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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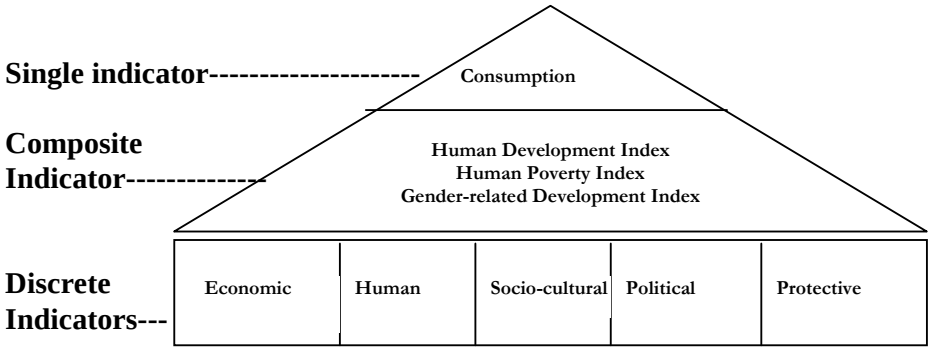
[70] Recent Australian research identified that an underestimation of Indigenous poverty rates in Australia was occurring due to the inability of standard household poverty rate comparative data to recognise the larger and multigenerational composition of households (Hunter, Kennedy and Biddle 2002).

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



(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

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

[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.

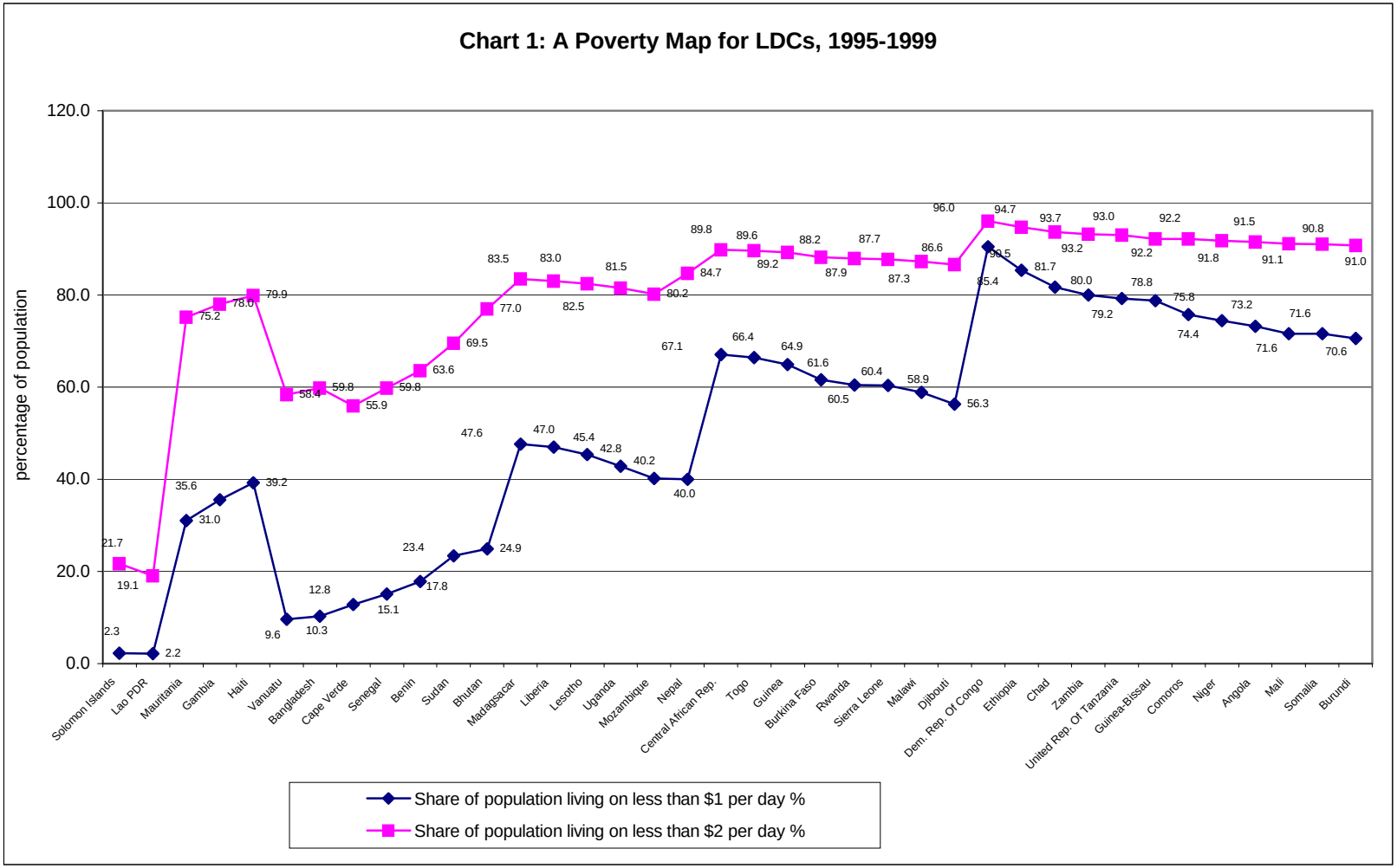
Table 6: Poverty Trends in LDCs and other Developing Countries, 1965-1999
(a) (1985 Purchasing Power Parity $1 and $2 international poverty lines)

	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.



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].

[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

[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.