and Mozambique. The eight countries where conflict is ongoing are Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Nepal. This analysis, based on 2002 data, does not include Timor-Leste which was classified a least developed country in 2003 (UNCTAD 2004).

> become progressively safer from violent conflict, making subsequent development easier. Where development fails, countries are at high risk of becoming caught in a conflict trap in which war wrecks the economy and increases the risk of further war. (Collier et al 2003: ix)

The fact that the majority of these conflicts are internal rather than between states indicates that there are a series of internal characteristics that could exacerbate the potential for conflict. One of the factors the report identifies is the poor economic growth in the countries that experienced conflict, and the associated decline in the capacity of the state to function and provide essential basic services. A second issue identified by the report is high national dependence on a small range of primary commodities for export, and the high rates of corruption that can be associated with this national economic structure, a corruption which by its nature does not promote the equitable distribution of benefits (Seyf 2001). The report explores this issue in close detail and notes the close association between corruption and particular products, notably timber, diamonds and narcotics. The relationship here is that the high rates of return available through illegal transactions can finance conflict. It notes that in many LDCs, exports continued during conflict and frequently imports increased, but the national gross domestic product fell significantly, as did the degree of absorption through domestic consumption, an indicator of an increase in the prevalence and depth of poverty (UNCTAD 2004: p 161-174).

This acknowledgement that the prevalence and depth of poverty can be affected by conflict is the extent of the social impact analysis included in the UNCTAD report. It is clear that violent conflict has a major impact on both combatants and civilians both in terms of loss of life, and negative impacts on health, well-being and livelihood (Burkle 1999). The World Bank report outlines the findings of an economic analysis of the social impact of conflict using mortality data:

> Considering a typical five-year war, the study finds that infant mortality increases by 13 per cent during such a war; however, this effect is persistent, and in the first five years of post-conflict peace the infant mortality rate remains 11 per cent higher than the baseline. (Collier et al 2003:23-24)

Violent conflict has a particular and significant impact on women, both during and after the cessation of active conflict. Women are affected as part of the broad social impact of conflict in a community. Women are also affected by gender-specific violence during and after conflict. This can take many forms, and includes sexual and gender-based violence, sexual exploitation, displacement and recruitment as soldiers. Women suffer as a result of the destruction of local social infrastructure, the destruction of crops and the subsequent increase in poverty, and difficulty in accessing basic goods and services, nutrition, sanitation and shelter (Bouta, Franks and Bannon 2005; Byrne and Baden 1995). Women and children are frequently disproportionately affected in the numbers of the internally displaced and refugees (Martin 1991). Conflict can have direct and indirect effects on the health, including mental health, social status and overall well-being of women and their families. Rates of sexual violence against women rise during conflict, as communities are fragmented and women find themselves without their usual forms

of social protection, becoming isolated and finding themselves as heads of households. During conflict women are vulnerable to the military, or to those who offer some form of protection seeking sexual favours in return. Rape and violence against women are used as tools of warfare, and there is now documented evidence of the deliberate infection of women with HIV in conflicts in Liberia, Mozambique, Rwanda and Sierra Leone:

> There is documented testimony from female survivors of rape in Rwanda that the transmission of HIV was a deliberate act. According to some accounts, HIV-positive Hutu men would tell women that they were raping that they would eventually suffer an agonizing death from AIDS…some of the rapists allegedly said 'We are not killing you. We are giving you something worse. You will die a slow death'. (Elbe 2002 cited in Collier et al 2003:28)

Women also play critical roles in bringing fractured communities together, as peace-builders both during and after the cessation of armed violence, and can become very involved in informal peace-building initiatives (Anderson and Olson 2003). A key issue then, in this analysis of conflict by UNCTAD, is the lack of social impact analysis of the prevalence of conflict, and of the exclusion of any gender analysis.

It is worth noting that Leonhardt expresses the concern that the rise and prolonged nature of contemporary conflicts is having a significant impact as scarce aid resources are allocated to respond to immediate humanitarian and emergency situations rather than longer term development. He noted that when discussed by the OECD Development Assistance Committee, it was recognised that there had been a significant change in the percentage of OECD development assistance allocated to humanitarian relief, rising from three to ten percent from the 1980s to the 1990s, at a time where there was a decline in the total amount of international donor development assistance. This raised issues of the complex relationships between aid, development, conflict and security, including the structures supported by development assistance, the negative effects of aid and a reactive approach to conflict (Leonhardt 2001: 238-239). In addition, the emerging disciplines of conflict analysis are not only identifying the relationships between peace building and development (Smoljan 2003) but are also identifying the complexity of social and economic costs and impacts, and the potential for aid interventions and humanitarian and development assistance to do harm and exacerbate complex conflict dynamics, when undertaken without a clear understanding and analysis of the complexity of the circumstances.

Conflict is clearly a major issue affecting development in LDCs. The fact that conflict is only now being incorporated into UNCTAD analyses illustrates how slow the development discourse on LDCs is to address factors that are not visible titled 'economic issues'. The lack of inclusion of gender analysis within conflict analysis means that it gives only a very limited picture of the impact of conflict on national social, economic and cultural status and development prospects, clearly an issue of concern for valid policy development.

Conclusion

Within LDC development discourse, data operates as a technology of knowledge. The boundaries that surround the functioning of data within LDC discourse are identifiable through gender analysis, which highlights the significant absences within the data, and the limited analysis it can produce. Using these insights from gender analysis as a basis, it is argued in this chapter that data functions in three ways, through implying homogeneity amongst LDCs with the sole reliance on national level data; through the limitations this national level data places on national and international analysis; and through the dominance of the economic separated from the social. Within all of these, the data itself, and the processes of collection, measurement and methodologies for analysis, become a critical focus within LDC discourse, determining decisions as to what countries can be included in the LDC category or not. This chapter's examination of the data produced in the two most recent UNCTAD reports on the LDCs makes visible the ways in which data functions as a technology of knowledge.

The data used in determining LDC status, and undertaking analysis and formulating policy recommendations, presents a bleak picture of poverty in the LDCs. In twenty LDCs over 50 per cent of the population were living on less than $1 per day, and in twelve LDCs over 70 per cent of the population were living on less than $1 per day. The average EVI in LDCs is 47.9, much higher than the 37 score set for inclusion in the LDC category. The average HAI in LDCs is 39.2, much lower than the 55 score set for inclusion in the category. Over time, the levels of per capita income have increased in some countries in the LDC grouping, and have decreased in others. The levels of EVI and HAI indices are greater in some countries in the LDC grouping than in others. What is clear is that in comparison to other developing countries as a broad group, the situation within the LDCs appears to have consolidated in severity and complexity. This analysis reveals that there has not been a single 'development trajectory' for the countries within the grouping. However the assumed homogeneity of LDCs through the use of single national level indicators means that further exploration of the reasons behind these divergent experiences is simply not possible.

This data is used as the privileged policy facts in LDC discourse, providing justification and rationale for decisions about LDC category membership, and for monitoring development trends within LDCs. The numbers are gender-blind, as no data disaggregated by sex is used in any of the data for the LDC criteria. Feminist economics challenges to the field highlight the inadequacy of conventional economics that separates the economic and social. The dominance of economic factors within the LDC data and the separation of the social from the economic are characteristics within the LDC development discourse. The exclusions from the data highlighted by gender analysis are explored fully in two examples, HIV/AIDS and conflict. In both cases, significant social and economic impacts occur on national development outlooks, and are clearly critical contributing factors to the development context in the LDCs and are not included in the data sets. This chapter highlights the operation of data as a technology of knowledge within LDC discourse, and through gender analysis, highlights the ways in which the LDC development discourse is reliant on determinations based on a limited set of policy

facts that are dominated by narrowly 'economic' factors with the use of reductionist homogenizing national level indicators. The product is an analysis that cannot understand significant inhibitors of development such as HIV/AIDS and conflict as they are outside the data frame, and the result is a simplistic and incomplete analysis of LDC status.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

> …I have tried to argue that a critical intimacy with deconstruction might help metropolitan feminist celebration of the female to acknowledge a responsibility toward the trace of the other, not to mention toward other struggles. That acknowledgement is as much a recovery as it is a loss of the wholly other. The excavation, retrieval, and celebration of the historical individual, the effort of bringing her within accessibility, are written within that double bind at which we begin. But a just world must entail normalization; the promise of justice must attend not only to the seduction of power, but also to the anguish that knowledge must suppress difference as well as differ-ance, that a fully just world is impossible, forever deferred and different from our projections, the undecidable in the face of which we must risk the decision that we can hear the other.
> (Spivak 1999:198-9)

Spivak's call for deconstruction of grand narratives has a particular focus in this quotation on the narratives of universal and essentialist womanhood, narratives which in their invoking of a global sameness erase local diversity and difference and structural inequality. In the introduction to this thesis Spivak's arguments about the location and politics of knowledge-making and use were illustrated by the story of the use of an academic specialist Senanayak's information to facilitate the violent apprehension and subsequent rape of an indigenous woman, Draupadi. I have drawn on this story to situate the analysis of grand narratives of enlightenment within development discourse in 'the world' with all its violence and inequity. With the use of the story of Draupadi fighting for rights to access water for her tribe, Spivak highlights indigenous female agency and strength. With the use of the story of Senanayak, Spivak locates herself in the shoes of the academic specialist with expert knowledge, who unwittingly facilitates rape and violence in the capture of Draupadi. This story highlights the problematic nature of the use of knowledge about others, particularly those with less access to the international privileges of socio-economic power. It is this story which has provided a way forward for this thesis in its search to answer the initial question, which was framed by Said's challenge, to identify the worldliness of policy texts within United Nations development discourse. Unlike Jane Austen's novel *Mansfield Park*, UN policy documents on the Least Developed Countries are not concealing topics of poverty and inequality. Their subject matter is the very stuff of the world that Said argues is hidden in *Mansfield Park*. A starting point in answering Said's challenge, which I have explored in this thesis, lies in the questions inspired by Spivak's story of Draupadi: where are the women, and how are women known?

The thesis has put forward the proposition that gender analysis can play a critical role in identifying aspects of how development discourse functions. It argues that in analysing UN Least Developed Country policy, development discourse functions in three ways which I have termed technologies of knowledge: classification through criteria, data and policy. Throughout this thesis, gender analysis has been used to identify the discursive boundaries and limits of the UN's LDC category, and to explore the ways in which the technologies of knowledge operate. In so doing it has maintained a specific focus on identifying where the women are and how they are 'known' in UN LDC development discourse. This approach has been crucial in an exercise that has sought to explore why international policy that focuses on the countries that are the poorest of the poor has not included a focus on women, the poorest of the poor.

Chapter 1 outlined the research methodology and the reliance on primary policy texts, in the absence of a body of academic literature analysing the UN LDC category. This chapter also outlined the key concepts and analytic approach taken in this exercise, notably the focus on discourse analysis and the use of the concepts of technologies of knowledge inspired by Foucauldian theory. The chapter locates this thesis within the body of literature within development studies that draws on Foucauldian discourse analysis to assess development theory, policy and praxis. This includes the seminal work of Escobar, Ferguson, Sachs and Shestra which has sought to highlight the ways in which key development concepts, such as poverty, progress and planning, have their own distinctive genealogies as concepts and terms, which interact to produce development discourse and praxis. Chapter 1 also locates this work within the field of gender analysis of and within development, and situates it explicitly with the work of theorists such as Spivak, Mohanty and Narayan who have questioned feminist ways of knowing about women in developing countries.

Chapter 2 focuses on policy as a technology of knowledge. It examines the products of the three UN Conferences on the Least Developed Countries, held in 1981, 1991 and 2001, and through tracing the representation of women, identifies the discursive continuities in the documents, despite the decade between each one. In identifying the ways in which policy operates as a technology of knowledge the key argument is that the policy format itself structures representations and discussion, limits agency, and relies on essentialist 'culture-free' representations. The assessment of the representation of women highlights the fleeting appearances of women or gender analysis, the separation of the social and economic, and the lack of agency attached to the references to action on the status of women. The discussion charts the way in which the policy process becomes increasingly focused on the production of policy, and policy is used as a barometer legitimizing issues for inclusion within LDC discourse. This is identifiable through the inclusion of issues and concerns in the policy documents that had previously been ignored through reference to other policy texts. The result of this operation of policy as a technology of knowledge is that the policy analyses and prescriptions are limited by the boundaries of UN LDC discourse, and critical issues are either excluded in total, or included in such a marginal position that they are excluded from the assessment of effectiveness of policy implementation.

Chapter 3 explores the second technology of knowledge, categorization through criteria. The key focus of the argument in this chapter was to highlight the ways in which gender analysis highlights the boundaries and limitations of the UN LDC category and its administration. The chapter argued that the body charged with the administration of UN LDC category, the UN Committee for Development Policy (formerly Committee for Development Planning), has been unable to broaden the analysis undertaken of individual LDC country contexts, or of LDCs as a group in comparison to other international groupings of developing or developed countries, as the boundaries of the discourse excludes women and gender as issues of relevance. Through reviews of the category itself, and through the processes of assessment for country inclusion (or exclusion) from the LDC grouping, the UNCDP has inexorably focused on producing increasingly specialized and refined processes for the administration of the category without questioning the core assumptions embedded within it, such as the exclusion of gender analysis. The attempts at including gender analysis and specific references to the status of women are inherently marginalized affairs, whether in the proposed human capabilities approach to development, or in other discussions. The references to women or gender analysis are always transitory, included one moment, excluded the next, and always essentialist, treating women in LDC countries as homogenous passive victims or only as potential agents ignoring the current breadth and diversity of contributions by women to social and economic and cultural and spiritual life in LDCs.

Chapter 4 explores the operation of data as a technology of knowledge. It argues that, as a result of the very definition of what information is included in the criteria, the information included is gender-blind, and thus produces a limited analysis. This chapter traces the data used in three criteria that assess inclusion in category LDC by the UNCDP with the most recent data produced by UNCTAD in its LDC reports for 2002 and 2004. The criteria are economics biased. The chapter traces arguments of feminist economists that conventional economics is based on an artificial separation of social and economic spheres. This separation is identifiable in the ways that data operates as a technology of knowledge within UN LDC development discourse. A key feature of the operation of data as a technology of knowledge is that it uses the nation state as the unit of analysis, which fundamentally inhibits the ability to undertake and produce any sub-national level analysis. This factor means that there is no use of gender-disaggregated data, and as a result no gender analysis of poverty is undertaken. There is also no ability to produce analyses that assess similarities and differences between different LDCs, with the result that all LDCs are effectively treated as homogenous.

This thesis contends that while UN LDC category policy and administration has been ignored until now in academic debate and discussion it provides a useful and important area for study, highlighting aspects of the operation of development discourse. The thesis draws on primary UN reference material to undertake this analysis of development discourse and identifies and argues two key findings. Firstly, the thesis demonstrates that there is a fundamentally critical role for gender analysis within postmodern-influenced analyses of development discourse,

identifying the limits of information that has discursive legitimacy. As a result of this first finding, the thesis argues that UN LDC development discourse operates through three technologies of knowledge: category classification through criteria, data and policy. These three technologies of knowledge function in various ways, but all reinforce UN LDC discursive boundaries that limit and constrain the analysis undertaken and produced, with the result that critical issues which impact on the development trajectories of countries within the LDC grouping are excluded and the analyses are 'culture-free'.   In exploring the interaction between gender and these three technologies of knowledge in UN LDC category, this thesis provides useful insights into the modes of operation of development as discourse.

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