The Impact of Developmental Aid on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Sustainable Value Chains

Human Geography Master Thesis
Globalization, Migration and Development
Fiker A. Tsehaye
Nijmegen, 2019
The Impact of Developmental Aid on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Sustainable Value Chains

Fiker A. Tsehaye

Student number: s1005711

Master Thesis Human Geography

Specialization: Globalization, Migration and Development

Supervisor: Dr. O.T Kramsch

Nijmegen School of Management

Radboud University

Nijmegen, 2019
Preface

Ever since I can remember, talks about gender equality has been central to my walk of life. Never could I have imagined I would write my master thesis about it. Similar to all academic papers, this paper will not have reached where it is today without the contribution of many. My acknowledgments are as follows. First, I owe all my success to the almighty God and the Virgin Mary. Second, I would like to thank my parents and brother with whom none of this would have been possible. It is through their paternal, emotional, scholarly, and financial support that I stand here. Third, I would like to thank my internship supervisor, Tim Diphoorn, for his unwavering support and all my colleagues at Solidaridad Europe who have contributed to this research. Last but not least, a special thanks goes to Dr. Olivier Kramsch, who has granted me the freedom to research a topic that is close to my heart. His feedback and unlimited support have not only thought me about geography but expand beyond that. Thank you!
Table of Contents

Chapter 1. Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 1
  1.1. Project Framework .................................................................................................................. 1
  1.1.1. Why Focus on developmental assistance? ..................................................................... 1
  1.1.2. Public and private partners - Civil society and non-governmental organizations ...... 2
  1.2. Objective ................................................................................................................................. 2
  1.3. Relevance ................................................................................................................................ 3
  1.3.1. Societal Relevance .......................................................................................................... 3
  1.3.2. Scientific Relevance ......................................................................................................... 3
  1.4. Research Question .................................................................................................................. 4
  1.5. Thesis Structure ...................................................................................................................... 4

Chapter 2. Literature Review and Theoretical Background .................................................................... 5
  2.1. Feminist Geography ................................................................................................................ 5
  2.2. Conceptualizing Gender and Empowerment .......................................................................... 6
  2.3. History of Gender and Development ...................................................................................... 7
  2.3.1. Women in Development ................................................................................................. 7
  2.3.2. Gender and Development ............................................................................................... 9
  2.3.3. Gender Mainstreaming ................................................................................................. 10
  2.4. Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment .................................................................... 11
  2.5. Development Aid .................................................................................................................. 13
  2.6. Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Development ......................................... 15
  2.7. Gendered Value Chains ......................................................................................................... 18
  2.8. The Two Domains: Structure and Agency ............................................................................. 19
  2.8.1. Agency ........................................................................................................................... 19
  2.8.2. Structure ....................................................................................................................... 21
  2.9. Conceptual Framework ......................................................................................................... 23

Chapter 3. Methods .............................................................................................................................. 24
  3.1. Research Philosophy ............................................................................................................. 24
  3.2. Research Approach ............................................................................................................... 25
  3.3. Research Strategy .................................................................................................................. 26
  3.4. Research Methods ................................................................................................................ 28
  3.5. Data Analysis ......................................................................................................................... 29
3.6. Research Reliability and Validity ......................................................................................................................... 30
3.7. Ethical Concerns .................................................................................................................................................. 30

Chapter 4. Analysis and Discussions ................................................................................................................................. 31
4.1. Organizational Overview and Context .......................................................................................................................... 31
  4.1.1. Solidaridad Network ........................................................................................................................................ 31
  4.1.2. UTZ/ Rainforest Alliance .................................................................................................................................. 32
  4.1.3. Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs ............................................................................................................ 33
4.2. The Relationship of the Two Domains ......................................................................................................................... 35
  4.2.1. Structures ......................................................................................................................................................... 35
  4.2.2. Agency ......................................................................................................................................................... 37
  4.2.3. Funding ................................................................................................................................................... 39
  4.2.4. Partnership and Inclusivity .............................................................................................................................. 40

Chapter 5. Conclusion ...................................................................................................................................................... 41
  5.1. Reflection and Limitations ..................................................................................................................................... 43
  5.2. Recommendation ................................................................................................................................................ 44

References ........................................................................................................................................................................ 45

Appendices ........................................................................................................................................................................ 56
  Appendix A: Interview Guide – Solidaridad .................................................................................................................. 56
  Appendix B: Interview Guide – UTZ/ Rainforest Alliance .............................................................................................. 59
  Appendix C: Interview Guide – Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs ........................................................................ 62

Table of Figures

Figure I: Thesis Structure ...................................................................................................................................................... 4
Figure II: Gender Equality Scoring ...................................................................................................................................... 13
Figure III: Humanitarian Supply Chain ............................................................................................................................ 14
Figure IV: Gender at Work's Framework ........................................................................................................................... 16
Figure V: Measurement of Economic Empowerment ....................................................................................................... 21
Figure VI: Conceptual Framework ....................................................................................................................................... 23
Figure VII Gender Buckets/themes .................................................................................................................................... 36
Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Project Framework

According to a report by Equal Measures 2030 (2019), there is no country in the world that has achieved gender equality. What is even more surprising is that the report also states that no country is on track to achieve gender equality by the year 2030. European countries Belgium, Denmark, France, Latvia, Luxembourg and Sweden are among the countries that have less gender inequality and rank on the top of the list; the list of the World Bank’s gender index ranks countries on their non-discriminatory law which treats women and men equally (World Bank, 2018). However, countries in Africa, Middle East, Asia, and South America have large equality gaps in economic, social, and political spheres ranking at the bottom (Equal Measures, 2019).

Over the years, the international development industry has depicted the extent to which inequalities have affected development through research, policy, and practice (Kabeer & Sweetman, 2015). Looking at the world with a gender lens in hand, we can see women are adversely affected through the intersection of multiple factors by the inequalities that prevail worldwide. The structure of inequalities is deeply rooted and embedded in the social relations that make it challenging to understand development as it is unique to every geographical location (Kabeer & Sweetman, 2015). Relevant here to know is the status and role of women in society – conflicting between reproduction and production role. The gendered division of labor that has and in some instances is still reproduced from centuries ago giving women the primary responsibility of reproduction and men the role of production is central to the development agenda (Kabeer & Sweetman, 2015; Razavi & Miller, 1995). In other words, women are caught up in the structure of social relations that deprives them of their agency of having to choose among making a living, providing care for their families, or both. It is here within the nexus of reproduction and production that economic growth and human development are substantial in the gender studies.

It is undeniable that there are gender equality advocates in individual, organization and institutional levels working towards eliminating the inequalities through changing the distribution of power and opportunity so as to reach men and women equally (Grown, Addison, & Tarp, 2016). However, the works that are being done have not resulted in practical outcomes to curve out the inequalities. In terms of aid, there are billions of dollars going into developmental projects with the ultimate goal of achieving gender equality and empowering women. When the approaches used by donors and their partners do not systematically address the gaps in outcomes of programs and projects in each geographical location with weakness in institutional procedures of outcome measurements such as knowledge sharing, monitoring and evaluations; and lack of gender-disaggregated data results in the inadequacy to make a change.

1.1.1. Why Focus on developmental assistance?

International donors, governments and non-governmental organization’s engagement with gender inequality and women’s empowerment issues can be traced as far back to the 1970s during the initial period of the Women in Development (WID) approach was in place. During and after the United Nation’s Decade for Women that was launched in 1976, donors and key governmental organizations entered commitments to address and bring light women’s rights (Grown et al., 2016). Additionally, to
enhance the effectiveness of development aid, donors agree that there needs to be a focus on gender equality and women’s empowerment (Pickbourn & Ndikumana, 2016). Ever since this time, progress has been made in both economic and human development, but no sustainable change has been achieved towards gender inequality. The amount of resources put into projects with the ultimate goal to abolish gender inequality in different forms of sectoral approaches has increased. The sustainability of aid funded interventions that at the more general level are poorly accounted for; among the main reasons are the challenges of documenting impact progress, and the use of aggregated data on aid commitments (Pickbourn & Ndikumana, 2016).

1.1.2. Public and private partners - Civil society and non-governmental organizations

In line with the experiences mentioned above, the multidimensional characteristics of gender equality – which requires more than a direct investment to programs and projects – requires more resources in gender-specific expertise and the sector, country, program specific skills (Grown et al., 2016). It often results that the commitments that have been in place since the 1970s, the targets that are set for 2020 and 2030 do not match with the outcomes. Donors, most often than not are outsourcing and calling for ideas, plans and proposals to abolish gender inequalities and empower women to non-governmental organizations and civil societies (Stubbs, Kentikelenis, & King, 2016). Donors are criticized for having disregarded the commitments they have made by not following through to enhance human resource, financial resources and methods of monitoring and evaluations of results (Dietrich, 2016; Pickbourn & Ndikumana, 2016).

Despite the global goals of achieving gender equality, and the recent Equal Measures 2030 (2019) report, there is a gap in what is being done and its outcome. The Journal of International Development (2016) special issue on gender equality and aid has discovered that there is little attention to the relationship between aid and gender equality ineffectiveness, determinants, and allocation.

Therefore, imposing greater responsibilities without addressing the quintessential cause that limits the capacities of civil societies, non-governmental agencies, and general developmental agencies. The responsibilities to address causes, problems, and results by weighing in what methods work best, it is essential to create the best practices for knowledge sharing guidelines that are also used by the European Union, World Bank, International Labor Organization and United Nations agencies for non-governmental partners (UNICEF, 2015; World Bank, 2015; ILO, 2007).

1.2. Objective

Rose (1993), eloquently states that we can consider human geography to be full when there are inclusivity and interconnectedness among traditional gender roles, human agency, acknowledgment of women, and space. Therefore, the objective of this research in a broad spectrum is to contribute to the goal of achieving gender equality and a world where women are empowered. However, due to the complexity and holistic nature of the goal, a more specific objective is needed within the context of this thesis. The first objective is to create and gain an understanding of the impact and relationship among donors, non-governmental organizations and gender equality by using a multifaceted and holistic approach from existing literature, reports and in-depth semi-structured interviews. Secondly, to investigate the gendered structural inequalities to shed light on the barriers women face and the policy interventions that are put in place. Lastly, to contribute to theory and practice by analyzing the organizations to share what works and what needs improvements.
1.3. Relevance

1.3.1. Societal Relevance

Grown et al. (2016) have argued that the support of donors is making an impact on maternal health by reducing the number of children and mother’s mortality rate, closing the gender gap in education as more and more children attend and complete primary education, there is a high success rate for the implementation of good practices. In other words, there is steady progress in terms of achieving quantifiable data. What academia, policies and practice lack on measuring is the challenges of accessibility to inclusive infrastructures, discrimination in the classroom, and the patriarchal domination of men in decision making and politics (Cornwall, 2015). Identifying and understanding the structural constraints and their interconnections within the society and beyond will have a win-win benefit for the people on one hand and donors and developmental agencies on the other.

The strategies that are being used to from the north perspective is quite limited in terms of scope and applicability into achieving the goal, as there are other barriers to gender inequality such as institutional structures, age, culture, religion, and race (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015; Brown, 2012). There needs to be a more space, time, and situation-specific policy to target and implementation scheme. In order to achieve this, the engagement of women in these sectors has proven to be successful. Among the various methods and indicators, empowering women economically, socially, and politically has been proven to bring a sustainable change (Kabeer, 2016). There is no one size fits all framework or implementation strategies. Therefore, inclusive and holistic approaches are necessary to make sustainable changes that will benefit both men and women.

This research tries to provide a piece of knowledge and contribution to halt the social organizational barriers and limits by providing a perspective to solve the issue in several ways. The absence of gender equality affects everyone – including men – from individuals, households, communities, and institutions to the global economy and politics. First, this research brings attention to the unsystematic and incomplete empowerment measures that show why significant change is not achieved. Secondly, research of organizations in their structural approaches and implementation strategies projects and their impacts will give a better insight into why agencies should be inclusive, seeing that it is practically impossible for public institutions to alleviate all the problems from one side. Finally, it provides an insight into how donors and agencies who are engaged can get a step further to end discrimination and empower women together with men enable them to achieve an instrumental goal.

1.3.2. Scientific Relevance

For economic and social development, the issues of gender inequalities along with race, class and other intersectional factors that contribute to inequalities should be addressed – it the central feature of Women in Development approach of the 1970s (Holmes & Slater, 2008; Razavi & Miller, 1995). To address the underlying structural inequalities, the collection and use of gender sensitive data is important (Cornwall & Rivas, 2016). However, relying solely on the measurement of outcomes in the form of quantifiable data is not accurate to shed light and address the existing structural discrimination and patriarchal hegemony. This type of measurement adversely affects policies, laws, and the efficiency of development assistance. Furthermore, this thesis will contribute to the scant literature available that addresses the impact and relationship of aid assistance, gender equality, and the gendered dimension of global sustainable supply chains. The nature of the thesis focuses on defining and understanding the concepts that are mostly associated with myths (Conrwall, Harrison &
Whitehead, 2007), the approaches and influences of donors on the institutional structures, and their aims.

On top of that, the measurement of indicators is quite limited due to the holistic nature of gender equality and data of accurate. Therefore, it means, donors assistance is needed for the development of policy and programs are accurately planned, resourced, and monitored (Esquivel & Sweetman, 2016). This thesis will explore the both the formal and informal institutional structures that are available in works of literature, reports and interviews and why it is different from the actual outcome. Structures have the power to shape by enabling and constraining agency (Eerdewijk et al., 2017). This thesis contributes scientifically in the above-mentioned ways by bridging the gap between these concepts and literature.

1.4. Research Question

Main Research Question:
To what extent does developmental aid from donors funneled through non-governmental organizations contribute towards achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment within the supply chain in the global south?

Sub-questions:

1. To what extent does the interference of developmental aid play a role in the practices of organizations approaches to achieving the goal?
2. What are the underlying organizational and societal structures and barriers that underwrite to the success of developmental projects?
3. To what extent are organizations from the global south involved in achieving gender equality?

1.5. Thesis Structure
Chapter 2. Literature Review and Theoretical Background

2.1. Feminist Geography

Feminist geography uses theory (Pratt, 1992) and methods (Staeheli & Lawson, 2010) as an approach in human geography to understand the societal and power relations in geographical space (Moss & Al-Hindi, 2008). Geography, in the 1970s, has disregarded feminist concerns in the academic and beyond the academic arena (Rose, 1993). Upon the development of feminist geography, it mainly criticized the lens in which geography views the concepts used to form the geographical knowledge— which geography ignored women’s issues (Rose, 1993). The assumption of where this disregard stems from has been traced back to the perception of gender roles; specifically, that women are limited to the roles in the household as wives and mothers (Razavi & Miller, 1995). Socially, gender is the basis for social differentiation and social inequality (Liz Bondi, 1990). However, Rose (1993) argues, that the interconnection between the preconceived notations of the gender roles of reproduction and production can grasp the full sense of human geography. To some extent agreeing with Rose, gender studies argue that production and reproduction exist in relation to one another (Liz Bondi, 1990). In addition to the relationality, feminist geography identifies the intersection of power relations, social context, complexity and social justice (Hopkins, 2017).

In the earlier developments of geography and its relation to women mainly focused on gender inequality. By focusing on women’s issue, feminism was associated with welfare theoretical approaches which meant that including women’s issues through welfare services, equality, anti-poverty and empowerment (Razavi & Miller, 1995). Additionally, liberal feminism as a theoretical background aided the movement to bring women’s issues to the bigger picture in the earlier days of geography (Bondi & Domosh, 1992). These two approaches provided a base for feminist issues to be included in the geographical scene. However, understanding gender as the only component for inequality doesn’t touch upon the uniqueness of the human geographic approach. Valentine (2007), explains to the concept of intersectionality as the relationship of multiple constituents in addition to genders, such as age, sex, orientation, sexuality and many more factors that influence one’s identity. On the one hand, women’s role in a society with regards to power dynamics plays a role in inequalities that exist. On the other, the socio-spatial inequalities also create their own set of challenges towards women’s role and possible opportunities (Doan, 2010; Moss & Al-Hindi, 2008). Admittedly, feminist geographers try to view the intersectional factors that are associated with men and women within the relational, power and spatial considerations.

The uses of concepts like gender equality and women’s empowerment are at the core of issues within global institutions, philanthropists, the development industry, donors, and more (Cornwall, 2016). The next sections of this thesis will delve into the historical developments of feminist within the development arena. By using feminist geography approaches this research aims to understand inequalities, the underlying social structures and economic development through north-south humanitarian relationship and the effects that it brings to eliminating gender inequalities. The engagement of women and development takes a toll in understanding that women’s role in development is seen from the instrumental gains of what development can do for from rather than the vice versa (Cornwall, 2016). However, this approach needs to be revised as women are not collective in characteristics and as mentioned previously the holistic and intersectional nature of
gender issues call for an inclusive approach on what women can do for development (Brown, 2012; Cornwall, 2016; Valentine, 2007).

2.2. Conceptualizing Gender and Empowerment

The first and important step of discussing the issues of gender equality and women’s empowerment is to conceptualize the concepts of gender and empowerment. The use of these concepts in recent years has shown to be used interchangeably defying them of their use as the framework of fundamental human right and justice (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015). The use of gender and empowerment concepts has increased in the developmental discourses by governments and non-governmental organizations, universities, and feminist advocates (Weltbank, 2012). Understanding these concepts is important because the ways we conceptualize broad concepts have misled to association with gender myths and negative understanding of the terms (Cornwall, Harrison, & Whitehead, 2007).

So, what is gender? Most commonly associated with gender is sex. Sex is distinctively different from gender; sex is attributed to biology while gender is socially constructed through psychological, cultural, and social means (West & Zimmerman, 1987). According to Cornwall and Rivas (2015), feminists in the 1970s closely associated sex and gender, Sex being biological and fixed as needed to map and determine gender which was deemed to be inconstant. Gender as a social construct determines the roles men and women play, which are bounded by norms, rules, resources, and identities in the institutional arena (Kabeer, 2016). The norms and rules that guide gender are created by dominant ideologies and are reproduced socio-culturally from one generation to the next by patriarchy, racism, colonialism, and so forth (Bhattacharyya, 2018). Viewing this from a sociological perspective, social change can take place with the coming together of structure and agency and their reproduction over generations (Stromquist, 2015).

Gender socially, culturally, and institutionally is used as a framework to determines who benefits from what and who does something (Celis, Kantola, Waylen, & Weldon, 2013). For example, roles assigned to men include roles in production while women take the role of reproduction, and men are assigned the responsibility of production (Razavi & Miller, 1995). These types of preconceived norms are passed down through the ideologies that are connected to institutions that the core of society (Stromquist, 2015). Therefore, gender as a social construct is responsible for exclusion and inequalities that women and men face towards economic, social, and political developments (Feenstra & Janna, 2019; Ljungholm, 2016).

When it comes to geography, according to Townsend (1990), gender is an integral part the determine the inner structures. Gender is defined as a social construct is varies in conceptualization across geographical locations and time. The diversity of cultural and social norms globally cannot place a distinct characteristic of gender with one accepted definition worldwide due to its context. This supports the understanding of gender as being unique to every locality, region, and country. Stromquist (2015), notes that history, economy, and culture are the framers for the differences. He supports his arguments by showing examples of focus of gender issues from different countries, for example in the United States, to mention a few, is on abortion, contraceptives, affirmative action on employment and educations. Whereas, in Sub-Saharan Africa the focus is on reproductive rights, abolishing harmful practices on women and girls such as forced marriage, and female genital mutilation (Nyambura, 2018). Collectively, it focuses on basic needs such as health, education, work,
and income. Thus, portrays the difference across the global north and global south. It is essential to keep in mind that within the two regions, there are variations as to which gender issue is focused on.

The concept of empowerment, it is closely associated with gender and power. Feminist scholars use the word empowerment to describe a radical struggle to transform traditional power relations (Cornwall, 2016). Kabeer (1999), a feminist scholar precisely and systematically defines empowerment as the ability to regain agency to those who have been denied the ability to make their own life choices. In gender relations, it is undeniable that women hold the lower end of the spectrum (Ukhova, 2015), and developmental practices the way empowerment is understood and used as a means to uplift women from the lower part varies from transformation of structures in economics, society and politics to gaining access and control to resources (Doherty, 2018). The inclusion of empowerment comes in when the person – in this case, women – have failed to get to their goals because of deep structural constraints rather than having low motivation to achieve their goal. Important to understand here, empowerment is not the means to an end, rather a process (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015; Kabeer, 1999).

Briefly, gender is a social construct determined by social and cultural characteristics by which the roles male and female play and are bounded by norms, rules, resources, and identities in the institutions and individuals (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015; Kabeer, 2016). Gender is not constant, it can change through time and it is beyond the binary of men and women (Bhattacharyya, 2018). However, for this thesis we will focus on the relationship between men and women due to the developmental practices and the general acceptance the genders. Also, going further into the different types of gender is beyond the scope of this paper. The attempt to conceptualize gender and empowerment terms in the broad sense sets a clear picture of the holistic nature of gender issues and the feminist understanding towards them. However, for this thesis, it is important to understand what is meant by gender equality and women’s empowerment and the evolving connotations of their meanings. Sadly, the understanding of gender does not match with the actual imbalances with social reality (Barnes, 2018). The next sections will focus on the understanding of these concepts from their historical points that they came to the developmental discourses and delve deeper to the issues.

2.3. History of Gender and Development

2.3.1. Women in Development

Historically, the relationship between men and women is not seen in the works of social theorists like Marx, Weber, and Durkheim (Inglis & Thorpe, 2012). The influential works and their intellectual ability on social forces and theories are limited in their understanding of inequalities that exist between men and women. In fact, these theorists considered women’s role in society is as subordinates, which are part of their reality inherently clearly stating their narrow understanding of gender. Despite the fact that these influential theorists work on the effects of social forces, they fail to see the inequalities that exist between men and women.

It was in the 1970s that the gender equality and women’s empowerment got its breakthrough in the development sphere by a network of female professionals and feminists introduced the concept of
gender in the world of development (Kabeer, 1999). These feminist professionals, backed by their experiences, challenged the “trickle-down” theories of development (Razavi & Miller, 1995). Following this, they came up with an approach that included a gender component which argued that modernization impacts men and women differently, and it became known as the ‘Women in Development’ (WID). The WID approach was further advanced to the integration of women in the development projects, highlighting the importance of access to resources and participation in development (Feenstra & Visser, 2019). The WID approach implicitly stated that the primary step to improving the lives of women should be by the integration of women in the economy and focus on productive roles (Jahan & Mumtaz, 1996). The downside of the WID is that developmental agencies and non-governmental organizations in this period limited the understanding of the role of women in households as wives and mothers.

The United Nations Decade for Women was among the main contributors to draw women’s role in the developmental process (Razavi & Miller, 1995). The UN Decade for women was the period from 1975 – 1985 that consisted of three international forums and multiple conferences with the various UN agencies and international, regional and local organizations in Mexico, Denmark and Kenya (Zinsser, 1990). The decade aimed to oversee the status of women’s disadvantaged circumstances, the challenges to develop, to draft the necessary strategies and measures to be implemented and enforced (Zinsser, 1990). In line with the WID approach, the UN Decade for Women issues such as the right of women to participate and gain from development, reform in the sexual division of labor, and the recognition of women’s unpaid labor were stated. However, they were not entirely met with open hands as by the development industry. Some suggest the distribution of power relations was the significant resistance that held for the attainment of gender equity (Razavi & Miller, 1995; Wieringa, 1994; Zinsser, 1990).

In addition to the WID approach, liberal feminists at that time made efforts to change the languages of political strategy and attain equal opportunity in employment for women and integration into the formal structures of the economy (Bandarage, 1984). Also, the strong dedication and hard work of feminists brought attention to the involvement of women in the academic research introducing influential works from feminist geographers (Rose, 1993). Thus, they became central to the influences of the WID approach.

This feminist movement that started in the United States in the 1970s turned into a global developmental issue giving attention to women’s productive labor as opposed to social welfare and reproduction (Razavi & Miller, 1995). Feminist from the south were opposed to this idea and instead wanted to focus on development and justice for both men and women (Fejerskov, 2017). On the contrary, Liberal feminists held the assumption that stereotypes and expectations held by society and mainly men that in turn, are internalized by women are central to the disadvantage of women (Rathgeber, 1990). The stereotypes can be broken by educating girls, representation of role models, access to equal opportunity programs, and placing anti-discrimination policies. These postulated solutions, however, leave out power relations and the engagement of men. (Razavi & Miller, 1995).

Gender relations in the society were not critically assessed as the discourses were dominated by patriarchal and liberals often relating to the sexual division of labor and individual decision making within the family. Following this, the first engagement of women in development was in the form of aid provided to women through projects that provided birth control, and nutritional supplements for women as objects of welfare (Rai, 2011). Women were disregarded in productive roles by restrictive
policies and solely considered for their roles as wives and mothers (Razavi & Miller, 1995). Thus, it was a smooth stage for the welfare approach to dominate the initial phase of developmental practice.

Women’s underrepresentation in this field was among the major concerns for feminist geographers (Coddington, 2015). Razavi and Miller (1995), argue that the coming of Boserup’s work provided the academic basis for WID by greatly showing the importance of women in the agricultural economy and challenged the assumption of the welfare approach. Her work showed the intervention of western ideologies and modes of appropriate production disregarded women by providing modern methods of farming for the men while women stuck with the traditional modes. This created a great difference in productivity that resulted in power, income, and status hierarchy that benefited the men. This eventually obscured women’s role in agriculture. In the same decade, a substantial shift of thinking in came as the United Nations Food Conference emphasized on shifting the focus from the trade of cash crops to food production. The shift on perspective was a result of the partially static and partially increasing hunger, poverty, and violence in third world countries.

According to Rai (2011), she argues that the shift of thinking comes from three different connected spheres: Liberals, Marxists, Neo-Marxist, and Post-structuralists. The liberals who were the first to move from ideologies of growth to the fulfillment of basic needs. Followed by the Marxist who highlighted on alternative models of socialist developments, neo-Marxist focused on the post-colonial and localized state struggles and finally from the post-structuralist critique of the development paradigm as a narrative of progress and as an available enterprise.

All in all, the WID approach has greatly drawn the attention to women developmental issues. It also has the importance of access to resources for women and the potential difference it can bring. However, it has also shifted the demands of women away from the developmental debates by seeing women as a separate entity within the gender framework. One of the significant limitations of the WID approach is the failure to integrate and demand change in the different social, economic, structural, and legal factors that contribute to the inequalities between men and women. Following their shortcomings in the late 1970’s, WID literatures were criticized by feminist thinker on the narrow scope of the WID approach that was mainly descriptive and vague about the identification and analysis of women’s subordination and considered women to be a secluded homogenous group (Razavi & Miller, 1995) leading to a revised and new approach.

2.3.2. Gender and Development

Following WID, in the late 1980s, a new approach that evolved from socialist feminist thoughts that considered that external factors, gender relations that accepts men and focuses of women came into existence in the 1980s (Tsige, Synnevåg, & Aune, 2019). Gender and Development (GAD) stressed on understanding the broader social structures in which women and men adhere to roles, responsibilities, and expectations (Feenstra & Visser, 2019). The framework proposed by GAD combines gender roles and the analysis of social relations by extending the analysis to include production and reproduction (Razavi & Miller, 1995). GAD’s approach differs mainly from that of WID’s approach from WID’s perspective of trying to fit women from the global south in a predetermined and narrow scope of western modernization (Rathgeber, 2003).
To rephrase and summarize the focus of the GAD approach, (1) it acknowledges the existence of gender relations between men and women, and (2) it explicitly states and recognizes the structural gender inequalities that exist. The recognition and combination of the two aspects set a new milestone for the issues of gender and development by bringing astounding change in gender projects. The argument of GAD stresses the importance and the transformative factor of understanding and focusing on the hierarchal power relations can there be a sustainable development (Brouwers, 2013).

Cornwall and Rivas (2015) argue GAD emerged from two processes, one from understanding the lived experiences and the social constitution that determines the relationship between men and women. Two, the power structure within the relationship that deems women as lacking power and men as the powerful. However, the GAD approach was narrow in understanding the relationship between men and women and the external influences by failing to capture the influences of other intersectional factors like age, race, ethnicity and more (Valentine, 2007).

The GAD approach challenged the resource focus of Marxist and Liberals and focused on the postcolonial and postmodern theorizing that gave emphasis on the importance of the role of culture and subjective experiences (Jaquette, 2017). By adjusting the WID approach and building upon it, GAD brought the attention of structural causes of inequalities (Razavi & Miller, 1995), included men into the gender focus (Brouwers, 2013) and called for the mainstreaming of women in development and integration into all projects and programming (Jaquette, 2017).

Browers (2013) argues that, between the WID and GAD approaches, GAD is seen to be superior. Due to the narrow view of WID to look only at women separately as opposed to the relational lens GAD views women, its descriptive nature and its analysis of women’s subordination is vague and open to other forms of interpretation. However, Tsige (2019) provides a counterargument that hierarchy is not the case here; GAD also has its flows, it fails to recognize women as knowledge holders of the gender-related issues they encounter and assigned experts, and officials exclude women from the decision-making process. Both the WID and GAD approaches have made their contributions to women’s and gender issues, respectively, and both have faced backlash and criticism that leads to the formation of gender mainstreaming.

2.3.3. Gender Mainstreaming

Succeeding the WID and GAD approaches, gender mainstreaming was introduced as a method to transform gender relations (Browers, 2013). For clarity, what it means by gender relations is the hierarchal power relations that exist between men and women, where women are the disadvantaged (Revees & Baden, 2000). The integral aim of gender mainstreaming is to prevent policy domains, legislations and programs of prioritized goals from unintentionally and negatively impacting men and women. The framework aims to tackle gender inequalities from continuously reproducing by changing the structures, process, and tackling gendered policy domains (Bock, 2015). This aim was possible through identifying and addressing the various needs, roles, and experiences of both women and men in the developmental processes (Tsige, 2019). Additionally, what gender mainstreaming intends to do by directing all policies to address the needs of all women, it includes women from the global south that have been marginalized and discriminated (Syed & Ali, 2019).
According to UN Women (2014), gender equality is required in order to advance in development and is also a crucial foundational goal in three key forms. These are gender mainstreaming in the educational system; the improvement of women’s access to education, health, employment and income, decent housing, ability to make decision both within the household and outside, and access to informed reproductive choices; and empowering women as mentioned previously outside the home and ability to participate in the decision making process in the community affairs, economy and political life, have representation in all forms of governmental and social structures.

Additionally, Derbyshire, Dolata and Ahluwalia (2015) note the definition of gender mainstreaming from the United Nations Economic and Social Council in their article as the process of measuring and monitoring the implications of policies, programs, and legislation for men and women. The Economic and Social Council’s definition of gender mainstreaming clearly portrays what it means.

“Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implication for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences if women as well as men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.” (Derbyshire, Dolata & Ahluwalia, 2015, p.04)

Gender mainstreaming is used as a strategy to make gender at the core of designing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation towards the benefit of men and women and to take out the structures that enable inequality in all political, economic and societal spheres (Jaquette, 2017; Syed & Ali, 2019). The gender mainstreaming approaches develops from the GAD and WID in that in order to bring a lasting and sustainable change, the decision-making approach should be reversed to a bottom-up and participatory method (Razavi & Miller, 1995). Since then, many development organizations have committed to mainstreaming gender into their projects. Generally, efforts have focused on creating awareness of gender-related inequality and on creating economic opportunities for women.

There are varying opinions and criticism about the success, importance, and goal-reaching the purpose of this goal. On the side where gender mainstreaming is seen as partially fulfilling its goal, Abels and Mushaben (2012) argue that because of gender mainstreaming, there is an increased gender awareness that has impacted gender policy implementation. On the other hand, some views claim that gender mainstreaming has moved away from the narrative feminists have been developing over the years, and therefore mainstreaming has failed (Bock, 2015). Alongside, it is important to also take into account the intersectional perspective of gender, gender interaction with race, social class, personal background, and geography (Hopkins, 2017; Syed & Ali, 2019).

2.4. Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) serve as a standard for development by organizations in the development industry by using their indicators and targets as measuring outcomes (Rosati & Faria, 2019; Sen & Mukherjee, 2014). The coming of the
MDGs as a global mobilization strategy that set goals on the global scale to generate incentives and improve performance was seen as a historic and effective method (Sachs, 2012). Among the goals of the MDGs is gender equality and women's empowerment ranking third. This goal has been criticized for its narrow approach that halted its progress by mainly lacking in human-rights approach and failure to onboard women's rights organizations (Sen & Mukherjee, 2014).

Following this, in 2015, United Nations (UN) member states agreed on targets that focus on combating gender inequality, inequalities, hunger, poverty, human rights limitations, environmental problems that are known as the SDGs (United Nations, 2015). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development announced 17 SDGs and 169 targets as a blueprint for success for everyone (Rosati & Faria, 2019). One of the goals, ranking fifth, is the goal to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls globally. The United Nations defined gender equality as a fundamental human right that gives equal access to quality education and health, economic resources, and political participation (Freedman & O'Donoghue, 2018). The definition of gender equality in the United Nations report does not discriminate based on a person's gender.

The SDGs as a global goal have a more detail-oriented approach to gender equality and women’s empowerment than its predecessor – the MDG. Among 17 goals, to ‘Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls’ holds the fifth place while there is no particular ordering to the goals SDG 5 is a cross-cutting goal with its aim to mainstream gender into all the goals (Chant, 2016). The goal targets to end discrimination in all forms against women and girls, end violence against women in the public and private spheres, eliminate harmful practices that women and girls face, recognize women’s domestic burden such as unpaid work, end unequal opportunities that hinder women from taking leadership and decision making roles, ensure right to education and healthcare, and provide a legal structure that promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls globally and throughout all levels (Freedman & O’Donoghue, 2018).

Gender is one of the many means of enabling inequalities and exclusions that differentiate between men and women (Feenstra & Visser, 2019). Gender relations determine labor, political, activity, and resource distribution as they are the multi-stranded hierarchical form of relations that intersect ideas, values, and identities by assigning authority, agency and decision-making power (Kabeer, 2005; Valentine, 2007). Gender equality can take any form depending on the economic structure, social organization, political stance, and culture of a society (Lorber, 2010). According to Weltbank (2011), gender is a socially constructed role learned and passed from one generation to another, and cultures define what these roles mean to them by assigning different tasks and behaviors based on gender. A widely used example and a reality for most women, the task of caregiving is assigned to them while the men socially acquire the role of breadwinners and the primary source of income. This behavior and tasks are present throughout one’s life cycle, being the main contributor to inequalities. When looking closely at the household level, it is clearly visible in the global south that the household recourse allocation is rationed unevenly between boys and girls (Rao, 2018). However, to avoid generalization on every household in the global south, the extent of household chores differs per household, community, country, and region how economic situations and resource allocation vary due to the multi-dimensional characteristics of gender inequalities.

According to Equal Measures report (2019), amongst all the countries, globally, regardless of their geographical size, economic achievements, and political stances will not achieve gender equality by
the end of 2030. The Gender Index, used by Equal Measures 2030, measures the progress of 129 countries referencing gender equality and issues that directly relate to women. The scale uses a numbering unit from 0 to 100, 0 meaning it is unequal while 100 implies a country has achieved equality with 62 being the global average. Those who score high on the index are mostly European countries Sweden, Slovenia and France ranking first, second and third respectively while on the lower end are countries with high violence and instability like the Democratic Republic of Congo and Yemen, as shown in Figure II.

![Figure II: Gender Equality Scoring](image)

Figure II: Gender Equality Scoring: the scoring of countries is based on the SDG 5 Gender Equality issues, the numbers displayed vertically represent the scoring and the horizontal line represents the average score of the countries. The dots representing the countries horizontally do not carry any meaning in their placement, only for viewing purposes. Source Equal Measures 2030.

2.5. Development Aid

In academia and politics, there are debates surrounding the effectiveness and agenda of developmental assistance. Developmental aid is a mainstream tool used by politicians and philanthropist to relief some of the central challenges we face – poverty, hunger, inequality, and environmental degradation – across the world (Brouwers, 2018). The developmental industry uses multilateral agencies composed of governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations and civil societies such as the United Nations agencies, community foundations, and charities that are funded by voluntary contributions in kind, in cash or a combination of both in the nationally and internationally (Oloruntoba & Gray, 2006). Funding from the governments comes from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development’s (OECD) Development Assistant Committee (DAC) members have agreed to set aside a percentage of their Gross National Income (GNI) to countries that are on the recipient list of the Official Development Assistance (ODA) (Brouwers, 2018). On the other hand, to name a few a majority of the non-governmental funding comes from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the United Postcode Lotteries (Dutch, Swedish and People’s), and MasterCard Foundation (Benn, Sangare, & Hos, 2018).
Developmental aid has its fair share of criticism with arguments ranging from its contribution to economic growth, effectiveness, and motive. Bearce and Tirone (2010), argue that aid is one of the means to promote economic growth in developing countries by incentivizing economic reform. Similarly, (Qian, 2015) illustrates the beneficial factor of aid by showing studies that were conducted in more than 50 countries and another one in 113 countries on how multilateral aid effectiveness, coupled with an increase in aid and a reform improvement in the allocation, could maximize the intended effects (Canavire, Nunnenkamp, Thiele, & Triveño, 2006). This brings us to the next argument; aid is praised for its outreach of reaching out to the most marginalized and discriminated by moving past institutional barriers, and yet their effectiveness is in question. But not everyone agrees with the positive effects, Davis (2019) notes, geographical locations of implementations, short term success rate and intention of implementation to attract more donors and funding have gotten ahead of the actual practical work putting in question the mission. Additionally, the mass implementation strategy of aid into projects lacks the hybridity and thus resulted in social cohesion in some countries by being reluctant to blend with social and cultural identities of the target groups (Brouwers, 2018). Thus, it is vital to have cultural, social, and political knowledge and sensitivity to implement projects that are funded by developmental aid.

For developmental aid to reach its intended outcome passes through a number of phases and institutions. Developmental aid has political and military advantages from the sending countries, receiving countries and within the donor industry which makes it prone to uncoordinated and often weak planning schemes to deliver (Oloruntoba & Gray, 2006). That being the case, developmental aid adopted the theory of supply chain management that is used in business models to create a sustainable form of the supply chain in the humanitarian aid processes. Kunz and Gold (2017), define sustainable supply chain management that seeks to understand the relationship among the donor, middle man and receipt line as the management of communications, information, material and capital flow through the supply chain that takes into account the requirements of stakeholders within the spheres and also implements the sustainable development goals into the whole chain. A simple and most commonly used supply chain in the developmental aid passes through four stakeholders before it reaches the aid recipients (Dubey & Gunasekaran, 2016; Kunz & Gold, 2017).

Figure III: The most common humanitarian supply chain. Source: Oloruntoba and Gray (2006)
As depicted in supply chain above, non-governmental organizations are responsible for managing two roles in the implementations stage from the donor’s side as well as the recipient side. Whether it international or local non-governmental organization, both have developed into influential stakeholders in the supply chain management of developmental aid (Davis, 2019). Aside from the bilateral agreements, ninety-seven percent of the funds are implemented through non-governmental actors (Benn, Sangare & Hos, 2018). The reason for the shift is a result of the challenges of the state developmental practices and their inefficient bureaucratic structures as compared to the transparent, efficient, and goal-oriented approaches of non-governmental agencies (Davis, 2019). There are limitations in the supply chain of aid that significantly points the difference between the business model and the adopted humanitarian model; first, the unstable characteristics of funds coming into the channels makes it hard to create a long-standing and stable existence, second, the goal of donors is mostly on reaching the aid recipients directly without having to contribute to the establishment of the channel on knowledge and infrastructure basis (Oloruntoba & Gray, 2006).

Based on the understanding of development aid, their impact on the recipients, and the overall relationship within the supply chain, it is essential for non-governmental organizations to perform well. This can be done by understanding the motivations and aims of governmental and private donors, by trying to develop a situation where all actors will gain benefit for the common good, and finally, it is important to understand what aid recipients actually need by improving the knowledge-sharing platform (Kunz & Gold, 2017). By including these factors and motives that are at the backbone of aid, it is then possible to identify the effectiveness and sustainability of the developmental works. However, due to the short and unstable existence of the funds, donors and overall actors in the developmental supply chain it is impossible to fully use the supply chain management model in its original and full-scale capability. Oloruntoba and Gray (2006), conclude their assessment of how the business model fits in the development industry by stressing on the importance of academia to relate the concepts in a way it is convening to donors that their funds will generate more sustainability if the internal structures of the organizations which the funds are going through invest in a more systematic, information and knowledge-based good practices. This is particularly important in achieving gender equality due to the interconnectedness of all factors and the holistic approach to understanding gender needs a social change theory not only within the society but also within the implementing institutions.

2.6. Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Development

Gender issues that emphasize gender equality are at the center of the developmental agenda. It can be seen from the SDG having two roles as a standalone and crosscutting goal which contributes to the overall growth and development of the economy (Rosati & Faria, 2019). There are multiple actors that contribute to the economic development and among it is foreign aid which plays a significant role in addressing gender inequalities in the global south. During the discussion about gender equality, women’s empowerment and developmental aid, there is a recurring emphasis on the continuing relationship between structure and agency (Stromquist, 2015). According to Pickbourn and Ndikumana (2016), gender equality in the developmental industry is understood as fairness in treatment. They proceed to understand the gender inequality in three closely associated scopes: fundamental human capabilities (Knowledge and health), livelihood conditions that enable the
survival of the individual and family, and the ability to shape oneself to make the right life choices and personal decisions (Pickbourn & Ndikumana, 2016; Seguino, 2013). Whereas, Kabeer (1999) conceptualizes gender equality and empowerment with resources, agency and achievement. The base for the understanding the 3 domains of power is: ‘power with’, ‘power to’, and ‘power within’ of the level of consciousness that is determinant of the individual’s knowledge of how to practice it (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015). Moreover, by integrating CARE’s empowerment concept, the concept of structure is added to underline the organizational structures and the invisible societal structures such as cultures and norms that guide and shape all form of structures (Farnworth, Fones Sundell, Nzioki, Shivitse, & Davis, 2013).

Following the in-depth review of the relationship between gender equality, women’s empowerment and developmental aid, the next section focuses on the structural aspects both within the society and the organization and external agents that impact the process. The term process is used because the concept of empowerment is not something that can be achieved or done for someone, rather it is an ongoing capabilities approach that can be instilled into a framework (Cornwall, 2016). More often in practice and in the pieces of literature the focus of bringing social change is focused on the last stage of the humanitarian supply chain – the aid receivers while brushing off on the importance of practicing the necessary social change within the institutional side (Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2004; Dietrich, 2016; Huyer, 2016; A. Rao et al., 2017). The emphasis of using a social change theory was that was later adopted by several authors into what it meant to achieve changes with a relational analysis among institutions, individuals, formal and informal domains (Cornwall, 2016). By using the interplay of structure and agency approach by Anthony Giddens (1984) and incorporating that into understanding the inner structures of non-governmental organizations policies that enable and make them responsible for distributing the foreign aid given to them by governmental and non-governmental donors. Identifying the institutional structure is possible by using the Gender at Work’s framework (Cornwall, 2016; Derbyshire, Dolata & Ahluwalia, 2015).

Figure IV: Gender at Work’s framework to answer, ‘What are we trying to change?’. Source: Cornwall (2016)
The Gender at Work approach main aim is to bring a sustainable change that guarantees to abolish inequality, and to do this the approach stresses on changing the institutional, individual and organizational power relations (A. Rao et al., 2017). As shown in Figure IV, there are four quadrants each representing consciousness and resources on the top and on the bottom, there are cultural practices and legal frameworks (Cornwall, 2016). In addition, the gender at work framework provides a platform for the interplay of structures, agency and resources by reiterating on the connection between the individual and the institution as well as the informal and formal domains (Kabeer, 1999; Stromquist, 2015). The relational factor and inclusivity of all four domains is the bottom line that connects to the understanding and ultimately achieving gender equality, however, it is rarely found in donor projects (Grown, Addison, & Tarp, 2016).

Looking at the bottom half of the quadrant, in order to achieve gender equality there needs to be change in the practices embedded in the institutions, communities, organizations and individuals. Cornwall (2016) argues that the reform to reach our global goal is beyond the individual and needs to be addressed in a larger framework to challenge the commonly held gender myths and assumptions that are the foundations of gender inequalities in the cultural context. For example, in Ethiopia and some parts of sub-Saharan Africa that experience extreme poverty, gender relations determine who eats first and women are the ones who eat last when most often they have to suffer due to the unavailability of leftovers, however, when this measured in policy it often is often overlooked as they are embedded in the cultural and exclusionary practices (Cornwall, 2016; Kabeer & Sweetman, 2015; Tsige et al., 2019). Failing to measure the inequalities is directly linked to failing to understand the dimensions that contribute to gender inequalities in reporting the macro-economic and micro-economic reports (Kabeer & Sweetman, 2015).

The bottom right quadrant focuses on the formal laws and policies, that include organizational accountability mechanisms, anti-harassment, work-family arrangements, equal employability, etc. (Zinnes, 2018). Works of literature and arguments that address the effectiveness of aid and the relationship with macro and micro-economic outcomes that gender equality in the labor market is strongly linked to having an impact on the economy (Dietrich, 2016; Thieme, 2018). However, the effectiveness and influence of aid depend on the structural, institutional and policy environment (Pickbourn & Ndikumana, 2016). Historically, policies are not gender inclusive as they don’t take into consideration the effects of gender and the relational factor that contribute to it (Brown, 2012). Policies that determine budget in public spending have an impact on men and women differently, Pickbourn and Ndikumana (2016) relate how monetary policies that result in budget cuts on public infrastructure spending like on water and sanitation have a negative consequences on women and girls as it increases the domestic burden by some folds as they have to spend extra time fetching water and taking care of household duties that have impact on education as it will cut time out of time they need to spend on school. Similarly, if there are no or limited sanitation infrastructure in schools, women are forced to drop out due to the challenges they will face (Rao & Sweetman, 2014). Therefore, this shows the strong linkage of polices and their impact on gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Developmental aid in, in the scenarios mentioned above, can have positive and negative effects on economic growth both the micro and macro levels. The positive effects are when they are limited public spending by governments on infrastructure it can be that aid can help fill in the gap and provide the resources needed to support the government (Qian, 2015). The increase in public infrastructure
spending can relieve governments stress and create space to increase the attention to social service and their implementation (Pickbourn & Ndikumana, 2016). However, also, considerations must be taken into mind that when aid inflows increase in developing countries, they have the effects of negatively affecting the local market structures and human development (Qian, 2015). Additionally, the implementation of aid should be in a way that is considerate of gender to avoid aiding existing gender inequalities (Pickbourn & Ndikumana, 2016).

2.7. Gendered Value Chains

The increasing interconnectedness of the people, places, and societies shape economies in the global and local spheres. Globalization has shown that the input of various factors, including the increasing in population and the diversification of needs, products are sourced from different countries (Bamber & Staritz, 2016). The interconnectedness has created linkages, to mention a few, for producers, consumers, business and governments located at different locations to create a structure for the flow of goods (Alfaro, Antràs, Chor, & Conconi, 2018). The structure and the actors within it constitute value chains (KIT, Agri-ProFocus, & IIRR, 2012). A report made by KIT, Agri-ProFocus and IIRR (2012) categorizes the system into three: the overall chain structure that includes the laws, global and local economy; the actors that include the farmers, producers, trainers, and businesspeople; resources or ‘chain supporters’ which includes financial institutions, educational facilities, certifications and other incentives. Value chain with it adds value on the economy at a broader level and also benefits individuals at household levels with its ability to intensify trade, generate jobs and income (Bamber & Staritz, 2016). However, the interaction of the social and economic dimensions creates a major challenge on who benefits from the resources available. Developmental policies have interfered in the value chains to ensure there exists equality in all spheres and not one actor benefits on the expense of the other. An excellent example for this can be taken from the coffee sector, the money coffee farmers make, and the value of a cup of coffee sold does not match, benefiting the seller but pushing the farmer towards poverty, in other cases exacerbating the situation (Kasente, 2012). It is not limited to the coffee sector, but also includes garments, horticulture, spices, and more generally any tradable goods.

Peeking through the gender lens, it is visible that the inequalities or challenges producers, household, communities, and institutions face have gendered structural inequalities within them (Bamber & Staritz, 2016). These structures are reproduced and bounded in micro-level with informal rules and norms, in the macro-level with formal rules, laws, and policies (Cornwall, 2016). They are the enablers of what is scientifically known as the gender relations approach; it determines what roles men and women take within the value chain and who has power and access to resources (Bamber & Staritz, 2016; Cornwall, 2016; Mudege, Mdege, Abidin, & Bhetasara, 2017). Gender relations puts men on top of the benefiting scale while women are on the bottom; the measuring scale is access to resources, decision making, and shared responsibilities (Mudege et al., 2017).

The agricultural value chain embodies four tiers of structures: the first tier consisting of the producers and farmers which are at the important actors; and the second tier consists of those who facilitate the production, service sector, technologies, and input providers (FAO, 2016). The last two levels of the value chain focus on formal and informal rules and laws. According to the FAO (2016) framework the third tier consists of the national enabling environment that includes the social, economic, environmental and political aspects and the final is the international enabling environment that within
it has the capability to determine the market price of the goods and enable formal laws and policies. With farmers and producers at the center of the value chain they, women are engaged in more than half of the production but have no say in markets when it comes to decision making, financial services, and resources (Murray, Gebremedhin, Brychkova, & Spillane, 2016).

There are structural barriers for women within the FAO’s framework mentioned above. It is clear that women and men have different roles in general but there are also intersectional factors such as ethnicity, race, social status, age, education and status that have a fair share of contribution to gender inequalities (Hopkins, 2017). In the value chains the structural inequalities that are unique to women are division of labor, representation and inclusion across all domains and access to resources and opportunities (Farnworth et al., 2016; Mudege et al., 2017). From the human rights approach, women are stripped of the basic human rights and from the business approach, disregarding possible potential of the other half of the world does not maximize gains. Therefore, these two approaches and the structural barriers influence the value chains that in turn have a domino effect on the micro and macro economies.

According to Mudege et al. (2017), studies conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa have shown that gender relations has an impact on agricultural value chain. There is a greater disadvantage as women contribution to the farm’s activities is perceived as support while it is not entirely true (Mudege et al., 2017). Women are also playing two roles as care givers and production workers, but often are excluded from participating in training or in the decision making arenas because of how the structures are built for men and disregard all the responsibilities women have (Doss, Meinzen-Dick, Quisumbing, & Theis, 2018). Another major disadvantage women face is access to infrastructures that enhance their roles in the value chain, such as financial services, often the requirements to have access to these services is beyond what women can match due to their circumstances (Bamber & Staritz, 2016). Therefore, this can be attributed to having negative impacts to the women’s ability to improve their capabilities, eliminate the exclusionary practices of social norms, representation in decision making and finally their ability to exercise them.

2.8. The Two Domains: Structure and Agency

In the international developmental industry, gender equality is equated with fairness among genders – which is the backbone of gender equity (Pickbourn & Ndikumana, 2016). Gender equality has focused, as mentioned above, on the three interrelated domains of power: structure, agency, and resources (Cornwall et al., 2007; Kabeer, 1999; Stromquist, 2015). The theoretical understanding of these three domains basis on the CARE’s Empowerment Framework (Farnworth et al., 2013). The following section provides a clear conception of what the concepts are with their relation to power.

2.8.1. Agency

The concept of agency refers to the ability to make a choice that enables to act upon them (Farnworth et al., 2013). Agency has the power to transform and shape individuals as well as groups by enabling and including them in the decision-making platforms in the household, community, workplace, and government (Pickbourn & Ndikumana, 2016). In the development of value chain, a women’s agency is when she has the choice to participate and act in a leadership role and has the power to make
decisions (KIT, Agri-ProFocus, & IIRR, 2012). Additionally, agency means the ability for women to make informed choices that are free from any form of violence, whether it is physical or emotional (Eerdewijk et al., 2017).

The importance of agency is that when women embody agency, they can take the driving seat to lead their life in an informed manner. In so many different ways are women robbed from their ability to embody agency and therefore make decisions putting them in vulnerable situations. Eerdewijk (2017) argues that including women in financial and family planning matters is a necessity as resource allocation within the different spheres of household, community, and government. Moreover, women’s decision making in family planning, nutrition, and child health are rights that need to be given to women to voice their say on the matter, this also includes access to contraceptives, access to education, access to extra-curricular activities and more (Eerdewijk et al., 2017). It is essential to keep in mind that the rights of decision making are not limited to the above mentioned as there is a more specific and intersectional factor that contribute to this.

In addition to decision making, leadership and collective action are ways in which women are entitled to voice their stance and concerns, and with the availability of leadership roles, it will enable women to effectively participate in the different formal and informal layer of the institutional and social sectors. When measuring political agency, women’s share of parliamentary seats is one indicator to the extent of the gap in gender equality (Sen & Mukherjee, 2014). It is proven that having political agency contributes to the development of other sectors that lack gender equality (Pickbourn & Ndikumana, 2016). Along with the ways mentioned above in which one’s agency can be determined in relation to power, giving voice without the structures to be heard leads to a dead end. Power on the other hand depends greatly on the ability to actively engage agency (FAO, 2016). This will be discussed in the next section on the interplay between structure and agency. However, inclusive decision-making of men and women, working together in the labor market and the household are equally apart of agency (Farnworth et al., 2013; Kabeer & Sweetman, 2015; KIT et al., 2012).

In addition to agency for the empowerment of women, resources are essential. Resources are sources of power that are bestowed or acquired in women which can serve as an expression of their agency (Eerdewijk et al., 2017). One of the prerequisites for gender equality is capabilities, health and knowledge are the basic human abilities that are also essential for women (Pickbourn & Ndikumana, 2016). The other one is the ability for women and girls to use their capabilities to provide and sustain livelihoods which can be measured through the access of women and girls to education, labor market, financial status including access to financial facilities, land and other ownership and right to exercise their rights independently (Pickbourn & Ndikumana, 2016). The availability and access to resources for women has a ripple effect on the family, community and nation if they are used relationally with other domains of empowerment. Providing the access and resource for a woman can have a positive effect for her to send her children to school and afford health care services that which in the long run lengthens the amount of time children especially girls spend in school (Eerdewijk et al., 2017).

The embodiment of agency has a profound effect not only on the implementation of human rights but also economically (Kabeer, 2016). Donors, governmental and non-governmental, have a tendency on providing aid that on the one hand that basis on the Human Rights approach and on the other hand has an economic advantage (Bearce & Tirone, 2010). The power of decision-making, leadership, and ability to make choices ultimately results in economic development. When looking at aid-funded
projects that target women’s empowerment through inclusivity and participation, there exists a positive correlation with economic impacts (Bearce & Tirone, 2010; Kabeer, 2016). Figure V shows women’s empowerment from a projects output, outcome, and impact. When women have the ability to make a choice and act upon it, it grants an increase in financial independence and control of household resources that impacts the economic development with the increase in profit and improved livelihood, respectively (UNIDO, 2015).

![Figure V: UNIDO’s measurement of economic empowerment in three spheres. Source: UNIDO (2015)](image)

2.8.2. Structure

In the 1970s, when the feminists were at the forefronts of the developmental debates, they used the concept of women’s empowerment to denote a structural transformation in the political, economic and social spheres within the national and international context (Doherty, 2018). With that being said, agency is heavily dependent on structure; structures have the power of enabling and constraining agency (Eerdewijk et al., 2017). Agency can transform structures, but it is not enough when done from an individual standpoint, there needs to be a transformation in a more substantial structural scope (Stromquist, 2015). In gender equality, women’s fight against social norms and value cannot be addressed individually unless a corporate reform takes place within the structures of institutions (Kabeer, 1999). Institutional structures are practices and regulations that form the power to regulate the agency of women and resources, formally and informally (Eerdewijk et al., 2017). Figure IV shows the interaction of the four domains on the power relation of how they are structurally linked with agency. Inequality in power relations are structurally embedded within relations, norms, laws, and policies ranging from informal to formal structures (Siemiatycki, Enright, & Valverde, 2019).

Structures, according to Farnworth et al. (2013), are composed of two sets of connected concepts. Firstly, the structures of which people live that are classified into political, economic, and social which are composed of institutions households, humanitarian/developmental agencies, and governments.
Secondly, there are the norms, values, and assumptions the first group is led by. Likewise, Eerdewijk et al. (2017) note four arenas in which institutional arrangement takes place: within the household, community, nation, and market. The market compromises of the general economic sphere where the exchange of goods and services takes place (value chain), financial sector, and educational facilities (Eerdewijk et al., 2017). Inclusivity of these arenas is highly valuable as they influence individual and collective agency. The inclusion of women in the decision making, access to finance, labor market integration, decent and equal pay, access to public infrastructure such as education and health care, and political representation is an aspect to work on in transforming structures as they are bounded within their frameworks of laws, policies, norms and rules (Bock, 2015; Eerdewijk et al., 2017; Mudege, Mdege, Abidin, & Bhatasara, 2017).

The categorization of non-governmental, non-profit, and civil societies are categorized under the community arena as they are social groups that have some level of power. Also, in the humanitarian supply chain, it is clear that non-governmental agencies in the local and international levels hold a primary standpoint, and thus have the ability to be transformers or enablers of structures (Kunz & Gold, 2017). Within communities, laws, and norms regarding land ownership, decision-making, marriage, and kinship related power have precedence (Mudege et al., 2017; Ukhova, 2015). Those who are prominent and first-hand gainers from the outcome are men, and this signifies the extent of the gender gap (Kabeer & Sweetman, 2015). However, without the implementing structures through values, norms, laws and polices they have limited power.

The systematic institutional structures influence women in a complex form as there are overlaps among the formal and informal guiding rules within the societies. Cultural norms shape agency by enforcement and compliance through the unknown and routine reproduction of social obligations that have violence, both physical and emotional, ideologies, and power dynamics (Pickbourn & Ndikumana, 2016). The gendered aspect of norms is reproduced through social penalties, social policing, and violence that favor men by bestowing gender privileges, while women are the disadvantaged groups (Eerdewijk et al., 2017). The consequences of the governance of norms have an enormous negative impact on individuals as well as socially and economically (Bullock, Gyau, Mithoefer, & Swisher, 2018). When it comes to the formal institutional structures that are guided by laws and policies which are historically known not to be gender neutral. Even though there are internationally and nationally adopted policies and laws, they are not fully applicable, one, due to the overlapping nature of laws and two when laws are put into place, they are not symbolic there needs to be practicing body (Hunt, Bond, & Ojiambo Ochieng, 2015). An excellent example of gendered laws is the one that states the roles of women and men based on gender giving the role of production to the man and reproduction to the woman justifying and being backed by cultural norms and practices by labeling the man and the head of household (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015). Tax laws can be the reinforcing factors because the man is the household head, or health centers requiring the consent of the husband before providing checkups or giving contraceptives (Eerdewijk et al., 2017). Where there are laws that do not recognize violence or in the case that they do, there usually lacks implementation tactics, again putting women at vulnerable positions even in the face of formal laws and policies. However, developmental assistance can take two turns in addressing this by negatively impacting it without thorough understanding of the situation and providing incentives, or by challenging the formal and informal structures to bring gender equality (Cornwall, 2016).
2.9. Conceptual Framework

Figure VI: Conceptual Framework. (Source: Authors summary)
Chapter 3. Methods

3.1. Research Philosophy

Qualitative research is a methodological approach consists interpretive frameworks used to study meanings and relationships among participants by using various data collection methods interviews, observations, audio-visual material and other nonquantifiable methods (Creswell, 2013; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015). The nature of qualitative approach also enables to understand complex, holistic, and specific aspects of subjects (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, the qualitative research approach is in line with the holistic characteristics of the gender and development concepts; and the scientific research gap to adopt an exploratory research design to explore the structures of non-governmental organizations contribution towards achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment.

In qualitative research, there are four guiding philosophical assumptions made by researchers undertaking qualitative research (Creswell, 2013). According to Creswell (2013), these paradigms are used to answer, the nature of reality; what is meant by knowledge, considered to be, and how they are claimed and justified; the roles values have in research; and the process of the research. The paradigms are known as ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology, respectively. In addition, the paradigms are embedded within philosophical assumptions.

However, this thesis aim constrains it to answer and adopt an unequivocal nature of reality – ontology. The nature of reality for gender issues is embedded within the structure and agency debate as one exists with the other. The ability to make a choice and to act upon it requires a structure (formal and informal) that would enable the agency. By viewing the ontological nature of this thesis, feminist studies focus on the subjective approach on studying women and their lived experiences while deviating from the traditional methodological focus from men. After all, gender is a social construct that is in line with subjectivism. Also, studying women’s consciousness (agency) is incomplete without the understanding the institutional (laws and policies) and social structures (norms and values) that reciprocate to form an important decision-making ability for women. By not merely focusing on the individual, this research gives acknowledges the different structures that enable and constrain agency.

By focusing on the humanitarian supply chain, it recognizes that non-governmental organizations have an essential role to play in attaining a gender equal world, it takes into account the existence of multiple realities. Therefore, by looking into the flow of developmental assistance through the non-governmental organizations contributes to the developmental goal by looking into the approaches of organizations by their projects and programs.

Epistemologies, used in prior times, are scientifically subjective due to the gender imbalance on what is considered to be knowledge and how it is justified by having a blind eye to the difference among genders by predominantly viewing from the male angle (Beetham & Demetriades, 2007). In line with this, this research knowledge is accumulated through the collection of primary data by semi-structured interviews with program managers, gender lead experts, and advisors. The secondary data collection comes from scientific works of literature, reports, and policies. Therefore, it takes a holistic approach in identifying and justifying what knowledge is by studying context specifics and attributed meanings. Among the major research philosophies, the epistemological nature lies with a mix of the postmodernism and interpretivism philosophies, which what is dominant ideologies decide what knowledge is; and perceptions, interpretations, and narratives are the determiners, respectively (Saunders et al., 2015).
Axiology, as defined above, is the role values contribute to this research (Creswell, 2013). The nature of this research within the continua takes a subjectivist stance considerate of the role of values as intrinsic (Saunders et al., 2015). In addition to the primary and secondary data collection, the research relies on the experiences, understandings, knowledge, and skills to analyze and formulate conclusions. The reflexive, holistic, interpretive nature leads to the understanding that there is no one universal and clear cut knowledge to underpin the conclusion as to what can be done to reach the developmental objective to eliminate gender-based inequalities globally. It also stresses on the fact that there exist multiple subjective realities as to how to shape knowledge.

The research basis its framework within feminist theories and that further shape and identify the design of this research is exploratory. Exploratory research helps to identify the realities within humanitarian aid, non-governmental organizations, and the developmental outcome by exploring and identifying the general and specific structural enablers and constrainers. By using the knowledge grasped from the in-depth data collection, this research will contribute towards achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment, which is a global goal.

3.2. Research Approach

The goal of Feminist research approaches is to place the researcher within the research so as to encourage subjectivity and discourage objectivity and establish ethical and transformative research (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research fits well within the goal of feminist research because it provides a method that generates an in-depth understanding by engaging deep within the research. Moreover, the aim of this research is to understand the relationship among donors, non-governmental organizations, and gender equality that leads us to the humanitarian supply chain, which is used to transfer developmental aid. This further led to investigate the organizational and societal structures and barriers that form the blueprint of developmental outcomes.

To meet the objective of this research, the researcher has undergone an in-depth communication and observation with experts in the field of humanitarian aid and supply chain with the focus on gender relations and inclusivity. Therefore, to meet with the objective and answer the research question and sub-questions, a qualitative research approach is chosen along with the reasons mentioned in chapter three, sub-section one.

The qualitative research method is used as the primary form of research approach within this thesis. Although, in geography the use of quantitative and qualitative methods employ their own set of qualities, for this quantitative research approach is chosen due to its diverse set of techniques that explore the subjective meanings of phenomenon by interviews, observation and visual methodologies (Clifford, French, & Valentine, 2010; Rose, 1993). The research and use of this approach are in three phases. The first part consists of desk research that indulges the knowledge from various sources. The second part consists of interviews and observation that enables the researcher to collect the primary source of data. While the third stage consists of the iterative process of analyzing the two forms of data collected to produce a reliable answer to the research question posed. Therefore, the use of a qualitative approach in this research processes is essential because of the in-depth, rich, and holistic nature of the approach.

In researching issues of gender equality and women’s empowerment, it requires an approach that captures the complexity and fluidity of the topic, and qualitative research methods are useful in
employing an approach to best meet the goal (Verschuren, Doorewaard, & Mellion, 2010). The qualitative approach is different from quantitative research approach in the data collection process; qualitative research approach has the capacity to collect data that are intangible in nature and mostly dependent on subjectivity and experiences (Clifford et al., 2010). However, there are restrictions in generalizations due to the dependence of the data collected to the contextual background. More details about the research validity and reliability will be discussed in the following sub-sections.

Qualitative research approach enables for the analysis of feminist theoretical approaches, and empirical data collected. Collecting data through qualitative approaches enables the researcher to employ the holistic nature of qualitative techniques through the primary stages of collection, analysis, and formulation of conclusion. However, quantitative data are used within the thesis, but the research depends mainly on the qualitative approach.

3.3. Research Strategy

Depending on the goal of the research, the research strategy is laid out (Saunders et al., 2015). The aim of research sets a foundation for the type of strategy used in a thesis. The aim of this thesis, following the in-depth literature review, is to disentangle the structures of non-governmental organizations and identify the barriers that hinder the progress of a global goal of achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls. From an extensive review of Creswell (2013), Saunders et al. (2015) and Yin (2003), using a case study research strategy fits the context of this thesis.

In qualitative research, research strategies are actions of research that link the philosophical assumptions and research approach to the data collection and analysis (Saunders et al., 2015). In other words, the design of a research aid in the process of data collection as well as to link empirical evidence to the research question and the formulation of a conclusion (Yin, 2003). According to Creswell (2013), there are five research strategies, and they are Narrative Study, Phenomenological Study, Grounded Theory, Ethnography study, and Case Study. Among which each research strategy has its own set of objectives and focus. The Narrative approach is a method that studies individuals and their lived experiences by analyzing the data collected through personal experiences and presenting it in an orderly way that narrates the stories of individuals (Creswell, 2013). Ethnography Study is a research strategy that studies a group who share the same culture or social world and analyzes the elements within the group (Saunders et al., 2015). Phenomenological studies are centered around a phenomenon and measure the experiences of individuals by conducting interviews and in some cases involves observations and other documents that relate to the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013).

Grounded Theory is a form of qualitative methods that seek to generate theory from the data collected various methods of data collection by going back and forth from data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2013).

By an iterative process of going through the objectives of the above research methods and the aim, research question, and criteria for the exploratory research, the researcher has aligned with a case study design. The case study approach is used to gain an in-depth understanding of the interactions of concepts, subject, and those involved within a situation in the original setting (Yin, 2003). What makes case study different from the other approaches is that it takes into account the context of the situation along with the data collected (Saunders et al., 2015). When trying to understand the structural barriers within non-governmental organizations and their relationships with their donors, it
points directly towards what the causes for the current successes and barriers are for achieving gender equality, not only within reach of a specific organization but with the global network structures as a whole.

Moreover, conducting a case study, according to Yin (2003), by using the single case approach is suitable for researches that use holistic theoretical basis. Therefore, gender equality is a holistic concept as well as bounded in the supply chain activities within the relationship of donors, non-governmental organizations, and aid receivers who happen to be located in the Global South. However, as every methodological strategy has its positive and negative aspects, this choice also contains both sides. Yin (2003) argues that on the downside, there is a probability that the research is conducted on an abstract level which lacks on the specifications. However, on the positive note, the research has a more global approach not conforming to any specific level of analysis in the operational scale (Clifford et al., 2010; Yin, 2003).

The research population for this thesis consists of expert staff members from non-governmental organizations such as Solidaridad Network, UTZ – the Label and Program for Sustainable Farming and the Rainforest Alliance; and from the donor perspective, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). These organizations are mainly engaged in the production of an inclusive and sustainable supply chain globally. The organizations where chosen based on the criteria that were acquired during the literature review. The selection of the organizations covers four sets of criteria: development aid, Structures, and agency (organizational and societal structures), inclusivity with other organizations with a gender focus and monitoring and evaluation.

The first part of the evaluation criteria of structure and agency are mutually exclusive concepts that are important to empower women and achieve gender equality. The two domains are described in chapter two, showing their relationship with the individual and the repercussions to the economy. It asks the questions on how incorporating gender into the organizational structures contribute to the overall goal. It seeks to identify the roles of cultural norms and exclusionary practices and what the organizational approaches are to address it. The other questions focus on access to opportunities and resources and their inclusive nature. The last part focuses on the enabling environment where formal laws and policies are restructured towards equality and to what extent the organizations contribute to it.

The second evaluation criteria focus on developmental aid. To fulfill the sustainable development goals, one goal focuses explicitly on building partnerships. There are several governmental and non-governmental donors that fund projects that tackle gender inequalities, and other means through the humanitarian supply chains. By identifying who is the primary donor, it seeks to understand if there are funds that are allocated to gender-related projects? The degree to which the donors influence the projects by establishing specific guidelines for the organizations to follow, or do they require gender-specific target groups or do they invest in sustainable internal organizational reforms? This section also digs deep on understanding if there is a dedicated gender budget or presence of gender expertise across all geographical locations.

Inclusivity, which is the third set of criteria, seeks to understand the level of partnership with local organizations. Working together with local women-led organizations have shown a more significant impact on tackling gender inequalities (Hunt, Bond, & Ojjiambo Ochieng, 2015). To what extent are northern organizations inclusive of local women-led organizations?
The fourth and the last part is based on the argument that empowerment or gender equality is not something that can be done and achieved in a project that has a life span of two to five years. It is a process and therefore requires effective monitoring, evaluation, and follow up mechanisms. Moreover, sustainability is a key theme in the evaluation criteria.

Also, these organizations have a gender focus embedded throughout their organizational structures and programs that meet the objective of this thesis. On the other hand, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs is chosen because it is the main institutional donor for these organizations as they are based in the Netherlands but operate globally – Solidaridad operates in 8 regions, UTZ and Rainforest Alliance have an impact in 130 countries and 40 countries, respectively. However, it does not mean that the organizations solely rely on funds from the Dutch government.

### 3.4. Research Methods

Saunders et al. (2015) define research methods as a process within the design of the research itself that employs a means and a method for accomplishing data collection and data analysis. For this thesis, the data collection is performed in two folds, by secondary desk research and primary data collection. The research aims to include experts from the donor agencies and non-governmental organizations that are working with gender as part of their organizational structures with developmental relations in line with the aid for trade that aims to create an inclusive and sustainable development in the global south (OECD & WTO, 2019).

As mentioned previously, the main aim for this thesis to choose qualitative research methodology as opposed to quantitative methodology and employ a case study strategy is to get an in-depth understanding of the relationship among donors, non-governmental organizations and the developmental goal of achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment. Therefore, data collection is in a more target-oriented to find the information needed to meet the research objective and answer the research question. The respondents were chosen by studying the organizational background and recommendations from people from within the development industry. Purposive sampling is used to select the respondents due to their knowledge and ability to understand the objective of gender and development issues (Creswell, 2013).

The primary data collection for this thesis takes in the from semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the main source of primary data collection because they enable the researcher to explore with the theme, it gives a certain level of room for probing and getting a clear picture of the phenomenon, and it will also help the researcher to stay within the range of the topic that is being studied for a better focus (Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson, & Kangasniemi, 2016). When conducting interviews that are partly or wholly structured, it is required from the interviewer to develop an interview guide. The researcher has, therefore developed interview guides to gain as much information possible from the respondents. The interview guides prepared for this thesis are based on the research questions that were prepared in the initial stages of the development of the paper. Moreover, scientific works of literature, daily debates in more general issues were taken from daily debates in the media, and other sources of information as the basis for the interview guides. The interview guide, together with an audio recorder, is used as a tool for the interview session. The availability of the tools will aid the researcher’s sensitivity and ability to learn the qualitative interview as a craft which constitutes the advantages of this method.
In qualitative methodology, it is recommended to take certain precautions before conducting interviews (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, the researcher used interview techniques provided by the universities e-learning platform to prepare for the interviews. The purpose of these steps is to test the interview guide and to remember all the necessary steps to take in the actual interview (Verschuren et al., 2010). The first step to reach the respondents was the drafting of invitation letters, which carried the same message but was tailored to each respondent. The letter was sent to the respective research participants via email, and that set out a meeting for the interview. Throughout the process from the total number of participants, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs was contacted through colleagues who have informed the participant about the research via ‘snowball effect’ (Verschuren et al., 2010).

In addition to primary data collection, the researcher relies on secondary data in the form of desk research. According to Verschuren et al. (2010), secondary data has three main characteristics: it uses materials that have been collected by other people with reflection, the researcher has no contact with women involved in the supply chains, and the research materials collected provide a perspective that is different from the researcher. In order to perform exploratory and holistic research, the researcher uses different forms of scientific pieces of literature, books, reports, statistical materials, and articles (Creswell, 2013).

When conducting research on concepts such as gender and development, it requires a level of reliance on literature and statistical data to understand and make an analysis. This use of secondary data takes a significant share in the forms of data collection in this thesis. Moreover, the set of criteria used to explore this thesis was derived from the literature study. This, in a way, portrays the dependence of desk research or in other words, the use of existing scientific works of literature, reports, and quantifiable data to this research. In conclusion, with the use of both primary and secondary data, this research explores the duality of structures and agency with a lens that seeks to understand the barriers and successes of developmental organizations to meet the most crucial developmental goal – gender equality and women’s empowerment.

3.5. Data Analysis

The data analysis process starts with the transcribing the interview recording. All primary data collected in the form of semi-structured interviews have been recorded and transcribed. The transcription process aids in extracting data acquired accurately. In addition to the audio recording the researcher has kept notes during the interviews conducted with each respondent. The next stage in the data analysis process is supported using a computer software program called Atlas.ti. Atlas.ti is a tool used to collect, store and manage the data collected and it does not analyze the data itself (Creswell, 2013; Friese, 2012). By using the software support, the data collected including the interview transcripts were uploaded and coded using the open coding, in vivo coding and list coding. The codes that were formulated in the initial stage where then categorized and grouped into themes. In line with the set of criteria developed by in-depth analysis from the desk research, the data analysis takes an abduction approach to theory development. An abductive form of research is used due to its alignment with exploratory approach used in the research. In this type of research approach, data collected is disentangled and collected into themes that check with the theoretical underpinnings and lead to the interaction of general and specific (Saunders et al., 2015). The next step is the discussion of the data that will lead to the conclusions of the findings and possible policy recommendations.
3.6. Research Reliability and Validity

Unlike other authors, Creswell (2013) defines research validity in qualitative research as the process of attempting to assess the accurateness of the research findings. Gender equality and women’s empowerment are two broad concepts that cannot be measured with a universal tool. These concepts are relative to time and space. It is stated in chapter two that what one identifies to be an important indicator in the United States cannot necessarily be of the same value in Kenya or as a matter of fact in the Netherlands. The situational and geographic dependency can be seen as a limitation to address and contact all stakeholders that are active participants in the value chain. In addition to that, the shortage of the and language barriers have setback the researcher to fully assess the phenomenon that has led to the reliance heavily on secondary research materials.

This thesis has come across multiple barriers when conducting this research. The first one is time constraints, the second one is the unavailability and non-responsive of experts within the field. This has limited the outreach of the research and created a reliance on multiple sources of data by using a limited triangulation strategy. Therefore, in its own way, the research is constrained in the research validity and reliability.

3.7. Ethical Concerns

The role of ethics is central to qualitative research methods in its inception, planning, designing and implementing process (Creswell, 2013). There is a large misconception with regards to research ethics is only used in the data collection method (Saunders et al., 2015). However, this did not limit the understanding of the researcher. From the primary data collection stage, the researcher explicitly stated the purpose of the research, its question and use of the data collected. In addition to that, respondents were asked for their consent to record the interview for the sole purpose of sourcing information accurately. The data received in the form of semi-structured interviews is restricted in as the respondents are employees of the organization and are bound by certain rules and regulation that hinders them from giving out their honest and unbiased opinion. Additional information that were sourced from respondents were given the approval to be used in the research.

The other main role of ethics is in the qualitative research is the role of the researcher within the research (Creswell, 2013). It is impossible to separate the researcher from the research as there is personal biases that are implicitly positioned within this research. The researcher’s background in terms of country of origin, gender and internship organization have shaped the thoughts, data collection and writing process of this paper. In the beginning of the research, the researcher chose the topic of gender equality and women’s empowerment for a specific personal interest that is linked with a global developmental goal with a combination of value chains as sustainable food sourcing is the direction that needs to be sought after due the current environmental issues and increasing in population.
Chapter 4. Analysis and Discussions

4.1. Organizational Overview and Context

4.1.1. Solidaridad Network

Founded in 1969, Solidaridad Network is a civil society organization that operates globally across eight regions in Africa, Asia, Europe, South America, and North America. The organization has a strong mission and vision that aims for sustainable supply chains with a strong focus on producers and market development. Taking into account the ever-growing global population and the foreseen environmental insecurities that have a ripple effect on the society, Solidaridad is working towards sustainable solutions to this problem. Solidaridad has one core mission; it is to include the producers that are responsible for the production of the resources that the people all around depend on. The main aim of sustainable production is derived from the challenge of producing more with less (Solidaridad, 2019). The main area of focus is on the sustainable production of agricultural produces. However, the organization is not limited to only the agricultural sector. In 2019, Solidaridad works in 13 commodities, namely aquaculture, cocoa, coffee, cotton, dairy, fruits and vegetables, gold, livestock, palm oil, soy, sugarcane, tea, and textiles.

Within the organization, there are five innovation areas that Solidaridad focuses on: Impact Investments, Landscapes Innovation, Climate Innovation, Digital Solutions, and Gender Inclusivity. These themes are composed of their own set of teams to develop and enhance knowledge and implementation. As mentioned previously, gender is one of the innovation areas. Gender is not new to the organization; but it has been systematically included, since 2016, across the global network to develop an understanding and acknowledging the importance of gender across the network. This approach has also been a way for the organization to position itself with regards to where it stands on the gender inclusivity and to be able to develop guidelines and tools that will be used in the implementation phase. Following this, in 2017, Solidaridad has developed a gender policy that has been approved by the International Supervisory Board (ISB) – the highest decision-maker in the organization. That set the milestone for the development of a durable, more concrete, and practical implementation tool that basis the gender policy.

In addition to the gender policy, Solidaridad is actively working on gender mainstreaming not only within its projects but also within the internal organizational framework. According to Solidaridad’s strategy paper – The Journey of Solidaridad Towards Gender Inclusivity published in May 2019 – points out two critical insights that have been taken from the past 50 years with regards to gender inclusivity, the first one is that for gender inclusivity to work, it has to be part of the organizations structures, the strategies, plans, programs, and policies. The second insight focuses on the people that make the organization, gender programs, policies, or strategies work when there are equal opportunities and resources for both men and women. While these two insights are massively valuable, there are differences from one region to another on the extent to which they are embedded within the internal organizational structures, programs, and projects. Solidaridad is fully aware of the progress and differences that exist across the network, including the barriers. With the help of the gender team known as the Gender Taskforce, that is comprised of gender focal persons from each region across the network, and the knowledge-sharing platform they can communicate and work towards closing the gap. However, one significant barrier is the shortage of capacity to bring the desired change within a short timeframe. In the European Regional Expertise Center (REC Europe), gender focal points are
constrained as they have limited time to spend on gender due to their primary job responsibilities. However, according to Emma – Knowledge Management and Learning Advisor, Gender Specialist and the Gender Focal Person for REC Europe – there are improvements in the integration of gender within the organization but she believes that if more time is spent on it, it will speed up the process a bit more driving the organization and the world closer to the goal.

Referring to the gender knowledge sharing platform, the gender policy aims to integrate gender into the internal organization and across all programs and projects, and the knowledge platform is one of the tools that enable this. Solidaridad has a framework that aids in the operationalization known as the Gender ABC. The ‘A’ is the first step of the framework that analyzes and addresses the barriers to participation, ‘B’ is the second step to which hierarchical power relations that are based on gender are put in question. The Gender ‘B’ works towards creating equal power relations where both men and women can actively engage in. The last step, the Gender ‘C’ is about inclusivity and partnership between men and women based on shared interests and values. What can be drawn from this framework is that Solidaridad has moved away from the gender myth that gender in the development industry is synonymous with women. Solidaridad strongly believes in gender inclusivity and that by working together with men and women, the desired change can be achieved.

4.1.2. UTZ/ Rainforest Alliance

Prior to 2018, UTZ and Rainforest Alliance were two separate entities. In 2018, the two organizations merged and jointly works towards improving the environmental and social issues globally. Going back to the main aim of UTZ before it merged with Rainforest Alliance, UTZ is a certification program that promotes and works towards sustainable farming of four priority commodities: cocoa, coffee, hazelnuts, and tea. In addition to these priority commodities, the previous Rainforest Alliance worked on bananas, palm oil and forest products and non-priority commodities such as cut flowers, spices, and herbs. Rainforest Alliance is a similar certification program with different standards that works on a broader scale as compared to UTZ. In comparison to UTZ, Rainforest Alliance has a wide range of themes it focuses on forests, food, and farming, wildlife, climate, and people. Both organizations, before their merger, had a geographical outreach that extended to Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America.

The merger between UTZ and Rainforest Alliance was officiated in 2018, and the new organization came to be known as Rainforest Alliance. The purpose of the merger is to increase the impact the organizations are setting and simultaneously to attract and strengthen the partnership. However, due to their financial and structural limitations, the name UTZ, and its standards are still used in the certification program. It is expected that the two organizations will come up with a shared standard and certification program in 2020. The organization’s primary mission is to enhance the sustainable production of agricultural produces and envisions a world where, one, producers, mainly farmers, employ good agricultural practices and are able to manage their farms and produces with respect to the environment and people. Two, creating an ecosystem where sustainable production is the norm, and investments are driven to increase the industry while acknowledging the importance. Third and the last one, to ensure that consumers know where and how their products are sourced from.

While working to ensure sustainable value chains, the organization works towards a number of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Out of the 17 goals, UTZ works have a contributions to alleviating poverty (SDG 1), eliminating hunger (SDG 2), ensuring healthy lives (SDG 3), gender equality
(SDG 5), the sustainable use of water in agricultural practices (SDG 6), works towards decreasing inequalities by giving equal opportunities and resources for training and advocacy works (SDG 10), Climate and environment smart production is at the core of the organization (SDG 13), and the protection of the ecosystem and further reduce harmful impacts (SDG 15). The works that address these developmental goals can be seen across different levels of the value chain.

UTZ/Rainforest Alliance’s approach towards addressing the developmental goals, as mentioned above, affect the whole chain from producers to consumers and within it has an impact on the society, communities, households, environment, and economy in the local and international context (KIT, Agri-ProFocus, & IIRR, 2012). In line with this, UTZ’s believes that its mission to ensure sustainable supply chain can only work if gender inequalities are addressed. According to UTZ’s gender position paper (2017), gender concerns the relations, roles, opportunities, and responsibilities that are assigned based on social norms, values, rules, and regulation. For UTZ, achieving gender equality is mainly a human right, but also sees the business, market-oriented benefits of it too. According to Viviana – Gender Officer at UTZ/ Rainforest Alliance, “It is known that there us a lot of evidence that farming and producing any commodity is being done by men as much as it is being done by women if we talk about smallholder farmers or estates, but when it comes to representation, visibility, resources, opportunities, and decision-making power attention is given to the male farmers. We should give attention to all producers, not only to men because it is a human right to make decisions for issues that affect people directly.” The contribution UTZ brings towards gender equality in its work is by ensuring that both men and women farmers have equal opportunities, resources and access, inclusive participation of men and women in decision-making venues, and to ensure that there is no discrimination based on gender in income generation. The organization also prides itself on having strong and diverse partners from local to international organizations.

4.1.3. Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Before going into the details of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), it is essential to clarify that the MFA is the main institutional donor for both Solidaridad and UTZ/Rainforest Alliance. The Netherlands MFA mainly takes the human rights approach to why gender equality is important. In line with the sustainable development goals of achieving gender equality between men and women holds a prominent place within the ministry. According to Baukje a Senior Policy Coordinator, “Gender and women’s rights hold an important place in the ministry and the Minister, and the Director-General of International Cooperation is very serious about it and are working together to ensure it. In the Netherlands, gender equality is being addressed, and unfortunately, in the world around us, it is not that prominent. Therefore, the ministry works to ensure this theme in many countries worldwide.”

In the 2018 policy document on Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation – Investing in Global Prospects, the ministry has set four goals that also intersects with other goals. These are (1) Increasing the role of women in decision-making, participation and in leadership in political, economic and social spheres; (2) to enhance the economic empowerment of women and also improve the economic conditions; (3) working towards eliminating gender-based violence to women and girls; and (4) to increase the participate of women in peace and conflict process and to enhance the protection of women and girls in conflict-affected areas. These goals are set and enhanced through the mainstreaming its policy throughout the works of the ministry. Gender mainstreaming is the main approach used to mainstream gender equality and women’s empowerment through the organization
According to Bock (2015), gender mainstreaming framework aims to change the structures, process, and policy domains from continuously reproducing and inherently creating a negative impact that affects women. In line with this argument, the gender mainstreaming approach incorporated gender equality and women’s rights in all aspects of its foreign policy.

So, by using the gender mainstreaming approach, the ministry integrates gender across all of its funds, programs, and policies. There are three main programs that are designed and operationalized by the ministry that have explicit gender focus. These are the Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women (FLOW) fund in Asia and Africa, the Better Work program, and the female entrepreneurship program in East Africa. In addition to this, the ministry has a fund that works towards women’s empowerment in the market known as the Women Entrepreneurs Financing Initiative. These programs are rolled out by the ministry with a specific gender focus in order to meet the goals that have been set by the Foreign Trade and Development cooperation policy note. Moreover, the government also supports non-governmental organizations that are working towards SDG 5. There are two programs; one is a project run by SNV, a Dutch developmental organization, that works towards enhancing women’s enterprises in agri-business in Vietnam and Kenya. The other one is the World Bank Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality that works in the form of advocacy, creating awareness, knowledge sharing, and inclusive policymaking.

The ministry contributes to achieving its goals through funds that are set directly from the MFA, and some funds are channelled through embassies that are located in different parts of the world. For practical reasons, the MFA does not implement programs as it is one, labor-intensive and requires specific expertise at the grassroots level. This findings from the ministry do not align with the argument of Davis (2019), on which he claims that developmental aid resorts to non-governmental implementors as it is perceived that the inefficient bureaucratic structures of government institutions hinder the success of projects, while non-governmental organizations have a transparent, efficient and goal-oriented approach when it comes to implementation. On a positive note, the ministry believes that this leads to working in close proximity and engagement with partners. The Senior Policy Coordinator emphasized the strong partnership that exists among its partners. One of the methods they use is called gender diplomacy; this is a platform that encourages partners and countries to work together towards the common goal. The diplomacy works within the European Union and the United Nations on a global level. So, by continually figuring out ways to reach the goal, the gender diplomacy tool engages everyone to work towards the common goal.

Furthermore, with regards to the stability of the funds, it is argued that funds are unstable in character (Oloruntoba & Gray, 2006). However, Baukje (Senior Policy Coordinator at the MFA) disagrees, she notes the stability of funds and emphasizing that the Netherlands ranks 5th in using the OECD-DAC gender policy marker. The OECD-DAC is a tool that is used to track if the Development Assistant Committee (DAC) members developmental aid projects have a policy objective that specifically addresses gender equality (OECD, 2016). Onlorunroba & Gray (2006), argue that there should be a stronger linkage of developmental aid and academia that would benefit the organizations by providing good practices based on knowledge that will aid in achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment. Additionally, they also argue that with a holistic issue such as gender equality, there needs a multi-sided approach to understand gender from a social change theory to the implementation processes. To be able to do this, the Netherlands MFA has a knowledge-sharing
platform and a group of experts within the ministry that together make up the gender task force. The task force is responsible for the production of knowledge across all departments in the ministry that take place in the form of training and creating a hub where all the information is easily accessible for everyone including the embassies and their experts oversees. In some instances, these platforms are shared with the public. They also have public campaigns; a recent campaign is the ‘Orange the World’ campaign.

4.2. The Relationship of the Two Domains

In the developmental industry, gender equality is understood as being a standalone goal as well as a cross-cutting goal that has contributions to the social, economic, and political spheres (Rosati & Faria, 2019). This poses a challenge in two ways, one, when gender is seen as a cross-cutting issue, the focus can be lost in translation. Solidaridad’s Gender Task Force lead shares her experience working with this in the eastern Africa region, and she articulately puts it as, “Gender is the work of everybody and nobody at the same time.” When projects and programs are planned, there is a need for gender experts to voice in their opinions; however, the infrastructures are not that developed yet to fully create awareness in the internal structures for project managers or any expert within its field to run their work through a gender lens. Therefore, leaving responsibilities unaccounted for. The other challenge is related to the first one in ways of lacking focus when there are gender components in the project inception phase, and this is later losing focus in the implementation phase. Denu, a country representative for UTZ/Rainforest Alliance in Ethiopia, stresses on how gender equality being seen as a cross-cutting goal is holding back the impact that can be created if it was to be viewed as a standalone goal.

Where gender equality is equated with fairness among genders, gender equality focuses on three interrelated domains of structure, agency, and resources (Cornwall et al., 2017; Stromquist, 2015; Kabeer, 1999). Solidaridad’s stance on gender equality or as the organization knows it as gender inclusivity approach is built on two pillars. Solidaridad strongly believes that gender equality can only be achieved if it is part of internal organizational structures – policies, strategies, and guidelines. The second one is focused on creating awareness and equipping the internal staff with gender knowledge. This pillar is built on a three-layer business case, using resources to their full capacity and enhancing opportunities for women to advance in the social and economic spheres; creating an inclusive environment where men and women’s approaches, perspectives and decision-making skills are valued; and increasing investment in gender inclusivity has a guaranteed profitable return.

4.2.1. Structures

The gender policy of Solidaridad has two levels, gender in programming and gender in the organization. Gender within the organization is set up with by embedding gender in the HR matrix; this means that there are gender focal points for every region and that person is responsible for setting up their own gender teams so that the responsibility does not lie on one person. The team is responsible for institutionalizing gender into the organization and its projects. The other one is related to gender and programming. Solidaridad has developed a set of 11 themes that need to be focused on, and the Gender ABC guideline mentioned previously serves for the purpose of implementing the themes. The themes are depicted in Figure VII.
The themes, in Figure VII, are classified in four levels across the value chain. The first level consists of the producer and infrastructure level where there is a focus on gender inclusivity in the roles of reproduction and production, knowledge and skills development for women in all levels, improvement of infrastructure for health and nutrition and finally inclusive access to finance for both men and women. The second level is landscapes level which focuses on decision-making, representation and the development of inclusive land-use frameworks. The country-level focuses on a broader pool of
challenging the cultures, norms, and community practices that are exclusionary and on the formal level, it works towards gender-equal policy advocacy. Moreover, the last market-level focus on using the best business practices, being part of certification and standards programs and creating and being part of an inclusive partnership with stakeholders in the international and national contexts. Therefore, by using these themes and implementing them through their gender ABC operationalization method, the organization moves a step closer to working towards gender equality and women’s empowerment. Not all eleven themes are applicable to every geographical location. The difference that Stormquist (2015) strongly argues in his paper, falls in line with the research findings that gender issues are not the same everywhere. In regions where mining is the main economic means, you see the question of legitimizing women miners being the issue with policy. While in regions where coffee is the main trade commodity, gender issues are related with land rights and access to finance.

On the other hand, UTZ/Rainforest Alliance has a similar approach as Solidaridad but gives more focus on gender equality and women’s empowerment at producer level. Their gender strategy focuses on households, accessibility to training, markets and finance, and enhancing women’s capabilities by engaging men and women. At the internal organizational level, there is a strong push from the gender experts for gender to be integral part of the organization so as to save it from being the only responsibility of experts. The organization believes that, any expert that works in the office in any location should have the ability to (1) carry out their work in a gender sensitive way and (2) be able to recognize the gender dimension of what their work is about.

Referring to the argument made by Kunz & Gold (2017), of how the importance of governmental and non-governmental organizations need to develop a situation where it’s a win-win situation to all actors involved and stressing on the importance that it requires to know what aid recipients need and to improve the knowledge platform. This is the first step for both organizations to do a gender analysis either by their local offices or their local partners. This somehow defies the one size fits all developmental approach used by most organizations. The approaches mostly seem to be developed from the north in the case of UTZ/Rainforest Alliance. However, for Solidaridad, there is a gender task force that is responsible for the development of approaches and tools. For both organizations, they follow somewhat of a similar approach in their first phase. For every region or project, they start off with a gender analysis. This helps them understand the social context – culture and norms.

4.2.2. Agency

Gender at Work’s framework draws the attention to four quadrants that need change, and within them, it stresses the importance to change women’s and men’s consciousness at the individual and informal level (Cornwall, 2016). The question here lies on what is being done to transform individual agency? The standard method for both organizations is working towards creating an inclusive educational/training facility, enhancing women participation and increasing decision-making abilities. An example taken from UTZ/Rainforest Alliance is on creating visibility in cooperative boards that if women take part in the fields of coffee production, they too should be part of the main decision-making. Their work is mainly done through advocacy, training and creating awareness. In addition to this, as part of the certification program, members should strictly adhere to the rules and regulation, which means also fulfilling the gender requirements.
Agency refers to the ability to make choices that enable one to act upon them (Farnworth et al., 2013). When we say this, it is unclear to what extent the organizations are leaving the decisions upon women and men. Increasing participation and inclusive decision-making can and should be backed by strong educational pillars that strengthen women and men’s capabilities. Due to cultural and place sensitivity and the already existing power dynamics between influential non-governmental organizations and weak villages or townships in the rural parts of a country in the global south, in this case in East Africa, it is observed that some of these strategies are instead imposed. However, UTZ/ Rainforest Alliance disagrees with this assumption, according to Viviana, “Encouraging cooperative members to elect women representatives among them does not mean imposing, it does not mean imposing our own ideas on the fact that a board should always be 50/50 because it is not our vision. But our vision is rather, if someone is involved in a certain occupation, they should also be able to have a say in what affects that occupation.” This is where cultures, norms, and societal practices influence the agency. In situations where women are responsible for reproductive roles and are not acknowledged for their contribution in productive roles, therefore, automatically being deprived of their agency. One of the most significant barriers is holding back from the advancement of individual agency is exclusionary cultural practices and norms. In Ethiopia, social norms prevent women smallholder farmers from voicing their needs to participate in marketing. In Kenya, if men leave their production roles to help women in their reproduction roles, they are immediately shunned by their community members. These examples of the relationship between structures and agency pose a great challenge for both men and women. The other observation that needs to be accounted for is that it is superficial to take the approach that western born ideologies can be fully implemented in non-western societies. The question of the division of labor is addressed mainly through awareness creation; both organizations take the approach of trying to change the perception of households, communities, and societies that roles should be inclusive, both men and women can be responsible for household as well as production work. These arguments are backed by the inability of women to go to the markets which are most commonly located far away from the households, or the fear that their children will not be taken care of. This ultimately reflects on the ability of the women to make decisions on revenue generation that has the power to empower women to make their own decisions. In the findings, it is seen that women are not restricted to the role of reproduction only but rather they play a dual role. It goes against the most preconceived notion that women are limited to reproduction roles and men are assigned to production role (Razavi & Miller, 1995). However, once again, this is cut short due to societal norms.

In regard to restructuring formal laws and policies, both organizations are at the initial stages of building up their capacity. Solidaridad has a couple of policy influencing works; however, it is focused mainly on the sustainable standards and not much on gender equality and women’s empowerment. Recently, in the gold mining sector in Peru, Solidaridad made a significant contribution to formalizing and acknowledging female miners by the government and their allowed to trade into the formal gold markets. The important lesson that the organization has drawn from this is that policymakers have a huge role in facilitating structural changes such as access to services and improved livelihoods. In UTZ/Rainforest Alliance, contributes to the restructuring of policies on a smaller scale as compared to Solidaridad. An example of their work is changing company and cooperative policies to increase women’s participation by creating specific standards or criteria. According to Viviana, “Many cooperatives require members to be landowners and while women cannot own land in the specific country due to customary roles, rules. So a small policy change that we can encourage, and we have
encouraged cooperatives to change their own membership requirements so that you don’t need to be a landowner or maybe if you need to be a landowner, it would be for a small portion of land so that it would be easier for women to join. So, we have contributed to that level of policy change regarding gender. But I can't give an example of a national policy that we have changed that regards gender.”

Additionally, in human agency and for gender equality, capabilities, health and knowledge are the basic human abilities (Pickbourn & Ndikumana, 2016). The basis for both Solidaridad and UTZ/Rainforest Alliance is inclusive trainings. Through trainings both within the organization and the projects, it creates awareness of the gendered inequalities that exist. Solidaridad has a theme that focuses on health and nutrition and in combination with the other advocacy work, in the long run tries to equip women with the necessary resources to sustain livelihood. Whereas, for UTZ/Rainforest Alliance, it is unclear on how it works in the direction of health and nutrition. Access to resources has a positive correlation with the health and wealth of a household and communities.

4.2.3. Funding

In developmental aid, donors occupy the top chain of the humanitarian supply chain that is shown in figure III (Oloruntoba and Gray, 2006). The Netherlands is among the countries that give great emphasis on gender equality and women’s empowerment. As explained above, developmental aid that is dismantled through the Netherlands MFA has specific criteria and guidelines for organizations – in most cases, non-governmental organizations or civil-society organization has to fulfill. Emma, Knowledge Management, Learning Advisor and Gender Specialist at Solidaridad, gave an example of a call from the Ministry, “For instance, the Dutch government in one of their calls, they had, as a requirement that the gender strategy and the proposal had to meet the WHO Gender Marker Standards. So, WHO has a specific set of criteria that determine a concept note or proposal if it is gender blind, gender harmful, gender-sensitive, gender-responsive, or gender transformative. They [Dutch government] said that you have to have at least gender responsive, I think. And they would prefer to have a gender transformative strategy. So, if you were assessing yourself and submitting a proposal and you had to explain if you were not gender-sensitive or transformative, why not? And how you would then ensure that it would be gender transformative or gender-responsive.”

Requirements and guidelines such as these are taken seriously, as this has been confirmed from the MFA.

From the inception phase of the projects up until completion, projects and the organizations pass through a set of monitoring and evaluation. For every project, putting into account the commodity and geographical location goes through has indicators and expertise who follow up and check on the projects. However, it is not clear whether there are follow up mechanisms after a project that aims to achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment regardless of being a cross-cutting goal or a primary goal is available. Feminist have claimed that empowerment is not something that can be achieved in a specific set of time or something that is done; instead it is a process (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015; Kabeer, 1999). Therefore, organizations and donors should aim for a more clear and transparent approach when it comes to answering the question of ‘what happens when a funds end?’

The most commonly mentioned topic when it comes to funding and developmental aid is the issue related to internal organizational capacity building. It again comes down to the value of working towards gender equality has two benefits, whether it is seen in the human rights argument or the business case model. Therefore, nowadays, there is an increasing focus on gender inclusivity in
projects and the organizational capacity buildings but neglect the fact that it requires a specialist or gender expertise. More and more organizations are seeing the importance of gender expertise within its own resources than extending their hand to external consultants. Having gender expertise within the office increases the sustainability of the projects or programs that are being drafted. However, this does not mean that all staff members should put the responsibility on the one dedicated person. For example, in UTZ/Rainforest Alliance, there are two dedicated gender focal persons for the whole organization. In Solidaridad, there is a mix of gender experts. It is visible in the East Africa region, there is a dedicated gender expert, but in the European office, that person dedicates a fraction of her full-time equivalent to gender.

4.2.4. Partnership and Inclusivity

In the developmental industry, there is an increasing recognition for actors who work in the multiple stakeholder platform (Hunt et al., 2015). According to Hunt et al. (2015), in the international development arena, humanitarian donors give great emphasis to the inclusive and participatory approach that include men and women, and local actors. The existing power relations, cultural norms, and practices most often do not console with women or local women organizations. The Netherlands MFA has funded such as FLOW, Better Work, and We-fi that require working with women organizations as their main target or aim is to reach women enterprises, women farmers in the agri-business fields. In addition to the funds that are set out, the ministry also supports organizations that strengthen economic opportunities for women in agri-business in the global south.

Among the criteria set in the interview guide, is to assess if the organization and the donor acknowledge and practice partnership with women-led southern organizations. The answer to all three parties is a definite, yes. For example, in the coffee value chain at the producer level in Ethiopia, since there is limited funding available and limited number of women led-organizations working, UTZ/Rainforest Alliance works in partnership with a women-led cooperative in the council. Their partnership aids, both the certification program and the women involved in the communities. The Ethiopian country representative is quoted explaining their relationship, “We work together with them [Women, Children and Youth Affair] because they are also the one who helps us to, to rule out our project at the community level and they participate in our workshops, in our training. We receive feedback from them, or now we can tackle these challenges. So, we are working very closely, but due to limitation, in terms of the resources, we have to implement these activities at a narrow community level. I would say that we only operate at selected areas, areas that we engage with the local government structures within the community in the areas where we have identified for our project.” The structural limitation has, once again, an effect on partnership with local organizations.

Moreover, from the European standpoint, the extent to which non-governmental organizations exchange information and work together has been observed. This is part of the sustainable developmental goals, to increase partnership and work with different organizations from governmental to non-governmental and from local to international. It is highly advantageous in mitigating and working towards a sustainable future together.
Chapter 5. Conclusion

This research started off with data showing that no country has achieved gender equality, nor will it achieve gender equality in 2030. Inequality has and continues to affect people globally - the more poverty-stricken a society, the more inequality there is. Gender is by no means an exception; rather, it is the basis for exclusion. Gender inequalities are deeply rooted in structures, in the formal and informal. However, there are many international and national advocates and organizations working to eradicate gender inequalities that exist. The sustainable developmental goal has a separate goal aimed at achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment. Governments and non-governmental organizations are ever-increasingly improving their understanding of the importance of gender equality. The term gender is subject to misunderstandings and a large pool of myths and is understood by different peoples and entities differently. There are two types of approaches that are used today: human rights and business model. This thesis finds that the human rights approach is used in combination with the business case model. This is due to the (1) misunderstanding what human rights for gender stands for and (2) the popularity of market-oriented approach that leads to the view the benefits one can get from investing in this cause.

Before delving further into the conclusion of this thesis, the main standpoint or the main research question is, “To what extent does developmental assistance from donors channeled through non-governmental organizations contribute towards achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment within the supply chain in the global south?” The flow of developmental aid through various initiatives, funds, projects, and programs to alleviate the global issues is undeniable, but how does the developmental aid contribute to achieving a multifaceted and holistic goal of achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment? In the SDGs, gender equality and women’s empowerment ranks fifth, but it is not something that can be achieved by itself. Therefore, it has been both taken a standalone goal and a cross-cutting goal. This is the exploratory route this research has undertaken and answered in the preceding chapters.

Historically, gender relations was not something that was visible until a group of female professionals and feminists brought it to the developmental table in the 1970s. A lot has changed since the introduction of gender equality, when we compare the Women in Development approach used then to how it is not, is that developmental industry does not only include a gender component, it mainstreams it throughout the programs and the organizations. However, this development came into being with strong feminists and their movements. The development has passed through decades dedicated for women, the UN decade for women, which focused on women’s rights to participate and gain from development, understanding and changing the gendered division of labor, recognizing and acknowledging women’s unpaid labor and the overall change in power relations. Distribution of power relations can still be seen as posing a significant threat. In households in Kenya and Ethiopia, the power dynamics can be seen by the male-headed households, showing the main decision-maker being the man of the house. The clear hierarchical relationship shows women’s as subordinates. These power structures are then reproduced by formal and informal structures.

The Gender and Development (GAD) approach that developed from WID had two important lessons to draw from: it drifted away from focusing on women and incorporated men, and it shed light to the structural inequalities that pertain. Today, the GAD approach has created an understanding that
developmental and sustainable work can not be done for women only as the men are the gatekeepers. This is being done by addressing the underlying structural barriers, which is an approach that is proven to result in sustainable changes. The structural gender inequalities are deeply rooted in social and cultural values and norms. The main reason for the success of the GAD is its ability to acknowledge women as knowledge holders and to include them in the developmental works. Then came gender mainstreaming with all its intended purposes to mainstream gender into all policy domains, programs and to change the formulation of formal policies from unintentionally impacting men and women negatively. The strategy of gender mainstreaming is widely used today by donor agencies and non-governmental organization to make gender at the core of the designing, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of interventions that take place.

Gender relations have within them power relations, and it is important to stress on the interrelated concepts of structure, agency, and resources. These three are in more than one way related to one another. Agency is the ability to make decisions; structures are the formal and informal laws and infrastructure that enable one to be able to make that decision while resources are the ways one can be able to exercise their agency. In the value chains, the joint approach of human rights and business model can be seen. When women are able to participate in activities it directly affects the agency of women by increasing self-worth, bargaining power, and decision-making ability. This inherently gives women access to market, new skills, and adaptation of new business skills. The impact of this can be seen from the agency level on increased financial independence and the ability to control household resources that benefits the economy with better living standards and more profit.

Both donor agencies and non-governmental organization practice gender mainstreaming within the organizational structures and throughout their projects. Internal organizational gender mainstreaming is focused on how the people who make the organization are fully aware of gender and the consequences it has to their works. By having a gender component in all stages of the value chain processes, the embeddedness of gender equality is increasing in the organization. However, there are challenges of insufficient funds that cover expert costs or reaching out to external consultants wears out the sustainability of the outcome. This is the case with organizational staff located in Eastern Africa and European regions. The gap lies in what the guidelines and knowledge of the donor agencies. However, this does not mean that there are no funds available that cover the over-head costs of gender expertise, it is not at the level and does not reach the goal of what is needed to bring sustainable change.

Another important criterion assessed how and in what ways local organizations and especially local women-led organizations are included in the developmental process. This question stems from the argument that gender equality and women’s empowerment is not something that can be changed in a given time. It is a process, and for a process to work, research has shown that change needs to happen from within. It is also shown in chapter two by referring to the ‘Gender at Work’ framework on how to bring change in the formal and informal levels to the individual and the community. When referring to the developmental aid funds that are open for proposals from the Dutch government, the ministry stresses on the importance of an inclusive environment for local organizations and specifically for women led organizations in projects targeted towards SDG 5. However, there is a grey area within their policy as public private partnerships are let off for the leading organizations to decide on who to partner with. Therefore, the lack of a fully structured and clear outline on the importance of including
Southern led organization in the process is seen clearly. The research finding shows that in both organizations, there is some partnership with women organizations, but they do not sufficiently emphasize on that due to their loose focus on the human rights approach and it tends to go beyond the organizational scope and capacity. For the inclusive projects rolled out, it is too early for the organizations to see results. All in all, there is a big drive from the ministry’s side to create strong partnerships with women-led organizations in the future, as mentioned by the policy coordinator.

Enhancing knowledge and capacity building in the projects and internal staff is increasing, there are more new ways to share information and collaborate with local expertise. The network structure used by Solidaridad and the equipping global staff with gender knowledge in UTZ/Rainforest Alliance is has improved the track records of both organizations. Most importantly, both organizations acknowledge the different degrees and extent of gender inequalities worldwide and are creating multiple innovative ways to tackle gender inequalities.

Delving deeply to answer the main research question; from a non-governmental organization perspective, both organizations acknowledge the importance of addressing gender inequalities. From the internal structures of Solidaridad, it can be seen that their network-wide approach starts with gender analysis in the local context, that has a narrower approach in terms of identifying the barriers, challenges and other forms of gender inequalities that exist. The next step will be directed toward the gender focal points in each working team that will then be mainstreamed and integrated towards all aspects of the program development. Utz/Rainforest Alliance has a similar approach but not articulately and clearly defined. The inner structural constraints are the main factors that boldly stood up in this research. From the donor perspective, the Netherlands MFA has a strong stance on gender equality and the current Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation holds a firm ground on improving in this goal. It is expected that the ministry will publish a new policy note that further strengthen the impact on their next round of funding. Therefore, by their approach, developmental aid goes into various streams from influencing the policy enabling environment, gender mainstreaming in the program development and beyond, capacity building to monitoring and evaluation brings change but a slow one. There needs to be an improvement as mentioned above within the internal structures, follow up mechanisms, and creating a sustainable and inclusive impact.

To conclude, this research has come to an understanding that the gender mainstreaming processes are not fully imbedded within organizational practices. This does not mean that there is no progress, but it means that the progress does not align with the other dynamics such as growth in population, economic advancement and stagnation, migrations and other social, economic and political factors.

5.1. Reflection and Limitations
The research in nature touches upon a broad and holistic topic of gender equality and women’s empowerment. To be able to create an understanding and disentangle all the barriers that are a result of inequalities requires a large platform composed of expertise and fieldwork. In human geography, place, space, inclusivity, and interconnectedness of people and societies is highly important (Rose, 1993). As stated in the objective, this is not something that could be addressed and achieved in individually, and it requires partnership and dedication. The first step is to create awareness of the different theoretical arguments and what is being done today.

The second step, the limitation of this research, is to contact all entities and people that part of the humanitarian supply chain to assess the impact the interventions have or are bringing to the grounds.
There are different cultures, societies, people and place which requires an in-depth and narrower view to what can apply to that specific place and society.

5.2. Recommendation

This research can be conducted from different angles, it can be seen from the aid recipients angle. It can be seen from the non-governmental organization perspective, or with a combination of the aid recipients. It can also be conducted from the donor perspective but the combination of all three in future research can bring an added value. In addition to this, taking into account the different geographical locations, race, colorism, ethnicity, social class, and similar intersectional factors, one could analyze and draw the bigger picture into understanding the aspects of the entire value chain. Expansion of the scope beyond this theme would also contribute significantly to the development of research around gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Lastly, I would like to conclude this thesis with a saying that will stay with me from The Gender Task Force Leader of Solidaridad in Nairobi, Kenya, “...for a very long-time gender work has been everybody’s work but nobody’s work.”
References


54


Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Guide – Solidaridad

Organization: Solidaridad Network

Name of Interviewee:

Title of Interviewee:

Location: Utrecht, Netherlands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part I: Interviewers Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Gain consent for an audio recording of the interview. Explain the use of the recording and where it will be stored.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Briefly introduce the research, its objective, question, and relevance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage participation, and questions can be asked at any time of the interview.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for taking part in this research!

Let me first start by asking for your consent to record this interview? It will be solely used for extracting information accurately and will be stored safely afterward. Then I will introduce myself and the research followed by an overview of the structure of the interview.

I’m a Master student at Radboud University in Nijmegen studying Human Geography and specializing in Globalization, Migration and Development. This research focuses on gender equality and women’s empowerment and developmental aid. To be specific my research aims to find how developmental aid channeled through non-governmental organizations contribute towards achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment in value chain within the global south.

The interview will take approximately one hour and will focus on four themes:

• Structure and agency
• Developmental aid
• Inclusivity
• Impact monitoring and evaluation

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask.

Let’s get started!
Part II: Respondents introduction

- Could you tell me about your role as __________ at Solidaridad Network?
- Could you tell me about the role of gender within the organization?
  - When, how, and to what extent gender is a part of the organization’s activities?
  - What is the geographical outreach of the network’s programs?
- What are the motivations for Solidaridad to include gender aspect to its organizational framework? Why is gender important?

Part II: Developmental Aid

- Achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment is a global developmental goal. There are several governmental and non-governmental donors that fund works that tackle gender inequalities, and one of the means is through sustainable supply chains.
  - In which category are Solidaridad’s donors placed?
    - How much funding goes to gender-related projects?
  - How do these actors (donors) influence the success of the projects?
    - Are there specific guidelines?
    - Are there gender-specific target groups?
    - Do they look for sustainable solutions? (Internal organizational reforms?)
  - To what extent do donors interfere?

Part III: Structures and Agency

- How does Solidaridad contribute to incorporating gender into the organizational structures?
  - In the international and national contexts
- What are the organizational barriers?

Within the internal structures

- What are the funding structure barriers within the organization?
  - Is there a dedicated gender budget?
  - Presence of expertise within the country offices?

Within its projects

- How does Solidaridad address cultural norms and exclusionary practices?
  - Division of labor
    - How does Solidaridad acknowledge the different roles women play within the household and outside?
      - For instance, the roles of production and reproduction.
How does Solidaridad contribute to the restructuring of formal laws and policies towards equality?
  ▪ To what extent are decision making roles inclusive?
    • Can you describe how the organization within its programs promote inclusive decision making for both women and men in relation to power within the country level?

Access to Resources and Opportunities
  ▪ How does the organization identify the important resources needed in the supply chain?
  ▪ Who has access to the resources?
    • Does the accessibility impact women and men differently?

Part IV: Inclusivity

- How does Solidaridad include local organizations?
- Research has shown that local women-led organizations have a more significant impact and contribute to tackling gender inequality, to what extent are southern women-led organizations included in the projects?

Part V: Impact monitoring and Evaluation

- How is the success of projects measured?
- Could you tell me about Solidaridad’s track record on successful gender projects?
- After a project is complete, is there a follow-up mechanism?

Part VI: Conclusion

- Are there any remarks or questions?
- Thank you for your time.
Organization: UTZ

Name of Interviewee:

Job Title of Interviewee:

Location: Amsterdam, Netherlands and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Part I: Interviewers Introduction

- Gain consent for an audio recording of the interview. Explain the use of the recording and where it will be stored.
- Briefly introduce the research, its objective, question, and relevance.
- Encourage participation, and questions can be asked at any time of the interview.

Thank you for taking part in this research!

Let me first start by asking for your consent to record this interview? It will be solely used for extracting information accurately and will be stored safely afterward. Then I will introduce myself and the research followed by an overview of the structure of the interview.

I’m a Master student at Radboud University in Nijmegen studying Human Geography and specializing in Globalization, Migration and Development. This research focuses on gender equality and women’s empowerment and developmental aid. To be specific my research aims to find how developmental aid channeled through non-governmental organizations contribute towards achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment in value chain within the global south.

The interview will take approximately one hour and will focus on four themes:

- Structure and agency
- Developmental aid
- Inclusivity
- Impact monitoring and evaluation

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask.

Let’s get started!
Part II: Respondents introduction

- Could you tell me about your role as ___________ at UTZ?
- Could you briefly describe the how UTZ and Rainforest Alliance are affiliated?
- Could you tell me about the role of gender within the organization?
  - When, how, and to what extent gender is a part of the organization’s activities?
  - What is the geographical outreach of the UTZ’s programs?
- What are the motivations for UTZ to include gender aspect to its organizational framework?
  - Why is gender important and more specifically in the agricultural value chains?
    - Does UTZ use the human rights approach for gender or business model?

Part II: Structure and Agency

- How does UTZ contribute to incorporating gender into the organizational structures?
  - In the international and national contexts
  - Could you elaborate on UTZ’s approach towards gender equality?
    - Block A – Management
    - Block C – Working and Living Conditions
- What are the organizational barriers?

Within its projects

- How does UTZ address cultural norms and exclusionary practices?
  - How are women’s roles acknowledged in the value chains?
  - Division of labor
    - How does UTZ acknowledge the different roles women play within the household and outside?
      - For instance, the roles of production and reproduction.
  - How does UTZ contribute to the restructuring of formal laws and policies towards equality?
    - To what extent are decision making roles inclusive?
      - Can you describe how the organization within its programs promote inclusive decision making for both women and men in the value chains?
  - Access to Resources and Opportunities
    - How does the organization identify the important resources needed in the supply chain?
    - Does the accessibility impact women and men differently?
How does UTZ facilitate the inclusion of women to improve their capabilities?
- Knowledge, skills and experiences to participate in the markets?

Part III: Developmental Aid
- Achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment is a global developmental goal. There are several governmental and non-governmental donors that fund works that tackle gender inequalities, and one of the means is through sustainable supply chains.
  - In which category are UTZ’s donors placed?
    - How much funding goes to gender-related projects?
  - How do these actors (donors) influence the success of the projects?
    - Are there specific guidelines?
    - Are there gender-specific target groups?
    - Do they look for sustainable solutions? (Internal organizational reforms?)
  - To what extent do donors interfere?

Within the internal structures
- What are the funding structure barriers within the organization?
  - Is there a dedicated gender budget?
  - Presence of expertise within the country offices?

Part IV: Inclusivity
- How does UTZ include local organizations?
- Research has shown that local women-led organizations have a more significant impact and contribute to tackling gender inequality, to what extent are southern women-led organizations included in the projects?

Part V: Impact monitoring and Evaluation
- How is the success of projects measured?
- Could you tell me about UTZ’s track record on successful gender projects?
- After a project is complete, is there a follow-up mechanism?

Part VI: Conclusion
- Are there any remarks or questions?
- Thank you for your time.
Organization: Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Name of Interviewee:

Job Title of Interviewee:

Location: Den Haag, Netherlands

---

**Part I: Interviewers Introduction**

- Gain consent for an audio recording of the interview. Explain the use of the recording and where it will be stored.
- Briefly introduce the research, its objective, question, and relevance.
- Encourage participation, and questions can be asked at any time of the interview.

Thank you, for taking part in this research!

Let me first start by asking for your consent to record this interview? It will be solely used for extracting information accurately and will be stored safely afterward. I’m a Master student at Radboud University in Nijmegen studying Human Geography and specializing in Globalization, Migration and Development.

This research focuses on gender equality and women’s empowerment and developmental aid. To be specific my research aims to find how developmental aid channeled through non-governmental organizations contribute towards achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment in value chain within the global south.

The interview will take approximately one hour and will focus on five themes:

- Gender and SDG’s
- Developmental aid
- Policies
- Inclusivity
- Monitoring and evaluation

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask. Let’s get started!
Part II: Respondents introduction

- Could you tell me about your role within the MFA?
- Could you briefly explain what developmental aid and SDG 5 mean to the ministry?
- Could you tell me about the role of gender within the organization?
  - When, how, and to what extent gender is a part of the organization’s activities?
- What are the motivations for the Ministry to include gender aspect to its organizational framework?
  - Why is gender important and more specifically in the agricultural value chains?
- What approach do you take on gender equality and women’s empowerment?
  - Human Rights approach?
  - Business model?
- How do you promote gender equality and women’s empowerment in developmental aid?
  - Rights
  - Opportunities – access to finance and resources
  - Responsibilities
- Gender equality scopes in value chains
  - Human Capabilities – Education (trainings and skills Development) and Health
  - Livelihood – Division of Labor
  - Participation and Decision making

Part IV: Developmental Aid

- What is the goal of the funds you are giving out?
- To what extent are the flow of funds stable?
- What is the reason behind funds being allocated to non-governmental organizations and not done by the government or the contracting agency?
- What does gender inclusivity mean and how has it been implemented by the ministry and in the developmental cooperation?
- Gender in the Organization
  - What is your approach of building and strengthening organizational capacity?
    i. Gender Experts?
    ii. Gender mainstreaming within the organization?
- To what extent do you focus on knowledge and infrastructure building?
Part III: Structures – Policies

- How do you shape formal laws and policies to be gender inclusive?
  - Example can be on the public spending on water and sanitation that have a profound impact on women and girls?
- How do you contribute to the restructuring of the exclusionary cultural practices and norms that most often than not exclude women in relation to value chains?

Part V: Inclusivity

Research has shown that local women-led organizations have a more significant impact and contribute to tackling gender inequality, to what extent are southern women-led organizations included in the projects?

- To what extent do you include local women-led organizations?
- Public private partnership and gender resource facility?

Part VI: Monitoring and Evaluation

- How are the monitoring and evaluations of funds and projects conducted?
  - Own implementation
  - Implemented by NGO’s
- How sustainable are the interventions made?
- Is there a follow-up mechanism once a project or a fund has finished its term?

Part VII: Conclusion

- Finally, how does the Netherlands MFA the sustainable development goal 5?
- Are there any remarks or questions?
- Thank you for your time.